

Police dog attacks Idaho boy

By The Associated Press

MERIDIAN, Idaho (AP) -- An Ada County sheriff's police dog mauled a boy in this suburb just west of Boise before his screams alerted a neighbor who helped restrain the animal.

The Belgian Malinois dog, which is similar to a German shepherd and often used in law-enforcement work, had to be pulled by the neck from the youngster, whose name was not immediately released. Another neighbor called law enforcement agents from the Meridian Police Department to intervene in the Wednesday attack.

The dog apparently escaped from the Meridian home of an Ada County Sheriff's Department employee. Sheriff's Sgt. John Tucker confirmed the animal was a police dog that lived with his human partner in the neighborhood where the attack occurred. Tucker declined to identify the deputy who works with the dog.

"There was a lot of blood," said Dave Warren, the neighbor who restrained the dog from further biting the boy after hearing what he termed "a bloodcurdling scream."

"It happened so fast, you just react," Warren said.

The victim, who appeared to be in his early teens, was riding his bicycle with his younger brother when the dog apparently knocked the boy from his bike and began biting him, Warren said. The boy appeared to have been bitten in the shoulder and the neck.

Paramedics and Meridian police officers treated the boy, then released him to his mother, Warren said.

Meridian Police Chief William Musser declined to give information about the incident, saying the agency would release a press statement sometime Thursday after investigating what happened.

Tucker declined Wednesday to say how the agency plans to address the incident. Phone calls to the sheriff's office Thursday morning weren't immediately returned.

Warren suffered two minor bites while separating the dog from the boy.

"I got an owie on my hand, but I'll live," he said.

The dog was impounded by animal control officers. Meridian Animal Control Officer Brenda Steinebach said that dogs are generally returned to their owners, even following attacks, if they have had their rabies shots.

Information from: The Idaho Statesman, <http://www.idahostatesman.com>