

ABSTRACT ONLY

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THE ROLE OF POLICE DOGS AS COMPANIONS AND WORKING PARTNERS^{1,2}

LYNETTE A. HART, R. LEE ZASLOFF

*Center for Animals in Society, School of Veterinary Medicine
University of California, Davis*

SANDY BRYSON

*Sheriff's Departments
Alpine and El Dorado Counties, California*

SARA L. CHRISTENSEN

*Center for Animals in Society
School of Veterinary Medicine
University of California, Davis*

Summary.—Written responses to a questionnaire by 255 officers who used canines in police work were assessed. Almost all officers frequently played with, talked to, petted, and brushed their dogs and believed the dogs benefitted their health and well-being. Officers whose dogs slept indoors, often in the same bedroom, generally said they loved their dogs and they described their dogs as calm rather than active, as indicated by a multiple correspondence analysis. These 96 officers more than the 154 officers whose dogs slept outdoors or in kennels also planned to remain in canine work. Although departments often assumed responsibility for purchasing the dogs, the more experienced officers usually were involved in the final selection of dogs (logistic regression: $p < .0001$). Compared with 94 officers not involved in selecting their dogs, 106 officers with a specific role in selecting their dogs planned to stay in canine work, as shown by a multiple correspondence analysis. They believed the dogs had saved their lives ($p < .01$). Over-all, officers reported spending 4.1 hr. on-duty and 2.9 hr. off-duty per week training their dogs, and also played with them for 6.5 hr. per week, assuring a regular pattern of exercise for the officers. Virtually all officers valued canine service and believed the dogs enhanced the department's effectiveness. This study showed that both close companionship with the dog and involvement in selecting the dog were associated both with satisfaction with the dog and with working as a canine officer.

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