



## DoD Non-Lethal Weapons Program Media Release

*Non-lethal weapons provide our operating forces escalation-of-force options, minimizing casualties and collateral damage.*

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### **Cobra Gold 2010 Features Non-Lethal Weapons**

By Jennifer Bowen  
Posted May 10, 2010



*Spc. Jason Lathrop and Sgt. Rodney Johnson, assigned to Company E, 1st Battalion (Combined Arms Battalion), 118th Infantry, 218th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade, South Carolina Army National Guard, coach a Royal Thai Army soldier how to use an FN-303 Less Lethal Launcher, a compressed-air-powered launcher that fires marking rounds, during the non-lethal weapons familiarization firing. U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Erica Knight*

The Joint Non-Lethal Weapons Program continues to assist U.S. Pacific Command with non-lethal weapons awareness-building efforts throughout the command's area of

responsibility. As part of this effort, the JNLWP recently participated in Cobra Gold 2010 last February in Thailand.

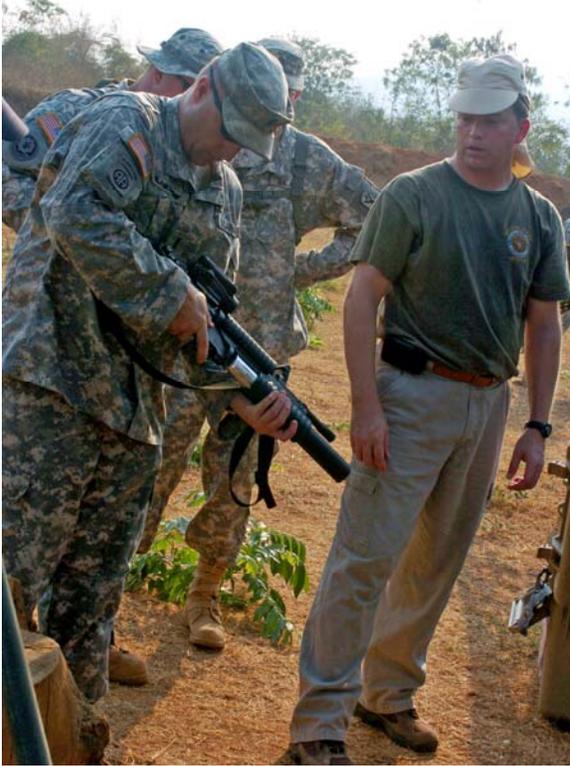
The Cobra Gold exercise is the largest multi-lateral joint military exercise in the world, according to Lt. Gen. Benjamin R. Mixon, commanding general of U.S. Army, Pacific. The annual exercise promotes multinational interoperability and provides training for U.S. partner nations located within the Pacific Command area of responsibility. Held in Thailand each year, Cobra Gold usually includes non-lethal weapon familiarization as part of the exercise.

The Department of Defense defines non-lethal weapons as "weapons that are explicitly designed and primarily employed so as to incapacitate personnel or materiel, while minimizing fatalities, permanent injury to personnel and undesired damage to property and the environment. Non-lethal weapons are intended to have reversible effects on personnel and materiel."

Non-lethal weapons provide operating forces with escalation-of-force options when lethal force is not the best first response. These capabilities assist operating forces in discerning intent, delaying and deterring individuals, and discriminating targets in a variety of missions ranging from full-scale combat to humanitarian relief—all while minimizing casualties and damage to property.

The main goals of the Joint Non-Lethal Weapons Program's involvement with Cobra Gold are to increase non-lethal weapons awareness within the command's area of responsibility while enhancing operational capabilities through familiarizing U.S. Service members and allied and partner nations with non-lethal weapons, according to Pacific Command Non-Lethal Weapon Combatant Command Liaison Officer Larry Brown.

During the non-lethal weapons portion of Cobra Gold, Brown presented the non-lethal weapons overview brief and the non-lethal munitions brief.



*U.S. Army 1st Lt. Jeff Blankenship (left), an executive officer assigned to Company C, 1st Battalion (Combined Arms Battalion), 118th Infantry, 218th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade, South Carolina Army National Guard, demonstrates how to load the M203 grenade launcher while Pacific Command Non-Lethal Weapon Combatant Command Liaison Officer Larry Brown (right) presents the NLW munitions brief.  
U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Erica Knight*

Following the briefs, Brown led a non-lethal weapons familiarization firing using currently fielded non-lethal capabilities, including 12-gauge fin-stabilized rubber bullets and 12-gauge crowd dispersal munitions fired from pump-action shotguns, 40mm crowd control munitions and 40mm sponge grenade rounds fired from M203 grenade launcher attachments, marking rounds fired from FN-303 Less Lethal Launchers (compressed-air-powered launchers) and TASER® X-26 human electro-muscular incapacitation devices.

Exercise participants, including U.S. Soldiers assigned to the 4th Battalion, 118th Infantry, South Carolina Army National Guard and Royal Thai Army soldiers, attended the NLW briefs and familiarization firing. Some of the U.S. Soldiers served as instructors for the non-lethal weapons familiarization firing.

Major William McDaniel, an operations officer assigned to 4th Battalion (Light Infantry Battalion), 118th Infantry, 218th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade, South Carolina Army National Guard, participated in the non-lethal weapons portion of Cobra Gold 2010 and sees a need for non-lethal weapons. "An infantry battalion needs more force options in the contemporary operational environment other than buttstock to bullet. Non-lethal weapons provide a reliable, credible force that only has to be used a few times to make an impact," he said.

The non-lethal briefs and familiarization firing showed the Soldiers the value of having non-lethal options on hand during operational missions.

"Non-lethal weapons broaden the range of possibilities for our Soldiers by expanding escalation-of-force options," said First Lieutenant Jeff Blankenship, an executive officer assigned to Company C, 1st Battalion (Combined Arms Battalion), 118th Infantry, 218th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade, South Carolina Army National Guard, who also participated in and served as the weapons range officer-in-charge for the non-lethal weapons portion of the exercise. "In a world of ever-restrictive rules of engagement, non-lethal weapons allow the desired effect with a significant decrease in risk of civilian casualties and collateral damage," he said.

"Non-lethal weapons can only help in regards to counter insurgency and swaying the hearts and minds of a people," said Maj. McDaniel. "Non-lethal weapons can help save innocent lives and stop fueling an insurgency by reducing civilian casualties."

In total, more than 120 U.S. Soldiers and 25 Thai soldiers attended the non-lethal weapons portion of Cobra Gold.



*Sgt. Gregory Johnson, assigned to Company C, 1st Battalion (Combined Arms Battalion), 118th Infantry, 218th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade, South Carolina Army National Guard, teaches a Royal Thai Army soldier how to fire 12-gauge non-lethal munitions from a pump-action shotgun during the non-lethal weapons familiarization firing.  
U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Erica Knight*

Brown said that the exercise's non-lethal weapons briefs and familiarization firing were the first time that Pacific Command has ever held a non-lethal weapons event with the U.S. Army. "Since Pacific Command's non-lethal weapons program falls under U.S. Marine Forces Pacific, it just has always ended up that Marines were the ones participating in Pacific Command's non-lethal weapons events," said Brown. "The Army's participation was a step towards further non-lethal weapons awareness among other Services in Pacific Command."

Non-lethal weapons static exhibits were also on display, giving greater visibility to non-lethal weapons, especially to participants unable to attend the non-lethal weapons portions of the exercise. U.S. military units in Iraq and Afghanistan are currently using many of the non-lethal weapons included in the display and familiarization.



*Larry Brown explains the capabilities of various currently fielded non-lethal weapons to a Royal Thai Army officer during one of the static exhibits. Brown is the Pacific Command Non-Lethal Weapon Combatant Command Liaison Officer. U.S. Army photo by Shelia Randolph*

Cobra Gold began on Feb. 1 and concluded on Feb. 11. Other countries, including Brunei, Chile, China, Germany, Laos, Mongolia, New Zealand, South Africa, Sri Lanka and Vietnam, also attended and observed portions of the exercise. In addition to military training exercises, Cobra Gold also included humanitarian and civic assistance projects.

Pacific Command and the Royal Thai Armed Forces co-sponsored the exercise. U.S. soldiers, sailors, airmen and Marines from around the world participated in and led many events throughout the exercise.

Cobra Gold 2010 marks the 29th anniversary of the exercise. Cobra Gold 2011 is tentatively scheduled for next February. The Joint Non-Lethal Weapons Program plans to continue to support non-lethal weapons efforts for the exercise.

In addition to Cobra Gold 2011, the Joint Non-Lethal Weapons Program is working toward expanding non-lethal weapons awareness, education and training throughout all the Combatant Commands, as well as allied and partner nations. These efforts will help educate U.S. and allied operating forces about non-lethal capabilities and escalation-of-force options that are crucial to mission success.

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