

SAC FIRE LAWSUIT

Battalion chief is third to allege racism, Page 1C



JIMMY CARTER CHOOSES HOME HOSPICE CARE

The oldest living former president, 98, will forego more medical treatment to spend final days in Georgia, Page 8A



VOL. 311 NO. 50

\$4.00

SACBEE.COM



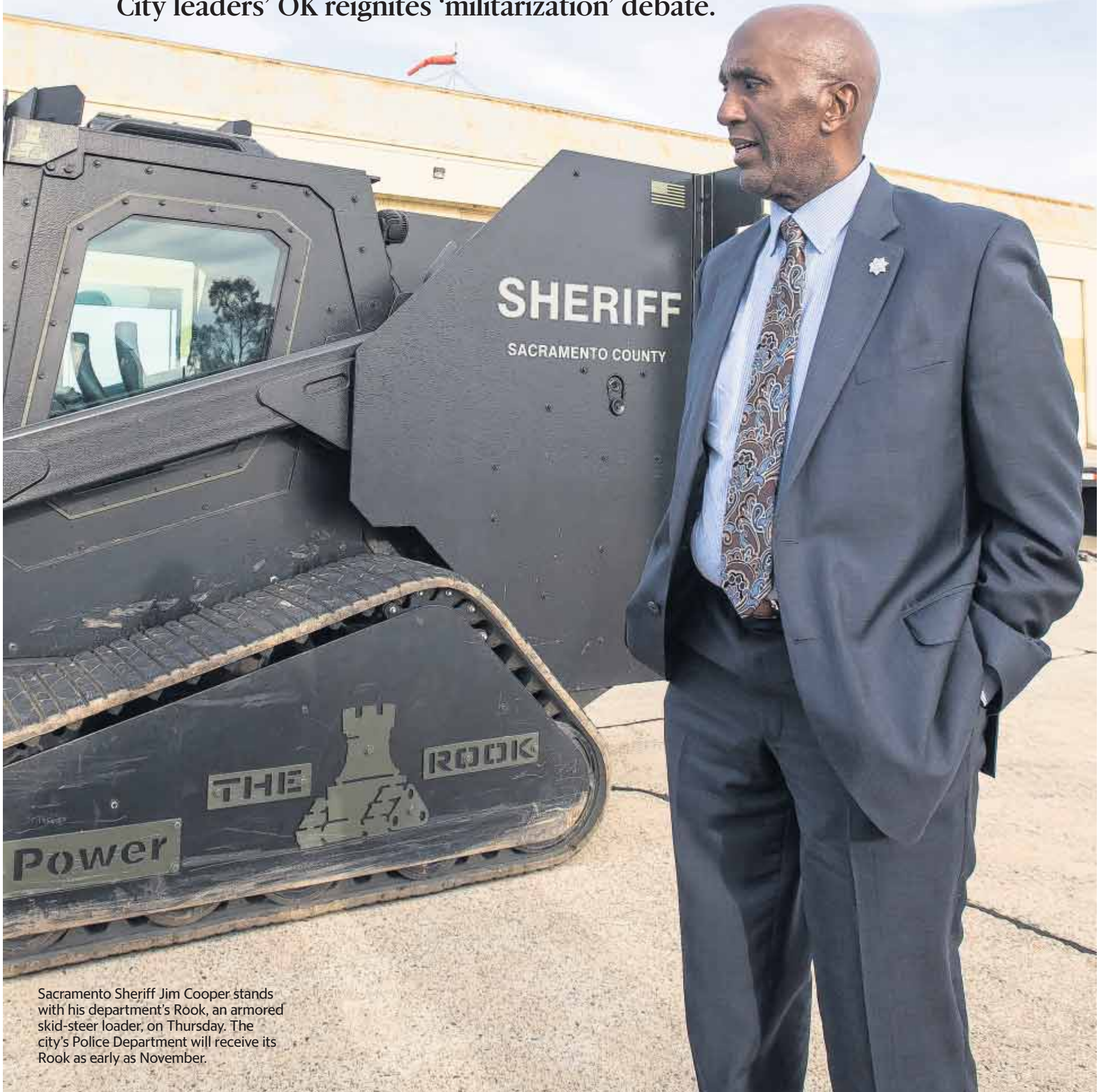
SUNDAY FEBRUARY 19, 2023



THE SACRAMENTO BEE

A matter of safety

Rook would protect Sacramento cops, police say. City leaders' OK reignites 'militarization' debate.



Sacramento Sheriff Jim Cooper stands with his department's Rook, an armored skid-steer loader, on Thursday. The city's Police Department will receive its Rook as early as November.

XAVIER MASCAREÑAS xmascarenas@sacbee.com



We're committed to providing the essential journalism you need. Find the content important to you inside. Subscribers can find an additional 50+ pages each day by going to sacbee.com/eedition/extraextra or by scanning the code to the left.

CUSTOMER SERVICE

800-284-3233

sacbee.com/customer-service



7 12499 170707 9



A CLEANER HOME IS A HEALTHIER HOME



FOR A CLEANER & HEALTHIER HOME™

1-800-STEEMER.
stanleysteemer.com

ANY CLEANING SERVICE

\$25 OFF

ORDERS \$165 OR MORE

Expires: 3/19/23
Promo Code: P25B3

AIR DUCT CLEANING

\$50 OFF

+ FREE INSPECTION

Expires: 3/19/23
Promo Code: AD5B3

CARPET • TILE & GROUT • HARDWOOD • UPHOLSTERY • AREA RUG • AIR DUCT

Minimum charges apply. Not valid in combination with other coupons or offers. Must present promo code at time of service. Valid at participating locations only. Residential only. Cannot be used for water emergency services. Combined living areas, L-shaped rooms and rooms over 300 sq. ft. are considered 2 areas. Baths, halls, large walk-in closets and area rugs are priced separately. Offer does not include protector and deodorizer. Offer valid for single furnace system only. Additional furnace units will be charged separately. Certain restrictions may apply. Call for details.

“

[THE ROOK'S] NOT ARMED. IT'S NOT A WEAPON. IT'S GOT NOTHING TO DO WITH MILITARIZATION. THE TERM 'MILITARIZATION' IS HIGHLY INFLAMMATORY AND DISINGENUOUS.

Ed Obayashi, a Plumas County sheriff's deputy and an expert in the use of force and law enforcement ethics training in California

“

WHEN THE POLICE ARE ARMED LIKE SOLDIERS, THEY TEND TO BEHAVE LIKE SOLDIERS, AND THE MILITARIZED RESPONSE THAT FOLLOWS IS OFTEN NOT IN THE BEST INTEREST OF COMMUNITY AND PUBLIC SAFETY.

Tom Nolan, a criminologist and former lieutenant with the Boston Police Department



XAVIER MASCAREÑAS xmascarenas@sacbee.com

Sacramento County Sheriff's Deputy Ken Becker, a member of the SWAT team, points Thursday to the impact point of a deflected bullet on the department's Rook. The armored vehicle is based on a Caterpillar skid-steer loader.

Sacramento police getting the Rook. Protesters call it a dangerous waste.

BY ARIANE LANGE AND ROSALIO AHUMADA
alange@sacbee.com
rahumada@sacbee.com

Law enforcement leaders evoked scenes of terror in their presentation to Sacramento's City Council: A man who shot his girlfriend in the face, potentially hiding in the trees. An armed suspect, firing at his neighbors. To defuse violent incidents, Deputy Chief Norm Leong told elected leaders that the Police Department needed a military-style armored vehicle known as a Rook.

During the same Jan. 31 meeting, Leong said that the agency borrowed the Sacramento County Sheriff's Office's Rook 13 times since 2019, and used it 10 times. On those two occasions he described, Leong acknowledged the danger was hypothetical — the suspects were elsewhere.

Police face genuine threats in the line of duty, as the city saw with Tara O'Sullivan, the officer killed by an alleged domestic violence perpetrator while trying to help the man's victim retrieve her belongings.

Leong told the City Council that the SWAT team has been shot at while using armored vehicles in three incidents since 2019. In those three incidents, more than 100 gunshots were fired at the specially-trained officers.

Critics of what they call police militarization heard these stories at the meeting and said the Rook represents the worst impuls-



XAVIER MASCAREÑAS xmascarenas@sacbee.com

A Sacramento resident identified in public comment as MVW confronts Sacramento City Councilman Sean Loloee, left, after Tuesday's meeting. MVW spoke against the Jan. 31 council vote to purchase the Rook earlier in the night. "Don't show your face in Natomas, girl," she said to newly elected Councilwoman Karina Talamantes. "Black and Brown boys are in Natomas, the boys you are now going to allow to be killed."



See it for yourself

Sheriff calls the Rook an 'invaluable tool' — get an inside tour of the armored vehicle. qr.getne.ws/DZ04Nr

SEE THE ROOK, 5A

FROM PAGE 4A

THE ROOK

es of law enforcement: That it was an overpriced extravagance and that, moreover, it violated a state law that demands police only acquire military equipment that is essential.

The January vote renewed attention to the extensive inventory of military equipment maintained by local law enforcement agencies and raised questions about the purpose it serves. The decision and the uproar that followed echoed a lawsuit filed over the police use of rubber bullets, tear gas, flash-bang grenades and pepper balls to disperse Sacramento protesters who gathered after Minneapolis officers killed an unarmed Black man, George Floyd, in 2020.

The debate also took place less than a week after news broke that second-degree murder charges had been filed against five Memphis Police Department officers involved in the Jan. 7 deadly beating of Tyre Nichols, a Black man who grew up in Sacramento. Against the backdrop of renewed national scrutiny of police behavior, the Rook became a symbol of who the police are — and how they interact with the public.

In the end, the council voted 7-2 to allow the police department to acquire its own Rook, using a \$440,000 grant from the federal government and setting off a series of frustrated protests.

Council members Katie Valenzuela and Mai Vang voted no. Sacramento Mayor Darrell Steinberg and council members Lisa Kaplan, Sean Loloee, Karina Talamantes, Caity Maple, Eric Guerra and Rick Jennings voted to approve the armored vehicle.

Valenzuela suggested that the new vehicle did not comply with the state law that stipulates police can only have a piece of military equipment when there is no reasonable alternative. Residents who spoke at the meeting said the department clearly had reasonable access to the county's Rook.

After the vote, Sacramento Community Police Review Commission Vice Chair Keyan Bliss said, "I fail to see how this is anything more than a luxury item."

POLICE, RESIDENTS DEBATE NECESSITY

In September, the Sacramento County Board of Supervisors faced similar criticism when it approved the sheriff's military equipment policy after then-Undersheriff Jim Barnes suggested that deputies would be forced to kill people if the policy were not approved that day. Without an authorized policy, he said, deputies couldn't use any of their military equipment, including the Rook and weapons such as beanbag shotguns or tear gas grenades.

"If this doesn't pass, and our officers may not have a less-lethal option," Barnes said. "To take it back, and only provide our officers with a lethal option in the interim would set us back."



XAVIER MASCAREÑAS xmascarenas@sacbee.com

Community activist Mackenzie Wilson, center, is embraced by labor organizer Fatima Garcia after both spoke during public comment Tuesday, calling for police reform and criticizing the City Council for homeless sweeps. "I'm exhausted from having to fight you always. In the last few weeks you militarized police, tried to intimidate a vigil full of people they traumatized or almost killed in 2020, and then bought a tank on the consent calendar," Wilson said.



XAVIER MASCAREÑAS xmascarenas@sacbee.com

Newly elected Sacramento City Councilwoman Caity Maple, center, listens to public comment Tuesday during a Sacramento City Council meeting where activists criticized the recent vote to purchase a Rook for the police department. Maple, who represents Oak Park, and new Councilwoman Karina Talamantes, who represents South Natomas, have received a lot of criticism for supporting the purchase.

POLICE CHIEF KATHY LESTER SAID THAT THE PURCHASE OF THE ROOK WAS FUNDED BY A FEDERAL URBAN AREA SECURITY INITIATIVE GRANT, NOT CITY FUNDS. THE CITY MUST STILL PAY FOR THE MAINTENANCE COST OF \$8,000 A YEAR DURING THE VEHICLE'S 25-YEAR EXPECTED LIFESPAN.

The green light from both governments continues a long pattern in the county: In keeping with national trends since the attacks of 9/11 more than 20 years ago, police departments have accumulated more military tools.

And the outcry this winter comes after years of complaints about police use of military equipment in the Sacramento region.

In August 2014, the public learned that the Davis Police Department had acquired a \$689,000 mine-resistant armored vehicle while the Sacramento police acquired two helicopters. The equipment was obtained through a federal program — the 1033 Program — that has long dispensed surplus military equipment to local law enforcement agencies.

The protests in 2014 also followed intense national news coverage of police violence.

The acquisitions were revealed just weeks after heavily armored police units violently clashed with

protesters in Ferguson, Missouri, where a police officer shot and killed an unarmed Black teenager, Michael Brown. That summer, police in helmets and body armor drove armored personnel carriers through Midwestern streets; they fired tear gas and rubber bullets.

The 1033 federal surplus program was not used to acquire the Rook, which was purchased for \$439,894 from a Florida-based company called Ring Power.

Police Chief Kathy Lester said at the Jan. 31 meeting that the purchase of the Rook was funded by a federal Urban Area Security Initiative grant, not city funds. The grant covers only the vehicle's cost, leaving the city to pay for the maintenance cost of \$8,000 a year during the vehicle's 25-year expected lifespan. Although the department had previously received City Council approval to apply for the grant specifically to fund a Rook, Sacramento agencies could apply for funding for other purposes, including disaster preparedness and response.

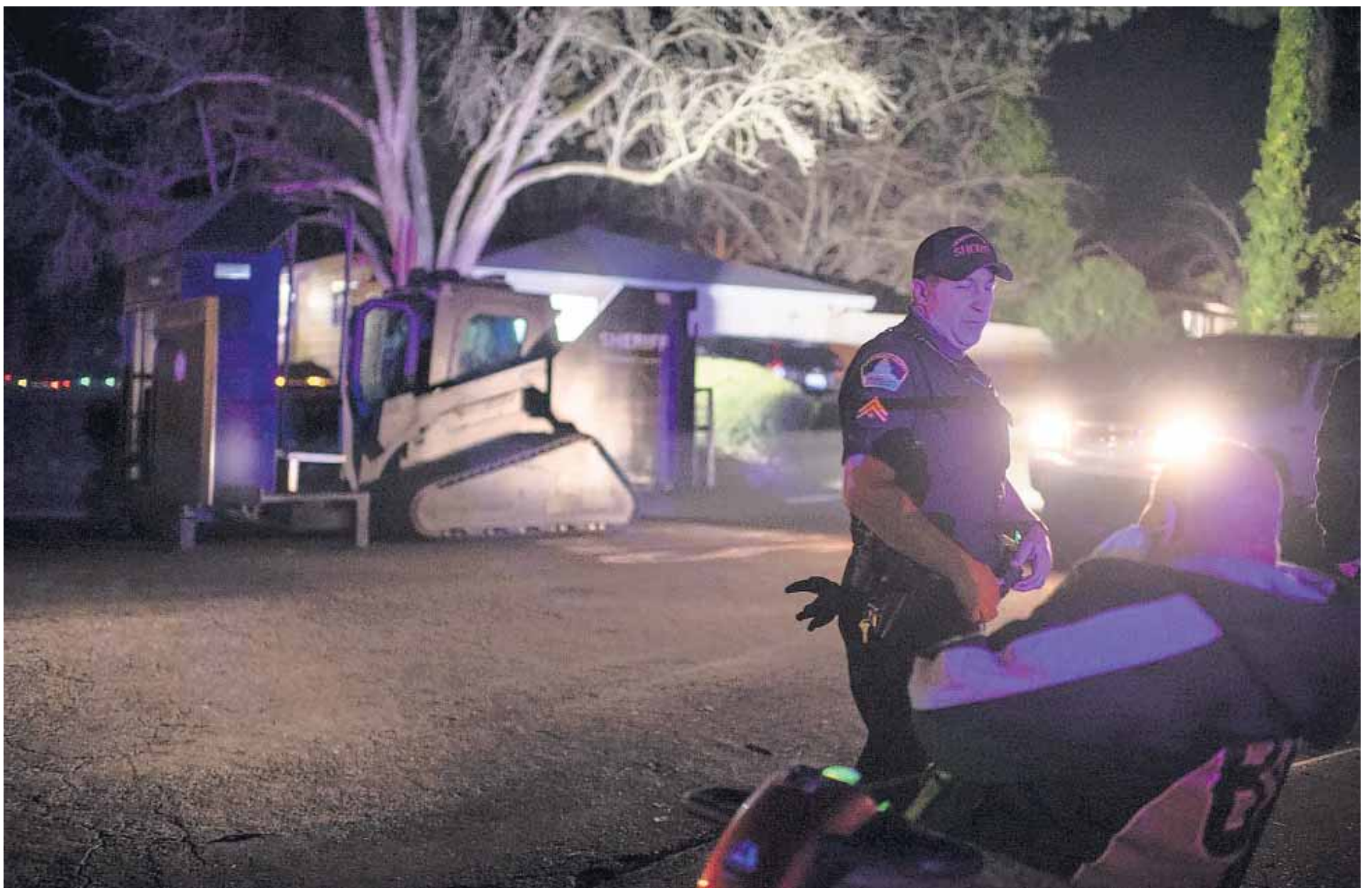
At the City Council meeting, Lester said officers expected to use the new vehicle 20 times a year — a six-fold increase from their average current annual usage of the borrowed Rook.

The Sheriff's Office has used its Rook an average of about 10 to 12 times each year, usually about once a month since it was purchased in February 2019. Newly elected Sheriff Jim Cooper calls the Rook an "invaluable tool" that's intended to be a rescue vehicle to save lives.

"One time is well worth the cost, because you never know," Cooper said. "For the folks that were evacuated or people whose lives it potentially saves, they're forever thankful."

Lester said that the vehicle has "armored-plating for officer protection," but it will not be used "in any of the traditional senses of

SEE THE ROOK, 6A



XAVIER MASCAREÑAS Sacramento Bee file

Sacramento County Sheriff's Deputy Matt Shropshire talks with onlookers after unloading the department's Rook after an officer shooting in Carmichael in 2021. Sheriff's officials said one suspect was fatally shot and another taken into custody. The sheriff's deputy who was shot was hospitalized.



XAVIER MASCAREÑAS xmascarenas@sacbee.com

Sacramento County Sheriff Jim Cooper walks past the department's Rook - configured with an hydraulic breaching ram attachment on the front - on Thursday before SWAT team members demonstrated the vehicle at their facility in Sacramento County.

FROM PAGE 5A

THE ROOK

military use." The Rook allows officers the mobility to gain safe positions of advantage, she said, and it provides opportunities for them to resolve dangerous situations using de-escalation techniques and potentially less force "when dealing with really violent people," generally barricaded, armed suspects.

'IT'S NOT A WEAPON'

Ed Obayashi, a Plumas County sheriff's deputy and an expert in the use of force and law enforcement ethics training in California, told The Sacramento Bee that the Rook is a practical and defensive vehicle that keeps officers safe in high-risk situations. He said criticism of the acquisition is "misguided" and a reaction "to the optics" surrounding the City Council's decision.

"It's not armed. It's not a weapon," Obayashi said about the Rook. "It's got nothing to do with militarization. The term 'militarization' is highly inflammatory and disingenuous."

He said the vehicle is not much different than a Bobcat compact loader with armored plating welded to the front. He added that law enforcement agencies have the responsibility to secure the best technology and equipment available to effectively protect the public. Officers are still bound by the laws and policies that govern the use of force, he said, no matter the equipment employed.

"I've said this before: We're not looking for better ways to kill," Obayashi said. "We're looking for ways not to kill."

That said, other experts told The Bee that evidence shows a more armed police force endangers the public.

"Generally, the research supports the contention that a militarized police response is oftentimes inimical with community-based policing practices," said Tom Nolan, a criminologist and former lieutenant with the Boston Police Department. "When the police are armed like soldiers, they tend to behave like soldiers, and the militarized response that follows is often not in the best interest of community and public safety. And even officer safety."

Studies have found that more military equipment is correlated with more lethal force by police officers, but that research appears to have been left out of the discussion in multiple city meetings about the Rook.

Up to the vote, police never provided data or research to support the purchase, said Bliss, who joined the police review commission in 2021 and became vice chair in 2022. "When (the police) presented this information to City Council, in fact, they were simply saying — the layman interpretation that I heard from it was — 'We need this. Trust us that we need this equipment.'"



DANIEL KIM Sacramento Bee file

Sacramento police ride on a BearCat armored personnel carrier at a shooting scene on La Riviera Drive in 2019. The incident ended with no one hurt and the surrender of the shooter.

A police department spokesman said last week that they were not aware of any empirical research or studies about the use of the Rook or military equipment by local law enforcement.

"We are not aware of any such studies existing," Sgt. Zach Eaton said. "However, real-world safe outcomes in dangerous situations provided our department with ample evidence of the Rook's capabilities of achieving safe outcomes in dangerous situations."

When asked about what empirical analyses he saw, Rick Jennings, who represents District 7 on the City Council and voted for the Rook, told The Bee through his chief of staff that briefings "were focused on the ability of the equipment to protect the public and our officers."

Nolan, the criminologist, said police often ask for military equipment without presenting a rigorous, evidence-based justification. That, he said, runs counter to best practices.

"Part of criminal justice reform generally — and police reform in particular — is that we move to an area where we have research-based practices and policies," Nolan said. "So if we want to implement a policy, or if we want to have a practice of this type of armament, we should seek out research that will affirm the need for this kind of equipment. And police departments historically have not done this, and they continue to not do this."

Researchers have cross-referenced data on police killings of civilians and transfers of military equipment. Two notable studies, one published in the journal *Research & Politics* in 2017 and the other in *Political Research Quarterly* in 2018, found that the more military equipment a police department had, the more civilian deaths occurred at the hands of officers.

TWO NOTABLE STUDIES, ONE PUBLISHED IN THE JOURNAL RESEARCH & POLITICS IN 2017 AND THE OTHER IN POLITICAL RESEARCH QUARTERLY IN 2018, FOUND THAT THE MORE MILITARY EQUIPMENT A POLICE DEPARTMENT HAD, THE MORE CIVILIAN DEATHS OCCURRED AT THE HANDS OF OFFICERS.

Critics of the Rook also pointed out it would likely be deployed disproportionately in certain marginalized neighborhoods.

Tobias Smith, a UC Davis researcher who studies policing and militarization, said, "There is a very strong — and bold and underline that phrase, 'very strong' — correlation between the use of militarized equipment by police forces and communities that are underrepresented, non-white, under-served and over-policed."

There is also specific evidence that Black people face more violence at the hands of police in the capital.

A study by the Center for Policing Equity found that between 2014 and 2019, Sacramento police used force against Black people 4½ times as often as they used force against whites. Although only 13% of the city's population is Black,

43% of people subjected to force by police were Black.

Police leaders acknowledged the Rook was ultimately not deployed or necessary five of the 13 times it was borrowed from the Sheriff's Office.

A department spokesman told The Bee that three times in 2021, the situation was resolved before the Rook made it on scene: On April 19, an armed suspect surrendered near Cal Expo. Two and a half months later, on July 7, officers used a type of tear gas against an active shooter in Fruitridge Manor, who subsequently surrendered. Then, on Nov. 6 off of Garden Highway by Gateway Center, a home invasion suspect jumped out a window and was apprehended by police before the Rook arrived.

The police also borrowed the sheriff's Rook twice when a suspect was not present.

Police did, however, clearly describe two times when another vehicle would not have had the same capabilities.

During the June 2019 shootout that killed O'Sullivan, the Rook removed cars and a tree so that other vehicles could move closer to the barricaded suspect; notably, a larger, less nimble vehicle became stuck in the ground.

In April 2022, police used the vehicle to remove a front door and force police entry during a domestic violence hostage situation in a home with a front yard that did not have enough room for a larger armored vehicle to breach the door. That domestic violence suspect shot at the Rook.

"The Rook has become a standard tool for many police departments," Lester added during the January presentation. When asked by Jennings what happened when the department did not receive the Rook on time, she said, "Without it

SEE THE ROOK, 7A

Military equipment held by Sacramento police, county sheriff

The City Council voted to approve the Sacramento Police Department's acquisition of a military-style armored vehicle, the Rook, and fueled public frustration over what critics call police militarization. Because of a state law, Assembly Bill 481, local law enforcement agencies must post their inventory of military weapons, ammunition, vehicles and tools. According to those records, the following pieces of equipment make up some of the arsenal in the capital region.

As of April 30, 2022, the Sacramento Police Dept. had:

- 79** unmanned aircraft systems or drones
- 5** robots
- 2** armored vehicles known as Bearcats
- 1** mobile incident command center
- 1** crisis negotiation team vehicle
- 4** long-range acoustic devices to clearly broadcast commands from a distance or to disperse crowds through loud high-frequency noises that can cause hearing loss
- 102** launchers that fire so-called less lethal rounds such as sponge rounds
- 503** of those rounds
- 619** shotguns that fire beanbag rounds
- 2,525** beanbag rounds
- 2** launching cups that attach to the beanbag shotgun so that those shotguns can be used to launch chemical agents or smoke
- 148** flash-bangs also known as stun grenades
- 2** AR-10 rifles for long-range shooting
- 2** .308 caliber precision rifles
- 20** short-barreled rifles that are optimized for use inside buildings
- 322** lightweight semiautomatic rifles
- 2** somewhat different short-barreled rifles that are optimized for use inside buildings, ammunition for these firearms
- 50** canisters that break into three tear gas-spraying parts 20 feet apart
- 75** tear gas grenades for use outdoors that spray for 20 to 40 seconds
- 20** tear gas grenades optimized for use indoors
- 28** more tear gas grenades for use inside buildings
- 18** pepper spray grenades
- 100** pyrotechnic smoke grenades
- 11** blue smoke grenades
- 82** pepper spray grenades designed for use in outdoor crowds
- 26** pepper spray canisters that break into three pieces
- 16** pepper spray vapor grenades
- 28** launchable pepper spray grenades
- 28** pepper spray canisters that can be hand-held foggers
- 5** streamers that deliver 14 bursts of pepper spray
- 28** foggers that deliver 14 bursts of pepper spray,
- 10** canisters that deliver 26 bursts of pepper spray
- 1,000** feet of detonating cord

- 90** blasting caps used to set off larger explosive devices, five breaching shotguns and ammunition
- 61** pepperball launchers
- 3,000** 2% pepperballs
- 3,000** 5% pepperballs
- 1,950** pepperballs designed for "area saturation"

As of Sept. 19, the Sacramento County Sheriff's Office had:

- 48** remotely-operated drones or robots
- 2** armored cars
- 3** military-style trucks including two Bearcats
- 1** five-ton dump truck for emergency aid during flooding
- 1** Youth Services Unit Humvee for community outreach events that is outfitted with an Xbox
- 1** Humvee used to bring sheriff's department dogs to community events
- 1** Rook
- 1** tactical command vehicle
- 1** tactical communications vehicle
- 750** feet of detonating cord
- 50** blasting caps used to set off larger explosive devices
- 8** rifles designed to shoot targets at a distance of up to 550 yards

- 16** rifles designated for use protecting Folsom Dam
- 1** rifle for use against an armored target up to 1,000 yards away
- 26** semiautomatic specialized rifles
- 18** AR-15-style rifles
- 480** flash-bangs also known as stun grenades
- 250** projectiles which a tear gas agent designed to promote "pain compliance"
- 225** smoke grenades which contain a tear gas agent
- 245** grenades which send out a larger amount of tear gas agent
- 175** smoke grenades that contain a tear gas agent
- 150** pepper spray grenades
- 150** tear gas grenades
- 130** additional combination tear gas and pepper spray grenades
- 95** powder grenades with a tear gas agent
- 80** powder pepper spray grenades
- 25** launchable rubber grenades that contain a tear gas agent
- 58** launchable grenades that contain a tear gas agent
- 58** barricade-penetrating teargas grenades

- 50** devices that mist out 14 short bursts of pepper spray through a crowd
- 50** devices that stream out 14 short bursts of pepper spray through a crowd
- 75** "sting-ball" grenades that distribute stinging pellets
- 70** "sting-ball" grenades that also distribute a tear gas agent,
- 50** chemical irritant "tear-ball" grenades
- 65** smoke grenades that break into three separate pieces
- 50** white smoke grenades
- 8** pepper ball launchers to fire pepper-ball projectiles
- 12,000** pepper-ball projectiles
- 4** long-range acoustic devices to clearly broadcast commands at a range of 600 meters or to disperse crowds through loud high-frequency noises that can cause hearing loss
- 2** long-range acoustic devices mounted on Folsom Dam
- 587** beanbag shotguns
- 50,000** beanbag rounds
- 45** launchers that can fire a single "sponge round"
- 1** launcher that can fire multiple "sponge rounds"
- 7,500** sponge rounds

FROM PAGE 6A

THE ROOK

being there, we just have to find a workaround."

'THE PEOPLE ARE FED UP'

In the Jan. 31 meeting, residents and community activists spoke against the Rook purchase, calling the armored vehicle an "earth-moving, wall-breaking sniper tank" that would continue to erode the public's trust in the police department and further traumatize disadvantaged neighborhoods.

The uproar over the Rook purchase doesn't seem to have waned in the weeks since. The two following meetings have ended with about a dozen attendees confronting council

members.

"From what I've seen, these are used outside of people's homes," Cesar Aguirre told the City Council at its Feb. 7 meeting. "These are armored military vehicles; they're not cheap, right? And they're used to enact violent, aggressive actions on people in our community."

Vice Mayor Eric Guerra adjourned the Feb. 7 meeting early after several audience members shouted from their seats, condemning the Rook purchase. Some of them held up a Black Lives Matter flag as Guerra struggled to maintain control of the meeting.

Opponents of the Rook purchase have presented a list of demands to the City Council that include a moratorium on all military equipment purchases, City Council approval of all Sacramento Community Police

Review Commission recommendations on military equipment use, a data transparency ordinance and an end to Sacramento police pretextual traffic stops, when police use a petty infraction as a means to initiate a more serious investigation, which could be based on nothing more than a hunch.

"We are angry that the city continues to fund the militarization of police and the criminalization of people in poverty, primarily Black and brown bodies," Fatima Garcia said during the Feb. 14 council meeting. "The people are fed up with law enforcement's practice to resort in deadly force without accountability."

FIRST CONTROVERSIAL ISSUE SINCE NOVEMBER ELECTION

The purchase of the Rook was the first controversial issue since the

November election created a liberal bloc of four members on the nine-member City Council. In two meetings since the vote, public vitriol over the Rook purchase has been directed at newly elected council members Maple and, later, Talamantes.

Maple, a Sacramento activist who ran last year to represent Oak Park, Hollywood Park and Parkway, said during her campaign that she supported the demilitarization of law enforcement. One constituent from her district said at the most recent council meeting that Maple "betrayed" the people of color who elected her.

Talamantes, who was elected in November to represent South Natomas, was told by one irate communi-

SEE THE ROOK, 8A

REVERSE MORTGAGES - LEARN THE FACTS

Join Tom Pinocci for a **free** informative lunch event:

Date: Wednesday, March 15th
Time: 11:30 am
Location: The Old Spaghetti Factory
 12401 Folsom Blvd.
 Rancho Cordova, CA 95742

Limited Seating! Please RSVP:
 Call (916) 761 - 6100 or visit
www.ReverseMortgageTom.com



Tom Pinocci
 NMLS: 248305
 Reverse Mortgage Specialist
 Phone (916) 761-6100
 tpinocci@mutualmortgage.com
 100 Howe Ave. Suite 120
 Sacramento, CA 95825

"I am local and have been in the Reverse Mortgage business for over 17 years, and like to do business the old-fashioned way, face-to-face, around the kitchen table."

Protect Your Kingdom



Borrower must occupy home as primary residence and remain current on property taxes, homeowner's insurance, the costs of home maintenance, and any HOA fees Mutual of Omaha Mortgage, Inc. dba Mutual of Omaha Reverse Mortgage, NMLS ID 1025894, 3131 Camino Del Rio N 1100, San Diego, CA 92108. Subject to Credit Approval. These materials are not from HUD or FHA and the document was not approved by HUD, FHA or any Government Agency. For licensing information, go to: www.nmlsconsumeraccess.org Licensed by the Department of Financial Protection & Innovation under the California Residential Mortgage Lending Act, License 4131356; Loans made or arranged pursuant to a California Finance Lender Law license, 60DB09310; Equal Housing Lender

BY ERNIE SUGGS AND GREG BLUESTEIN
Atlanta Journal-Constitution

ATLANTA

Former President Jimmy Carter, the Georgia native who is the longest living president in U.S. history, has decided against any further medical treatment and has entered home hospice care, the Carter Center said Saturday.

“After a series of short hospital stays, former U.S. President Jimmy Carter decided to spend his remaining time at home with his family and receive hospice care instead of additional medical intervention,” the Atlanta-based center said.

“He has the full support of his family and his medical team. The Carter family asks for privacy during this time and is grateful for the concern shown by his many admirers.”

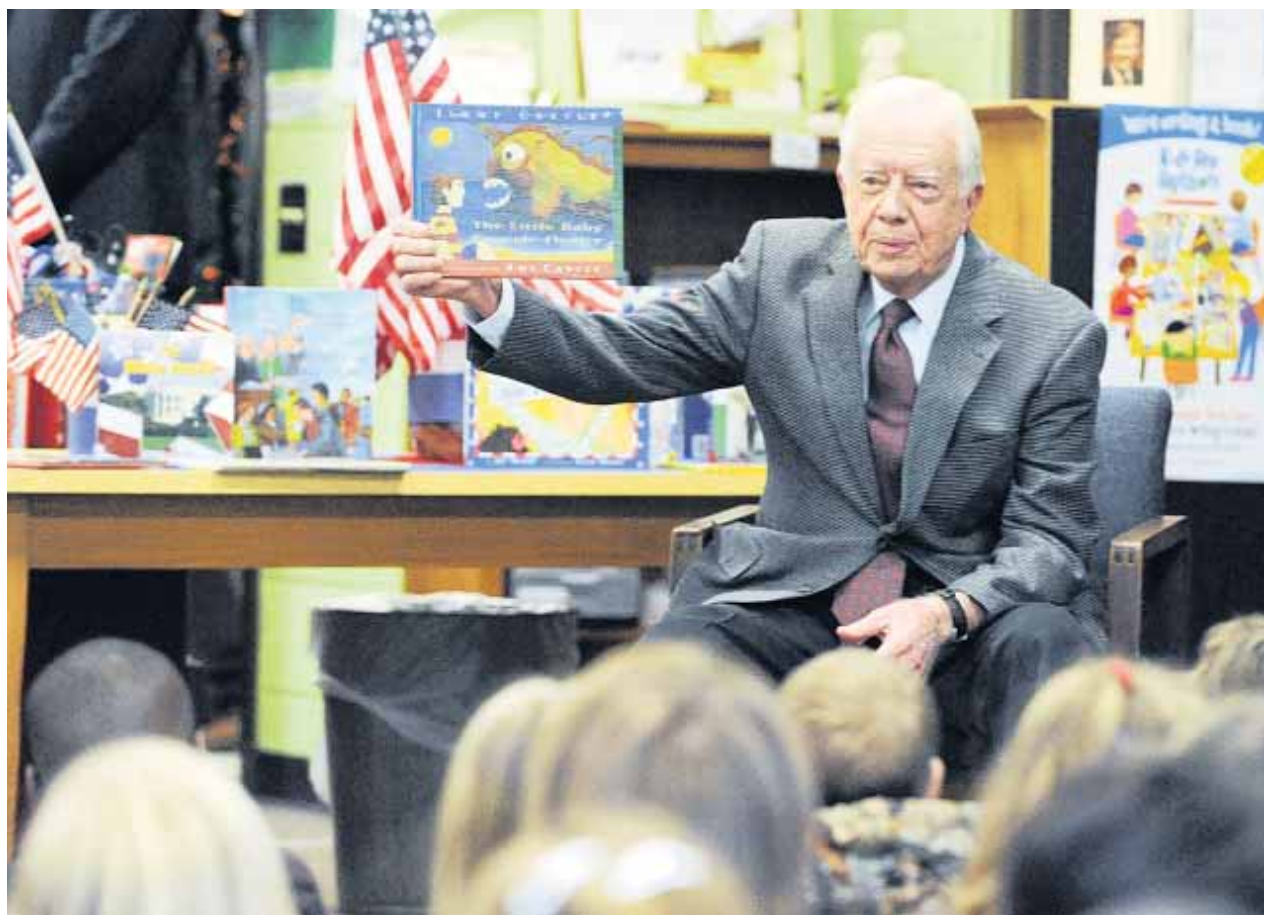
The Carter Center didn’t elaborate on the former president’s condition, but the 98-year-old has endured a host of illnesses as he’s outlived two presidents who succeeded him along with his own vice president.

In 2015, Carter survived a melanoma diagnosis that later spread to his brain. The discovery followed the removal of a lesion on his liver that took about 10% of the organ. The following year, Carter announced that he needed no further treatment, as an experimental drug had eliminated any sign of cancer. He also suffered several falls in 2019, including one requiring 14 stitches, and other health scares that have required hospitalization.

Carter celebrated his most recent birthday in October with family and friends in Plains, the tiny town where he and his wife, Rosalynn, were born in the years between World War I and the Great Depression.

He and his wife, Rosalynn, have scaled back their public schedules in recent years, and they spent much of the coronavirus pandemic mostly at their home in the southwest Georgia town of Plains, where they both grew up. The town, with a population of about 800 people, is roughly 130 miles south of Atlanta.

He didn’t attend President Joe Biden’s inauguration in 2021, though Biden visited Plains a few months later to rekindle their long friendship. Biden was a first-term U.S.



JASON VORHEES The (Macon, Ga.) Telegraph

Former President Jimmy Carter holds up his book “The Little Baby Snoogle-Fleejer” to third-grade students at a Macon, Georgia, school in 2017. On Saturday, the Carter Center said the 98-year-old would enter hospice care.

Former President Carter enters home hospice care in Georgia

senator from Delaware in 1976 when he became one of the first elected officials outside Georgia to pick Carter in the White House race.

The 98-year-old became the longest-living American president in March 2019, when he surpassed former President George H.W. Bush, who died the previous November. He served as the 39th U.S. president from 1977 to 1981, and he and his wife Rosalynn Carter have been married for 76 years.

Over the weekend, several of Carter’s family members traveled to Plains to visit with the former president.

“I saw both of my grandparents yesterday,” said Jason Carter, the former president’s grandson. “They are at peace and — as always — their home is full of love. Thank you all for your kind words.”

Carter was born Oct. 1, 1924, to a prominent family in rural south Georgia. He went on to the U.S. Naval Academy during World War II and pursued a career as a Cold War Naval officer before returning to Plains, Georgia, with Rosalynn and their young family to take over the family peanut business

after Earl Carter’s death in the 1950s.

The former Georgia governor, a moderate Democrat, stunned the political world in 1976 by winning the party’s nomination against a host of better-known contenders, and then ousted incumbent Republican President Gerald Ford on a platform of reforming government and fostering more transparency after Richard Nixon’s resignation.

He began his White House bid as an underdog with outspoken Baptist mores and technocratic plans reflecting his education as an engineer. He connected with many Americans because of his promise not to deceive the American people after Nixon’s disgrace and U.S. defeat in southeast Asia.

“If I ever lie to you, if I ever make a misleading statement, don’t vote for me. I would not deserve to be your president,” Carter said often as he campaigned.

Carter served a single, tumultuous term and was defeated by Republican Ronald Reagan in 1980, a landslide loss that ultimately paved the way for his decades of global advocacy for democracy, public health and human

rights via the Carter Center.

Carter, who came of age politically during the civil rights movement, was the last Democratic presidential nominee to sweep the Deep South, before the region shifted quickly to Reagan and the Republicans in subsequent elections.

He governed amid Cold War pressures, turbulent oil markets and social upheaval over racism, women’s rights and America’s global role.

Carter’s foreign policy wins included brokering Mideast peace by keeping Egyptian President Anwar Sadat and Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin at the bargaining table for 13 days in 1978. That Camp David experience inspired the post-presidential center where Carter would establish so much of his legacy. At home, Carter partially deregulated the airline, railroad and trucking industries and established the departments of Education and Energy, and the Federal Emergency Management Agency. He designated millions of acres in Alaska as national parks or wildlife refuges. He appointed a then-record number of women and

non-whites to federal posts. He never had a Supreme Court nomination, but he elevated civil rights attorney Ruth Bader Ginsburg to the nation’s second-highest court, positioning her for a promotion in 1993.

Carter also built on Nixon’s opening with China, and though he tolerated autocrats in Asia, pushed Latin America from dictatorships to democracy.

But he governed during a tumultuous four years rocked by Cold War standoffs with the Soviet Union and its allies, gas supply crunches and double-digit inflation. His handling of the 444-day hostage crisis in Iran, and the eight Americans who died in the failed rescues in April 1980, helped doom his reelection chances.

Following his bitter 1980 defeat at the hands of Ronald Reagan — or his “involuntary retirement,” as he calls it, becoming the first full one-term president since Hoover to lose reelection — Carter turned himself into something else.

In 1982, he started the Carter Center in Atlanta to advance human rights and promote democracy.

The center mediates conflicts and monitors electoral processes in support of free and fair elections.

For years after his loss, Carter largely receded from electoral politics. Democrats were hesitant to embrace him. Republicans made him a punchline, caricaturing him as a hapless liberal. In reality, Carter governed more as a technocrat, more progressive on race and gender equality than he had campaigned but a budget hawk who often angered more liberal Democrats, including Ted Kennedy, the Massachusetts senator who waged a damaging primary battle against the sitting president in 1980.

Carter said after leaving office that he had underestimated the importance of dealing with Washington power brokers, including the media and lobbying forces anchored in the nation’s capital. But he insisted his overall approach was sound and that he achieved his primary objectives — to “protect our nation’s security and interests peacefully” and “enhance human rights here and abroad” — even if he fell spectacularly short of a second term.

The Carter Center last year marked 40 years of promoting its human rights agenda.

The Center has been a pioneer of election observation, monitoring at least 113 elections in Africa, Latin America, and Asia since 1989. In perhaps its most widely hailed public health effort, the organization recently announced that only 14 human cases of Guinea worm disease were reported in all of 2021, the result of years of public health campaigns to improve access to safe drinking water in Africa.

Carter traveled the world for elections and worked with the Carter Center to eradicate diseases. His hard work during post-presidential life was recognized in 2002, when he was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize.

“As we’ve grown older,” Carter wrote of himself and Rosalynn, “the results have been surprisingly good.”

And years later, upon his cancer diagnosis as a nonagenarian, he expressed satisfaction with his long life.

“I’m perfectly at ease with whatever comes,” he said in 2015. “I’ve had an exciting, adventurous and gratifying existence.”

The Associated Press contributed to this story.

FROM PAGE 7A

THE ROOK

ty activist not to go to Natomas because that’s where “Black and brown boys” are the ones she’s “allowed to be killed.”

Maple and Talamantes did not respond to these accusations.

In a thread posted Feb. 1 on Maple’s Twitter account, the councilwoman said she voted to approve the Rook acquisition because she believes the armored vehicle “will help both the community and law enforcement stay safe.” Maple apologized for not doing better outreach to the community leading up to the council’s vote.

In an op-ed article published Feb. 8 in The Bee, Maple wrote that the Police Department did not buy a tank, contrary to what some have called the armored vehicle. She wrote that the Rook is a tractor with a shield and a platform that can be raised to allow entry into higher levels of buildings.

“I wish this violence didn’t happen at all and I firmly believe we need to invest in mental health care and interventions to prevent it from occurring in the first place,” Maple wrote. “But while we still live in a world where this violence does occur, we must prepare for it.”

Maple hasn’t spoken publicly

about the controversy since; she did not respond to a request for an interview for this story.

ANTICIPATED USES OF ARMORED VEHICLE

The police anticipate they will use the Rook to serve “high-risk search warrants” and to address “hostage situations, barricaded persons and other dangerous circumstances,” according to a city staff report. It’s identified as a “rescue vehicle” with a platform that can lift officers to a building’s second story.

The vehicle has a “grapple claw” that can lift 4,500 pounds, to remove obstacles such as fortified doors or burglar bars. The Rook can move or immobilize a vehicle and other large obstructions.

Lester has said the Rook allows officers to get into tight spaces. It’s smaller than the two armored Bearcat SWAT trucks the department already owns.

As part of the City Council’s approval of the purchase, the Police Department was told to work with Sacramento Community Police Review Commission members to define limitations on usage of the Rook and provide reports of its usage to the City Council and the residents in whichever area it’s used.

Eaton, the police spokesman, said the Rook will be operated by the department’s SWAT team.

In response to public concerns,

Eaton said the department has begun sending notifications to residents “within a predefined radius” during armored vehicle deployments.

“The notifications will advise residents which equipment is being used as well as a brief explanation of why the equipment is being used,” the police spokesman said. “Additionally, our armored vehicles are frequently brought to community events to educate the public on their capabilities and use.”

STATE LAW GOVERNS POLICE MILITARY EQUIPMENT

Assembly Bill 481, approved in 2021, requires law enforcement agencies to seek community feedback on the acquisition, funding and use of military equipment. It is aimed at giving the public a voice in the acquisition and use of military-grade material that could have a negative effect on communities, according to the legislation.

Sacramento police’s military equipment use report — posted on the department’s website — lists its inventory of equipment that falls under AB481.

Eaton noted that equipment such as pepper-ball and beanbag shotguns, which are considered military equipment under state law, were implemented by law enforcement in response to the public’s request for equipping officers with additional

less lethal options during dangerous situations.

“The use of such equipment has prevented officers from resorting to lethal force during dangerous situations,” Eaton said in an email to The Bee, “and has ultimately saved lives many times.”

In local government meetings, representatives from both the Police Department and the Sheriff’s Office have emphasized that military equipment is not used in every incident, and said that many types of equipment are used to de-escalate violence. As Barnes said in September, much of their equipment is classified as non-lethal or “less lethal.”

Bliss saw it differently: “The deployment of military equipment in any situation,” he said, “is an automatic escalation.”

City police leaders vowed to continue documenting the use of such tools in the hope of persuading the public that purchases such as the Rook won’t be platforms for weaponry but are instead meant to protect officers. Opponents, meanwhile, vowed to continue protesting this new vehicle at City Council — the next meeting is Tuesday evening.

The Rook itself is expected to be delivered to the city in November.

Rosalio Ahumada: 916-326-5549, @SacBeeNightCops