Montville Police welcome K9 Rogue to the team

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Day Staff Writer

Montville — After the sudden death of K9 Gunner last May, the police department has welcomed a new police dog named Rogue, who is now certified and working alongside Patrol Officer Bayron Mora.

Gunner, a young Belgian Malinois who was just three weeks from graduating the Connecticut State Police K9 Patrol Academy, died unexpectedly from a gastrointestinal issue despite undergoing emergency surgery. His death was not taken lightly, according to the department.

"It definitely hit hard, for my family, the department, and the community," Mora said. "He made a big name for himself even though he was just in training."

Gunner had been purchased through a donation from The Stanton Foundation. In the aftermath of his death, the Windham County Kennel Club and AKC Reunite stepped in with a $10,000 donation to help the department acquire a new K9 from Grasso Dog Training and Shepherd in Shelton.

SEE MONTVILLE PAGE B2

FROM B1

Rogue, also a Belgian Malinois, began training with Mora in September 2025 as part of the Connecticut State Police 258th K9 Academy. Even after completing 14 out of the 17 weeks of training with Gunner previously, Mora had to start the training process from scratch with Rogue. They graduated in December 2025 with certifications in tracking, apprehension, and evidence recovery.

"Even though I had done most of the training before, we had to start from zero," Mora said. "But the second time around, you realize how much you've learned. It was easier to train Rogue."

Rogue is already proving to be an asset. During his first live track, he helped locate a suspect involved in a larceny from a store near Montville Commons. The suspect fled on foot, and Rogue tracked him for three quarters of a mile, including across four lanes of traffic, before locating him hiding behind Dollar General on Route 32.

"I was just holding the leash," Mora said. "That was all him."

The police department owns Rogue, but he lives with Mora full time. Even at home, Mora said, Rogue can't help stay in "work mode."

"All he wants to do is work," Mora said. "Even in the backyard, he's looking for evidence. I carry metal, leather, and plastic items with me just to give him something to sniff out."

Police Chief Wilfred Blanchett emphasized the importance of the department's K9 program.

"The K9 program remains vital to our mission of keeping Montville safe," Blanchett said. "We're thrilled to have two K9 patrols on now. They're a great asset."

PHOTO COURTESY OF MONTVILLE POLICE DEPARTMENT

Montville Police Patrol Officer Bayron Mora and K9 Rogue

The donation from the Windham County Kennel Club was part of a community-focused initiative to support working dogs. Club president Kim Holmes said the group had previously struggled to find departments willing to accept such donations, until a Montville member notified them about Gunner's passing.

"We were already looking for a department to support," Holmes said. "Montville was a perfect match. We were proud to attend Rogue's graduation and see him in action."

Rogue is expected to serve about seven to 10 years, depending on his health. Mora said he plans to continue in the K9 unit for the rest of his career.

"Once you're in it, you fall in love with it," he said. "I can't wait to see what more we can do together."

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