

FINAL REPORT: IIU concludes investigation into self-inflicted gunshot injury by RCMP member

On November 29, 2019, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) notified the Independent Investigation Unit of Manitoba (IIU) of an incident involving an off-duty RCMP member who accidentally shot himself in the foot while goose hunting.

According to the notification (summarized as follows):

On September 7th, 2019 at 07:01 a.m., an off-duty RCMP Constable (the subject officer (SO)) called to report that he had accidentally shot himself in the foot while goose hunting. EMS and St Pierre RCMP were dispatched.

RCMP members attended in the area of Grunthal, MB and noted that SO was being treated by EMS and had an injured foot with a bandage over his big toe. SO explained to the attending members that he had been hunting and that he had accidentally discharged his firearm into his left foot. Police noted that the firearm appeared to be a shotgun.

At this time, this is all the information that is known or available. No further details were provided, including a statement, notation of the make/model of the firearm, follow-up as to details of the injury, etc.

On November 29, 2019, it was brought to the attention of D Division Criminal Operations, at which point it was ordered that further investigation / documentation was to take place. The specifics of the injury have not yet been confirmed. however, it is believed that a surgery took place and that a possible amputation of toe(s) occurred. As such, the requirement for notification to the Manitoba IIU of an off-duty discharge of firearm involving serious injury.

As this notification concerned the discharge of a firearm by a police officer, which resulted in injuries, and notwithstanding that the incident occurred while off duty, this constitutes a serious injury as defined by regulation. Accordingly, the IIU was mandated to undertake an investigation into this matter, pursuant to section 66 of The Police Services Act (PSA).

A team of IIU investigators was assigned to investigate.

This investigation was fraught with difficulties and a dearth of information from the outset. The notification was received nearly three months after the incident occurred. Scene examination was rendered moot, given the significant passage of time from the occurrence to notification. Witness officers, identified in the notification, failed to make notes of their contact with the subject officer on the date of the incident, nor further the investigation. In fact, witness officers had advised that they decided to take no further action thereafter. A potential eyewitness to the shooting was never identified, nor was a name and contact information obtained or recorded. While it was believed that the subject officer discharged a shotgun and injured himself, the

witness officers never identified, inspected, or seized SO's firearm. A telephone conversation between a witness officer and the subject officer, relative to this matter and concerning the injuries resulting from the discharge of a firearm, was not recorded.

Furthermore, a subject officer cannot be compelled to provide his or her notes regarding an incident, nor to participate in any interview with IIU investigators. In this case, SO declined to participate in an interview with IIU investigators. SO also declined to provide a consent to the release of medical information and therefore, IIU investigators could not substantiate the nature and extent of his injuries. If it were not for the attendance of EMS personnel, the fact that SO suffered an injury would have been unknown. As it is, the extent of the specific injury sustained by SO is still undetermined.

For all intents, this investigation ended almost as soon as it began. If not for the diligence of senior RCMP management, who discovered the oversight of the delayed notification and took immediate steps to rectify the matter, IIU would never have known of this matter.

We anticipate that senior RCMP management will deal with the issues identified in this report that effectively rendered this investigation null.

The IIU investigation is at an end and this file is closed.

Final report prepared by:

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