

BLUE LINE NEWSWEEK *Celebrating 20 Years*

A Chronicle of News for the Law Enforcement Community |

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Executive Digest

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Blair leading marijuana task force

Jan 08 2016

OTTAWA - The Trudeau government is calling on former police chief Bill Blair to find the best way to legalize marijuana in Canada, relying on the rookie Liberal MP's law-enforcement credentials to sell the controversial policy to the public.

Federal officials said Mr. Blair is expected to work with a new federal-provincial task force to develop a regime in which marijuana is available to all adults across the country, with the two levels of government reaping applicable sales taxes.

In his new role, the former chief of the Toronto Police Service will be expected to find a consensus in favour of the major shift in the way that marijuana is handled by the country's justice system.

His former colleagues at the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police said they remain concerned by issues such as access to the drug by young Canadians, and the potential for an increase in impaired driving.

"Mr. Blair has a formidable challenge in front of him," said Clive Weighill, chief of the Saskatoon Police Service and president of the CACP. "We in policing have a role to play, as do many others. We will work with the government in a positive and collaborative manner to help mitigate public safety impacts."

Carleton University professor Frances Woolley said the government's policy will have to allow adults to enjoy recreational marijuana, while reducing the harm related to dependency, poor-quality products and the use by young adults. At the same time, the



professor of economics said the federal and provincial governments need to have access to higher tax revenues, while finding ways to reduce policing costs.

"There are inevitable tensions between these goals: Harm reduction potentially conflicts with revenue maximization, for example," she said. "What I would hope the task force to accomplish is to steer a path that gets us as close as we can to achieving these three objectives."

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau has driven the Liberal Party away from the simpler policy of decriminalizing marijuana - which would keep the product illegal but lower penalties for possession - toward the more radical promise of legalization.

For the October election, the Liberal platform promised that the federal-provincial task force would create a "new system of strict marijuana sales and distribution, with appropriate federal and provincial excise taxes applied."

Officially, the lead ministers on the file are Jody Wilson-Raybould at Justice, Ralph Goodale at Public Safety and Jane Philpott at Health. Still, Mr. Blair, as the parliamentary secretary for Ms. Wilson-Raybould, has been

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given a lead role on this specific file, to free up the ministers to focus on other issues.

"[Mr.] Blair's experience and background in public safety will be a great asset to the government's work to ensure a careful and thoughtful approach to the legalization and regulation of marijuana," Ms. Wilson-Raybould's spokesman said in a statement.

During the election campaign, Mr. Blair played a key role in defending the Liberal Party's credentials on law-and-order issues.

"We've already had a great deal of experience with controlling the sale and use of alcohol. We believe that we can build upon that model and we can ensure our communities could be made safer through regulation and legalization," Mr. Blair told CTV News in October.

THURSDAY JANUARY 7, 2016

Jan 07 2015

The RCMP's Auxiliary program is about to change because of safety issues, and it could mean an end to auxiliary constables across the country.


A memo has gone out to all RCMP detachments from Ottawa, saying the entire auxiliary constable program is under review and details will be released soon.

Concerns have been raised about the volunteers going on ride-alongs with officers because of liability and safety issues.

The question has also been raised as to whether it's safe to dispatch auxiliary members in uniform without a weapon.

The auxiliary program was introduced in 1963 to enhance community policing and crime prevention initiatives.

There are 1600 auxiliary constables across the country. (CKNW)



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Jan 07 2016

NEWMARKET - Tony Ferri may only have opened the door of a York Regional Police cruiser and climbed into the driver's seat but for the 91-year-old retired Montreal police officer, it was a trip down memory lane.

"I feel like a new man," he said just before Christmas, with a police cap perched on his head, while fulfilling his wish of sitting in a police car one more time.



The staff at Newmarket's Chartwell Barton Retirement

Residence, where Ferri has lived for the past 12 years, arranged for his wish to come true last month through its Moments that Matter program.

In each residence, staff write down residents' wishes or hopes as they hear them from day to day and, through the program, wishes are granted to residents, if possible, Barton sales consultant Linda Robinson said.

"Tony had expressed the idea that he wishes he could ride in a police car, so it was put together and arranged to have a police car come."

The fulfillment of his wish came as a pleasant surprise for Ferri, who said the moment took him back in time to his police days, from when he joined the Montreal force in 1948 after serving in the army to his retirement in 1971.

Ferri served on the morality squad on the streets of downtown.

He was working at the Montreal Forum the night of the Canadiens' Maurice Richard riot on March 17, 1955.

Ferri said he and his fellow officers feared for their lives that night but he walked away from the incident unhurt.

While sitting in the police car, Ferri said he was grateful to everyone who made his wish come true.

"I thank them very much for thinking of me. I'm a regular person here in the building. I don't do anything special," he said.

Ferri's daughter Louise said her dad was thrilled to sit in a police car again.

"This is so, so special for him and you can tell by the smile on his face that he is in his absolute glory," she said. (Newmarket Era)

FRIDAY JANUARY 8, 2016

Jan 08 2016

VANCOUVER - West Vancouver has joined forces with the Integrated Homicide Investigation Team - a squad of police officers and civilian experts who investigate slayings in south coast communities from Whistler to Hope.

West Vancouver Police Chief Const. Len Goerke says his department linked with IHIT on Jan. 1.

The team primarily investigates homicides in RCMP jurisdictions, but Abbotsford, Port Moody and New Westminster are among the municipal police forces already benefiting from IHIT's expertise.

Because of the complexity of homicide investigations, Goerke says West Vancouver decided IHIT membership allows his department to best serve city residents.

RCMP Acting Cmdr. Dan Malo says IHIT's integration with West Vancouver will add to the team's strength and maintain its decade-long record of success cracking murder cases.

Of IHIT's 106 employees, 81 are police officers, with seven seconded from area police forces other than RCMP detachments.

Jan 08 2016

OTTAWA - Canada's border agency plans to compare images of people arriving in the country with photographs of suspects on watchlists to keep out alleged terrorists and other criminals.

The federal privacy watchdog has cautioned the agency that the scheme could ensnare the wrong travellers, resulting in unwarranted scrutiny for some people at the border.

The Canada Border Services Agency wants to see how well the facial-recognition technology works at various locations and under specific lighting and crowd-movement conditions.

The border agency's science and engineering directorate has quietly been working with the University of Quebec and other partners to gauge the ability of devices to extract needed information from video footage.

The initiative is among the latest federal efforts to use biometric tools that focus on personal characteristics - such as fingerprints, an iris or the contours of one's face - to identify people in the name of security.

In his recently released annual report, privacy commissioner Daniel Therrien says his office provided advice on the potential pitfalls, including the possibility of "false positives" that could result in unnecessary secondary screening for travellers.

Jan 08 2016

FREDERICTON - A criminology professor in New Brunswick says the fact that at least 16 police officers in the province have been suspended or fired in the past year is eroding public confidence in police.

Michael Boudreau of St. Thomas University in Fredericton says the incidents raise doubt about how much trust can be put in frontline officers.

The municipal police force in Fredericton has been the centre of attention with about a half-dozen officers suspended in the past year, including two who were fired in the last month following arbitration.

Fredericton Police Chief Leanne Fitch says these are troubling times, but there are many hard-working officers on the force.

Two officers in Bathurst have been charged with manslaughter after a man was shot inside his car, while the RCMP have eight officers on suspension - all for discreditable conduct.

The New Brunswick Police Commission is planning a course on values and ethics, but policing consultant Paul McKenna from Nova Scotia says the answer is to weed out problematic individuals at the time of recruitment.

Jan 08 2016

MISSISSAUGA, Ont. - The province's police watchdog says a Toronto police officer is facing an assault charge over his involvement in an arrest last July.

The Special Investigations Unit says several officers from the Toronto police major crime unit attempted to arrest four men who were seen entering a vehicle in a parking lot.

During the arrest, the 24-year-old driver of the vehicle suffered a fracture to the bone around his right eye. SIU director Tony Loparco says an investigation found reasonable grounds to believe the officer committed a criminal offence.

Sgt. Darren Worth has been charged with one count of assault causing bodily harm, and is to appear in court on Feb. 18.

Jan 08 2016

WINNIPEG - With a provincial election scheduled for April 19, leaders of Manitoba's political parties are weighing in on the future of Winnipeg's police helicopter.

Police Chief Devon Clunis says an announcement about the future of the police helicopter will come in a few weeks, but says while there is value in having the chopper, in the end it might just come down to balancing the books.

The province funds the helicopter's operating costs.

The current NDP government says it is committed to funding the helicopter for many years, but has called for an independent audit to make sure taxpayers are getting their money's worth.

Tory justice critic Kelvin Goertzen says his party would talk it over with police to

determine if they feel it's good value for the money or if there are other things similar funding could be used for, a stance the Liberals are also taking. The city is expected to table its budget next month.

The police helicopter was purchased for \$3.5 million in 2010 and according to data on the city's website, is used for a wide range of service calls, especially domestic disturbances, traffic stops and reports of suspicious persons.

"The province has made a significant investment in this and expects to continue that investment in the years ahead," Justice Minister Gord Mackintosh said Friday. "There may be improvements, perhaps, and we'll work with the city if improvements are recommended by the outside review."

(CJOB, CTV Winnipeg)

Jan 08 2016

MONTREAL - Montreal police are dealing with a major breach of confidential police information and say retrieving it is a top priority.

CTV has confirmed that a bag belonging to a high-ranking police officer was stolen from his unmarked car on December 17, 2015.

Commander Patrice Vilceus, who heads the Ese squad that investigates organized and violent crime, was at a Christmas party when someone broke into his car.

The thieves stole a bag which contained a USB key that held contact information for police informants, and classified information about an ongoing police investigation.

Some are wondering if the theft of the

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USB key is linked to five shootings that happened in Montreal the week after. The shootings, which police have said could be related to street gangs, left one man dead and four others injured. But police deny there is any link between the theft and the shootings.

High-ranking organized crime investigators have been searching for the memory stick but police will not make any other comment about the case aside from saying it is a serious privacy breach which could have drastic consequences.

This is not the first information breach the Montreal police have had to deal with. In 2014 organized crime investigator Benoit Roberge was sentenced to eight years in prison for selling classified information to the Hells Angels.

A few years earlier a retired veteran of the Montreal Police force, Ian Davidson, stole and then tried to sell a long list of police sources to organized criminals.

Davidson was arrested at the time and then committed suicide.
(CTV Montreal)

Jan 08 2016

TORONTO - The SIU says Toronto Police Sergeant Darren Worth has been charged with one count of assault causing bodily harm after his involvement in an arrest last July that resulted in a man being injured.

A Special Investigations Unit news release that shortly after midnight on July 5, 2015 a number of unmarked police cruisers and several officers attempted to arrest four men seen entering a vehicle in a parking lot at 113 Denison Ave.

Doctors at St. Joseph's Health Centre later determined that the 24-year-old driver of the vehicle had sustained a fractured right orbital bone during the arrest, the news release stated.

As a result of the SIU investigation, the press release stated that the Director of the Special Investigations Unit, Tony Loparco, has reasonable grounds to charge the officer with one count of assault causing bodily harm.

He is scheduled to appear before the court on Feb. 18.
(Toronto Star)

Jan 08 2016

EDMONTON - Over Christmas, the rising number of traffic fatalities was weighing heavy on Edmonton Police Chief Rod Knecht's mind.

On Friday, the chief announced a reassignment of some members of the four Specialized Traffic Apprehension Teams (STAT) to help deal with the escalating problem of the city's bad drivers.

In 2015, there were more traffic fatalities, at 35, than the 30 homicides, Knecht said.

"Every one of these fatalities was preventable," Knecht said. "The situation is just as dire for non-fatal traffic accidents.

"The health care costs, property damage costs and insurance costs were in the tens of millions of dollars. This is in addition to the

long-term human suffering."

And the new year is off to a bad start, continuing the trend.

As part of tackling traffic troubles, dedicated officers will go into residential neighbourhoods as well as continuing enforcement on major arteries.

"We know traffic is a problem in this city, we know we have poor drivers in this city and we've got to take action," said Knecht.

"We've got to change the culture of entitlement."

Knecht said the team will be evaluating the project on a month-to-month basis.
(Edmonton Sun)

Jan 08 2016

MONTREAL - A tech expert says Montreal police blew it.

Authorities are looking for a briefcase stolen from an unmarked cruiser just before the holidays.

The car was broken into while a high ranking police officer attended a downtown party.

A USB stick containing contact information for police informants and other sensitive data was stolen.

"Virtually every basic security rule was violated here. You never allow critical information like that to be saved to a USB or flash drive is not controlled", said Carmi Levy.

Levy added police made it so easy for someone to steal the data.

He said you never allow information to be saved to an external drive that is not encrypted and then once it is, you must guard that device physically and never leave it in a place where it can be easily stolen, in a bag in a car at night.

"It's almost like there was an invitation there for this thing to be ripped off. It is beyond unimaginable that a police officer would be responsible for this, that a police officer would allow this to occur, wouldn't think that this could happen to him", added Levy.

No comment yet from Montreal city hall or police officials.
(CJAD)



TORONTO - Police have recovered an Ontario Provincial Police cruiser that was stolen Friday night in the Brampton area and later abandoned in Mississauga after it was involved in a crash.

However, the person, or persons who took the police car remain at large.

OPP Sgt. Kerry Schmidt said the incident began when a vehicle collided with some other cars while travelling the wrong way on a ramp linking highways 410 and 407. Three people were seriously injured in the collisions.

Sgt. Schmidt said the OPP cruiser was

stolen at the accident scene and then driven to Mississauga where it was involved in a head-on crash a short time later.
(680 News)

Jan 09 2016

OTTAWA - The Liberal government is open to an expansive revamp of national security legislation, not just a handful of promised changes to the controversial bill known as C-51, says Public Safety Minister Ralph Goodale.

The government will give Canadians a chance to have their say before deciding what changes to make, Goodale said in an interview with The Canadian Press.

"If the consultation leads to a broader set of action items, obviously we would be guided by what that consultation tells us," Goodale said.

"The subject matter is large, it's complex, the solutions aren't particularly easy to achieve. But our whole point in having consultations is to listen to what we hear. And if the messages indicate that something more needs to be done, obviously we would try to pursue that."

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau has asked Goodale to work with Justice Minister Jody Wilson-Raybould to repeal the "problematic elements" of Bill C-51 and introduce new legislation that strengthens accountability with respect to national security while better balancing collective security with rights and freedoms.

The government has pledged to ensure all Canadian Security Intelligence Service warrants respect the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. That would roll back new provisions allowing CSIS to disrupt terror plots through tactics that breach the charter as long as a judge approves.

It has also committed to creating a special committee of parliamentarians to keep an eye on national security operations.



FRESNO, Calif. - While officers raced to a recent 9-1-1 call about a man threatening his ex-girlfriend, a police operator in headquarters consulted software that scored the suspect's potential for violence the way a bank might run a credit report.

The program scoured billions of data points, including arrest reports, property records, commercial databases, deep Web searches and the man's social-media postings. It calculated his threat level as the highest of three color-coded scores: a bright red warning.

The man had a firearm conviction and gang associations, so out of caution police called a negotiator. The suspect surrendered, and police said the intelligence helped them make the right call - it turned out he had a gun.

As a national debate has played out over mass surveillance by the National Security Agency, a new generation of technology such as the Beware software being used in Fresno has given local law enforcement officers unprecedented power to peer into the lives of citizens.

Police officials say such tools can provide critical information that can help uncover terrorists or thwart mass shootings, ensure the safety of officers and the public, find suspects, and crack open cases. They say that last year's attacks in Paris and San Bernardino, Calif., have only underscored the need for such measures.

Few departments will discuss how - or sometimes if - they are using these tools, but the Fresno police offered a rare glimpse inside a cutting-edge \$600,000 nerve center, even as a debate raged in the city over its technology.

Fresno's Real Time Crime Center is the type of facility that has become the model for high-tech policing nationwide. Similar centers have opened in New York, Houston and Seattle over the past decade.

Fresno's futuristic control room, which operates around the clock, sits deep in its headquarters and brings together a handful of technologies that allow the department to see, analyze and respond to incidents as they unfold across this city of more than 500,000 in the San Joaquin Valley.

On a recent Monday afternoon, the center was a hive of activity. The police radio crackled over loudspeakers - "subject armed with steel rod" - as five operators sat behind banks of screens dialing up a wealth of information to help units respond to the more than 1,200 911 calls the department receives

every day.

On 57 monitors that cover the walls of the center, operators zoomed and panned an array of roughly 200 police cameras perched across the city.

They could dial up 800 more feeds from the city's schools and traffic cameras, and they soon hope to add 400 more streams from cameras worn on officers' bodies and from thousands from local businesses that have surveillance systems.

The cameras were only one tool at the ready. Officers could trawl a private database that has recorded more than 2 billion scans of vehicle licenses plates and locations nationwide. If gunshots were fired, ShotSpotter could triangulate the location using microphones strung around the city. Another program, called Media Sonar, crawled social media looking for illicit activity. Police used it to monitor individuals, threats to schools and hashtags related to gangs.

Fresno police said having the ability to access all that information in real time is crucial to solving crimes.

As officers respond to calls, Beware automatically runs the address. The searches return the names of residents and scans them against a range of publicly available data to generate a color-coded threat level for each person or address: green, yellow or red.

Exactly how Beware calculates threat scores is something that its maker, Intrado, considers a trade secret, so it is unclear how much weight is given to a misdemeanor, felony or threatening comment on Facebook. However, the program flags issues and provides a report to the user.

In promotional materials, Intrado writes

that Beware could reveal that the resident of a particular address was a war veteran suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder, had criminal convictions for assault and had posted worrisome messages about his battle experiences on social media. The "big data" that has transformed marketing and other industries has now come to law enforcement.

Fresno Police Chief Jerry Dyer said officers are often working on scant or even inaccurate information when they respond to calls, so Beware and the Real Time Crime Center give them a sense of what may be behind the next door.

The Fresno City Council called a hearing on Beware in November after constituents raised concerns. Once council member referred to a local media report saying that a woman's threat level was elevated because she was tweeting about a card game titled "Rage," which could be a keyword in Beware's assessment of social media.

(Washington Post)

MONDAY
JANUARY 11, 2016

Jan 11 2016

Fingerprints and DNA are key evidence in identifying criminals, but crime scene investigators of the future may add Wi-fi to their toolkit for tracking down lawbreakers.

If police were able to seize Wi-fi devices at the scene of a crime, they could have access to vital information which could place people at the scene at the time an incident took place.

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Dan Blackman, a PhD candidate at Edith Cowan University in Australia, and technical adviser to Western Australia Police, thinks police are missing out by not using this key source of information.

Routers, for example, capture 'chatter' from smartphones, tablets and wearables, including successful and failed attempts to log onto a network, as well as the time they attempted to connect.

In addition, routers capture a media access control (MAC) address from mobile devices, which are unique identifiers for each phone, laptop or tablet that try to connect to the network.

Mr Blackman described the information from Wi-Fi devices as 'gold' in terms of evidence for court.

Speaking to Science Network WA, he said: "These devices could hold a lot of information, but we're not capturing it."

"If we were to look at it from a purely legal perspective, we might be able to place a specific person at a specific location at a specific time."

However, one of the limiting factors is the often short window of time in which investigators have to secure the information.

Many devices store a limited amount of information and have limited memory capacity.

For older routers, this may be as little as a few hundred kilobytes of data - the equivalent of a few hundred paragraphs of text.

As storing logs isn't a primary necessity for routers, even more modern devices may fill up within minutes.

And for detectives on the scene looking to freeze the data capture process, switching off the device could cause havoc.

"If we power off the Wi-Fi device we lose a heck of a lot of data, which causes issues with seizure," explained Mr Blackman.

One more pitfall awaits once the device is switched off.

As they often contain internal and external antennae for communication, switching off the power can cause the input to switch from one to the other.

"So the moment you disconnect the external aerial, [the internal] fires up, and you still have connectivity to the device," he added. (UK Daily Mail)

TUESDAY JANUARY 12, 2016

Jan 12 2016

SAINT-JEROME, Que. - There will be no criminal trial in the case involving a dramatic helicopter escape from a prison north of Montreal in March 2013.

Two of the six accused pleaded guilty yesterday, becoming the last to do so.

Benjamin Hudon-Barbeau entered a guilty plea to various charges, including hijacking a helicopter and escaping from prison.

The other person to enter a guilty plea was

Billi Beaudoin, who was recruited just a day before the escape.

Beaudoin and Steven Mathieu Marchisio hired a helicopter and ordered the pilot at gunpoint to head to the Saint-Jerome detention centre, where Hudon-Barbeau and Dany Provencal clambered up a rope from the prison yard.

Marchisio pleaded guilty last June and was sentenced to 15 years in prison.

Provencal was given an additional seven years after pleading guilty in November.

Vincent and Samuel Barbeau also pleaded guilty last fall.

Jan 12 2016

GRANDE PRAIRIE, Alta. - A police vehicle was damaged and a pedestrian narrowly missed being hit after a driver in northwestern Alberta was suddenly startled out of an apparent doze behind the wheel by an RCMP officer.

Mounties in Grande Prairie say a 26-year-old woman was slouched in a truck outside a convenience store Monday afternoon when an officer tried to wake her up.

She quickly reversed the truck and slammed into a cruiser before she drove over a snowbank and narrowly missed a pedestrian before speeding away in the wrong direction.

Officers pursued her for a short distance but lost sight of the truck before they caught sight of it again soon after.

The driver was outside the vehicle and tried banging on the door of nearby home when police arrived, but she was arrested without incident and no one was hurt.

Tara Lee McInnis of Grande Prairie remains in custody on numerous charges, including vehicle theft stemming from an incident last month.

Jan 12 2016

A L'Isle-Verte, Que., family who stayed by a stranger's hospital bedside overnight in a case of mistaken identity is demanding a public letter of apology from provincial police.

Last week, provincial police called Roland Lafrance's family to tell them he had been seriously injured in a fall and had been transferred to a Quebec City hospital.

Police had relied on identification by passersby after discovering a man who had been badly injured. Lafrance's sisters rushed to the hospital and tended to their brother for hours.

It was only after receiving a call from Lafrance himself that they realized they were caring for a stranger.

Now they'd like the Sûreté du Québec to issue a letter of public apology for the error and to reimburse them for the cost of getting to and staying in Quebec City.

"I find them very arrogant," Daisy Boucher Lafrance, Roland Lafrance's niece, said of provincial police.

"I sincerely believe out of respect for the family and as an apology, the SQ has to at least reimburse my family for the useless

expenses and issue a public letter of apology."

Since going public about the mix-up, Boucher Lafrance says her family has been bombarded with people making fun of them for not immediately realizing it was not Roland in the hospital bed.

"My mom's legs are still shaking from all the negative comments we've received," Boucher Lafrance said.

"[My mom] and aunt really thought it was my uncle. On top of it, the man's hospital bracelet had my grandparents' names on it."

Boucher Lafrance says the man's face wasn't completely visible.

"When the police, doctors say it's your brother...you finally tell yourself it is him, even with some doubts," she said. (CBC News)

Jan 12 2016

The head of the RCMP in Alberta is raising the alarm about stolen guns after the number of firearm thefts reported to RCMP in the province swelled by more than 20 per cent in 2015.

There are currently 10,000 guns listed stolen or missing in Alberta RCMP jurisdictions. The number of stolen firearms reported to RCMP has more than doubled since 2012.

"In my day, it was exceptional to find a firearm in anything, and I was in drug squad," said Marianne Ryan, commanding officer of the RCMP in Alberta. "Even in a drug warrant search, it was exceptional to find a gun, but now we expect it and we need to prepare for it. Even in a traffic stop, we need to prepare for 'what if there's a firearm in the vehicle'."

There were 1,300 guns reported stolen in RCMP jurisdictions in Alberta in 2015 - more than three each day - not including those reported stolen in Calgary and Edmonton. Those cities are also seeing more guns, and more gun crime. There were 94 shootings in Calgary in 2015, nearly a 100-per-cent increase from the year before.

"From a public safety perspective, I really believe this is hitting very close to everyone's home," Ryan says.

While the Edmonton Police Service doesn't keep specific statistics on gun thefts, a spokesman says 1,804 guns came into police possession last year, including firearms used in crimes, found, or voluntarily surrendered. That number - an increase of nearly 30 per cent since the previous year - includes 130 guns seized from one man alleged to be part of the anti-government Freeman on the Land movement. A self-professed Freeman shot and killed Edmonton police officer Const. Daniel Woodall in June 2015.

Speaking to media during a press conference about city homicides late last month, Staff Sgt. Shawna Grimes said guns were used in nearly half of Edmonton's homicides in 2015, and that officers are encountering more firearms in other investigations, as well.

"For our front-line patrol guys, they are

seeing a lot more guns coming off the street,” she said. “They are dealing with them much more frequently than I did when I first started my career 20 years ago...”

“They are a lot more common for us to be pulling over vehicles or doing search warrants and finding them in houses.”

Calgary police Staff Sgt. Quinn Jacques said there may occasionally be a crime - such as a domestic homicide - perpetrated with a lawfully-owned and purchased firearm, but it's rare. Instead, most guns used in offences are 'crime guns,' obtained through theft or smuggled into the country. In many cases, the guns have their serial numbers filed off, making their provenance a mystery.

“Nearly all gun crime involves stolen or illicitly-obtained guns,” Jacques says. “I don't think a day goes by that we don't come into contact with firearms. We're not bluffing by saying we are concerned.”

Guns are stolen in residential break-ins and in targeted retail heists.

Ryan said 40 per cent of the guns stolen in RCMP jurisdictions last year were taken from vehicles. Others are stolen from garages, barns, sheds and houses. From there, they are sold and traded, stashed, hidden. They turn up in different provinces and different cities, different crimes, often many years later. In one case this year, RCMP found 92 stolen guns hidden in the walls of a tool shed.

Of the 52 guns stolen during a break-in at the Wholesale Sports store in Regina in Dec. 11, 2011, five turned up in a drug bust in Calgary in 2013, and another was found abandoned in a Calgary basement by a landlord cleaning a property. Two more were picked up by police during a traffic stop in Winnipeg in 2014, and another turned up in Calgary later that year. The latest was found in Toronto in January 2015. The other 42 are still missing.

(Edmonton Journal)

Jan 12 2016

EDMONTON - Court documents show an RCMP undercover operation against a double murder suspect involved a paid informant.

New documents filed with the court say RCMP did not disclose to the Crown prosecutor the information, which included statements, letters, and documents showing how much the informant was paid.

Travis Vader is charged with two counts of first-degree murder in the deaths of Alberta seniors Lyle and Marie McCann in July 2010.

RCMP quickly named Travis Vader as a person of interest in the case although it took nearly two years for them to charge him with two counts of first-degree murder.

The charges were stayed in 2014, just a few weeks before the case was set to go before a jury when the Crown says it realized Mounties hadn't disclosed all evidence in the case.

The charges were reactivated in December 2014 and a new trial before a judge alone is to start in March.

(Global Edmonton)

Jan 12 2016

The Ontario Human Rights Commission is challenging a Toronto police practice that keeps the names of traumatized officers who committed suicide off the memorials dedicated to cops who died on the job.

In a rare move, the commission has filed a claim to the Ontario Human Rights Tribunal, alleging the Toronto force is discriminating against officers who develop Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) then take their own lives, because their deaths are not recorded on the Toronto Police Memorial Wall.

Currently, an officer who commits suicide after developing PTSD on the job would not be named alongside comrades killed in the line of duty, either on the Memorial Wall at the Toronto Police College or on the Honour Roll wall at Toronto police headquarters.

Toronto police should be treating these deaths “with the same degree of recognition and respect as officers who lose their lives by reason of physical injury,” the OHRC wrote in a recent statement announcing its claim against Toronto police.

“By refusing to memorialize officers who take their life because of PTSD from the job, it essentially perpetuates that stigma that this is not as important or seen as in the same light as physical injuries,” Renu Mandhane, OHRC commissioner, said in an interview Monday.

The current memorial wall “is symbolic of the stigma that officers with mental health issues still face in the police force,” she said.

Meaghan Gray, a spokesperson with Toronto Police, said the service could not comment on the claim because the matter is currently before the tribunal.

The OHRC's claim stems from the suicide of Toronto police Staff Sgt. Edward Adamson. Son of former Toronto police chief Harold Adamson, Adamson witnessed the 1980 shooting death of fellow officer Const. Michael Sweet during a botched robbery and hostage-taking.

As a sergeant with the Emergency Task Force, Adamson responded to the hostage-taking, which was inside a Toronto restaurant, but was ordered by a senior officer to stand down. While he and his team waited outside, Adamson could hear the severely injured officer calling for help.

Sweet lay bleeding for more than an hour before Adamson decided - “at great risk to himself,” according to the claim - to storm the building and rescue Sweet. But the young officer died in hospital, leaving a wife and three daughters.

Adamson developed PTSD as a result and never recovered. In 2005, he walked into a motel room, surrounded himself with news



pings about Sweet's death, then committed suicide.

Adamson's widow and daughter successfully fought to have his death recognized by the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board as “on duty” because it resulted from his PTSD.

The family also asked Toronto police to add Adamson's name to the Memorial Wall, to no avail. Former police chief Bill Blair did strike an advisory committee to determine criteria for inclusion on the wall, but none have been approved to date, according to OHRC's claim.

Adamson's family then filed an application to the human rights tribunal, but their claim was unsuccessful because it was found his estate did not have standing.

Mandhane said the commission decided to make use of its “exceptional, extraordinary” power under the Human Rights Code to initiate its own application. The move was made in part because of the potential to change not just Toronto police policy on the memorial wall, but the policies of police services across the country.

“We would hope that the Toronto Police Service would show leadership that then other police forces might see,” Mandhane said.

Mandhane adds she is not sure if there are other Toronto police officers whose PTSD-driven suicides should be added to the memorial, because some families may not want to come forward until the issue is resolved.

“It's kind of a chicken-and-egg thing,” she said.

Heidi Rogers says she would like to see the name of her late husband, Sgt. Richard (Buck) Rogers, added to the memorial wall. The former Toronto police officer committed suicide in July 2014, after complaining openly of severe depression, anxiety and bullying at work.

The 24-year veteran wrote “I blame the Toronto police for putting me in this state,” on a note he left on his computer, according to Rogers.

Before her husband's death, Rogers says she would have believed that the wall should only memorialize those officers who died at the hands of another person during a shift. She has since had a change of heart, she said.

(Toronto Star)

Jan 12 2016

Rene Berger, Chief of the West Grey Police Service has announced his retirement. He will retire on August 31, 2016 after 11 1/2 years as Chief of the Service.

Berger has worked for a number of police agencies since 1979 including Meaford, Thornbury, Hanover, Chatham-Kent and West Grey. Berger is the recipient of the Police Officer Exemplary Service Medal and sits on the OACP and CACP Traffic Committees.



Jan 12 2016

Fredericton Police Force Chief Leanne Fitch is being investigated by the New Brunswick Police Commission, the city's chief administrative officer has confirmed.

"I can confirm that I have received a complaint against the police chief and that the complaint has been handed over to the police commission for followup and that they will be investigating," Chris MacPherson stated in an email to CBC News on Tuesday.

"That is as much as I can say at this point."

The nature of the complaint that led to the investigation by the independent oversight body has not been disclosed.

Steve Roberge, executive director of the commission, declined to comment.

The commission investigates and resolves citizens' complaints relating to the conduct of police officers, according to its website.

It also looks into any other aspect of police services, including the review of police force adequacy in New Brunswick.

Force spokesperson Alycia Bartlett also declined to comment, citing the ongoing investigation.

Fitch has been the chief of the Fredericton Police Force since June 2013, making her Atlantic Canada's first female police chief. (CBC News) Jan 12 2016

EDMONTON - Police union president Maurice Brodeur said the Edmonton Police Service is facing a double edged sword of retiring experienced officers and difficulty recruiting new ones.

Brodeur said around 15 years ago, driven by a need to cut costs during tough economic times, experienced officers were replaced by more affordable new recruits.

"That hurt us for years," said Brodeur. "We lost homicide detectives, robbery detectives, a lot of guys in major crimes that had a lifetime of skills and knowledge. We lost them, and we had to start over again."

After Brodeur said a population boom in the 1970s led to a mass hiring of new police officers and "started us on this roller coaster," those experienced officers are retiring, and Edmonton police are once again facing the challenge of replacing them.

"It takes a lot of years to replace that," said Brodeur.

Last year, 40 Edmonton police officers retired. The year before that, 43 officers retired and in 2013, 47 officers retired.

Brodeur said Edmonton police officers have an average of 28 years of experience when they retire, experience that is hard to replace.

Not only are experienced officers retiring, Brodeur said, but some are being head-hunted by private industry luring officers away from police work with the promise of solid salaries and less stress.

"We have a highly developed skill set, and we are very sought after," said Brodeur.

Two of Edmonton's top cops, Kevin Galvin and Darcy Strang - both with 28 years experience, are being hired on by the Edmonton Oilers Entertainment Group.

Exacerbating this is an ongoing issue with recruiting, with Brodeur saying policing in Edmonton is facing a branding issue.

Images of police violently clashing with civilians in the United States has had an effect on the perception of local police, said Brodeur.

Putting your life on the line, even on evenings, weekends and holidays, Brodeur said, can be a tough sell, but what he believes is missing is the sense of nobility in keeping the city safe.

(Edmonton Sun)

Jan 12 2016

The Atlantic Police Academy is using a new simulator with 3D capabilities to help prepare its cadets for the stressful situations they'll likely face on the streets.

The simulator features more than 600 real life scenarios where cadets can use a range of weapons including pepper spray, stun guns and firearms.

"What we do is reality-based training," explained instructor Rick Blouin.

"Because it's a very short period of time ... they're here for five months ... The more they can do, the better they become."

Cadets used to practice using actors and scripts, but the 3D simulator offers a much more hands-on experience.

"This is about as close to reality as you can get," said Atlantic Police Academy executive director Edgar MacLeod. "So it's a great training tool."

The weapons the cadets use are real but they're synched to the program to fire lasers instead of live ammunition. The scenarios are based on real situations and the actors onscreen are all involved in law enforcement.

Instructors say cadets learn more than just how to fire the weapons - they also learn when not to deploy weapons, even in high stress situations.

Instructor Wayne Rudderham said the academy will continue to use scenario training with actors who can give the cadets live feedback, but he said the 3D scenarios will give cadets more practice.

"The scenarios on the simulator are quick, they're short," he said. "It's going to allow the cadets to have more screen time."

"The more their minds are thinking of how to de-escalate or solve a problem the better off they will be when they hit the streets."

According to Rudderham, the academy is the first Canadian customer for the American company that produces the simulator, at a price tag of just over \$100,000.

WEDNESDAY
JANUARY 13, 2016

Jan 13 2016

LIMA, Ohio - A man Ohio police say sent them a selfie because he didn't like the mugshot they were using has been arrested in the Florida panhandle.

Lima, Ohio, police say Donald "Chip" Pugh was arrested Tuesday in Century, Florida, and is being held on another warrant out of Georgia.

Police in Ohio say Pugh also is wanted for failing to appear in court and is a person of interest in several other cases.

Lima police say Pugh sent them a picture of himself in a sport coat and sunglasses along with a message stating, "Here is a better photo that one is terrible."

The police department has posted on its Facebook page a new mugshot of a smiling Pugh after his arrest in Florida.

Pugh can't be reached for comment while he's in custody.

Jan 13 2016

TRACADIE-SHEILA, N.B. - More than 100 people marched through Tracadie-Sheila in New Brunswick yesterday to pay tribute to a local businessman shot dead a year ago during a police drug investigation that went awry.

The RCMP have charged two Bathurst City Police officers in the death of 51-year-old Michel Vienneau, who was shot in his vehicle near the Bathurst train station on January 12th, 2014.

The Mounties have said their investigation revealed that Vienneau was not involved in criminal activity.

Family friend Camille McLaughlin says the march was organized as a memorial for a good neighbour and as a protest against the way local police have acted.

Jan 13 2016

WELLAND, Ont. - A Niagara Regional Police officer has been suspended with pay after being arrested on multiple criminal charges.

Police say they were called to a home in Welland, Ont., Tuesday afternoon, where they arrested one of their colleagues.

Const. Wayne Brown is charged with break, enter and commit assault.

Police say Brown is a 15-year veteran of the force currently working as a uniformed patrol officer.

Brown was held in custody and was expected to be in court later Wednesday for a bail hearing.

Jan 13 2016

WINNIPEG - Manitoba is setting up a task force to look at problems associated with the drug fentanyl.

Attorney General Gord Mackintosh and Health Minister Sharon Blady are scheduled

to make the announcement later today.

Fentanyl has been blamed for more than 650 deaths across Canada in the last six years.

The opioid is used as a painkiller for terminally ill cancer patients and is 100 times more powerful than heroin.

Police and health officials say the drug poses a serious threat to public safety across North America.

Ontario recently passed a private-member's bill that forces people who take the drug through a skin patch to turn in their used patch before getting a new one.

Jan 13 2016

Sudbury city council is asking the provincial government to return an Ontario Provincial Police search and rescue chopper.

The helicopter was once stationed at the Sudbury airport, but it was moved to Orillia last spring to save provincial police money.

At Tuesday's city council meeting, Ward 4 councillor Evelyn Dutrisac introduced a motion to bring the chopper back, saying it belongs in Sudbury because it can serve the north better.

"We're different from southern Ontario," she said. "We have issues: security, safety, weather conditions that are different. And I do hope [the provincial government] will consider bringing back what we had."

There are only two provincial police search and rescue helicopters in Ontario, and both are stationed in Orillia.

"The Barrie area, Orillia area, is the snow belt," Dutrisac continued.

"If you've driven through that area, there might be a lot of snow, a lot of fog. There might be issues that they couldn't get to Sudbury or northern Ontario. So I definitely think that we need to reconsider that decision."

Dutrisac is also seeking support from members of the Federation of Northern Ontario Municipalities.

(CBC News)

Jan 13 2016

MISSISSAUGA, Ont. - The Special Investigations Unit says a Niagara regional police officer was in the wrong, but shouldn't be charged in a collision that left a 51-year-old motorcyclist with a fractured pelvis.

The police watchdog agency says the collision occurred on Aug. 8, 2015, when the officer was attempting to make a left turn at an intersection in Niagara Falls.

The SIU says a motorcycle driven by David Taylor collided with the police cruiser and he was thrown from the bike.

SIU director Tony Loparco says Taylor was operating his motorcycle safely and had the right of way through the intersection at the time of the accident.

But Loparco says he found there are no reasonable grounds to believe the officer committed a criminal offence, though he says it is clear that she failed in her duty to yield to oncoming traffic.



Jan 13 2016

VICTORIA - British Columbia's first police watchdog is resigning from his post at the end of his term.

Richard Rosenthal has informed the provincial government that he won't seek reappointment next January as the chief civilian director of the Independent Investigations Office.

Rosenthal has led the agency since it was established in 2012 as a police oversight body looking into incidents of serious injury or death involving police officers.

Attorney General Suzanne Anton says Rosenthal has been instrumental in establishing the agency and advancing its mandate to ensure that investigations are dealt with promptly, appropriately and independently.

The office was created to eliminate the perception of bias of police investigating other officers.

The IIO was set up after separate inquiries into the deaths of Robert Dziekanski at Vancouver's airport and Frank Paul, who was dropped off in an alley by a Vancouver officer and later found dead of hypothermia.

Jan 13 2016

It turns out police departments in Alberta's two major cities are pretty popular on Twitter.

Twitter Canada released a list of the most-followed local police accounts on Wednesday and Calgary and Edmonton made the top five.

The Calgary Police Service took third spot with 117,000 followers.

The Edmonton Police Service came in fifth with nearly 73,000 followers.

"I think it's a fantastic honour for Edmonton police," EPS' social media coordinator said. "It's not the reason that we do it, but to see us getting recognized for all our great efforts, it's a big honour," Landis Kine Donahue added.

Toronto Police have 188,000 followers and nabbed top spot.

Twitter Canada spokesperson Cam Gordon said the company is seeing more and more police departments encourage officers to engage with citizens by tweeting from their personal accounts.

That is something both Edmonton and Calgary police do well.

"It's one thing to hear from a corporate account, but when you get the personality... it makes such a big difference," Kine Donahue said.

The EPS has seen great response with social media initiatives like Traffic Tuesdays (where a traffic officer answers questions on Twitter), High-flyer Fridays (which showcases the week's worst excessive speeders) and a recent fly-along with the Air 1 helicopter.

(Global News)

THURSDAY
JANUARY 14, 2016



Jan 14 2016

ST. JOHN'S, N.L. - Newfoundland and Labrador's Justice Department says an independent watchdog agency from Nova Scotia is investigating a complaint related to the handling of an investigation by the Royal Newfoundland Constabulary.

The department says the Serious Incident Response Team was asked to investigate in November.

Ron MacDonald, director of the Halifax-based team, would not discuss the nature of the allegations, but said it's a matter that the Justice Department believes is "of significant public interest."

"At this point of the investigation we're not entirely sure exactly which members it does involve," said MacDonald in a phone interview on Thursday. "It's a matter of significance. It does involve allegations of potential criminal conduct."

In a statement, Justice Minister Andrew Parsons said he's unable to comment on the specifics of the allegations while the investigation is underway.

Parsons said once the results of the investigation are public, he will comment in more detail.

He said public confidence in the justice system is paramount to the government.

MacDonald said he will deliver a report to Parsons once the team's investigation is complete.

The Serious Incident Response Team investigates serious incidents that arise involving police in Nova Scotia.

Jan 14 2016

Step aside Snoopy, a new comic book dog is vying for readers attention.

The Legacy of Heroes: Day of the Dog Squad comic book was released by the Edmonton Police Service on Tuesday. It tells the true story of Sgt. Val Vallevand, who started the police department's canine unit over 50 years ago. In the comic, Vallevand's trusty dog Sarge sniffs out suspects and wins over the approval of the skeptical police chief.

Vallevand first pitched the idea of forming a dog squad in 1963, but it didn't go over that well, said friend Sgt. Major Gary Cook.

"The Chief wasn't thrilled with the idea but decided to give Val and his dog Sarge a chance," he said. "There was this reluctance back in those days of using this new tool that was basically untested."

But Vallevand saw the potential in following in the policing paw prints already laid by the RCMP and the Vancouver Police Service.

"He was raised in Saskatchewan, a farm boy," said Cook. "He had this passion for policing and, at the same time, dogs and animals so he saw the RCMP, he saw Vancouver [and] other agencies take this very innovative road of using a canine in capturing the bad guys."

Sarge eventually proved his worth when an investigator suggested Vallevand take him into an abandoned warehouse to find a suspect's hiding spot.

"Within moments after searching this huge warehouse they had the bad guy," he said, "The proof was in the pudding as it were."

The illustrated tale is a fitting tribute for Vallevand, a self-taught artist, who died in 1994.

One of his paintings, a self-portrait of him and Sarge responding to a call, still hangs on the wall at the EPS kennels, which are also named in Vallevand's honour.

Day of the Dog Squad is the third installment in the Legacy of Heroes comic series about EPS history. It was written by Jeff Awid and illustrated by Jared Robinson.

(CBC News)

Jan 14 2016

MISSISSAUGA, Ont. - The Special Investigations Unit says a Toronto police officer is facing charges after its probe into an early morning incident last year at an east-end parking lot.

The police watchdog agency says its investigation - which included video evidence as well as 911 call recordings - found that a man drove his vehicle into a parking lot early on Oct. 31, 2015.

The SIU says that moments after, a police cruiser drove into the parking lot and stopped behind the man's vehicle, and there was an interaction between a police officer and the 47-year-old man.

The officer then left the scene and, sometime later, paramedics arrived and the man was taken to hospital.

Sgt. Robert Goudie is facing charges of assault causing bodily harm, and failure to provide the necessities of life, and is to appear in court on Feb. 23.

Jan 14 2016

VANCOUVER - A coroner's jury examining the death of a 58-year old woman in more than a year ago is recommending more training for police.

Cheryl Ann Cowan suffered a heart attack after she was arrested for breaking into her former husband's home in December of 2014.

She died after spending more than a week on life support.

A three-day inquest has determined Cowan's history of abusing alcohol and a lack of oxygen to her brain were factors in her death.

Witnesses also testified Cowan had no medical attention for several minutes after she was found unconscious in a police wagon.

Non-binding recommendations made by the five-member jury include more first aid training for police and jail employees, as well as the installation of video cameras in vehicles transporting suspects.

(Roundhouse Radio)

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