

June 14, 2017

IIU concludes investigation into dog bite during arrest in Portage la Prairie

On May 15, 2017 the Independent Investigation Unit of Manitoba (IIU) completed its investigation into an arrest that saw a police service dog bite the suspect—requiring the male to undergo surgery. The IIU has concluded the subject officer—the dog handler—acted appropriately and there are no grounds to lay any charges against the officer.

On the night of November 16, 2016, the RCMP telecommunications centre received a 911 call from a person who said he had been chased by three males and cut with a machete on 3rd Street NE in Portage la Prairie. When members of the Portage RCMP attended to the area and located three suspects, one of them bolted. A police service dog and handler were called for assistance in locating the missing suspect.

The male was tracked to a nearby yard, where he began to climb a fence. The police dog was released in order to prevent an escape, and the animal engaged and bit the male. After arrest, he was taken to hospital with lacerations and punctures to his lower leg and thigh and required surgery to treat the injuries.

Among other things, the IIU interviewed several civilian and police witnesses. Investigators confirmed that the subject officer's use and handling of the dog was in keeping with RCMP policy, and that the subject officer and dog had recently completed and passed annual qualifications as mandated by the RCMP.

In his report on the incident, IIU Civilian Director Zane Tessler said the suspect was not prepared to surrender to police or comply with their direction to stop, and that the subject officer's decision to deploy and engage the police service dog was entirely appropriate. He found no grounds to justify laying any charges against the officer.

The civilian director's complete report is available online at iiumanitoba.ca. The details of this investigation were first released November 18, 2016.

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