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## RCMP centre brings in high-tech simulations to prepare cadets for streets

REGINA \_ RCMP cadets training to enter a job where split-second decisions can mean life or death are getting a chance at a trial run.

Thanks to more than \$1 million in new interactive video displays, officers-to-be get the chance to squirt pepper spray, fire a gun and hurtle a car down a snow-slick street, all without leaving the Regina training centre.

Dr. Garry Bell, an analyst at the depot, tells CTV Regina that new cadets are comfortable with the concept.

"Generation Y has cut their teeth on computer technology and video games," he says.

In one simulation, an RCMP officer stands in front of a screen showing a dark kitchen, the only light trickling in from a hazy window to her right.

As she slowly advances, a bright circle of light from a flashlight pointed by her hands traces its way along the countertops, glancing past a shadowy figure and then darting back to reveal a man standing with a raised blade in his right hand.

He swings the blade in vertical circles as the officer calls, "Drop the knife, put it down!"

The displays help officers understand when force is justified. They learn to fire guns that interact with computers through lasers before picking up actual weapons.

They also get to practice manoeuvres behind the wheel in a variety of different conditions.

"This training will ... give them environments that could be more dangerous, (that) you don't want to reproduce in downtown Regina," says instructor Cpl. Ryan Currie.

The new training technology is the result of two years of research, and much of it has been in place for about six months.

One feature still to come will measure the body's reaction to stress, hopefully allowing cadets to recognize their capabilities and take their physiological condition into consideration.

"It really speaks to the future of the cadet training program," says Chief Supt. Bob Smart.

As the kitchen simulation progresses, the officer has prompted the man to put down the knife, but he's ignoring her calls to put his hands in the air.

One hand creeps behind his waist, snapping back with a gun.

He gets off two shots before she can fire her own weapon, causing him to dive to the side.

Smart says cadets come into the program not knowing how to shoot or drive like police officers.

"There's lots of pressure on them to succeed," he says. "And we can introduce technology to help achieve that short-term goal, which is their success in graduation."

(CTV Edmonton)

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