

From notebooks to brass knuckles, Saskatoon's policing history finds new home

By Morgan Modjeski, Metro News

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Pieces of Saskatoon's policing history have found a home in the Saskatoon Police Service's new headquarters. With artifacts dating back to the force's beginnings, the open concept museum allows the public to view artifacts ranging from vintage police uniforms and seized drug paraphernalia to homemade weapons and retired forensic equipment.

Karen Smith, media technologies coordinator with the Saskatoon Police Service's (SPS) public affairs, helped organize and establish the museum and hopes the displays educate the public and members on how the SPS got to where it is today.

"Basically we want the members to know the history and then the public is always interested because of the nature of the displays — the artifacts," said Smith. "It showcases our history and it's so localized," she added later. "It gives you pride in your community because it's the Saskatoon police," said Smith. "This is not Regina, this is not RCMP, this is specific to Saskatoon Police and that's my community and I see this on the street," she said. "When you see the shoulder patch, all of sudden you know a little bit more about it. It's just more specific and more personal."

With more than 1,000 artifacts in the SPS's possession, Smith said the majority of pieces on display are from the 1960s to the 1990s and have been contributed by former members of the SPS alongside members of the community. In storage for more than two decades after the SPS's original museum shut down in the late 80s early 90s, the majority of artifacts are being seen by the public for the first time and are now strategically located in the service's main lobby and at various spots throughout the building.

Working closely with the pieces over the years, Smith said the tools of police work have changed drastically. "They've become a lot more efficient and they've become a lot more powerful," she said.

Alongside showcasing the advances made by the SPS, some of the displays also serve as memorials, as one of the main display cases carries the ashes of Cyr, who was the only SPS canine officer to be killed in the line of duty.

David Snider, who was at the SPS head quarters on Tuesday to deal with a warrant, said he was intrigued by the displays. "It's interesting how they went from what they have here to what they have now," he said. "It's just breath-taking actually."

Others, like Janice McCarthy, who was waiting to get a criminal record check, said she feels the museum is an "excellent" way to educate the public on SPS history. "I thought it was very interesting," she said. "I liked the tribute to the police dog and the different weapons and drug paraphernalia — I've never seen that before — and it was kind of neat. It's past and present I would say."

With a number of artifacts still in storage at the SPS headquarters, Smith said they'd be rotating the displays on a regular basis noting in the future the SPS will look at options to expand the museum even further.



Karen Smith, media technologies coordinator with the Saskatoon Police Service hopes the service's new museum helps educate police officers and public about Saskatoon's policing history.

A small selection of artifacts on display at the SPS museum



Colouring books and a Saskatchewan license plate that reads 'Oscar' can be seen in one of the display cases at the SPS museum. Oscar was the force's first talking police car, used for education and outreach in the 1980s.



Photos of the Saskatoon Police Service headquarters throughout the ages can be seen as part of the Saskatoon Police Service's museum located at the SPS's new headquarters on 25 Street East.



Photographed and recorded by hand, photos showing alleged criminals of Saskatoon's past can be seen in this book of mug shots from the 1930s.



A pair of old-fashioned handcuffs can be seen alongside a police notebook in a display found on the second floor of the Saskatoon Police Service headquarters.



A mug shot camera from the 1970s was just one piece of photography equipment used by the SPS. Also on display at the museum are external flashes, film developers and finger print cameras.



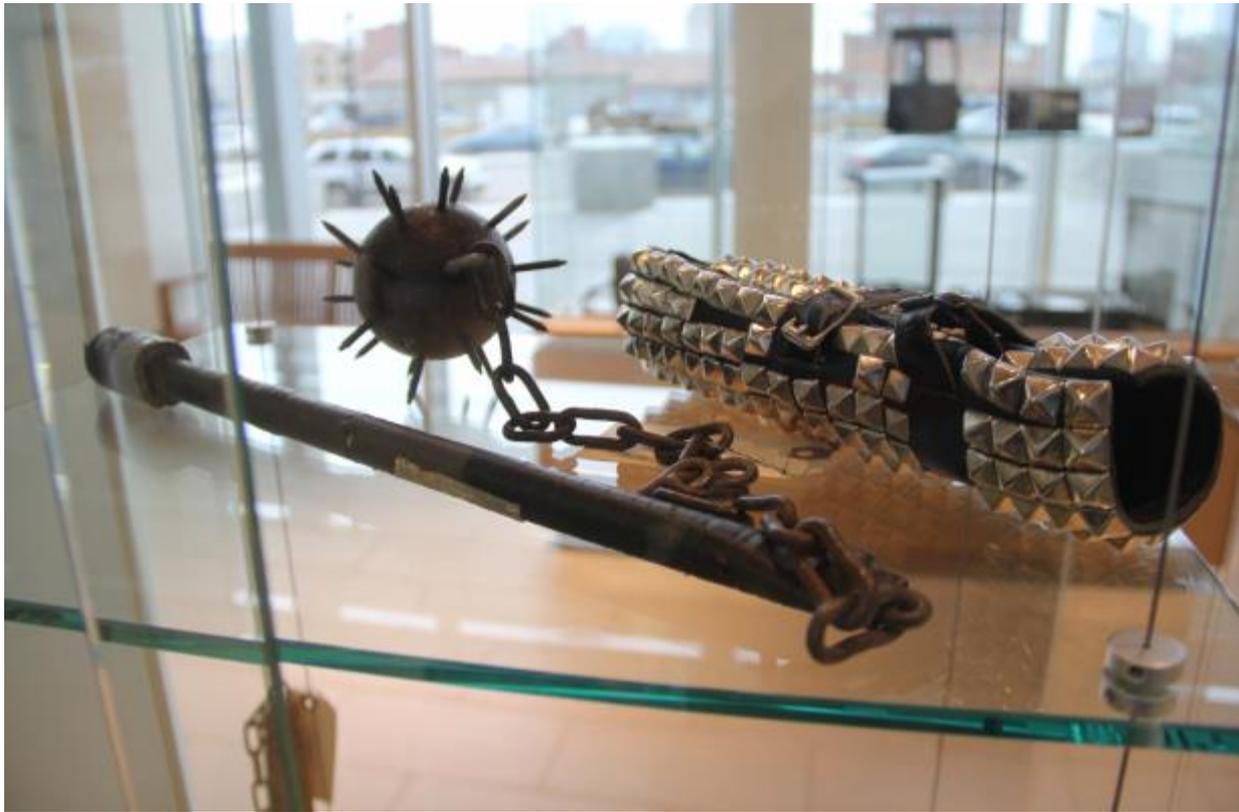
Old-fashioned uniforms ranging from the 1950s to the 1980s can be seen as part of the SPS's Prairie Winters Display. The buffalo coat, which can be seen towards the back of the display, is one of the last remaining coats the SPS has in its possession.



The lock to a cell door, alongside a set of keys used in the Municipal Justice Building from 1928 to 1978, can be seen amongst a number of weapons, including homemade brass knuckles, a throwing star and a small pistol.



A hostage negotiator phone kit from the 1980s can be seen in one of the main display cases at the SPS headquarters.



Weapons seized by police, like this homemade mace alongside a spiked armband, show members of the public some of the weapons confiscated by police over the years.



An early version of the Breathalyzer from the 1970s is one of the many pieces of police equipment on display at the SPS museum.



Scarred with scratches from use by past members of the Saskatoon Police Service, a tactical helmet from the 1980s, alongside a copy of SPS's manual of regulation from 1965 can be seen in one of the museums main display cases.



Field equipment, including a roller to measure accidents from the 1960s, a Katz radar from 1965 and an original Mobile Data Terminal from the 1980s, can be seen in this display case located in the SPS's main lobby.



A patrol box, which was part of the Gamewell Police Patrol Box System purchased by the SPS in 1912, was used to alert patrol officers about emergencies. They were located at various street corners throughout Saskatoon.



Replacing Oscar, Otto is the Saskatoon Police Service's second talking police car. This small robot was used by the SPS in the 1990s for education and outreach purposes.



This desk and bookshelf, which are both on display in the SPS headquarters' main lobby, once belonged to chief of police James Kettles, who served throughout the 1950s and 1970s, providing the public a chance to see the office of the police chief in the service's early years.



Shoulder patches from police forces across the globe can be seen on display as part of the SPS's museum.