

BARK THE BLUE

Newport Twp. Police Department starts K-9 unit

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Newport Twp. has its first-ever police dog — a highly trained German Shepherd named Axel.

The dog is the personal animal of Officer William Dubiak of Scranton, who was able to get the dog specialized training for free using his Veterans Administration benefits after exiting the Marine Corps three years ago.

While Dubiak was with the Hop Bottom Police Department in Susquehanna County, he had agreements to use Axel to assist departments in Luzerne, Lackawanna and Susquehanna counties on search and rescue missions and to seize firearms and explosives.

But now Axel's work will generally be limited to serving the Newport Twp. and Nanticoke areas after Newport Twp. police started up its own K-9 unit earlier this week.

"He's 86 pounds of muscle," Dubiak said. "His pedigree, his family tree is pretty good. He has six police dogs in his family. He has a good bloodline."

Dubiak, 36, said he purchased the dog directly from the Czech Republic and got him trained at an elite school in New Jersey.

The dog is certified to detect firearms, gunpowder and explosives. He's also trained in criminal apprehension and search and rescue missions.



SEAN MCKEAG / STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Newport Twp. police officer Bill Dubiak sits in front of his Scranton residence with 3-year-old K-9 Axel on Wednesday.

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K9: Used VA benefits to train dog for free

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After getting out of the Marine Corps, Dubiak said he first bought the dog and then inquired about training. He said he learned he'd be able to use his VA benefits to train the dog for free.

"I was like, 'I'm not going to pass on that opportunity,'" Dubiak said.

Dubiak has been using Axel for several years with the Hop Bottom Police Department, where he served as chief until recently.

Since Dubiak has been working for Newport Twp. over the past year, he and township leaders considered starting a K-9 unit with his dog. On Monday, the township officially approved an agreement to utilize Dubiak's dog as its police K-9.

Under the agreement, Dubiak will still be responsible for feeding the dog and his veterinarian bills. Newport Twp. will cover up to \$1 million in liability insurance and designated a specially outfitted sport utility vehicle for the use of the dog.

"A dog is a great tool for any police department,"



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Newport Twp. police Officer Bill Dubiak's son Mason, 3, plays with Axel in the front lawn of the their Scranton home Wednesday.

Newport Twp. police Chief Jeremy Blank said. "This is Newport's first dog as far as anyone could remember. There might have been one back in the day, but nobody could remember one."

Newport Twp. Commissioner Mike Roke, who is the police chief in Nanticoke,

said he looks forward to both departments utilizing Axel.

"We work pretty well, hand-in-hand together," Roke said. "We help each other out when requested. It will be an asset to the township for sure."

Roke commended Dubiak for getting the dog and himself trained for K-9

work "all on his own."

Dubiak said he's glad he got the dog trained for his new assignment.

"He's probably the best partner you can have," Dubiak said. "He doesn't argue."

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