

BLUE LINE NEWSWEEK

A CHRONICLE OF NEWS FOR THE CANADIAN LAW ENFORCEMENT COMMUNITY

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Executive Digest

Nov 27 2014

VICTORIA - The British Columbia government has introduced new rules for the training and deployment of police dogs months after a report singled out dog bites as the leading cause of injuries.

Page 2

Nov 28 2014

TORONTO - Ontario is launching an independent review into a hair analysis program at Toronto's Hospital for Sick Children whose findings have been used in multiple child protection and criminal cases.

Page 5

Dec 01 2014

OTTAWA - A new law that puts Canada's national police force under more civilian oversight came into effect Monday, the federal government says.

Page 7

Dec 03 2014

CALGARY - As two child witnesses take the stand in a Calgary courtroom this week, they will be comforted by a special four-legged support worker.

Page 9

Dec 03 2014

PRINCE ALBERT, Sask. - A jury in Prince Albert, Sask., left the city police and Parkland Health Region with four recommendations following a three-day coroner's inquest into the death of Billy Ballantyne.

Page 9

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RCMP arrest suspect in shooting that critically injured B.C. Mountie



Dec 03 2014

VICTORIA - A 36-year-old man who is known to police has been arrested by members of an emergency-response team in Kamloops, B.C., just hours after an RCMP officer was shot and critically wounded.

RCMP Supt. Brad Mueller said Wednesday that police helicopters and dogs were also involved in the search for the suspect who allegedly shot Cpl. Jean Michaud earlier in the day in the city located in the province's Interior.

Michaud, who is a member with 13 years'

experience and the father of two young children, remains in critical but stable condition, he said.

"The events are, you know, a sobering reminder of the dangers that police officers face every day while they are serving and protecting their respective communities, and I can't tell you the impact that an incident (like this) has on our policing community," Mueller said.

He couldn't reveal the name of the suspect, who has not yet been charged.

The man arrested received an injury, Mueller said, adding the RCMP contacted

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the Independent Investigations Office of B.C., the police watchdog which investigates serious incidents involving British Columbia's police officers.

Hours earlier, at about 2:45 a.m., the officer had pulled over a vehicle in a residential area of the city. He was shot by a suspect who was inside a white, four-door Chrysler Intrepid while another officer who had come as a backup for Michaud exchanged gunfire.

Police launched an intensive search, blocked off the area and evacuated some residents for what they said were public safety reasons. The shooting also prompted false media alerts that arrests had been made.

Mueller told reporters hours after the shooting that the 40-year-old officer underwent emergency surgery shortly after the shooting.

"The doctors were very happy with how he responded with the surgery," he said.

Mueller said Michaud was wearing body armour and driving a marked police cruiser as he approached a vehicle as part of an ongoing investigation.

"I can say that our officer was fired upon as he approached the suspect vehicle and the backup officer who was also in attendance returned fire towards that vehicle," he said.

Dennis Maruschy, who lives a block and a half from the shooting scene, said he was awakened by the sound of gunfire.

"It sounded like one guy emptying a clip - pop, pop, pop, pop," Maruschy said. "It sounded like someone emptying a clip in a semi-automatic."

Kamloops Mayor Peter Milobar said he was shocked to hear the news.

"I guess you always hope that you live in a community where something like this wouldn't happen," he said.

"I think that the RCMP are all very well aware of the risk they are assuming and the fact that they're still willing to put themselves out there for us on a day-in and day-out basis

is beyond commendable."

Mueller said there are a lot of solemn faces at the RCMP detachment.

"People who don't wear the uniform and don't put their lives in danger every day don't have a true understanding of what you go through in those types of situations.

"I can assure you there's great support and great concern for the officers involved. I've asked them to take care of themselves and get the support they require from their family and friends, and our organization will also be providing support."

(The Canadian Press, Kamloops This Week, CFJC)

**THURSDAY
NOVEMBER 27, 2014**

Nov 27 2014

OTTAWA - The Conservative government is trying to quash a finding of the federal integrity commissioner concerning alleged wrongdoing within the RCMP.

The government is asking the Federal Court to set aside an Oct. 31 decision of the public sector integrity commissioner's office.

A notice of application says the commissioner's office began investigating in November 2013 following a disclosure from a whistleblower.

There is little other public information about the case, and details of the purported offence remain a mystery.

In general, once the integrity commissioner concludes a case he is supposed to inform the whistleblower, any others involved and the head of the relevant organization - in this case the RCMP. When there is a finding of wrongdoing, the commissioner can make recommendations to the organization and must report the finding to Parliament within 60 days.

In the court filing, the government argues the integrity commissioner's decision - which remains under wraps - should be tossed out because the matter is already being dealt with under another, unspecified parliamentary provision.

The government says the commissioner violated procedural fairness by inadequately explaining the substance of the alleged wrongdoing, relying upon evidence not fully disclosed to the RCMP, and not permitting the Mounties to submit further relevant evidence.

It also argues the commissioner failed to notify all parties who may be adversely affected by the investigation.

Finally, the government says the commissioner made a legal mistake by basing his decision on an "erroneous finding of fact."

The government has asked the integrity commissioner to disclose all documents considered by the commissioner's investigators during the almost year-long probe, all interview notes and any material obtained from interviewees or subject-matter experts.

Nov 27 2014

OTTAWA - Security is being tightened on Parliament Hill through additional screening, the arming of guards and the elimination of public tours during caucus meetings.

And House of Commons Speaker Andrew Scheer says more changes may be in the works as a result of an ongoing, comprehensive review of Hill security.

The review was initiated after a gunman fatally shot a soldier at the National War Memorial on Oct. 22 and burst into Parliament's Centre Block before being killed in a hail of bullets.

Earlier this week, Scheer and Sen. Vern White announced the separate House of Commons and Senate security forces would be merged.

Members of the unified parliamentary security team are being trained to carry firearms.

They will continue to patrol the interior of buildings on the Hill, while the RCMP secures the parliamentary grounds.

Nov 27 2014

RED DEER, Alta. - A highway patrol officer has been injured in a collision during heavy snowfall in central Alberta.

Mounties say the provincial sheriff had been standing outside, checking on motorists involved in another crash in Red Deer on Highway 2, when he was hurt.

An out-of-control semi truck jackknifed and slid into both the officer and his cruiser.

The man was taken to Red Deer hospital by ambulance and treated for serious but non-life threatening injuries.

Snowfall and travel warnings were issued Thursday throughout the province.

Nov 27 2014

VICTORIA - The British Columbia government has introduced new rules for the training and deployment of police dogs months after a report singled out dog bites as the leading cause of injuries.



Attorney General Suzanne Anton said Thursday that the new standards emphasize proper training and spell out permitted uses for the dogs, with an effort to make sure the animals aren't used improperly.

In June, the Pivot Legal Society released a three-year study that concluded police dogs are the leading cause of injury by RCMP and municipal forces in B.C.

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The study found most B.C. police forces train service dogs with a method called bite-and-hold, as opposed to the other leading technique that simply sees the dogs circle and bark.

Anton said the changes are the first standards of their kind established in Canada.

She said the dogs will still be used to bring down criminals or if police need to stop people who commit crimes.

"But you don't want that to happen unnecessarily, so that is the point of the standards that we're putting in place today."

The society's report tallied data from the RCMP and the Office of the Police Complaints Commission, finding that at least 490 people were bitten and injured by police dogs between 2010 and 2012.

Among permitted uses for police dogs under the new regulations are tracking or searching for people who may have committed a crime, looking for lost people, search for drugs, explosives or firearms and crowd control.

The regulations won't come into force until September 2015.

Nov 27 2014

VICTORIA - It's clear from the contents of recently digitized leather-bound charge books that policing has changed considerably since the 1870s, when offences like being "a rogue and a vagabond" were entered in meticulous cursive with a quill pen in Victoria Police Department records.



Scofflaws' acts such as riding a horse "at a pace faster than a walk" or hitting someone in the face with a fish are recorded in the five books, covering parts of 1873-1876, that were sent to University of Victoria Libraries to be digitized over the past several months. One man was given a choice of a \$1.25 fine or six hours in prison for being drunk and disorderly.

The books were returned with fanfare to the department's Caledonia Avenue headquarters Wednesday, arriving in Car 40, a restored 1940 police vehicle used for special occasions.

Thanks to UVic, the contents of the books - about 2,000 pages - are now preserved on a hard drive and will be made available online soon through the university and Victoria Genealogical Society, whose volunteers have begun indexing the information.

Victoria Police Chief Frank Elsner said the historical volumes are a little like the books that were used to record charges at the

beginning of his career.

"We've progressed in policing light years in the last 30 years."

Still, he said many of the offenses recorded in the historic books are not much different from those today. Along with drunken behaviour, the records are filled with references to break-ins and assaults. "Human nature really hasn't changed as time has gone on," Elsner said.

One difference, however, is that today's police write much more about each investigation than appears in the old volumes, he said. "Our reports now are pages and pages and pages long. Here, it's a paragraph."

Victoria Genealogical Society president Pat Acton said her group enjoys helping to preserve historical material and make it more accessible. "It's amazing history and we don't want this record to disappear."

Simply reading the police volumes is an experience, she said. One person commented that when she opened them up, "she smelled her grandfather's pipe," likely because so many people smoked in those days, Acton said.

Each entry spurs her to learn more about the stories, Acton said.

Established in 1858, the Victoria Police Department is Canada's oldest west of the Great Lakes. "So something like this actually is very a propos for us," Elsner said.

Victoria police have another 50 to 60 volumes of archival books in storage. (Victoria Times Colonist)

Nov 27 2014

CALGARY - In a rare move, Calgary city council handcuffed the growth of the police budget — this time for the next four years.



While Police Chief Rick Hanson expressed concerns about the need for spending boosts in 2017 and 2018, he said he's content with a hold-the-line approach for now.

"We can manage this year and in 2016 given some of the efficiencies we've brought in," he said, adding he's aware of the city's fiscal squeeze, which could tighten.

"We're very much aware with what's happening with the price of oil - it's very dependent on the impacts."

The approved budget allows for just 10 more sworn officers next year, though Hanson noted his budget will be reviewed in 2016.

He predicted the \$400 million police budget could ultimately be pressured by the costs of controlling high-tech organized crime, the increasing costs of solving murders and preventative tactics.

"Every investigation we do is a tech crime," said Hanson. (Calgary Sun)

FRIDAY
NOVEMBER 28, 2014

Nov 28 2014

OTTAWA - Prime Minister Harper is getting a positive reception to his latest Supreme Court appointment from Quebec.

He has appointed high-profile commercial trial lawyer Suzanne Cote to the high court.

She's the first woman ever appointed directly to the top court from the bar, but follows in the footsteps of a number of distinguished former jurists, including John Sopinka and Ian Binnie.

Cote's appointment will bring the number of women on the court to four of nine justices.

Chief Justice Beverley McLachlin welcomes Cote's appointment, saying "she brings extensive expertise in commercial and civil law, as well as a wealth of experience in public law."

Michele Hollins, president of the Canadian Bar Association, says the "justice system and all Canadians will be well-served by the high calibre" of the appointment.

Nov 28 2014

WINNIPEG - The Manitoba attorney general's office has responded to a 14.5-million-dollar lawsuit filed by Kyle Unger, who spent 14 years in prison for murder before being cleared.

A statement of defence filed recently in Court of Queen's Bench says the office acted in good faith and followed accepted procedures in investigating and prosecuting Unger.

The attorney general also says Unger was convicted largely on repeated confessions he made to undercover police officers in a sting operation.

Unger, who is now 43, was found guilty of first-degree murder in the 1990 death of Brigitte Grenier at a rock concert south of Winnipeg.

His lawsuit alleges he was tricked into making a false confession by undercover officers posing as gangsters who offered him money and work if he had committed a serious crime.

Nov 28 2014

TORONTO - A Toronto man convicted of first-degree murder 10 years ago has been freed after the Crown decided against prosecuting him again.

The decision comes a year after the Supreme Court of Canada said Leighton Hay should get a new trial.

The top court made its ruling after hearing fresh evidence about hair samples that undermined the Crown's case against him.

Hay, then 19, was convicted in 2004 in the killing of a man two years earlier at a Toronto nightclub.

The Crown argued Hay had gone home and shaved his head to prevent recognition.

However, the hair used to bolster that theory turned out to be facial, not from the head.

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When the Conservative government announced two months ago that it was ordering the RCMP to reverse its decision to curtail the use of muskrat fur hats, it raised questions among bureaucrats over whether the government had the authority to do so, internal emails show.



The emails, obtained by Postmedia News under access-to-information laws, suggested that in the past three decades there had never been any written orders - known as ministerial directives - related to what Mounties wear and that such decisions were the domain of RCMP Commissioner Bob Paulson.

"From a legal perspective, there do not appear to be any prior Ministerial Directives (we have gone back to 1981) that would provide a precedent for the Minister directing the RCMP with regard to uniform/headwear," Mark Potter, director general within Public Safety Canada's law enforcement and policing branch, wrote to his colleagues on Oct. 1.

"Also, the regulations flowing from the RCMP Act indicate that the Commissioner is responsible for non-formal uniform/headwear decisions."

Nevertheless, the RCMP complied with the government's wishes and will allow members the choice of sticking with the traditional muskrat fur hats or wearing new wool toques in the winter, a spokesman confirmed Friday.

Sgt. Greg Cox said a contract for the toques will be awarded in the near future. "Once both hats are available, they will be issued to members who will have a choice as to which winter hat best suits their climate and operational needs," he said.

A spokesman for Public Safety Minister Steven Blaney refused to say whether a formal ministerial directive had been issued to the RCMP. "Our Government agrees with the RCMP decision to ensure that all RCMP members have access to the iconic muskrat fur winter hat," Jason Tamming said in an email.

Giving members a choice over wool or fur hats was not what the RCMP had wanted.

In late September, the RCMP announced that it was undertaking a "significant move away" from the use of muskrat fur in its winter hats in favour of merino wool toques after listening to the concerns of the public and employees.

The wool toques would become the new "standard" winter head dress. The muskrat fur hats would be reserved only to those working in "extreme winter conditions."

Media lines prepared at the time noted that there would be a cost savings as well. The fur hats cost about \$48 each, whereas the wool toques cost about \$20.

The decision was hailed as a victory by The Association for the Protection of Fur-Bearing Animals.

But on Sept. 30, Environment Minister Leona Aglukkaq told the House of Commons that the government would "stand up for Canada's hunters and trappers," and that Public Safety Minister Steven Blaney was taking action to ensure that the fur winter hats would not be discontinued.

"The RCMP decision, which is causing much glee among anti-fur activists, is being fully overturned," she said.

That afternoon, Meribeth Morris, a senior departmental assistant in the public safety minister's office, sent an email to Lynne Cyr, a special advisor in Public Safety Canada's law enforcement and policing branch, asking that a ministerial directive be drafted by the next day.

The directive "should be based on freedom of choice" for members to decide whether they wish to be issued wool or fur hats, Morris wrote.

The next day a proposed directive was drafted. It stated, "I direct that the RCMP maintain its current policy ... as it relates to fur hats to its members and cadets."

But the wording created some confusion. By reverting to the original policy, did this mean wool hats would be scrapped altogether, asked Kathy Thompson, assistant deputy minister in Public Safety Canada. "So when they say return to original, where's the choice?" she asked.

Thompson also wondered whether the RCMP had been consulted to determine whether the force still had a supplier for the fur hats.

Internal emails suggested that instead of a written order, the minister's office would work informally with the RCMP on developing a hat policy that respected the government's objectives and met the RCMP's operational requirements.

(Postmedia News)

Nov 28 2014

VANCOUVER - A rookie Vancouver police officer who admitted abusing his authority when he pushed a disabled woman to the ground has been suspended for six days.

Const. Taylor Robinson was captured on video shoving Sandy Davidsen, who has multiple sclerosis and cerebral palsy, as he walked along a sidewalk in the Downtown Eastside in June 2010.

Robinson's lawyer has argued that his client's actions involved an innocent lapse of judgment and that a two-day suspension was sufficient, though Davidsen's lawyer sought 15 days.

The officer has received the punishment after a disciplinary hearing last month by the Office of the Police Complaint Commissioner.

Adjudicator Wally Oppal says the facts are not in dispute and notes the length of time it's taken to settle the matter is unacceptable.

Robinson's lawyer has said Davidsen incorrectly believed his client tried to grab his firearm, though the officer has admitted to using unnecessary force.

Nov 28 2014

TORONTO - Ontario is launching an independent review into a hair analysis program at Toronto's Hospital for Sick Children whose findings have been used in multiple child protection and criminal cases.

The review of the Motherisk program comes a month after Ontario's highest court set aside a criminal conviction on the basis of differing expert opinions about a particular hair-testing method previously used by the laboratory.

The review - which is being launched with the hospital's support - will examine "the adequacy and reliability of the immunoassay biochemical hair-testing method" used by Motherisk between 2005 and 2010 in child protection and criminal proceedings.

It will also determine whether a further review is needed regarding specific cases or classes of cases in which Motherisk's hair testing was used.

The review will be led by Susan Lang, a former judge with the Court of Appeal for Ontario.

Lang will submit her report to the Attorney General by June 30 next year.

The Ministry of the Attorney General says the review will determine if further action is needed to ensure public confidence in the province's child protection system and the operation of the courts.

**SATURDAY
NOVEMBER 29, 2014**

Nov 29 2014

Mounties are breaking the rules governing the notebooks they use to scribble information at crime scenes or during undercover investigations, according to auditors.

A sample review of 217 RCMP notebooks from across the country found some with missing pages, improper handwritten corrections and no indication that supervising officers had routinely inspected them, as required.

And there's still no clear policy on whether RCMP officers can take their notebooks home with them when they leave the force or retire — a continuing problem that has negatively affected criminal cases in the past.

The findings are in an internal audit, completed in July, which followed up on reviews by the Public Prosecution Service of Canada in 2005 and 2011 that repeatedly cited poor notebook maintenance by various police forces, including the Mounties.

"Notebooks did not always have all of the

core components required by policy, and supervisory review of notebooks was not occurring as required," concludes the audit, which has several sections censored over security concerns.

The report recommends the RCMP toughen and enforce its rules for notebooks — similar to recommendations in other reviews over the last 10 years.

The "most significant issue at this time is the storage and handling of notebooks by members post-employment," said auditors, referring largely to retired officers who keep a lifetime of notebooks in attics and basements.

Missing notebooks have damaged court trials. In 2010, for example, a retired RCMP officer in Manitoba burned all of his notebooks — covering 32 years' of police work — including notes that may have been relevant to a careless-driving case. The Crown prosecutor dropped the charges on learning about the destroyed material.

Garry Clement, a retired Mountie who in 2009 started a consulting firm near Colborne, Ont., said members leaving the force routinely kept their notebooks, even though they are technically government property.

"As a retired member, I can state I retained my notebooks, which was the norm in recent memory," he said, referring to dozens of RCMP notebooks from 1973 to 2003.

"As a result of maintaining control, I was able to produce evidence for a 1978 cold case which likely would have not been available had I not maintained custody."

A 200-page notebook used by an RCMP officer for undercover operations related to a 2007 gangland slaying in Surrey, B.C., went missing for years after the officer left the force. It was eventually located at his ex-wife's home and returned last year.

Other cases have involved deliberately falsifying notes, such as a double-homicide investigation in 2007, in Saint Lazare, Man., in which a forensics constable kept two notebooks on the same incident, one of them smeared with red paint to imitate blood.

RCMP officers are generally required to create an electronic report within 24 hours after jotting handwritten notes in their notebooks. The auditors found instances where the electronic version was created 72 hours later, which can create evidence problems in courts.

In other instances, no handwritten version existed, merely the electronic version, which some judges will not allow officers to use to refresh their memories for testimony.

Most of the 217 notebooks the auditors examined at 16 detachments showed no evidence that a supervisor had regularly inspected them, an RCMP requirement since 2011 that most supervisors who were interviewed acknowledged they did not follow.

"As a manager, I did require notebooks to be reviewed, but I know this did not occur throughout the organization," Clement said of his three decades with the Mounties.

"According to many [defence] lawyers, cases are won because officers do not know how to articulate their evidence, including

proper note-taking."

RCMP Deputy Commissioner Janice Armstrong told the auditors the Mounties will clean up their policies and procedures by mid-January, though clear protocols on what to do about notebooks after retirement or post-employment will have to wait for wider consultation.

The audit did not examine notebooks that contained confidential police sources, though some court cases have raised the issue of retired members' notebooks containing such sensitive information.

(CBC News)



Future funding for the Alberta Law Enforcement Response Team (ALERT) continues to be uncertain.

As part of its tough-on-crime agenda, the federal government established the Police Officer Recruitment Fund in 2008 to recruit 2,500 officers across the country. Roughly \$400 million was allocated to the program over five years.

In Alberta, the funds were used to hire 83 officers for ALERT, which specifically tackles serious and organized crime. The funding was set to expire at the end of March 2013, but wound up extended to the 2014-15 budget year because of when it began being allocated. The funds are now set to end March 31, 2015, forcing the province to cough up the shortfall or ALERT to find cuts.

ALERT Insp. Darcy Strang said there already were some budget reductions last year that have had an impact on operations, but so far the organization has been able to deal with the funds its been given. No positions have been cut, but vacancies have not been filled either.

"Right now we're doing the best we can. I think we are doing relatively well with the amount of people that we have. I don't see in the near future anything happening to ALERT at all or anything happening to CFSEU (Combined Forces Special Enforcement Units)," said Strang, adding there may be some form of financial issues in relation to capacity.

"We're still able to function here. It certainly isn't at a point where we're thinking that next March things are going to shut down."

Alberta Justice Spokesperson Michelle Davio couldn't comment on future spending/budget decisions for ALERT, but said that funding for the organization will be determined as part of the normal budget process.

Formed in 2006, ALERT is made up of nearly 400 of the province's best municipal police, RCMP and sheriffs focused on disrupting and dismantling serious and organized crime. The officers are divided into teams — such as CFSEU — that investigate crimes like drug trafficking, gangs and child exploitation.

This past year has been the most successful for ALERT Edmonton. Since January, police have taken a whopping \$24 million

worth of drugs off the streets and seized another \$1.5 million in property and proceeds of crime. Record amounts of steroids and hashish were also seized.

(Sun Media)



OTTAWA - A video made by Michael Zehaf Bibeau before he staged his dramatic and deadly attack on Parliament Hill in October may not be released to the public after all, says RCMP commissioner Bob Paulson.

Investigators still need a chance to complete a full investigation of the video, which police recovered in the wake of the deadly Oct. 22 rampage, Paulson told a news conference Monday.

Paulson has said in the past that the video laid out Zehaf Bibeau's reasons for the attack, which took the life of Cpl. Nathan Cirillo as he stood sentry at the National War Memorial. Zehaf Bibeau himself was killed moments later in a gunfight inside the Centre Block building on Parliament Hill.

The commissioner had also indicated he wanted to see the video released publicly, but he now says that won't happen. Some form of its contents, such as a transcript, could be released later, he said.

"I had said that I hoped to release the video, but I think it forms a central part of the evidence... I think we need to think thoroughly through the benefits and the merits of releasing the video," Paulson said.

"We may look at releasing some aspects of the transcript of the video. But I don't know that we will be releasing the video."

Paulson said he has no new information about the incident.

Dec 01 2014

OTTAWA - The country's homicide rate fell last year to 1.44 victims for every 100,000 people, its lowest level since 1966, Statistics Canada reported Monday.

The agency said the 2013 rate was eight per cent lower than in 2012.

That follows reports that the overall crime rate also declined in 2013 compared with 2012, falling eight per cent to its lowest level since 1969. Statistics Canada said last summer that the crime rate was continuing a long-term, downward trend that began in the early 1990s.

But the drop in murders and a falling crime rate overall haven't deflected the Harper government from its tough-on-crime agenda.

And there remain concerns about the cost of fighting crime, even as the incidence falls.

The Fraser Institute reported in September that police costs have soared even as crime falls.

"Between 2001 and 2012, police officers

per 100,000 of population in Canada rose 8.7 per cent while the crime rate declined by 26.3 per cent," the institute's report said.

And while police cost more, their workload dropped, the report added.

"Real per capita police expenditures in Canada between 1986 and 2012 rose 45.5 per cent while Criminal Code incidents per officer declined by 36.8 per cent."

The latest statistics said says police reported 505 homicides in 2013, down 38 from the previous year.

In comparison, the U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation says there were more than 14,000 homicides in the United States in 2013 for a rate of 4.5 for every 100,000 population - more than three times the Canadian rate.

Statistics Canada attributes the overall decrease in homicides in 2013 to a drop of 40 deaths reported in Quebec after two years of higher-than-average numbers of homicides in the province.

Quebec reported 68 homicides in 2013, representing a rate of 0.83 per 100,000 population, the lowest rate recorded in the province since reporting began in 1961.

Six provinces reported modest increases in the number of homicides in 2013, although even with those increases, the homicide rates in nearly every province and territory were below their 10-year averages in 2013.

The exceptions were Newfoundland and Labrador and Prince Edward Island, where the 2013 homicide rates were above their previous 10-year average.

Homicide rates continued to be generally highest in the West and the North. Provincially, Manitoba reported the highest homicide rate with 3.87 per 100,000 population, followed by Saskatchewan with 2.71, Alberta at 2.04 and British Columbia with 1.66.

Nunavut, with 11.24 per 100,000, and the Northwest Territories, with 4.59, reported homicide rates higher than any province, while there were no homicides in Yukon for the third consecutive year.

Among metropolitan areas, Regina reported the highest homicide rate at 3.84 per 100,000 population, followed by Winnipeg and Thunder Bay.

Homicide rates were below the national average in the two largest metropolitan areas, as Toronto had a rate of 1.34 and Montreal was at 1.08.

Vancouver, at 1.72, was above the national average.

Firearm-related homicides were down, but fatal stabbings increased. There were 131 homicides tied to guns in 2013, down 41 from 2012. This was the lowest rate of firearm-related homicide since comparable data became available in 1974.

Shooting still accounted for about a quarter of homicides.

Most gun-related homicides were committed with handguns, a trend that has held over the last 20 years. Despite this, the rate of handgun-related homicides reached its lowest point since 1998.

The number of fatal stabbings grew by 31 cases, to 195 deaths. Knives accounted for

about 40 per cent of all homicides.

Gang-related homicides fell to 85 in 2013, compared with 96 reported the previous year. It was the first drop after three years of steady numbers.

The rate of gang-related homicide was 0.24 per 100,000 population, its lowest level since 2004. The rate of gang killings was highest in British Columbia and Manitoba.

The victims in almost 90 per cent of homicides knew their killers. The rate of stranger homicide was at its lowest level in over 40 years.

The number of victims of homicide committed by a current or former spouse, common-law partner, dating partner or other intimate partner decreased in 2013. There were 68 intimate partner homicides reported in 2013, 14 fewer than in the previous year.

Dec 01 2014

REGINA - The Regina Police Service says a former officer who was fired after he was charged with assault is getting his job back.

Robert Power was found guilty in provincial court earlier this year of assault causing bodily harm for kicking a drunken man in the detox unit.

But a Queen's Bench judge reviewed the case and overturned the conviction last month.

An independent hearing officer appointed by the Saskatchewan Police Commission has ruled that Power should be reinstated.

Police say he will be returning to his job this week and placed on administrative duties.

A 13-month suspension ordered by the hearing officer has effectively been served and Power will be entitled to pay and benefits dating back to May 1.

He is to be closely supervised for 18 months and must also participate in ethics education and training.

Power was seen in surveillance video kicking Edward Stonechild in the stomach in May 2012. The kick caused Stonechild to fall backward and hit his head on a cement floor.

Defence lawyers argued that Stonechild had his fist cocked and came at Power, who followed police procedures.

Crown prosecutors said the victim's hands were at his sides when he was kicked.

When Power was dismissed, police Chief Troy Hagen said he was "unsuitable for police service."

Power had been an officer in Regina for five years and received a chief's commendation in 2010. It is given to officers for bravery or "an exceptional contribution" to the service.

Dec 01 2014

OTTAWA - A new law that puts Canada's national police force under more civilian oversight came into effect Monday, the federal government says.

The law creates the new civilian committee responsible for investigating complaints about RCMP members. It also modernizes internal RCMP disciplinary processes.

The Enhancing Royal Canadian Mounted Police Accountability Act received royal assent in June 2013 but it has taken this long to prepare the force for the new regime.

It's the first major reform of laws governing the RCMP in more than 25 years.

The law:

- Creates a Civilian Review and Complaints Commission for the RCMP. It replaces the Commission for Public Complaints Against the RCMP and will have more powers than the commission.
- Establishes new rules for investigations involving RCMP members.
- Establishes new rules about how the RCMP goes about handling internal grievances and deals with employment and human resources issues.

(Toronto Sun)

TUESDAY
DECEMBER 02, 2014

Dec 02 2014

ST. JOHN'S, N.L. - Police say abuse of prescription pain relievers is a huge problem for Newfoundland and Labrador but it lacks a provincewide computer tracking system.

RCMP Const. David Emberley says better tracking would help.

But the province still lacks a full computer network that could trace those who fill multiple prescriptions from various doctors at different pharmacies.

Health Minister Steve Kent says there's a rising rate of opioid addiction.

He says trying to add to about 40 per cent of 200 pharmacies now linked to a monitoring network is a priority.

The system helps to trace prescriptions and catch patterns of abuse.

Most provinces across Canada already use such networks to some extent.

But Stephen Reid of the Pharmacists' Association of Newfoundland and Labrador says there are technological stumbling blocks.

He says doctors, pharmacists, government officials and IT providers must work together to link different computer systems.

Dec 02 2014

OTTAWA - A new report says there has been a big spike in the number of aboriginal women in Canada's prisons.

A Justice Department study found the overall number of aboriginal women behind bars in federal institutions nearly doubled between 2002 and 2012, rising 97 per cent.

By comparison, the number of aboriginal men increased by 34 per cent during that time.

That steep, decade-long rise makes aboriginal women one of the fastest growing segments of Canada's federal prison population.

The numbers were slightly higher in provincial and territorial facilities, where 41 per cent of all women were aboriginal, compared to 25 per cent of men.

The report found nearly two-thirds of aboriginal women serving federal prison sentences were admitted for violent offences, compared to one-third of non-aboriginal women.

Dec 02 2014

OTTAWA - RCMP pilots doctored flight manifests in order to fly over-loaded aircraft, the federal integrity commissioner said Tuesday as he dismissed several other serious allegations from a whistleblower for lack of evidence.

Commissioner Mario Dion says he could not establish whether the RCMP flights in 2012 posed a danger to the life, health or safety of anyone because the true weight of the aircraft is not known.

"The records were, not being accurate, it's impossible to determine actually what was the total weight of the plane on any given flight and therefore impossible to determine whether it did constitute a risk to health and safety," Dion said in conference call.

Several other serious allegations from a whistleblower - including that RCMP planes were flown without valid airworthiness certificates, that pilots with lapsed credentials were scheduled to fly and that the RCMP overpaid to house planes at a commercial hangar recommended by a staff member - could not be substantiated "on the balance of probabilities," Dion said.

His report remains under a legal challenge from the federal government, which wanted to quash his findings before they could be made public.

However a judge last week rejected the bid by the federal attorney general and Dion says his mandate includes public disclosure of wrongdoing.

The RCMP and the government continue to contest the manner in which Dion pursued the complaint and they are seeking all records of the integrity commissioner's investigation, including interview notes and any materials obtained from interviewees.

"We have to produce everything we have on file concerning this matter," said Dion.

"We are taking appropriate steps to ensure the confidentiality of the important pieces of information, such as the identity of the whistleblower."

Judge Roger Hughes of the Federal Court gave all parties to the case 15 days to identify which portions of the evidence should remain confidential.

The RCMP said Tuesday that because it moved to address the complaints last year, they should not have been investigated and made public.

"Because the spirit and intent of the recommendations were already being proactively addressed with Transport Canada oversight under the Aeronautics Act, the RCMP has filed an application for judicial review," Sgt. Greg Cox said in a statement.

The Mounties acknowledged their Ottawa Air Section, one of 19 RCMP air operations across the country, did not properly maintain logs and that some planes, "likely

due to calculation errors, may have been flown overweight."

However the integrity commissioner's report found that pilots "had worked backwards to make the numbers work on paper" - in effect, doctoring the log to make the weights of passengers, cargo and fuel fit under the maximum allowed.

One pilot acknowledged doing this and "two other witnesses alleged that almost all pilots did so," according to the report by two investigators.

Dion said there was no evidence that traced the subterfuge up the chain of command, nor did the investigation cover practices at any of the other 18 RCMP air operations.

The commissioner would not characterize what his investigators found when they looked at the other whistleblower allegations.

"They did not find evidence of the fact they were true to a degree that was sufficient for us to conclude that it had happened," said Dion.

The falsified flight manifests were not referred to legal authorities, he said, because Transport Canada is aware of the issue.

Dec 02 2014

EDMONTON - Police will likely hover over Edmonton in a new single-engine helicopter instead of the twin-engined model they requested after councilors approved the purchase Tuesday with conditions.



Following hours of procedural wrangling, the \$3.3-million deal passed 7-6 in what Mayor Don Iveson called "a prudent move."

"I do support the aerial operations of the Edmonton Police Service."

The purchase price includes about \$1.1 million to trade in Air-2, more valuable than the older Air-1.

Proposals to buy the twin-engined for \$7.2 million, or two singles for a total of \$7.1 million, were defeated.

But before any money is released, police must report back, likely next year, on where the chopper would be stored and maintained.

They must also look at the available equipment options and issues such as noise.

As well, Iveson will work with police and the federal government to see if it's possible to move the existing fleet to Canadian Forces Base Edmonton from Villeneuve.

While police indicated last year that idea won't fly, Iveson said this conclusion was coloured by their desire for a heavy twin-engined chopper and a heliport.

"Because of the police service's fixation on this giant helicopter, the answers given to

me were not all satisfactory, which is part of what's behind this."

Police are now looking at buying the same AS-350 used by the RCMP so they can share maintenance, training and space at Edmonton International Airport.

However, the noisy AS-350 might not be the best one to fly over a built-up city, Iveson said.

"If there's some efficiencies for maintenance there, I think that's a great outcome, but again council just wants to get all those details confirmed."

He'll contact manufacturer Airbus Canada to find out if any suitable, quieter models will be available in a few years when a second helicopter is needed.

(Edmonton Journal)

WEDNESDAY
DECEMBER 03, 2014

Dec 03 2014

MONTREAL - A former Quebec doctor charged with first-degree murder in the deaths of his two children will remain a free man pending his new trial.

The Quebec Court of Appeal ruled today that Guy Turcotte should not be incarcerated ahead of the trial, which is set to begin next September.

A jury found Turcotte not criminally responsible in 2011 in the stabbing deaths of five-year-old Olivier and three-year-old Anne-Sophie in 2009.

His freedom comes with various conditions, including having to stay with his uncle and not being allowed to get in touch with his ex-wife.

Quebec Superior Court Justice Andre Vincent granted Turcotte bail a few months ago, saying he does not represent a danger to society and is entitled to the presumption of innocence.

The Crown appealed that decision and argued Vincent erred when he said releasing Turcotte would not undermine the public's faith in the judicial system.

Dec 03 2014

CALGARY - An Alberta agency that investigates police says officers did not contribute to a crash involving a mentally disabled woman driving an ATV on a busy freeway.

The Alberta Serious Incident Response Team says no charges will be laid.

The agency investigated after the 21-year-old woman was injured in Calgary in October.

She had driven a quad off her family's property and onto a highway, where she maintained speeds with other cars and swerved across lanes of traffic.

A Mountie followed her from a distance with emergency lights to hold back traffic.

Police in Calgary planned to catch her at a traffic stop after she got on Deerfoot Trail but, before they could, the woman lost

control of the quad and hit a fence.

She was taken to hospital with serious injuries. ASIRT says she continues to recover at home.

In a news release, the agency says motorists provided video clips and details that cleared officers of any wrongdoing.

"The evidence confirmed that all of the police officers involved attempted to protect the young woman and everyone else on the road."

Dec 03 2014

NEWMARKET, Ont. - The country's top Mountie has told the trial in a lawsuit filed by a longtime RCMP officer that he was given the impression last year that the man seemed "almost unequivocally embittered towards the force."



Commissioner Bob Paulson says he understood Sgt. Peter Merrifield was a "very smart, very accomplished officer" who had become "very negative."

Paulson is testifying in Newmarket, Ont., and is being asked about the information provided to him on the officer.

Merrifield is alleging he was harassed by some of his superiors within the RCMP and that they employed aggressive and intimidating means to silence him. None of the allegations have been proven in court.

His lawyer says Merrifield is seeking damages to be determined at trial and wants "a punitive judgment to send the RCMP a message" about harassment in the force.

Paulson brought up Merrifield by name last year before a Senate committee looking into harassment and bullying within the RCMP.

Paulson - who levelled criticism at a selection of RCMP members who lodged complaints against the force - accused Merrifield of being upset because the force "took issue with him running for Parliament."

Merrifield's lawyer John Phillips said in an earlier interview that Paulson got "incomplete information" about Merrifield in 2013 which demonstrates further damage to Merrifield's reputation.

"Our theory of that is that (Paulson) is a victim of the harassment of Merrifield in some way - not as badly as Merrifield, but he's a victim of that harassment - because it caused him to distrust a very good cop because of the loss of reputation," Phillips said.

Paulson is telling the court that he understood, after conversations with the RCMP's Commanding officer for Ontario Stephen White, that efforts for the force to reconcile its differences with Merrifield had gone nowhere.

"He was locked into this view that the of-

ficers he was referring to had harassed him and he was not taking any ground back from that," Paulson said. "He was very, very determined to have those claims of harassment from those officers validated."

Paulson said it was communicated to him that the officers behind the alleged harassment of Merrifield were found to be "blameless."

"The view was that those officers had tried to respond to the circumstances as best they could in the moment and that there was no sort of malfeasance," he said.

"The essence of our conversation was ... we've got a lawsuit and he's very active in publicizing the response of the organization so where we ended was we're just going to have to let this thing play out."

Merrifield's alleged issues with the force stem from 2005, when he sought the Conservative nomination to run in a federal riding in a town north of Toronto. He claims that some of his superiors deemed his political views and political participation incompatible with his duties.

He alleges that led to punitive transfers, rumours about his conduct and integrity and a number of internal investigations, all of which resulted in no disciplinary action, his lawyer notes.

Dec 03 2014

CALGARY - As two child witnesses take the stand in a Calgary courtroom this week, they will be comforted by a special four-legged support worker.



Hawk was there to comfort a seven-year-old girl who took the stand Tuesday.

The girl is testifying against her father, who has been accused of sexually abusing her.

Her nine-year-old brother will also eventually testify, with the black Labrador retriever by his side as well.

Hawk, who is four years old, has been working as a therapy dog with the Calgary Police for one year.

To date, Hawk has worked with sexual-assault victims and those who have lost loved ones in traffic accidents and homicide cases, including the families of the five young people stabbed to death at a Calgary house party last April.

His handler, Sgt. Brent Hutt, says Hawk possesses a number of important qualities that help reduce victims' anxiety.

"He is extremely low energy. He loves people," said Hutt. "People can be crying and screaming or in some cases getting relatively aggressive with him when they're petting

him. It doesn't faze him."

The young boy and girl, who can't be identified, met Hawk on numerous occasions before their testimony this week. Hutt said their interactions with the dog were "very positive."

"Their reaction with him is typical of all the kids we interact with," said Hutt. "It brings a smile to their face, helps us have a conversation. No bad can come of it."

Appearing in court through closed-circuit television Tuesday, the little girl answered the lawyer's questions, with Hawk lying beside her the entire time. Even when she became agitated, the dog never left her side.

Hutt said Hawk was more than ready for this new role, as his intuition can be trusted in all sorts of tense situations.

"I've had instances where he bypasses those people he would normally talk to and goes straight to the people who have been impacted. It's truly amazing."

The Crown prosecutor made an application to have Hawk in the courtroom this week, a request the defence lawyer and judge didn't object to.

"There is an immediate trust that children have with these animals, something that they wouldn't necessarily have with a court support person, even if they've met them before," said Crown prosecutor Rosalind Greenwood. "With an animal, there's an immediate trust there."

(CTV Calgary)

Dec 03 2014

OTTAWA - The RCMP have laid 16 more charges against a London, Ont., man originally charged last April in connection with the Heartbleed computer bug and the loss of data from the Canada Revenue Agency website.

Stephen Arthuro Solis-Reyes had been charged only with unauthorized use of a computer and mischief in relation to data, in the revenue agency case.

An expanded RCMP investigation produced more charges in the revenue case, plus new allegations of other attacks both in Canada and abroad.

The Mounties now allege Solis-Reyes transferred sensitive data from the revenue agency's network and have charged the computer science student with obtaining a computer service directly or indirectly, and intercepting a function of a computer system.

They also allege he attacked several other unrelated computer networks.

The additional charges include illegally obtaining computer services, illegal interception of computer functions, five counts of possessing unauthorized computer passwords, three counts of possession of devices used to hack computers and two more counts of mischief to data.

Dec 03 2014

PRINCE ALBERT, Sask. - A jury in Prince Albert, Sask., left the city police and Parkland Health Region with four

recommendations following a three-day coroner's inquest into the death of Billy Ballantyne.

Ballantyne, who died in November 2012, came to the Prince Albert hospital because he was feeling sick but was arrested and taken to jail after a disturbance at the health centre.

He did not see a doctor and, shortly after while in police custody, he started having breathing problems.

An ambulance was called, but he died in hospital of an acetaminophen overdose.

A jury suggested police check with medical specialists before taking someone away from the hospital and recommended police report to a sergeant right away if someone in their custody appears to have a medical issue.

The jury also suggested triage nurses have an assistant to keep time guidelines for patient re-assessment and that security guards working at the hospital consult with a medical practitioner before calling police to remove someone who is being disruptive.

(CTV Regina)

Dec 03 2014

OTTAWA-In a serious breach of privacy, the RCMP accidentally sent details of a woman's complaint of a sexual assault to a Toronto Star reporter.

The woman's note to the RCMP details an attack that happened decades ago but is potentially related to an ongoing police investigation. It was inadvertently forwarded to the Star Wednesday morning.

Told of the mix-up by the Star, the woman was dismayed to learn that her complaint to the Royal Canadian Mounted Police had been revealed.

"I did believe it was a confidential email," the woman told the Star.

The mistaken disclosure made her question whether she should have come forward at all. "I wonder if I should have sent anything," she said in a telephone interview Wednesday.

The Star is not identifying the woman. Nor is it revealing details of the assault to protect her identity.

She reached out to the RCMP Tuesday night to outline circumstances around a sexual assault that happened several decades ago. She told police that she was threatened with death during the attack and feels lucky to be alive.

She said that she had never previously reported the assault but told the police she believes it could be related to a current investigation. It appears she used an on-line form on the RCMP website to provide details of the incident to the police.

On Wednesday morning, the RCMP "webmaster" forwarded her complaint to a Star reporter with the subject line "tip" and name of the ongoing investigation. The information sent to the Star included the woman's name, work email address and telephone number.

The RCMP blamed "autofill" for automatically - but mistakenly - filling in the name of a reporter on the email, instead of the police division it was intended for.

The woman told the Star she is understanding of the error. "I have to admit in my

lifetime I have probably sent the wrong email to the wrong person on occasion," she said.

RCMP Cpl. David Falls said the police force had apologized to the woman and explained what had occurred.

Falls, a spokesperson for the RCMP, said the force would also be reviewing how it processes emails received in its national email account.

(Toronto Star)



Dec 04 2014

FORT MCMURRAY, Alta. - A judge has ruled Alberta Mounties were doing their job when they shot and killed an armed man in a Fort McMurray apartment building in 2011.

A fatality inquiry report says Ahmad Abdalla had fired shots into the floor of the apartment before RCMP arrived and found him standing in a hallway.

The 24-year-old raised his gun and fired first, striking one officer and nearly hitting another.

The two officers returned fire and killed Abdalla.

Tests on the man's body showed there were alcohol and methamphetamines in his system.

Provincial court Judge James Jacques offered no recommendations in his report.

"In my view, the officers involved in this incident did precisely what they should have done under the circumstances."

He wrote that the two officers "saved not only their own lives, but those of their fellow officers by reacting rapidly and accurately to a deadly threat."

The Alberta Serious Incident Response Team also reviewed the shooting in 2012 and determined police were justified in the shooting and acted in self-defence.

Dec 04 2014

MONTREAL - The jury in the first-degree murder trial of Luka Rocco Magnotta has finished hearing the evidence.

The case has been adjourned until next Wednesday, when the defence and Crown will give their closing arguments, followed by the judge's instructions to the jury.

Quebec Superior Court Justice Guy Cournoyer told jurors today they'll likely be sequestered as of next Friday.

Magnotta has pleaded not guilty by way of mental disorder to premeditated murder and four other charges related to the slaying and dismemberment of Jun Lin in May 2012.

The trial has sat for 40 days and heard from 66 witnesses, including some more than once.

The final witnesses today were defence expert witnesses who'd previously appeared and were recalled to reply to testimony from the Crown expert.

Dec 04 2014

KAMLOOPS, B.C. - British Columbia's police watchdog says a man accused of shooting a Mountie in Kamloops, B.C., sustained an arm injury during an exchange of gunfire with a second officer.

The Independent Investigations Office is investigating the police-involved injury as the RCMP does its own probe into the shooting of its 40-year-old-officer.

Police have said Cpl. Jean Rene Michaud was shot at about 3 a.m. Wednesday during a traffic stop in a residential area.

A 36-year-old man known to police was arrested after police had warned they were looking for a suspect, or several suspects, who were believed to be armed and dangerous.

RCMP say a Mountie in a backup vehicle returned fire as Michaud went down and the suspect drove off.

The injured Mountie remains in critical but stable condition, and Supt. Brad Mueller says he was able to provide helpful information after having surgery.

Dec. 04 2014

Vancouver - Vancouver Police has a sense of humour, at least on occasion.

On Tuesday evening the force tweeted these two photos showing a 2015 Lamborghini Huracan caught speeding and the vehicle being loaded onto a tow truck.

If writing a ticket for the driver, towing the car and tweeting the photo weren't enough, the caption reads like a MasterCard commercial.



The Huracan has a base price of about \$250,000 and with 610 horsepower it can go from 0 to 100 km/h in 3.2 seconds. It has a top speed of 325 km/h.

The big problem for the 30-year-old driver? The speed limit on Cambie Street near West 54th Avenue is 50 km/h. The Lamborghini was clocked at 102 km/h, allegedly.