

# Going to war in the courtroom

Jason Morische's military experience sharpens his cross-examination skills.

BY BILL ROGERS

**I**'ve fired pistols, assault rifles, and light machine guns," says Jason Morische, a Toronto criminal lawyer. "I've also fired general purpose machine guns, heavy machine guns, and anti-tank rockets of various kinds. And I've thrown grenades."

It's not every day you run into a lawyer who can say this. In Morische's case, there's a perfectly reasonable explanation: in addition to being a lawyer, he's a military man.

Holding the rank of captain in the Canadian Forces Reserve, Morische trains soldiers to go overseas to theatres of war, such as Afghanistan. Firing heavy weapons goes with the territory. "You mustn't be afraid of these weapons," he notes, "but you have to respect them. You have to be comfortable putting a grenade into a pouch on your vest. These are the tools of the trade."

Morsche, 34, devotes at least two nights a week, plus one weekend a month, to the army, and his military expertise has actually helped advance his legal career. As a fourth-year associate at Adler Bytensky Prutschi, he has been involved in a variety of gun-related cases,



JASON MORISCHE

PASHA PATRIKI

gang cases, and murders. His uncommon knowledge of weaponry and military tactics has served him well.

His boss, Edward Prutschi, says, "Ja-

son's extensive knowledge of military and police tactics, weapons, and explosives has given him a dramatic upper hand in cross-examining police officers, particularly the quasi-military officers of Ontario's Emergency Task Force. You'd be surprised how many times knowing the particulars of firearms, ballistics, or explosives can come in handy. Especially in complex drug and gang trials."

The thing is, when police officers are on the stand talking about tactics and weapons, even though they may not be specifically qualified as expert witnesses, they often come across as what Morische calls "pseudo-experts." With his unusual expertise in this area, he can deflate the bubble.

"When the police conduct a surveillance operation, it's similar to how the military would plan a reconnaissance patrol," he explains. "I've used my

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