

**DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY**  
**VERMONT STATE POLICE**

**UPDATED PRESS RELEASE**  
**OFFICER INVOLVED SHOOTING INCIDENT – BURLINGTON**

Major Glenn Hall – Criminal Division Commander – Vermont State Police

12/23/15 - The investigation continues into the officer involved shooting that occurred in Burlington last evening. Preliminary investigation has revealed the following:

On Monday, 12/21/15, federal agents and task force officers from the DEA obtained a federal search warrant for the residence of Kenneth Stephens (age 56) located at 101 Elmwood Avenue in Burlington. Stephens was the subject of an ongoing DEA investigation involving the distribution of heroin and crack cocaine. In addition to the search warrant, a federal arrest warrant was obtained for Stephens for distribution of cocaine. This ongoing drug investigation revealed that during the week of November 9<sup>th</sup>, a confidential source working with the DEA made two separate controlled purchases of heroin from Stephens. During the week of November 16<sup>th</sup>, the same confidential source again made a controlled purchase of heroin from Stephens. On December 16<sup>th</sup>, the same confidential source made a controlled purchase of heroin and crack cocaine from Stephens. These controlled purchases were monitored by the DEA and all occurred at Stephens' residence located at 101 Elmwood Avenue. The confidential source told DEA officers that he/she had observed a muzzle loader inside Stephens' residence several times. The confidential source told DEA that Stephens had previously told him/her that the weapon was loaded but the confidential source did not know if the muzzle loader contained a primer, which would permit the weapon to fire.

A criminal record check revealed Stephens has previous drug convictions and a burglary conviction. In 1996 Stephens was convicted in the U.S. District Court for the District of Vermont for the unlawful possession of a firearm. As a result of this conviction, Stephens was sentenced to 188 months in prison, followed by three years of supervised release. In 2010, Stephens violated the conditions of supervised release and was sentenced to 12 months and one day in prison with no supervision to follow.

On Tuesday, 12/22/15, federal agents and task force officers formulated plans to execute the search warrant at 101 Elmwood Avenue. These plans included the arrest of Stephens. Prior to the execution of this search warrant a briefing was conducted at which time details of the investigation were discussed with participating officers. These details included facts of the investigations, to include the prior criminal history of Stephens and information that he may be in possession of a firearm, specifically a muzzleloader. DEA was assisted by other law enforcement agencies to include Burlington and Essex Police departments and ATF. A total of sixteen officers participated in this planned operation.

At approximately 7:15 pm officers approached the residence located at 101 Elmwood Avenue. A team of officers approached the residence lined up one behind the other in what is known as a stack formation. Upon reaching the front of the residence, a DEA Agent began attempting to breach the door with a battering ram. The second officer in line, a State Trooper announced the presence of law enforcement by yelling "police". As the door began to open, the Trooper could hear yelling from inside the residence and observed a male subject sitting in a chair, whom he believed to be Stephens. The Trooper then observed the subject stand up and point the rifle directly at him. The Trooper immediately

began yelling commands at the subject and discharged multiple rounds from his patrol rifle. At the same time, the third officer in line, a DEA Agent, discharged multiple rounds from his patrol rifle at the subject. The subject then fell to the floor and officers began to render medical aid. Rescue personnel responded to the scene at which time the subject was pronounced deceased.

The Vermont State Police Crime Scene Search Team was activated to process the scene. The deceased was transported to the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner for autopsy. The deceased has been positively identified as the suspect, Kenneth Stephens, a resident at 101 Elmwood Avenue. Stephens was located on the floor inside the residence and appeared to have sustained multiple gunshot wounds. A muzzle loader rifle with a scope was located on the floor near Stephens' body. The muzzle loader was loaded but had not been fired. Detectives believe a total of 13 rounds were discharged between the two officers, both of whom fired patrol rifles.

This investigation is ongoing to include interviews of all officers that were present. Detectives are working closely with the Chittenden County State's Attorney's office, the Attorney General's office, the U.S. Attorney's office and DEA. The names of the two officers involved are not being released at this time. Per policy, the Vermont State Police does not release the name of a Trooper involved in a shooting incident until at least 24 hours following the incident. Pursuant to department policy the Trooper has been placed on a minimum of three days administrative leave. Once the investigation is complete there will be an independent review conducted by the Chittenden County State's Attorney's Office and Attorney General's Office as is customary for all officer involved shootings.

No other information is available at this time.

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STATE OF VERMONT  
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY  
VERMONT STATE POLICE

Major Glenn Hall – Criminal Division Commander, Vermont State Police

#### **PRESS RELEASE**

Officer Involved Shooting – Burlington, VT

Burlington, VT – 12/22/15 – This evening at approximately 7:45 pm, the Vermont State Police were notified of an officer involved shooting that occurred at a residence on Elmwood Avenue in Burlington.

This shooting occurred during the execution of a federal search warrant led by the Drug Enforcement Administration. Federal, state and local officers were involved in the execution of this search warrant.

Preliminary investigation indicated that officers executing the search warrant confronted a male subject inside the residence. Officers discharged multiple rounds at the subject, resulting in his death. None of the officers involved were injured.

The Vermont State Police were requested to conduct the investigation into this shooting incident. Detectives from the Major Crime Unit and Bureau of Criminal Investigations have responded to investigate. The Vermont State Police Crime Scene Search Team will be responding to process the

scene. Detectives are working closely with the Burlington Police Department, DEA in conjunction with the Chittenden County State's Attorney's Office.

This investigation is in its early stages and no other information is available at this time. Additional information will be released when available.