

Prime Minister (2)

CIP 22/4.



MINISTRY OF DEFENCE
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MO 19/3/12

19th April 1985

Dear Charles,

You will wish to be aware that as from 22nd April a new type of baton round will be available for use by the Prison Guard Force (PGF) in Northern Ireland.

CDE Porton have developed a lightweight round, with a polystyrene head containing a small amount of CS powder, known as the XL 19 Frangible. This round will be issued to the soldiers of the PGF at HM Prisons Maze and Belfast (Crumlin Road) who have been specially trained in its use. Specific rules of engagement are being issued.

The PGF has standard baton rounds but these are considered unlikely to stop a determined escaper. The Frangible round will incapacitate its target by releasing a small dose of CS on impact which adheres to the target causing watering of the eyes and coughing thereby making it difficult to move with any purpose or speed. As the dose is small only the target is significantly affected and Prison Officers wearing gloves and face masks will be able to move in to apprehend the escaper. For these reasons it will also be useful in prison riots. However, the new round will only be used when it is considered to be more appropriate than the alternatives. It is not intended to publicise its introduction.

As the Frangible round is lighter, and the polystyrene head collapses on impact, it does not hit so hard as a standard round. This reduces the likelihood of injury. The CS would not have any long term effects.

A battery of 3 Royal Horse Artillery have been trained in the use of the Frangible round prior to taking up duty as the PGF on 22nd April. Only those who carry out this role will be trained in the use of, and supplied with, the new round. There are at present no plans to deploy the round in any other parts of the province.

Charles Powell Esq
 10 Downing Street

SECRET



I am copying this letter to Hugh Taylor (Home Office), John Graham (Scottish Office), Jim Daniell (Northern Ireland Office) and to Richard Hatfield (Cabinet Office).

Yours etc,

Richard Mottram

(R C MOTTRAM)

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COMMUNICATIONS

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