

SHOOTING INCIDENT MAKES CASE FOR DOG VEST

As related in Suzanne Stoltz's article, before receiving the dog vest, Cst. Mackown and Brit were shot while attempting to make an arrest. The following article relates the incident which caused both injury to Cst. Mackown and his partner, Brit, and demonstrates the bravery of Cst. Mackown's fellow officers. — Editor

As Cst. Mackown and *Brit* neared the suspect's house to make an arrest, the suspect opened fire. *Brit* took a hit in his tail but could have suffered greater injury had he not moved when he did. Cst. Mackown, however, was shot several times in the legs. He yelled out that he had been hit and both Cst. Gerrard and Cst. Mackown began returning gunfire into the tree line. In the confusion, *Brit* charged Cst. Gerrard and was called off from biting him at the last second by Cst. Mackown. When the shooting ended, Cst. Mackown attempted to run but was unable due to his leg injuries. He crumpled on the roadway and began crawling with *Brit* into the ditch and away from the gunman. The entire time, the gunman threatened to "finish off" Cst. Mackown, telling the other members to back off because he had Cst. Mackown in his sights and would shoot him.

Cst. Mackown continued to crawl to a better position of cover, waiting for the final shotgun blast to come that would end his life. Cst. Gerrard distracted the gunman by verbally engaging him and ordering him to surrender.

The members called out to Cst. Mackown but he would not answer for fear of giving his position away to the gunman who continued to threaten that he had the officer in his sights and would kill him. Cst. Halbach notified the despatch centre that the dogman was down and requested ambulance, backup and ERT. Cst. Mylie crawled along the opposite side of the road from where the gunman was hidden and managed to see Cst. Mackown in the darkness. Cst. Mackown couldn't use his right leg but he managed to hop across the road on his left leg with *Brit* to Cst. Mylie. At first *Brit* wouldn't let Cst. Mylie get near Cst. Mackown to help him but soon accepted him as part of the team. Cst. Mylie notified the others that he was with the wounded dog handler and that they needed to get him to the hospital. Cst. Gerrard continued to negotiate with the gunman and got him to agree to let them get Cst. Mackown out without firing any further shots.

Cst. Fitzgerald drove a police car directly to the place where the gunman was hiding and to where Csts. Mylie and Mackown were lying in the ditch. Upon opening the rear door of the police car, the interior light automatically came on, fully exposing Cst. Fitzgerald to the gunman. They quickly loaded Cst. Mackown and *Brit* into the back of the car and drove to a waiting ambulance. Approximately 20 minutes had elapsed. ERT soon arrived and the gunman was arrested without incident five hours later.

It wasn't until hours later that members saw blood in the back windows of the



Members of the Stony Plain Detachment who helped save Cst. Mackown's life the night of the shooting. (L-R): Cst. Doug Mylie, Cst. Dave Gerrard, Cst. Joel Mackown and PSD Brit, Cst. Ken Fitzgerald, and Cst. Dave Halbach.