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Police Dog's Attack On Postman Baffles Department

Mail Carrier Bloodied; Animal To Be Examined

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LEBANON, Ind. -- Dogs may be natural adversaries of postal carriers, but Joe Luckey couldn't have been prepared for an attack by a police animal.

Luckey was working his route when Erik, the Lebanon Police Department's 7-year-old German shepherd, ran for him Tuesday, startling the mailman and the dog's handler.

The dog bit his face and neck and barely missed his jugular vein.

"I was thinking, 'Boy, this is really going to hurt. I don't know how bad, but this is really going to hurt,'" Luckey told [6News' Ray Cortopassi](#) on Wednesday.

The dog was with his longtime, off-duty handler, Officer Dave VanBaale, when it ran to Luckey. Police said the attack was unprovoked, and that the dog disregarded VanBaale's commands to stop.

Luckey tried to defend himself with his mailbag and his hands. He had pepper spray but didn't have time to use it.

"I could hear the handler calling him, so I knew the handler was coming," Luckey said. "I grabbed (the dog) and we went down to the ground together, and I was trying to hold him to keep him from biting me anymore."

Blood ran onto his postal shirt. Luckey received six stitches.

Lebanon police said they would cover Luckey's medical bills and suspend the dog from duty. Police intend to re-examine the animal's training and get it checked medically.

Investigators are especially troubled by the lack of provocation, Lebanon police Lt. Brent Wheat said.

"That's the part that bothers us, (that) there's no explanation for this," Wheat said.

Wheat said the dog attacked people last year while off-duty at a Ford dealership, but under different circumstances.

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Joe Luckey

"The handler wasn't aware that there were people working in the area. It was the middle of the night," Wheat said. "The dog entered the building where the people were working, and they tried to grab the dog, and the dog bit him."

Luckey said he will take a few days off work to let his injuries heal.

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