

INTRADEPARTMENTAL CORRESPONDENCE

August 28, 2026

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TO: The Honorable Board of Police Commissioners

FROM: Chief of Police

SUBJECT: QUADRUPED UNMANNED GROUND VEHICLE ANNUAL INSPECTION
REPORT – 2025/2026

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

1. That the Board of Police Commissioners (Board) REVIEW and APPROVE the Los Angeles Police Department's (Department) Annual Report, Fiscal Year 2025/2026 on the Quadruped Unmanned Ground Vehicle (QUGV).
2. That the Board TRANSMIT to the Los Angeles City Council (Council) the report on the QUGV program.

BACKGROUND

On November 8, 2022, the Board approved the use of the QUGV. The Department implemented the program, as delineated in Administrative Order No. 6, dated May 30, 2023. As directed in the Administrative Order, Metropolitan Division was required to provide reports to the Commanding Officer, Counter-Terrorism and Special Operations Bureau (CTSOB) documenting the QUGV field deployments. Prior to the implementation date, the Council introduced Motion 2A, dated May 23, 2023, instructing the Department to provide reports to the Council as well. The Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT) team of Metropolitan Division was assigned the implementation, management, and deployment of the QUGV. The use of the QUGV was reserved for specific incidents, including high-risk incidents that met SWAT's deployment criteria.

DISCUSSION

The SWAT team conducted the required evaluation for Fiscal Year 2025/2026, in the following areas:

1. Approved deployment of the QUGV.
2. Permissible Uses; and
3. Tracking system to capture the approval and deployments of the QUGV.

REPORTING

Deployment No.	Date	Deployment Description	Division / Bureau
1	August 4, 2025	Armed barricaded suspect.	Newton Division/ Central Bureau
2	August 23, 2025	Officer-Involved Shooting by Southwest Officers. Armed barricaded suspect.	Southwest Division/ South Bureau

The first deployment was on August 4, 2025, at approximately 2215 hours, when Newton Area patrol officers responded to a report of an armed takeover robbery at a marijuana dispensary. The business owner reported multiple armed suspects entered the premises. Upon arrival, patrol officers initiated an immediate foot pursuit of the suspects, resulting in the apprehension of one individual. An air unit subsequently located a rifle and a tactical vest. These items were recovered by officers. There were two additional suspects that refused to comply with the patrol officers' commands and barricaded themselves in the structure. The SWAT team was deployed for the armed barricaded suspects.

The visual assessment from the SWAT officers, determined the property contained construction equipment that was placed throughout the interior and blocking certain walkways. There were also several narrow hallways, passageways, and doorways in the interior of the property. Additionally, there were more than a dozen industrial heavy gauge electrical cables running the length of numerous hallways. With all these materials and hazards, traditional track robotics would have difficulty maneuvering in the area as it searched for the two-armed robbery suspects. Based on these facts, Sergeant Mike Knoke, Serial No. 36679, requested the use of the QUGV and Deputy Chief David Kowalski, Serial No. 33157, CTSOB, approved the deployment.

The QUGV deployment was successful in navigating all the above obstacles. The QUGV cleared a very narrow hallway where the two suspects were last seen. Once the QUGV was at the end of the hallway, it was used to provide situational awareness and acted as a physical barrier to protect the personnel. The two suspects were located and taken into custody without incident.

The second deployment was on August 23, 2025, at approximately 1715 hours. The SWAT team responded to an incident involving a suspect wanted for assault with a deadly weapon and murder. The suspect had barricaded himself inside a residence and had fired shots at responding uniformed officers from Southwest Division. Upon initial assessment, the interior of the multi-room, two-story residence was found to contain scattered debris and furniture obstructing pathways. The layout included a prominent switchback staircase visible from the front yard, along with several narrow hallways and doorways. Given the structural complexity, size of the property, and associated risks, the QUGV was deployed with the approval of Deputy Chief David Kowalski. The QUGV successfully cleared the staircase, upper hallways, and multiple rooms while minimizing risk to personnel.

The QUGV was then positioned to monitor a partially closed closet, where the suspect was believed to be located. Through coordinated efforts, the Crisis Negotiation Team (CNT) persuaded the suspect to surrender peacefully, with no further incidents occurring.

Deployment No.	Date	Deployment Description	Division / Bureau
3	October 7, 2025	Armed barricaded suspect during Warrant service.	Harbor Division/ South Bureau
4	October 18, 2025	Armed barricaded suspect.	77 th Street Division/ South Bureau

The third QUGV deployment was on October 7, 2025, at approximately 0500 hours, when the SWAT team served a warrant in support of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) Safe Streets Task Force. Intelligence provided by lead detectives indicated that the target location functioned as a known “stash house” for firearms and narcotics. Furthermore, it was believed that several identified gang members were residing at the residence. Initial reconnaissance of the first floor was conducted using a small Unmanned Aerial System (sUAS) and an ICOR mini tracked robot. Both platforms encountered operational limitations in the environment. To address challenges posed by confined spaces and stairwells where the tracked robotics proved ineffective, the QUGV was requested, and Deputy Chief Kowalski approved the deployment. The QUGV successfully searched the structure but did not identify any additional occupants.

The fourth QUGV deployment was on October 18, 2025, at approximately 0100 hours, when the SWAT team was deployed for an armed barricaded suspect. The suspect had discharged a .22 caliber rifle toward a neighboring residence. The responding 77th Street Division patrol officers initially contacted the suspect; however, the suspect refused to comply with repeated commands to surrender. Due to challenging terrain, any direct approach by SWAT officers would have exposed them to significant risk from the armed suspect. The location had an uneven surface and a flight of stairs leading to the porch. Accordingly, the SWAT team requested deployment of the QUGV, and Deputy Chief Kowalski, approved the deployment.

The QUGV was successfully deployed to locate and assess the suspect's position. Equipped with a camera on its robotic arm, the QUGV cleared the area behind the door by maneuvering through a broken window. Once the immediate area was confirmed safe, SWAT officers advanced to the front entrance, enabling the introduction of additional robotic assets to conduct a methodical search of the residence. During the operation, SWAT officers located the suspect concealed in a bedroom. Chemical agents were deployed, prompting the suspect to flee to a closet in another part of the residence. The QUGV effectively tracked the suspect's movement and provided the arrest team with a real-time and high-definition video feed. The suspect was subsequently taken into custody without further incident or injury to officers or others involved.

Deployment No.	Date	Deployment Description	Division / Bureau
5	February 26, 2026	Armed barricaded suspect.	Mission Division/ Valley Bureau
6	February 28, 2026	Armed barricaded suspect.	Southwest Division/ South Bureau

The fifth deployment was on February 26, 2026, at approximately 2200 hours, when the SWAT team responded to an assault with deadly weapon (ADW) call at the 14900 block of Nordhoff Street, in North Hills. The suspect was reported to be barricaded inside an

underground portion of the Pacoima Wash channel. The suspect refused to comply with the first responding officers' commands to safely surrender. At approximately 2330 hours, the SWAT team requested the deployment of the QUGV; due to the rotund shape of the tunnel system, standing pools of water, various obstacles and debris that was lying in the path of the approach to the Suspect's location.

Deputy Chief David Kowalski approved the deployment of the QUGV to search for the suspect. The QUGV was used to enter the curved tunnel, which led to a makeshift illegal living area at the end of the tunnel. The tunnel had various objects and debris strewn about which created several obstacles for the QUGV. The QUGV was able to clear approximately eight feet of the suspect's doorway, when it encountered a pile of sandbags. The QUGV successfully made it over the sandbags, however it fell over in a subsequent pile of boulders. Due to the rotund shape of the tunnel, slippery ground, and large pile of rocks, the QUGV was not able to automatically pick itself up and remained in place until the suspect surrendered.

The sixth deployment was on February 28, 2026, at approximately 1700 hours, when the SWAT team responded to a felony domestic violence suspect call at 1638 West 35th Place, in Los Angeles. The suspect was reported to be barricaded inside a three-story structure and was believed to still be in possession of a firearm that was used in a recent robbery. The suspect refused to comply with first responding officers' commands to safely surrender. The area leading to the suspect's location had various obstacles and debris. At approximately 1900 hours, the SWAT team requested the deployment of the QUGV, and Deputy Chief Kowalski approved the deployment. The QUGV was deployed, but as it reached the driveway, The QUGV experienced a mechanical failure rendering it inoperable. The suspect was eventually taken into custody without incident.

Deployment No.	Date	Deployment Description	Division / Bureau
7	April 8, 2026	Armed barricaded suspect.	77th Street Division/ South Bureau
8	April 11, 2026	Armed barricaded suspect.	Harbor Division/ South Bureau

The seventh QUGV deployment was on April 08, 2026, at approximately 1615 hours, when the SWAT team was deployed at 2001 West 94th Street, in Los Angeles, for an armed barricaded suspect. The suspect was inside a single-family residence and was believed to still be in possession of two firearms. Despite numerous callouts and attempts at negotiations, the suspect refused to comply with responding officers' commands to safely surrender. At approximately 1615 hours, the SWAT team requested the deployment of the QUGV; due to the various obstacles and debris that lay in the path of approach to the suspect's area. Additionally, the adjoining properties had not been searched which caused concern.

Commander Laura Curtin, Serial No. 34325, CTSOB, approved the deployment of the QUGV, and it was deployed with other robotics, and a small Unmanned Aircraft System (sUASs), to search the location as well as adjoining yards. The suspect was absconded in an attic and refused to comply with the SWAT officers' commands. The use of chemical agents was utilized, and the suspect was taken into custody without incident.

The eighth QUGV deployment was on April 11, 2026, at approximately 1312 hours., when the SWAT team was deployed to a domestic violence call at 624 North Neptune Avenue, apartment No.8, in Wilmington. The suspect was a security guard and owned a handgun and reported to be barricaded inside his apartment. The suspect refused to comply with the first responding officers' commands to safely surrender. At approximately 1600 hours, the SWAT team requested the deployment of the QUGV to assist with locating the suspect.

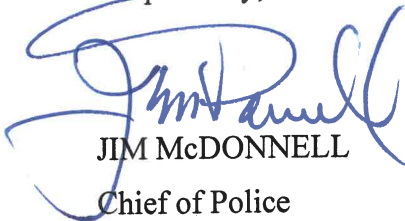
Deputy Chief Kowalski approved the deployment of the QUGV to search for the suspect. The QUGV cleared the stairwell leading to the second floor. However, a malfunction with the QUGV communication cable prevented the SWAT team from continuing to utilize the QUGV. Other technology equipment/tools were used to assist with taking the suspect into custody. The suspect was arrested shortly after without further incident.

CONCLUSION

The established protocols and procedures were adhered to in all QUGV deployments. As part of this report, an assessment was conducted of the tracking system utilized by Metropolitan Division for the approval, deployment, and documentation of each QUGV deployment. The system proved to be effective and Metropolitan Division will continue to assess the tracking system for efficiency.

Should you have any questions, please contact Deputy Chief David Kowalski, Commanding Officer, Counter-Terrorism and Special Operations Bureau, at (213) 486-8780.

Respectfully,



JIM McDONNELL
Chief of Police