

BLUE LINE NEWSWEEK *Celebrating 20 Years*

A Chronicle of News for the Law Enforcement Community | January 23, 2015 – Vol. 20 No. 4

Executive Digest

Jan 15 2015

Edmonton police say three young men who reportedly went to fight with jihadists in Syria were on the radar of investigators before word of their deaths.

Page 2

Jan 16 2015

MONCTON, N.B. - RCMP officers responding to the fatal shootings of three Mounties in Moncton last year faced a number of challenges that included communicating accurate information, accessing high-powered weaponry and securing hard body armour, says a review released Friday.

Page 3

Jan 16 2015

OTTAWA - The Supreme Court of Canada gave rank-and-file RCMP members a major morale boost Friday when it affirmed their right to engage in meaningful collective bargaining.

Page 4

Jan 18 2015

ST. ALBERT, Alta. - The shooting of an auxiliary RCMP officer in Alberta on Saturday is raising questions about whether more could be done to protect the safety of such officers who don't carry firearms.

Page 6

Jan 19 2015

VANCOUVER - The B.C. Civil Liberties Association and the John Howard Society of Canada are suing the federal government over the use of solitary confinement for prisoners.

Page 7

BLUE LINE NEWSWEEK

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Alberta officer involved in weekend shooting dies



Jan 21 2015

ST. ALBERT, Alta. - RCMP say an officer who died Wednesday was being proactive in a stolen truck investigation when he and another officer were shot inside a casino.

Const. David Matthew Wynn should be remembered as a great police officer and citizen, RCMP Assistant Commissioner Marlin Degrand told reporters after it was announced that the 42-year-old had died in hospital.

Degrad said Wynn was taking the initiative during the slow early morning hours last Saturday, checking out vehicle licence plates in the parking lot of the Apex Casino in St. Albert, a bedroom community north of Edmonton.



A search revealed a plate didn't match the heavy-duty pickup truck it was on, but Wynn "didn't leave it at that," said Degrand.

Unable to see the vehicle identification number on the dashboard of the tall truck, Wynn "actually went into the casino, retrieved a chair and went back outside."

He climbed on the chair to record the

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number, then discovered the truck was stolen.

Degradand said two other officers had joined Wynn outside to help Const. Derek Bond, an auxiliary officer, then went inside the casino with Wynn to review security video footage.

The pair found a suspect on the video and, as they were walking through the casino, spotted the man and went to speak with him.

It was "a random crossing of paths," said Degrand.

"They have very brief words. The suspect then immediately bolted on them."

Wynn and Bond chased down the man, unaware he was armed, said Degrand.

"This individual, as he's running away, reached into his beltline and produced a (hidden) handgun, which would not in any way have been visible to our officers as they were behind him."

The suspect immediately turned and fired, Degrand said. The first shot struck Bond in the right arm and torso.

Wynn then had a very brief moment of contact with the suspect, but a second bullet struck him in the head. The suspect then ran off.

Wynn wasn't able to return fire.

Shawn Rehn, a career criminal wanted on warrants, was found dead in an apparent suicide later in the day at an acreage home not far from the casino.

Bond was released from hospital later that day, but Wynn never regained consciousness.

He is survived by his wife, Shelly, and three sons Matthew, Nathan and Alexander.

Wynn served as a paramedic in Bridgewater, N.S., before he became a Mountie in 2009 and was posted to St. Albert.

Besides his regular duties, he had been a resource officer at Keenooshayo Elementary School for five years. His main duty was to provide drug education for Grade 6 students, but he was frequently in the school speaking with students and parents, and appeared annually in red serge for the Remembrance Day assembly.

Deputy RCMP Commissioner Marianne Ryan issued a statement saying the force has lost a dedicated member in the line of duty.

"His wife lost a husband, and his sons lost a father. Words cannot express the deep sadness we feel today," Ryan said.

Mounties say there will be a regimental funeral for Wynn in the Edmonton area.

Prime Minister Stephen Harper expressed condolences on behalf of all Canadians.

"This was a brazen and cowardly assault on our brave law enforcement officers," Harper said in a statement. "It is a grim reminder of how law officers in communities across the country put their lives on the line every day to protect Canadians from harm."

"We mourn with all RCMP members today."

A regimental funeral for Wynn will be held at Servus Place in St. Albert on Monday, Jan. 26.

THURSDAY JANUARY 15, 2015

Jan 15 2015

HALIFAX - The mother of a Cape Breton teen who died 24 years ago says a probe by Nova Scotia's Serious Incident Response Team is breathing new life into her family's quest to reopen the investigation into Clayton Miller's death.

The province's police watchdog said it has launched an investigation into the accuracy of information it received that alleges a current member of the Cape Breton Regional Police Service may have undisclosed information on Miller's death.

His 17-year-old body was found in a stream in 1990 after police raided a bush party.

Doctors came to differing conclusions about the cause of his death and an inquest and RCMP investigation both cleared the New Waterford police department of any wrongdoing.

But his family have raised questions about the circumstances surrounding his death, saying they believe there is more to be known that has not been publicly released.

Miller's mother Maureen said she hopes the Serious Incident Response Team investigation will lead to police reopening the overall investigation into her son's death.

"The end goal is getting justice for Clayton. What we want is a fair and honest investigation, which has never been done," said Miller, who maintains that her son died under suspicious circumstances.

"What they're saying Clayton died from doesn't go with the evidence."

Miller said one police report said her son died of "dry drowning" and another said hypothermia.

But she said her family later asked a forensic pathologist in the U.S. to look at the case, who determined he died of a chokehold.

The Serious Incident Response Team said it received information in October and its investigation is ongoing.

Director Ron MacDonald said it did not notify the public previously in order to protect

the integrity of specific investigative steps.

He said if accurate, the information may be considered evidence of obstruction of justice.

The Serious Incident Response Team's mandate is limited to consider incidents after April 2012, and MacDonald said their investigation is restricted to possible current offences.

MacDonald said he will meet with Miller's family in the near future.

Last year, Justice Minister Lena Metlege Diab asked the province's chief medical examiner Dr. Matt Bowes to look into the case.

Miller said her family is eagerly awaiting Bowes' report.

Jan 15 2015

A Vancouver man who is frustrated with the pace of the police's investigation has posted surveillance video of people he believes are the alleged thieves.

Joe Roderick claims two thieves were let into his East Vancouver apartment building in late August, broke into his suite and stole his valuable coin collection in a targeted heist.

Now, fed up with what he believes is a slow-paced police investigation, Roderick has posted online surveillance video and photos of the alleged suspects.

He said he's not concerned about potentially identifying people who have not been convicted of a crime or being charged with defamation.

"There's no question that these men are suspects and nothing more. But in order to find out more, we need to identify who they are," he said.

"I am going to identify these men, if I can."

A private citizen could be held responsible for any actions that defame another person if those allegations are not proven.

David Jones, a former Vancouver Police inspector, says private citizens should not take it upon themselves to post such content themselves.

"I think the justice system ought to work in a manner in which people feel confidence in the police, that they can present this information to them, that the police will follow up."

Vancouver Police say no arrests have been made and they're still investigating, but cannot say a person has committed a crime unless Crown prosecutors are satisfied.

Jan 15 2015

Edmonton police say three young men who reportedly went to fight with jihadists in Syria were on the radar of investigators before word of their deaths.

Deputy Chief Brian Simpson said officers were aware the three cousins had left the country, and police did all they could with that information when they learned it.

"We did have knowledge that those individuals were overseas," Simpson said Thursday. "Past that, I can't offer much."

"In the areas that are involved, to get information is hard. To get that information confirmed is even harder."

BLUE LINE NEWSWEEK Celebrating 20 Years

ISSN 1704-3913
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Phone 1-800-893-5777 Info@accesscopyright.ca

Published weekly by Blue Line Magazine, Inc. as an executive news briefing service to Canada's top level law enforcement personnel.

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He said the three were known to police before they left and there was an indication that they may have been high-risk travellers.

Edmonton police informed the RCMP, which has the mandate to handle terrorist or extremist activities.

The CBC has quoted the father of one of the men, who said the three were radicalized in Edmonton and died fighting with the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant.

Ahmed Hirsi told CBC his son Mahad, 20, died last fall along with cousins Hamsa and Hersi Kariye.

Simpson did not confirm the names.

Hirsi told the broadcaster that in 2010, Mahad moved from Toronto to Edmonton to live with his aunt. He began attending a local mosque and from there became radicalized, moving in with the two cousins.

The CBC quoted other family members disputing that the trio died fighting for ISIL, saying they had only gone to Egypt to further their religious education.

Simpson said there are other investigations going on into radicalized young people in the city and right across Canada.

"We've had two attacks in this country. We've seen what happened in France recently. We saw what's happened in Australia. So we have to be attuned to the issue," he said.

"We've got a great country here and it's a balance. You don't want to create paranoia.

"We want to create knowledge and education to allow people to have the tools and the ability to deal with this effectively."

Simpson also clarified remarks made this week to The National Post newspaper by Edmonton Police Chief Rod Knecht.

Knecht, in the interview was commenting on how Parliament Hill shooter Michael Zehaf Bibeau had worked in the oil industry, where workers can earn vast sums in short periods of time.

Knecht agreed in the article that it is possible other extremists may be working in Fort McMurray.

"The EPS is not saying that Fort McMurray is a hotbed for extremism or terrorism, or any other community in Alberta for that matter," said Simpson.

"However, the economics in Fort McMurray make it easier for these types of activities to be funded easily and quickly, as was the case with the Ottawa shooter."

FRIDAY JANUARY 16, 2015

Jan 16 2015

MONCTON, N.B. - RCMP officers responding to the fatal shootings of three Mounties in Moncton last year faced a number of challenges that included communicating accurate information, accessing high-powered weaponry and securing hard body armour, says a review released Friday.

The report makes 64 recommendations that call for better access to shotguns and

rifles, standard equipment for emergency response teams, improvements in radio communication and training to better prepare supervisors for critical incidents.

It highlighted a number of problems the Mounties faced when they were searching for Justin Bourque, who was arrested 28 hours after the June 4 shooting rampage began.

"Accurate risk assessments were difficult as members were calling for ambulances to multiple locations," the 180-page report says.

"Sightings were being reported based on caller location (as opposed to suspect location), then broadcast out of order. There were wounded members in need of medical attention. ... Based on the radio traffic, it would have been nearly impossible to form an accurate tactical view of the situation."

While there were five RCMP tactical armoured vehicles deployed for emergency response team use, one tactical armoured vehicle from the Quebec RCMP was not deployed as it was in Montreal and not requested, the report said.

"The RCMP TAV was designed for this type of operation and, given the scale of this incident, having as many as possible was essential," it said. "To mitigate the shortage of TAVs, commercial armoured trucks were put into use."

One RCMP tactical armoured vehicle from Nova Scotia was dispatched but it broke down and a mechanic was sent to fix it. The report recommended tactical armoured vehicles travelling long distances should go by rail or flatbed truck.

Many RCMP officers did not know that hard body armour was available in vehicles while others were not familiar with how to wear the equipment properly, the report said.

"This all speaks to a general lack of knowledge and understanding with respect to how and when HBA must be worn," said the review, which was led by Alphonse MacNeil, a retired RCMP assistant commissioner.

The RCMP should have also considered asking for the help of the military, given its specialized and unique capabilities and equipment, the report added.

The RCMP said it accepts all of the review's recommendations and has started implementing them.

"We must learn from this tragedy," RCMP deputy commissioner Janice Armstrong said in a statement.

"It is our duty to make sure all RCMP employees on the front lines are as prepared as possible to meet the threats we face every day."

The wife of one of the slain officers, herself an RCMP employee, said she believes MacNeil's recommendations will bring about much needed change.

"I will confess, I was originally skeptical of his intentions given that he is a retired member of the RCMP and I'm certain others may have shared this concern," said Angela Gevaudan, the widow of Const. Fabrice Gevaudan.

"However, I have come to know and appreciate Mr. MacNeil's integrity and unbiased approach, something which I do not say lightly. And I believe wholeheartedly in these

recommendations."

She said she hopes the various levels of government recognize the urgency of the recommendations.

"Why wait for another crisis?"

Gevaudan became emotional and had to pause to compose herself while reading her statement. She was flanked by the two other women who lost their husbands and they did not take any questions.

In October, Bourque was sentenced to life in prison with no eligibility for parole for 75 years after pleading guilty to three counts of first-degree murder and two counts of attempted murder.

Bourque, 25, admitted in a statement to police that he used a semi-automatic rifle to shoot the five officers in the city's north end.

Afterwards, he fled into the woods near a suburban neighbourhood, where he was later arrested.

In addition to Gevaudan, Bourque killed constables Dave Ross and Doug Larche. Constables Eric Dubois and Darlene Goguen were injured.

The Mounted Police Professional Association was critical of the RCMP last year after the Moncton shootings because it said many detachments still didn't have the high-powered rifles or specialized armour that is better able to protect against rifle fire, particularly after the deaths of four RCMP officers near Mayerthorpe, Alta., in 2005.

The shooting deaths led to recommendations that police be equipped with proper



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The officers in Alberta were guarding a marijuana growing operation when the owner opened fire on them with a rifle, leaving them to defend themselves with 9-mm handguns.

Jan 16 2015

OTTAWA - The Supreme Court of Canada gave rank-and-file RCMP members a major morale boost Friday when it affirmed their right to engage in meaningful collective bargaining.

The high court did not explicitly state that the Mounties have the right to form a union, but the justices effectively cleared a path to that possibility.

The landmark 6-1 ruling gives the federal government a year to create a new labour relations scheme, setting the stage for talks among RCMP members, Commissioner Bob Paulson and the Harper government.

The Supreme Court overturned a previous ruling of its own from the 1990s which upheld an exclusion that barred the Mounties from forming unions like federal public servants, who gained the right to collective bargaining in the late 1960s.

The high court says that overturning its precedent "is not a step to be lightly taken," but in this case it was justified because case law has evolved since it ruled in 1999, when it was dealing with a narrower issue.

Friday's decision was written by Chief Justice Beverley McLachlin and Justice Louise LeBel and will ultimately affect officers across the country.

The case is a major win for RCMP members, some of whom were seen hugging in the foyer of the Supreme Court building after the ruling was released.

"Today is an awesome day for all members in the RCMP," said Ray Banwarie, president of the Mounted Police Professional Association of Canada. "It is also a great day for Canada - it's a great day for democracy in this country."

Banwarie said RCMP members want to work together with management to address a "myriad" of issues facing the force, including resources, pay, benefits and equipment and grievances that have not been addressed for over a decade.

One major issue is a class-action lawsuit against the force, alleging years of harassment and discrimination, in which some 300 serving and retired female RCMP officers and civilian employees are taking part. The suit has yet to be certified by a court.

Such points of conflict could be more easily resolved if the interests of RCMP members were properly represented, Banwarie said.

In recent years, the national police force has been beset by internal complaints of harassment and bullying. A new law has streamlined the process, giving supervisors more power to deal with disputes promptly, but some critics fear that will lead to abuses.

Laura Young, the lead lawyer for the appellants, said the ruling opens the door for the RCMP to unionize and removes a process that was "foisted" by management on RCMP

members and silenced them.

"We hope now to move ahead with a very positive process," she said.

Banwarie said RCMP members want to form a "police association," not a union.

Jason Tamming, a spokesman for Public Safety Minister Steven Blaney, whose department oversees the RCMP, would only say the government would study the ruling.

Treasury Board President Tony Clement would be taking the lead for the government in any future talks, he added.

The Supreme Court said excluding the Mounties from collective bargaining violates their charter right to freedom of association, but it does not dictate a specific labour relations regime that should be applied to the RCMP.

The court says the Mounties have to be sufficiently independent to have some meaningful form of collective bargaining with management.

Currently, RCMP officers have voluntary associations funded by members' dues that work with management to establish pay and benefits, but top brass maintains full control over the final result.

The ruling comes in one of two cases that the court was asked to revisit.

In the second case, the court dismissed an appeal by two RCMP officers who challenged a government decision to roll back three years of wage increases that were agreed to before the onset of 2008 global financial crisis.

The court upheld the decision by former finance minister Jim Flaherty to bring in wage-restraint legislation that reduced RCMP pay raises from 2008 to 2010.

But the main case, brought by the Mounted Police Association of Ontario and the British Columbia Mounted Police Professional Association on behalf of the entire national police force, opens the door for RCMP to unionize, and engage in collective bargaining.

The court doesn't specify what sort of labour relations model should be put in place for the Mounties.

"This court has consistently held that freedom of association does not guarantee a particular model of labour relations," the ruling said.

"What is required is not a particular model, but a regime that does not substantially interfere with meaningful collective bargaining."

The justices dismissed the argument by the federal government that preventing the RCMP from engaging in collective bargaining was warranted to prevent its members from engaging in a "an unlawful strike or other debilitating job action."

Jan 16 2015

MONCTON, N.B. - A senior RCMP officer shared her sorrow Friday that a Mountie chose to go without hard body armour so that a fellow officer with children could have the protection as they responded to the fatal shootings of three Mounties last year in Moncton.

"It was absolutely heartbreaking that someone would have a conversation such as that," RCMP deputy commissioner Janice

Armstrong said after the release of a review of the shootings that killed three Mounties and wounded two others.

"It is incumbent upon us in a situation like Moncton that we learn and we evolve. We owe that to the members who gave their lives that night. We owe that to the members who put their lives in jeopardy. We owe that to the two gals who were in that car talking about hard body armour."

RCMP officers responding to the shootings faced a litany of problems that included communicating accurate information, accessing high-powered weaponry and securing protective equipment, the report said.

The review paints a chaotic picture as the Mounties pursued Justin Bourque, who was arrested 28 hours after the June 4 shooting rampage began.

"Accurate risk assessments were difficult as members were calling for ambulances to multiple locations," the 180-page report says.

"Sightings were being reported based on caller location (as opposed to suspect location), then broadcast out of order. There were wounded members in need of medical attention. ... Based on the radio traffic, it would have been nearly impossible to form an accurate tactical view of the situation."

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RCMP employees on the front lines are as prepared as possible to meet the threats we face every day.”

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“However, I have come to know and appreciate Mr. MacNeil’s integrity and unbiased approach, something which I do not say lightly. And I believe wholeheartedly in these recommendations.”

She said she hopes the various levels of government recognize the urgency of the recommendations.

“Why wait for another crisis?”

Gevaudan became emotional and had to pause to compose herself while reading her statement. She was flanked by the two other women who lost their husbands. They did not take any questions.

A spokesman for the Mounted Police Professional Association said while the recommendations are well founded, the review doesn’t go far enough in examining issues such as understaffing and lack of funding for training.

Jan 16 2015

CALGARY - Police cyber-crime investigators are linking with new partners as their caseload has doubled and the technology being used by new-age crooks rapidly evolves.

The Cybercrime Support Team was established in January 2013 and its seven members were involved in roughly 200 cases, ranging from high-profile murders to complex international fraud schemes.

In 2014, that number shot up to 400 – more than a case per day, on average.

“Our cyber-crime area is already stretched to the limit because the use of technology to commit crimes — everything from bullying to identity theft to trafficking and child pornography, to the multitude of frauds committed – is continuing to grow,” police Chief Rick Hanson told Metro in a recent interview.

The cases the support team, overseen by Staff Sgt. Ryan Jepson, works are complex. To the untrained ear, terms like cryptography, malware and phishing hold little meaning.

As a result, his unit has also begun meeting with computer science and security experts at the University of Calgary as well as those in the private industry.

“It’s kind of a bit of a roadshow that we’ve gone on where we’re speaking to members of corporate Calgary and others about how we can better exchange information,” he said.

One of the academics he’s been talking with is Michael Locasto, an assistant professor in the U of C’s computer sciences department, whose primary area of expertise concerns the “bits and bytes” of technology

systems and how they can be corrupted.

Locasto deemed the partnership with police preliminary at this point but said the university could get something out of it, too, by introducing new avenues of instruction for up-and-coming information technology students.

He surmised that the ins-and-outs of an investigation are the same, but the places where police search for clues are continuously changing.

“Really, where they may need some partnerships is understanding what the absolutely new forms of technology are that are coming down the pike,” he said. “That’s something that academic research is appropriately and entirely focused on is anticipating how systems and technology will radically change.”

Jepson said a primary goal is to identify the original sources of cyber crime.

“We want to increase our ability to respond to the threat actors, not just the threats themselves,” he said.

His unit has also proven useful in opening new avenues on cases where the trail has seemingly gone cold.

Last year, Jepson’s team needed just one day to hone in on the location of a fugitive who’d eluded law enforcement for five years. The individual’s physical location was pinpointed and he was subsequently arrested.

Jan 16 2015

VANCOUVER - British Columbia's justice minister is refusing to investigate the behaviour of a Vancouver Island mayor despite a plea from the district's police board for her help.

Suzanne Anton said on Friday she is keeping an eye on the situation unfolding in Saanich, B.C., where mayor Richard Atwell has accused the police of harassment and district staff of spying.

But the minister said the police board is at arm’s length from the government and therefore it is not her job to investigate the mayor, who is the board’s chair.

“At the moment it’s really up to them to manage their internal affairs as they see fit,” she said. “My role is to make sure there is good policing in Saanich. There is good policing in Saanich.”

The board issued a statement this week that said Atwell’s conduct put members in an

“untenable position,” and that it had asked him to step down until it received advice from the minister.

Board member Lori Staples said on Friday after hearing of Anton’s response in the media that she does not know what the board will do now. The board’s next meeting is in early February.

“We wouldn’t have contacted her if we thought we could deal with it on our own,” she said.

Staples said the board does not appear to have the power to kick out a sitting chair under the Police Act, only to elect a new chair if the current one is absent or unable to act.

“We are totally stymied by the Police Act,” said Staples, who is a lawyer.

Atwell did not return requests for comment on Friday. He agreed not to chair a police board meeting on Thursday, but told reporters he has not decided how to respond to the call for him to step down.

At a news conference earlier this week, the rookie mayor suggested police leaked details of a reported altercation with a supporter’s fiance and said he has been pulled over four times by officers since running for mayor.

The mayor also told the media that he lied when he denied having an extramarital affair.

Atwell, who was just elected in November, said he believed spyware was installed on his office computer. Police later concluded that the software was installed to protect the computer network from outside threats.

Ross Poulton, acting deputy police complaint commissioner, confirmed his office had received two complaints from Atwell and said it would take a few weeks to determine whether they warranted investigation.

Saanich Coun. Judy Brownoff said council is trying to carry on with its business but it has been challenging because of the mayor’s distrust of district staff.

“It’s just very hard to understand. We’ve asked him to let us know what we can do to make him feel more comfortable at the municipal hall. Tell us what you need. We just want to get on with our business,” she said.

She said council hopes to announce next week an interim chief administrative officer to replace Paul Murray, the man Atwell unilaterally forced out in December - a move that cost taxpayers about \$480,000 in severance.

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She is hopeful that a new top bureaucrat will help council move forward with strategic planning and the budget, two issues that have stalled during the mayor's brief tenure.

Brownoff has been a councillor for two decades and said she has never encountered a situation like this one. However, she said council is not seeking to oust Atwell or limit his powers.

"Quite honestly, the mayor was elected as were all eight of us. So I expect that the residents expect us all to work together," she said.

"Since all of these things appearing in the media, we have now been getting a lot of emails around that. I have just said to people, 'You need to let the mayor know of your concerns.'"

Jan 16 2015

A woman who alleged Regina police mistreated her disabled daughter has changed part of her complaint.

Lisa Dustyhorn said last week on social media that police took her 25-year-old daughter's shoes and coat, drove her outside the city and threatened to leave her there.

She says she has since seen a video taken outside an apartment building that shows her daughter was dumped from a truck without shoes or her coat.

It happened before police arrived Sunday morning.

Dustyhorn says police may not have taken away her daughter's shoes or coat but still believe they took her for a joyride.

Police have said there is no evidence to support the complaint and that GPS data from the police cruiser shows the car didn't leave residential areas.

They said officers found a 25-year-old woman and 16-year-old girl - both extremely intoxicated - outside an apartment.

They said the teen was taken to hospital and the woman was held in custody until she was sober.

The Public Complaints Commission is investigating the matter.

SATURDAY JANUARY 17, 2015

Jan 17 2015

Toronto police are hoping to learn from two officers in Minneapolis who have had success engaging with the Somali community.

Sgt. Mohamed Abdullahi and Const. Abdiwahab Ali are in Toronto for four days to see how police are interacting with the city's Somali community and to share what they know.

Somali-Canadians have long said they need help dealing with a gang problem and need more officers of Somali origin on the streets. They've also accused police of unfairly targeting their community.

In particular, the Project Traveller raids in June 2013 made residents of the Dixon Road community feel "victimized, vilified and traumatized as a result of the reckless manner in

which officers forcibly entered their homes," Mahad Yusuf of Midaynta Community Services said at the time.

SUNDAY JANUARY 18, 2015

Jan 18 2015

ST. ALBERT, Alta. - The shooting of an auxiliary RCMP officer in Alberta on Saturday is raising questions about whether more could be done to protect the safety of such officers who don't carry firearms.

Auxiliary Const. Derek Walter Bond, 49, was shot when he and a regular RCMP officer - Const. David Matthew Wynn - walked into a casino just north of Edmonton while on a routine investigation.

Bond was released from hospital on Saturday evening, while Wynn remains in grave condition.

As an auxiliary officer, Bond did not carry a gun though normally auxiliary officers carry pepper spray and a baton. The dramatic events that unfolded in the community of St. Albert on Saturday are thrusting the role of such officers into the spotlight.

Rob Creasser, spokesman for the Mounted Police Professional Association of Canada, said there's good reason why auxiliary officers do not carry guns.

"They don't have near the training that a regular member does," he said. "They're really not trained in situational use of guns, like when do you pull it and when do you shoot."

He said auxiliary officers are civilians who volunteer part-time to do jobs that free up regular police officers, such as traffic control. They also ride along with officers, as long as they're under the direct supervision of a regular member of the RCMP.

There are over 2,000 auxiliary constables in the RCMP across the country. Creasser said they typically wear a RCMP uniform with a small patch on the shoulder that distinguishes them as an auxiliary officer.

He said auxiliary officers are a huge help to regular officers. Creasser, who is now retired from the RCMP, said when he was with the force he often used them to direct traffic at collision scenes. He added they carried firearms at one time but the practice was stopped many years ago.

Creasser said the St. Albert shootings should signal to government that the safety of all police officers - not just auxiliary officers - is under threat.

"As we're starting to find out in today's world, police are becoming a target," he said.

"Not that long ago, just out my back door in Kamloops here, there was another member shot. We've seen members that were just sitting in their police cars in New York get shot. Paris officers are getting shot. It's a really disturbing trend."

He said the RCMP is "hugely under-resourced" and it's about time governments at all levels got that message. The RCMP needs

better services, better equipment and more members, he said.

Steve Summerville, president of Stay Safe Instructional Programs and a former police training officer in Ontario, said in his experience auxiliary officers are given comprehensive training, but not nearly the same amount as regular officers.

He said they are trained in how to respond to potentially violent situations using verbal strategies, self-defence and their batons, but are not trained in higher levels of use-of-force such as when to fire a gun.

He said it's too soon to jump to conclusions about what took place in St. Albert. He noted that Bond was with a regular officer and would not have been left on his own.

"I think we should get all the facts to determine exactly what did transpire before we start seeking solutions," he said. "You might find that even if the auxiliary member had been armed with a firearm to some degree, it may or may not have made a difference."

Laura Huey, a sociology professor at the University of Western Ontario who has studied policing, said there are multiple reasons why auxiliary officers do not carry firearms.

She said there have long been concerns within policing circles about using civilians to perform regular policing functions. Police unions would not want to see volunteers filling roles that could be undertaken by regular members, she said.

Huey added that concerns have been raised about training standards, the quality of auxiliary recruits and the costs of training and arming civilians - which would have to be paid by taxpayers at a time when governments are trying to shrink police budgets, not expand them.

"The role of auxiliary officers does need to be reconsidered. However, I'm not convinced that re-arming them is necessarily the answer," she said in an e-mail.

"To reverse this policy the public would have to be willing to increase police budgets in order to pay for comprehensive reviews of current auxiliary members, train them to police member standards and pay for re-arming and other costs. Why not just hire more police officers in remote communities?"

MONDAY JANUARY 19, 2015

Jan 19 2015

YORKTON, Sask. - A man accused of threatening to blow up an RCMP detachment in east-central Saskatchewan faces a 30-day psychiatric assessment.

Shayne James Trowbridge has appeared in court in Yorkton and been remanded into custody.

Trowbridge, who is 40, is charged with uttering threats to harm RCMP members and uttering threats to destroy an RCMP building.

The charges stem from a Facebook posting that was brought to the attention of the

Mounties last week.

Officers searched the Yorkton detachment, city hall and an apartment building, but did not find anything suspicious.

Jan 19 2015

WOLLASTON LAKE, Sask. - An RCMP officer who was seriously hurt in an ATV accident in northern Saskatchewan has been charged with impaired driving.

Const. Kevin Granrude suffered a head injury last June when he was thrown from an all-terrain vehicle he was driving while off duty.

Another Mountie from the Wollaston Lake detachment was on patrol and came upon the hurt officer, who was transported to hospital in Saskatoon.

Police said at the time that investigators were working to determine why Granrude was using the RCMP vehicle while off duty.

An RCMP release says Granrude, who is 44, has recovered and has been posted to the Swift Current rural detachment.

Jan 19 2015

VANCOUVER - The B.C. Civil Liberties Association and the John Howard Society of Canada are suing the federal government over the use of solitary confinement for prisoners.



The groups say segregation for up to 23 hours a day for months or years at a time amounts to cruel and unusual punishment and is internationally regarded as torture.

Their lawyer, Joe Arvay, says such confinements can occur without input from an independent decision maker to determine whether the practice is justified and that violates the constitutional rights of inmates.

The lawsuit to be heard in B.C. Supreme Court claims prolonged segregation is a risk factor for suicide behind bars, as was the case in the death of teenager Ashley Smith in an Ontario prison in 2007.

The civil liberties association's senior lawyer Carmen Cheung says Canada has continued to rely on the practice when other countries have scaled back their use of a dangerous system.

Catherine Latimer, executive director of the John Howard Society, says solitary confinement is inhumane and is being used to warehouse mentally ill inmates.

Jan 19 2015

One OPP officer has been charged after a collision with a civilian car on way to responding to an armed robbery at a Gananoque jewelry store Friday.

The Gananoque Police Service charged

the OPP officer with fail to yield to traffic on a through street, under the Highway Traffic Act.

The two vehicles involved in the incident sustained major damage, but there were no injuries.

The marked OPP car had its sirens and lights on when responding to an armed robbery at a jewelry store after Gananoque police called the OPP for assistance.

The Special Investigations Unit is investigating.

Jan 19 2015

Ontario's police watchdog is investigating a single-vehicle accident northwest of Guelph that left two people injured.

The Special Investigations Unit says provincial police tried to pull over a car on Sunday afternoon after it left a Minto Township gas bar without paying for fuel.

The SIU says that a short time later the vehicle left the road in Arthur Township and rolled several times.

The 31-year-old driver suffered back injuries, while his 18-year-old passenger, who was ejected from the vehicle, sustained serious internal injuries.

Both remain at the Hamilton General Hospital for treatment.

Jan 19 2015

VICTORIA - B.C.'s privacy commissioner says police forces across the province are implementing new policies preventing them from revealing embarrassing details in record checks.

In a critical report released last year, Elizabeth Denham said police record checks were revealing sensitive personal information beyond what was necessary for employment or volunteering.

The provincial government released the policy guidelines last month that set out what kind of information police won't be allowed to disclose, including suicide attempts, mental health apprehensions, or incidents that don't result in charges or convictions.

Denham says she heard many stories of people being devastated, shocked or embarrassed about the information disclosed in previous police record checks.

While she's hopeful the policy will work, Denham says police departments still need to follow the rules and her office will be watching for any infractions.

The commissioner says she would have much rather seen the changes implemented in law instead of regulations.

Jan 19 2015

KINGSTON, Ont. - The Special Investigations Unit has been called in after a man was injured while interacting with police following a house fire in Kingston, Ont.

Kingston police say officers who answered a call on Monday afternoon about an incident inside a residence arrived to find a fire under way.

All residents were safely evacuated except for a man who refused to leave.

Police say once the fire was extinguished, officers went inside to find the man and it was during this time that the man suffered what is believed to be a serious injury.

He was taken to hospital by ambulance.

TUESDAY
JANUARY 20, 2015

Jan 20 2015

HALIFAX - Nova Scotia is increasing fines for drivers who use hand-held electronic devices behind the wheel while also taking demerit points from their licences.

Transportation Minister Geoff MacLellan says distracted driving is as serious as impaired driving and the bigger fines and loss of demerit points is aimed at influencing the behaviour of drivers.

The new penalties take effect Feb. 1, with exceptions for people who use their cell-phones to report an emergency.

A conviction for using a hand-held device while driving will mean the loss of four demerit points from a driver's licence.

Meanwhile, the fine for a first offence jumps from \$176.45 to \$233.95.

The fine for a second offence increases from \$233.95 to \$348.95, and a third offence from \$348.95 to \$578.95.



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- Current legal status of investigative interviews and how far you can pursue the truth in a legal manner.

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Jan 20 2015

MISSISSAUGA, Ont. - Ontario's police watchdog says it has reopened an investigation into a 2009 drowning incident involving the Brantford Police Service after receiving some new information.

The Special Investigations Unit's initial probe had concluded there were no reasonable grounds to believe a criminal offence was committed by any officer in connection with the drowning death of a 32-year-old man.

But the SIU says director Tony Loparco has decided to reopen the case as a result of "materially new information coming to light" - although it gave no details.

In its initial investigation, the SIU determined that early on Jan. 20, 2009, a Brantford police officer followed a set of shoe prints from a stolen car to the bank of the Grand River, where there was a struggle between the officer and Benjamin Wood.

It said Wood ventured out onto the river's ice surface, despite repeated pleas from multiple officers to get off the ice, and that a short time later officers saw Wood go through the ice.

Provincial police divers located his body at noon that day and a post-mortem determined that Wood died of drowning and hypothermia.

The SIU said on Feb. 27, 2009, that it had completed its investigation into Wood's death and then-director Ian Scott said he found no criminal liability linking any officer with "unfortunate death of Mr. Wood."

Jan 20 2015

MONTREAL - Justice Minister Peter MacKay said he doesn't see the need for an in-depth examination of police and justice system protocols as suggested by the head of the RCMP after the recent shootings of two Mounties in Alberta.

RCMP Commissioner Bob Paulson said last weekend the fact the suspected shooter was let free despite having a violent criminal history including a series of overlapping firearm bans may spark a review.

"I don't think, in my view, in my experience, having some sort of a pause where we have a full-blown examination or royal commission or some sort of a study is really going to provide us the answers that we need," MacKay said Tuesday in Montreal.

"The answers that we need are the ongoing efforts to prevent crime, to deal specifically with individuals who are drifting, who are feeling disconnected and marginalized and to provide the police with the necessary support, tools and laws that they need to protect Canadians."

MacKay made his comments in Montreal after announcing more than \$220,000 in federal funding for a Montreal centre that provides programs to help young offenders reintegrate into society.

Jan 20 2015

WETASKIWIN, Alta. - There won't be any charges against an Alberta RCMP officer who shot and killed a man in a traffic stop that rapidly went wrong.

An agency that reviews police-related shootings says the Mountie acted in self-defence.

A release from the Alberta Serious Incident Response Team says the lone officer pulled over a truck near Ma Me O Beach in August 2013 after he observed the driver wasn't wearing a seatbelt.

The driver wasn't able to produce a valid driver's licence and the officer noted the driver's speech was slurred and there were other signs of impairment.

There was a struggle while the officer was trying to arrest the man, and the driver's three sons quickly moved toward the police officer.

The officer let the driver go and began to retreat, and pulled out his service pistol and pepper spray. He told the three men to get away or he would shoot them.

As this was happening, the driver got into the police vehicle where the officer's shotgun was located.

Investigators say the Mountie tripped as he was trying to get away and dropped his pepper spray. Fearing for his safety, the officer fired three shots.

Lance Cutarm, who was 30, died and his brother, 41-year-old Larron Cutarm, suffered chest wounds.

Their father, Lawrence Cutarm, admitted that they had been drinking that day, but said there was no reason to shoot at them. He also said the officer Tasered his son after he was already dead.

An Alberta aboriginal leader requested that ASIRT investigate whether racism was a factor. ASIRT said the officer did not use racial slurs in dealing with the Cutarms.

ASIRT says the entire contact between the parties can be heard on an audio recording that was activated in the patrol car. However, the video camera in the police car did not capture the shootings because it happened off to the left and behind the police cruiser.

"This entire incident, from the first point of direct contact ... took less than 2 1/2 minutes," says the release. "Indeed, from the point the driver was asked to step out of the vehicle to the point the officer is able to re-enter his police vehicle, only approximately one minute and 17 seconds had passed."

ASIRT says the evidence shows that

Lawrence Cutarm was never handcuffed and thrown to the ground. It also says the constable never used a Taser on anyone.

Lawrence Cutarm was later arrested by a different officer, who used a stun gun to subdue him.



Jan 21 2015

MONTREAL - The Crown maintains the warrant issued for the arrest of former hockey great Guy Lafleur in 2008 was justified considering the seriousness of the crime.

Prosecutor Lise Archambault told Lafleur's civil trial today while there have not been many criminal cases involving contradictory testimony, it was still a very serious criminal offence in her opinion.

The Montreal Canadiens legend is seeking \$2.16 million in a civil suit against the Crown and Montreal police for an arrest he calls unjustified and exaggerated.

He was arrested and found guilty in 2009 of giving contradictory testimony at his son's bail hearing on sex charges.

The conviction was overturned on appeal a year later.

Archambault told the court today she didn't insist on the warrant, but acted on a police request for one.

Jan 21 2015

SWIFT CURRENT, Sask. -A Mountie based in southwestern Saskatchewan is facing drug-related charges.

The RCMP says the 31-year-old officer from Swift Current was arrested on Monday and charged with trafficking cocaine and ecstasy.

There's also an internal code of conduct investigation.

Michael Chachula has been with the force for almost seven years and in his current post since 2012.

He is to appear in Swift Current court on Feb. 18.

Police say the charges were laid after an investigation by the Moose Jaw Police Service uncovered information about the alleged offences.

Moose Jaw police were investigating an unrelated criminal complaint against Chachula at the time.

"It is never easy to speak about investigations like these," RCMP Supt. Alfredo Bangloy said in a media release Wednesday. "It's very disheartening that a serving police officer, sworn to uphold the law, is facing criminal charges."

Jan 21 2015

CALGARY - An Alberta RCMP official says the Mounties will do their own review of their interactions with the man who shot two officers.

Assistant Commissioner Marlin Degrand says the force wants to know if there's anything it could have done to help keep Shawn Rehn off the streets.

Degrad says the review will start with Rehn's earliest dealings with police up to and including Saturday's shooting.

Alberta's justice minister has also ordered a review into how the Crown handled the career criminal.

Jonathan Denis says the review will be done in addition to any fatality inquiry that may be called.

Rehn had a lengthy criminal history and was facing dozens of charges when he shot the officers at a casino in the Edmonton area on Saturday.

Jan 21 2015

KAMLOOPS, B.C. - Mounties in British Columbia's Interior say an internal review is now running parallel to the criminal probe into last month's shooting of an RCMP officer.

Forty-one-year-old Cpl. Jean Rene Michaud was shot during an early morning traffic stop on Dec. 3 in Kamloops.

Supt. Brad Mueller says the review will look at all aspects of the shooting and make recommendations to prevent further incidents, noting similar processes took place after officers were shot in Moncton, N.B., last year and in Mayerthorpe, Alta., in 2005.

After the shooting, Michaud underwent emergency surgery and was later airlifted to a Vancouver-area hospital where he remains.

The shooting sparked an intense manhunt that lasted more than 12 hours and ended with the arrest of Ken Knutson, a 36-year-old with a lengthy criminal history.

Knutson faces charges off attempted murder, aggravated assault and two firearms-related charges, has remained in custody at Kamloops Regional Correctional Centre since his arrest and is due back in court on Jan. 29 for a potential bail hearing.



Jan 22 2015

DRAYTON VALLEY, Alta. A 38-year-old man faces almost a dozen charges after a stolen pickup truck was driven into the side of an Alberta RCMP detachment.

Mounties in Drayton Valley, southwest of Edmonton, say the truck broke through a

secure overhead door and caused extensive damage.

The driver then walked into the main part of the building and was taken into custody.

Police don't believe the RCMP were targeted.

David Yurkiw of Drayton Valley faces 10 charges that include dangerous operation of a motor vehicle.

Jan 22 2015

HALIFAX - The RCMP in Nova Scotia have charged a 42-year-old man with uttering threats and possessing a weapon for a dangerous purpose in their investigation into a hazardous chemicals discovery in Halifax.

Christopher Burton Phillips was being brought back to Nova Scotia on Thursday from Ottawa, where he was arrested at a hotel a day earlier.

Police allege in a sworn information at a Halifax provincial court that Phillips threatened a police officer and possessed a chemical called osmium tetroxide.

The document alleges the offences took place between Boxing Day and Wednesday in Cole Harbour, a suburb of Halifax.

An investigation into the discovery of hazardous chemicals at two Halifax-area homes prompted separate evacuations earlier this week.

RCMP Cpl. Greg Church said two chemists from Health Canada are helping with the investigation and an evacuation that was ordered around a cottage where hazardous chemicals were found is expected to remain in effect overnight.

"We have here of course a situation with several unknowns," Church said Thursday. "We do have two very serious criminal charges that have been laid against the individual."

He said there is no reason to believe that the areas that have been evacuated have been contaminated.

John Holmes, a professor emeritus of chemistry at the University of Ottawa, said when in fine powder form, osmium tetroxide is hazardous and can cause death by damaging the lungs when inhaled.

"One would handle it with great care," he said. "If it's in a screw top jar it's safe to handle. If it's a sealed container it's not dangerous."

"If you inhaled it as a powder it would be lethal."

He said the substance can be purchased from large chemical companies but is intended for use in laboratories.

"Having it at home would ... be called a bit foolish."

Ottawa police arrested Phillips at the Chimo Hotel on Wednesday and linked the arrest to the discovery of the chemicals in Halifax. Police said they found no hazardous materials in the Ottawa hotel.

The RCMP said it issued a Canada-wide warrant after a "large quantity" of chemicals were found inside two homes in Cole Harbour and Grand Desert.

Jan 22 2015

Winnipeg's mayor tearfully promised to fight racism after the city was branded Canada's most racist by a national magazine.



Brian Bowman stood surrounded by dozens of aboriginal and community leaders and admitted the city has a problem with racism.

The city's first Metis mayor broke down in tears as he said he wants his boys to be proud of their heritage.

He says there is no doubt racism exists in Winnipeg and he is determined to do something about it.

Former national chief Ovide Mercredi says he has experienced racism, but has not let that define him.

Macleans magazine published a cover story Thursday labelling Winnipeg Canada's most racist city.

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