



Baton, shield and rubber bullet

ON a visit to Northern Ireland, Lord Carrington, Secretary of State for Defence, announced that the Army was to be issued with a new kind of weapon to cope with the troubles there.

The new weapon, "nothing revolutionary but a variation which would be a deterrent to rioters," and new techniques of control would be sprung as a surprise on trouble-makers.

Northern Ireland has already seen the addition of the "rubber bullet" to the Army's armoury and the development of anti-riot protection for soldiers.

The six-inch rubber bullet is hard and can bring down a rioter 30 yards away without injury except for bruising. Fired at the ground in front of a charging mob it can ricochet to knee height and persuade the attackers to keep their distance. Similar rounds made of wood have been used by police overseas but tend to splinter

and inflict wounds. In the United States cartridges containing five wooden bullets have been fired from large-bore guns. They turn over in flight and spread out to cover a wide area.

Also used for protection in Ulster in the last two years are the anti-riot shield, helmet visor, bullet-proof vest and hand baton. The shield is made of metal with a see-through gauze top and fitted with a handle in rear. It effectively covers the upper part of the body against stones and bottles. The visor, fitted to the steel helmet, is of Perspex and can be swivelled back when not in use.

The hand baton is carried by snatch squads who bear no arms when sent forward to arrest ringleaders inciting crowds to riot. More recently used in Ireland are head-to-foot transparent shields which give protection against shotguns and .22-inch weapons.



Top of page: The head-to-toe see-through shield gives good protection in a dangerous situation. Above: Firing the six-inch hard rubber bullet.



Front cover

Although the spectacles of Aldershot, Northern Command, Woolwich and White City have long fallen by the wayside, the military tattoo still draws the crowds. This year there will be tattoos at Tidworth, Sidcup, Carisbrooke Castle, Colchester, Cheltenham, Gosport, Dover, Folkestone, Cardiff, Edinburgh, York and Berlin with Army Cadet Force tattoos at Gosport and Swindon and, of course, the Royal Tournament.

The Berlin Tattoo, held every two years, is the British Services' way of thanking the Berliners for their co-operation and hospitality. The Americans in Berlin hold their Independence Day parade and a folk festival, the French have

their Bastille Day and a French fortnight, but the British Army concentrates on its tattoo which attracts more than a hundred thousand delighted Berliners to its two performances.

This month's front cover depicts the finale of the 1969 Britischer Militär-Tattoo with the massed bands, including the mounted band of The Life Guards, conducted by the tattoo's director of music, Major (now Lieutenant-Colonel) Rodney Bashford. The setting is the vast stadium built under Hitler's direction for the 1936 Olympic Games remembered for the winning of four gold medals by Jesse Owen. Picture by Leslie Wiggs.