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## **Military Police Working Dogs: A Security and Force Protection Asset**

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**JCSP 49**

**Service Paper**

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**PCEMI n° 49**

**Étude militaire**

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Service Paper – Étude militaire

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Major Benjamin Kelly

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# **MILITARY POLICE WORKING DOGS: A SECURITY AND FORCE PROTECTION ASSET**

## **AIM**

1. The aim of this service paper is to illustrate the benefits of Military Police Working Dogs (MPWD) as it pertains to security and force protection in the CAF. Due to the constraints of this particular paper, the focus will be on why MPWD are of value to the CAF and how they should be employed to maximize their capabilities while utilizing CAF resources responsibly.

## **INTRODUCTION**

2. In 2020, the Canadian Forces Military Police Group (CFMP Gp) retired its' last active MPWG. MPWD Vimy was employed for almost 13 years in the CFMP Gp and retired 13 March 2020. Vimy served in CFB Petawawa and CFB Halifax throughout his career and was handled by MWO Justin Caron. The retirement of MPWD Vimy essentially put an end to the CFMP Gp working dog program. This paper will outline why it would benefit the CFMP Gp and CAF to resurrect this program and make it more robust and practical. The intent of this paper is not to simply suggest the need or desire for MPWD anywhere there is a CAF Base or Wing, but to objectively demonstrate the benefits of having a strategically placed MPWD in certain CAF establishments across the country. The paper will also discuss the options to fund and control the program as well as highlight the competencies of a MPWG.

## **DISCUSSION**

3. Working dogs have been used throughout history in a variety of different roles and capacities. Although their duties can vary, the majority of them are employed in law enforcement, search and rescue, firefighting, and military applications. For the purpose of this paper, a working dog (also known as K9), is a dog specifically trained to assist law enforcement and security operations. Dogs have been used in law enforcement since the Middle Ages. The most commonly used breeds are German Shepherds and Belgian Malinois, but several other breeds are used for some unique talents such as their tracking, trailing, and detection skills<sup>1</sup>. K9 usually serve police forces for 6 to 9 years.<sup>2</sup>

4. There are a number of advantages to having military police working dogs. They are commonly considered intelligent, loyal, and tireless workers. They are also known for their protective instincts, and are often used to guard military installations (USA)<sup>3</sup> and sensitive information. Military working dogs offer a number of unique advantages to the Canadian military. They are highly trained and dependable, and can be deployed in a variety of environments. They are also relatively cost effective, and can be reused multiple times. Military working dogs are an effective tool that can be used by military police officers to protect defence establishments, CAF personnel, and CAF resources.

5. In the past, MPWD have proven to be invaluable tools in security, force protection and police operations. Twelve MP handlers and eleven working dogs have operated in support of MP operations from 1987 to 2020<sup>4</sup>. When employed properly, a MPWD may contribute to the reduction of man-hours, performance of tasks that humans cannot complete, and the overall improvement of officer safety. It must be acknowledged that although a MPWD reliability tends to be exceptional, it is not without fault and it is imperative to combine Military Police (MP) skills and the MPWD team to ensure optimum results. The

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<sup>1</sup> Green, American Kennel Club, 2021

<sup>2</sup> British Columbia Policing Standards, 2015

<sup>3</sup> U.S. Department of Defense, 2023

<sup>4</sup> Canadian Forces Provost Marshal, 2017

MPWD compliments, but does not replace regular MP investigative steps, therefore the use of the MPWD must be justified by the situation for which it is requested.

5. If this program were to be reinstated, it would operate under the authority of the Canadian Forces Provost Marshal (CFPM) and should be administered by the Special Advisor (SA) to the CFPM. For the purpose of this paper, the MPWD program would focus on the provision of two separate capabilities that would include:

- a. the provision of enhanced capabilities in support of specific investigations, including the enforcement of the Criminal Code (CC) and National Defence Act (NDA), and other associated regulations by suppressing the use of illegal drugs, detecting explosives, and protecting Defence Establishments (DE) and installations<sup>5</sup>; and
- b. support the Commanding Officer Deterrence and Safety Program as well as Base/Wing/Unit community relations<sup>6</sup>.

6. The MPWD program would be of particular value on both of the naval bases in CFB Halifax in the east and CFB Esquimalt out west. Every year each naval base sees dozens of port visits from various allied naval forces for a variety of reasons. Each of these countries have different security and force protection requirements that must be adhered to prior to birthing at one of the ports. As it pertains to the USA Navy, a security sweep of every jetty is required prior to arrival. As the CAF does not have MPWD capability, this task is typically contracted to the local law enforcement agency or working dog/K9 service provider. These contracts can become expensive if visits become frequent. In CFB Halifax from July to September 2018 there were 13 USA Navy port visits and a large-scale international exercise called CUTLASS FURY<sup>7</sup>. In a three-month period alone, CFB Halifax had to pay the Halifax Regional Police force for over a dozen jetty sweeps for American security and force protection requirements.

7. The MPWD program would provide the following capabilities specifically:

- a. Explosive Detection. MPWD Teams are exceptionally valuable in antiterrorism operations. They can detect unexploded ordnance, search bomb threat scenes, and augment Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) capability;
- b. Base Defence and Contingency Operations. MPWD provide enhanced patrol and detection capability to perimeter and point defence. Given the range of potential contingencies, drug and explosive detection are also valuable added capabilities in these environments;
- c. Physical Security. Although not specifically tasked for peacetime physical security roles, the MPWD team can augment in a detection role, temporarily replacing inoperative sensor systems, patrol difficult terrain, and deter potential intruders; and
- d. Drug Suppression: MPWD teams specially trained in drug detection support the CAF goal of a safe and drug free working environment. Their widely publicized capability to detect illegal drugs deters drug use and possession, and is a valuable aid to a commander's other primary tools such as urinalysis and safety sensitive testing.

8. The MPWD program could also prove quite valuable as a method of deterrence. The MPWD could be used for a variety of defence establishment inspections as well as traffic stops and RIDE

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<sup>5</sup> Canadian Forces Provost Marshal, 2017

<sup>6</sup> Canadian Forces Provost Marshal, 2017

<sup>7</sup> Caron, 2022

programs. Although barrack rooms have an expectation of privacy<sup>8</sup>, barrack hallways and common areas do not have the same right of privacy. Because these areas are considered public and by regulation and practice of the service, are constantly being monitored by barrack staff or Commissionaires, are subject, by law, to inspection and search by military authorities. As there is a decreased expectation of privacy in public areas, such as Barrack Block hallways or the exterior of buildings, a walk through with a MPWD is authorized. That is not to say that the MPWD will focus on these types of tasks, but it functions well as a secondary duty to deter CAF members from behaving poorly.

9. Like any great idea proposed in the CAF, one of the biggest considerations to be made will be the cost of the program. Unfortunately, it is not as simple as getting a dog and going to work. There will be costs associated with the animal itself (purchasing the dog, food, and vet bills), training, infrastructure, and vehicles. Although there are several accredited working dog training programs throughout the country, this paper used the standards from the largest training program administered by the Ontario Provincial Police (OPP). The cost for the animal and the initial training required (to include TD, accommodations, food, and miscellaneous expenses) is roughly \$30000 (Canadian dollars)<sup>9</sup>. The cost for vehicle rental, animal upkeep (food, vet bills, grooming, and toys/rewards) infrastructure maintenance, and annual qualifications will be recurring every year. Annex A (attached) will outline the specific costs associated with the MPWD program.

10. This cost could also fluctuate depending on several variables such as the cost of fuel, the need for a rental vehicle, and inflation over time. For the purpose of the paper, a higher estimate was used to reflect a realistic number. The approximately \$51000 price tag of the MPWD and all its' requirements is a cost that should seem reasonable considering the capabilities the animal can provide. The other upside to the MPWD program is the community relations and recruiting implications. The MPWD program could be used as an incentive for prospective applicants as something to strive for in their careers. The MPWD would be considered elite as the fitness standards would be challenging and could attract more desirable applicants. It is also something that future recruits see as making the MP branch more credible as a police force.

11. The issue that will likely arise is who will pay for the program. As this command and control of the MPWD program resides with the CFPM, it is a fair assumption that they will have to fund it. A second option could be that the Royal Canadian Navy (RCN) funds it. In 2018, the CFB Halifax base commander was very interested in funding a MPWD as he believed it was a very valuable asset. It is the belief of the author that the RCN would have interest in funding a MPWD program simply due to the security and force protection capabilities. Security and force protection standards are not becoming more lenient, if anything, they are becoming more stringent. To comply with the security and force protection standards of our allies (in particular the American navy), a robust MPWD program on each coast would be largely beneficial and show our allies that security and force protection is paramount to the CAF.

12. As the MPWD program will still be an integral part of the CAF, considerations should be made concerning the rank of the handlers and career progression. The recommended rank at the low end is QL 5 qualified Corporal (Cpl) and the high-end Sargent (Sgt). A Cpl or Master Corporal (MCpl) is preferred as a MPWD handler will be required to remain in a position for an extended period of time (likely 6-8

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<sup>8</sup> Department of National Defence, QR&O 19.76, 2006

<sup>9</sup> Ontario Provincial Police, 2022

years, career expectancy of the animal)<sup>10</sup>. As members become more senior in rank the types of positions they fill are typically leadership roles and less tactical. A MPWD handler would be expected to operate as a handler as long as their respective animal is actively serving. This could in some instances hinder their chances for promotion as their experience will be limited to MPWD handler.

## CONCLUSION

13. The \$51000 price tag may appear steep at the onset but will become much more palatable as the cost declines over time. Many of the costs associated with the program are a one-time cost and can even be reduced when including more than one animal. The capability of the MPWD is something that cannot be replicated by a human. The credibility it would bring to the CFMP Gp and the CAF would be significant in the eyes of our allies. MPWD can be trained to detect a variety of crimes, including explosives and drugs. They are also trained to apprehend suspects and protect their handler. MPWD could be essential to the success of military operations. They are reliable and can identify threats that humans cannot. Their skills could help protect military personnel and keep defence establishments safe. MPWD are highly trained and able to provide valuable services to the CAF. Their skill sets make them a valuable asset and their versatility allows them to work in a variety of environments. They are reliable and could provide valuable service to the CFMP Gp and the CAF in general.

## RECOMMENDATION

14. As previously discussed in this paper, the MPWD program is not new to the CFMP Gp or the CAF. Because of this, there already exists infrastructure, standard operating procedures (SOP), draft CFMP Gp Orders, relationships with training institutions, and experienced handlers within the CFMP Gp. As a result, the recommendation for this paper is not to create an entirely new MPWD program but to revive or build upon what once existed. This paper has already identified that the start up cost for this program can be expensive. Due to this, it is recommended that the program starts slowly and develop over three phases:

- a. Phase 1: 2 X MPWD and 2 X MPWD handler at CFB Halifax and CFB Esquimalt (total of four animals and 4 handlers). CAF Naval bases will be treated as priority as they have the most considerable security and force protection requirements due to port visits from Allied Naval forces (specifically the American Navy with more stringent security and force protection requirements);
- b. Phase 2: 1 X MPWD and 1 X MPWD handler at 8 Wing Trenton (total of one animal and one handler). 8 Wing Trenton is the largest Wing in the CAF and is the nucleus for CAF air transport. Having MPWD capability could help with customs, PAX searches and general deterrence for CAF members returning with illegal or controlled items from deployment as well as sending similar items through CAF mail;
- c. Phase 3: 1 X MPWD and 1 X MPWD handler to all large CAF Army bases and training establishments. These bases typically have the largest populations and the greatest numbers of new recruits. The MPWD would act as a deterrent if used for random searches at accommodations and entry points (IAW QR&O **QR&O 19.76**).

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<sup>10</sup> British Columbia Policing Standards, 2015

15. Acknowledging that the appetite for this program may be limited in the current CAF capacity, the MPWD program could be an incredible security and force protection asset to the CFMP Gp and CAF if the security and force protection climate were to change. The MPWD can provide services and capabilities that humans simply cannot and could potentially be a vital resource for the CAF.

## ANNEX A

1. The following is the estimated cost to initiate a MPWD program taken from the OPP Canine course and the TD claims from former applicant<sup>11</sup>:

- a. Dog: \$6000;
- b. 6' leather leash: \$50;
- c. 5' leash: \$45;
- d. 10-15' tracking line: \$40;
- e. Tracking harness: \$65;
- f. Choke chain: \$25;
- g. Agitation collar: \$55;
- h. Food/water bowl: \$50;
- i. Muzzle: \$50;
- j. Grooming supplies: \$40;
- k. 3 X Kong: \$60;
- l. 16-week General Service Course (food and quarters): \$3300;
- m. 4-week Narcotic Detection Course (food and quarters): \$950;
- n. TD (to include vehicle rental, fuel, food, accommodations, and incidentals): \$18509;
- o. Total for start-up and training: **\$29239.**

2. Once the handler and the MPWD have been trained and qualified, the following costs will have to be considered<sup>12</sup>:

- a. Vehicle fully equipped with kennel (rental through Base Transport): \$1300 per month;
- b. Bite sleeve: \$300;
- c. Hidden bite sleeve: \$300;

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<sup>11</sup> Ontario Provincial Police, 2022

<sup>12</sup> Caron, 2022



- d. Canine first-aid kit: \$150;
- e. Vari Kennel: \$250;
- f. 6'X 10'X 6' fence kennel: \$900;
- g. Kennel base: \$800;
- h. Kennel roof: \$500;
- i. Dog house: \$400;
- j. Annual medical: \$500;
- k. Annual food: \$1000;
- l. Annual re-certification: \$1500
- m. A total of: **\$21300**

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