

**AIMING FOR SAFETY:
A NEEDS ANALYSIS TO DETERMINE THE
FEASIBILITY OF ADOPTING THE PATROL
CARBINE IN THE RCMP**

Submitted to:

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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A needs analysis was undertaken to determine the feasibility of adopting the patrol carbine for uniformed patrol officers in the RCMP. Two survey questionnaires were designed and distributed to firearms specialists in the RCMP and to municipal and urban police agencies across Canada between November-December 2009. The purpose of the needs analysis was to assess whether the RCMP should a) replace the shotgun with the carbine; b) retain only the shotgun; or c) add the carbine to the RCMP's existing armament.

120 survey questionnaires (RCMP-94; Urban/municipal-26) were completed and returned to RCMP Headquarters. In total 2,646 responses served as the basis for the analysis and recommendations contained in this report. The analysis of the responses revealed that there is widespread support by members for a) adding the patrol carbine to existing RCMP armament; b) issuing the carbine to all uniform patrol officers and c) retaining a re-configured version of the shotgun for use in non lethal situations.

The platform/model most commonly mentioned by respondents in the survey was the Colt C842 for use with the .223 round. The findings generated the following recommendations for consideration:

- **The RCMP should immediately adopt and phase in a national patrol carbine program for all of its uniformed patrol officers regardless of whether they are providing policing services in a rural/urban/suburban environment.**

- **The RCMP should retain the shotgun but reconfigure this firearm so that it fires only non-deadly projectiles such as the beanbag. Carbines should be reserved only for deadly force situations;**
- **Prior to deploying carbines at the patrol officer level the RCMP should plan and execute a comprehensive and effective training program for all of its members. Such a training program should:**
 - a) **Be rigorous, ongoing and carefully monitored;**
 - b) **Be tactically oriented with a focus on the proper deployment of the weapon;**
 - c) **Be scenario based with an emphasis on cover and non-traditional positions;**
 - d) **Be offered quarterly with a minimal annual qualification required;**
 - e) **Include a standard user/maintenance course on the patrol carbine for all of its members;**
 - f) **Be developed in collaboration with training personnel from the Department of National Defence;**
 - g) **Maintain high standards not only in target scores but also in the handling, deployment tactics and safety requirements of the firearm;**
 - h) **Comply with the Incident Management Intervention Model (IMIM) and the rules of engagement pertaining to when the use of lethal force is required and justified as is the case with its existing firearms;**
- **New policies should be drafted and issued which include guidelines on the storage, maintenance, training and re-qualification requirements for the carbine as well as to where and when the weapon can be deployed.. These policies will have to be widely distributed so that they are clearly understood and complied with by all uniformed patrol officers.**
- **The RCMP should undertake consultations with the Department of National Defence and other police agencies in order to determine the best model/type of platform and munitions to be acquired along with any accessories that will enhance the carbines performance capabilities in the field;**

- **A proactive communications strategy should be prepared to clearly explain to the public, media and politicians the RCMP's rationale for purchasing and issuing the patrol carbine to all of its uniformed officers. Such a communications plan should utilize messaging that emphasize the advantages the patrol carbine will offer to the RCMP in terms of combating crime, increasing officer safety and ensuring a safer and more secure country for all Canadians;**
- **In order to defray costs associated with purchasing patrol carbines, ammunition, accessories and training requirements, the RCMP should build a business case which includes the development of an M.O.U between the RCMP and the Department of National Defence which addresses such issues as purchasing carbines and ammunition through DND's suppliers and utilizing DND firearms instructors and training facilities across Canada.**
- **Once the carbine program has been operational for at least three years all components of that program including implementation issues, training and deployment of weapons should be carefully evaluated to ensure that the original objectives for the patrol carbine program are being met.**

2. INTRODUCTION

An important question facing the RCMP in the year 2010 is whether they should replace the shotgun/handgun combination being used by the force with the patrol carbine for its uniformed members. Since 911, in both rural, urban and suburban areas, the nature of crime and criminality facing police has changed significantly. Whether responding to school shootings, gang violence or the ever increasing threat of terrorism on Canadian streets, it is imperative that the RCMP are adequately armed so they can contain and control these situations with the most up-to-date firearms technology. In fact, it is becoming an all too common occurrence for police officers to encounter situations where they have to deal with armed suspects.

The shooting deaths in 2005 of four RCMP officers in Mayerthorpe

Alberta, highlighted the importance of equipping officers with the necessary tools to respond effectively and quickly whenever they are confronted by armed suspects brandishing assault rifles. As one respondent to the survey stated “If our members were equipped with carbines Mr. Rosko would have thought twice about engaging four heavily armed and trained police officers.”

Data from the Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics indicates that between 2001-2007 more than fifty percent of all Canadian police officers killed in the line of duty were killed by shotguns and rifles. In the United States, studies indicate that one in every five police deaths in the line of duty have been the result of shots fired by an assault rifle. Many police agencies in Canada such as the Ontario Provincial Police (OPP), Metropolitan Toronto Police Force, Calgary Police Service, Delta Police Service and the Edmonton Police Service among others have already taken steps to remedy this situation by training and equipping their uniformed officers with patrol carbines. In fact, according to Colt Canada, 53 police agencies across the country have already purchased the carbine and several others are in the process of replacing/adding the carbine to their existing armament such as the province of Saskatchewan.

Under RCMP policy first responders are required to secure and contain an active shooter until the Emergency Response Team (ERT) arrives. This approach however is not always realistic or practical in today’s policing environment. This is particularly problematic for the RCMP given the fact that they are mandated to provide policing services to rural as well as urban communities throughout Canada. In some cases tactical units may be

located hours away from the crime scene. As the Mayerthorpe tragedy clearly demonstrated, the time interval between the arrival of first responders and backup tactical units compromises the safety of officers and members of the public.

Present RCMP policy also places officers in a dangerous situation where officers using handguns and shotguns may find themselves completely outgunned by adversaries using assault rifles. This paper therefore examines whether the RCMP should 1) replace the shotgun with the carbine; 2) keep the shotgun or 3) add the carbine to the RCMP's existing armament. At the same time, it also seeks answers to questions about the patrol carbine's effectiveness when compared to the shotgun/handgun.

As this report indicates, there are a number of factors that provide a solid rationale for the RCMP when it comes to making a decision to switch from shotguns to carbines. Although these reasons are addressed in more detail in the body of the report it is clear that the strongest argument in favour of the replacing the shotgun with the carbine is public safety. Many members are intimidated by the shotgun and reluctant to carry the weapon on duty. Some officers feel that the shotgun is bulky and awkward to use and they question their ability to accurately target a subject with a shotgun especially in distance shooting situations. In addition, some members feel that the shotgun is not a safe option in urban areas due to pellet spread and the fact that it is unable to penetrate body armor. The latter problem is a serious concern given the fact that police are more frequently encountering armed suspects who are wearing

body armor.

There is no question that a transition to the patrol carbine from the shotgun/handgun combination will entail a major financial expenditure as well as major changes to the RCMP's firearms policy, practices and training requirements for its members. At the same time however it is widely believed that changes of this nature will also have a beneficial impact for both officer and public safety whenever police have to respond to active shooting incidents in the future.

There are many arguments that can be made both for and against replacing the shotgun/handgun with the patrol carbine. The purpose of this feasibility study therefore is to objectively examine these arguments and to provide RCMP management with the best advice possible based on available evidence from other police agencies already using the carbine and from knowledgeable firearms users/specialists in the RCMP. At the present time, the most commonly employed types of carbines being used by most police agencies in Canada and the United States include the following:

- M-16
- AR-15 or its carbine version the CAR-15
- M-4
- H & K MP5
- SKS

As there are many excellent models available it is not the purpose of this paper to recommend one type of carbine over another but rather to examine the merits of the carbine over the existing shotgun/handgun combination. The ultimate goal is to ensure that RCMP officers on patrol have access to the right

tools at the right time wherever and whenever the situation demands it in the interest of public safety regardless of whether they are policing in a rural or urban/suburban environment.

3. LITERATURE REVIEW

For this report, a comprehensive literature review was undertaken with the following objectives:

- To inform the development and design of the two survey questionnaires that form the basis of this report's analysis and recommendations;
- To determine if there is any empirical evidence supporting the adoption of the patrol carbine over the shotgun/handgun combination;
- To provide an overview of the current issues and arguments surrounding the patrol carbine and its adoption by police agencies in Canada and the United States.

Information was gathered from a variety of sources including the RCMP, the internet, journals, periodicals and several internal proposals prepared by police personnel that recommended adoption of the patrol carbine for their police agency. In addition a few examples are cited in this literature review of actual shooting incidents in Canada where outcomes might have differed significantly had officers at the scene been equipped with carbines as opposed to shotguns/handguns.

The Patrol Rifle: Considerations for Adoption and Use, The Police Chief, February 2007.

This article published by the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) is one of the most detailed reviews of the patrol carbine and its advantages and disadvantages. The breadth of their coverage is so all

encompassing that it comprises the major portion of the literature review for this paper. At the onset, it should be mentioned that the IACP made it clear that their article was written solely “to assist law enforcement agencies as they address the the question of whether to rearm their officers to meet the challenges posed by more dangerous firearms on American streets.”

As a result, the IACP does not make a determination as to whether or not officers should or should not be armed with rifles. Rather as they stated the purpose of their article is to:

- Present many of the pros and cons of arming patrol officers with rifles;
- Examine the logic of some of the arguments both pro and con;
- Explore potential options for arming police;
- Offer some guidance that may help departments decide whether to pursue this course of action; and
- Suggest practices for police agencies that have already chosen to adopt the patrol rifle.

The article by the IACP first examines the advantages and disadvantages of the patrol carbine and looks at the following topics:

Increased Protection against Superior Firepower

This section looks at weapons used against the police as well as confrontations they may encounter with multiple adversaries. The IACP states that one of the strongest reasons for adopting the carbine is that there has been a corresponding increase in the use of assault rifles by their adversaries. This situation, is particularly dangerous for officers because any rifle in the hands of a criminal, places a shotgun/handgun armed police officer at a potentially fatal disadvantage.

As the IACP states: “Whereas most police handguns have a combat-

effective range of perhaps 25 yards, almost any rifle likely to be used by a criminal may have an effective range of 500 yards, will have far greater stopping power, will have much greater magazine capacity, and will be capable of a considerably higher rate of fire. It will also be likely to penetrate standard issue police body armor.”

Protection of the Public

The article indicates that police officers who are adequately armed with carbines will be in a much better position to increase public safety because they will be able to contain shooting incidents quickly and effectively with a carbine than they could with a shotgun/handgun.

Threat of Terrorism

The potential threat facing police officers from armed terrorists is a serious problem especially if their encounters involve confrontations with terrorists who are suicidal bombers or are persons armed with chemical, biological or radiological weapons.

Response to Active Shooters

In this section, the article examines the problems that may arise if first responders have to wait for the arrival of SWAT teams or tactical units. Such a time lag is a serious threat both to officer and public safety and was clearly demonstrated in the North Hollywood robbery when six civilians were injured during a shootout between criminals and police who were only armed with their handguns.

Deterrent Factor

The IACP states that the deterrent factor of using a carbine is an important consideration. If their adversaries are aware the police are adequately armed there is widespread belief that they will be less likely to initiate gunfire. In the section of the paper dealing with the advantages of the carbine the IACP point out that the carbine has greater accuracy, is easier to use and results in less excessive penetration. In addition, there are other arguments for arming officers with carbines such as the situational and organizational support they may receive from a broad spectrum of police agencies including the media and members of the public.

In the section on disadvantages the IACP article discusses the dangers to the public resulting from the high volume of shots, greater travel distance of rifle rounds, risk of penetration of homes and vehicles and civil liability exposure. In addition, the IACP addresses related factors in their paper such as training requirements that will be needed for a carbine program, the high costs involved and any potential opposition that may arise in terms of political and public opposition.

The balance of the IACP article examines where carbines could be deployed (rural versus urban areas) and the impact acquisition of the carbine will have in terms of the size of the police department/agency, the budget implications involved and whether a carbine should replace or complement existing firearms such as the shotgun/handgun in the police armament. The IACP comment that while cost should never take precedence over safety

considerations that there are options that may help alleviate these costs

such as:

- Retaining the shotgun but reconfiguring this firearm so that it only fires non deadly projectiles such as the beanbag while reserving the carbine for use only in deadly force situations;
- Phasing in a carbine program so that the costs of purchasing the carbine, ammunition and training officers is done incrementally with costs staggered over time;
- Issuing the carbine to police vehicles rather than to individual officers;

The IACP paper discusses the various accessories and options for the carbine. These include obtaining models that can be fired in either semi-automatic or automatic mode, obtaining larger capacity magazines, adopting iron sights to highly sophisticated telescopic illuminated laser or night sights and using ammunition such as the .223 round which is designed to fragment on impact but which still penetrate body armor without penetrating walls or other surfaces excessively. The IACP article also examines who the rifles should be issued to, where they should be stored, whether they should be issued to all patrol officers or only a selection of officers. It also sets out the criteria that should be followed if the carbine is issued to selected officers or teams of officers along with an analysis pertaining to the rules of engagement.

The issue of body armor was also reviewed in the paper along with policy and training issues and weapon handling and familiarization. While the IACP avoided making overarching recommendations as to whether to add the patrol carbine to a police agencies armament it did make two recommendations in its summary section. First, the IACP stipulated that “any department that decides to

deploy rifles should plan and execute a comprehensive and effective training program and second “that every department that is considering the acquisition of rifles or that has already acquired them, should take advantage of the knowledge and experience of law enforcement agencies that have already deployed them.

Although the IACP did not include this as a recommendation one point that they did emphasize in their article is that “the decision to add rifles to the department’s armament will require drafting and issuance of new departmental policies and that they will have to be carefully prepared so that they include guidelines on such matters as deployment of the rifles, training and re-qualification requirements and use of the rifles on the street—when, how and by whom they are to be used. Finally, the IACP paper stated that once such policies are prepared that they should be widely disseminated, understood and complied with by all departmental personnel.

The Armament of Calgary Police Service Frontline Officers- Risk Analysis and Mitigation, Calgary Police Service 2007

The Calgary Police Service adopted the patrol carbine following a proposal to the Chief’s Executive Committee by the Calgary Police Service’s Use of Force Committee in 2007. The proposal identified the risk to the Calgary Police Service of maintaining the current firepower. It included a review of the .40 calibre (handgun), the 12 gauge slug (shotgun) and the .223 cartridge (carbine). The proposal outlined the advantages and disadvantages of the .223 cartridge and concluded with seven recommendations which led the Calgary Police Service to adopt the Colt C842 carbine as the weapon platform for use

with the .223 calibre round.

Proposal For Change: Colt C8A2/CQB Rifle Implementation and Phase Out of the Operational Remington 870 Shotgun, Durham Regional Police Service

As with the Calgary Police Service, the Durham Regional Police Service also adopted the Colt C842 carbine to replace the shotgun. The proposal they submitted justifying the change, referred to the fact that both the Ottawa Police Service and the London Police Service had already implemented a carbine program based on the rationale that the carbine was a superior firearm to the shotgun. In addition to outlining their rationale for the change the Durham Regional Police Service's proposal also discussed the various advantages and disadvantages of replacing the shotgun/handgun with the carbine. The report made seven recommendations which eventually led to the adoption of the Colt C8A2/CQB by the Durham Regional Police Service.

Two additional reports "The Patrol Rifle/Carbine" by the E.M.U. School of Police Staff and Command by Sergeant Craig Bauldry (Canton Township Police Department, Canton MI) and "Patrol Rifles: Arming Officers to succeed" by Sergeant Scott Buziecki (North Aurora Police Department) also reached similar conclusions as the Calgary and Durham Regional Police Services namely that the patrol carbine will ensure that 'compliance can be improved in all areas where the operational shotgun falls short.'

As this literature review demonstrates there is strong evidence both from the review provided by the International Association of Chiefs of Police and the various proposals that were submitted by police agencies that a wide patrol

carbine program should be implemented on a national scale. There are many examples both in Canada and the United States where the availability of carbines to police would have made a huge difference. For the purposes of this section of the report three cases are worth mentioning:

- **Chad Yurko**

On June 23 1998 in Edmonton Alberta, a heavily intoxicated man named Chad Yurko left his parents home carrying a shotgun and wandered in a busy school field where a student track and field day was being held. Most of the students had gone into the school for lunch, and Yurko began blasting off 12 gauge shotgun rounds into the air. Police attended and Yurko refused to surrender. A police dog was deployed and Yurko shot and killed it. Police officers had to move within range of the suspect's weapon without cover or concealment to remove the threat. At that time they had no access to patrol carbines and eventually shot the suspect with 12 gauge 00 buck ammunition. Not all of the shotgun pellets were recovered. It would have not been practical to wait for the Edmonton Police Service Tactical Unit (ERT) as the suspect was walking towards the school.

- **Connie and Ty Jacobs**

In March 1998 RCMP Constable Dave Voller responded to Connie Jacob's residence after there had been a family fight after which time Jacob's took a rifle and threatened an aboriginal police officer with it. Upon arrival on the scene Voller was shot at by Jacobs as she was standing on her front porch. Voller returned fire with a 12 gauge shotgun using buckshot. Jacobs was killed, but so was her nine year old son who had been standing behind her. Voller never saw the child, who was hit by the spreading buckshot ammunition. This is a situation that could happen to any RCMP officer anywhere in Canada. The availability of a patrol carbine likely would have prevented the death of the child.

- **North Hollywood Band Robbery**

This incident was the catalyst for police deployment of rifles/carbines (as the shooting at the OC Bus station was for the Ottawa Police Service) in North America. Two criminals armed with automatic weapons fired hundreds of rounds in the presence of police, wounding several civilians and police officers. The suspects wore soft body armor which defeated all of the LAPD pistol rounds and buckshot pellets. LAPD debriefing and

analysis of the incident recognized that patrol carbines could have terminated the suspects actions at the onset of the confrontation.

4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Collecting data and information for the 'RCMP Patrol Carbine/Shotgun Survey' and the Urban/municipal Patrol Carbine/Shotgun Survey' required designing two separate survey questionnaires. Both questionnaires were prepared based on information obtained from the literature review as well as from consultations with firearms specialists in the National Use of Force Program, Community, Contract and Aboriginal Policing at RCMP Headquarters in Ottawa. The 'RCMP Patrol Carbine/Shotgun Survey' sought to obtain the views of RCMP members on both the shotgun/handgun they were using and it's possible replacement with the patrol carbine.

The 'Urban/Municipal Patrol Carbine/shotgun Survey' elicited responses from police agencies across Canada that had already replaced their shotguns with carbines or were imminently in the process of making the transition. Both survey questionnaires consisted of open-ended and closed questions. The 'RCMP Patrol Carbine/Shotgun Survey' questionnaire included 24 questions and was distributed internally to divisional members in the RCMP who were knowledgeable about firearms. In contrast, the 'Urban/Municipal Patrol Carbine Shotgun Survey' questionnaire consisted of 15 questions and was sent to a sample of rural/urban/suburban police agencies across Canada.

120 questionnaires were completed and returned to RCMP Headquarters either by facsimile or electronic mail between November-

December 2009. The 'RCMP Patrol Carbine/Shotgun Survey' generated the return of 94 questionnaires while the 'Urban/Municipal Patrol Carbine/Shotgun Survey' produced 26 questionnaires. In total, both questionnaires generated 2,646 responses (RCMP- 2,256 & Municipal-390) for analysis and they form the basis of the findings, analysis and recommendations contained in this report.

5. FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

For the purpose of analyzing the 'RCMP Patrol Carbine/Shotgun Survey' responses have been divided into two categories based on their relevance to either the shotgun/handgun or the carbine. Seven questions including questions 1, 7, 9, 13, 14 & 15 apply to the shotgun/handgun while the remaining questions apply specifically to the carbine.

a) RCMP Patrol Carbine/Shotgun Survey

1. SHOTGUN/HANDGUN

- **Adequacy of Firearms**

'Question One' asked respondents whether the traditional patrol officers handgun/shotgun combination is adequate for law enforcement agencies. 72/94 or 76.5% of the total number of respondents indicated that the shotgun/handgun is not adequate to meet the challenges facing law enforcement. Only 17% or 17/94 respondents thought the shotgun/handgun is adequate while 6.3% or 6/94 respondents offered no opinion. Based on the responses to this question it is clear that the majority of respondents do not believe that the shotgun/handgun is adequate for policing today's society.

- **Alternatives**

'Question Seven' asked members what alternatives they would propose to the handgun/shotgun. This was an open-ended question and a review of the comments shows that most members believe the patrol carbine is the best alternative. Although respondents differed on the make/model it is clear they regard the patrol carbine as the firearm of choice. Some respondents gave no answer while a few suggested adopting state of the art handguns.

- **Advantages/Disadvantages of the Shotgun**

In 'Question Nine' respondents were asked to list the advantages and disadvantages of retaining the shotgun. The following is a representative sample of the responses received.

Advantages

- Excellent for close range
- Easy to use
- low maintenance
- Compensates for situation inaccuracy
- Members are already familiar with the firearm
- Intimidating
- Door breaching for ERT
- Useful in close quarter applications
- Minimal malfunction
- Good for dealing with injured and dangerous animals
- Has low failure rate
- Cheaper to purchase
- Training protocols already in place
- Easy to learn and use

Disadvantages

- Loses accuracy at great distances
- Members have to account for every pellet (8 rounds per shot)
- Weight and recoil issue for smaller members

- Members afraid to use it
- Heavy and cumbersome
- Limited ammunition capacity
- Not accurate
- Limited range up to 25 metres
- Spread of shot results in collateral damage
- Slow reload time
- No sling requiring use of both arms to operate
- Ammunition more bulky
- Outdated technology
- Awkward for many officers
- No built in retention system
- No long-range capabilities
- Hard to shoot
- Limited tactical use in urban areas
- Limited magazine capacity

Overall, respondents indicated that the shotgun has a place in the RCMP's arsenal but pointed out that it is outdated technology. Since it is not accurate at long distances members are forced to move closer to their target potentially endangering their own lives in the process. For members the shotgun has a place particularly in rural areas where pellet dispersion is not as big a threat to bystander safety. The shotgun is also seen as a good firearm for destroying injured and dangerous animals. For the majority of respondents the major drawback of the shotgun is its limited range and accuracy at distances greater than 25 metres. In today's policing environment members view the shotgun as outdated technology.

- **Choice of Firearm in Police Vehicles**

'Question Thirteen' asked respondents whether shotguns should be replaced by carbines in police vehicles if carbines are purchased by the RCMP. 52/94 or 55.3% of all respondents supported replacing the shotgun with carbines in police vehicles while 39/94 or 41.4% of respondents said the

vehicle should include both shotguns and carbines. There was a fairly close distribution of responses between those wishing to replace the shotgun with the carbine in police vehicles and those who favour carrying both firearms in police vehicles. The rationale for this is that many members see the shotgun and the carbine as having a unique purpose specific to the geographical area in which it is being deployed.

- **Switching to Carbines or Upgrading the shotgun/handgun**

'Question Fourteen' asked respondents whether the RCMP should switch to carbines or merely upgrade the type of shotgun and munitions being used by the force. For this question it is clear that the majority of RCMP officers would rather switch to carbines than update the shotgun that they are currently using. 75/94 respondents or 79.7% of all responses indicated that members did not favour upgrading their current weaponry and preferred to have it replaced with the carbine. Only 7.4% or 7 respondents stated a preference for upgrading the shotgun rather than making a change to patrol carbines. 5.3% or 5 respondents said they should keep both while 7 respondents or 7.4% of responses offered no opinion.

- **Deterrent Effect**

'Question Fifteen' asked whether the shotgun had a greater effect as a deterrent than a carbine on potential adversaries. 57/94 respondents or 60.6% stated that the carbine was a more effective visual and auditory deterrent than the shotgun while 22/94 or 23.4% of all respondents disagreed. 15 respondents or 15.9% of all respondents offered no comment

one way or the other. Based on responses to this question, the majority of RCMP officers feel the carbine would be even more effective as a deterrent to criminals than the shotgun.

- **Firepower Capability**

'Question Nineteen' asked respondents to comment on their current firepower capability. This question was open-ended and it is evident from a review of the responses that the majority of members believe their firepower is behind the times. Here is a sample of the comments received from respondents:

- Outdated and ineffective weaponry
- Very limited
- Equipment out of date
- Lack necessary equipment
- lack firepower at distances
- Firepower is lacking
- Equipment does not meet modern standards
- Behind the times in firepower capability
- Limited compared to other police agencies
- Not adequate
- Hole in frontline members ability to deal with long-gun bearing criminals
- Lower than desired level
- Not equipped adequately
- Lacking long-range weaponry
- Out of date
- RCMP should lead not follow which is not the case today
- Present firearms inadequate
- RCMP needs proper tools to perform duties expected of them

2. CARBINE

- **Justification For Carbine**

'Question Two' asked whether the threat posed by criminals using sophisticated weapons in today's policing environment justifies giving RCMP members access to patrol carbines. An overwhelming 85/94 respondents or

90.4% agreed with this statement compared to 7/94 respondents or 7.4% who disagreed. Only two respondents gave no response. It is clear that the vast majority of RCMP members feel outgunned and less safe when they have to respond to armed assailants who may have assault rifles in their possession.

- **Who should have access to Carbines?**

In 'Question Three' respondents were asked whether carbines (if they are purchased by the RCMP) should only be used by emergency response teams or issued to all patrol officers. The results show that 73/94 or 77.6% of all respondents believe patrol carbines should be issued to all uniformed officers and not restricted solely to members of ERT. This finding is significant because it demonstrates that the majority of members feel they should be allowed access to the carbine. Only 21 responses or 22.3% of all respondents disagreed and said that carbines should be restricted only to ERT members.

- **Support for Patrol Carbine**

'Question Four' asked respondents whether the carbine should replace the shotgun. The responses were overwhelmingly yes with 86/94 responses or 91.4% of all respondents supporting the replacement of the shotgun with the carbine. Only 4 responses or 4% of all respondents disagreed. The answers indicate that support for replacing the shotgun with the carbine is widespread among members across the country.

- **Redressing the Firearm Imbalance**

'Question Five' asked respondents if they agree or disagree with the statement that arming RCMP officers with carbines will redress the imbalance in firepower between the police and the criminal element. 71/94 or 75.5% of all respondents agreed with this statement as opposed to 15/94 or 15.9% who disagreed. 8 respondents provided no opinion on the question. The fact the majority agree with this statement clearly shows that RCMP members feel that they are currently outgunned by their adversaries and that they are behind the times in terms of their firepower capability and technology.

- **Rural versus Urban Access**

'Question Six' raised the issue about the rural-urban distribution of carbines and whether they should be restricted in use according to geographical location. In total 78/94 responses or 82.9% of all respondents stated that the carbine should be issued to all RCMP officers regardless of geographical location. Only 11 responses or 11.7% of respondents believed they should be restricted to urban areas only. 5 respondents provided no answer. The responses to this question show that support for the use of the carbine should not be limited exclusively to rural/urban/suburban areas but should be made available to all uniform officers regardless of where they are policing in Canada.

- **Are Carbines a risk to the Public?**

'Question Eight' looked at the issue of public safety and asked whether a patrol carbine would be a greater hazard to bystanders than a

shotgun/handgun. 81/94 or 86.1% of respondents stated that the carbine would be no more hazardous than a shotgun compared to 10/94 respondents or 10.6% who said that it would constitute a threat to public safety.

- **Advantages/Disadvantages of Carbines**

For 'Question Ten' respondents were asked to list the advantages and disadvantages of the patrol carbine. Answers provided by respondents were similar across the board with few disadvantages cited. Below are a sample of the comments received.

Advantages

- Accuracy
- Penetrating power
- Lethal force option with range
- Little recoil
- Easy to shoot
- Less intimidating to officers
- Lightweight
- Increase in ammunition capacity
- Ability to meet present threats
- Enhance public/police safety
- Allows coverage at greater distances
- Increased morale for members
- Can be used effectively by members of all statures
- Reliability
- Great stopping power
- Enhanced portability
- Keeping up with the latest technology

Disadvantages

- Over penetration concerns in urban areas
- Costs for initial purchase, training and qualifying
- Substantial training required
- Retrofitting of police vehicles
- Public perception

Respondents indicated very few disadvantages for the carbine. Overall it

was seen as the right firearm for the job with officer and public safety its major advantage.

- **Factors for Consideration**

In 'Question Twelve respondents were asked to list the factors they thought were the most important when equipping police officers with carbines. For this open-ended question and in order of priority, respondents provided the following reasons for purchasing carbines:

- Police officer and public safety
- Training and re-certification
- Reliability
- Portability
- Ease of use
- High magazine capacity
- Accuracy
- Compactness
- Simplicity
- Cost

The vast majority of respondents identified the need for ongoing scenario based training on a quarterly and annual basis so that members know how to operate, deploy and maintain the weapon. On par with responses for strict training requirements was the fact that the patrol carbine would significantly enhance officer and public safety. While cost was mentioned as a factor it was only mentioned by a few respondents and when it was listed it was relegated low priority compared to officer and public safety considerations.

- **Carbine Specifications**

'Question Sixteen' invited respondents to recommend which carbine, caliber of ammunition or scope they felt would be the best for the RCMP.

Several variations were identified with some respondents indicating that this was a decision that should be left to the experts in firearms. Given the wide ranging comments provided to this question it is not possible to make recommendations as to which carbine model, ammunition or scope should be purchased by the RCMP. Nevertheless, this section does provide a good overview of what some members think would be the best options for consideration if the RCMP proceeds to purchase the patrol carbine for their officers. The platform most commonly mentioned by respondents in the survey questionnaire is the Colt A-842 for use with a .223 round. However the author believes that any decision with respect to the model/type of carbine and ammunition purchased by the RCMP should be made by firearms experts who are very knowledgeable about the patrol carbine in the military and the RCMP.

- **Media and Public Reaction**

In 'Question Seventeen' respondents were asked to comment on how they thought the media, public and politicians would react to a decision by the RCMP to purchase the carbine. For this open-ended question the majority of respondents stated that acquisition of the carbine by the RCMP would be supported by the public. Most respondents felt that it really would be a non-issue given the shooting deaths of RCMP officers at Mayerthorpe Alberta.

While a minority stated it would be perceived negatively by the public most respondents said it would be a non issue provided the RCMP developed a solid proactive media strategy explaining their decision to the public and

pointing out that they were merely doing catch up with other police agencies in the country. Some members felt prior consultation would also help address any concerns in advance.

In summary, the impression by members is that adoption of the carbine would be viewed positively by the public, media and politicians as they expect the RCMP to be adequately armed with the latest up-to-date technology to address any serious security and safety concerns that may occur on Canadian streets.

- **Purchasing the Carbine**

'Question Eighteen' asked whether members would support a decision by the RCMP to adopt the patrol carbine. 68/94 or 72.3% of all respondents answered yes to this question. 19 respondents or 20.2% said no while 7.4% of respondents offered no opinion. The results show that there is widespread support by members to purchase the carbine.

- **Impact on Morale**

'Question Twenty' asked respondents if adopting the patrol carbine would help increase the morale of members. 65/94 or 69.1% of all respondents agreed that purchasing the carbine would help improve morale compared to 16/94 or 17% who disagreed. 11 respondents or 11.7% of respondents offered no opinion and two respondents provided a qualified response to the question.

The responses show that the majority of members believe the addition of the patrol carbine would have a positive impact as it would demonstrate that

management in the RCMP are concerned about ensuring the safety and welfare of all its members in the field.

- **Public Safety**

'Question Twenty-one' addressed the issue of public safety and asked respondents if they were aware of any criminal cases or incidents where a carbine as opposed to a shotgun would have saved lives or contained the situation faster and more effectively. For this question, 54/94 or 57.4% of all respondents indicated no to this question while 33/94 or 35.1% of respondents stated that there were cases where the carbine would have made a big difference. 7.4% or 7 respondents offered no comments.

- **Use of Carbine in other Jurisdictions**

'Question Twenty-two' asked members to comment on the effectiveness of the patrol carbine in other police jurisdictions in either Canada or the United States. The majority of respondents indicated that they were unaware of the carbine's effectiveness in other policing jurisdictions.

- **Training Requirements**

'Question 'Twenty-three' asked respondents what training requirements would be necessary if the patrol carbine was adopted by the RCMP. Most respondents indicated that training would be required. Some respondents went further stating that there should be initial training reinforced by scenario based training and annual qualifications. The following responses show the importance members place on training.

- Re-certification should be at a minimum annually if not biannually
- Training should be ongoing and rigorous

- Intensive training and regular maintenance program on carbine is needed
- Training should be tactically based with a focus on proper deployment of weapon
- Training in use of rifles from cover and non-traditional positions
- Develop a CTS for the carbine selected
- Establish high standards not only in target scores but in handling, deployment tactics and safety.

The responses to this question illustrate the high importance that members place on the need for training with the carbine. Throughout the questionnaire, ongoing training was a constant and repetitive theme from respondents.

- **Rules Governing use of Carbines**

‘Question Twenty-four’ asked respondents if they had any views about the use of rules for carbines in the field. This open-ended question produced the following comments:

- should comply with the Incidence Management Intervention Model (IMIM)
- should have NCO authorization prior to use
- should be removed from patrol vehicles at the end of every shift
- should follow same rules as for the shotgun/handgun
- ammunition should be more readily available for officers to practice
- carbine operators need to receive more than annual qualification
- members should be trained to use/display in accordance with the IMIM
- members should be chosen who consistently display solid risk assessment and appropriate intervention decisions
- training should not be limited to NCOs and senior managers
- training needs to demonstrate guidelines for consideration but leave the individual to make decisions when a threat is present.

The majority of respondents stated that the carbine should follow the IMIM model and that the same rules should apply to the carbine as apply to other firearms such as the shotgun/handgun used by the RCMP. The view was expressed that the carbine should not needlessly be encumbered by rules or it would reduce its effectiveness in the field.

b) URBAN/MUNICIPAL PATROL CARBINE/SHOTGUN SURVEY

The 'Urban Municipal Patrol Carbine/Shotgun Survey was sent out to selected municipal/urban/suburban police agencies and departments. Each survey questionnaire contained 15 questions which generated a total of 390 responses for analysis. The results of this analysis are presented below.

QUESTION #1

'Question One' surveyed respondents to determine whether patrol officers were allowed to carry long guns in their patrol cars. 25/26 respondents indicated that they are allowed to carry shotguns and carbines in their vehicles.

QUESTION #2

This question asked respondents what types of weapons they are allowed to carry in their vehicles. The majority of respondents indicated that they had access to the carbine. A number also indicated that they have both the shotgun and the patrol carbine in their vehicles. A few responses indicated that while shotguns are carried their police agency is in the process of adopting the patrol carbine.

QUESTION #3

'Question three' asked respondents how long their police service have been using the patrol carbine. The answers indicate that for some departments the carbine is a relatively new acquisition whereas some respondents stated that their police agency have been using the carbine for over thirty years.

QUESTION #4

This question asked respondents whether they felt the patrol carbine was more effective than weapons that they used previously such as the shotgun. 57.6% or 15/26 respondents replied that the patrol carbine was a more effective firearm than any weapon they had used in the past while 11/26 or 42.3% offered no opinion.

QUESTION #5

'Question Five' surveyed respondents for information on the type of carbine and munitions that were being used. A review of the responses shows that the primary cartridge being used by these police agencies is the .223 55 grain and that this is used as the duty round and for training purposes. The secondary cartridge most frequently mentioned by respondents is the 69 grain soft point.

When asked what application the round is used for most mentioned said that it is used mainly for training purposes. For the make and model of the carbine the Colt C-8 was identified in most responses. Respondents were also asked about the cost of the carbine (excluding accessories) and prices given ranged from \$1200-\$2000 depending on the model and type of carbine purchased. The most common type of action identified by respondents was the semi-automatic and they said the weapon was used principally for draw and display although other reasons were provided such as: containment of buildings, high risk vehicle stops, execution of warrants, drug entries, tactical assaults and securing perimeters.

QUESTION #6

This question which applied specifically to shotguns asked respondents whether they used slugs or buckshot and reduced recoil loads. The answers indicate that slugs and buckshot are used by most agencies. However more than 50% of respondents indicated that they did not use recoil loads.

QUESTION #7

For this question respondents were asked whether ballistic testing was done by their police service prior to adopting official rounds or whether they relied on ballistic testing by another agency. Slightly more than a third of respondents said that their police agency did the testing but a number said that they relied on tests performed by other police agencies such as the FBI or relied on the manufacture's specifications.

QUESTION #8

The purpose of this question was to see whether carbines are being used solely by specialized emergency response or tactical units or issued to all patrol officers. The findings show that the carbines are evenly distributed between uniformed patrol officers and members of specialized tasked units. 50% of respondents stated that carbines are issued to their uniformed patrol officers.

QUESTION #9

This question asked respondents what criteria they use if any for the

officers who are allowed to carry carbines in their vehicles. The following responses illustrate the criteria:

- Minimum of three years police experience
- Having a proven record of safe handling of firearms for patrol
- Based on performance
- Selected on gun handling skills and capabilities
- Completion of a patrol carbine course
- Must have achieved a minimum of 80% on their last pistol qualification

QUESTION #10

The majority of respondents to this question indicate that they carry the carbine in the trunk of their car (12/26) while 9/26 specified the firearm is carried in the front seat. A number of respondents mentioned that the firearm is stored in padlocked hard cases affixed to vehicles in the trunk. A few respondents said that they have specially designed boxes or overhead case racks. The largest number however stated that the firearm is stored in the trunk.

QUESTION #11

This question attempted to ascertain whether their police agencies had any opposition from the public, media or politicians when they made the switch from shotguns/handguns to patrol carbines. 17/26 or 65.3% of all respondents stated that they experienced no opposition whatsoever. The balance were all recorded as no reply. It would appear that making the transition from shotguns/handguns to patrol carbines is not an issue of concern to the public at large. For the most part it would appear that the public are not concerned about this because they expect their police officers to be armed with the most

capable weapon for the job that they do.

QUESTION #12

Question twelve asked respondents if they had a training program in place to accommodate the change from shotguns to patrol carbines. The vast majority of respondents 19/26 or 73% commented that they already had a training program in place for the training of their officers.

QUESTION #13

This question asked respondents if they utilized any attachments or accessories to enhance their rifles and/or shotguns. Overall the answer was yes with more than 90% of respondents saying that they had acquired tactical lights, back up iron sights, slings and adjustable stocks, surefire light system, electronic sights, Holographic sights by EOTECH, fore grips, collapsible butt-stocks, translucent magazines etc.

QUESTION #14

Question fourteen surveyed respondents to see if any modifications had been made on shotguns or rifles by police armorers to meet certain standards/specifications required by their police service. Overall, 18/26 or 69.2% of all respondents said that modifications had been made compared to 5/26 (19.2%) who reported no changes to their equipment. 3/26 or 11.5% of respondents did not provide any comments to this question.

QUESTION #15

The final question in the survey asked respondents if they had any general comments or any other helpful information to provide regarding their carbine program. The bulk of respondents emphasized the importance of training indicating that it must be provided on a continuous basis along with a yearly qualification. One police department (Halifax Police Service) said that their program had been very successful and that all the officers had commented on positively on the accuracy and ease of using the carbine. A number of responses mentioned the importance of transitional training along with vehicle mounting options and dealing with storage issues at detachments.

6. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The responses to the RCMP Patrol Carbine/shotgun Survey and the Urban/Municipal Patrol Carbine/shotgun Survey along with the literature review in this report, provide strong evidence that the patrol carbine is the weapon of choice in today's policing environment. As stated previously, the patrol carbine is now widely used by police forces both in Canada and the United States. The trigger that ignited the change from the shotgun/handgun to the carbine for these police agencies arose directly from shooting incidents where police found themselves outgunned by armed adversaries brandishing assault rifles.

As the RCMP Patrol Carbine/shotgun Survey revealed 76.5% of respondents stated that the shotgun is out-of-date technology and no longer meets the demands facing law enforcement in 2010. While some

members believe the shotgun still has its use in certain situations and geographical locations, the vast majority regard the shotgun as inadequate in terms of firepower capability.

77.6% of all respondents surveyed feel the carbine should be issued to all uniformed patrol officers and a comparable number also think that the carbine will help redress the imbalance between police and armed assailants in the future. Over 90% of respondents said they would support a decision to replace the shotgun with the carbine. The advantages cited both in the RCMP Patrol Carbine/shotgun Survey and the Urban/Municipal Patrol Carbine/shotgun Survey showed that the carbine is a safer, accurate and easy weapon to use. Moreover, it is the most advanced and effective firearm technology available to police.

Both surveys recognize the carbine is a much more expensive weapon to purchase and deploy than the shotgun. At the same time however, respondents indicated that cost should never take precedence over safety considerations when the lives of responding police officers and innocent bystanders are at risk. Both surveys show that the patrol carbine has innumerable advantages over the shotgun/handgun. For some respondents the fact the force has not already acquired the carbine for its members indicates that they are not as adequately equipped to respond to high-risk shooting situations as many police agencies in Canada and the United States that have already acquired the carbine.

As Canada's national police force, the public perception is that uniformed patrol officers in the RCMP already have access to the most up-to-date firearms available. The Mayerthorpe tragedy however made people realize that this is not

the case. The findings contained in this report and the recommendations below should go a long way to help the RCMP bridge that gap in the future.

- *The RCMP should immediately adopt and phase in a national patrol carbine program for all of its uniformed patrol officers regardless of whether they are providing policing services in a rural/urban/suburban environment;*
- *The RCMP should retain the shotgun but reconfigure this firearm so that it fires only non-deadly projectiles such as the beanbag. Carbines should be reserved only for deadly force situations;*
- *Prior to deploying carbines at the patrol officer level the RCMP should plan and execute a comprehensive and effective training program for all of its members. Such a training program should:*
 - a) *Be rigorous, ongoing and carefully monitored;*
 - b) *Be tactically oriented with a focus on the proper deployment of the weapon;*
 - c) *Be scenario based with an emphasis on cover and non-traditional positions;*
 - d) *Be offered quarterly with a minimal annual qualification required;*
 - e) *Include a standard user/maintenance course on the patrol carbine for all of its members;*
 - f) *Be developed in collaboration with training personnel from the Department of National Defence;*
 - g) *Maintain high standards not only in target scores but also in the handling, deployment tactics and safety requirements of the firearm;*
 - h) *Comply with the Incident Management Intervention Model (IMIM) and the rules of engagement pertaining to when the use of lethal force is required and justified as is the case with its existing firearms;*
- *New policies should be drafted and issued which include guidelines on the storage, maintenance, training and re-qualification requirements for the*

carbine as well as to where and when the weapon can be deployed.. These policies will have to be widely distributed so that they are clearly understood and complied with by all uniformed patrol officers.

- The RCMP should undertake consultations with the Department of National Defence and other police agencies in order to determine the best model/type of platform and munitions to be acquired along with any accessories that will enhance the carbines performance capabilities in the field;*
- A proactive communications strategy should be prepared to clearly explain to the public, media and politicians the RCMP's rationale for purchasing and issuing the patrol carbine to all of its uniformed officers. Such a communications plan should utilize messaging that emphasize the advantages the patrol carbine will offer to the RCMP in terms of combating crime, increasing officer safety and ensuring a safer and more secure country for all Canadians;*
- In order to defray costs associated with purchasing patrol carbines, ammunition, accessories and training requirements, the RCMP should build a business case which includes the development of an M.O.U between the RCMP and the Department of National Defence which addresses such issues as purchasing carbines and ammunition through DND's suppliers and utilizing DND firearms instructors and training facilities across Canada.*
- Once the carbine program has been operational for at least three years all components of that program including implementation issues, training and deployment of weapons should be carefully evaluated to ensure that the original objectives for the patrol carbine program are being met.*

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