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## Cops say scrap the long-gun registry: Poll

By JEFF CUMMINGS, EDMONTON SUN

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An Edmonton police officer believes an overwhelming number of law enforcement officials across the country are in favour of scrapping Canada's long-gun registry through a survey in a national police magazine.

And that's against the latest stance by the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police (CACP)-- including Edmonton Police Chief Mike Boyd -- who say the registry "protects lives" across the country.

"When the police chiefs across Canada say 'we represent the police and we believe in (the registry),' I think my survey has proved them wrong," said Const. Randy Kuntz, a criminal investigator with the Edmonton Police Service.

"They do many great things, but on this topic, they are incorrect."

Kuntz, a 22-year EPS veteran, says 2,410 of the 2,631 officers from across the country he surveyed in Blue Line magazine since last spring believe "inaccurate" data from the registry is affecting police safety in every province and territory.

The firearms database shows registered firearms and their owners, but Kuntz says the data don't tell police officers where the firearms are actually located.

There's nothing that says a firearm has to be in possession of the person who the gun is registered to as guns are never linked to an address in the system, says Kuntz, who is an avid hunter.

"Newer policemen rely on databases for everything, and that could (mean their lives) someday," Kuntz said.

Boyd says he supports the gun registry and the CACP says firearm-related deaths decreased by 43% between 1991 and 2005 because of the registry.

"From all that I've learned, there is value to the long-gun registry and it's proven to save lives," Boyd said to reporters Friday, days before Edmonton hosts the CACP's annual conference.

"Anything that helps protect the safety of our police officers out there and the community, you've got to get behind it."

Police have more than 111,000 firearms in police custody for "public safety reasons" or after criminal use because of the registry, the CACP says.

"What the registry was intended to be was a utopian ideal," said Gordon McGowan, who owns MilArm Co. Ltd., an Edmonton gun store.

"What it is in practicality is of little or no value to (police)."

With more than a month to go before politicians in Ottawa vote on killing the controversial long-gun registry, Boyd says he's willing to adapt if it gets voted down.

"If the law gets changed around the issue, then I as a police chief need to recognize the changing legislation and follow it," said Boyd.

Edmonton Police Association president Sgt. Tony Simioni could not be reached for comment.

— With files from Andrew Hanon

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