

British officers investigate U.S. ways

Exchange program brings two visitors to St. Cloud

By Dave Aeikens

TIMES STAFF WRITER

Police officers Steve Cairns and Pete Doherty stand out even when they are standing among a group of St. Cloud Police officers.

Among the blue uniformed St. Cloud officers, the two English bobbies, with their black pants and white uniform shirts with black ties, are easily recognizable.

The two men are in Minnesota this month to get a glimpse of U.S. law enforcement. They will be guests of the Crystal Police Department until Sunday.

Cairns and Doherty visited St. Cloud Wednesday, touring the Law Enforcement Center and the Minnesota Correctional



spin on the police driving range. Crystal officers visited England earlier this year.

Once you get past the style of the uniform, the work Doherty and Cairns do in England is much like that of their U.S. colleagues, the men say.

"They work very similar to the ways we do," Cairns said of his U.S. counterparts.

The two men work for the Ministry of Defense, and they police civilians in the British military. They did not work on anything related to the death of Princess Diana. That was handled by London police.

The Ministry of Defense is the only force in England allowed to carry weapons. When regular British officers confront gun-toting suspects, they contain them until a weapons team arrives.

"In America, people are very concerned with civil liberties, which can restrain certain police activities," Doherty said of differences between the two countries.

Britain's Police and Criminal Evidence Act is designed to protect both officers and citizens, he said.

"If we break that, it's very serious," he said.

Cairns investigates domestic abuse cases in Plymouth, England, and Doherty is in crime prevention in Kileton-Warwickshire.

Doherty works on preventing drunken driving. He has spent time in Minnesota analyzing the Safe and Sober campaigns that Minnesota departments use to increase patrols and heighten awareness of traffic safety during holidays. He also has inspected the Drug Abuse Resistance Education program used in schools.

In England, penalties for drinking and driving are more



TIMES PHOTOS BY KIMM ANDERSON

During a visit to St. Cloud Wednesday, British constables Pete Doherty and Steve Cairns practiced evasive maneuvers on the Minnesota Highway Safety Center's

strict than in the United States, Doherty said.

First offenders are banned from driving, and some offenders serve 18 months in jail.

This week, Cairns visited a domestic abuse unit in Duluth. He works with local police dealing with members of the British Navy or Royal Marines who are having domestic abuse problems. In Plymouth, 10 percent of the domestic abuse cases involve military personnel.

"We've got to look for offenses. We must look for an assault and threatening damage for an arrest," Cairns said.

Cairns said British officials have heightened their concern about domestic abuse. Abusers are arrested and offered options to try to solve their problems. There was a time when British police came upon a couple who had been fighting and told them to knock it off and went about their business.

Statistics show that in England 25 percent of all homicides stem from domestic situations, and 47 percent are committed against women. As in the United States, most people are killed by people they know.

"That's why you have to treat domestics seriously, because it can progress into a murder," Cairns said.

The British officers have seen just about every type of law enforcement agency in the state. They have visited the Bureau of Criminal Apprehension, flown

in a Minnesota Highway Patrol helicopter, toured the state Capitol and visited the Hennepin County Sheriff's Department.

Cairns and Doherty also have sampled Minnesota culture, with trips to a Twins game and Gooseberry Falls.

"It gives you a broader outlook on certain issues," Cairns said.

And St. Cloud officers got a chance to talk to colleagues from a different country.

"We get a little insight on how they operate," St. Cloud Police Capt. Ken Deters said.

"They probably get more from us in Minnesota because they are here longer. All we're doing is asking some basic questions."

training course near U.S. Highway 10. Police Constable Pete Doherty banked a patrol car through a course that simulates having to dodge a car stopped in his lane.



Police Constables Steve Cairns (left) and Pete Doherty (right) were briefed by test track director Dave Schultz before venturing out onto the course.



Constable Steve Cairns worked to steer smoothly through a slalom-like course.

■ In America, people are very concerned with civil liberties ... ■

Pete Doherty
OFFICER COMPARING BRITISH, U.S. SYSTEMS