Bristol County Sheriff's Office K9 Team gets unique training in homemade explosives

A few bucks and a few web clicks is all someone needs to make dangerous explosives.

It's a reality law enforcement knows all too well. Bristol County K9 Lt. Kenneth Almeida and K9 Officer Ryan Isherwood, who are both trained and certified in firearms and explosives detection, took another step to protect the public from these homemade explosives with a unique training at Tripwire Operations in Gettysburg, Pa., recently.

"Anybody with the internet can find out how to make a bomb," Lt. Almeida said. "We're so much more likely to encounter a homemade explosive than a commercial or military explosive, that's why this training was so important."

The training course started in the morning, when Lt. Almeida and Officer Isherwood would build an explosive device. The afternoons were dedicated to the K9s detecting the scents used in the explosives, which were then put through a controlled detonation in the evening.

"Every single explosive we built and detected can be made in 15 minutes with simple items ordered online or bought at a hardware store," Officer Isherwood said. "Building and detecting it brings a whole new level of respect to the job and how crucial it is to protect the people from these."

If there's anyone who knows the impact these explosives can make, it's Officer Isherwood. While serving overseas with the U.S. Marines years ago, his vehicle was taken out while

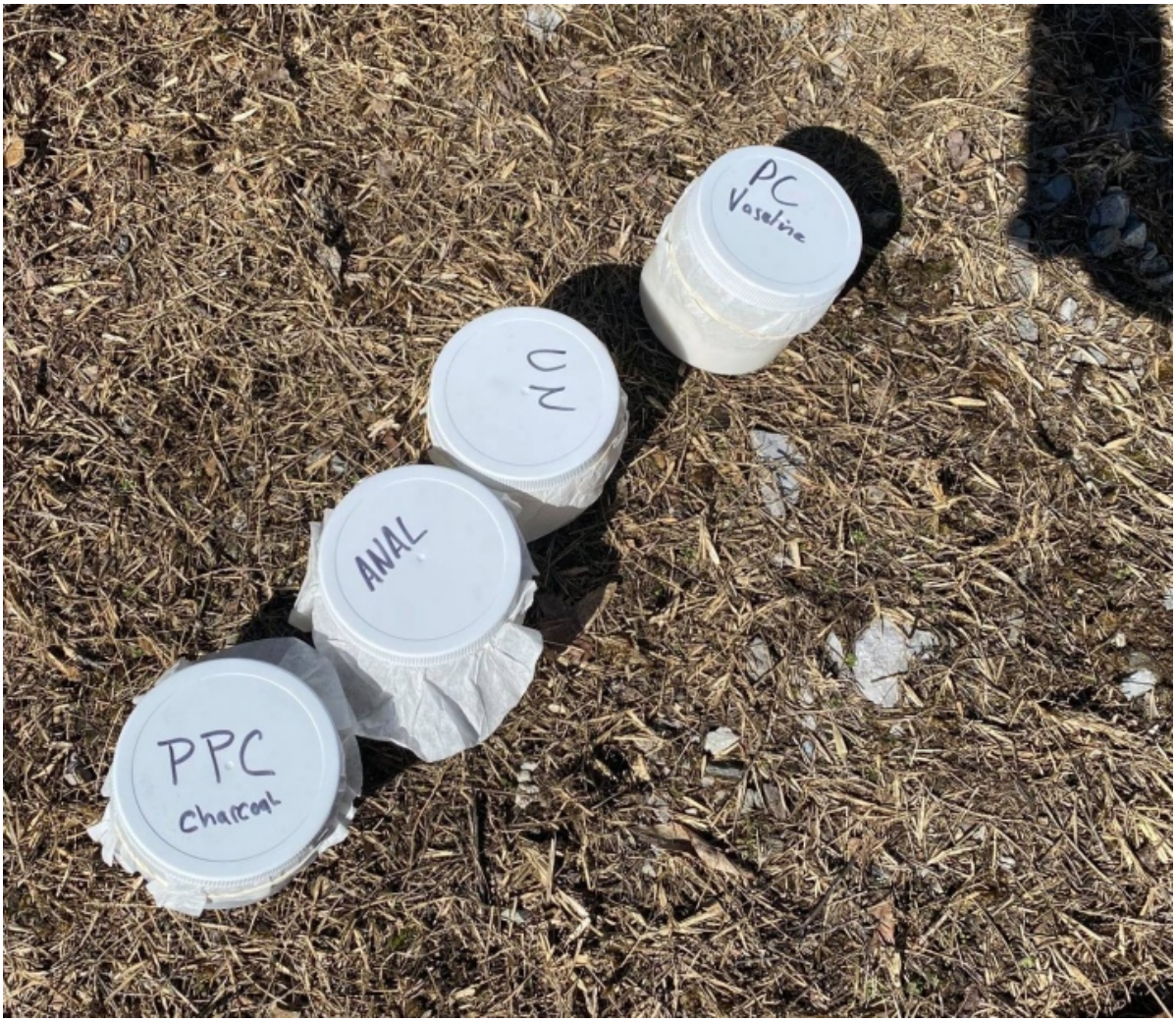
driving over a homemade mine.

“I’ve seen what these bombs can do first-hand,” Officer Isherwood said. “They can do a lot of damage. That’s the last thing anyone in law enforcement wants happening in our community.”

Lt. Almeida said training building the explosives gives them more information about the chemicals used to make them. For example, he said that large quantities or certain household cleaners or chemicals during a vehicle or home search should trigger an alert for a law enforcement officer that something dangerous may be on the premise.

“This will be a tremendous benefit to the people of Bristol County,” said Lt. Almeida, who is hoping to organize a training session for K9 teams from across Bristol County on homemade explosives. “These chemicals can be very unstable and an explosion can occur at any time with these homemade explosives. No doubt we will use the knowledge to prevent these in Bristol County.”

All photos by Bristol County Sheriff’s Office:

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