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Press Release

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[MTA Headquarters](#)

IMMEDIATE

Nineteen Dogs Graduate from MTA Police Training

Nineteen canine police officers in the Class of 2015 graduated from MTA Police explosives detection and anti-terrorism training this morning in a ceremony at Grand Central Terminal.

The dogs and their human partners trained on a 72-acre rural campus in Stormville, N.Y., in Dutchess County. A new canine training academy built on the site is almost completed and will soon be dedicated.

Fifteen of the graduating dogs will now join their human partners in active duty for the MTA Police Department. They will inspect suspicious packages and patrol the trains, stations, tracks and facilities of the Long Island Rail Road, Metro-North Railroad and Staten Island Railway, a 5,000-square-mile territory covering 14 counties in New York and Connecticut.

Four of the canines who graduated today will join MTA PD sister agencies, the United States Park Police and the Putnam County Sheriff's Office. They are among the regional partners of the MTA in law enforcement who send dogs to the MTA for training.

The MTA Police Department has one of the largest canine explosives detection forces in the country, with approximately 50 dogs in service. Last year, the canines responded to 25,860 requests for assistance, and inspected and cleared 2,584 unattended packages.

Dogs are approximately one year old when they go through the rigorous 12-week training course. They live with their human partners, and can serve in active duty for up to eight or nine years before retiring. MTA Police dogs are most often German shepherds, but some are Belgian Malinois or Labrador retrievers.

The MTA Police Department's Canine Unit was established in 2002 to protect train customers and the public from criminal acts and to assist in reducing railroad service disruptions by expediting inspections of unattended packages. Canines can do in minutes what can take hours for humans to do when searching for explosives or other evidence in crimes.

The canines graduating today are named after fallen police officers, firefighters, and members of the United States Armed Services. Fifteen canines entered active duty with the MTA Police Department today:

- Artie, named in honor of Police Officer Arthur DeMatte of the Larchmont Police Department, who was shot and killed on October 12, 1976, while attempting to remove a suspect from the New Haven Line train tracks.
- Doc, named in honor of Corpsman Jeffrey L. Wiener, United States Navy, who was shot and killed on May 7, 2005, by insurgents during a firefight in western Iraq.
- Droga, named in honor of Detective James Zadroga of the NYPD, who died on January 6, 2006, of a respiratory disease he contracted during rescue and recovery operations at the site of the September 11, 2001, attacks.
- Dwyer, named in honor of Police Officer Anthony T. Dwyer of the NYPD, who was killed on October 17, 1989, when he was pushed from a Times Square rooftop during a struggle with a suspect.
- George, named in honor of Police Officer George Wong of the NYPD, who died on May 24, 2011, from illnesses he contracted after inhaling toxic materials as he participated in the rescue and recovery efforts at the World Trade Center site following the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001.
- Glen, named in honor of Police Officer Glen Pettit of the NYPD, who was killed on September 11, 2001, while attempting to rescue the victims trapped in the World Trade Center.
- Jerry, named in honor of Police Officer John "Jerry" Scarangella, NYPD, who died on May 1, 1981, succumbing to gunshot wounds received two weeks earlier when he and his partner were shot by gunmen during a traffic stop in Queens.
- Joey, named in honor of Retired Sgt. Joseph Callahan of the MTA Police Department, who served as a great example of leadership to his officers during his 35 years of service. He passed away in May 2013.
- Johnny, named in honor of Sergeant John Mullen of the MTA Police Department, who suffered a fatal heart attack while on duty on January 26, 2007.
- King, named in honor of Inspector Kevin King of the MTA Police Department, who was the MTA Police Commanding Officers Association President and the Commanding Officer at Grand Central Terminal until his death from cancer on July 8, 2014.
- Matty, named in honor of Specialist Matthew E. Baylis, US Army, who was killed in combat on May 31, 2007, in Baghdad, Iraq.
- Mikey, named in honor of retired Police Officer Michael Aurisano of the MTA Police Department, whose community policing skills still serve as a role model to all future officers. He passed away on October 11, 2012.
- Seabee, named in honor of Police Officer Stephen P. Driscoll, NYPD ESU, was killed in the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks while attempting to rescue victims trapped in the World Trade Center.
- Sentry, named in honor of the crew of USAF E3 Sentry, Call Sign "YUKLA 27," which went down on September 22, 1995, after hitting birds shortly after departure from Elmendorf Air Force Base in Alaska.

- Vinny, named in honor of Sgt. Vincent J. Oliva of the Port Authority Police Department, who died on November 27, 2013, after a battle with cancer. Sergeant Oliva led the Port Authority Police Department's Canine Unit.

Two dogs entered active duty with the United States Park Police today:

- John, named in honor of Sgt. John Guarino, US Park Police, who was instrumental in the formation of the U.S. Park Police Canine Unit.
- Sam

Two dogs entered active duty with the Putnam County Sheriff's Office today:

- Satch, named in honor of Deputy Putnam County Sheriff Michael Neuner, who as a volunteer firefighter was killed in line of duty on June 22, 1997, when a floor collapsed beneath him inside a burning house.
- Sentinel, named in honor of Putnam County War Veterans of Iraq and Afghanistan.