



Dayton K9 Phantom likely died from blood clot

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The Dayton Police Department and K9 Handler Officer Rob Cleaver have been overwhelmed by the community's outpouring of support and condolences after the passing of Officer Cleaver's partner, K9 Phantom.

Phantom, who was 9 1/2 years old, died suddenly early Saturday morning (June 6). Officer Cleaver was on duty and on his way home to give Phantom a break, when Phantom collapsed in the back of the cruiser. Officer Cleaver rushed him to an emergency vet clinic, where a medical team worked on Phantom for 20 minutes, but were unable to save him. The veterinarian at the clinic said Phantom most likely had a blood clot that worked its way into his brain.

Officer Cleaver, who has been a K9 handler for more than 20 years, offered this reflection on Phantom, his third partner, who had served our department and community for 7 1/2 years:



"Phantom was a fantastic partner, wonderful, fun, loving, and loyal. He and I responded to more than 1,700 canine calls in our time together. He loved to come to work, every day. He was eager to jump into the car each day and many times got upset at me for dressing up for work too slowly. He knew that as soon as I got my shoes, vest, and uniform on that it was time to go. He never backed down, nor was he ever under any stress. He thought that coming to work and riding in the cruiser was *fun*.

Phantom helped catch suspects and locate drugs, guns, and ill-gotten money in order to take them off the streets. Over the years, we found lost children or adults who'd wandered away from the safety of their homes. During his career, Phantom found or located evidence that was vital to cases. All he ever asked for was a toy to play with in return for his efforts. Many times all he wanted was a pat on the head or to be told that he was a good boy. He would have given his life for me, or any other officer, and for any citizen as well. He was born and bred to work. He never questioned what we did or why we did it. He just went into each and every situation prepared to give his all, no questions asked, no fear, even though many times we were in harm's way.

Phantom grew up with my kids and loved to be around children, which was evident when we visited schools to do demonstrations.

For the past six months, Phantom had been receiving treatment for a mild vitamin deficiency and enzyme/protein issue in his stomach. He was not seriously ill and he was doing well on prescribed medications. His desire to be at work and perform his duties was only hampered a little by his age. He was slowing down a little. He and I were supposed to retire soon, *together*.

I could go on and on...he was so much fun, and we had a terrific and inseparable bond between us. It was very tragic that his death happened so quickly, now our buddy is gone and taking his place in heaven.”

Members of the DPD Canine Unit are in the process of planning a memorial ceremony for Phantom, likely later this month.

With the passing of Phantom, there are four active K9s at work in the Dayton Police Department.

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