



MEDIA RELEASE

Joint Non-Lethal Weapons Program



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Army Integrates Non-Lethal Capability Sets into Deploying Units

By Jennifer Bowen

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Sgt. Timothy Heck, Charlie Company, 1st 11th Infantry, reacts to the effects of the X26 TASER® as Sgt. Nicholas Boltz (left) and Sgt. Evan Lally help him to the ground during NLCS training at Fort Dix.

JNLWD photo by Wanda Napier

The Department of Defense's Non-Lethal Weapons Program has reached a significant milestone with the U.S. Army's Non-Lethal Capability Set (NLCS). The Army is now integrating NLCSs and related training into Army units prior to their deployments to Iraq and Afghanistan.

The NLCS is a versatile package of DoD-developed and commercial- and-government off-the-shelf mission-enhancing non-lethal weapons, devices and munitions. The NLCS provides warfighters with a variety of acoustic hailing

devices, translation devices, optical distracters and vehicle stopping capabilities, such as nets that can stop oncoming cars. The sets include four mission-specific modules: checkpoint, convoy operations, crowd control/detainee operations and dismounted patrolling missions. The equipment comes in easily transportable, weatherproof military containers.

The various modules have similar goals: to deny, move, disable or suppress adversaries while having reversible effects and to expand the warfighter's range of escalation-of-force options.

"The NLCS provides tools that help enable effective force protection, as well as perimeter and area security, while enhancing the soldier's non-lethal capability when challenged to cope with non-combatants and civil disturbances," according to Linda Chico, NLCS Lead Engineer at the Army's Picatinny Arsenal, N.J., who has been with the Army's non-lethal program since 1998. "The set provides a significant increase in the capability of U.S. forces to accomplish the objectives of military action in situations where use of lethal force is not the preferred or desired method of operation."

Captain Curtis Drake, officer-in-charge at recent NLCS training held at Fort Dix, N.J., agrees that the sets give warfighters additional escalation-of-force tools. "Non-lethal capabilities give soldiers an option to determine a person's intent and then react with an appropriate level of force, either lethal or non-lethal," he said.

Combining the non-lethal tools into a set makes a variety of non-lethal capabilities readily available in a one-stop shop. While each soldier doesn't individually receive an entire NLCS, a Brigade Combat Team (BCT) has the flexibility to provide subordinate units with specific components of each set based on their particular missions.

The soldiers receive pre-deployment NLCS training specifically for situations they may encounter in Iraq and Afghanistan. The NLCSs are now assigned to the units on their deployments and return with them, enabling continuous training.



Tom Martens, a non-lethal systems subject matter expert, gives instruction on setting up the Portable Vehicle Arresting Barrier during NLCS training at Fort Dix, N.J. JNLWD photo by Wanda Napier

Getting pre-deployment hands-on training with the NLCS is advantageous to the soldiers. "It's definitely less stressful here than in-country," said Staff Sergeant Brian L. Keaton, Sr., Bravo Troop, 2/104th Calvary. "It gives us time to relax, understand and train with the Non-Lethal Capability Sets."

In July 2008, an Army unit based at Fort Stewart, Ga., received the first unit-assigned NLCS before its pending deployment. Since then, the Army has assigned approximately 10 NLCSs to various BCTs prior to deployment. As the Army distributes the NLCSs, units with deployment orders get first priority to receive the sets and training. The Army's goal is to field approximately 110 NLCSs to specific units.

Training on Non-Lethal Equipment

An essential component to the fielding of the NLCS is providing training to units prior to their deployments. Instructors and non-lethal subject matter experts from the U.S. Army Military Police School's Army Nonlethal Scalable Effects Center (ANSEC) in Fort Leonard Wood, Mo., conduct the training. The training includes classroom and range instruction, as well as practical exercises using the sets' non-lethal equipment.



*Members of the 56th Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 28th Infantry Division, practice laying out spike strips during NLCS training at Fort Dix, N.J.
JNLWD photo by Wanda Napier*

According to Eric Niver, Army Non-Lethal Systems Specialist with ANSEC, requiring pre-deployment training is a significant development. "The fielding of unit-integrated NLCSs prior to deployment is a real success for the non-lethal program," said Niver. "These NLCSs are a part of their units now, and the soldiers are being trained to use the equipment prior to deployment, knowing that they'll have these options when they're in a combat situation. How non-lethal options fit into their daily missions is now at the forefront of a unit's mind."

The 56th Stryker Brigade Combat Team (56SBCT), 28th Infantry Division, a National Guard unit based in Philadelphia, Pa., became the most recent Army unit to receive NLCSs. Selected soldiers from the unit gathered January 6-9 at Fort Dix, N.J., for NLCS training, as well as instruction on how to train fellow soldiers to use the non-lethal equipment.

The 56SBCT is the first National Guard unit to be assigned NLCSs. The 28th Infantry Division, which includes the 56SBCT, is the Army's oldest division, with roots dating

back to Colonial times. However, the division's long traditions did not stop the soldiers of the 56SBCT from embracing new escalation-of-force options and non-lethal capabilities. Many soldiers volunteered to experience first-hand the X26 TASER® and trained on the newest technology.

With a combat deployment approaching, the soldiers expressed confidence that the NLCS may save a life.

"Using the Non-Lethal Capability Sets just might mean preventing injuries or taking a life," said Staff Sergeant Eric J. Hatton, platoon sergeant, Bravo Troop, 2/104th Cavalry.

Developing the NLCS

The progression of the NLCS reflects a joint effort across the Department of Defense. In 1998, the Army, with help from the Joint Non-Lethal Weapons Directorate (JNLWD), based in Quantico, Va., took the lead on the development of the NLCS. The product manager for Improvised Explosive Device Defeat/Protect Force under the Office of the Project Manager for Close Combat Systems (OPM CCS) manages the Army's NLCS program. Working closely together, OPM CCS; the Armament Research, Development and Engineering Center (one of the Army's premier armaments facilities); the JNLWD and ANSEC led the development of the NLCS.

The NLCS has gone through several modifications throughout its evolution. "This latest reconfiguration has resulted in fielding more responsive non-lethal products (to include training) to the warfighter on equipment and munitions in the NLCS," said Chico. "The end result is a reduced risk to warfighters through timely fielding, distribution and training of NLCS equipment and munitions."

Each Service has also developed variations of the sets tailored to specific groups and mission needs.

As the NLCS is fielded to more deploying units, non-lethal capabilities will continue to provide warfighters with a range of options for the diverse situations they face on the battlefields of Iraq and Afghanistan, helping them achieve mission objectives while minimizing fatalities and unnecessary damage to property.

For more information on the DoD Non-Lethal Weapons Program, visit <https://www.jnlwp.com>.