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March 21, 2024

BPC #24-045

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 QUARTERLY INSPECTION
REPORT, QUARTER 2, FISCAL YEAR 2023 – 2024.

At the regular meeting of the Board of Police Commissioners held Tuesday, March 12, 2024, the Board APPROVED the Department's report relative to the above matter.

Respectfully,

BOARD OF POLICE COMMISSIONERS

Handwritten signature of Rebecca Munoz in black ink.

REBECCA MUNOZ
Commission Executive Assistant

Attachment

c: Chief of Police

INTRADEPARTMENTAL CORRESPONDENCE

March 13, 2024

1.1

TO: The Honorable Board of Police Commissioners

FROM: Chief of Police

SUBJECT: QUADRUPED UNMANNED GROUND VEHICLE QUARTERLY
INSPECTION REPORT – QUARTER 2, FISCAL YEAR 2023/2024

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

1. That the Board of Police Commissioners (Board) REVIEW and FILE the Los Angeles Police Department's (Department) Quarter 2 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 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) team, Metropolitan Division, was assigned the implementation, management, and deployment of the QUGV. The use of the QUGV was reserved for specific incidents that met SWAT's deployment criteria.

DISCUSSION

The SWAT team conducted the required evaluation for the period of October 1, 2023, through December 31, 2023, 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

During Quarter 2, the SWAT team reported two QUGV deployments.²

The first 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.

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 second deployment on November 8, 2023, involved Hollywood Area patrol 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 black, replica Glock 17-style BB gun (see Figure No. 1).

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 quarterly inspection report.



Figure No. 1 – Replica Handgun Recovered at Scene (Division of Records No. 2306-17539)

Usage and Deployment

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

CONCLUSION

During Quarter 2, the QUGV was deployed twice 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,

DOMINIC H. CHOI
Chief of Police

BOARD OF
POLICE COMMISSIONERS
Approved *March 12, 2024*
Secretary *Rebecca Murtos*

Attachment

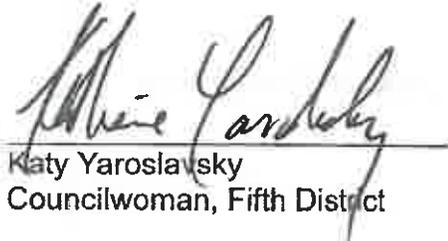
MOTION

As with the use of any new technology used in policing, it is important that the City Council have appropriate oversight and the ability to modify or halt the program if circumstances warrant.

I THEREFORE MOVE that the City Council instruct the Police Department to provide quarterly reports to the Council on the deployments of the Quadruped Unmanned Ground Vehicle (QUGV), including where and why the QUGV was deployed, the outcome of the deployment, and any issues arising from the deployment. The report should include how these deployments were in compliance with the QUGV deployment policy that the Police Department has shared with the Council in the report.

I FURTHER MOVE that the City Council expressly declare its intent to closely monitor the QUGV program and to modify the deployment policy or suspend the program at any time if the use was outside of policy or if after the use the Council feels that the policy in place does not address all of the concerns of the Council.

Presented by


Katy Yaroslavsky
Councilwoman, Fifth District

Seconded by

