

AT \$62, NEW NIGHTSTICK IS A STEEL

By Greg Middleton
Staff Reporter

Vancouver police are swinging into the new year with a new hi-tech billy club.

Beat cops are now sporting the stainless steel, telescoping baton.

"Folded up, it's not much bigger than a pocket flashlight," said Vancouver police training officer Joel Johnston.

But it snaps open into a formidable weapon.

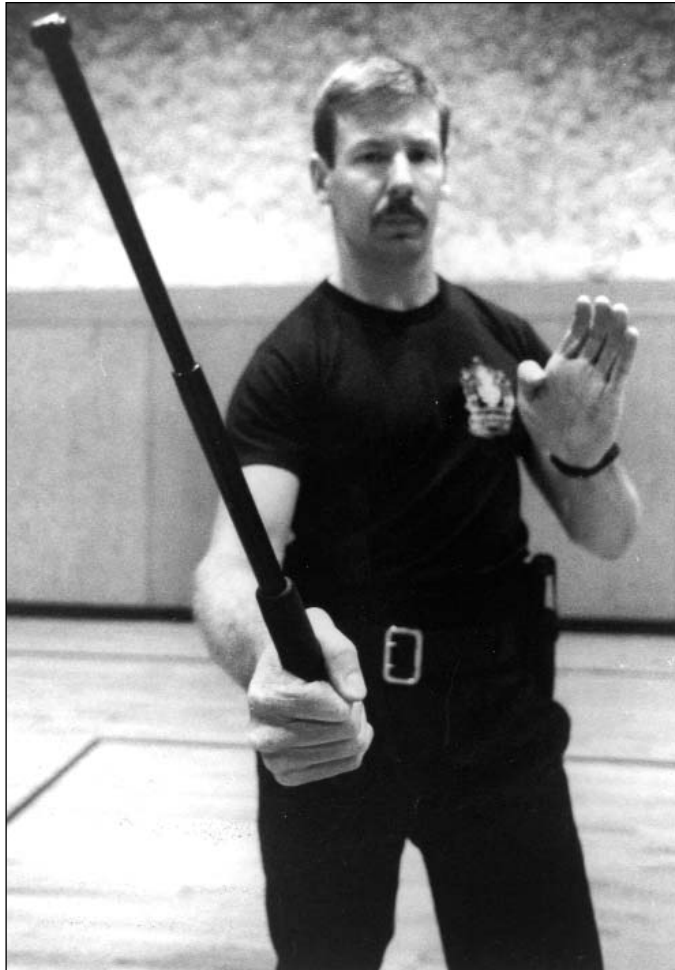
"Just the psychological effect of seeing it snap open is frequently enough to take the fight out of most people," Johnston said.

If you can end a confrontation and arrest someone without hitting or hurting them, everyone is happier."

Johnston said the old 66-centimetre (26-inch), \$20 wooden batons were "big and clumsy. A lot of officers didn't like going out to meet the public carrying a big black club."

A study found most beat cops left the clubs in their lockers.

Johnston said the department has bought 200 of the new clubs, at \$62 each, and wants to make them standard issue for all uniformed officers by the end of the year.



Staff Photo by Gerry Kahrmann

Const. Joel Johnston, control tactics co-ordinator, demonstrates new stainless-steel night stick.