Deputy Chief Constable Doug LePard
Statement
March 1, 2010

With a tip of the hat to Winston Churchill, I would have to say that never in the history of policing the City of Vancouver have so many owed so much to so many.

I can safely say that in my 29 years with the Vancouver Police Department, I have never seen anything close the massive effort required to ensure everyone’s safety at this incredible event.

I can also tell you that I have never been prouder to be a member of the VPD. If you could survey each and every member of our Department, I am sure they would tell you the same thing. I also could not be prouder of every single member of the VPD - sworn, civilian and volunteer.

Every day I saw our people working long days, many with few if any days off, and they did it with a smile on their faces, unfailingly professional and courteous. The Olympics is about incredible feats of athleticism, and our VPD members ensured that would be the focus.

I’m sure our front line police officers would also tell you how grateful they are for the support of the police officers who came from all over Canada to help us make these Games safe and welcoming.

But I can only speak today to our role, the role of the VPD in policing what is called the urban domain, or everything in Vancouver outside the venues themselves.

Our first real challenge came on opening night when 1,500 protestors tested the police line outside B.C. Place.

I can tell you now that really was our most tense moment. The criminal element within the protest group threw everything at us they could get their hands on. When they ran out of things to throw, they spit on us.

Through it all, the blue line held and no one in the crowd was hurt.

We were praised for restraint and professionalism. I would like to make it clear that this was not some new tactic we were experimenting with for the Olympics. It is the same protocol we use for every one of the 175 protests on average we police in the city every year.

Those who seemed surprised by our approach can be forgiven since the fear mongers and critics tried their best to convince the public that massive police presence would lead to massive abuses and police brutality, even suggesting we would employ sonic cannons. As we said then, how ridiculous.

I know you are interested in some of the statistics from the Games, so I’ll go over those with you now.

Despite doing our best to remind people, with the assistance of the media, that we wanted to keep this a celebratory event and that consuming liquor in public is illegal, we saw a record number of voluntary liquor pour-outs during the period of the Games: 20,824.
We issued 1,230 violation tickets to people for consuming liquor in a public place.

Our Jail saw an unprecedented number of people during the Games - 253 people were arrested for state of intoxication in a public place and 93 were arrested for breach of the peace.

In closing, I would also like to thank all of you. I know that leading up to the Games, in the early days, the media appeared to be obsessed with the glitches, but then, like the rest of us, you stepped back and were awed by the bigger picture.

The story wasn’t the police or the weather or even the chain link fence; it was the incredible demonstration of national pride for an extraordinary group of Canadian athletes. We are proud and consider ourselves lucky to have been a part of it.

It’s a great to be a Canadian.