

BLUE LINE NEWSWEEK

A CHRONICLE OF NEWS FOR THE CANADIAN LAW ENFORCEMENT COMMUNITY  December 07, 2012 – Vol. 17 No. 49

Executive Digest

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Police reported homicide rate up seven per cent last year



canada.com

Dec 04 2012

OTTAWA - Police reported 598 homicides in Canada in 2011, 44 more than the year before and the first increase in homicide in three years, Statistics Canada said Tuesday.

The agency said the homicide rate was 1.73 per 100,000 population in 2011, seven per cent higher than in 2010, although the rate of firearms homicides fell to the lowest level in almost 50 years.

The rate of homicides involving handguns has also generally been declining since reaching a peak in 1991, although they account for about two-thirds of all firearm homicides.

Despite annual fluctuations, the overall homicide rate has remained relatively stable over the past decade, after a steady decline from the mid-1970s.

Most of the 2011 increase was accounted for by Alberta, which had 32 additional homicides, and Quebec, which had 21 more.

The homicide rate in Ontario, in contrast, hit its lowest point since 1966, with 28 fewer killings than in 2010.

Among the provinces, Manitoba reported the highest homicide rate for the fifth year in a row, followed by Saskatchewan and Alberta.

Stabbings accounted for virtually the entire



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increase in homicides in 2011, with 39 more stabbings.

Overall, stabbings accounted for 35 per cent of homicides, firearms for 27 per cent, beatings for 22 per cent and strangulation for seven per cent.

Police considered 95 homicides to be gang-related in 2011, similar to 2010, but well below the peak of 138 reached in 2008. Gang homicides increased steadily from the early 1990s until 2008, before declining in both 2009 and 2010.

The report said the majority of homicide victims and those accused of homicide are male. In 2011, males accounted for 7 in 10 homicide victims and 9 in 10 of those accused of homicide.

Victims typically know their killer. Among solved homicides in 2011, almost half were committed by an acquaintance or friend, one-third by a family member and only 15 per cent by a stranger.

Police reported 89 homicides involving intimate partners in 2011, including 76 female victims and 13 male victims. This resulted in a rate of 0.26 intimate partner homicides per 100,000 population, similar to the rate in recent years.

The rate of intimate partner homicides committed against females increased by 19 per cent in 2011, the third increase in four years. The rate for male victims declined by almost half, hitting the lowest point since data collection began in 1961.

THURSDAY NOVEMBER 29, 2012

Nov 29 2012

OTTAWA - A veteran Mountie accused of sexual harassment, drinking in the office and operating a police car under the influence of alcohol has lost his court bid to derail a

BLUE LINE NEWSWEEK

A CHRONICLE OF NEWS FOR THE CANADIAN LAW ENFORCEMENT COMMUNITY

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Pending disciplinary hearing against him.

A federal judge says it would be premature to rule on RCMP Sgt. Steve Black's argument that a delay of more than 10 months means the disciplinary hearing must be scrapped.

In his decision, Federal Court Justice James Russell said Black's first avenue of appeal is to the RCMP commissioner.

Details of the case surface amid concerns about harassment within the RCMP and the ability of the national police force to expeditiously deal with serious allegations against its members.

Black stands accused of acting "in a disgraceful manner that brings discredit on the force" during the first eight months of 2009, contrary to RCMP regulations.

Black denied all of the allegations last April at an initial two-day proceeding before an adjudication board.

Nov 29 2012

EDMONTON - Justice officials reviewing the work of a former forensic pathologist in Alberta have found mistakes in 13 out of 14 cases they have looked into.

A review by an independent medical panel was announced early this year to look into the files of Dr. Evan Matsches. He worked at the Calgary medical examiner's for one year before he left in 2011. Matsches worked on 426 death investigations, including 262 autopsies, during that time.

"The panel found the conclusions reached by Dr. Matsches to be unreasonable regarding either the cause of death, manner of death and/or other opinions," said a press release from the Alberta government.

Of the 14 cases examined by the panel, three resulted in criminal prosecutions. Of those, two are currently before the courts and one has concluded.

A dedicated Crown prosecutor is doing a separate review of Matsches's files to see if any mistakes interfered with the court process.

Justice spokeswoman Michelle Davio said 24 people have been accused of crimes in deaths the doctor investigated. She could not say whether anyone is currently behind bars because of the doctor's mistakes.

"No criminal prosecutions have been reopened, nor have any of the cases been lost to date solely as a result of the doctor's evidence," Davio said.

Defence lawyers handling the cases have been notified, she added.

Nov 29 2012

QUEBEC - Following other provinces across Canada where a civilian review of deaths and serious injuries at the hands of the police is the rule, Public Security Minister Stéphane Bergeron presented a bill Thursday to establish the "Quebec model" for such investigations.

At present, in cases of death or injury involving a police officer in Quebec, another police force is called in to investigate — a prac-

tice that has long been criticized by Quebec's ombudsman and the province's human rights commission, as well as by citizens groups.

Bill 12 will create the Bureau des enquêtes indépendantes, which will be designated a police force but will be headed by a civilian director and assistant director, chosen in consultation with Quebec's ombudsman, the deputy justice minister and a lawyer belonging to the bar association.

The director and assistant director must be retired judges or criminal lawyers who have been bar members for at least 15 years and must never have been peace officers.

Bureau investigators, named for a five-year term, may be civilians or retired police officers and the bureau will be able to call on a police force for assistance during an investigation.

Bergeron said the bureau, which will have an annual budget of \$3.8 million, would be in operation one year after the bill is passed.

The bill will go to hearings by a committee of the National Assembly, likely in the spring.

Pierre Veilleux, president of the 5,400-member provincial police union, l'Association des policières et policiers provinciaux du Québec, said his members are "very disappointed" with the bill.

"What we take from our first reading of this bill is that the office will include some police officers, but not necessarily specialized, experienced and active investigators," Veilleux told The Gazette.

"Instead, it will be a mix of citizens and retired police officers, and we have ample evidence of the failures of that model in Ontario," he added.

He said retired police officers are not as effective because investigation techniques evolve quickly and constantly.

The new agency's mandate will not include incidents that occurred before its creation.

(Montreal Gazette)

FRIDAY

NOVEMBER 30, 2012

Nov 30 2012

MONTREAL - Albert Lisacek was 19 and working as a bouncer at an east-end Montreal nightclub when he was set upon by a gang of thugs and beaten within an inch of his life.



montrealgazette.com

Then and there, he decided to get the upper hand by becoming a law-enforcement officer. During his 25 years with the Sûreté du

Québec, the provincial police force, his questionable crime-fighting tactics, especially during the October Crisis in 1970, earned him a reputation as the toughest cop in the country. He had little regard for the loopholes in the law and operated on the principle that if hardened criminals didn't play by the rules, police shouldn't have to.

"I only whack the people who deserve it," he used to boast. "There are a lot of bad people out there. I was good at getting rid of bad people."

Det. Sgt. Lisacek, who died of cancer in Montreal on Nov. 20 at age 79, was part of an elite team of provincial police officers who crossed paths with a number of high-profile habitual criminals in the 1960s and 70s, including the terrorists who kidnapped and murdered Quebec cabinet minister Pierre Laporte.

Lisacek cut an intimidating figure, at 6 feet 2 inches with a shaved head. Known either as "Little Albert," or "Kojak," Lisacek enhanced his image by walking around with what he called his "Chicago typewriter," a Thompson submachine gun.

He was on the scene when Pierre Laporte's body was found and later closed in on three of the Front de libération du Québec kidnappers, including Francis Simard and brothers Paul and Jacques Rose, who were discovered hiding in a farmhouse basement. If Lisacek had had his way, he said, he would have preferred to flood the basement and drown them on the spot rather than allow them to surrender.

Albert Lisacek was born in Montreal on

July 13, 1933, the eldest of four boys in a Slovak immigrant family. His father, who had been a strongman in a European circus, worked in a steel mill in Canada. Lisacek grew up in a rough downtown Montreal neighbourhood near The Main and said he was bullied as a boy because of his ethnicity. In his teens, he trained to become a professional wrestler and was working as a bouncer when he was outnumbered by his assailants and attacked on the street. He vowed never again to be caught off guard. He became a private detective for a couple of years and then joined the provincial police force in 1956. He was made a detective in 1961, became a member of the holdup squad in 1963, and was promoted to sergeant in 1967.

That was the year he came face to face with Machine Gun Molly, a suspect in more than 20 bank holdups. She pulled a gun on him during a high-speed chase moments before she was shot and killed. Lisacek was off-duty at the time, a mere bystander in the shootout.

"Lisacek carried a Tommy gun and liked to think of himself as trigger-happy, but the only time he actually shot anyone, it was by accident," said retired Montreal police reporter Eddie Collister. "He was certainly rough on suspects in the interrogation room. Rumour had it that he'd slap people around and wasn't afraid to use the brass knuckles. He wasn't much of a team player. He made it clear to his partners that he trusted his wife more than he did any of the guys on the squad. Whenever there was a raid, his partners were happy to

let Big Al kick down the doors and let him go in first. Lisacek liked to be the hero, and his fellow officers were more than happy to let him play the role."

He was so feared that the internationally known killer Jacques Mesrine staked out the restaurant where Lisacek ate and planned to kill him. The plan failed when Lisacek broke his routine and failed to show up as usual.

Lisacek made the front cover of a national magazine in 1972 when he was profiled by Tom Alderman as "a man suited to the rough and tumble of the holdup squad ... when Albert speaks his superiors can only duck. It's very doubtful he will rise much higher through the ranks."

It was a prescient piece of journalism. During his career, Lisacek had often arrested and sparred with a bad-to-the-bone holdup artist known as Richard (The Cat) Blass. Blass had a number of jailbreaks to his credit and was known for his nine lives. Lisacek grudgingly admired his street smarts. Then in 1975, Blass again broke out of jail and this time went on a deadly rampage. He shot and killed four people before locking another 12 in a storage space in the Gargantua Bar and setting fire to the place, fuelling the flames with cognac as his victims burned alive. While on the run, Blass taunted Lisacek, sending a note to a local newspaper describing his "old pal" Lisacek as a "French poodle."

Lisacek found Blass three days later hiding out at a chalet north of Montreal. During the raid, Blass was gunned down. Although no



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The 2012 award recipient will be recognized in the May 2013 issue of *Blue Line Magazine* and will receive the award at a presentation held in conjunction with the *Blue Line Expo*, April 23, 2013.



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one really knows what happened, it would appear Blass was not given a chance to surrender. Lisacek told a CTV news reporter at the time that when he broke into the chalet he found Blass in bed with his girlfriend and he agreed to give Blass time to put his pants on before taking him into custody. But when Blass emerged from the bedroom wielding a gun, Lisacek said, his partners opened fire and shot him 27 times. Other reports suggested that the "gun" was actually a black sock.

The shooting occurred just as the federal government was introducing correctional reforms, putting the emphasis on the rights of the accused. Blass's death proved embarrassing to authorities. Lisacek's superiors suggested that "Little Al" transfer to an Arctic outpost. When he refused, he was given a desk job shuffling papers. He quit the force in 1981. A TV miniseries based on his exploits, October, 1970, aired in 2006. Lisacek dismissed all TV detective shows, including the miniseries, as "phony," and preferred instead to immerse himself in Western novels.

"He was a police officer from a bygone era, one who was motivated to do what was right, not what was expedient, who put his life on the line to protect ordinary law-abiding citizens," writes former police reporter Warren Perley, now the editor of the online magazine Beststory.ca. Perley, who was with him hours before he died, says Lisacek "wouldn't last a single day on the job on the 21st-century world of police bureaucracy and political correctness."

Lisacek's first wife, whom he married in 1962, died in 1999. He leaves his second wife, Jacqueline Richer. One of his brothers, William, who was on the Montreal police force, died last year.

(Globe and Mail)

Nov 30 2012

MORDEN, Man. - Winnipeg's police helicopter was used to help search for a four-legged escapee in rural Manitoba.



winnipeg.ctvnews.ca

The town of Morden's police dog, which is trained to track down criminals and sniff out illegal drugs, escaped from her kennel last Sunday while her handler was away.

Morden police Chief Brad Neduzak says Chase is trained to bite, so her being on the loose was concerning.

Morden officers immediately put together a search party to track the missing dog, and also called their counterparts in Winnipeg for help and before long, Air1 was deployed to Morden to assist.

The chopper made the 20-minute flight to

Morden and then circled the town for an hour trying to find the 2 1/2-year-old Belgian Malinois, estimated to be worth between \$10,000 and \$15,000.

Winnipeg police say the duty officer took into account the volume of calls coming in at the time and dispatched the helicopter to assist.

"You never know until you ask the question so we did contact the on duty inspector and threw the question past him and it was minutes later we received a call they would be on their way to help find the dog," said Neduzak.

Police later learned a Good Samaritan had found Chase and taken her in after spotting her shivering in the cold. The dog was treated for minor cuts to her paws and has since been reunited with her handler.

The kennel has also been reinforced to make sure the dog doesn't escape again.
(CTV Winnipeg)

SATURDAY DECEMBER 01, 2012

Dec 01 2012

The RCMP is failing to document about one-third of its cases of use of force, internal records show.

Anytime a Mountie uses force — whether it's throwing a punch, unleashing pepper spray or firing a gun — details surrounding the incident are supposed to be documented in an electronic database using a standard reporting form.

The RCMP has said capturing such details is necessary to enhance police accountability, identify trends and assist with training and policy development.

But an August 2011 audit of the so-called "Subject Behaviour/Officer Response" reporting system showed a 67 per cent compliance rate, according to RCMP briefing notes obtained by Postmedia News. Little changed when a follow-up audit was done this past spring, officials acknowledged this week.

One briefing note singled out the lack of compliance in B.C. It stated that there were "approximately 2,400 unreported use of force incidents annually in 'E' division."

The RCMP is "committed to institutionalizing use of force reporting into its operations," Sgt. Greg Cox, a spokesman in Ottawa, said in an email Friday. "As with the introduction of any new process and given the size of the organization, it takes time to adopt."

RCMP cadets at the training depot in Regina are now taught how to complete use-of-force reports, Cox said. The force has also "increased supervisor accountability" to ensure members are submitting the reports.

Sgt. Rob Vermeulen, a spokesman for RCMP's E-Division in B.C., said in an email that the value of recording use-of-force data is "undisputed."

The lack of full compliance in B.C., he said, is related to the fact that Mounties in

the province use a different computer system (called PRIME) than the one used by Mounties elsewhere in the country (called PROS).

The form available on the PRIME system for recording use-of-force incidents is limiting and doesn't allow officers to record all the information that is required by the national RCMP standard, Vermeulen said.

As a result, officers are not able to complete the form on the mobile work stations in their vehicles. Instead, they have to return to the detachment and log on to a separate system to complete the report.

"We continue to look at ways to make it easier for our officers to complete these reports," he said.

The RCMP's standardized method of recording use-of-force incidents came into effect in January 2010. Such a system was recommended the previous year by retired justice Thomas Braidwood, who led a commission of inquiry into the use of Tasers in B.C.

Under the policy, officers are required to record details of all cases in which they display or use "hard" physical control (such as a punch or kick), an intermediate weapon (such as pepper spray or Taser), or lethal force (such as a firearm or rifle). They also must record details of all incidents in which a subject is injured.

Each report must be approved by a supervisor.

A sampling of completed "Subject Behaviour/Officer Response" forms obtained through access-to-information legislation shows that officers are required to answer a variety of questions.

If a Taser is fired, for instance, the officer is required to say how far he was standing from the subject, where on the body the subject was hit, what he said to the subject, whether the subject was injured, what time of day it was, what the weather conditions were like, the age and gender of the subject, and whether the subject was perceived to be under the influence.

There is also space at the end of the report for the officer to give a full written summary of the entire incident.

A briefing handbook provided to RCMP Commissioner Bob Paulson upon his appointment in November 2011 stated that "overall acceptance of (use-of-force reporting) remains an ongoing challenge."

With 33 per cent of the RCMP's use-of-force incidents not being reported, "this will have significant impact (on) the accuracy and integrity of the proposed annual use of force report," a briefing note stated.

"Additionally, over the next few years as reporting compliance increases, it will appear that the RCMP's use of force has substantially increased which is not the case."

The briefing note stated that senior management in each division must "emphasize" to all members the importance of reporting use-of-force incidents and completing the reports in a "timely manner."
(Postmedia News)

SUNDAY DECEMBER 02, 2012

Dec 02 2012

OTTAWA - The RCMP says youth gang members - not just mobsters, bikers and other traditional protectees - should be allowed into the federal witness protection program as part of a sweeping modernization.



o.canada.com

The Mounties are also embracing intensive psychological examination of potential protectees, a national support centre for the secretive program, and an external advisory board to serve as a watchdog.

The changes are spelled out in a detailed RCMP blueprint for reforming witness protection with assistance from the federal Public Safety Department and the provinces.

Although the paper was completed in May 2010, it was released only now to The Canadian Press under the Access to Information Act.

RCMP spokeswoman Laurence Trottier - while providing few details - confirmed that at least some changes have already been introduced, adding that the program continues to evolve.

The program, administered by the Mounties, provides measures ranging from short-term protection to permanent relocation and identity changes.

Dec 02 2012

CAMPBELL RIVER, B.C. - B.C.'s Independent Investigations Office is looking into a motorcycle crash near Campbell River early Sunday morning that involved RCMP.

The independent police watchdog says Mounties were trying to stop a motorcycle around 2 a.m. because the driver was allegedly not wearing a helmet.

During the incident the male motorcycle driver lost control at a high rate of speed and struck the RCMP cruiser, sustaining serious injuries.

He was taken to hospital for treatment.

Five investigators from the police oversight agency are involved.

The Campbell River RCMP are conducting the investigation into the actions of the motorcycle driver.

Dec 02 2012

ST. THOMAS - The St. Thomas police services board is hiring outside help to find a successor for Chief William Lynch.

The board approved bringing in consultants Michael Mitchell and Maurice Hodgson to find a replacement for Lynch, who is retiring on May 31, 2013.

"The selection process for the next police chief for the City of St. Thomas is one of the most important endeavours that our police services board has undertaken in many years," board chairman David Warden said in a release.

"Both members of this consulting team have extensive knowledge and experience with policing in Ontario and their advice and guidance will assist us with the development and execution of the selection process to find the best candidate to fill this top position in our community."

Lynch, who served with the police for 35

years, succeeded Wayne Howard as chief of police in 1998. He started his career with St. Thomas Police as a constable in 1978.

(QMI Agency)

MONDAY DECEMBER 03, 2012

Dec 03 2012

TORONTO - The Ontario government must return a raft of seized items bearing the Hells Angels' 'death head' insignia to the bikers, an Ontario judge has ruled in a decision welcomed as important for property rights.

The judge made her ruling because she



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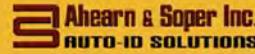
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found there was no relation between criminal acts committed by club members and the paraphernalia, which includes black leather vests, belt buckles, gold and diamond jewelry, and other clothing bearing the logo.

"While membership in the club was clearly used to commit the offences, membership cannot be equated with the symbols of membership," Ontario Superior Court Justice Maureen Forestell said in her judgment.

"There was a rule that members were not permitted to wear (the Hells Angels) insignia when committing offences."

Lawyer Craig Bottomley, who represented the bikers, said Monday that last week's ruling was important to counter "creative efforts" in recent years by prosecutors to use legal powers to try to grab property on the basis it is crime-related.

"There needs to be decisions like this one to set out the limits of where those powers end," Bottomley said in an interview.

"They can't just have airy-fairy applications of these powers for people who you think are bad, and then go and take their property away without having to prove they committed an offence with the property."

Police seized the items in question in April 2007 during raids on the Hells Angels clubhouse in Toronto and on the homes of several bikers.

Although acquitted of being members in a criminal organization, nine bikers were convicted about 18 months later of a range of drug-related offences.

The Crown then argued the seized items should automatically be forfeited to the province under a section of the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act.

Simply having the Hells Angels logo, trademarked by the Hells Angels Motorcycle Corp., on the materials makes them "offence-related property," the Crown said.

In effect, the government argued, the actual use of the items did not matter, but that the "symbolism of membership" was significant.

For their part, the bikers argued symbolism was not enough to warrant automatic forfeiture.

The judge agreed.

"This is not a case where any item bearing a symbol of membership was used to extort or intimidate," Forestell said.

Being a known biker carried sufficient weight that a member didn't need to sport their logo, something only full club members are allowed to wear.

Forestell did rule earlier this year the bikers' clubhouse must be forfeited to the Crown as an offence-related property because it was used as a safe haven for criminal activity.

Dec 03 2012

VANCOUVER - British Columbia's auditor general says complaints against police are being investigated thoroughly, respectfully and in compliance with the law.

The audit of the Office of the Police Complaint Commissioner notes, however, that most investigations were not completed in the six-month time frame specified in the Police Act and needed extensions which were granted by the commissioner.

It also says the office should train staff

working at police detachments on how to receive and handle complaints.

The audit was ordered by members of the B.C. legislature on May 13, and the auditor general was directed to complete the report by Jan. 1, 2013.

The auditor general looked at complaints and investigations concluded between April 1, 2010 and Aug. 31, 2012.

The auditor general says none of the complaints reviewed were treated as trivial.

Dec 03 2012

HALIFAX - Police in Nova Scotia would be able to apply to a judge to access personal information such as text messages and banking records in their searches for missing people under legislation introduced today.



metronews.ca

Currently, police can only access this information if they believe a crime has been committed.

Under the Missing Persons Act, judges and justices of the peace would decide whether police can have access to personal information during a process similar to a search warrant application.

Justice Minister Ross Landry says the legislation would also allow police to seek access to a building if they believe a vulnerable missing person or missing youth is inside.

The legislation defines a missing person as someone whose safety is in question.

Last year, the RCMP and Halifax police filed about 1,400 missing persons reports.

Dec 04 2012

TILLSONBURG, Ont. - The Special Investigations Unit is investigating the case of a man barricaded in a home who was later found dead by provincial police.

Police were called just after 10 a.m. Monday by family members concerned about the safety of the man who owned the home (on Windham East Quarterline Road East in Norfolk County).

Officers found the man dead when they entered the home in a rural area east of Tillsonburg.

His name and age have not yet been released, nor have police indicated how long the man was barricaded inside the house.

(CKOT)

**TUESDAY
DECEMBER 04, 2012**

Dec 04 2012

VANCOUVER - B.C.'s Independent Investigations Office has concluded there

was no evidence that police officers committed an offence in connection with the death of an intoxicated man while in Vancouver police custody.

The Oct. 7 death occurred after officers responded to an evening call of a man causing trouble in a Vancouver park.

Police watchdog Richard Rosenthal says the officers determined the man, whose name was withheld, should not be arrested or go to detox, so they offered him a ride to his house, which he accepted.

The 51-year-old man was placed in the back of a police van without handcuffs, but when they arrived at the man's home seven minutes later he was found unconscious.

Paramedics performed resuscitation and transported him to Vancouver General Hospital, but he was pronounced dead shortly after arrival.

Six investigators with the IIO examined the case that resulted in the final report.

Dec 04 2012

FREDERICTON - A review of the Fredericton police department's handling of a local blogger's criminal libel investigation says the force should have allowed another agency to pursue the probe.

The report by Bernard Richard, New Brunswick's former ombudsman, says the Fredericton police should have "farmed out" the investigation of Charles LeBlanc given the troubled history between him and the department.

The review was launched earlier this year after the Fredericton police searched LeBlanc's home and seized his computer equipment while investigating a complaint of criminal libel from one of its own officers.

No charge was ever laid because the province's Justice Department said it could not support laying a criminal libel charge over comments LeBlanc made online about a city police officer.

Acting police Chief Leanne Fitch says the force accepts Richard's seven recommendations, which include mandatory training on dealing with emotionally disturbed people.

They also call on the Fredericton police to ensure that officers who are the targets of unfair criticism stemming from their work have access to support.

Fitch says the recommendations will be acted upon in the coming weeks.

Dec 04 2012

EDMONTON - Four members of an organized crime organization known as the White Boy Posse have been charged in three separate murders in Alberta and Saskatchewan, including one in which a head was found in an Edmonton alley.

The head was found by a woman out for a walk on Oct. 25. The decapitated remains of Robert John Roth had been discovered less than a week earlier and 100 kilometres away near the Alberta town of Ranfurly.

"It was significant. It was sensationalized," Insp. Jerry Scott with the Alberta

RCMP's serious crimes branch said Tuesday after the arrests were announced.

Scott said police stepped up their investigation once they realized what they faced. The gang had been on their radar for a few years.

"We were very cognizant of who we were dealing with and the public safety matters."

Saskatoon police Insp. Garret Woolsey says investigators believe everyone involved in the gang is now in custody.
(CHED, CJWW)

Dec 04 2012

VICTORIA - The B.C. government has appointed nine new provincial court judges to deal with backlogged cases throughout the province.



Attorney General Shirley Bond says the new appointments are in response to recommendations in a report on justice reform by lawyer Geoffrey Cowper.

The government and Chief Judge Thomas Crabtree will also work together on two projects to address the clogged court system.

One of the projects will focus on reducing pending child protection cases in some courthouse locations while the other will work on eliminating the backlog in criminal cases.

The appointments come after provincial court judges criticized the provincial government over long trial delays that forced judges to throw out serious criminal cases.

The new judges will be appointed over the next seven weeks and more justice reforms are expected to be announced early in the new year.

Dec 04 2012

BRANDON - The western Manitoba city of Brandon is getting a new police chief.



Insp. Ian Grant, who has served with the Brandon Police Service for nearly 28 years, steps into the role in January.

He takes over from outgoing police Chief Keith Atkinson, who is retiring after serving as Brandon's top cop for the past six years.

"I've worked for a lot of chiefs in my time, and I learned a lot from every one of them," Grant told CBC News in an interview Tuesday.

"I just thought that this is a perfect opportunity to take everything that I've learned and to try and move the organization forward."

Grant said morale in the Brandon Police Service is good, but one of his biggest challenges will be moving the force forward at a time when the city is growing.

"There's, you know, some unique challenges when you're facing growth, and especially when it comes to dealing with people who speak different languages," he said.

Grant will officially take over as Brandon's police chief on Jan. 23.

(CBCNews)

Dec 04 2012

BRANDON, Man. - An investigation is underway into the death of a woman who was in RCMP custody in Manitoba.

Mounties say they got a call Nov. 28 about a woman in medical distress in a home in Gods Lake Narrows.

Officers took the 31-year-old woman to the local nursing station and after being examined, was put in an RCMP cell under the Intoxicated Persons Detention Act.

The next day, she complained of not feeling well, and was taken back the nursing station, then was medivaced to Winnipeg.

On Nov. 30, the woman died in Winnipeg.

The Brandon Police Service is conducting the investigation as per Mountie policy, and a local community member was selected by Gods Lake chief and council to act as an observer.

WEDNESDAY DECEMBER 05, 2012

Dec 05 2012

VANCOUVER - The chiefs of the Vancouver police and fire departments have written letters to Prime Minister Stephen Harper urging him to overturn the government's decision to close a Vancouver coast guard base.

In letters dated Nov. 30 and posted online by Global News, Vancouver Police Chief Jim Chu and Fire Chief John McKearney say closing the Kitsilano station could put lives at risk.

Chu says the closure should be "seriously reconsidered" because it could cause longer

response times to incidents on the water.

"The transfer of all Vancouver area incidents to the CCG Sea Island base, the addition of a summer inshore rescue boat staffed by students, and some increased funding for the Royal Canadian Marine Search and Rescue (RCM-SAR), will not provide the same level of service currently provided by the CCG Kitsilano base," says Chu, in the letter.

McKearney also urged Harper to keep the base open, saying "there is no question that this closure will put lives at risk."

He added that since the closure was announced, he has heard from many residents whose lives were saved by staff working at the Kitsilano station.

"Many of them said that even a few extra minutes in the response of the coast guard would most likely have resulted in the loss of their life," said McKearney.

The Kitsilano station is set to close next May. (Vancouver Sun)

Dec 05 2012

FREDERICTON - The CEO of Mothers Against Drunk Driving Canada says young people "are going to die" if the New Brunswick government eliminates an overnight restriction for new drivers.

Andrew Murie says the change proposed by the Alward government is "dumb" and contrary to expert advice.

Public Safety Minister Robert Trevors introduced legislation last week that would remove a restriction preventing novice motorists from driving between midnight and 5 a.m.

Trevors says it is an inconvenience for young drivers, especially in rural areas, but he could not produce any research to show safety would be affected.

Steve McCall, president of the Atlantic branch of the Canadian Automobile Association, says the proposed change will put young drivers and other motorists at risk.

Dec 05 2012

SASKATOON - A study says police in northern and remote communities are often overburdened serving as social workers, constantly dealing with mentally ill people in their community.

The study by researchers from the University of Saskatchewan suggests setting up a

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problem-solving court to divert people with mental illness or addictions out of the criminal justice system.

It says the "court" could rotate through small communities or be held through video in a larger centre.

Principal investigator Arlene Kent-Wilkinson says other provinces already have them, and it's time to introduce them into Saskatchewan.

The study involved researchers from the colleges of Medicine, Psychology, Nursing, and Law, as well as the U of S Centre for Forensic Behavioural Science and Justice Services.
(CJWW)

Dec 05 2012

OTTAWA - The Conservative government has quietly shelved rules on serial numbers for guns that would have helped keep Canada in compliance with its international conventions on arms smuggling.

The decision came through an order-in-council - a cabinet decree - that was not formally announced by the Harper government but has been posted among dozens of other orders on the Privy Council Office website.

A single paragraph on the website states the long-delayed regulations, which were scheduled to come into force on Dec. 1, "are being deferred."

A spokeswoman for Public Safety Minister Vic Toews confirmed, following an inquiry by The Canadian Press, that the regulations have been pushed off to December 2013.

However Toews' spokeswoman, Julie Carmichael, would not comment on why the gun lobby was apparently told of the move more than a month ago - even though the order-in-council decision was approved only last week - and why no news release accompanied the policy change.

Earlier this fall the government posted the rule changes in the Canada Gazette, signalling it was finally going to make good on gun-marking regulations that were first announced in 2004.

Some gun enthusiasts objected to the regulations because they said they would increase costs for manufacturers, who would pass the increase on to gun buyers.

The government noted in October that the repeal of the long-gun registry has created a gap in Canada's international obligations with regard to two protocols on arms smuggling.

The Gazette notice said ensuring most firearms in Canada had unique serial numbers would "meet some of the specifications" of those international protocols.

Regulating unique serial numbers on weapons - which most reputable gun makers already do routinely - helps national governments track the smuggling of black market arms.

But the Canadian government's stated reasons for marking weapons went further.

A backgrounder in the Canada Gazette said the "rationale" for the new rules was to aid police investigations.

"The proposal would establish basic marking requirements to facilitate the identification

of firearms and to contribute to public safety, by facilitating law enforcement investigations when the markings can be linked to information on the last legal owner of the firearm," said the Public Safety document.

The same document said the new marking rules would "ensure that all firearms continue to be marked to facilitate firearms identification, including crime gun tracing by law enforcement."

The Public Safety backgrounder also noted, however, that last June's repeal of the long-gun registry decreases the utility of such gun markings, making them "only of limited use in the tracing of non-restricted firearms used in crimes."

The Conservatives have also introduced legislation to make sure gun dealers are not required to keep records identifying buyers of non-restricted weapons.

Toews' spokeswoman said in an email Wednesday that the Conservative government "is focused on effective solutions to tackle crime, not billion dollar boondoggles."

"Our government intends to defer the UN marking regulations for one year to consult on the best solution for law-abiding Canadian gun owners," Carmichael wrote.

A posting on the web site of the Canadian Shooting Sports Association, dated Nov. 2, says that Toews "in a statement" informed the lobby group of the same ruling. Canada's National Firearms Association, another pro-gun group, posted a similar message on its site the next day.

Dec 05 2012

DRUMMONDVILLE, Que. - The mother of three dead Quebec children was charged Wednesday with three counts of first-degree murder.

Sonia Blanchette, 33, was arraigned in Drummondville three days after the children were found at her home.

Blanchette will undergo an evaluation to determine whether she is fit to face criminal charges. Her next court appearance is scheduled for Dec. 14.

Blanchette did not say a word during her arraignment.

Provincial police began questioning Blanchette following her release from hospital earlier on Wednesday.

Police have not yet confirmed how Anais, 2, Loic, 4, and Laurelie, 5, died. They were found dead at Blanchette's home in Drummondville on Sunday.

Dec 05 2012

KELOWNA, B.C. - A B.C. RCMP officer who was caught on video as he kicked a man in the head surprised a full courtroom in Kelowna, B.C., by pleading guilty to assault.

Const. Geoff Mantler was expected to testify Wednesday afternoon when his lawyer asked that the not-guilty plea be expunged and changed to guilty.

Mantler was charged with assaulting Buddy Tavares in January 2011 while the man

was on his hands and knees on a street.

Fifty-three-year-old Tavares says he wants to know why Mantler decided to plead guilty after all this time, and that he's still too angry to forgive the officer.

Tavares says he had spent four months recovering from a brain injury from a motorcycle crash when Mantler kicked him.

Mantler will be sentenced in January or February.

(*Kelowna Daily Courier*)

Dec 05 2012

An annual survey of Yukoners' opinions of the RCMP has produced mixed results for the territory's police force.

Most people said M Division officers they deal with are professional, courteous and respectful, but there are concerns, particularly with police attitudes about women.

Regard for the force dropped sharply in the 2010 survey, after revelations about how Raymond Silverfox was treated before he died in the RCMP cells. It began rising again last year, but this year's survey indicates there are still lingering doubts.

Seventy-one per cent of Yukoners said the RCMP is an organization with integrity. M Division said it's working on improving those numbers.

"We internally recognize there's always room for improvement, and again that comes down to communication," said RCMP Cpl. Rick Aird.

There are much more positive numbers from Yukoners who have dealt with RCMP officers in the past year. Ninety-two per cent said officers were courteous and respectful and 93 per cent said they were professional.

There's been a huge jump in ratings provided by community leaders, such as mayors and First Nation chiefs. This year 79 per cent said the RCMP provided high quality service, compared to 22 per cent last year.

Aird said it's the result of community policing initiatives, and that one of the popular changes is giving communities a say in choosing detachment commanders. He cited Sgt. Cam Lockwood in Watson Lake as an example.

"When they brought in the detachment commander for the last appointment, the communities involved in that decision sat at the table and interviewed prospective detachment commanders so when that person eventually took that spot, the community was involved in finding a person they felt would suit their needs."

He also singled out the RCMP's new relationship with women's groups.

"One of the areas we worked in a lot in the last couple of years with the women's groups is Yukon Sisters in Spirit, and we have a tremendous relationship with them that's ongoing."

Aird said that's why he's surprised by the response in the survey to the statement: "The RCMP is sensitive to needs of women."

The number of people who agreed dropped to 57 per cent this year from 81 per cent three years ago. Aird said he doesn't know why but acknowledges there have been many national

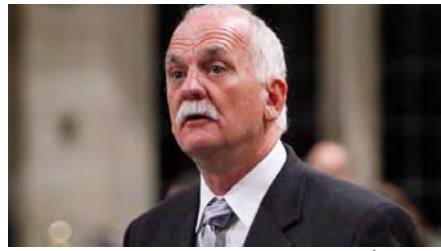
stories alleging poor treatment of women within the force.

The survey, done annually across Canada, helps show the RCMP the areas where it needs improvement.

(CBC News)

Dec 05 2012

OTTAWA - Public Safety Minister Vic Toews is asking the government for \$242 million for a contract police agreement between the RCMP and the provinces — a previously-undisclosed sum of money announced Wednesday because negotiations have ended.



ctvnews.ca

Toews made the request today during a committee hearing meant to vote on supplementary estimates being requested by his ministry.

The money would go toward financing 30 per cent of the RCMP's operations in more than 100 municipalities, all three territories and eight provinces, excluding Ontario and Quebec. It would be the first installment on a 20-year contract recently finalized between the federal government and participating jurisdictions.

The contract estimate represents more than half of the \$447.9 million being sought by Toews in addition to the office's budget for 2012-13.

"The new agreements which our governments have reached represent the culmination of a lengthy and important negotiation process — nearly four years of hard work and commitment," Toews said today about the end of negotiations.

He added the length of the talks made it impossible to pencil a figure into earlier budget requests.

"(A)t the time main estimates were being prepared, the government was still negotiating with the majority of the partners and consequently it was not possible to include this funding request in the 2012-13 main estimates."

The \$242 million represents only a fraction of the cost of an annual RCMP presence across the country, as 70 per cent of costs to run the operation will be picked up by provincial governments.

Public Safety Deputy Minister Francois Guimont also announced the end of a five-year, \$400 million RCMP recruitment fund Wednesday. He said the fund will be dissolved next March 31, the end of the original sunset period for the money pool. Guimont said the program, which has recruited and trained additional RCMP officers across the country, "has achieved its outcome."

"The fund did what it needed to do," Guimont said in response to NDP committee

member Rosane Dore Lefebvre's appeal to reinstate the money.

In addition to the RCMP policing funds, Toews is asking for about \$180 million in disaster financial assistance and \$50 million in flood mitigation funds, along with \$1.4 million for border security.

He said the ministry had saved \$179 million in their budget since last fiscal year.

(ipolitics.ca)

Dec 05 2012

NUNAVUT - The RCMP's commanding officer for Nunavut is retiring.



Chief Supt. Steve McVarnock will step down next month. He has served with the RCMP for 32 years, spending 13 of those years working in the North.

He began his career in 1981 with stints in Iqaluit, Igloolik and Yellowknife, later worked for five years at the Cape Dorset detachment and N.W.T.'s G Division drug section, and served again in Yellowknife in 2003 and 2004.

He was first appointed as commanding officer for Nunavut in 2009.

McVarnock will be succeeded by Supt. Lindsey Brine, who takes over command in January. Brine has been with the RCMP for 25 years and has served in all three territories.

Both Brine and McVarnock plan to tour some of the RCMP detachments in Nunavut this week. They also plan to hold a news conference Friday in Iqaluit.

(CBC News)

Dec 05 2012

MONTREAL - A coroner's report has highlighted poor pistol-training among Montreal police officers after a stray bullet killed a bystander during a botched takedown.

Dr. Jean Brochu says target shooting isn't a priority at the force and officers routinely miss training sessions because of court appearances or staff shortages.

On June 7, 2011, two officers opened fire on Mario Hamel, a mentally ill homeless man who was clutching a knife on a downtown street. One bullet struck and killed Hamel, but a stray bullet ricocheted across the street and hit 36-year-old hospital worker Patrick Limoges in the head, killing him as well.

The coroner said internal documents show, among all forces in the province, Montreal police officers are the worst shots, despite the fact they're involved in the greatest number of shootings.

Their certification rate has dropped from about 98% in the early 2000s to 43% and 56% in

the last two years of the decade," Brochu wrote.

"In addition, the absenteeism rate for target training sessions...is around 20%. And since lack of shooting qualification doesn't seem to produce any effect internally, some officers...may be tempted to take things lightly."

The coroner recommended greater use of tasers "even though they're decried by many."

The Quebec coroner says tasers might have provided a safer alternative than firearms in the Limoges-Hamel case. The shooting sparked criticism about police training measures, and led to a rally by Limoges' colleagues at the downtown hospital just down the street from where he was fatally shot.

The coroner's recommendations include a suggestion that Quebec's police academy incorporate better officer training for high-stress takedowns.

Brochu also said minimum, mandatory target shooting sessions must be implemented at the Montreal police force.

"Shooting at an inanimate object is one thing, shooting at a threatening person, agitated and moving, is another," the coroner wrote.

The police officers involved in the shooting deaths of Hamel and Limoges weren't charged.

The decision was controversial given the fact that it was provincial police who investigated their Montreal colleagues.

Quebec introduced new police oversight measures this week that would involve civilians, much like the Toronto Police Services Board and the Independent Investigations Office of B.C.

(Sun Media)

**THURSDAY
DECEMBER 06, 2012**

Dec 06 2012

EDMONTON - An expensive component in the exhaust system on pickup trucks has become a hot item for thieves in the Edmonton region.

Police say there have been 60 suspected thefts of catalytic converters over the past year, primarily involving North American-made trucks.

Diesel-powered models are particularly attractive to thieves but investigators are not sure where the parts are going, or whether they're being sold in an underground market.

The component, which can cost thousands of dollars, converts pollutants into less harmful emissions before they leave the vehicle's exhaust system.

Scott Held, a spokesman for a Chrysler Dodge Jeep dealership in Sherwood Park, says demand for the converters has outstripped the supply and victims may face a long wait for a replacement.

Police recommend truck owners park in a well-lit area and be aware of any suspicious activity around their vehicles.

(Global Edmonton)

Dec 06 2012

QUEBEC - The Quebec government is marking the anniversary of Canada's worst mass shooting by reiterating its intention to set up its own gun registry.



Public Security Minister Stephane Bergeron said in a statement today it will happen once Ottawa turns over Quebec data that was in the now-defunct federal long-gun registry.

Bergeron later said he wasn't sure if the legislation setting up the registry would be tabled before the resolution of an ongoing legal battle with the federal government.

Quebec and Ottawa are fighting over the federal registry, which the Conservatives scrapped earlier this year.

In September, Quebec Superior Court ordered the data on Quebec guns be preserved and turned over to the province.

The federal government is appealing that ruling and a hearing is scheduled for March.

Information provided by the other parts of the country has been destroyed.

Dec 06 2012

FREDERICTON - The New Brunswick government has put the brakes on a proposal to eliminate an overnight driving restriction for new drivers after a backlash from two national groups who said the legislation would threaten safety.



Public Safety Minister Robert Trevors introduced legislation last week that would have removed a restriction preventing novice motorists from driving between midnight and 5 a.m.

Trevors initially defended the legislation, saying it was needed to remove a restriction that is inconvenient for young drivers, especially in rural regions.

But Trevors reversed course Thursday, saying the government would not proceed with the bill after hearing concerns about it.

"Since introducing new legislation regarding licensing, we have heard additional concerns. People feel very strongly about it at both ends of the spectrum," said Trevors in a statement.

"But safety must be our top priority. We

have listened. In light of the concerns that have been expressed, we will not proceed further with Bill 5 at this time."

The legislation sparked uproar from MADD Canada and the Canadian Automobile Association, who said it would have put driver safety at risk.

The two groups said there is no science to support the elimination of the overnight driving restriction and that it would have gone against restrictions that are in place in most of the country.

Dec 06 2012

WINNIPEG - The Crown has stayed a perjury charge against two Winnipeg police officers who had been accused of lying to a magistrate to get a search warrant in a drug investigation.

Constables Jess Zebrun and Peter O'Kane were cleared of the charge in a February 2011 decision, but the Manitoba Court of Appeal overturned the ruling this fall.

The Crown has now formally entered a stay of proceedings after O'Kane suffered a fatal brain injury last month when he tumbled down a flight of stairs.

Prosecutor Robert Tapper says it would have been difficult to try Zebrun alone, considering both officers were linked to the allegations.

Hymie Weinstein, Zebrun's lawyer, says his client is relieved by the stay, but was confident he would have cleared his name at trial.

The new trial for the officers was to have been held next fall.

(Winnipeg Free Press)

Dec 06 2012

OTTAWA - Prime Minister Stephen Harper says his government is unhappy with recommendations from its firearms advisory committee that would further relax the gun laws.



Documents obtained by the Coalition for Gun Control reveal the committee advising Public Safety Minister Vic Toews wants some prohibited weapons, including hand guns and assault rifles, reclassified to make them more easily available.

It is also pushing to make firearm licences good for at least 10 years, rather than the current five - a measure opposed by police groups who say the five-year renewals are a chance to weed out unstable gun owners.

Harper is telling the House of Commons the Conservatives have no intention of weakening the categories for prohibited weapons.

And he said he's very concerned by some of the committee's recommendations.

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