

Mysterious Macing

A mysterious element was introduced into the aftermath of the Soledad verdict yesterday at the Hall of Justice — and reporters who have experienced it labelled it as Mace.

In the tight security of the third floor corridors outside the courtroom area, it seemed unlikely that anyone could have been carrying a metal canister of tear-making gas.

Except, of course, the Tac Squad officers, who wore the canisters on their hips.

Radio and television newsmen were kept from using their own press room on the third floor for the first hour after the verdict was returned.

The tight security maintained throughout the trial still held, and Tac Squad officers were quick to stop entrance by newsmen to that area of the third floor.

When the Tac Squad left, radio and television newsmen entered their press room to discover their eyes watering, breathing difficult.

Riot veterans were quick to identify the acrid odor as Mace.

Pete Cleveland, reporter for radio station KGO, was the first into the room. Eyes smarting, he stepped into the hallway and asked a passing officer to identify the smell.

The officer told him it was Mace, Cleveland said.

Bob Benson, KGO news director, said he promptly filed a complaint and was assured command officers will investigate.