



The Associated Press
Saturday, September 29, 2001



Officers kill police dog mistaken for vicious stray

PLAINFIELD – A police dog that searched for survivors in the rubble of the World Trade Center was shot to death by two Plainfield officers who mistook it for a vicious stray attacking a young suspect.

Git Ander, a 7-year-old German shepherd that served with the Union County Sheriff's Office, was killed Wednesday when it turned on the officers, Ronald Fusco and Craig Montgomery. The incident began around 7 p.m., when Git Ander's handler, Sgt. John Gillespie, and several other area officers were pursuing a car that had been reported stolen. When Gillespie saw some suspects bolt from the car, he chased after the driver while Git Ander – who had a sheriff's badge on its collar – went after and subdued a 12-year-old girl, who ran in the opposite direction.

When they arrived a short time later, Fusco and Montgomery thought the dog was a stray and tried to pry it off the girl's leg. When the dog bit Fusco, the officers shot it 11 times. Gillespie, who had apprehended the driver, arrived on the scene as his dog was dying. Union County Sheriff Ralph Froehlich said the dog performed as it had been trained when it subdued the suspect.

Froehlich said Git Ander turned on Fusco because he tried to separate the animal from the girl – a command that can be given only by the handler. No charges have been filed in the shooting, but it is under investigation by Union County Prosecutor Thomas V. Manahan because it involved police use of deadly force. Neither the girl nor the officers were seriously injured. The driver of the car, Brian Tinsley, 18, was charged with possession of a stolen car and eluding police. The girl and another passenger, a 17-year-old male, were also arrested."



"Git Ander" is German for GET UNDER



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World Trade Center Rescue Dog Shot and Killed

Sunday, September 30, 2001 - USA

PLAINFIELD, NJ – An unfortunate case of mistaken identity has resulted in the death of one of New Jersey's finest rescuers. "Git Ander", a seven-year-old German Shepherd who searched for survivors in the rubble of the World Trade Center was shot to death by two Plainfield police officers who mistook him for a vicious stray.

According to an AP report published in yesterday's **North Jersey Record**, the incident began around 7:00pm Wednesday with several officers in pursuit of a car that had been reported stolen. Sergeant John Gillespie, the dog's handler, was among the first to arrive on the scene with Git Ander as suspects abandoned the car and fled on foot. Sgt. Gillespie ran after the driver, 18-year-old Brian Tinsley, while Git Ander chased after one of the passengers, a 12-year-old girl.

Sgt. Gillespie was able to apprehend the driver while his dog brought down the girl by clamping onto her leg. About that time, Officers Ronald Fusco and Craig Montgomery arrived on the scene and--despite the police badge on Git Ander's collar--mistook the dog for a stray. They tried to forcibly pry the dog from the girl's leg, bitten in the process. The officers then shot Git Ander 11 times, wounding the animal fatally. Sgt. Gillespie arrived just as his dog was dying.

**For More information call (908) 273-1608 or (908) 527-6064.
<http://www.dogsinthenews.com/issues/O109/articles/O10930b.htm>**

According to **Union County** Sheriff Ralph Froehlich, the police dog performed exactly as he had been trained in subduing the suspect. Sheriff Froehlich explains that Git Ander turned on Fusco for trying to separate the dog from the girl--a command that can only be given by his partner, Sgt. Gillespie.

The Record reports that no charges have been filed in the shooting, but it is under investigation by Union County Prosecutor Thomas V. Manahan because it involved police use of deadly force. Neither the girl nor the officers were seriously injured. The driver of the car was charged with possession of a stolen car and eluding police, while the 12-year-old girl and a 17-year-old male passenger were also arrested.

The Union County Sheriff's Department K-9 Unit, commanded by Sergeant John Gillespie and Sergeant Ronald Malcolm, is a special branch of the **Search and Rescue Unit of Union County**. Since its inception in 1983, the K-9 unit has been commended for its expertise in searching for missing persons or fleeing felons, evidentiary searches of burglarized buildings and arson scenes, narcotics detection, bomb and weapons searches and crowd control. The unit is also involved in community relations work and gives demonstrations to schools.

Eden & Ney Associates Inc.
Police Dog Home Page

Git Ander

On September 26, 2001 K9 Git Ander was shot and killed in the line of duty during an incident while attempting to apprehend three suspects fleeing from a dumped stolen auto subsequent to a pursuit.

Git Ander, an 8 * year old German Shepherd, was Sergeant Gillespie's loyal partner for seven years. Git lived with him and his wife, four daughters, 10, 9, 7, 5 and one son, 2, during this time. Git had an amazing record of service. He served at the World Trade Center in New York on many occasions after the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001. He was gentle and mild-mannered making him a favorite at local schools and nursing homes. John and his wife, Allison, and children were devastated by the death of their friend and family member. Git was more than a K-9 Officer, he was a loyal, loving friend and hero who lost his life doing the job he loved.

http://executive.policek9.com/Valor/Git_Ander/git_ander.html

Police K-9 Git Ander

Animal Communication 2/28/02 2:02pm

"She went to the right, then straight. You said, 'GO!' I got her on her left. I held her there. I was not out of control.

"They (uniforms) came to me and said, 'NO!' but I could not leave. I heard you in the park (?) (I think he means the distance) and I grabbed her by the arm. She was crying. I was working hard.

"Shot one, I felt in my right thigh. I did not feel anymore after that. I worked harder because I could not move well now. I cried out, but then I held her tighter. (It feels like the first shot threw him a little – to the side, perhaps because his leg buckled? If he was hit elsewhere first, then his back leg buckled from the impact.)

"I heard them yelling but they do not know the right words. I did not want to keep working now, I wanted you to come back for me. I do not know why they shot me again. Didn't they know I was working?

"Someone yelled, "Good shot!" (and now I hear rapid fire which sounds like it's from two different guns, as the sounds are separated). I could not see anymore, only the mist, but I tried to find you and couldn't. I know now that it is because I was being swept upward toward the clouds. I saw the top of the car below. (I see numbers and doors open. 17?) Below people were all moving fast, but I did not see me move. I realized I did not care and looked back no more.

"I know now that you came to me and held me. I'm sorry, I do not remember. I was not there. A special guardian for dogs like me was by my side. It wore a shiny badge and I knew what that meant, that I was to follow and no commands were needed.

"I was told that I did good work. I would be remembered by our people (officers) for many years to come. They will learn from me and they will know that not all dogs should be shot. Some dogs are doing good work.

"I will be remembered by many other people as well. They will know me as a good cop who was working hard when I left you. They will know that I did as you requested and that I was a good cop who always followed protocol. I did not get out of control. I did not need to respond to rookies.

"Your new partner will not be me, but will forge a new bond in your heart that I once held. This is important to the public we serve. I will wait here for a while and will then ask for a new job.

"I'm a good cop, a good dog and I will work hard again. Do not despair or cry for me. Sometimes we die on duty.

"I do want you to know that I am still the good dog you once trained with and loved. I am still the good dog you played with each day. I am still the good dog that you cried on in the street and I will remain the proud vision of what good working dogs are. There is honour in this, as in the way I left. Never cry for having said, 'GO!' It was our job. We did it well."

