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Ontario Provincial Police Holster committee report

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TECHNICAL REPORT
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NOTE: Further information
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

With the conversion to semi-automatic service pistols along with improvements in wearing apparel, other hardware developments, as well as new legislative and regulatory changes, the Ontario Provincial Police surfaced the need to field test a variety of off-the-shelf holsters in combination with various duty belts.

Prior to this study, the OPP had selected the Sig Sauer P229 .40 cal pistol as their replacement service handgun and a previous study, co-funded by the Canadian Police Research Centre, had resulted in the selection of the Uncle Mike's nylon duty belt.

The Safariland 070 SS III holster was selected as meeting the best combination of comfort and security needs along with minimizing training requirements during the implementation transition period.

Acknowledgement

The CPRC would like to thank the OPP and the Holster Committee for their permission to publish this report for the benefit of the law enforcement community.

SOMMAIRE

En raison de la conversion aux pistolets semi-automatiques et considérant les améliorations apportées aux vêtements et aux équipements ainsi qu'aux dispositions législatives et réglementaires, la Police provinciale de l'Ontario (OPP) a jugé nécessaire de faire l'essai d'une gamme d'étuis offerts sur le marché, avec divers ceinturons de service.

Rappelons que l'OPP a choisi le pistolet sig SauerP229 de calibre .40 comme arme de poing de remplacement et, pour ce qui est du ceinturon de service, c'est le modèle *Uncle Mike* qui a été retenu au terme d'une étude antérieure cofinancée par le Centre canadien de recherches policières.

L'étui *The Safariland 070 SS III* a été choisi parce qu'il assure confort et sécurité et nécessite peu de formation quant à son utilisation.

Remerciements

Le Centre canadien de recherches policières tient à remercier l'OPP et le comité des étuis d'avoir permis la publication du présent rapport au bénéfice de la collectivité policière.



Holster Committee Report

1998

Holster Committee Report 1998

Purpose of the Study

To review the present OPP issue holster in light of changes in handgun retention methods, new Regulations under the revised Police Services Act, observations of recruits, training personnel and other members attending training and law enforcement activities with other Ontario police services.

To identify if changes are required before current Quarter Masters stocks of the issue holster have to be replaced.

Methodology

In 1996 funding assistance for a trial was received from the Canadian Police Research Centre in Ottawa. In conjunction with the Ontario Provincial Police Association (OPPA) a field trial strategy was developed and several holsters from different manufacturers were purchased and sent to the field for testing by In Service Training and front line delivery personnel.

This test was conducted during the second and third quarter of 1996, however it was not evaluated till the fall of 1997. At that time several issues around the size of the sample, the reliability of the data and the monitoring of the test were discussed by the newly formed committee. It was agreed that this test would be used only as a guide to narrow the field of acceptable holsters using criteria identified as the highest concern to those involved in the original test. This criteria included security, ease of draw, comfort and adaptability to different body types.

Research was conducted to ascertain if there had been new developments in handgun retention technology, new holsters developed, equipment trends within the law enforcement community and changes to legislation governing police equipment.

The area of municipal absorptions was also identified as a concern re possible changes in the level of holster security if the OPP issue holster is a lower standard than pre absorption issue.

Findings

Field Study

A review of the information from the field trial indicated the *Safariland* Level III was the holster of choice of the members involved. (Graphs attached as Appendix A)

The major concerns expressed by the field test members, in order of importance, were security, ease of draw, comfort and suitability to different body types.

Documented evidence during the field trial indicated some bruising had taken place with several holsters excluding the *Safariland*.

Training and conversion to the new holster also scored high as a concern and as indicated in the trial the field trial members had differing times re comfort level with their abilities to become proficient with a new holster.

Manufacture Review

At the time of this report there have been no new models or manufacturers identified which meet or exceed the handgun retention standards of the Ministry.

All holsters used during the Field Study were compared to the present handgun retention standards of the Ministry, only the *Safariland* Level III and the *Uncle Mike's* met most of the standards, with the *Safariland* Level III meeting more of the standards than the *Uncle Mike's*.

A review of *Safariland's* Internet Catalogue revealed that the current OPP issue holster is now classified by them as a Level I holster (copy attached as Appendix B). However our present issue holster still meets the Level II standard of the Ministry.

Legislation

The new Police Services Act and the associated adequacy standards were reviewed. At this time there are no new standards and it is expected that a Regulation, in respect to holsters will be developed in the near future. Based on discussions, with OPP members involved in the review of the Police Service Act, it was agreed that any new standards would be based on advancing the existing standards.

The two top holster (*Safariland* Level III and *Uncle Mike's*) identified by the Field Study were compared to the existing holster regulation. Both holsters met the majority of the standards the *Uncle Mike's* based on information from The

Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR) did not meet the moisture retention standard. Information from an outside source indicates that this problem has been addressed by the manufacturer.

Survey of Other Canadian Law Enforcement Agencies

All police services in Ontario use the *Safariland* Level III as their duty holster with the exception of the Metropolitan Toronto Police and the OPP. MNR issues its patrol officers with the *Uncle /We's* (Report attached as Appendix C)

The RCMP have also evaluated holsters and have issued the *Safariland* Level III to their members.

Need for Action

Current stocks of the present issue holsters is too low to equip next recruit class. A purchase of *Safariland* Level III holsters has already been made to equip this class and the In Service Trainers scheduled to attend training at Base Borden in late April.

Several municipal police services absorbed during the last year were carrying the *Safariland* Level III prior to absorption.

OPP members are currently purchasing and wearing, on duty, various level III holsters.

Members currently assigned to plain clothes duty purchase their own holsters and receive very little OPP approved training in the use of these holsters.

Ontario Provincial Police Association

Sgt. Larry Reesor and Sgt. Ed Kinnear representing the OPPA have reviewed the committee's recommendations and endorse them on behalf of the OPPA. They support the transition policy and will assist in the promotion of this change in equipment issue.

Recommendations

It is the Committee's recommendation that the Ontario Provincial Police start converting to the *Safariland* 070 SS III holster during the upcoming firearms requalification.

Holster conversion be accomplished through a programmed transition, commencing with front line personnel, similar to the recent pistol conversion. Recommended time frame commence April 98 with completion targeted for July 99. This would allow for expenditures over two budget years.

All new recruits and direct entry officers would receive the *Safariland 070 SS III* holster and training at the time of joining.

Options

The present issue holster has not kept pace with handgun retention upgrades and advancements. This is emphasized by the fact we are the last major police force in Ontario using this holster.

All other holsters designated as level III by the manufacturers do **not** meet the current Ministry Standards and were also not rated highly during our small sample field study.

Disadvantages

One major disadvantage is the perception of the difficulty to draw your weapon from this holster. All other police forces have encountered this perception and have successfully overcome it through training and practice.

Another disadvantage is the cost of issuing the new holsters. Quartermaster Stores projects this cost at \$550,000 based on information received from R. Nichols, *Safariland's* Ontario distributor. This up front cost is somewhat lessened by the fact that we are approaching the estimated five year service life of our existing holsters. When viewed in this light the differential between the recommended holster and our issue holster is only an increase of \$36.36 per holster. A Request for Quotation or the cooperative purchasing policy may reduce the costs.

Quartermaster Stores does not have sufficient funds in this year's budget (98/99) for this purchase.

Benefits

The *Safariland 070 SS III* will meet the adequacy standards being developed by the Ministry

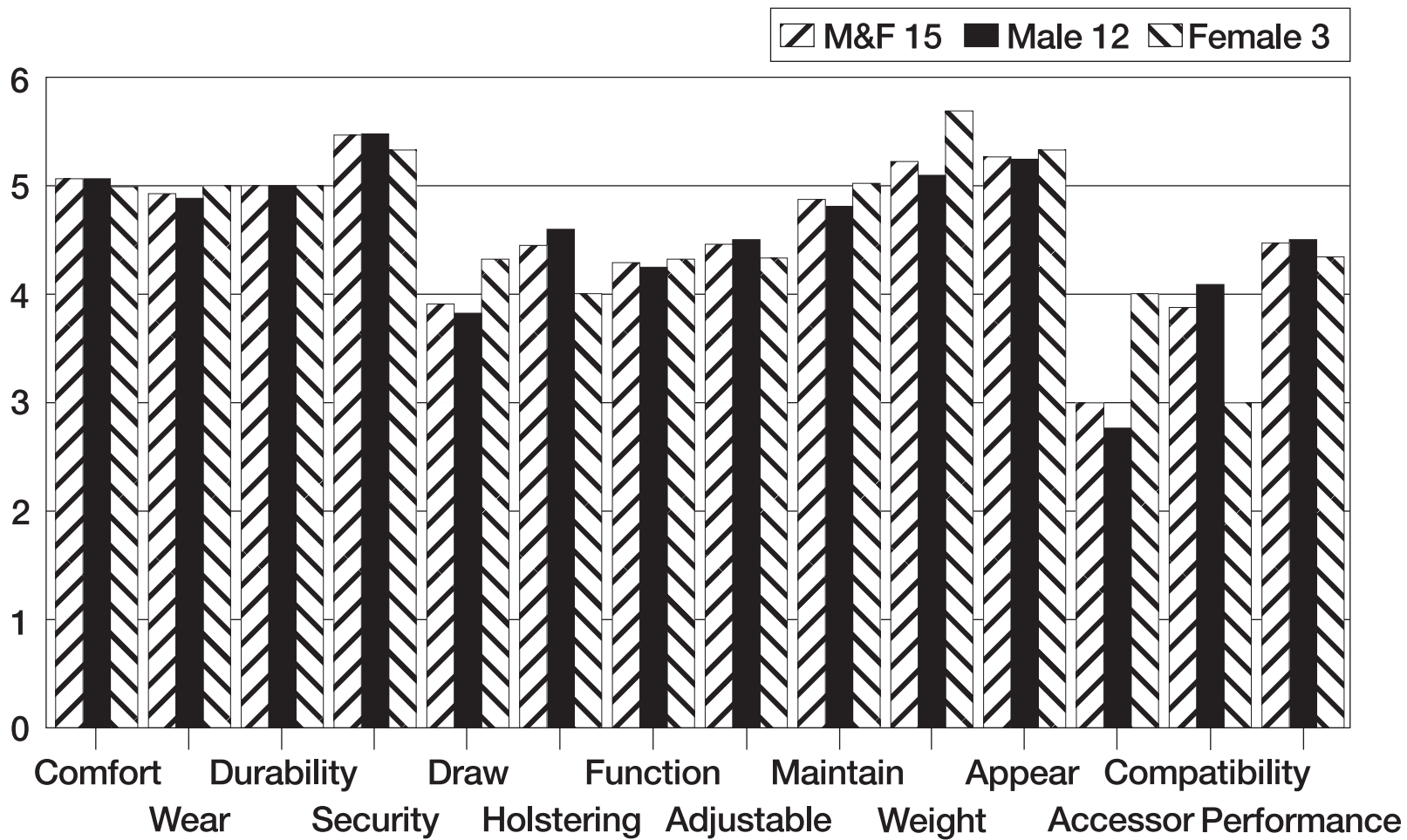
Safety of officers and the citizens of the Province will be improved due to improved handgun retention.

The *Safariland 070* series of holsters provides for three different types. Two are regular duty holsters designed to address the comfort and security needs of different body types and the third is a concealment holster with similar draw and security features which will reduce the training and transition time between

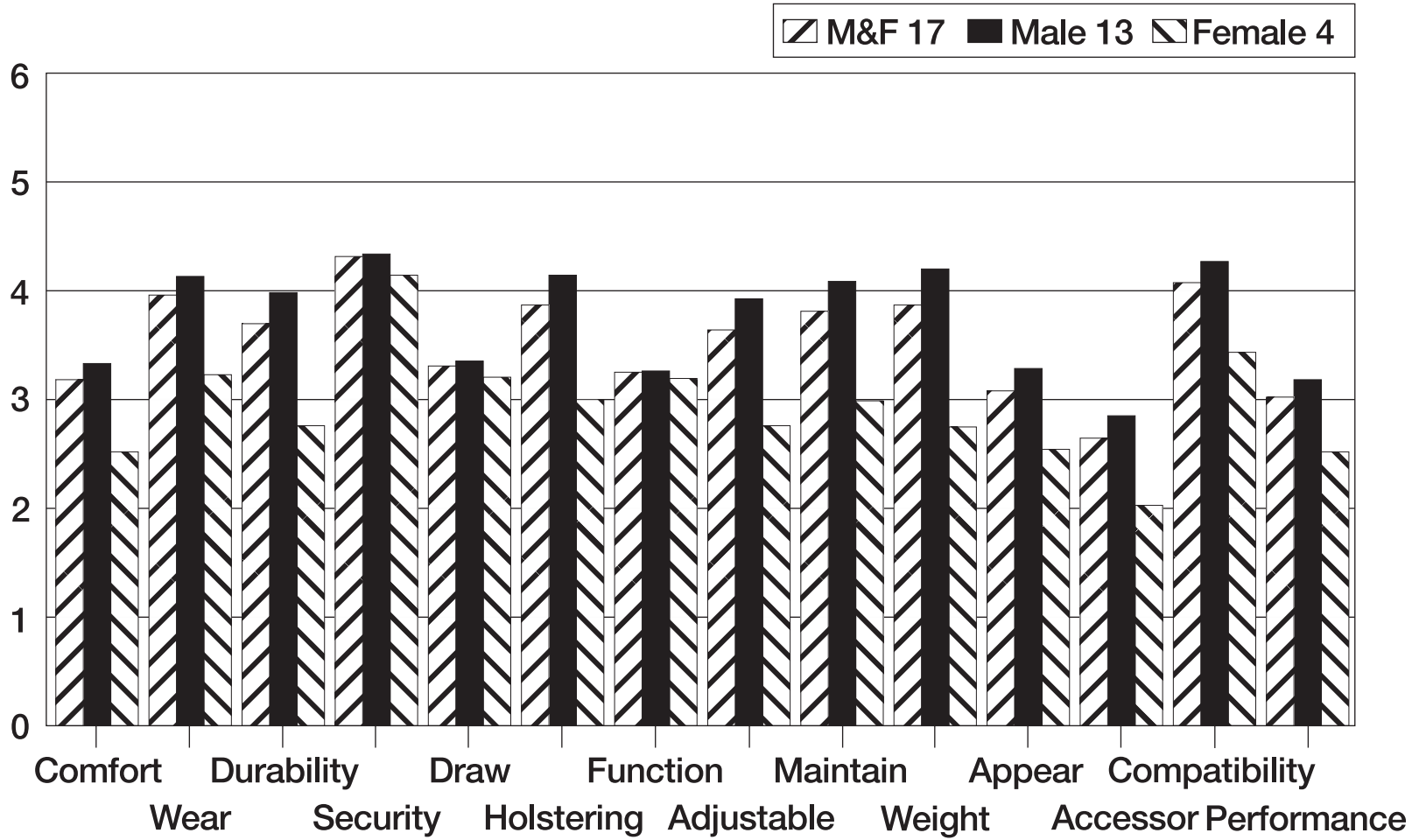
the holsters while providing improved security. The 070 series should address the needs of our plain clothes members.

The issuing of the *Safariland* SS III holster will bring the handgun retention standards of the OPP up to the standard of other major police services in Canada.

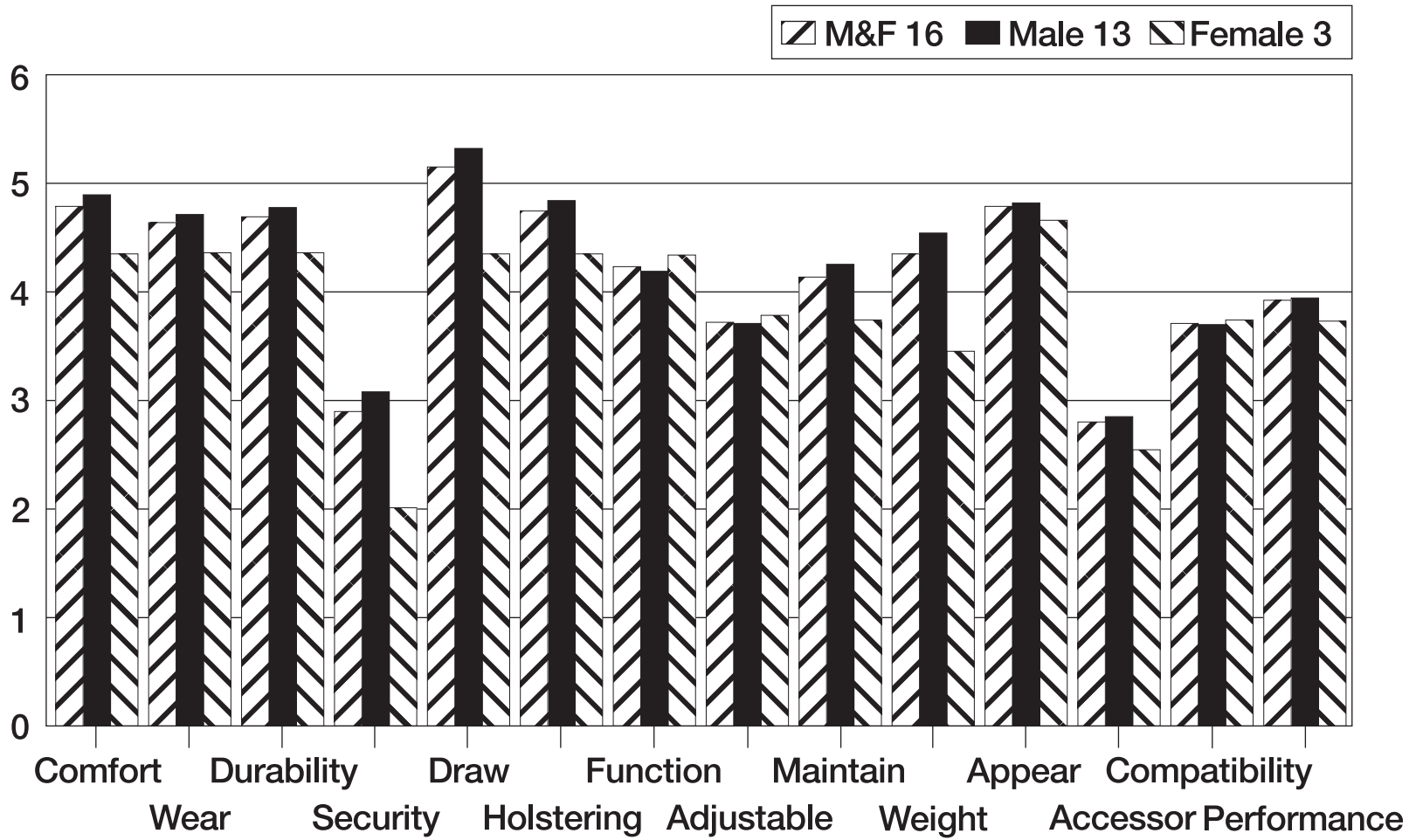
Safariland Level III



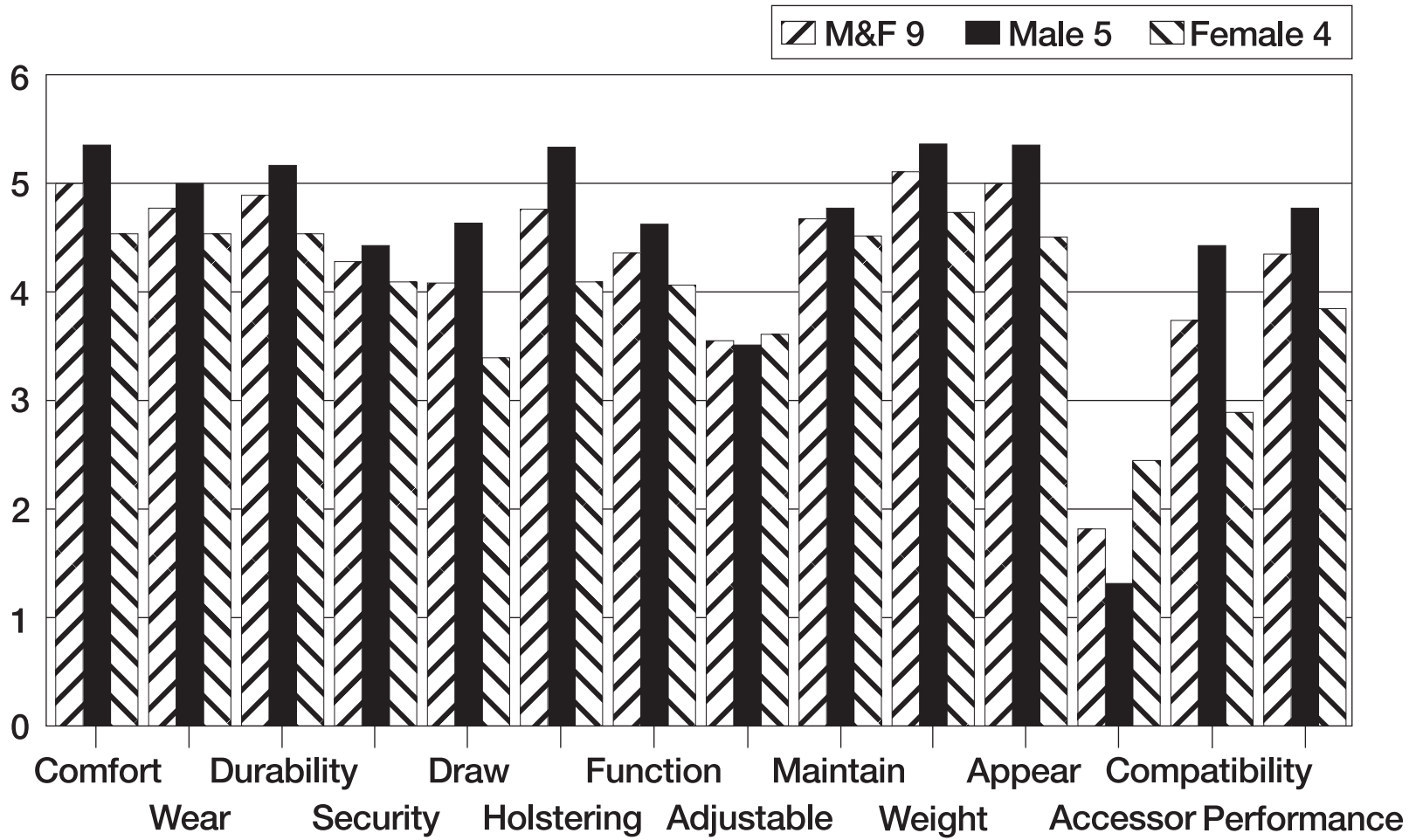
Uncle Mike's



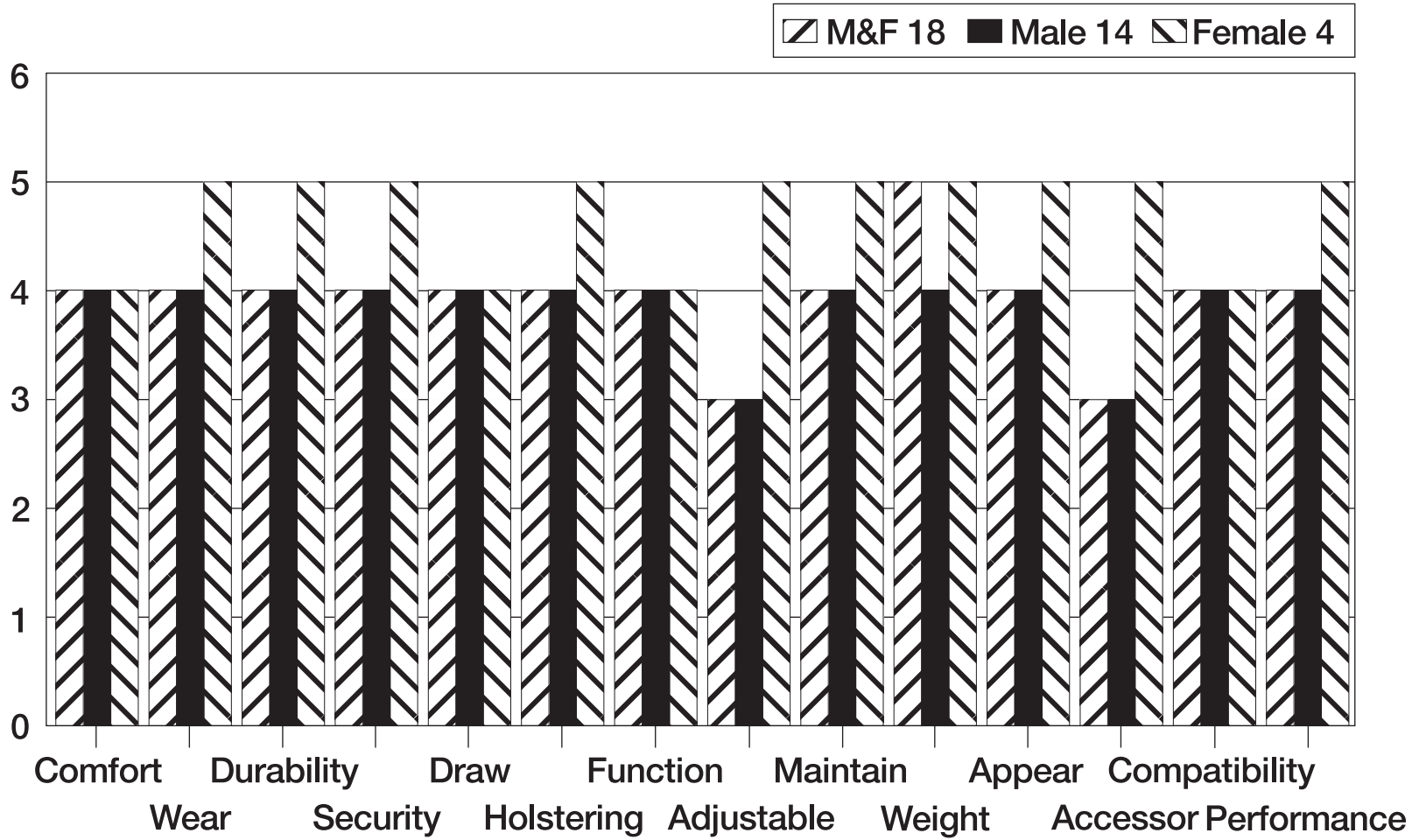
Safariland Issue



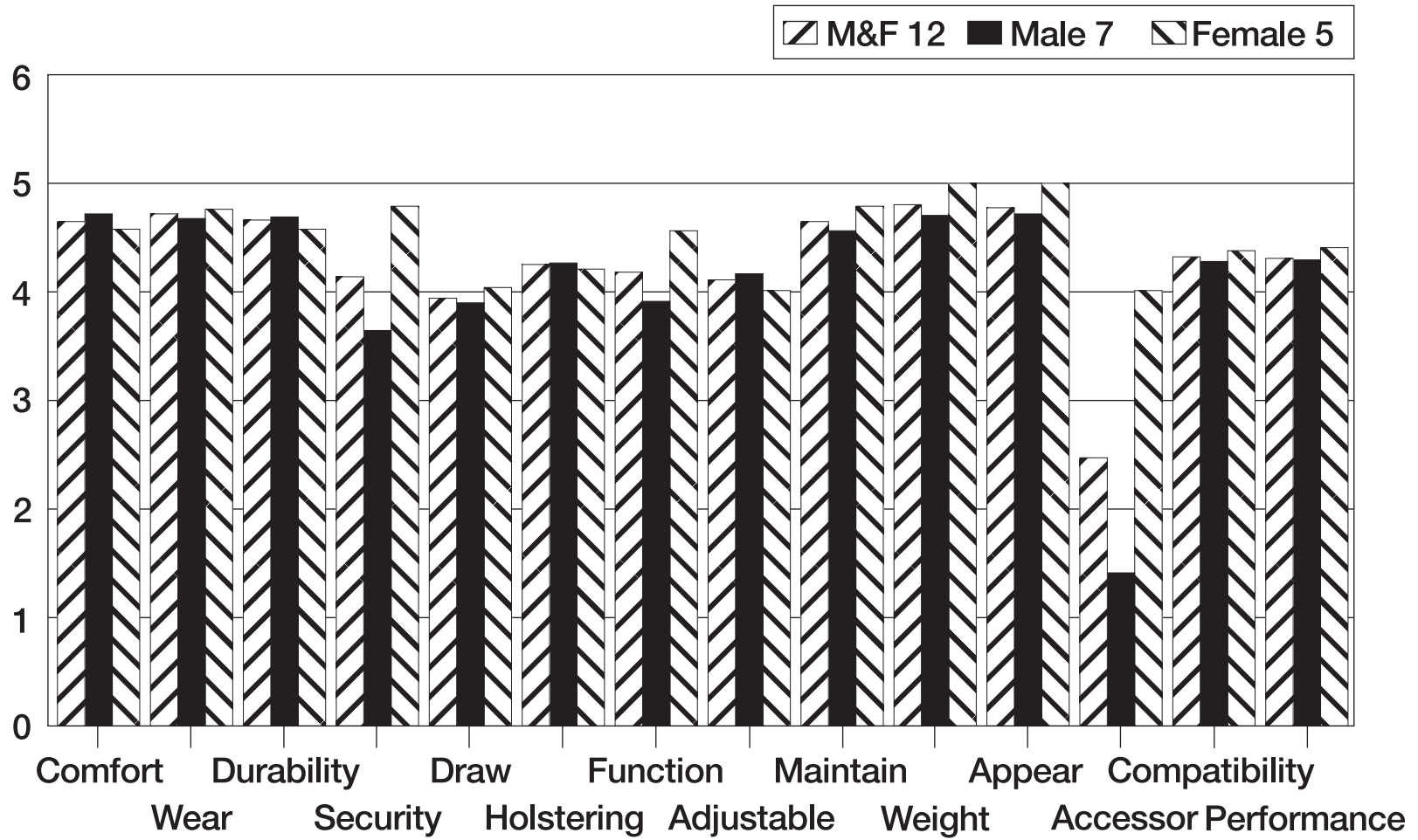
Safariland Level II



Gould

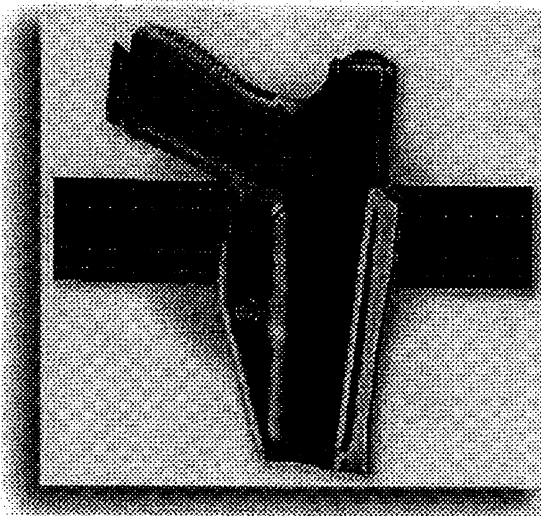


Bianchi



Safariland Duty Gear Catalog

Duty Holsters **Model 200**



"TOP GUN" LEVEL I RETENTION

This is our standard duty holster and one of our best sellers. Its top draw, mid-ride, straight drop cant and thumb break with one-way directional snap are familiar to police officers everywhere.

An adjustable holster tensioning device allows you to control the level of retention by simply turning a screw. Available for pistols and revolvers.

Contact your local Safariland Dealer for product pricing and availability.

Consult our "Will-Fit" tables to see if a particular weapon will fit a Safariland holster.

Holster Evaluation Committee

Study of Police Services Using the Safariland 070 SSIII Holster

All police services in Ontario use the *Safariland 070 SSIII* as their duty holster for their front line uniform officers except for Metropolitan Toronto Police, Ministry of Natural Resources and The Ontario Provincial Police. Information for the study was gathered from the individual police services and R. Nicholls Distributing.

Metro Toronto carry the *Safariland 6280 Level 2* holster. They felt that the Level 3 holster was too secure and a Level 1 was not secure enough.

The Ministry of Natural Resources carry The *Uncle Mike's Level 3* holster. Initially The M & R had problems with this holster in that during snowmobile patrol the firearm froze to the inside of the holster. This was a design problem with materials in the holster and has since been corrected.

The O.P.P. stayed with the same design of holster that we had with the 38 revolver. We found that during the time of pistol transition it was easier to concentrate best on the new firearm rather than adding a new holster in as well. Once pistol transition training was completed we started a field holster test in the spring of 1996.

Several Ontario Police Services were contacted in regards to their choice of holster. All reported that they conducted a field test and selected a holster based on the test. All found the *Safariland 070 SSIII* holster to be the most secure on the market

They also reported that with proper training the security of the holster did not sacrifice draw time. The following Ontario police services were contacted for this information:

Peel Regional Police
York Regional Police
Ottawa-Carleton Regional Police
Hamilton-Wentworth Regional Police
Durham Regional Police

The RCMP were also contacted with regards to this study. They are also carrying the *Safariland* SSIII holster. The RCMP conducted a holster evaluation during late 1994 and early 1995. The evaluation was part of their Small Arms Replacement program undertaken at the time to determine a successor to the RCMP issue .38 cal revolver.

Security of weapon was considered the most important criteria for the holster with weapon access second. RCMP members on operational duty draw their weapons infrequently on average and few enter into fast draw situations; however, most become involved in physical altercations on a frequent basis where weapon security is paramount. The RCMP found the *Safariland* 070 SSIII holster to have the best retention of holsters available at the time.

Training

It is recommended that all members receive their training in the new holster from the In-Service Trainers with the exception of new recruits. They will receive their training at the Ontario Police College. The In-Service Trainers will receive their training in the new holster from *Safariland* in April at their annual workshop at CFB Borden.

It is recommended that members must receive training in the new holster prior to issue. The new holster will require a break in period as the initial fit for the weapon is firm. There is also an adjustment in draw which will require our members to undergo training and practice with the new holster before they are issued it operationally. The training will take place during the day or night firearms programs. Members will be required to pass an approved standard prior to the holster being put into service by the individual. If a member fails to meet the standard remedial training and practice will take place before the member is tested on the standard a second time. This standard will be developed during the In-Service Training workshop in April. It is anticipated that the standard will consist of a member drawing their pistol from a locked holster and firing 2 rounds centre mass in 2 seconds or less.

Plastic Shim

At present a plastic shim is used with our current *Safariland* holster to secure it to our present *Uncle Mike's* duty belt. The shim is required as the duty belt is narrower than the holster belt loop. The shim works very well in holding the holster to the belt as it evenly distributes pressure along the top of the belt by the use of two screws in the holster. We have not been made aware of any complaints with the holster coming loose on the belt. We would recommend staying with the same belt system shim and holster back that we presently have when we purchase the new holsters. We feel that this combination will hold the holster better and minimize wear on the belt.

New holster kept RCMP gun from prisoner

JAMES STEVENSON
Journal Staff Writer

Minutes before he was shot dead Sunday, Dean Welsh tried to wrangle the police-issue 9 mm handgun from the lipster of his vanquished police guard.

RCMP are saying that a special new gun holster is largely responsible for saving Const. Dave Hardy's life after he was beaten and pepper-sprayed by Welsh in the Jasper police detachment.

"The prisoner did attempt to get the member's gun, but was unsuccessful because of the trigger-locking mechanism," Cpl. Dave Osborne said Tuesday.

The police officer had just

seized the 34-year-old Welsh from his cell in the phone room when Welsh attacked.

Osborne said that, other than some slight agitation from being locked up there was abnormally no behaviour that forewarned of the "violent explosion" that followed.

"Our member was severely beaten and his life was in jeopardy. His need enough force to save his own life."

Slightly larger than his police guard, the prisoner jumped Hardy and began headbanging.

During the brawl, Hardy was sprayed with his own pepper spray and had his defensive baton taken away.

But Hardy's 9 mm Smith and Wesson stayed in the safety holster until

he took it out to shoot his attacker. Issued to RCMP officers in late 1986, the new holster has two snaps — one at the top and one towards the back — which must be unhooked before the gun can be removed.

Even with the snaps unhooked, a special hand movement is also required to draw the pistol.

"The new design was supposed to make it virtually impossible for someone other than the officer to get at the weapon."

Hardy is a five-year veteran of the RCMP, but had only spent about six weeks at the Jasper detachment before the attack.

Welsh, from Prince George, B.C., had been serving a 30-day sentence for resisting arrest and obstructing a peace officer when he drove away

from his halfway house Saturday. He was pulled over in Jasper National Park later that evening for speeding.

A spokesperson for British Columbia's Corrections Branch said there was little in Welsh's file that would indicate violent tendencies. Welsh had been in three different facilities in 15 days of court proceedings from across Canada, but normally based centre.

In early 1986, Welsh was sentenced 30 days for failure to stop and obstructing a police officer.

Few details could be obtained about Welsh's obstructing charges. Under the Criminal Code, a person can be charged with obstructing a peace officer for non-violent offences.

Officer kills prisoner

JASPER, Alta. (CP) — An RCMP officer shot and killed a 34-year-old prisoner in a cell Sunday after the man attacked him using the officer's own pepper spray and baton.

The shooting happened in the Jasper detachment's detention area about 1 p.m. while the prisoner was being led back to his cell after being allowed to make a phone call, said RCMP spokesman Cpl. Howard Eaton. Suddenly the prisoner turned on the officer.

"During the course of the struggle, he managed to get the member's pepper spray and he sprayed (the Mountie) in the facial area," said Eaton. "He then got the defensive baton from the member and came after the officer with that."

At that point, the officer drew a standard issue 9-mm service pistol and fired.

RCMP shooting defended

JASPER, Alta. (CP) — RCMP are defending a Mountie who fatally shot a prisoner on the weekend, saying the officer's head had been viciously banged on the floor several times during a struggle.

Const. Dave Hardy acted on instinct when he fired four shots at Dean Welsh, 34, said Cpl. Howard Eaton. "He was in a fight for his life."

Eaton said Welsh, of Prince George, B.C., was being taken to his cell Sunday after making a phone call when he turned on Hardy, grabbing the officer's pepper spray and baton.

Hardy drew his service pistol and fired.

15 APRIL 1987

APRIL 14, 1987

APPENDIX D

Committee Members

Sgt. D. Knox, Provincial Police Academy, Co. Chair
S/Sgt. D. Makay, Infrastructure Support Bureau Co. Chair
Sgt. M. Bussieres, First Nations & Contract Policing
Sgt. R. Sanders, Provincial Police Academy
Sgt. L. Reesor, OPPA
Sgt. E. Kinnear, OPPA
Sgt. R. B. Pritchard, Project Coordinator