



MEDIA RELEASE

Joint Non-Lethal Weapons Program



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Congressional Staffers Learn about Non-Lethal Weapons

By Jennifer Bowen

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At Marine Day, Frank Hubbard (left), test and evaluation analyst for the Joint Non-Lethal Weapons Directorate, discusses the non-lethal grenade launcher with David Wall, a staff member with the Office of the Sergeant at Arms and Doorkeeper for the U.S. Senate.

JNLWD photo by Wanda Napier

The Joint Non-Lethal Weapons Program (JNLWP) participated in Marine Day at Quantico Marine Corps Base, Va., on May 1, giving more than 350 Congressional staff members the opportunity to learn about non-lethal weapons. The annual event brings Congressional staffers to Quantico to meet U.S. Marines and learn about military technology and equipment. General James T. Conway, Commandant of the Marine Corps,

and Sergeant Major Carlton W. Kent, Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps, were on hand to welcome this year's guests.

After flying to Quantico on Marine Corps helicopters, the staffers viewed an aerial demonstration of several Marine Corps aircraft. They also visited with Marines and defense contractors showcasing the latest weapons and technologies during an expo-style gathering at the Marine Corps Air Facility. The visitors then had a lunch of military meals, ready to eat (MREs), some for their first time. The staffers next traveled to Quantico's Range 15 for a live-fire exercise.



*Gen. Conway, Commandant of the Marine Corps, welcomes the Congressional staffers to Quantico for Marine Day.
U.S. Marine Corps photo by Cpl. Erin A. Kirk*

The JNLWP, based at Quantico, participated in the event with a display, as well as subject matter experts from the Joint Non-Lethal Weapons Directorate (JNLWD) answering questions about non-lethal weapons. The display included an explanation of what non-lethal weapons are and why they're important to the warfighter.

Non-lethal weapons are defined as "weapons, devices and munitions that are explicitly designed and primarily employed to incapacitate targeted personnel or materiel immediately, while minimizing fatalities, permanent injury to personnel and undesired damage to property in the target area or environment. Non-lethal weapons are intended to have reversible effects on personnel and materiel." Non-lethal weapons provide warfighters with escalation-of-force options when lethal force is not the best first response.

Dr. Bruce Wright, a human effects engineer for the JNLWD and one of several subject matter experts at the JNLWP display, recognized the importance of educating the visitors about non-lethal weapons. "These congressional staffers could potentially be the United States' next generation of leaders," Wright observed, as the staffers streamed into the hangar and walked through the displays.

Only a few Congressional staff members who visited the JNLWP display had heard about non-lethal weapons, but most wanted to learn more about non-lethal capabilities and how they worked.

Many staffers inquired about the TASER[®] human electro-muscular incapacitation device. The JNLWD's subject matter experts explained the device's incapacitating, reversible effects.

"Imagine every muscle in your body tensing up all at once for a couple of seconds," said Wright. "It definitely stops you in your tracks. But as soon as the TASER[®] stops, the effect stops."

Some of the visitors had seen non-lethal weapons on TV shows and were interested to see the devices in person and ask questions about their capabilities.

"I've heard of non-lethal weapons before, but I've only seen them on television," said Gabriele Tonsil, who works for the Government Accountability Office. "Especially in Iraq and Afghanistan, anything that will help relations between the U.S. military and the people of these countries is good. If non-lethal weapons are effective and reduce unnecessary fatalities, then that is all the better."

David Wall, a staff member with the Office of the Sergeant at Arms and Doorkeeper for the U.S. Senate, commented on how non-lethal weapons would be helpful in targeting an individual in a crowd. He also recognized the inherent change in mentality required to integrate non-lethal weapons into the military.

"Non-lethal weapons are a new way of thinking about arms," Wall said. "They allow the dialogue on the use-of-force options to remain open."

Keeping the dialogue about non-lethal weapons open is a main objective of participating in these events, according

to Tim Fox, Capabilities and Requirements Assistant
Division Chief at the JNLWD.

"We're here to share information about non-lethal weapons,"
said Fox. "We're telling staffers what we're doing, why
we're doing it and how we're advancing non-lethal
capabilities."

These staffers provide an important link in forwarding
information about non-lethal weapons to Congressmen. The
knowledge they take back to Capitol Hill can help get these
essential escalation-of-force capabilities into the hands
of warfighters.

For more information on non-lethal weapons, visit the JNLWP
website at <https://www.jnlwp.com>.