

DOG HEROES
"DUKE"—POLICE DOG

WHEN is a police dog not a police dog? For the answer, you have only to consult the members of the Police Department of Patchogue, Long Island, New York, where Duke is a member of the force. Veteran cops will tell you that Duke joined the force eleven years ago when Patrolman Morris Gilman fished the pup out of an unfinished cesspool. Since that time, Duke has proved his worth repeatedly as a "police" dog although his various ancestors stamp him as a 100 per cent mongrel.



Duke began his police work with his rescuer, Patrolman Gilman. He was the constant companion of Gilman on the officer's rounds. Late one night, as man and dog were checking up on store fronts to be certain they were locked, Duke's warning growl apprised Patrolman Gilman of an intruder at work. A whispered command silenced the keen-eared dog and Patrolman Gilman crept forward to make a capture.

This was only the first of many similar exploits involving Duke. The mongrel really captured Patchogue's heart when a two-page news story revealed that Duke had saved a kitten from drowning. The kind and gentle dog which could be so savage toward burglars had leaped into the water to rescue a helpless kitten which some person had cruelly attempted to drown.

In his spare time, Duke keeps all other dogs moving from the village's principal intersection. This traffic post brings him some tough encounters with big dogs who don't recognize his official authority. As a result, Duke has his share of scrapes. One time, with a Dalmatian, Duke had to be patched up by a veterinarian, but the Dalmatian never returned to the corner.

Before the village installed parking meters two years ago, Duke covered every foot

patrol with Patrolman Gilman. With the advent of the meters, however, Duke's routine changed. Patrolman Gilman got the "scooter patrol" checking the meters. Duke found it easy to run alongside the scooter, and maintained his traffic post outside patrol hours.

Eight years ago, when Patchogue had a round-up of stray dogs, the Patrolmen's Benevolent Association decided to take out a license for Duke, as a precaution. But the village's legal minds vetoed the idea on the question of responsibility. So James K... then a member of the force, took out a license and became the owner of record, although everyone knew that Duke was still a member of the force. Patrolman Gilman now has the license.

Duke is morally obligated to spread a little cheer around the Patchogue Volunteer Fire Department, too. Ever since the department lost its mascot, the "police" dog has been dropping in on the boys to join their company. Of course, he appreciates the small treats which are bestowed on him there in the form of choice bones and... etc.

Whenever he may be on the village, Duke is up and at 'em when the fire alarm sounds. He's up and racing for the corner of Main Street and Ocean Avenue—his traffic post by the way—to wait for the first fire truck which stops there to pick up the volunteers. He has appointed himself guardian of the truck's equipment when the firemen fight any blaze.

The patrolmen and volunteer firemen of Patchogue to this day dispute the pedigree describing Duke which is on file with the dog's license in the Village Clerk's Office. They insist that the word "mongrel" should be changed to "Thoroughbred Police and Fire Dog," even if Duke is the only one of his kind.



"Duke" was a special kind of a dog and the best known animal in all of Patchogue. This magazine article tells his story.

Al Morge and the police mascot "Duke" in front of Swezey's. A plaque dedicated to the memory of "Duke" is embedded in the sidewalk in front of Swezey's, his favored spot.