

Minister
of National Defence



Ministre
de la Défense nationale

Ottawa, Canada K1A 0K2

Received
Oct 10, 2014
[Signature]

OCT 01 2014

Mr. Dennis R. Young
1330 Ravenswood Drive South East
Airdrie AB T4A 0P8

Dear Mr. Young:

Thank you for your letter of 19 May 2014 about the flooding in Alberta last year, and please accept my apology for the delay in responding.

In June 2013 the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) supported Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) flood relief operations in High River, Alberta. The support was provided pursuant to subsection 273.6(1) (Public Service) of the *National Defence Act*, following a request for assistance from the Minister of Public Safety, which was itself preceded by a request for assistance from the Province of Alberta. The CAF was asked for humanitarian support, including transportation support, in the effort to find trapped or injured people.

On 5 July 2013 the Commission for Public Complaints Against the Royal Canadian Mounted Police announced that it had initiated a public interest investigation into RCMP actions during these flood relief operations. I am confident that the Commission will look into many of the questions you raise in your letter and that have been expressed by other members of the public. I look forward to the results of the investigation.

I trust that this information is helpful, and thank you for your interest in this matter.

Yours truly,

Hon. Rob Nicholson, PC, QC, MP

Canada

Airdrie, Alberta
May 19, 2014

The Honourable Rob Nicholson
Minister of National Defence
House of Commons
Ottawa, ON
K1A 0A6

Dear Minister Nicholson:

Re: Canadian Forces Engaged in Law Enforcement in High River

Firstly, let me commend Public Safety Minister Vic Toews, National Defence Minister Peter MacKay, DND Deputy Minister Richard B. McFadden, General T.J. Lawson, Chief of Defense Staff for their speedy response to the Alberta Government's request for assistance in Alberta and High River in particular. The actions of the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) deployed are also to be commended for their overall professionalism and courage that resulted in saving 31 people from the rooftops of homes in High River homes on June 20 and 21, 2013.

I am writing you today with concerns about what happened in High River after those people were rescued.

I recently received a response to my *Access to Information Act* request (DND file: A-2013-01161). Among those documents was a copy of your e-mail response dated August 30, 2013 to a person asking about the involvement of the Canadian Armed Forces in the subsequent forcible entry into thousands of homes in High River, Alberta and the warrantless seizures of firearms, ammunition, magazines, other weapons and accessories from those homes.

In your email, you stated: "The mandate of the CAF was clear, providing mobility and protecting the safety and security of residents - which included going door-to-door in High River and locating residents who were in distress or deceased; **our task was not assistance to law enforcement.**" [emphasis added]. Documents released by your department (DND ATIP file A-2013-01158) confirms that on June 21, 2013 this direction was given to your troops by Defence Minister MacKay and General T.J. Lawson, Chief of Defense Staff: "Canadian Armed Forces personnel will not engage in law enforcement activities. Should the support of the Canadian Armed Forces be required to provide assistance to law enforcement authorities, it will be the subject of another request." Documents provided to me so far only includes a copy of the original request from the Alberta Minister Responsible for Emergency Response, Doug Griffiths. Somewhere during the six-day CAF deployment in High River something went seriously off the rails.

Documents obtained directly from the RCMP through *Access to Information Act* requests show that after the first day or so of the emergency in High River, the RCMP officers were, in fact, doing more law enforcement during their unwarranted door-to-door search and seizure operation than "protecting the safety and security of residents." I offer as evidence my analysis of the 212-page response to RCMP ATIP File: A-2013-04640 in my letter to the Commission for Public Complaints Against the RCMP dated March 24, 2014. See the links below. I have also included a hard copy for your easy reference and I respectfully ask you to review it. <https://nfa.ca/news/eighth-letter-rcmp-public-complaints-commissioner-march-24-2014>
http://www.cdnsportingsports.org/2014/03/Eighth_Letter_to_RCMP_Public_Complaints_Commissioner-20140324.pdf

It seems pretty clear from the above documents that Canadian Armed Forces personnel and vehicles drove the RCMP up to many of the 4,000 homes they searched and nearly 2,000 doors they kicked in. Canadian Armed Forces personnel are clearly visible in the boat in this video released to the media by senior RCMP officers during the flood event in High River:

<http://bcblue.wordpress.com/2013/06/28/redford-ordered-rcmp-to-enter-and-take-high-river-residents-fire-arms/>

Expert analysis of the radio transmission heard in this video establishes that the RCMP were targeting homes with firearms for their warrantless search and seize operation.

<https://nfa.ca/news/video-analysis-reveals-rcmp-targeting-houses-firearms>

It seems that Canadian Armed Forces LAVs and boats were also used to collect the hundreds of firearms, ammunition, magazines, other weapons and accessories which were seized from abandoned High River homes. The Canada Armed Forces' own audio-visual, photographic record and recordings of radio communications of their activities in High River will confirm this.

Based on the evidence obtained so far, it appears the Canadian Armed Forces aided and abetted the unwarranted searches and seizures from High River homes. Just like the driver of the getaway vehicle in a bank robbery is guilty of bank robbery, CAF personnel are also guilty for the mistakes or crimes committed by RCMP officers conducting these aggressive searches and seizures in High River.

It is also clear from the documentation provided so far that all or the door breaking and warrantless searches conducted by the RCMP in High River did not result in a single person being rescued. Not one. Therefore, the RCMP's claim that this door-to-door was a search operation for "survivors" in need of rescue is not credible. Search requests, complaints and appeals where the RCMP have refused to disclose pertinent documents are ongoing. At this point, the RCMP has even refused to release documents showing the number and type of charges laid as a result of these warrantless searches.

Something went seriously amiss in the High River search and rescue operation on or about June 23rd. The following documents were obtained through *Access to Information Act* requests:

- National Defence documents dated June 24, 2013 stated: "**No further danger to civilians (life and limb) and evacuations not requested.**" [emphasis added]
- An RCMP e-mail dated June 24, 2013 from RCMP Superintendent Frank Smart states: "As of 1500hrs today, RCMP led by STO have **completed the physical search of all homes in High River** [emphasis added] (with the exception of a small amount in quadrant 8 which is underwater)." Houses\Buildings 3,337 - Forced Entries 674 - People located 303." Note: These 303 people would be residents who stayed in their homes and refused the evacuation order.

Other than the 31 persons saved by CAF helicopters and crews on June 20th and 21st, none of the DND or RCMP documents released so far have indicated more people being rescued as a result of the door-to-door searches conducted in High River.

According to other RCMP documents released so far:

- Between June 20th and June 24th, there were 674 forced entries and 386 guns seized.
- Between June 25th and July 10th, there were at least 1,200 more forced entries and 223 more guns seized.

- Canadian Armed Forces assisted the RCMP to move from home to home in High River up until June 27th when the province approved their return to home base.

It therefore seems obvious that CAF personnel, either knowingly or unwittingly, got caught up in a decision made by some authority to shift the priority of the operation in High River from one of search and rescue of people to a systemic and warrantless search and seizure of firearms, ammunition and other weapons with unrestricted forced entry into High River homes. We already know of at least one incident where two members of the Canadian Armed Forces, while under RCMP supervision, were seen kicking in a door to a High River home (after being told it was empty) and leaving with two long-guns in their hands.

Our military has a long and proud history. This episode cannot be left to fester and poison that image. Only a complete airing of the truth will reassure the people in communities all across Canada that when a state of emergency is called they are safe to leave their homes in the care of those who claim to be rescuers. Two nights ago on Global National News a woman from High River was being interviewed about her fears of a another flood this spring (2014). She responded that she would not leave her home because of what I described earlier in this letter. That is a real and present danger to public safety if the cover-up of the events in High River is allowed to continue. How many people will refuse to leave their homes when a future evacuations are ordered because they don't trust the RCMP? How many of those people will be injured or die as a result of this mistrust?

Mr. Ian McPhail, Q.C., Interim Chair of the Commission for Public Complaints Against the RCMP is currently conducting an investigation of the whole High River mess. He could use your help to uncover the truth. Please provide his investigative team with access to everything your 330 soldiers and staff saw, heard and recorded during your Force's entire involvement in the High River search and seizure operation and an understanding of when, how and who gave the orders. With your support we may be able to clear the air and avoid a judicial inquiry.

Thanks for your time and consideration.

Yours sincerely,

[Original signed by]

Dennis R. Young
1330 Ravenswood Drive SE
AIRDRIE AB T4A 0P8
Home Phone: 587-360-1111
New E-Mail: dennisyoung@telus.net

cc Right Honourable Stephen Harper, Prime Minister of Canada
Honourable Steven Blaney, Minister of Public Safety
Honourable Peter Mackay, Minister of Justice
Ian McPhail, Interim Chair, Commission for Public Complaints Against the RCMP