



Henderson, Lemieux and the life-saving bomb basket

The bomb squad

They know what to do if your uncle leaves you a mortar shell in his will

By RICH MURZIN
Times staff writer

What do you do when your favorite uncle leaves you a couple of mortar shells in his will?

Peel Regional Police Detective Fred Lemieux recalls that a Mississauga woman was the anxious recipient of just such a legacy. Lemieux, a member of the five-man police bomb squad says the shells were in working order. They were detonated harmlessly at Canadian Forces Base Borden.

Lemieux, 32, joined the former Mississauga police force in 1973. After about a year, he volunteered for the Peel Regional Police bomb squad.

Since joining the squad he has been a voracious student of police work. His credentials list training in international terrorism, locksmithing, radiography, photography, nuclear defence and explosive identification. He also has a degree in chemistry.

His training has taken him to West Point, where he took part in an FBI bombing investigator's school.

Special services superintendent Des Rowland calls this year a quiet one for the bomb squad. From January to July, the force has received 45 bomb threats, three suspected explosive packages, 32 reports of explosives kept as souvenirs by war veterans, and has made six arrests for possession of explosives.

The bomb threats are similar, says Rowland. "It's not unusual for a disgruntled employee or a kid who isn't doing too well in school to call in a

threat," he says. "Most of the ones that are called in aren't bombs but they must be treated as real."

Some of the bomb reports turn out to be nothing but others are not so harmless.

The bomb squad was called to assist the Halton Regional Police, who had discovered a buried cache of one and a half tons of stolen dynamite.

The task of removing the sticks was made more difficult because they were "weeping" nitroglycerine. The ton and a half of dynamite would have about twice the power of the blasts in the Mississauga train derailment.

The Peel squad is led by Detective Sergeant Vic Henderson. Henderson designed the squad's blast cart, removal system and a one-man titanium blast shield.

A squad member approaches the suspected explosive device, and loads it into a nylon webbed, three-foot wide basket. The basket is rigged to swing back over a boiler plate steel blast drum.

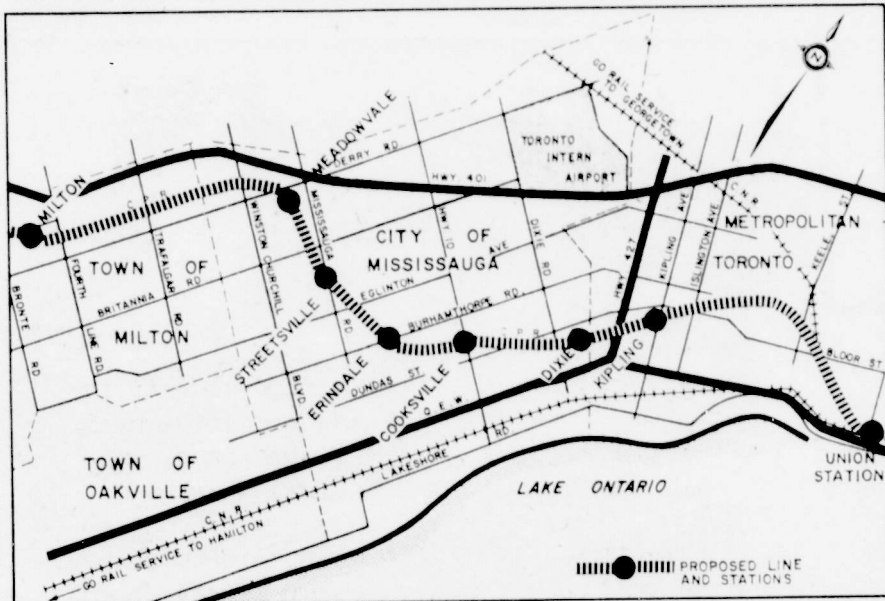
The chimney-like drum, equipped with a dish reflector on the bottom, ensures detonation is directed up and away from people.

Henderson's design has brought inquiries from police forces across North America.

The "Wheelbarrow", a remote control robot first used in Ireland against terrorist bombs, is the safest device in the bomb squad's arsenal.

Lemieux is also a good man to have on hand the next time your favorite uncle leaves you a strange, ticking package.

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GO Transit is holding public open house sessions to review the station site layout plans for the proposed commuter GO Train service between Milton and Toronto. The sessions will be held at the following Mississauga locations between 6 and 9 p.m. each day:

- | | |
|----------------------|--|
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| WED. AUG. 6 | Valley Community Centre
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| THURS. AUG. 7 | Burnhamthorpe Community Centre
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