

BLUE LINE NEWSWEEK

A CHRONICLE OF NEWS FOR THE CANADIAN LAW ENFORCEMENT COMMUNITY

April 19, 2013 – Vol. 18 No. 16

Executive Digest

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BLUE LINE NEWSWEEK

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Vancouver riot probe techniques may help Boston



Apr 17 2013

VANCOUVER - A U.S. forensic video analyst says investigators in Boston may follow the example of Vancouver police, analyzing photographic evidence to track down who is responsible for the explosions at the Boston Marathon on Monday.

Vancouver Police used new image analysis technology to create a searchable database of 30,000 YouTube videos and Facebook images to identify the Stanley Cup rioters.

“Vancouver is actually the model for these kinds of investigations going forward,” said Grant Fredericks, who led a team of 52 analysts in processing video collected during the riot investigation.

“The most prolific source of evidence available for police generally comes from video evidence,” said Fredericks.

More than 1,000 law enforcement officers from different agencies have been assigned to the Boston investigation. Fredericks says the Law Enforcement and Emergency Services Video Association has already been contacted by investigators.

“Vancouver set the standard, and I know Boston is looking at that standard,” he said.

“The FBI has already been in contact with LEVA. They are interested in the Vancouver model. They want to see how well it worked, what technology is available, and they want to look at whether it’s an option for them with

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this investigation.”

Authorities in Boston are now asking witnesses to share any photos and videos taken from near the finish line to help investigators gather clues. Fredericks said that kind of evidence is key.

“There is no doubt that there are hundreds of people walking around with video images of the suspect or suspects who placed those explosive devices,” he said. “They will be pursuing witnesses all around the world.”

The challenge, Fredericks said, is tracking down all the race participants and witnesses who have already left the United States.

Runners returning to Vancouver on Tuesday reported police at the Boston airport were asking departing passengers if they had any video or pictures on their cameras or phones that may have captured some photographic evidence.

Three people were killed and more than 170 were wounded when two devices exploded near the finish line of the annual race on Monday.

(CBC News)

WEDNESDAY APRIL 10, 2013

Apr 10 2013

WINNIPEG - Winnipeg police Chief Devon Clunis says he wants to rid the city of its dubious distinction as “Canada’s crime capital” in the next decade, but he said adding more officers is not the only solution.

Clunis, who was sworn in as the city’s top police officer in November, said he has heard a clear message from Winnipeggers in the half a dozen meetings he has had with groups since he took over as police chief.

“What they’re saying is they would like to see more beat patrols in their respective

areas, a greater presence of the cadets in some areas,” he said.

“The citizens themselves are also saying that the issues that are in the communities [are] not just a policing problem. It is all the social issues that we’re talking about.”

Clunis has been focusing on crime prevention and the importance of police working with community groups to tackle the root causes of crime.

Clunis said more police officers have been assigned to walk the beat.

However, he said there won’t be any major policing announcements until the end of May, when an operational review will be complete.

(CBC News)

THURSDAY APRIL 11, 2013

Apr 11 2013

MONTREAL - Quebec’s appeals court is upholding a lower court decision to free 31 Hells Angels and associates because it would have taken too long to put them on trial.

In a two-to-one decision, the province’s highest court has rejected the Crown’s attempt to appeal the controversial decision.

Superior Court Justice James Brunton ordered the release of the 31 in 2011 after he decided it would take too long for their trial dates to come around.

He stressed at the time his decision had nothing to do with guilt or innocence - but with the fact the justice system was ill-equipped to deal with the complex file.

While two of the appeals court justices upheld Brunton’s decision, one agreed with the Crown that the trial judge erred by releasing the accused.

They had been arrested as part of a massive police operation in 2009.

Charges against the more than 150 accused included murder, gangsterism, drug trafficking and conspiracy.

Some have pleaded guilty while others - as many as 100 - are still awaiting trial.

The 31 who were released were not facing murder charges but were looking at charges of gangsterism and drug trafficking.

Since Brunton’s decision, the federal government has moved to help the justice system manage megatrials better.

Apr 11 2013

After 31 years of policing, Waterloo Region Police Service Deputy Chief Brent Thomlison is set to join the ranks of the retired.

Thomlison, who worked in the deputy chief role for the last five years, has been with the service since 1982, starting his career as a front-line officer at the Cambridge division.

The deputy chief made the announcement Thursday morning.

In addition to his many roles as an officer in the region, Thomlison served on the training and youth committees of the Ontario Association of

Chiefs of Police and was a member of the Community Safety and Crime Prevention Council of Waterloo Region.

(Cambridge Times)

Apr 11 2013

ST. JOHN’S - The RCMP say funding cuts in the provincial budget won’t affect front-line policing in Newfoundland and Labrador.

\$3.9 million was cut from the RCMP budget so the Mounties have decided to decrease positions or create vacancies in administrative and operational positions throughout the province. The force says the majority of jobs affected are located at their provincial headquarters in St. John’s.

Six police officer positions will be impacted along with other positions in civilian support roles. They say there are some retirements and vacant positions which won’t be filled. Transfers, normal attrition, or other administrative processes will be available to all employees impacted by these changes.

The force says no front-line policing services or positions will be reduced, except in Buchans. The one person detachment in that community will be eliminated. Buchans, Buchans-Junction and Millertown will be policed from Grand Falls-Windsor. RCMP are meeting with the town on Friday to discuss the future of policing in the area.

The RCMP continues to assess its options and plans for the budget reduction.

The provincial government has cut \$3.9 million to the RCMP budget. It has resulted in a decision to close the one-officer detachment in Buchans. The detachment will be phased out of service over the coming months, and there will be further consultation with the community to discuss service delivery expectations. Buchans, Buchans-Junction and Millertown will be policed from Grand Falls-Windsor.

The Department of Justice has also \$2 million to the RNC’s funding.

The Constabulary says several middle management positions of Non-Commissioned officers or NCO’s will be eliminated through attrition, with no effect to front-line policing or services.

The RCMP signed a new contract with the province last March for the next 20 years. The RNC ratified a new collective agreement with the province last week.

(VOCM)

FRIDAY APRIL 12, 2013

Apr 12 2013

EDMONTON - Alberta jail guards say a massive new remand centre set to open in Edmonton isn’t a safe workplace.

The Alberta Union of Provincial Employees says it has found five pages of design flaws after touring the facility, which will eventually hold up to two-thousand inmates.

The union says it is also not satisfied with

some of the new procedures that will be used at the remand centre, which will see guards work with inmates much more closely.

Union president Guy Smith has asked the province to delay the transfer of the first batch of 800 inmates from the old remand centre until changes are made.

Smith says the union has also filed a formal occupational health and safety complaint.

Alberta Justice says it is aware of the complaint and will work with the union to deal with safety concerns, but the inmate transfers will go ahead this month as scheduled.

Apr 12 2013

FREDERICTON - The RCMP has a new commanding officer in New Brunswick.



rcmp-grc.gc.ca

Assistant commissioner Roger Brown is a 32-year veteran of the force.

He takes over from assistant commissioner Wayne Lang, who is retiring.

Brown has served as commanding officer at the RCMP training academy in Regina since 2008.

He has also held a number of other roles, working in Newfoundland and Labrador, Quebec and Ottawa.

Nearly 1,200 people are employed by the RCMP in New Brunswick, where the RCMP is responsible for policing 70 per cent of the population.

Apr 12 2013

EDMONTON - The Alberta Court of Appeal says the case of a former army sniper who was fired from his job with the Edmonton Police Service must be reviewed again.

Const. Rob Furlong, a decorated veteran of the war in Afghanistan, was fired last year for urinating on a fellow officer and other misconduct.

The Law Enforcement Review Board ruled in December that the punishment was too harsh and ordered him reinstated with a temporary demotion.

Police Chief Rod Knecht filed an appeal that argued the decision to dismiss Furlong was reasonable.

The Appeal Court, saying the review board made mistakes in its ruling, sent the case back to the board Friday for reconsideration.

"There may be cases where the seriousness of the misconduct, or other relevant factors or the combination of factors, mandate dismissal even if the restoration of the

relationship between the officer and the police service might be possible," the justices wrote.

An official with the review board said a hearing will be scheduled as soon as possible to review the case.

Furlong, a former corporal who served with the Edmonton-based Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry, was lauded in 2002 for shooting a Taliban fighter at a range of 2.43 kilometres - the longest sniper kill recorded at the time.

He continues to be suspended from the police service without pay.

In its December ruling, the review board characterized Furlong's conduct during a night of heavy drinking following a police training event as "horseplay" that went too far.

It also noted that Furlong had entered an alcohol treatment facility.

The Edmonton Police Service and Edmonton Police Association, which represents officers, were reviewing the Appeal Court ruling and were not available for comment.

Apr 12 2013

MONTREAL - A judge has ordered accused killer Luka Rocco Magnotta to stand trial on a first-degree murder charge in the death of Chinese student Jun Lin.

Quebec court Judge Lori-Renee Weitzman has concluded there is enough evidence to send Magnotta to trial.

Her decision in Montreal today comes after a lengthy preliminary hearing that featured 32 Crown witnesses.

The defence presented no witnesses.

Evidence presented at the hearing is subject to a publication ban.

In the event Weitzman ordered a trial, Magnotta's legal team wanted the charge to be lessened to second-degree murder.

Apr 12 2013

HALIFAX - An investigation unit has cleared three RCMP officers of wrongdoing in a case that saw a man fatally shoot himself as he spoke to police.

The Serious Incident Response Team, or SIRT, issued a report today on the incident in Mill Cove, N.S., last Nov. 12.

The team says there was no indication the officers did anything to prompt the unidentified man to shoot himself and, instead, tried to dissuade him from committing suicide.

The three-page report says two RCMP officers were called to a trailer and found the man sitting on the ground outside, with a shotgun pointed at himself.

The report says the officers used appropriate measures to try to help the man, who repeatedly told them he wanted to kill himself.

Apr 12 2013

TORONTO - A mentally ill man who was found not criminally responsible for killing a Toronto police officer with a snow plow will have a hearing to determine his status later this month.

A jury found that Richard Kachkar, 46, was mentally disturbed and couldn't appreciate what he was doing when he killed Sgt. Ryan Russell, 35, two years ago.

A hearing before the Ontario Review Board, which manages people found not criminally responsible in the province, has been scheduled for April 26 and will take place in a Toronto courtroom.

The board will determine whether Kachkar will be sent to a mental hospital or released into the community.

If he is sent to a hospital the board will review Kachkar's case annually and only when they decide he is no longer a significant threat to the safety of the public will they release him.

Under changes proposed by the Conservative government, people found not criminally responsible and designated a high-risk offender could have their time between hearings lengthened to three years.

Apr 12 2013

CALGARY - The RCMP is celebrating a time in its history when the "second man" at many remote police outposts was actually a woman.

A ceremony Friday recognized 23 women who supported their husbands' careers at isolated and one-man posts, primarily in Western Canada and the North, from the 1940s to the 1970s.

Bob Kells, president of the RCMP Veterans' Association Calgary and a retired superintendent, said it was common during that time for areas that were geographically large but with sparse populations to be policed by a single officer. Wives became a second pair of hands.

"These women provided such services as answering the door and the phone, taking messages, cooking meals for prisoners, cleaning the office, typing reports and answering the radio," Kells said at the event in Calgary.

"For all those years that these women provided this invaluable service, they were never formally recognized. They provided the service out of loyalty to their husbands."

Lynn Armstrong, 71, moved to six different communities in Canada's North with her husband, Jim, from 1966 to 1979.

She remembers Fort Resolution and Fort Smith in the Northwest Territories and Dawson City and Whitehorse in the Yukon. Her worst memory is of Frobisher Bay, now known as Iqaluit in Nunavut.

"It was barren and there was hardly any summer. The kids walked and came home in the dark," Armstrong said.

"You were totally isolated. There was no way in or out and you got a year's supply of groceries on the ship."

In 2004, Ruth Lee-Knife compiled some of the stories about Mountie wives in a book called "When the Second Man Was a Woman." The 21 profiles focused on wives, including her mother, from RCMP detachments in Saskatchewan.

"That term 'second man' was coined by members of the force. It was just sort of a humorous take," said Lee-Knight, who mar-

ried an RCMP officer herself.

"They would refer to the wife of the man in charge, the only man there, as the second man. It just became folklore."

RCMP Commissioner Bob Paulson presented "second man" commemorative brooches Friday to the women. He said it's about time their stories came out.

"Nobody knows about it and it's high time we do. The problem was how to approach it," said Paulson.

"Nobody wanted money. What they wanted was recognition and I think events like this one go a long way to satisfying that expectation," he added.

"These are remarkable stories to have these women being jailers and sometimes taking statements and sometimes talking to suspects and waiting for their husbands to show up, so they can be arrested."

So far 470 women have been identified to receive the brooches.

Paulson said Friday's ceremony was the first of many to be held across the country.

Apr 12 2013

VANCOUVER - A former Mountie has launched a lawsuit in B.C. Supreme Court saying the RCMP failed to provide proper counselling and treatment for the trauma he experienced on the job.

James Ward, who was once an officer in Surrey, B.C., claims he was diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder two years ago after responding to numerous suicides, horrific car crashes and civilian deaths.

His lawsuit claims RCMP breached his employment contract because it either didn't act on, or didn't have sufficient measures in place to adequately treat and counsel officers after they experience trauma on duty.

Ward is jointly suing the federal and provincial Crown, which the lawsuit states are typically liable for wrongdoing by the RCMP.

While Ward's lawsuit states he was looking for both punitive and aggravated damages, no dollar figure was mentioned.

Nothing has been proven in court. The defence has yet to file its own statement in court and a media spokesman with the force declined to comment on the case.

Apr 12 2013

MONTREAL - Additional charges have been laid against a 43-year-old man accused of counselling people to kill a high-profile Montreal police officer.

Anatoliy Vdovin was supposed to appear for a bail hearing in Montreal today but instead had charges of intimidating and harassing a peace officer filed against him.

Vdovin's bail hearing was put off until April 18 during his brief court appearance.

Authorities say Vdovin was arrested Wednesday in connection with alleged threats against Cmdr. Ian Lafreniere, the head of communications for the police department.

Montreal police say they were tipped off by citizens who noticed alleged Internet threats against Lafreniere.

Police say the charges have nothing to do with the case of a woman who was charged with criminal harassment last week after she posted a photo online of graffiti showing Lafreniere with a bullet in his head.

Jennifer Pawluck was released under conditions and ordered to appear before a judge at a later date.

Apr 12 2013

A Quesnel RCMP officer has been charged with assault following an independent review of an October 2012 incident that took place in a jail cell.

Allan Slaney of the Quesnel RCMP detachment now faces one charge of assault causing bodily harm.

The incident took place Oct. 16, 2012, after which the New Westminster Police Department was tapped to conduct an independent review of what happened.

NWPD announced Friday the New Westminster Regional Crown had approved the charge after reviewing a final report from that followup investigation.

Police have released very few details on the incident and the case, noting the matter is now before the courts.

The NWPD has only said that the incident involved a Quesnel RCMP officer and took place in a jail cell.

(The Province)



Apr 13 2013

Authorities probing Canadian links to January's terrorist attack in Algeria are trying to track down a fourth Ontario man for possible extremist connections.

Independent sources in Canadian security and government tell The Canadian Press that authorities are investigating Mujahid Enderi, who goes by the anglicized name "Ryan."

They say Enderi is believed to have travelled overseas around the same time as three other young men, all of whom are from London, Ontario.

Two of them (Ali Medlej, Xristos Katsiroubas) died during a siege at an Algerian gas plant.

A third is in a Mauritanian prison but denies any terrorist involvement.

The gas plant siege ended in the deaths of 37 hostages and 29 terrorists.

RCMP Commissioner Bob Paulson would say little Friday about Enderi's involvement in the investigation.

Sources say his whereabouts remain a mystery, but they say there is a connection with the other three Ontario men included in the investigation.

Apr 13 2013

EDMONTON - A sexual assault case that was tossed out after dragging on in

court for years has prompted Alberta's justice minister to change the way prosecutions are handled.

Jonathan Denis apologized yesterday to Danielle Polson of Airdrie, who complained to police about being sexually assaulted beginning when she was nine years old.

However, the charges against her alleged attacker were stayed because of procedural delays that violated his right to a timely trial.

Denis says the changes will include expediting traffic tickets, which take up a lot of time and draw staff from other cases.

He also says there will be administrative changes, including moving trials to other regions rather than have a case thrown out.

Prosecutors will in some cases also be allowed to bump minor cases in favour of more serious ones.

Polson says she's pleased at the changes and although they won't help her, she hopes nobody else has to go through what she's gone through.

Apr 13 2013

VANCOUVER - Family members of northern BC man who was shot by Mounties say they feel a sense of comfort knowing their late son has won the Memorial Cross.



The honour is reserved for soldiers whose deaths are linked to their military service.

Greg Matters was a soldier for 15-years and served in Bosnia before leaving the forces in 2009.

He was battling post-traumatic stress disorder when he was shot and killed during a confrontation with police last September.

His family says Matters wasn't armed and his death is under investigation by an agency that looks into police-involved fatalities in the province.

Earlier this week, Veterans Affairs informed Matters family they would receive the cross.

His sister, Tracey Matters, says the award acknowledges that her brother's death was due to injuries he received while he was a Canadian soldier.



Apr 14 2013

OTTAWA - The Conservative government is ending a seven-year waiver on

gun licence renewal fees next month in an effort to collect about \$18 million annually from firearms owners.



thespec.com

New changes to the firearms regulations were quietly posted in the Canada Gazette on the weekend that restore the \$60 licence fee for non-restricted weapons.

The Conservatives brought in a two-year waiver on the fees in May 2006 and had extended it every year until now.

“The government will not renew the current fee waiver in the current climate of fiscal restraint,” said the Canada Gazette post, dated April 13.

Two other measures that the government says are designed to encourage compliance with firearms regulations will be extended by one year, however.

Gun owners who let their possession-only licences expire have been allowed to re-apply since 2008 without having to pay to go through a firearms safety course, as the regulations require. That break continues to May 2014.

And an amnesty on criminal charges for failing to licence or register non-restricted weapons for people “who were taking steps to comply with these requirements” has also been extended.

The Canada Gazette notes that although the long-gun registry was ended by legislation last year, it remains in effect by court order in Quebec. And the amnesty provisions are pitched as a means of keeping Quebecers registering those rifles and shotguns.

“Accordingly, the extension of the Amnesty Order would encourage compliance by owners of non-restricted firearms with the licensing requirements across Canada, and in Quebec, with the registration of non-restricted firearms,” states the government document.

The Conservatives ended the long-gun registry last spring for a savings of about \$2 million annually, a figure confirmed in documents prepared for Public Safety Minister Vic Toews but never publicized by the government.

Last September the Conservatives began phasing back in the higher \$80 licence fee for restricted and prohibited weapons that had been waived.

In May 2012 Conservative MP Candice Bergen told the House of Commons that the fee waivers were being phased out, but she framed it as the government providing “extra time” for people to renew their five-year licences at no cost.

“This is good news for law-abiding gun owners and good news for taxpayers,” she said at the time.

According to the Canada Gazette, non-restricted gun licences alone are expected to bring in \$18 million in additional revenue each year.

MONDAY
APRIL 15, 2013

Apr 15 2013

HALIFAX - Nova Scotia Premier Darrell Dexter says the provincial government will launch a review of the original police investigation in the Rehtaeh Parsons case.

But Dexter says the review will not pro-

ceed until the Mounties conclude their current investigation into the alleged sexual assault of the 17-year-old girl.

Dexter says there will also be a review of how the Halifax Regional School Board handled allegations that Rehtaeh was bullied and another of the province’s Public Prosecution Service.

The RCMP announced Friday that it was reopening its investigation into the alleged sexual assault after receiving new and credible information.

Prior to that, the RCMP said they concluded there was insufficient evidence to lay charges in the case after consulting the Public Prosecution Service.



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Dexter says the government is still considering who would lead the reviews.

Rehtaeh's family says she killed herself after months of bullying that stemmed from a sexual assault by four boys in November 2011.

TUESDAY
APRIL 16, 2013

Apr 16 2013

BOSTON - The two bombs that ripped through the crowds at the Boston Marathon, killing three people and wounding more than 170, were fashioned out of pressure cookers and packed with shards of metal, nails and ball bearings, a person briefed on the investigation said Tuesday.



nfttu.blogspot.com

The details on the apparently crude but deadly explosives emerged as investigators appealed to the public for amateur video and photos that might yield clues, and the chief FBI agent in Boston vowed "we will go to the ends of the Earth" to find those responsible.

A person who spoke on the condition of anonymity because the investigation was still going on said that the explosives were put in 6-litre pressure cookers, placed in black duffel bags and left on the ground. They were packed with shrapnel to inflict maximum carnage, the person said.

The person said law enforcement officials have some of the bomb components but do not yet know what was used to set off the explosives.

A doctor treating the wounded appeared to corroborate the person's account, saying one of the victims was maimed by what looked like ball bearings or BBs. Doctors also said they removed a host of sharp objects from the victims, including nails that were sticking out of one little girl's body.

Across the U.S., from Washington to Los Angeles, police tightened security, monitoring landmarks, government buildings, transit hubs and sporting events. Security was especially tight in Boston, with bomb-sniffing dogs checking Amtrak passengers' luggage at South Station and transit police patrolling with rifles.

Similar pressure-cooker explosives have been used in Afghanistan, India, Nepal and Pakistan, according to a July 2010 joint FBI and Homeland Security intelligence report. Also, one of the three devices used in the May 2010 Times Square attempted bombing was a pressure cooker, the intelligence report said.

"Placed carefully, such devices provide little or no indication of an impending attack," the report said.

The two bombs blew up about 10 seconds and around 100 yards apart Monday near the finish line of the storied, 26.2-mile race, tearing off limbs, knocking people off their feet and leaving the streets spattered with blood and strewn with broken glass. The dead included an 8-year-old boy.

Federal investigators said no one had claimed responsibility for the bombings, which took place on one of the city's biggest civic holidays, Patriots Day.

Gov. Deval Patrick said that contrary to earlier reports, no unexploded bombs were found. He said the only explosives were the

ones that went off.

FBI agents searched an apartment in the Boston suburb of Revere overnight, and investigators were seen leaving with brown paper bags, plastic trash bags and a duffel bag. But it was unclear whether the tenant had anything to do with the attack.

At a news conference, police and federal agents repeatedly appealed for any video, audio and photos taken by marathon spectators, even images that people might not think are significant.

Boston Police Commissioner Edward Davis said investigators also gathered a large number of surveillance tapes from businesses in the area and intend to go through the video frame by frame.



TRAINING

Truth Focused Interviewing

April 23rd & 24th, 9:00 to 4:00

Instructor:

Kevin Byrnes - A Detective with a major GTA police service, an author and facilitator, he has conducted interviews for many police agencies, the FBI and Interpol.

Crisis Intervention for First Responders

April 23rd 9:00 - 4:00

Instructor:

Tom Hart - Retired from Durham Regional Police Service, he is now President of Canadian Critical Incident Inc.

Investigative Strategies

April 23rd 9:00 - 4:00

Instructor:

Dave Perry - Retired Toronto homicide detective and CEO of Investigative Solutions Network

Coping with Secondary Traumatic Stress

April 24, 9:00 - 4:00

Instructor:

Stephanie M. Conn - Registered Clinical Counsellor, Conn Counselling and Consulting and Blue Line Magazine columnist - *Holding the Line*

Economic Crimes:

Detection & Investigation (Project Mouse and Project Kite)

April 24th, 9:00 - 4:00

Instructors:

PROJECT MOUSE:

Police Constable Timothy Trotter,
Toronto Police Service - 14 Division

Detective Constable Michael Kelly,
Toronto Police Service - Financial Crimes Unit

BLANCHARD CASE:

Larry Levasseur CFI, CPP
Senior Investigator at MTS Allstream
Previous: Winnipeg Police Service, Manitoba Hydro

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MONTREAL - Six people were arrested on Tuesday and four search warrants carried out to break up a stolen goods ring selling out of warehouses in Montreal.

Four males and two females age 20 to 47 were picked up. Their names have not been released.

The thefts were of tractor trailers full of goods as diverse as energy drinks, frozen crab, milk cartons, electronics and furniture. The first theft took place in Oct. 2012 from a parking lot in St-Liboire.

"They would steal the merchandise, sell the goods to someone else and then the products were liquidated in warehouses on the island of Montreal," said Sgt. Joyce Kemp with the Sûreté du Québec.

"This investigation has allowed us to solve 23 cases of theft of tractor trailers and their contents."

Kemp said the value of the stolen goods, truck cabs and containers was \$1.5 million.

The police from the Division des enquêtes régionales de la Montérégie worked with the forces in Quebec City, Chaudière Appalaches and le Mauricie, as well as the Montreal police.

The thefts took place in several regions of Quebec and Ontario.

(Montreal Gazette)

Apr 16 2013

TORONTO - Toronto police say they've charged a 27-year-old New York City man with 26 offences arising from the G20 Summit in Toronto in June 2010.

Investigators say Joel Saleem Bitar returned to Canada from the United States voluntarily and surrendered to police on Tuesday.

Bitar - who was wanted on a Canada-wide warrant for G20-related offences - is being held in custody pending a court appearance on Wednesday.

Police allege Bitar used a hammer to smash the windows of a police car, while a police officer was inside the vehicle, and vandalized windows of numerous downtown Toronto banks and shops.

He's also alleged to have thrown a rock at a line of police officers, and smashed the window of a police minivan, causing property damage totalling more than \$400,000.

Bitar faces charges that include 13 counts of mischief over \$5,000, two counts of intimidation of a justice system participant by violence, and five counts of mischief endangering life.

WEDNESDAY APRIL 17, 2013

Apr 17 2013

RED DEER, Alta. - A central Alberta Mountie accused of using excessive force during an arrest has been ordered to stand trial.

Const. Ron Lavallee of the Hobbema de-

tachment is charged with assault causing bodily harm.

His preliminary hearing concluded Wednesday, but no trial date has been set for the 34-year-old officer.

Lavallee, a seven-year veteran of the force, is on medical leave.

He was charged earlier this month after an investigation by a senior member of an independent RCMP unit.

The review was prompted by a complaint that excessive force was used during an arrest in January 2012.

(CKGY, The Canadian Press)

Apr 17 2013

WINNIPEG - Nine of Canada's provinces pressed Wednesday for a national inquiry into missing and murdered aboriginal women across the country.

The action came after a meeting in Winnipeg of aboriginal affairs ministers from every province and territory except British Columbia.

"We jointly call upon the federal government to call a national inquiry into this matter of missing and murdered aboriginal women and girls," said Manitoba's Aboriginal Affairs Minister Eric Robinson, chairman of the working group of the provincial and territorial aboriginal affairs.

British Columbia, where Liberal Premier Christy Clark's party is fighting for re-election, was not represented at the Winnipeg meeting.

The 2012 B.C. Commission of Inquiry into Missing Women was raised by name as a model of best practices in the minister's joint communique yesterday.

The Assembly of First Nations, the Metis National Council, the Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami and the Native Women's Association of Canada have made repeated calls for such a national public inquiry into the cases of 600 aboriginal women across the country.

"This is really significant move," Robinson said. "Every province and territory is doing something on its own but as aboriginal ministers and leaders of national aboriginal organizations, we've never gone down this road together where we're collective in our voice," Robinson said.

Up to now the provinces have shied away from an inquiry, agreeing only to consider a task force, which has a narrower scope of inquiry, at a meeting last fall in Saskatchewan.

As chairman, Robinson said he will make the call to Ottawa in a formal letter on the minister's behalf.

Parliament agreed to appoint a Special Committee on the matter of missing and murdered aboriginal women, but so far the federal government has resisted demands for a national public inquiry.

(Winnipeg Free Press)

THURSDAY APRIL 18, 2013

Apr 18 2013

BOSTON - Investigators were on the hunt Thursday for a man seen in a department-store surveillance video dropping off a bag at the site of the Boston Marathon bombings that killed three people, a Boston politician said.

In what could be a major break in the case, a law enforcement official separately confirmed that authorities have found an image of a potential suspect but don't know his name.

Wednesday's developments - less than 48 hours after the attack that also wounded more than 170 at the world's oldest and most prestigious marathon - marked a possible turning point in a case that has investigators analyzing photos and videos frame by frame for clues to who carried out the twin bombings and why. The footage hasn't been made public.

City Council President Stephen Murphy, who said he was briefed by Boston police, said investigators saw the image on surveillance footage they got from a department store near the finish line, and matched the findings with witness descriptions of someone leaving the scene.

The bombs were crudely fashioned from ordinary kitchen pressure cookers packed with explosives, nails and ball bearings, investigators and others close to the case said. Investigators suspect the devices were then hidden in black duffel bags and left on the ground.

As a result, they were looking for images of someone lugging a dark, heavy bag.

One department store video "has confirmed that a suspect is seen dropping a bag near the point of the second explosion and heading off," Murphy said.

A law enforcement official who spoke to AP on condition of anonymity and was not authorized to discuss the case publicly confirmed only that investigators had an image of a potential suspect whose name was not known to them and who had not been questioned.

The turn of events came with Boston in a state of high excitement over conflicting reports of a breakthrough.

A law enforcement official briefed on the investigation told the AP around midday that a suspect was in custody. The official, who was not authorized to divulge details of the investigation and spoke on condition of anonymity, said the suspect was expected in federal court. But the FBI and the U.S. attorney's office in Boston said no arrests had been made.

By nightfall, there was no evidence anyone was in custody. No one was brought to court. The law enforcement official, who had affirmed there was a suspect in custody even after federal officials denied it, was unable to obtain any further information or explanation.

At least 14 patients remained in critical condition. Dozens of patients have been released from hospitals around the Boston area, and officials at three hospitals that treated some of the most seriously injured said they expect

all their remaining patients to survive.

Compounding Americans' jitters were letters sent to Washington officials, including ones addressed to Obama and a senator, that contained suspicious substances that showed traces of poisonous ricin in initial tests. The letters evoked eerie parallels to the anthrax attacks that followed the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001.

Apr 18 2013

WINDSOR, Ont. - A police chase early Thursday that ended in the death of a motorist has prompted a call to the province's Special Investigations Unit.

The watchdog agency says an Essex County OPP officer tried to initiate a traffic stop at about 12:25 a.m. but the driver failed to stop and a pursuit began.

After a short chase, the vehicle went off the roadway and crashed in a ditch southeast of Windsor.

A 39-year-old man was ejected from vehicle and was taken to a Windsor hospital where he was pronounced dead.

The SIU has assigned three investigators, three forensic investigators and a collision reconstructionist to probe the incident.

Apr 18 2013

EDMONTON - An investigation is underway after a shooting involving police in Edmonton.

Police say the early morning shooting happened when officers responded to a weapons call on the city's west side.

They say a male suspect was wounded, but no officers were hurt.

The condition of the wounded male was not immediately known.

The Alberta Serious Incident Response Team, or ASIRT, has taken over the investigation.

Apr 18 2013

TORONTO - A fierce battle about whether police officers under investigation by a civilian watchdog can have a lawyer help them prepare their notes finds its way to the country's top court on Friday.

Pitted in the Supreme Court of Canada against the officers are the families of two men shot dead by Ontario's provincial police in separate incidents in 2009.

The families argue the police practice of creating two sets of notes - a confidential first draft and a lawyer-approved second draft that ends up in their memo book - is unacceptable.

"Keeping two sets of books is a universal hallmark of deception," the families state in their factum.

"This case begs the question as to whether we turn a blind eye where an investigation involves police use of lethal force on a member of the public."

The families also say that allowing a single lawyer to act for several officers involved in an incident undermines rules against collusion.

In their factum, police argue they have the right to talk to a lawyer of their choosing before finalizing their notes.

"The legislature recognized that the fun-

damental right to consult counsel could continue to be extended to officers prior to the preparation of their notes without fear that the independence and integrity of their notes will be compromised."

A host of other parties - including police, civil-rights and lawyer groups - are intervening in the complex case.

In a landmark decision in November 2011, Ontario's top court handed the families a major victory in their bid to have police note-taking banned.

The families, who were also awarded \$100,000 in costs, had sought a court declaration that the officers involved in the killings had violated laws on how police co-operate with the Special Investigations Unit - the

province's police watchdog.

Police had argued the families had no legal standing to press their case, but the Ontario Court of Appeal disagreed, and issued the declaration they had sought.

"Reliable, independent and contemporaneous police officer notes are central to the integrity of the administration of the criminal justice system," the Appeal Court said.

"The use of legal counsel to advise or assist in the preparation of notes would be inconsistent with the purpose of police notes and with the duty imposed on police officers to prepare them."

The ruling did say officers could obtain legal advice about their rights and duties with respect to SIU probes, but were bound to com-

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plete their notes before the end of their shift.

In separate incidents in June 2009, Ontario Provincial Police officers shot and killed Doug Minty, 59, and Levi Schaeffer, 30.

In clearing the officers of wrongdoing, SIU Director Ian Scott issued a scathing statement in which he said he could not determine what had happened because the police notes were unreliable.

The families maintain that allowing the officer who pulled the trigger and officers who witnessed the incident to consult the same lawyer effectively amounted to collusion.

They also said the officers provided notes to their lawyer for vetting before turning them over to the civilian investigators, rendering the notes useless.

Police groups argue officers are simply exercising the same rights as any other citizen - the right to consult a lawyer of their choosing.

Apr 18 2013

WEST, Texas - Rescuers searched the smoking remnants of a Texas farm town Thursday for survivors of a thunderous fertilizer plant explosion, gingerly checking smashed houses and apartments for anyone still trapped in debris or bodies of the dead. The accident killed as many as 15 people and injured more than 160 others.



abcnews.go.com

Daylight revealed a breathtaking band of destruction extending for a four- or five-block radius around the West Fertilizer Co. in the small community of West, about 20 miles north of Waco. The blast shook the ground with the strength of a small earthquake and levelled homes, apartments, a school and a nursing home. Its dull boom could be heard dozens of miles away.

Waco police Sgt. William Patrick Swanton described ongoing search-and-rescue efforts as "tedious and time-consuming," noting crews had to shore up much of the wreckage before going in.

Searchers "have not gotten to the point of no return where they don't think that there's anybody still alive," Swanton said. He did not know how many people had been rescued.

There was no indication the blast, which sent up a mushroom-shaped plume of smoke and left behind a crater, was anything other than an industrial accident, he said.

The Wednesday night explosion rained burning embers and debris down on terrified residents. Morning exposed a landscape wrapped in acrid smoke and strewn with the shattered remains of buildings, furniture and personal belongings.

Dogs with collars but no owners trotted

nervously through deserted streets in cordoned-off neighbourhoods around the decimated plant. The entire second floor of a nearby apartment complex was destroyed, leaving bricks and mattresses among the rubble. One rescue crew going from apartment to apartment gave special attention to a room where only a child's red and blue bunk bed remained.

The precise death toll was uncertain. Three to five volunteer firefighters were believed to be among the dead, which authorities said could number as many as 15. But that was merely an estimate.

About a half-hour before the blast, the town's volunteer firefighters had responded to a call at the plant, Swanton said.

They immediately realized the potential for disaster because of the plant's chemical stockpile and began evacuating the surrounding area.

The blast happened 20 minutes later.

Apr 18 2013

BOWMANVILLE, Ont. - Police say they've solved a case involving exploding pop bottles that left a dog injured in a community about 75 kilometres east of Toronto.

Durham regional police say a Bowmanville, Ont., resident walking her dog last weekend was shocked when two plastic pop bottles the dog sniffed suddenly burst.

When the dog sniffed the first two-litre bottle, it created a minor explosion.


A few minutes later, the dog sniffed a similar bottle with the same results and suffered a minor injury to his nose.

Concerned about what was in the bottles, the woman eventually reported the incident to police.

Investigators say the bottles contained urine that underwent a chemical reaction due to warmer weather and sunshine causing pressure to build up so the containers exploded when disturbed.



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