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Sheriff's Office Mourns the Loss of K-9 Verro

(Paulding County, GA) It is with a very heavy heart that we announce the passing of one of our law enforcement canines, K-9 Verro. K-9 Verro was an eight year old Belgian Malinois who was handled by Corporal Brandon Kilgore. K-9 Verro and Corporal Kilgore had been partners for over seven years while working together in Paulding County. K-9 Verro was a dual purpose law enforcement canine and was an exceptional member of the Paulding County Sheriff's Office K-9 Unit.

On Friday July 19, 2019 at approximately 12:03 PM Deputies responded to a domestic dispute at 14 Trotters Way Dallas, Georgia 30132 (Saddlebrook Farms Subdivision). Prior to their arrival, the male suspect from the domestic dispute left the scene on foot. When responding Deputies arrived in the area, they located a male matching the suspects description in a silver passenger car still inside the neighborhood. When they initiated a traffic stop on the vehicle, the passenger, who was later confirmed to be the suspect from the domestic dispute, ran from them.

As more Deputies responded to the scene to assist, the male suspect continued to jump over fences and run through yards in an attempt to get away. A short time later, Corporal Kilgore arrived on scene and observed the male suspect running in the area of Brooks Road and Trotters Way. Corporal Kilgore quickly stopped his patrol vehicle and gave chase on foot. Handlers are trained on specific rules regarding the deployment of their K-9 partners. At the time Corporal Kilgore arrived, the departmental criteria to deploy the dog had not been met, so he did not release K-9 Verro.

K-9 Verro was the kind of working dog that any handler would dream of. He had a high drive to fight crime and was relentless in his work ethic. Anyone that knew K-9 Verro knew how attached and protective he was of his handler, Corporal Kilgore.



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When Corporal Kilgore left his patrol vehicle chasing someone, K-9 Verro wanted to be with him as the two were inseparable.

A series of tragic, almost unbelievable events followed. K-9 Verro was able to squeeze through the partially open kennel door that separates his vehicle kennel from the drivers compartment which allowed him to crawl into the front of the SUV. Standard practice when looking for a suspect fleeing on foot would be to have your vehicle windows partially or completely down so you can listen for the suspect. The front drivers side window of the patrol vehicle, a 2015 Chevrolet Tahoe, was partially down. K-9 Verro was able to inch his way out of the vehicle in an attempt to assist his handler.

As the chaotic scene unfolded, no Deputies were aware K-9 Verro was out of his vehicle. Had Corporal Kilgore known K-9 Verro was loose, he would have advised the other Deputies to stop the foot pursuit and taken command of K-9 Verro. Shortly after K-9 Verro exited his vehicle, he observed a Deputy sprinting away from him. In the absense of his handlers direction, K-9 Verro could not differentiate between Deputy and suspect. K-9 Verro apprehended the Deputy by grabbing the back of his leg and followed his training by biting and holding until he was commanded to release. The Deputy, who had been bitten from behind while running, had no idea the dog was actually a law enforcement canine. Unable to remove the dog from his leg, the Deputy followed his training, drew his service weapon and shot and killed K-9 Verro.

It wasn't until a short time later that other Deputies realized that the deceased animal was K-9 Verro. Unfortunately, it was too late for K-9 Verro and he passed away on the scene. A short time later the male suspect was taken into custody by other Deputies in the area. The Deputy who was bitten has some injuries as a result of the apprehension but will heal with time.

This has been a devastating incident that has shaken our office to its core. Sheriff Gary Gulledge remarked, "Being a former K-9 handler, I know how special the bond is between a handler and his dog. The emotional grief everyone is going through, including the Deputy who was bitten, has been overwhelming. Please keep Corporal Kilgore, his family, the K-9 Unit, our injured Deputy, and the Sheriff's Office in your prayers as we all go through this difficult time."