

## **2009 Vehicle Theft Award of Merit**

### **Agency (251-1,000 Officers) Recognition: Aéroports de Montréal's Airport Patrol, of which Pierre Goupil is the Chief**

The Aéroports de Montréal's Airport Patrol is responsible for the operation of the Montréal—Pierre Elliott Trudeau International Airport, as well as the Montréal—Mirabel International Airport. Approximately 1.7 million vehicles each year park in the 12,395 available spaces at the Montréal—Pierre Elliott Trudeau International Airport. Two hundred twenty-four vehicle-thefts occurred in 2005, but only 36 were recorded in 2008, an 84 percent decrease. Moreover, only five vehicles were reported stolen between January 1 and May 11, 2009. The substantial decline in vehicle thefts resulted from the Airport's ambitious and successful program:

- An Airport Patrol analysis determined the vulnerable areas, as well as the days and times when vehicle-thefts were occurring.
- Private security officers were hired by the Airport to augment Airport Patrol officers and were assigned on the basis of the analysis to patrol parking facilities 16 hours per day.
- More effective use of the existing surveillance camera footage was undertaken.
- Physical security of the parking facilities was repaired and/or enhanced, and is maintained regularly.
- Information now is exchanged frequently between various organizational elements of the Airport Patrol, the Montreal Police, and the private security firm.
- A license plate reader was installed at the exit of the parking garage to determine when the stolen vehicles were exiting and who was driving them.
- Vehicles that cannot be secured properly have been towed—as a preventive measure—by the Airport Police, at the Airport's expense.
- A security awareness flyer was developed and distributed to the Airport's parking facilities employees at meetings.
- The private security officers conduct spot checks of vehicles exiting the parking facility.

### **Agency (1,001+ Officers) Recognition: Chungbuk Provincial Police Agency, South Korea, of which Park Ki-Ryun is the Commissioner General**

Vehicle-thefts rose from 678 in 2007, to 731 in 2008, in Chungcheongbuk province, with 56 percent of them occurring in Cheongju City. Like many other police departments throughout the world, the Chungbuk Provincial Police Agency has elected to use high-tech scientific policing devices as force multipliers to augment its insufficient work force:

- Six Automatic Plate Number Interpretors were mounted on six patrol cars in 2008, and another 36 are being added in 2009. Eight vehicle-thieves and 150 “wanted” persons were arrested in 2008.
- Following a pilot study, 215 CCTV for Crime Prevention cameras became operational in 2008, and an additional 461 will go online in 2009. These units solved 56 crimes in 2008: two robberies, 31 thefts, and 23 other criminal offenses. One of the thieves apprehended had committed 80 prior agricultural thefts, but was caught on April 9, 2008, via one of the CCTV cameras.
- The ongoing development of the Electronic Policing Management System will integrate criminal, traffic, geographic, and other information and will provide in real-time information upon which officers can act promptly.

Through the use of high-tech scientific policing devices, the Chungbuk Provincial Police Agency was able to clear by arrest 39 vehicle-thefts in 2008, compared to 32 in 2007, an increase of 20 percent; and anticipated many more clearances once all of its devices are in place.

**Multi-Agency Task Force Recognition: San Diego, California, Regional Auto Theft Task Force (RATT)**

With vehicle thefts increasing four percent in 2007 over 2006 in San Diego County, California, the San Diego Regional Auto Theft Task Force (RATT), a multi-agency task force comprised of 13 local, county, state, and federal law enforcement agencies, launched the largest undercover sting operation in the County’s history: Operation Southside Blitz. It yielded, when it culminated in November 2007, the indictment of 73 persons, 100 percent of whom were convicted, and the recovery of 161 stolen vehicles with an estimated value of \$1.9 million.

An analysis identified two trends: (1) the closer a vehicle was located to the U.S.—Mexican border, the more likely it was to be stolen and transported across the border; and (2) those vehicles stolen in northern San Diego County generally were recovered in the area in which they had been stolen.

Operation Knee Drag, initiated in January 2008, targeted the theft of “sport type” motorcycles in southern San Diego County, many of which occurred on military bases and/or affected military personnel. Covert infiltrations, “bait” motorcycles, patrol officer-training, and new legislation were employed. This year-long initiative revealed that the thefts were undertaken by small, independent cells which communicated to various degrees with one another, which were involved with Mexican drug cartels, and which rode the stolen motorcycles directly to Mexican chop shops; and that “pig tails,” alternate ignitions utilized to start motorcycles without the use of keys, were used. The cell that had been penetrated was dismantled after twelve months, with 74 arrests and 60 stolen

motorcycle recoveries. The training identified specific indicators for which patrol officers could watch during traffic stops of motorcycles; it resulted in the recovery of numerous “unreported” stolen motorcycles, including the arrest of one of RATT’s top five motorcycle thieves nine days after a California Highway Patrol officer had completed the training. Efforts to amend California’s Penal Code to define pig tails as burglary tools and to make their possession illegal are ongoing.

Operation Northern Alliance kicked off in November 2007, and attacked the vehicle-theft problem by opening lines of communication with detectives from other agencies, i.e., exchanging theft trends and developing likely suspects on whom to concentrate; and by designing and maintaining the daily “North County Hot Sheet” of thefts and recoveries, which is analyzed to detect trends and is disseminated electronically to local law enforcement officers. Seventy-five persons were arrested by Operation Northern Alliance’s five detectives and 175 vehicles with an estimated value of more than \$1.2 million were recovered. Thefts in each of the five North County regions declined by at least 15 percent and by as much as 24 percent in 2008 compared to 2007.

All of RATT’s efforts reduced vehicle theft in San Diego County over 19 percent in 2008 over 2007, including a 24 percent decline in automobile thefts and a 20 percent decrease in motorcycle thefts.

**Individual Recognition: Major Greg Terp, Miami-Dade, Florida, Police Department**

Major Terp has devoted a considerable portion of his more than 30-year career with the Miami-Dade Police Department to deterring, investigating, and prosecuting vehicle theft. He commanded between 1996 and 2007, the Miami-Dade Multi-Agency Auto Theft Task Force and served during that assignment as the Chair—and now as a Board Member—of the North American Export Committee. He has actively supported the full implementation and funding of the Anti-Car Theft Act of 1992, including the complete development of the National Motor Vehicle Title Information System (NMVTIS) with access available to law enforcement.

During his tenure with the Miami-Dade Multi-Agency Auto Theft Task Force, Major Terp recognized the pressing need to address more effectively the approximately 40,000 vehicles stolen annually in Miami-Dade County and in Miami and consequently began researching means by which to scan cargo containers. He settled on radiation portal monitors that did not impede commerce or generate unreasonable costs, had a prototype developed, and tested it at the Port of Miami. The test was so successful that these monitors are now being utilized at the top 80 ports in the United States and has resulted in all containers arriving at the Port of Miami being scanned for stolen vehicles. This program even has located several vehicles that have been tied to individuals with terrorism links, has identified one that had been utilized in a Miami homicide, and

has been adapted to search for items other than vehicles.

The Miami-Dade Multi-Agency Auto Theft Task Force successfully piloted in 2006 and 2007, automated license plate recognition (ALPR) units, the use of which eventually spread to robbery and gang investigations, as well as to intelligence gathering in homeland security matters.

Major Terp has assisted U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) in developing the Auto Theft Interdiction Program, the purpose of which will be to provide state and local law enforcers with CBP authority to assist in inspecting cargo containers and in seizing stolen vehicles and other items. This program is expected to be implemented in the near future.

Major Terp serves on the U.S. Department of Justice's Task Force on Organized Crime, Auto Theft; has frequently made presentations throughout the U.S., as well as in Canada and Mexico, on auto theft and its links to terrorism; and has been recognized for his expertise and dedication by the International Association of Auto Theft Investigators, the National Association of Counties, and the Florida Auto Theft Intelligence Unit. The Task Force developed, under the Major's tutelage, an annual Motor Vehicle Identification and Auto Theft Symposium that attracts officers from local, state, federal, and international law enforcement agencies.

As a result of Major Terp's long-term commitment, vehicle thefts in Miami-Dade County were reduced tremendously, from a high of 43,000 in 1996, to 6,687 in 2007.