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JUL 24 2014

MINISTRY OF SOLICITOR GENERAL
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF CORONER



BRITISH
COLUMBIA

JUL 22 2014

Ms. Lisa Lapointe
Chief Coroner
BC Coroners Services
Ministry of Justice
Metrotower II
Suite 800 – 4720 Kingsway
Burnaby BC V5H 4N2

Dear Ms. Lapointe:

I am responding to your May 26, 2014 letter regarding the jury's recommendations resulting from the Coroner's Inquest into the death of Mr. Matters (BCCS Case File #2012-0607-0096).

I have referred your letter to my Assistant Deputy Minister, Clayton Pecknold, in order to provide a detailed response to you.

Thank you for bringing the jury recommendations to my attention.

Yours very truly,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Suzanne Anton'.

Suzanne Anton QC
Attorney General
Minister of Justice

pc: Mr. Clayton Pecknold



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JUL 14 2014

MINISTRY OF SOLICITOR GENERAL
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF CORONER

July 9, 2014
Ref: 502105

Ms. Lisa Lapointe, Chief Coroner
BC Coroner Services
Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General
Metrotower II
Suite 800 – 4720 Kingsway
Burnaby BC V5H 4N2

Dear Ms. Lapointe:

I am responding to your May 26, 2014 letter regarding the jury's recommendations resulting from the Coroner's Inquest into the death of Mr. Matters (BCCS Case File #2012-0607-0096).

Police Services Division (PSD) will also be considering any recommendations that may arise from the Civilian Review and Complaints Commission (CRCC) for the RCMP investigation of this incident, before finalising any actions in response to recommendations.

I have presented below our current responses to the Coroners Inquest recommendations, which were directed at the Ministry of Justice.

There are four topic areas covered by the recommendations directed at the provincial government, summarized below:

Cameras on Emergency Response Team (ERT) members during deployment

(Recommendation #1): PSD is currently considering the potential for police body-worn video (BWV) in British Columbia. Police agencies, such as the RCMP and Vancouver Police Department, are also examining the use of this technology, and PSD will be monitoring the outcome of any evaluations. The issue is complex and will require balancing the potential benefits of BWV with the fiscal and legal implications of implementation.

Less-lethal weapon inventory and training (Recommendations #2 and #3): Both the Arwen gun and the Beanbag shotgun (BBSG) are extended range impact weapons that fire less-lethal rounds and are utilized in the same general circumstances. The RCMP currently utilizes the

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Ms. Lisa Lapointe, Chief Coroner

Page 2

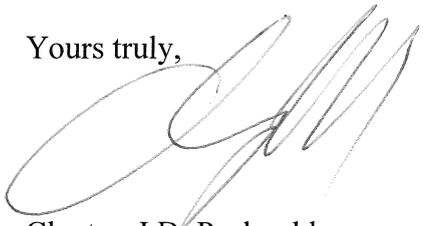
BBSG and not the Arwen as recommended by the Jury. All ERT members currently have training and certification requirements in the use of less-lethal weapons. It is accepted that an ERT team should have a variety of less-lethal weapons available; however, it may not be necessary or desirable that all members are trained on every weapon. I am aware that the recommendations regarding less-lethal weapons were also addressed to the RCMP and I am confident that the RCMP will review and consider these carefully.

Mental health training and assistance (Recommendations #4 and #5): The British Columbia Provincial Policing Standards (BCPPS) currently require all front-line police officers to undertake provincially approved Crisis Intervention and De-escalation training (CID), and take refresher training once every three years. I am confident that the RCMP will review carefully the recommendation to have a mental health worker available to all ERT deployments.

RCMP police dogs (Recommendation #6): PSD is currently working with police agencies to develop appropriate BCPPS regarding police dogs in British Columbia. Police dogs are already currently trained to apprehend subjects, whether or not they are armed. The BCPPS under development will include apprehending an aggressive/armed person as part of the mandatory annual certification requirements.

Thank you for bringing the jury recommendations to my attention.

Yours truly,



Clayton J.D. Pecknold
Assistant Deputy Minister
and Director of Police Services
Policing and Security Branch

Minister
of National Defence



Ministre
de la Défense nationale

Ottawa, Canada K1A 0K2

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AUG 11 2014

CHIEF CORONER

JUL 31 2014

Ms. Lisa Lapointe
Chief Coroner
Province of British Columbia
Office of the Chief Coroner
Metrotower II
800 - 4720 Kingsway
Burnaby BC V5H 4N2

Dear Ms. Lapointe:

Thank you for your correspondence of 26 May 2014, sharing with me the Verdict at Inquest regarding the death of Master Corporal Gregory John Matters. As you mentioned in your letter, the Inquest resulted in, among other things, two recommendations, made by the jury, that are applicable to the Department of National Defence, the Government of Canada, and Veterans Affairs Canada.

We have considered these two recommendations as they apply to the Department of National Defence and the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF), and offer the following comments:

Recommendation 1: Programs be developed to monitor the physical, emotional and financial health and well-being of all officers of the Canadian Armed Forces. This would include veterans following their discharge or dismissal.

In recent years, the CAF have introduced a number of programs designed to both monitor and enhance the well-being of CAF personnel, particularly those who are having physical or mental health issues. These include but are not limited to the Surgeon General's Mental Health Strategy (enclosed) and component programs and the Transition Support Program for members medically releasing from the CAF. Continued efforts to better prepare and support our members and their families are key elements of the Chief Military Personnel's Strategic Framework going forward.

Recommendation 2: Adequate support and education for Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) be made available to families and loved ones of officers and veterans of the Canadian Armed Forces. This could be in the form of a resource package, website or hotline.

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Canada

The Surgeon General's Mental Health Strategy recognizes that a family member's knowledge of mental illness and of abnormal indicators to look for in their loved ones returning from operations is essential for early diagnosis and treatment of operational stress injuries. For this reason, families are part of the mental health strategy, including the CAF Road to Mental Readiness Program. Surgeon General staff is working closely with Military Family Resource Centres throughout Canada in the execution of this part of the Strategy.

While the CAF are not responsible for veteran health and welfare, we work closely with Veterans Affairs Canada to share good practices and align programs between departments to ensure that there is a smooth transition for our members who are releasing.

Thank you for sharing the results of this inquest with us.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Rob Nicholson".

Hon. Rob Nicholson, PC, QC, MP

c.c. The Honourable Julian Fantino, PC, MP
Minister of Veterans Affairs



Veterans Affairs
Canada

Anciens Combattants
Canada

Assistant Deputy Minister
Service Delivery

PO Box 7700
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Sous-ministre adjoint
Prestation des services

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C1A 8M9

PROTECTED
ACTION REQUEST NO. ESU14-001093

Ms. Lisa Lapointe
Chief Coroner
British Columbia Coroners Service
Ministry of Justice
Metrotower II
800-4720 Kingsway
Burnaby, British Columbia
V5H 4N2

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AUG 28 2014

MINISTRY OF SOLICITOR GENERAL
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF CORONER

Dear Ms. Lapointe:

On behalf of the Honourable Julian Fantino, Minister of Veterans Affairs, this is in response to your correspondence of May 26, 2014 in which you shared the Verdict at Inquest regarding the death of Master Corporal Gregory Matters. As noted in your correspondence, the Inquest resulted in, among other things, two recommendations of the jury applicable to Veterans Affairs Canada.

We have carefully reviewed the two recommendations as they apply to Veterans Affairs Canada and offer the following comments:

Recommendation 8: Programs be developed to monitor the physical, emotional and financial health and well-being of all officers of the Canadian Armed Forces. This would include veterans following their discharge or dismissal.

Veterans Affairs Canada is committed to providing Veterans and their families with the best possible support and works closely with the Department of National Defence to assist releasing Canadian Armed Forces personnel.

All releasing Canadian Armed Forces members undergo a transition interview with a representative from Veterans Affairs Canada. This is a chance for them to discuss their physical, emotional and financial needs and obtain advice on the Department's programs and services as well as referrals to community resources. Their family members are also encouraged to participate in this process.

To ensure continuity of care, releasing Canadian Armed Forces personnel who have complex needs are transferred from their case manager at the Department of National Defence to a case manager at Veterans Affairs Canada to develop an integrated transition plan as they re-establish into civilian life.

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The case manager works with the Veteran and his or her family to discuss aspects of his or her health and life circumstances. An assessment is conducted, goals and barriers are identified, and referrals and ongoing monitoring is done to achieve desired outcomes. The case managers are members of interdisciplinary teams and have access to doctors, nurses, physiotherapists, occupational therapists, mental health specialists, rehabilitation specialists, among others. Veterans who are discharged for medical reasons or who have a rehabilitation need that is related to their service can also participate in the Department's Rehabilitation Program. This program is designed to assist these individuals in overcoming any barriers they may face in adjusting to life outside the military. The medical and psycho-social components help ill and injured Veterans to restore their health and regain their independence to the fullest extent possible, while the vocational component helps them to achieve their occupational goals.

In addition, Veterans who have a service-related illness or injury are eligible for a disability award and associated treatment benefits such as medication, access to health care specialists and in- and out-patient programs, and special equipment.

Recommendation 9: Adequate support and education for Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) be made available to families and loved ones of officers and veterans of the Canadian Armed Forces. This could be in the form of a resource package, website, or hotline.

Veterans Affairs Canada recognizes that operational stress injuries, such as PTSD, present a great challenge to affected Canadian Armed Forces personnel, Veterans and their loved ones.

Veterans Affairs Canada works closely with the Department of National Defence to ensure that individuals who have a service-related psychological condition have access to specialized care, including early intervention, treatment and rehabilitation, in the communities where they live:

- The Department of National Defence has established 30 primary clinics and 26 mental health clinics nationwide to care for serving military personnel. In total, the Department employs nearly 400 full-time mental health professionals and more are scheduled to be hired.
- Veterans who have complex mental health conditions will usually have access to a departmental case manager. Veterans Affairs Canada also provides assistance for eligible Veterans to receive treatment from a private health professional—for example, a licensed psychologist—of their choice. Currently, over 4,000 mental health care providers are registered.

- Staff from Veterans Affairs Canada and the Department of National Defence work side-by-side at 31 integrated personnel support centres to deliver a coordinated approach to the care of injured or ill Canadian Armed Forces personnel as they transition back into military service or to civilian life. At these centres, Regular and Reserve Force members, Veterans and their families have one-stop access to information and assistance with the services and benefits of both departments.
- Together, the two departments opened 17 clinics that specialize in the treatment of operational stress injuries (OSI), such as PTSD. These facilities offer a full range of mental health services to current and former members of the Canadian Armed Forces. Many OSI clinics offer a “family friendly” approach to support the Veteran’s treatment plan, such as providing couple assessments, counselling for partners and family therapy.
- Veterans Affairs Canada and the Department of National Defence jointly run the Operational Stress Injury Social Support program. Through this program, soldiers, Veterans and their families can receive confidential support from a national network of trained peer and family peer coordinators who have dealt with an operational stress injury and lived through similar experiences.
- Both departments offer a 24-hour, toll-free assistance line to provide confidential, short-term counselling or referrals for psychological services.
- Pastoral Outreach services provide Veterans and their families with spiritual support.
- Veterans Affairs Canada is involved in several initiatives to evaluate the potential of animal-assisted interventions to improve the emotional well-being of our service men and women. In September 2013, the Department commissioned the Canadian Institute for Military and Veteran Health Research to review the existing scientific literature on the role of psychiatric service dogs in treating PTSD and, on May 27, 2014, the Minister announced that Veterans Affairs Canada will provide \$500,000 to help fund a pilot project to assess the benefits of using service dogs in the treatment of PTSD among Veterans. The Department also provided funding to St. John Ambulance Canada and Can Praxis for two pilot projects. Each of these organizations has collaborated with a Canadian university to develop tools to measure the benefits of their respective programs using dogs and horses.

All these initiatives form part of Veterans Affairs Canada's broader strategy to promote the health and independence of our Veterans. I have enclosed a *Services & Benefits* brochure that provides more details on the full range of programs offered by Veterans Affairs Canada.

Thank you for writing and I hope that the information provided is helpful.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'MD', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Michel Doiron

Enclosure



Veterans Affairs
Canada

Anciens Combattants
Canada



Veterans Affairs
**Services
& Benefits**

Supporting Veterans and their families

Canada

This publication is available upon request in multiple formats.
Web site: veterans.gc.ca
Toll free: 1-866-522-2122

Revised February 2012

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represented by the Minister of Veterans Affairs, 2009.

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HELPING YOU BECOME HEALTHY AND INDEPENDENT

Veterans Affairs Canada is here to serve those who have served Canada. Following your service, we want to help you be as healthy and independent as possible. There is a wide range of services and benefits available, and our goal is to make sure you know your options and help you make the best choices for you and your family.

Veterans Affairs Canada serves qualified:

- Veterans;
- Canadian Forces (CF) members (Regular and Reserve Force);
- serving and discharged members of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP);
- certain civilians; and
- their families.

The needs of those we serve are changing, and we are changing to meet those needs. Inside this brochure, you will find short descriptions of some of the ways we can help. You may be surprised to learn about some of the benefits and services you may qualify for, including:

- rehabilitation for mental and physical injuries;
- financial benefits and cash awards;
- group health insurance;
- help finding a job;
- health benefits;
- help for your family;
- help to stay in your home.

If you believe you may be eligible for any of these services and benefits, all you have to do is click on our Web site (veterans.gc.ca), call us toll free at **1-866-522-2122 (English)** or visit one of our many offices across Canada.

Just click, call or visit us, and we will be pleased to work with you. We are here to help.

GETTING STARTED

When you first contact us, either in person, online or by phone, we will:

- provide you with more information about the services and benefits you may qualify for and how to apply for them;
- listen to the challenges you face or the changes in your life that are affecting you or your family, and work with you to put together a plan that best meets your needs; and



- help you become as independent as possible by helping you make choices about the services and benefits available to you from the Government of Canada, provincial and municipal governments and your community.

Case Management

If you are having serious or complicated problems, personal case management can make a world of difference.

Together, you and your case manager will come up with a personalized plan to help you and your family. Veterans Affairs Canada's case managers are part of a team that includes doctors, nurses and other professionals.

Click, call or visit us to find out how our case managers can help you.

HEALTH CARE

To help you be as independent and healthy as possible, Veterans Affairs Canada offers health care benefits, rehabilitation services, the Veterans Independence Program, long-term care and the Public Service Health Care Plan to those who qualify. Help with covering the costs of these services is in addition to other Government of Canada programs and services for which you may qualify.

Health Care Benefits

Veterans Affairs Canada offers 14 kinds of health care benefits, including medical, surgical and dental care, prescription drugs, and hearing and vision aids. There are also other benefits and allowances, including help with the cost of travel for medical services and travel for someone to accompany you, if needed.

Rehabilitation

Recovering from a serious injury or illness can be hard, but if you are medically released from service for any reason, you can get help from Veterans Affairs Canada's Rehabilitation Program. The program pays for the services Veterans need to recover physically and mentally, to get used to their disability and to re-train for a new career. Veterans who apply within four months of being medically released are automatically approved. Veterans having problems because of an injury or illness caused by their military service may apply at any time.

Veterans Independence Program (VIP)

Known as VIP, the Veterans Independence Program helps those who qualify remain independent and stay in their homes for as long as they can. This includes help such as day-to-day housekeeping, yard work and making meals. Care workers can also go into

your home to help with bathing and getting dressed. You can also get help to make changes to your home so you can do things on your own like cook, take a bath and get around on your own.

Long-Term Care

If you qualify, Veterans Affairs Canada will pay for some, or all, of the cost of long-term care in about 2,000 facilities across the country.

Public Service Health Care Plan

CF Veterans and survivors may qualify for group health insurance under the Public Service Health Care Plan.

SUPPORT FOR OPERATIONAL STRESS INJURIES

Canada is recognized as a world leader in the treatment of operational stress injuries (OSIs). If you think you have ongoing issues resulting from your military service such as **anxiety, depression** or **post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)**, please contact the Department right away to find out how we can help. If you believe a member of your family is dealing with any of these issues, it's important that you know what is available and who to contact. There are a number of operational stress injury clinics across the country that provide assessment, treatment, prevention and support services.

If you need immediate help for an urgent personal matter such as marital and family issues, emotional, money or substance-abuse problems, call the Veterans Affairs Canada 24-hour toll-free assistance line at **1-800-268-7708 (TDD 1-800-567-5803)**.

There is also a peer support network made up of Veterans and family members of Veterans from across the country who know firsthand what it is like to live with an OSI or to live with someone who suffers from an OSI. You can contact the peer support coordinator nearest you by phone at **1-800-883-6094** or online at **www.osiss.ca**.

FINANCIAL AND EMPLOYMENT SUPPORT

If you have been injured during service, you may worry about how you and your family are going to pay your bills. Along with our rehabilitation program, Veterans Affairs Canada may be able to help you and your family financially to allow you to concentrate on getting better and returning to civilian life. Depending on your service, these programs and benefits are in addition to other Government of Canada support you may qualify for.

Earnings Loss Benefit (Partial Salary Replacement)

If you qualify, your income will not be less than 75 percent of your military salary. You may receive this taxable benefit while you are in the Rehabilitation Program or until you turn 65, if you can't return to work.

War Veterans Allowance (Low-Income Support)

If you are a low-income traditional wartime Veteran, you may qualify for a regular monthly payment. Surviving family members may also qualify for this payment if the deceased Veteran or civilian served during wartime.

Disability Benefits

You or a member of your family may qualify for a pension or award if you are disabled because of your service. A disability award comes with a number of options for payment, including a lump-sum payment, annual payments, or a combination of both.

Other disability benefits can include a number of things, from pensions and help with your care to financial help to pay for clothing. There are also survivor benefits for surviving family members of Veterans who have died as a result of a service-related injury, including children

who need help paying education costs. You may also qualify for a pension or benefit if you were a prisoner of war or a Veteran with the Allied Forces.

Supplementary Retirement Benefit

If you can't return to work, you may qualify for this one-time, taxable payment when you turn 65 to help with your retirement income.

Death Benefit

A death benefit is a tax-free, lump-sum payment to a spouse or common-law partner and dependent children of a Canadian Forces member who is killed in service or injured in service and dies within 30 days of the injury.

Assistance Fund (Help in an Emergency)

If you already receive the War Veterans Allowance, you may qualify for financial help through the Assistance Fund if you have an emergency situation and there is no way to pay these expenses.

Career Transition Services (Help Finding a Job)

Everyone who has released from the Regular Force, and some members of the Reserve Force, can get real help finding a civilian job.

Canadian Forces Income Support

A monthly tax-free payment made if you have not found a job, or have found only a low-paying job after rehabilitation. You may also qualify for it if you are 65 or older and have a low income.

REMEMBRANCE

The Canada Remembers Program helps keep alive the memory of those who served Canada in times of war, military conflict and peace. Veterans Affairs Canada organizes remembrance ceremonies, and offers cemetery maintenance and upkeep of our memorials, funeral and burial assistance, and learning activities and materials for Canada's youth.

Veterans Affairs Canada is also proud to work with communities across Canada to remember those who have served our country. If your community is interested in working with the Department to promote remembrance locally, or to build or repair monuments to honour Canadians who have served, we have three programs to help you:

- Community Engagement Partnership Fund;
- Cenotaph/Monument Restoration Program;
- Community War Memorial Program.

To find out more about these programs and how Veterans Affairs Canada can support activities in your community, please **call, click or visit us**.

TO CONTACT US

For more information on services and benefits for Veterans, to find out if you qualify, or to apply, **please click, call or visit us**.

CLICK

- Web site: veterans.gc.ca
- E-mail: information@vac-acc.gc.ca

CALL

- **1-866-522-2122** (English)
- **1-866-522-2022** (French)

If you are facing a more urgent personal situation, and want to talk to someone who can help, call the Veterans Affairs Canada 24-hour toll-free assistance line at:

- **1-800-268-7708**
- **TDD 1-800-567-5803**



If you live outside Canada, please call Foreign Countries Operations who is responsible for the provision of benefits and services available to eligible Canadian Veterans and their dependants who reside or vacation outside of Canada.

- **1-888-996-2242** (toll-free from Canada and the United States)
- **00-800-996-22421** (toll-free from the United Kingdom, Germany, France and Belgium)
- **1-613-996-2242** (collect, all other countries)

VISIT

Drop in to one of our many offices across Canada or visit one of the integrated personnel support centres (IPSCs) located at Canadian Forces bases across the country for help and information. To find the office or centre nearest you, visit **veterans.gc.ca**.

WRITE

- Veterans Affairs Canada
PO Box 7700, Charlottetown PE
C1A 8M9

APPEALS AND ADVOCACY

Bureau of Pensions Advocates

You have access to free legal advice through the **Bureau of Pensions Advocates (BPA)**. BPA's lawyers will help you with free advice and free legal representation if you have concerns with a decision about your claim for disability benefits.

Veterans Review and Appeal Board

The Veterans Review and Appeal Board (VRAB) is independent from Veterans Affairs Canada and it deals with appeals of disability benefit decisions. It is also the final level of appeal on all allowance decisions.

Within Canada, please call toll-free:

- **1-800-450-8006** (English)
- **1-877-368-0859** (French)

Outside Canada, please call collect:

- **0-902-566-8751** (English)
- **0-902-566-8835** (French)

Web site: **www.vrab-tacra.gc.ca**

Office of the Veterans Ombudsman

The Office of the Veterans Ombudsman (OVO) is independent from the Department and it will work in your best interest to make sure your concerns are heard and dealt with.

Within Canada, please call toll-free:

- **1-877-330-4343**

Outside Canada, please call collect:

- **0-902-626-2919**

E-mail:

info@ombudsman-veterans.gc.ca

Web site: **ombudsman-veterans.gc.ca**





Royal Canadian Mounted Police Gendarmerie royale du Canada

Commanding Officer Commandant divisionnaire

Mail Stop #306
14200 Green Timbers Way
Surrey, BC
V3T 6P3

July 25, 2016

Ms. Lisa Lapointe, Chief Coroner
Chief Coroner's Office
Metrotower II
Suite 800 - 4720 Kingsway
Burnaby, BC
V5H 4N2

RE: MATTERS, Gregory John (DOB 1972-04-12)
Coroner's Inquest into the Death of
BCCS Case File: 2012-0607-0096
"E" Division Crops File: 2013CP-0142/86

Dear Ms. Lapointe:

As a result of this tragic incident, we undertook a review of related RCMP policy and wish to provide a response to the following Coroner's Jury recommendations directed to the Commanding Officer "E" Division:

Recommendation 1

Audio/Visual Recording device be worn by all ERT members upon deployment.

Response:

The RCMP nationally have conducted a review regarding the use of body worn video (BWV) and the results have recently been forwarded to the Deputy Commissioner in Charge of Contract and Aboriginal Policing for consideration. The RCMP in British Columbia are also participating in a working group under the auspices of the British Columbia Association of Chiefs of Police that includes members from other police agencies and the Provincial Government. This group is developing guidelines for the use and deployment of BWV based on best practices. While BWV can provide

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excellent, objective evidence on the interaction between a police officer and a member of the public, these reviews have recognized the need to account for several issues. These include; the need to balance the benefits against the privacy rights of individuals and related privacy legislation; the costs, information management, disclosure, and security issues associated to the significant quantities of data created; and the need for policies to govern the use of BWV including when and how it should be used, proper notice to the public of its use, and processes for public and media access. This work is well advanced and will provide fulsome guidance regarding the adoption of this technology.

Recommendation 2

The Arwen Gun be included in the RCMP's less-lethal weapons.

Response:

The RCMP's National Critical Incident Program is presently pursuing the acquisition of the 40mm Multi-Launcher less lethal weapon for use by Emergency Response Teams. Concurrently, the National Use of Force Program through Contract and Aboriginal Policing is actively engaged in procuring the 40mm Single Launcher for use by General Duty. These weapons fire a blunt impact projectile comprised of a dense foam material and are considered more accurate and effective than the current less lethal shotguns.

Recommendation 3

A program be developed to effectively train and qualify all ERT officers in the proper use of all less-lethal weapons. This would be completed with a view to ensure that ERT teams have a variety of less-lethal force options. This must include ongoing training and qualification at appropriate intervals.

Response:

In the Lower Mainland, all ERT members are trained in the use of CEW, less lethal shot gun, OC spray and baton. In the Island District, 75% of ERT members are trained in CEW, 60% in less lethal shot gun and all in OC spray and baton. In the Southeast District, 60% of ERT are trained in CEW, all are trained in less lethal shot gun, OC spray and baton. In the North District, 80% of ERT are trained in CEW, 70% in less lethal shot gun and all in OC spray and baton. In summary, all ERT members are trained and qualified on some, and in some instances, many, less lethal weapons. In addition to ERT training there is ongoing training in OC spray and baton each time a

member attends operational skills training. It is likely, then, at any given ERT call out, that among the attending members there will be members who are trained in all RCMP-approved less lethal weapons.

Recommendation 4

A qualified Mental Health Professional be made available (possibly on-call) to all ERT deployment situations, similar to the Vancouver Police Department 'Car 87'.

Response:

All Emergency Response Teams now maintain a list of on call mental health professionals who can either attend or provide support to the Critical Incident Commander by telephone.

Recommendation 5

Mental Health Training be required for the RCMP members to be completed within the first year of active duty. Such a program would include ongoing training and re-qualification.

Response:

The RCMP in "E" Division includes a mandatory Crisis Intervention & De-escalation (CID) module in its five day Operational Skills Training Course, which recurs every three years. This training was designed collaboratively by the RCMP Pacific Region Training Centre, the BC Ministry of Justice, Police Services Division and Municipal Police Departments, and includes both an online component and a scenario-based component with live actors.

The course is based on a five stage communication model that emphasizes rapport building and use of empathy and ongoing risk assessment to build understanding, trust and confidence with emotionally disturbed clients. Although the principles of this communication model were designed primarily to deal with individuals who may be suffering from mental illness, those principles may be applied and extended to all police-client interactions.

Recommendation 6

RCMP police service dogs be trained and utilized in apprehending armed subjects, and the K9 Officers be prepared to deploy their service dog in such situations.

Response:

The Police Dog Service Training Centre subscribes to this recommendation of the jury. Beginning in early development, through the imprinting program and continuing on through the three levels of dog handler training, each potential police service dog is exposed to wielding sticks, threatening gestures and gun fire. RCMP police service dogs are trained and capable of engaging subjects armed with edged weapons. Each dog handler will perform a risk assessment prior to deploying his/her dog in any given situation.

Recommendation 7

RCMP cell phones issued and used during a critical incident have all data collected and preserved to assist in a subsequent investigation.

Response:

Shared Services Canada, who manages the RCMP's telecommunications system, retains Blackberry Short Messaging Service (SMS) and Personal Information Number (PIN) messaging for 90 days. It does not retain Blackberry Messaging (BBM) conversations. Members will communicate with whatever system is available in any given situation, critical or not—even orally, especially in an emergency—and if the system they use is not inherently recordable (such as BBM or simple telephonic smart phone), then it is the members' duty to make a record of any meaningful decision they make. That record may include notes or a summary report, and would attract the file retention of the incident itself, which for an uttering threats file, for example, would be ten years.

Thank you for bringing these recommendations to my attention. The RCMP is committed to learning from tragic incidents such as these and to developing policies and procedures that will improve our response.

Respectfully,



C/Supt. Dave Attfield
Acting Criminal Operations Officer
"E" Division Core Policing