



Division of Capitol Police

News Release

April 7, 2026

Division of Capitol Police Expands K-9 Unit with Two Newly Certified Teams

RICHMOND, Va.—The Virginia Division of Capitol Police has added two newly certified K-9s to its K-9 Unit, strengthening the division’s capabilities in counter-terrorism prevention, security sweeps, bomb-threat response and evidence search.

K-9 Echo, a 3-and-a-half-year-old German Shepherd handled by Sean Chaulklin, and K-9 Ozzy, a 1-year-old Belgian Malinois-German Shepherd mix handled by K-9 Officer Melanie Sandoval, recently joined the unit and are supporting safety and security operations throughout the Capitol complex and surrounding region.

Echo, a former pound pup rescued through a local shelter, quickly proved himself to be intelligent and eager to learn, advancing rapidly through training and earning certification after exceeding expectations. Echo is the first K-9 paired with a part-time civilian handler in Capitol Police history. Chaulklin served with the division as a sworn K-9 officer for over 20 years until his retirement in 2022. Shortly after, he returned as a part-time civilian K-9 trainer.

“I’m excited to be back working with the K-9 Unit,” said Chaulklin. “There’s always something rewarding about training but building this partnership with Echo has been especially meaningful. He brings a lot of energy, and that’s made this experience really special.”

Ozzy entered the division with no prior working-dog experience. Following three months of intensive training, Ozzy and Sandoval received certification through the Virginia Police Work Dog Association with support from Officer Raecke of the Henrico Police Department, whose expertise was instrumental in their development as a team.

“Ozzy brings a new, young spirit to the department,” said Sandoval. “After the retirement of my former partner K-9 Luca, having a new partner can present challenges, but it’s all about building trust and teamwork. Ozzy is highly focused and eager to work. I am impressed by how much he has adapted over the last three months, and I have high ambitions for our future success as an explosives and firearms detection team.”

The Division of Capitol Police K-9 Unit was established in December 2000 and is certified through the Virginia Police Work Dog Association. Echo and Ozzy are the 15th and 16th canines to join the division’s K-9 program and now serve alongside Kayce, a Belgian Malinois, and Titan, a Belgian Malinois-Shepherd mix, as active members of the K-9 Unit. Their responsibilities include counter-terrorism prevention, security sweeps, bomb-threat response, evidence searches and assisting neighboring jurisdictions.

“Police K-9 handlers and their K-9 partners play an essential role in creating a safe and secure environment for our visitors, stakeholders and elected officials here at the Capitol and the surrounding area,” said Col. McKee, chief of the Capitol Police. “I am excited to welcome Echo and Ozzy and look forward to them serving with the division. Our handlers did a wonderful job getting them prepared, and they seem very eager to get to work and exemplify our core values of Devotion, Character and Professionalism.”



K-9 Echo (left) and K-9 Ozzy (right)

About the Division of Capitol Police

The Division of Capitol Police has been leading the nation since 1618 in securing, protecting and serving the seat of government and its people. Our mission is to provide progressive law

enforcement and security services to Virginia's government officials, employees, citizens of the Commonwealth and its visitors.

CONTACT: Caroline Frye, Public Relations Specialist
Division of Capitol Police
(804) 786-2522
cfrye@dcp.virginia.gov