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From: Dr. K P Norris Deputy Director (Physics and Engineering)

PROCUREMENT EXECUTIVE, MINISTRY OF DEFENCE

CHEMICAL DEFENCE ESTABLISHMENT

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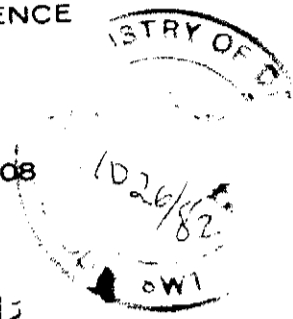
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Our Ref: Ptn/TP4020

Mr B Miller  
Head DS6  
Ministry of Defence  
Room 6290  
Main Building  
Whitehall  
London SW1A 2HB

→ Mr Brown  
To note and for file  
28 May 1982



Dear **Bury**

BATON ROUNDS

Since the hunger strike in Northern Ireland concern has been expressed on several occasions about the number of casualties produced by baton rounds.

In preparation for a meeting of the Medical Committee on 7th September, which was attended by Richard Jackson, I attempted to get detailed information from SCIAD HQNI (copy of letter attached - Ptn/TP4020 of 14 Sept). Whilst HQNI did provide some statistics on the use of baton rounds, information concerning wounding was not provided since, either it was not available or the cases were sub-judice. There appeared to be a reluctance to release information because of the mistaken view that the Medical Committee was a committee which could make a decision concerning the use of baton rounds. On 1st Sept 1981 (Ptn/IT4227), Director CDE wrote to AUS(GS) clearly defining the role of the Medical Committee. In this he made it clear that the committee offers independent medical advice on the assessment which has been made by CDE and on which Ministers take decisions concerning the acceptability of a particular device which the Services wish to use.

As I have served as Scientific Adviser to GOC NI, I am aware of the problem of obtaining data on casualties and it may be that this information is not available to the Ministry of Defence. At this distance from the scene of operations in NI I am not able to judge whether the information exists or whether it is being withheld from the Medical Committee.

The Medical Committee has stated repeatedly that the advice they offer must be subject to revision in the light of useage in NI and they now feel that they are being thwarted by the MOD. At a recent meeting of the committee on May 10th they expressed concern that so little information was being made available to them on the circumstances surrounding deaths or serious injuries from baton rounds.

It would be extremely unfortunate if a body of independent advisers, who have access to Ministers, were to be prevented from carrying out their duties because of the actions of officials who are not aware of

the true role of the Medical Committee. You will recall our recent telephone conversation on the future of baton rounds when you suggested that the ARWEN launch would provide a platform for MOD to consider its future attitude to baton rounds. The current lull in rioting in NI provides an ideal time for such discussions to take place.

Dr Beswick, who is executive officer of the Medical Committee, feels as strongly as I do about the supply of information to the Medical Committee and when we meet in the near future to discuss liaison with the Home Office it would help if the subject of baton rounds could be included in the Agenda.

Because of our Headquarters interest in this subject I have copied this letter to Michael Warner.

Yours sincerely

*Keith Norris*

K P NORRIS  
Deputy Director (Physics and Engineering)

Copy to: Dr M H C Warner, Hd ER3