

Placer County uses K9 death as learning tool

In the early morning hours of Thanksgiving 1998, the Placer County Sheriff's Office lost its first and only dog in the line of duty.

As a way to remember Ranger and the sacrifice he made 17 years ago, the department is launching the first of what it hopes is many **videos** on different topics meant to educate, inform and entertain.

Ranger, an Australian Shepherd, had been called to duty with his handler PCSO search and rescue volunteer Terry Butrym to assist Sacramento County in the search for a missing pheasant hunter. Ranger found the downed man near a phone utility box in the middle of a pitch-black field, where the current Sleep Train Arena stands today.

After locating the hunter, Ranger ran back to his handler, as he was trained to do. Butrym followed Ranger to where the hunter's body laid next to the phone box. Then, the only thing Terry saw was what he described as a "fireball" igniting the black night. Ranger had run up and touched the man, as he was trained, and the shock from the electrocuted man shot through Ranger's body, killing him instantly.

The man was not only hunting for pheasant, but for copper wire that was in the phone box. The man couldn't have known that the wires inside the box were live; a nearby tree had caused an overhead wire to break and fall onto the box, the wire's end resting on top of the box.

Butrym said it could have been much worse, as Ranger gave his life so other searchers didn't suffer the same fate.