



PRESS RELEASE

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TSA showcases working canines at MSP ahead of Super Bowl LII

These explosive detection canines are key to efficient security operations

MINNEAPOLIS – In what is projected to be the busiest day ever for the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) at Minneapolis-St. Paul Airport (MSP), the agency showcased one of its key assets that it will utilize to keep travelers safe and secure leading up to and in the days after Super Bowl LII.

Twenty Passenger Screening Canines (PSC), which are specially trained to detect explosives and explosive components, and their handlers are being used to expedite the screening process for travelers departing MSP. Some of the teams work regularly at MSP while others have come from airports in the Midwest to support MSP's Super Bowl LII activities.

“PSCs are able to work in large crowds in a busy transportation environment and can pinpoint the source of an explosive odor,” said Cliff Van Leuven, TSA Federal Security Director for the state of Minnesota. “We are thrilled to add this additional layer of security during what is guaranteed to be a peak travel period at MSP.”

TSA projects that on Monday, Feb. 5, it will screen up to 69,000 people through the security checkpoint. This includes fans who traveled to Minneapolis for Super Bowl LII as well as local residents. By comparison, TSA screens an average of 34,000 travelers on a typical day.

TSA's use of PSCs significantly impacts the efficiency of the security screening process. PSCs are trained to work in a busy transportation environment, using their keen sense of smell when working in and around travelers and their belongings. Passengers departing MSP should expect to see PSCs working in the security checkpoint, making travelers eligible for TSA PreCheck and expedited screening.

PSCs are able to navigate among large groups of people to pinpoint the source of an explosive odor, often without the source being aware and even if the source is mobile. PSC handlers are trained to read the dog's behavior when it indicates an explosive scent has been detected.

If a dog alerts its handler to something suspicious, TSA follows an established procedure to resolve the alarm. The use of these canines are an effective tool in detecting explosives, which are known to be the greatest threat to the aviation system.

PSCs are regularly tested to ensure they maintain excellent scent capabilities. While they are sociable, they are working canines so they should not be petted or fed by anyone except their handlers.

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Profiles of some of TSA's working canines supporting Super Bowl LII

Some of TSA's PSCs and handlers are on hand today including:

Bagira is a two-year-old, all-black male German Shorthaired Pointer with boundless energy. He loves to go to work every day and be part of a team that protects the nation's transportation systems. When not working, Bagira lives at home with his handler **John** and enjoys eating, sleeping and bird watching.

Doc is a Black Labrador and can't wait to come to work every day. His handler **Lori** says this enthusiasm is contagious. The special bond between canine and handler is apparent - you will find that they even vacation together. Doc is also a military veteran; prior to becoming a PSC, he was an explosive detection canine with the U.S. Marine Corps.

Don is a five-year-old Labrador. He and his handler **Nick** have been together since last summer. Don is very enthusiastic and keeps Nick on his toes every day. Away from the airport, Don likes to play fetch and lounge around on his bed. His favorite three things (in no particular order): his job, food, and his family.

Seven-year-old Vizsla Labrador **Ebbers** has worked with **Jeannie** for more than five years. Based at MSP, they have had the honor of working at several other events around the country including Super Bowl XLVIII, the Special Olympics World Games and a National College Football Championship. Ebbers is named in memory of U.S. Army PVT James Ebbers who died in 2002 in service to his country during Operation Enduring Freedom.

EEtte, is a seven-year-old Hungarian Vizsla-Yellow Labrador Mix. She was born into the TSA Puppy Program at Lackland Air Force Base in San Antonio, Texas, and is named in memory of Sadie Ette, an accountant who was working on the 106th floor of the World Trade Center North Tower on the morning of Sept. 11, 2001. EEtte enjoys playing "retrieve" with her handler, **Jasmine**.

Llenoir is a nine-year-old Vizsla-Labrador mix. She, too, was born into the TSA Puppy Program at Lackland Air Force Base in San Antonio, Texas. She is a proud graduate of the first-ever PSC class offered at the TSA Training Center located at Lackland. Llenoir is named in memory of John Rob Lenoir, 38, who was working on the 104th floor of the World Trade Center's South Tower on Sept. 11, 2001. Llenoir and her handler **Scott** have been together since July 2011 and can usually be seen working at Indianapolis International Airport. Super Bowl LII is her fifth Super Bowl assignment.

Mogart, a German Shorthaired Pointer, can normally be seen working at Chicago O'Hare International Airport with his handler **Paul**. They've been together since 2013. Mogart, who will turn nine in March, maintains a keen olfactory sense and an eagerness to work. When off-duty, he enjoys running around the yard and playing fetch with his "sister," a retired working canine named Frida.

Three-year-old **Perry** is a German Shorthaired Pointer. She and her handler **Chris** have been together since last summer. Perry loves to have her picture taken and was thrilled to be featured on the TSA Instagram account, generating more than 18,000 "likes." Chris, a 12-year employee of TSA, has been with the canine program since 2016.

Potyi is a four-year-old German Shorthaired Pointer originally from Germany. She has been working at MSP with her handler **Davis** since July 2016. Potyi enjoys being around people, watching birds and chasing squirrels.

TTirado is an eight-year-old Black Labrador Retriever. He and his handler **Keith** have been together for six years. They started in Honolulu and are now assigned to work at Indianapolis International Airport. TTirado traveled to Washington, D.C., in January 2017 to support activities related to the presidential inauguration. He is named in memory of New York City Firefighter Hector Luis Tirado Jr., from Engine 23 who died on Sept. 11, 2001. TTirado loves getting treats and would swim all day if he could. A video of TTirado snoring away during his rest time was posted on TSA's Instagram account in November 2017 and has more than 185,000 views.