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Joint Non-Lethal Weapons Program



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Improved Flash-Bang Grenade Team Wins Technology Transition Award

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*The Improved Flash-Bang Grenade
Official DoD photo*

The U.S. Air Force (USAF) team researching the human effects characterization of the Improved Flash-Bang Grenade (IFBG) recently won the David M. Clark Technology Transition Award for 2008. The team's efforts led to the development of a safer and more effective flash-bang grenade to meet the needs of U.S. Special Operations Command (USSOCOM), the lead for the IFBG program.

The IFBG creates a loud bang and a large, bright, long-duration flash to temporarily incapacitate targeted individuals. The IFBG incorporates improved safety to the user and non-combatants in the target area, as well as reduced environmental impacts and a longer-duration incapacitation than previous flash-bang grenades. The IFBG can support missions such as hostage rescue, room clearing and other operations in complex urban terrain. The IFBG is currently in the engineering and manufacturing development phase of the acquisition process.

According to the award citation, the team determined the human effects necessary to increase mission effectiveness by analyzing flash-bang grenade injury data, writing software to analyze flash effects and determining sound exposure limits. The team's research resulted in critical design and performance specifications for IFBG prototypes that met USSOCOM's needs.

The 12-member IFBG team includes military, government and contractor personnel from the Air Force Research Laboratory (AFRL), 711th Human Performance Wing (711th HPW), Human Effectiveness Directorate, Directed Energy Bioeffects Division and the Human Effects Center of Excellence (HECOE). The Joint Non-Lethal Weapons Program sponsors the IFBG program.

"The team is ecstatic because this award highlights the importance of integrating human effects factors into the development of safe and effective non-lethal technologies for troops on the modern battlefield," said award recipient 2nd Lieutenant Katharine Sheldon, IFBG Human Effects Lead and biomedical scientist at HECOE.

During a ceremony at Brooks City-Base in San Antonio, Texas, on January 16, Dr. Garrett Polhamus, Directed Energy Bioeffects Division Chief, presented the award to four IFBG team members who accepted it on behalf of the entire team.

The David M. Clark Technology Transition Award is given annually to a team or individual from AFRL's 711th HPW to recognize the most significant technology transition achievement of the year. The award is named for David M. Clark, a noted American inventor and businessman. Through collaboration with the USAF, Clark helped develop and transition the first earmuff hearing protectors for the U.S. Navy and the first high-pressure flight and space suits for the USAF and NASA in the 1950s.

Through their human effects research, the IFBG team has led the way for improved grenade safety for targeted individuals and operators, increasing warfighters' capabilities to conduct the full spectrum of combat operations.



IFBG team members (left to right) Dr. Robert Thomas, Principal Research Physicist; 2nd Lt. Dave Wooddell, mathematician; 2nd Lt. Katharine Sheldon, Human Effects Lead; and 2nd Lt. Allan Nagy, computer engineer, accept the David M. Clark Technology Transition Award during a January 16 ceremony at Brooks City-Base in San Antonio, Texas. Official U.S. Air Force photo