

Massachusetts State Police K9 “Neko” tracks suspect who fired gun into neighborhood

At approximately 2:25 a.m. State Police patrols and an MSP K9 team responded to the area of Samoset Road in Woburn to assist local police in searching for a man who fired a gun in a residential area and fled on foot.

State Police K9 Section Trooper Dan Purtell deployed his partner Neko at the place the suspect was last scene. Neko acquired the suspect's scent and tracked from that yard across the street into a backyard on Anna Road. Neko then returned to the original back yard he was in behind the house where the incident occurred, pulled behind a shed, and then continued down to a stream.

Neko tracked along the stream, then went up an embankment and jumped a chainlink fence into another yard. There, he tried to pull through a broken wooden fence. Trooper Purtell opened a gate and Neko pulled back across Anna Road again into another backyard, where he jumped another fence and became frantic and started to whine. He pulled past a shed in that backyard, did a big circle in the yard, and came back to the shed. Neko began to whine, jumped on top of a trash barrel and attempted to jump on top of the shed. Trooper Purtell restrained Neko from jumping on the shed; Neko then alerted to the shed and began barking.

Three officers established tactical positions along with Trooper Purtell and Neko outside the shed.

Trooper Purtell issued commands ordering anyone in the shed to surrender, and quickly heard a voice from inside yell, “OK, I don't have a gun!” Trooper Purtell ordered the suspect to slowly walk out the door with his hands on his head, which he

did.

The suspect was placed in custody without incident; police searched the shed and did not locate the firearm.

Trooper Purtell and Neko then began a search for the gun, back tracking along their initial route to the shed. When they got to the first backyard on Anna Road that Neko had entered near the start of the search, Neko began circling and zig-zagging across the yard before crouching down and staring at Trooper Purtell.

Trooper Purtell looked down and saw a black semi-automatic pistol under Neko's paws.

Woburn Police detectives photographed the pistol and secured it, and later located two shell casings in the house where the incident began.

The suspect tracked by Trooper Purtell and Neko was charged with unlawful possession of a firearm and unlawful discharge of a firearm within 500 feet of a dwelling; he was also the subject of an outstanding warrant. Because the initial incident is believed to be domestic in nature, his name is not being released at this time.