



DATE: 22 June 2015

TO/DEST: Executive Director, Ottawa Police Services Board

FROM/EXP: Chief of Police, Ottawa Police Service

SUBJECT/OBJET: **OCTOBER 22, 2014 – OPERATIONAL REVIEW BRIEFING**

RECOMMENDATION

That the Ottawa Police Services Board receive this report for information.

INTRODUCTION

The Ottawa Police response to the events of October 22, 2014 demonstrated the best of our Service. Our officers did exactly what they are trained to do in an active shooter response. Members of the Ottawa Police Service (OPS), together with our law enforcement partners and other emergency responders, faced the crisis calmly and professionally in order to ensure community safety – which is, after all, our primary goal.

Within minutes of the first 911 call reporting the shooting of Cpl. Nathan Cirillo at the National War Memorial, we were on the scene. From that moment on, OPS members – whether on duty that day or not – converged on the downtown core to help, while civilian staff performed vital support functions and managed hundreds of requests for information from the media and the public.

The situation that unfolded that Wednesday was fluid and dynamic, and there was a great deal of fear and confusion throughout the day. The presence of an active shooter in the heart of Canada's capital was something none of us had ever experienced, and it was many hours before we were able to confirm that he had been working alone.

And yet, as one member of the public wrote in a letter afterwards, OPS officers, along with members of the RCMP and the military, could be seen running *towards* the sound of gunfire while moving civilians out of harm's way.

As part of our efforts to continually evolve and adapt, we regularly review our response to significant incidents in our community, like the events of October 22. We do this not only for the benefit to our own operations, but also to provide important experience and information to

law enforcement agencies across Canada that may one day have to respond to a similar situation.

As with any review, we found that many facets of the OPS response on October 22 worked very well. The review also indicates there are a number of areas where we can improve. The actions we take, and have already taken as a result of this review, will ensure we are better prepared for another major incident or emergency. The better prepared we are, the better we are able to keep our community safe.

BACKGROUND

On October 22, 2014, shortly before 10 a.m., a suspect shot and killed a member of the Canadian Forces Sentry at the National War memorial. The gunman proceeded to Parliament Hill, where witnesses reported him saying, "This is for Iraq." Minutes later, he was fatally wounded inside Centre Block after an exchange of gunfire.

The grounds surrounding Parliament Hill were closed to the public immediately following the incident, and a large security zone was established in the downtown core. Many surrounding buildings went into lockdown, and members of the public were advised to shelter in place. The downtown security zone remained in place until just before 8 p.m., by which time the possibility of other suspects had been eliminated.

The victim of the shooting was identified as Corporal Nathan Cirillo, 24, a member of the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders who grew up in Hamilton, Ont. and was the father of a five-year-old son. Cirillo was a highly trained reservist with a background in recon patrol who hoped to have a long career in the Canadian military.

The shooter was identified as Michael Zehaf-Bibeau, 32, a native of Laval, Que. Zehaf-Bibeau had a record of arrests and convictions for assault and possession of weapons and drugs. He had also travelled abroad using various aliases and had an Egyptian passport seized in 2008. In early October 2014, Zehaf-Bibeau's request to the Libyan embassy for a passport was delayed.

Following this unprecedented incident, the Ottawa Police Service (OPS) undertook a detailed internal review to provide a factual account of the event and the OPS response to it, to determine what worked well, and to make recommendations where gaps and risks were identified. The review is also intended to facilitate continuous improvement regarding the role of the OPS during major incidents or emergencies.

ANALYSIS

Success factors:

The OPS internal review found that many aspects of the response were very successful. For example, officers were on the scene within minutes of the initial incident, and the OPS had all the resources in place to mount a comprehensive response. Within just 30 minutes, four key Command Centres – the National Capital Region Command Centre and OPS Command Centre, as well as two Mobile Command Posts at the site of the incident – were up and running. Operation INTERSECT fulfilled its mandate by providing verified situational

awareness updates to all partners, which helped inform their decision-making throughout the incident. In addition, the OPS-RCMP experience in working together proved to be effective.

Early identification of the suspect also saved time during the investigation. A photo from patrol was sent to the Mobile Command Posts and, from there, disseminated across the organization. Within an hour of the shooting, OPS had the suspect's name and, by early afternoon, officers were beginning to put together a suspect profile.

Key command issues and challenges:

The OPS dealt with numerous command issues on October 22. These included: ensuring the public was not at risk and did not interfere with police operations in the downtown core; evacuating key personnel; searching buildings and grounds in the Parliamentary precinct; preserving multiple crime scenes; interviewing multiple witnesses; and handling requests for immediate information from the public, municipal officials, security partners and the media.

The greatest challenge for the OPS and its law enforcement partners was the amount of conflicting witness information, which the OPS followed up on as quickly and efficiently as possible. Dozens of calls were received about suspicious people, packages and behaviour, as is to be expected during such a fluid and dynamic situation. These included an erroneous report about shots fired at the Rideau Centre, and reports of individuals with guns on rooftops, who turned out to be law enforcement officers. It took a full eight hours before the OPS was confident Zehaf-Bibeau had been acting alone and lifted released the security zone that had been under lockdown.

Lessons learned:

The OPS internal review found gaps in a number of areas, including: policy and procedures related to the response; equipment and logistics; and communication with staff, law enforcement partners and the public. Specific recommendations are being actioned to address each issue.

During the response, self-deployment was found to be an issue. While OPS members' instinct to rush to the downtown core to help was laudable, many officers arrived on scene without checking in to Command Posts, and, in some cases, without clear and consistent police identifiers. Recommendations include: reviewing OPS major incident policy and supporting Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) to include guidelines on officer deployment during major incidents or emergencies; ensuring every officer has a working uniform available; reviewing the uniform policy for plainclothes members so all officers are clearly identified as police; and GPS technology to track team and officer movement during an incident response.

There were also a number of issues related to the lack of proper equipment and vehicles: officers at the scene ran out of radios and batteries, and OPS officers searching unlit basement rooms in the Parliament Buildings had to use flashlights because night-vision goggles were not available. (Many of these issues have since been resolved; for example, new night-vision equipment has been purchased.) In addition, due to a requirement for 37 additional vehicles, officers relied on rental cars that did not have proper police identification. Recommendations include: ensuring a logistics coordinator is on site to enable proper distribution of materials and developing a standard package for unmarked vehicles that includes a light, siren and POLICE signage.

A need for improved communication – particularly around lockdown and shelter-in-place procedures, as well as security at OPS buildings – was also identified. A lockdown order was issued via e-mail at 10:56 a.m. to OPS members and staff at the Elgin Street headquarters and other divisions, but it is not clear how consistently this message was received and the order followed. Civilian staff were also not fully informed of the nature of the incident. Recommendations include using mobile and desktop devices to create a more effective internal alert system for OPS staff, as well as a checklist for emergencies to enhance safety and security at OPS buildings during any future major incident. The recommendations also include improving and strengthening communications between decision centres and better ensuring access to up-to-date information for communications staff.

In addition, it was found that the public and large building management had limited understanding of what lockdown and shelter-in-place mean, and limited awareness of what to do during an active shooter incident. The City of Ottawa has already identified this issue and is working to strengthen the City's emergency preparedness. The OPS will support that work to build greater awareness on lockdown and shelter-in-place procedures and best practices related to emergency preparedness.

EXISTING POLICY

As a result of the internal review, OPS continues to examine a number of policies related to equipment, communications and response procedures to determine where enhancements can be made.

CONSULTATION

Not applicable.

FINANCIAL STATEMENT

Overtime costs related to the October 22 downtown shooting totalled \$373,593. This includes \$268,961 in overtime on the day in question, as well as costs for the provision of additional police presence in the downtown core in the days leading up to and during the Remembrance Day ceremonies on November 11, 2014.

Costs related to specific recommendations resulting from the OPS internal review are still being determined.

CONCLUSION

The internal review following the October 22 shooting in downtown Ottawa has allowed the OPS to examine the effectiveness of its response to this unprecedented event in our nation's capital. The organization has confirmed areas of strength, and is focusing on opportunities for improvement that will ensure the OPS and the community at large are better prepared for another major incident or emergency.

(Original signed by)

Charles Bordeleau
Chief of Police