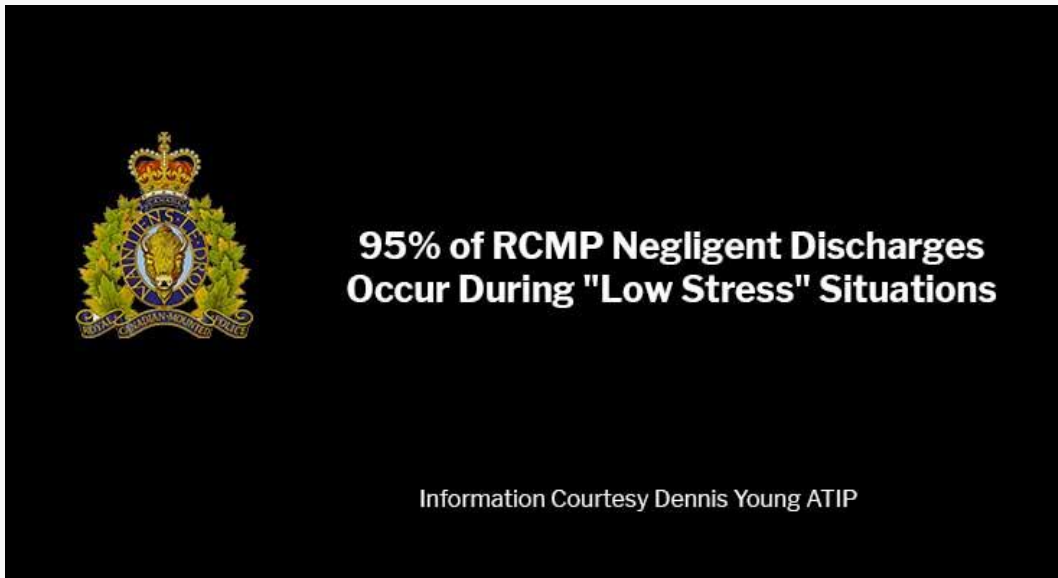


COMMENTARY

<https://t.co/KxyJiYAHH0>



RCMP members negligently discharged their service weapons 21 times in 2007 according to the response to an Access to Information Request received by firearm researcher Dennis Young. [ii](#)

Those 21 negligent discharges account for 37% of all RCMP's member-involved shootings.

This is both good and bad news.

It's good news because RCMP members don't feel the need to discharge their police-issued weapons very often.

It's bad news because for every three times an RCMP member fires his or her weapon, one of those times was unintentional.

Worse, 20 of the RCMP's 21 negligent discharges (95%) occurred in conditions identified in the ATIP response as "Low Stress".

The ATIP response explanations of events surrounding each of these cases are:

- Routine Firearm Task: Completing safety and mechanical check
- Routine Firearm Task: Completing pre-patrol firearm inspection
- Routine Firearm Task: Unloading firearm after shift
- Routine Firearm Task: Unloading firearm after operational skills training
- Routine Firearm Task: Loading firearm for duty
- Routine Firearm Task: Completing disassembly of firearm for cleaning
- Routine Firearm Task: Accidentally "grazed" trigger while slung with safety off
- Muscle Co-Activation: While engaging the safety after firing

- Startle Response: Distraction device was utilized and the second “bang” was heard

The RCMP classifies negligent discharge of a firearm (when a gun is discharged without intent to do so) as “unintentional”. Lack of intention means lack of paying proper attention, as the descriptions above show, which is the definition of negligence.

Basic firearm safety tells us to keep your finger off the trigger until you can positively identify your target, know what is beyond your target, and are ready to shoot at your target.

Only then do you place your finger on the bang switch. When a firearm is discharged outside of those conditions, it is due to negligence.

Firearms have the ability to provide great safety and security (this is why police carry them) or to cause grave injury or death when used negligently.

Thankfully in these cases, at least as far as the ATIP Response indicates, nobody was injured or killed.

For this we can all be grateful. We would like to see better training instituted for RCMP members so the 95% of wholly preventable negligent discharges is zero.

Source:

 <https://dennisryoung.ca/2020/02/14/rcmp-unintentional-discharge-of-firearms-statistics-2017/>