

VANCOUVER POLICE DEPARTMENT

STAFF DEVELOPMENT/TRAINING

DATE: 1990 March 20

TO: Deputy Chief Constable H. Starek
Commanding Bureau of Support Services

SUBJECT: ASP Baton Course - 1990 March 14/15

On 1990 March 14/15 the writer successfully completed the Armament Systems and Procedures Baton Instructors Course at Seaforth Armoury in Vancouver. The course was taught by DR Kevin Parsons (PhD Police Systems), who is a knowledgeable martial artist and police instructor. DR Parsons gives expert testimony throughout the United States in defence of Police Use of Force. Also in attendance were members of the RCMP, Victoria and Central Saanich Police Department, Canadian Corrections, Canadian Military and Canadian Fisheries Enforcement.

The telescoping baton is 7" long closed and 21" long extended. It weighs 15 ounces and is made of steel. The baton in the closed position sits on the officer's equipment belt and is completely inconspicuous. The public is not aware the officer has a baton. The closed position allows plainclothes officers to carry it on the belt or in a pocket. The 15 ounce weight prevents damage to clothes. The baton can be used in the closed position to block or prod and strike as well as other low level force techniques. Extending the baton is accomplished with a flick of the wrist making it ready as a 21" full length baton. The opening has a positive psychological factor as it makes a distinctive sound. In the extended position, the baton is used as per our training with the three levels of force within the baton option. Closing the baton is accomplished by tapping it on a solid floor. This baton is currently in use by Tampa Police, US DEA, US Secret Service, US Capitol Police and several US County Sheriff's Departments.

One of the advantages of this baton for the Vancouver Police Department is that it will fit in perfectly with our Crowd Control Training. We would not have to make any expensive training changes because of adopting a new baton. Herein lies other advantages. We would not have to retrain our members and this baton offers us greater flexibility because it can be used in the closed position. Plainclothes squads (IE, Gang Squad, North and South Crime Units) could carry the baton. ERT could use this baton in those difficult use of force areas where deadly force cannot be justified and traffic members could easily carry the baton. Many members do not carry a baton because it is uncomfortable or they forget it in the car. This baton because of its 7" length is always on the equipment belt and is so light it is barely noticeable. Professional image is paramount to the Vancouver Police Department, and this baton certainly assists that area. It is inconspicuous on the belt and the officer carrying it does not look like he is about to club someone.

Because the baton is made of steel, I was concerned about it cutting a suspect during application. Parsons states that because the baton does not flex, it does not cut, instead it delivers a more direct impact. This appears to be supported by SGT O. Nichol, RCMP, who has done extensive testing on Duckseal (a Gelatin substance resembling human tissue) and reports that it does not cut.

The baton does require some maintenance (oiling) and requires an armourers kit to tune the extension mechanism for each individual. M.D. Charlton of Victoria, BC is the sole authorized dealer in Canada and any maintenance or replacement would be completed in his usual timely manner.

During the two day course I had ample opportunity to speak at length with DR Parsons. He is not only an excellent instructor but is a very capable martial artist. DR Parsons also teaches the traditional baton as well as the side handle model, and ASP makes these batons as well. It was refreshing to find an American instructor who shared the same concerns as we Canadian trainers have and to logically explain the pros and cons of all batons. DR Parsons stated that his research of the side handle baton indicated that this baton had an extremely high rate of head injuries associated with its use. This is because it spins in the user's hand and rides up on an arm strike hitting the head. The other series problem relates to the 40 hour per man basic training time involved to become minimally proficient with the baton.

PROPOSAL

I am proposing that the Vancouver Police Department commence a trial test of the telescoping baton with patrol members as well as certain plainclothes squads. The issues of practicality, professionalism and effectiveness could be reported by members themselves. The department could then be in a position to determine which baton (of the many) offers us the most in terms of our needs. The Training Section will be pleased to provide a demonstration upon request.

J.K. McKay, Constable 1241
Fitness Co-Ordinator

cc

Superintendent S. Ziola, Chairman, Training Board
Superintendent V. Campbell, Commanding Bureau of Support Services
Superintendent N. Larkin, Commanding Traffic/OAS
Superintendent J. Lucy, Commanding Patrol South
Superintendent M. Farren, Commanding Patrol North
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