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8/14/18

WLECHA Awards Committee,

Please accept this letter as my nomination of Officer John Parker and K9 Drago for the meritorious apprehension of the year award.

On June 1, 2018, officers from the Fitchburg Police Department received information on a vehicle stolen in North Dakota that was possibly in the City of Fitchburg or surrounding area. Additional information indicated the vehicle was likely driven by a male who had an outstanding warrant issued in North Dakota for a probation violation. This subject had a lengthy criminal history including offenses involving narcotics and firearms. His probation stemmed from an incident in which he had strangled a corrections officer to the point of unconsciousness which allowed him to escape custody. This subject was believed to be in the company of two other individuals who had been involved in drugs and weapons related offenses. He was believed to be armed.

Officer Parker and K9 Drago had volunteered to come into work outside of their normal hours that day in order to assist our local narcotics task force with a search warrant. While they were still near the city, a Fitchburg officer located the stolen vehicle from North Dakota in a parking lot. Based on the seriousness of the suspect's past offenses and the fact he was operating a stolen vehicle, the officer who located the vehicle contacted Officer Parker to see if he would be willing to assist. Despite the fact he was not required to extend his extra hours in order to assist, Officer Parker began to drive toward the area where the vehicle had been spotted.

Additional officers had set-up surveillance on the vehicle in an attempt to coordinate an arrest of any subjects who may return to the parked vehicle. While officers were responding to the area, multiple subjects returned to the vehicle and it left the parking lot. Officers then attempted to coordinate a high-risk traffic stop. Ultimately the vehicle did not stop and the driver began to actively flee. Officer Parker joined the pursuit of the vehicle and eventually ended up as the lead vehicle.

The pursuit wound through the City of Madison with speeds reaching 90+ m.p.h.. After approximately 10 miles, the fleeing vehicle struck a stopped vehicle in traffic and spun out. Two of the three occupants exited the stolen vehicle and began running towards a wood line adjacent to the highway. Within moments of coming to a stop, Officer Parker removed K9 Drago from his squad and began giving commands for the suspects to stop. K9 Drago was then deployed to apprehend the suspects with Officer Parker close behind.

Shortly after reaching the wood line, Officer Parker observed the driver scale a six-foot fence and run further into the wooded area. Officer Parker lifted Drago over the fence while continuing to give commands for the driver to stop. Moments after lifting Drago over the fence Officer Parker realized K9

Drago had engaged the suspect by biting his leg while the suspect was attempting to scale a second fence. This fence was approximately 30-50 yards from the first fence. The suspect kicked at Drago while he was scaling the fence and was able to break free of K9 Drago's grasp.

Officer Parker then assisted K9 Drago over two additional fences, one a 6' barbed-wire fence followed by a 5'6" chain-link fence. As Officer Parker cleared the fences himself he observed the suspect

barricading himself on the back porch of a residence. The suspect was placing patio furniture and other items between himself and the entrance to the porch.

K9 Drago jumped over the makeshift barricade and began to apprehend the suspect. While K9 Drago was engaged, the suspect began to strike Drago in the head with his hands and legs. Despite this resistance K9 Drago maintained his grip on the suspect's right forearm. The suspect continued to fight with and resist for approximately ten to fifteen seconds. After resisting and fighting with K9 Drago, the suspect complied with Officer Parker's commands. K9 Drago then released from his grip and did not reengage.

Officer Parker continued to give the suspect commands to remain still. Due to the constraints of the porch environment where the apprehension took place, Officer Parker and K9 Drago remained in very close proximity to the suspect and were unable to reposition. After a few minutes of holding the suspect in place, another officer arrived on scene to take the suspect into custody. As the officer moved into position, the suspect swiftly kicked his leg out toward Officer Parker and K9 Drago, contrary to Officer Parker's commands. K9 Drago briefly engaged the suspect's calf and then immediately released his grip on command. The suspect was then placed into handcuffs and provided with medical treatment.


Following the apprehension, K9 Drago was taken to a veterinarian where he received treatment for scratches and abrasions to an ear that appear to have been caused by the suspect scratching or pulling on it.

I am nominating Officer Parker and K9 Drago for the meritorious apprehension of the year award based on the apprehension of a dangerous and violent suspect who clearly demonstrated a disregard for law enforcement and the safety of the general public. In addition to the immense danger of his vehicle pursuit, his attempted flight on foot could have posed significant danger to citizens and law enforcement officers.

Officer Parker maintains a high degree of physical and cardiovascular fitness in order to maximize the effectiveness of K9 Drago's tracking and high-speed capabilities. Additionally, Officer Parker frequently trains with K9 Drago to prepare for these types of high intensity deployments. Squad car camera footage clearly depicts the rapid deployment of K9 Drago and his immediate pursuit of the suspect. Despite the fact both Officer Parker and K9 Drago had been involved in an adrenaline pumping vehicle pursuit, they were both able to immediately transition to a foot pursuit/deployment. On more than one occasion during the deployment K9 Drago attempted to apprehend the suspect and during the second attempt, leapt over an improvised barricade to engage. The focus and determination exhibited by K9 Drago during this deployment is a clear testament to the training regimen Officer Parker maintains.

Absent Officer Parker's willingness to assist at the beginning of this situation, or any of the other above mentioned factors, this scenario could have had a significantly different outcome. Fortunately Officer Parker and K9 Drago were able to utilize their skills and training to apprehend a dangerous criminal on

June 1, 2018. Thank you for your consideration.



Sergeant Edward Hartwick



Wisconsin Law Enforcement Canine Handler Association

P.O. Box 136 Germantown, WI 53022
<http://www.wlecha.org>

AWARD NOMINATION FORM

Please complete this form and submit with your nomination letter to:

WLECHA
c/o Award Nominations
PO Box 136
Germantown, WI 53022
wlechatreasurer@gmail.com

Handler Name: OFFICER JOHN PARKER
K-9 Name: DRAGO
Agency: FITCHBURG POLICE DEPARTMENT

Category (Please circle one per form)

Handler of the Year - Rookie Handler of the Year - Meritorious Apprehension - Meritorious Article Find
Meritorious Track with Apprehension - Meritorious Track - Meritorious Narcotics Find

Nominator: EDWARD HARTWICK
Title: SERGEANT
Agency: FITCHBURG POLICE DEPARTMENT
Phone: 608 270-4300
E-Mail Address: edward.hartwick@fitchburgwi.gov
Hours of Work: 3-11 pm

Membership must be current to be eligible for an award

All nominations must be postmarked or submitted by e-mail by August 15th to be accepted

Canine teams may be submitted for multiple awards.

Please submit separate nominations for each category.

