



MEDIA RELEASE

Joint Non-Lethal Weapons Program



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Soldiers Deploying for Kosovo Receive Non-Lethal Weapons Training

By Jennifer Bowen

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Soldiers from the California Army National Guard put their non-lethal weapons skills to the test during a pre-deployment training exercise in Hohenfels, Germany. U.S. Marine Corps photo by Sgt. Rocco DeFilippis

Non-lethal weapons (NLWs) play an important role in military peacekeeping missions across the world. In Kosovo, a country striving to overcome ethnic hostilities, U.S. military forces use NLWs to safeguard peace and carry out humanitarian missions. Their efforts are part of the Kosovo Force (KFOR), the NATO-led international force responsible for establishing a safe and secure environment in Kosovo.

Prior to a recent deployment to support KFOR, 450 soldiers from the California Army National Guard attended six days of training at U.S. European Command's (USEUCOM) Joint Multi-national Training Command (JMTC), a U.S. Army training facility in Hohenfels, Germany. Working with NLWs played a major role in the pre-deployment training.

During the training, soldiers learned a variety of crowd control techniques and how to employ non-lethal munitions, including fin-stabilized rubber bullets, crowd-dispersal cartridges, non-lethal sting-ball grenades and 40mm sponge rounds. After the training, soldiers got a chance to practice their newly learned skills during a crowd control scenario training exercise.

"Seeing the soldiers' interest in NLWs and hearing them talk about how they could use non-lethal capabilities during a mission was one of the training's highlights for me," said Staff Sergeant Roberto Cervantes, Joint Service Support Staff Noncommissioned Officer with the Joint Non-Lethal Weapons Directorate (JNLWD) and an NLW instructor.



Staff Sgt. Roberto Cervantes (right), Joint Service Support Staff Noncommissioned Officer with the JNLWD, discusses a non-lethal weapons training scenario with a platoon leader from the California Army National Guard.

U.S. Marine Corps photo by Sgt. Rocco DeFilippis

Marine Forces Europe (MFE), USEUCOM's executive agent for NLWs, organized the training. To train the large group of soldiers in a short period of time, MFE reached out to the Joint Non-Lethal Weapons Program (JNLWP) for support and

assistance. NLW instructors from JMTC, MFE, USEUCOM and the JNLWD led the training.

"Even though the NLW instructors had not trained together before, we were all on the same page," said Staff Sgt. Cervantes. "We all completed our NLW instructor training at the Inter-service Non-lethal Individual Weapons Instructor Course (INIWIC), so the way we were trained to teach how to use NLWs was the same." INIWIC, held at Fort Leonard Wood, Mo., serves as the Department of Defense's NLW training authority, certifying Service members to become NLW instructors.

"The collaborative nature of the training was a success, as it allowed MFE, a relatively smaller command, to capitalize on the JNLWP's resources to support the educational contact team," said Eric Damm, USEUCOM NLW Combatant Command Liaison Officer, who coordinated instructor support for the training. "The training could potentially serve as a model for how future educational contact teams are built."

Damm noted the success of this training effort and the importance of getting NLWs into the hands of military service members to meet their mission needs. "The training serves as an example of what the Joint Non-Lethal Weapons Program is designed to do," said Damm. "Troops are being trained by a joint group of instructors to use NLWs developed through the JNLWP and fielded by the Services, all in an effort to support an operational mission."

The JNLWP is working toward expanding the availability of NLW training and education to help military service members at all levels learn more about the non-lethal capabilities available to them.