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August 29, 2024

BPC #24-192

The Honorable City Council
City of Los Angeles, Room 395
c/o City Clerk's Office
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Dear Honorable Members:

RE: QUADRUPED UNMANNED GROUND VEHICLE YEARLY INSPECTION REPORT
FOR FISCAL YEAR 2023-2024.

At the regular meeting of the Board of Police Commissioners held Tuesday, August 20, 2024, the Board APPROVED the Department's report relative to the above matter.

Respectfully,

BOARD OF POLICE COMMISSIONERS

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Rebecca Munoz".

REBECCA MUNOZ
Commission Executive Assistant

Attachment

c: Chief of Police

DS 8/14/24.
24-192

INTRADEPARTMENTAL CORRESPONDENCE

August 14, 2024
1.1

TO: The Honorable Board of Police Commissioners

FROM: Chief of Police

SUBJECT: QUADRUPED UNMANNED GROUND VEHICLE YEARLY INSPECTION REPORT – FISCAL YEAR 2023/2024

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

1. That the Board of Police Commissioners (Board) REVIEW and FILE the Los Angeles Police Department’s (Department) Yearly Report, Fiscal Year 2023/2024 on the Quadruped Unmanned Ground Vehicle (QUGV).
2. That the Board TRANSMIT to the Los Angeles City Council (Council) the quarterly report on the QUGV program as directed in the attached motion.

BACKGROUND

On November 8, 2022, the Board approved the use of the QUGV. The Department implemented the program, as delineated in Administrative Order No. 6, dated May 30, 2023. As directed in the Administrative Order, Metropolitan Division was required to provide a quarterly report to the Commanding Officer, Counter-Terrorism and Special Operations Bureau (CTSOB) documenting the QUGV field deployments. Later, the Council introduced Motion 2A, dated May 23, 2023, instructing the Department to provide quarterly reports to the Council as well. The Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT) of Metropolitan Division was assigned the implementation, management, and deployment of the QUGV. The use of the QUGV was reserved for specific incidents, including high-risk incidents that met SWAT’s deployment criteria.

DISCUSSION

Special Weapons and Tactics conducted the required evaluation for the period of July 1, 2023, through June 30, 2024, in the following areas:¹

1. Approved deployment of the QUGV.
2. Permissible Uses.
3. Tracking system to capture the approval and deployments of the QUGV.

¹ Quarter 1 (July 1, 2023, to September 30, 2023), Quarter 2 (October 1, 2023, to December 31, 2023), Quarter 3 (January 1, 2024, to March 31, 2024) and Quarter 4 (April 1, 2024, to June 30, 2024).

REPORTING

Quarter 1				
Deployment No.	Date	Time Deployed	Deployment Description	Division / Bureau
1	August 12, 2023	23:33	Armed Barricaded Suspect	Olympic / West Bureau

During Quarter 1, the QUGV logged its first and only deployment on August 12, 2023. The incident involved an Officer-Involved Shooting (OIS). The suspect, who was believed to be armed, had secreted himself behind a staircase where numerous community members were dining and walking about.

The on-scene Incident Commander requested to deploy the QUGV, and gained approval from Commander Shannon K. Paulson, Assistant Commanding Officer, CTSOB.

The QUGV was utilized to safely remove what was believed to be a rifle and handgun away from the suspect, so SWAT officers could safely approach, detain the suspect, and begin medical treatment. The suspect was arrested without the use of additional force by SWAT officers.

Quarter 2			
Deployment No.	Date	Deployment Description	Division / Bureau
2	October 17, 2023	Armed Barricaded Suspect	Newton / Central Bureau
3	November 8, 2023	Armed Barricaded Suspect	Hollywood / West Bureau
N/A	December 20, 2023	Demonstration for Community Event	North Hollywood/ Valley Bureau

During Quarter 2, SWAT reported two deployments, on October 17, 2023, and November 8, 2023.²

The deployment on October 17, 2023, involved Newton Area patrol officers responding to a radio call of an Assault with a Deadly Weapon suspect at 1000 East 7th Street. As patrol officers approached the apartment in question, they discovered the suspect had fired multiple rounds into his upper floor neighbor’s apartment unit. The suspect failed to submit to arrest, the incident was declared an armed barricade, and SWAT was notified. The SWAT team responded to the incident and determined that using the QUGV was the best option to peacefully resolve the incident.

² On December 20, 2023, SWAT provided a static display for the Winter Wonderland event in North Hollywood Division. Per Department policy, this demonstration did not meet the criteria of a deployment; therefore, it was not detailed in this inspection report.

The on-scene Incident Commander requested to deploy the QUGV, and gained approval from Deputy Chief David J. Kowalski, Commanding Officer, CTSOB.

The QUGV was deployed to the third floor of the apartment complex and its camera system was utilized to record the suspect's actions. The QUGV was situated in the middle of a hallway and provided cover from the suspect's door. The QUGV allowed officers to remain at a safe distance from the suspect, enhanced situational awareness, and provided a means to observe the suspect's movement through the camera without endangering SWAT officers. After chemical agents were introduced into the apartment, the suspect opened the door and surrendered without further incident.

The deployment on November 8, 2023, involved Hollywood Patrol Division officers who responded to an armed suspect on a Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority bus. After approximately 75 minutes of attempted dialogue with the suspect, the incident was declared an armed barricade and SWAT was notified. Upon SWAT's arrival, a request for the combined deployment of the small Unmanned Aerial System (sUAS) and the QUGV was initiated due to the suspect having a firearm on the floor of the bus next to his feet.

The on-scene Incident Commander requested to deploy the sUAS and QUGV, and gained approval from Deputy Chief David J. Kowalski, Commanding Officer, CTSOB.

The sUAS observed the suspect to be sleeping or unconscious with the firearm next to his feet on the floor of the bus. It would have been impossible for a tracked robot to navigate the steps of the bus; therefore, the QUGV was deployed. As the QUGV entered the bus, the suspect awoke from his sleep. The QUGV was positioned to create a barrier between the suspect and the firearm. The suspect was ordered off the bus where he surrendered and was taken into custody without incident.

At the conclusion of this incident, it was determined the observed firearm was a replica.

Quarter 3			
Deployment No.	Date	Deployment Description	Division / Bureau
4	January 25, 2024	Barricaded Armed Burglary Suspects	Van Nuys/ Valley Bureau

During Quarter 3, SWAT reported one QUGV deployment.

On January 25, 2024, Van Nuys Patrol Division officers received a radio call of a Burglary in progress. The comments of the call indicated the person reporting was out of the country and alerted by their in-home security/surveillance system that two masked individuals possessing firearms were inside of the residence. Metropolitan Division K-9 units responded and assisted patrol units with a search of the first floor of the location. During the search, the Tactical Flight Officer in the overhead Department helicopter observed a shotgun on a back patio. The K-9 unit ceased their search and requested SWAT to assist.

Upon SWAT's arrival, they determined the QUGV was the best option to safely search the second and third floors of the residence.

The on-scene Incident Commander requested to deploy the QUGV, and gained approval from Deputy Chief David J. Kowalski, Commanding Officer, CTSOB.

With the assistance of the QUGV, the SWAT team searched all floors of the residence; however, the SWAT team was unable to locate the suspects. The shotgun was recovered and booked into evidence.

Quarter 4			
Deployment No.	Date	Deployment Description	Division / Bureau
5	April 6, 2024	Hostage/ Kidnap Suspects	Robbery Homicide/ Detective Bureau
6	June 20, 2024	Barricaded Armed Suspect	West Valley/ Valley Bureau

During Quarter 4, SWAT reported two QUGV deployments, on April 6, 2024, and June 24, 2024.

On April 6, 2024, at approximately 2300 hours, SWAT responded to a Hostage/Kidnap investigation at 14720 Big Sky Dr, Pearblossom, in the City of Lancaster, California. Although the victim was rescued, there was an outstanding suspect who fled from the scene and was believed to be hiding at the residence or nearby in the surrounding area.

After an initial assessment of the structure and surrounding property, it was determined that there were significant unique features that would be problematic for traditional tracked robotics. Adding to the complexity of the search was the surrounding area of the house was undeveloped and had rugged terrain. The QUGV has mobility advantages, advanced cameras and door manipulation capabilities that exceed those of our traditional tracked robots.

The on-scene Incident Commander requested to deploy the QUGV, and gained approval from Deputy Chief David J. Kowalski, Commanding Officer, CTSOB.

The QUGV opened several closed doors to search for any suspects. In addition, it navigated a steep stairwell and provided real time high definition video feed of the search. Lastly, the QUGV effectively cleared several rooms, closets, and bathrooms. Ultimately, the investigation revealed the suspect(s) fled the scene prior to SWAT's arrival.

On June 20, 2024, SWAT responded to a barricaded suspect. The suspect was believed to be armed with knives and a handgun. As the Crisis Negotiation Team (CNT) was developing a dialogue with the suspect, he discharged his pistol inside his residence several times and continued to make statements about killing himself.

The on-scene Incident Commander requested to deploy the QUGV, and gained approval from Commander Shannon K. Paulson, Assistant Commanding Officer, CTSOB.

After an initial assessment of the suspect's residence, it was determined the use of the QUGV was the best means to assist SWAT in bringing this crisis to a peaceful resolution. The QUGV removed the obstructions in the stairwell and provided real-time video feedback to the search team. The suspect was later found dead underneath his bed from an apparent suicide.

CONCLUSION

For the Fiscal Year 2023/2024, the QUGV was deployed six times and adhered to all established protocols and procedures. As part of this report, an assessment was conducted of the tracking system utilized by Metropolitan Division for the approval, deployment, and documentation of each QUGV deployment. The system proved to be effective and Metropolitan Division will continue to assess the tracking system for efficiency.

Should you have any questions, please contact Deputy Chief David J. Kowalski, Commanding Officer, Counter-Terrorism and Special Operations Bureau, at (213) 486-8780.

Respectfully,



DOMINC H. CHOI
Chief of Police

**BOARD OF
POLICE COMMISSIONERS**
Approved *August 29, 2024*
Secretary *Rebecca Muñoz*