

Best Of



2009 WINNER

# Best Canine Capture Design Contest **Fresno Co. Sheriff's Department**

**Heroism converges at Fresno Co. shooting  
2 deputies, sheriff's dog injured, gunman killed south of Fresno.**

Published online on Tuesday, Jul. 14, 2009  
By Jim Guy and Paula Lloyd / The Fresno Bee

Deputies quick to answer a call for help, a sheriff's dog and two women on their way to work were hailed as heroes in a shooting Tuesday that left the gunman dead and two officers wounded.

The rifle-wielding gunman killed by Fresno County Sheriff's SWAT team officers was identified as Jesus Serna, 32, of Fresno.

The incident began with a call reporting a man with a gun at a tire shop just south of Fresno. Sheriff Margaret Mims said Serna shot at the first two deputies to arrive, firing even before the deputies could get out of their cars.

Deputy George Ozburn was struck by bullet and glass fragments in his shoulder, arm and face. Ozburn never lost consciousness and directed other deputies to the shooting scene before he was taken to a hospital.

Deputy Mark Eaton was hit in the arm by glass fragments. He stayed on the scene to help with the investigation.

Mims praised two women who came to Ozburn's aid moments after he was shot: "They stepped up. This was a dangerous situation. ... They stopped the bleeding and

helped him from going into shock.

“My gratitude is boundless.”

At a Tuesday afternoon news conference, Mims described what happened at Jerry’s Tire Shop on Elm Avenue just south of North Avenue.

Just after 8 a.m., a shop employee reported a man he knew as “Chewy” was at the business with a gun. Initial reports said Serna went to the shop to confront a man he thought was having an affair with his wife, but Mims declined to discuss those details.

Serna used a semi-automatic rifle to fire at the driver’s side window of Ozburn’s marked patrol car and Eaton’s unmarked car.

“This incident happened so fast, the deputies didn’t have time to get out of their vehicles,” Mims said.

After Serna fired at the deputies, he drove about 50 yards away, crashed into a fence and ran into an area where wood pallets are stored.

Within minutes of the shooting, other deputies, Fresno and Clovis police and California Highway Patrol officers sped to the scene, some dressed in civilian clothing. Heavily armed officers carrying rifles and shotguns fanned out around the industrial area as the sheriff’s helicopter circled.

A deputy who arrived moments after the shooting helped Ozburn, who took cover behind a building wall, clutching his shoulder.

That’s when the women, Yvette Dader and Angelique Rocha, took over.

They said they had been driving to work. Dader said she is a home care worker who is interested in medicine.

“I applied direct pressure [to the wound],” Dader said. “We just tried to help as much as we could, which wasn’t much, because we were waiting for the ambulance.”

“I always seem to be in the wrong place at the wrong time.”

Corrected Rocha: “You weren’t in the wrong place.”

Ozburn, 34 and a 12-year veteran of the sheriff’s office, was taken to Community Regional Medical Center and released about 11:30 a.m., Mims said. Eaton, 41 and a 15-year veteran, was treated at the scene and released.

The Sheriff’s SWAT team was training Tuesday morning; less than an hour after the deputies were shot, the SWAT officers with Reno the sheriff’s dog and his handler, Deputy Robert Marean, were searching the storage area. They found Serna barricaded behind a pile of pallets and tires.

Deputies told Serna to come out, but he refused. Reno was “sent in to catch the bad guy and he was shot in the line of duty,” Mims said. The round hit Reno behind his left ear and exited through his face, she said. Reno survived but lost his left eye.

Deputies fired several shots at Serna, killing him.

Mims said Serna “didn’t care for his safety, he didn’t care for the deputy sheriff’s safety. He certainly didn’t care for the safety of the public. But he paid the price.”

Mims said Serna has an arrest record for violent crimes, but declined to say what those crimes were.

Source: <http://www.fresnobee.com/local/story/1534243.html>

## **K-9 deputy Reno goes home after being shot**

Published online on Wednesday, Jul. 15, 2009

By Marc Benjamin / The Fresno Bee

Only a day after he was shot in the face by an assailant, Reno the K-9 dog was released Wednesday afternoon from a Fresno veterinary hospital into the custody of his partner, deputy Robert Marean.

The 6 1/2-year-old German shepherd, who was showered with donations and gifts -- including a quilt -- from grateful Fresno County residents, was clearly ready to regain his freedom.

Pulling at his leash, Reno -- who lost his left eye in Tuesday's shooting -- stepped outside the Veterinary Emergency Services clinic on Fresno Street. His face half-shaved, Reno wore a plastic cone around his head to keep him from accidentally reinjuring himself. The dog also had a fentanyl patch to manage any lingering pain, doctors said.

Reno was shot by Jesus Serna, 32, who had earlier shot and injured deputy George Ozburn and shot at deputy Mark Eaton, who was injured by flying glass. Ozburn was treated Tuesday at Community Regional Medical Center and released. After shooting Reno, Serna was shot and killed by deputies.

Marean said he was grateful to the hospital for its efforts to save Reno.

"My family and I are very happy to be taking him home today," he said in a written statement. "However, I don't want what happened to Reno to overshadow the trauma and injuries suffered by deputy Ozburn and deputy Eaton. My thoughts and prayers are with both of them and their families."

Eaton returned to work Wednesday, and Ozburn is on injury leave. It's not clear when he will return, deputy Chris Curtice said.

Reno still has fractures and some bleeding, but he "looked great all day," said Rachel Horne, a veterinarian who oversaw Reno's care Wednesday. Reno was treated in surgery Tuesday by Dr. Allen DeBlieck, she said.

Through it all, Horne said, Reno "was stoic."

It's too soon to tell whether Reno will have to retire, said Sgt. John Reynolds, who oversees the Fresno County sheriff's K-9 division.

Sheriff Margaret Mims said if he can't return to patrol, he could be retrained as a drug-detection dog.

Reno was born in the Czech Republic and purchased in California. He could work for three more years if he is deemed healthy enough. He is one of nine patrol dogs in the Sheriff's Office, which also has two drug-detection dogs.

A new dog would cost about \$8,500, plus \$5,000 to \$6,000 for training, Reynolds said.

Although some animal-welfare agencies criticize the use of dogs by police, the Central California Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals supports their use, said Beth Caffrey, humane education administrator.

If the dogs are trained professionally, they can be used in ways that people cannot, Caffrey said.

A bomb-sniffing dog, for example, can detect danger and be pulled away from an explosive device and replaced with a robot, which could save lives.

"You can't really know how these things will play out, and sometimes the dog will defuse [a situation] and no one will get hurt," she said.

Reno was shot while searching for Serna, who had holed up in stacks of pallets as deputies looked for him. Serna fired at Reno after the dog discovered him, authorities said. Deputies then opened fire on Serna, killing him.

"We don't put a dog on suicide missions, but there are times where a dog can allow some time for a tactical team to approach safely," Reynolds said.

With senses of hearing and smell thousands of times better than a human's, a dog can find a hidden suspect more easily. Once found, an assailant could be distracted by the dog, allowing deputies to approach.

"You know in the back of your mind that the worst could happen, and you regret it when it does," Reynolds said. "But Reno most likely took a bullet that could have been for one of those deputies."