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Photos by BEV MACKENZIE

Sergeant Al Oakley, in riot helmet and flak jacket, shows one-pound machine gun, "pepper fogger" (centre) and hickory riot baton

Their business is riot guns, armor and Nebulizers

By PAUL PATTERSON

For those who make and sell riot guns, body armor and tear gas, 1976 has been a boom year. At a recent police chiefs' convention in Halifax, salesmen from the largest police equipment companies in Canada and the United States gathered to promote their wares. All agreed that 1976 had been an exceptional year for sales.

Because of sometimes direct negotiations with police departments, no salesman wanted to be named and few wanted to have their statements identified with their companies.

Some of the companies represented were Maranda Inc., which supplies ambulances, police military and fire equipment; Federal Signal Corp., which makes flashing roof lights; Motorola, which makes radio equipment; Smith and Wesson gun manufacturing firms which make a variety of armaments.

Most agreed that it was the Montreal Olympics which put sales to police over the top this year.

"We did a big business in riot equipment, body armor and seiper

rifles," said a representative from Maranda Inc. He added that sales of seiper rifles were mainly confined to police departments in Ontario and Quebec.

But other police departments across the country were doing a heavy business in riot equipment and body armor, he said.

The March riot helmet seems to be a popular item this year. One company's literature describes the helmet as an instrument in which police forces can have 100 per cent confidence. It goes on to explain that the helmet is made of plastic, with a solid leather strap and "WILL NOT BREAK BY HITTING."

Another fast-moving item is the riot shield. The shield has "strong resistant stress" and is made of "new" polycarbonate which, according to one company, "meets a dependable Wedge of Protection in times when it is needed most."

Exactly why the police departments were buying riot equipment, the salesmen could not say. But in Canada this year have been met.

Another piece of equipment of

increasing interest in police departments is soft body armor. Salesmen suggest that police may see themselves more and more in the role of combatants and are looking for more protection.

Their suspicions might be confirmed by the fact that earlier this year the federal government allowed the RCMP to switch to a full-wad center bullet for their firearms. The wad center has a flat top and more stopping power. Many municipal forces had already switched to the wad center. The term bullet-proof vest is today considered obsolete and inaccurate. The new term is soft body armor, typified by the Barrer Vest, made by Smith and Wesson.

A material which the company calls barrier cloth is bonded to special steel to form the shield. The vest has two layers of the special steel sandwiched by 17 layers of barrier cloth. The vest weighs 16 pounds and is supposed to stop .357-magnum or .30-caliber bullets.

A detachable groin protector adds another four pounds to the suit.

Besides body armor, one company

was trying to promote bullet-proof vests for executives.

The salesman presented a film, a 15-minute dramatization of an executive being murdered in the back of his limousine. The narrative described the murder in great detail and common sense, saying most murders of executives occur in the victims cars, where they are most vulnerable.

For a mere \$15,000 this American-based company will bullet-proof any Lincoln or Cadillac and provide the chauffeur with escape routes, driver training.

The company even provides tires with special inner wheels so the car can continue to run even if the tires are blown off.

The salesman said the company has sold a few of the cars in Canada but would not say to whom. Asked if his company supplied Pierre Trudeau's limousine, he replied, "Let's pretend you didn't ask this question."

Spread before the salesman on a table were a variety of weapons on display. There were handguns — from the largest magnum to the smallest

derringer. There was a small machine gun with a retractable stock.

Under the Police Act, the official firearm used by police is the .38 Smith and Wesson police special.

However, the act does not allow a police chief to authorize a policeman to carry a firearm other than the official one for a "special purpose."

Along with the firearms were displays of flashlights which could be used as clubs, bullet-proof shields which double as shields and strips of plastic to be used as bandages.

One weapon which wasn't on display but could be ordered from a catalogue was the Nebulizer, made by Control Concepts, Inc.

This Star-Trek-style weapon resembles a child's flashlight with a control switch, in the form of a trigger, which is a regular flashlight beam. In the second position it releases a "blinding light."

According to the catalogue, switching to the third position releases a "stunning spray" effective immediately. Range is 15 feet.

Control Concepts doesn't explain in its literature exactly what a nebulizer

spray does to its victim and the firm which distributes the weapons, Maranda Inc., wouldn't be reached at either of its listed Canadian phone numbers, both of which are out of service.

The term Nebulizer apparently comes from the noun nebulizer, defined as a clouded speck on the cornea causing defective sight. Thus, the nebulizing spray probably is aimed at making its target temporarily blind.

While the catalogue offers no clue to the Nebulizer's effect, a long disclaimer makes its potential appear terrifying.

"This unit is sold with the understanding that Control Concepts Inc. assumes no responsibility for its use under local laws and regulations, nor for its safe handling by any person who may come into possession of it."

"Control Concepts Inc. assumes no responsibility for physical injury or property damage resulting from either intentional or accidental discharge, and assumes no responsibility or liability for the use or for circumstances created by the use, misuse, handling or storage of this unit."



Sergeant Oakley brings tear-gas gun to the ready

Massive police firepower only an emergency away

By TONY WANLESS

Because of the growing number of incidents in which firearms are used in Canada, Windsor police believe it's necessary to have a full arsenal available for emergencies.

If a sniper perched on a roof begins firing at pedestrians, or a car begins firing in Toronto, or if a gunman barricades himself in a room, policemen can draw from a collection of weapons containing items as ordinary as shotguns and as exotic as one-pound machine guns.

Most city policemen have been trained to use the available weapons, but the emergency firepower is kept under lock and key. Only a sergeant or senior officer can authorize the use of special weapons and they cannot be brought into the field unless a senior officer, usually an inspector, is present.

Windsor police sergeants carry shotguns in their patrol cars and all city policemen carry .38-calibre Smith and Wesson police special revolvers.

But in the emergency arsenal, police have access to 12-gauge pump-action shotguns, 30-30 gal. lever-action rifles and rifles with special telescopic sights.

A collection of Winchester-Remington-made, 9-millimetre machine guns called MPFs is stored with other weapons in the city police garage. Police wouldn't say how many machine guns are available to them.

Among the more exotic items in the arsenal are two "pepper foggers" — hand-carried machines which spray tear gas over a

large area. "Pepper foggers" are usually used to break up large crowds in open areas.

Tear gas is also available in containers which are activated by pulling pins much like those on hand grenades. There is also a tear-gas gun which lets tear-gas shells and also fires high-velocity projectiles that can pierce a door.

Police Chief John Williamson said the department's arsenal is under strict supervision and will only be used when the situation warrants it.

"The use of different weapons is something that is growing in our society and the police department must be prepared for it," he said. "We're not yet prepared for any emergency."

Police also have access to three-foot hickory riot batons and riot helmets.

When a suspect is believed to be barricaded in a building with a gun or if police suspect shooting will be involved in an arrest, they have access to flak jackets — heavy, metal and canvas vests which cover their chests and backs. Some officers also wear light flakjackets under their shirts when they are on regular duty.

Some city policemen are also engaged in continuing training programs which help them understand methods of handling suspects and dealing with hostage-taking incidents.

Chief Williamson said two Windsor policemen are currently taking a course in Calgary called "officer survival techniques."

The course is being taught by members of the Special Weapons and Tactical Squad of the Los Angeles police force.