

New Hand Grenade Stunned Jet Hijackers

London Telegraph Service

BONN — For the first time, a new "hand grenade" was used successfully by German commandos as they blasted their way aboard a hijacked Lufthansa jet at Mogadishu, Somalia.

German experts refused to describe the device in detail but said it essentially is an oversized firecracker.

Hurled into a plane cabin or a room of people, it bursts with a blinding flash and deafening bang. For six seconds it incapacitates all present.

The grenade is said to be harmless unless it is held in the hand while exploding. There are no splinters and only an initial dazed shock.

The Bonn Defense Ministry said the device is not part of the armed forces

arsenal. It is essentially an anti-hijacking weapon.

At the Interior Ministry, responsible for the Federal Frontier Force to which the GSG-9 commando unit belongs, a spokesman declined to say whether it was a German invention.

"But you can take it that we are not the only people equipped with this device," he said.

He added that technical details could not be revealed since the data might aid potential terrorists in planning future operations.

One action in which such a device might have come in useful was the train siege in Assen, North Holland, last June. When Dutch marines stormed the train, they used another means of creating a din to cow the hijackers — lowflying Starfighter jets.