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Sheriff's Office's dog attacks deputy's daughter

By Lauren Pack

Staff Writer

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HAMILTON — Butler County sheriff's dog Ammo uses his instincts daily to fight crime, but Saturday he made a mistake that injured his human partner's young daughter.

Seven-year-old Sarah Tolley was bitten by the dog — en route to work with Deputy Don Tolley — in the upper thigh at her Ross Twp. home during a birthday party. The bite was closed with more than 30 stitches.

But according to Tolley, the only time his daughter cried was when he talked about getting rid of Ammo and leaving the K-9 unit.

"I said I was done," Tolley said. "But my family has bonded with Ammo. She (Sarah) says it's not the dog's fault. I know what happened — he went into building search mode. That's what working dogs do ..."

Sarah and her friends were in their pajamas about 8:50 p.m. preparing to watch some movies as part of a birthday sleep over. Tolley let Ammo out of his kennel to roam around the yard before they started the shift.

Tolley and Ammo were on their way to the cruiser when one of the girls opened up the sliding glass doors and called out.

"She called for Ammo. He likes to be inside and he turned around and ran into the house," Tolley said.

Through the window he could see the dog, a dutch shepherd mix, wagging his tail as the girls gathered around. But when one girl squealed, others began doing the same and then they took off running, Tolley said.

As Tolley hurried toward the house, Ammo went into work mode. Sarah Tolley was the last in line when the dog found what he thought was the "suspect" and bit down.

"He released as soon as I called the command," Tolley said. "I know it was just automatic for him, a chain reaction when the girls started yelling and running ..."

Chief Deputy Anthony Dwyer said Tolley has taken some vacation days to consider the partnership.

Tolley said Thursday he believes after talking with his wife and daughter, that he will keep Ammo as his partner.

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