



## MEDIA RELEASE

### Joint Non-Lethal Weapons Program



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### SHARED ACCORD 2009 Shows U.S. Marines, Beninese Soldiers Advantages of Non-Lethal Capabilities

By Jennifer Bowen

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*Beninese Army soldiers demonstrate their riot control procedures for U.S. Marines during non-lethal weapons instruction at SHARED ACCORD 2009.*

*U.S. Marine Corps photo by Lance Cpl. Jad Sleiman*

**shared** (shârd): adj. - 1. Held or experienced in common. 2. Related to another or others.

**ac·cord** (ə-kôrd): n. - 1. Agreement; harmony. 2. A formal agreement between groups or nations. 3. Unison; rapport.

The U.S. military understands the important meaning behind the words "shared" and "accord" in today's global environment. In an effort to promote a growing rapport with the United States' international allies, more than 400 U.S.

military service members participated in exercise SHARED ACCORD 2009 in June.

Benin, a French-speaking country on the west coast of Africa, hosted the 15-day combined U.S.-Benin military exercise. The exercise focused on small unit infantry and staff training, including non-lethal weapons instruction.

The Department of Defense defines non-lethal weapons 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. Non-lethal capabilities have applications across the range of military operations, from full-scale combat to humanitarian and disaster relief missions.

"Our warfighters face a critical gap between shouting and shooting," said Colonel Tracy Tafolla, Director of the Joint Non-Lethal Weapons Directorate. "In many operational situations, shouting is inadequate, but escalating to a lethal response is not an appropriate or desired first response. Non-lethal capabilities are crucial not only for U.S. forces, but for our international allies, as well."

At SHARED ACCORD, the Joint Non-Lethal Weapons Program (JNLWP) supported two non-lethal weapons instructional exercises for two U.S. Marine Corps Reserve units and Beninese service members. Tony Lewis, U.S. Africa Command (AFRICOM) Non-Lethal Weapons Combatant Command Liaison Officer for the JNLWP, with assistance from two U.S. Marines and a Beninese interpreter, provided support for the crowd control and vehicle/individual entry control point instruction. In addition to providing non-lethal weapons instruction support during the exercise, the Marines themselves also gained valuable non-lethal weapons familiarization and experience.



*1st Sgt. Michael Bowen helps Pvt. Ghislain Tokpovi of the Beninese Army into protective foam gear during non-lethal weapons instruction at SHARED ACCORD 2009.*

*U.S. Marine Corps photo by Lance Cpl. Jad Sleiman*

The crowd control instruction focused on peacekeeping and riot control operations. It highlighted proper baton carries, baton strikes, baton blocks, proper shield techniques, and basic crowd control formations and movements.

The vehicle/individual entry control point instruction included spike strips, caltrops, high-intensity search lights and entry control point inspection gear, such as bullhorns, stop signs and directional arrow signs.

"By participating in events like SHARED ACCORD, the JNLWP is able to educate both U.S. military and foreign military personnel on the advantages of incorporating non-lethal weapons into their missions," Lewis said.

SHARED ACCORD is designed to improve interoperability and mutual understanding of each nation's tactics, techniques and procedures. According to Lewis, these are important outcomes, as the Beninese service members will likely need to use these riot control skills if they deploy in support of multinational efforts with the African Union or the United Nations.

In addition to military instructional exercises, SHARED ACCORD also included humanitarian and civic assistance projects.



*A Beninese soldier practices baton strikes with a U.S. Marine during non-lethal weapons instruction at SHARED ACCORD 2009.*

*U.S. Marine Corps photo by Lance Cpl. Jad Sleiman*

Lewis said he felt surprised at how quickly the U.S. Marines and Beninese service members overcame the English-French language barrier. "They were able to communicate and relate with each other and really built a rapport during the exercises," he said.

Reserve units throughout the U.S. Marine Corps, along with medical contingents from the U.S. Navy, the U.S. Air Force and the U.S. Army National Guard, participated in the exercise.

U.S. Marine Corps Forces Africa plans SHARED ACCORD annually with sponsorship from AFRICOM. The exercise supports AFRICOM's Theater Strategic Objectives.

The JNLWP plans to again support non-lethal weapons training efforts for SHARED ACCORD 2010 in Mozambique, continuing to share non-lethal capabilities with the United States' international allies.