



5 Days of Military Exercise English Preparation Course for Cobra Gold

Jovelyn Q. Jundante

Acting English Teacher, Naval Medical Department, Royal Thai Navy, Bangkok

Corresponding Author: vaj_09@yahoo.com

For five consecutive years, Academic Affairs Division, Royal Thai Navy Medical Department offered Military Exercise English Preparation Course for aspiring Naval Medical personnel engaged on international cooperation. The first Military English course commenced in 2015 when it was taught for 60 hours in the span of two weeks. In 2017, Military English for International Fleet Review (IFR) was also conducted in preparation for the 50th Anniversary of ASEAN International Fleet Review which the Royal Thai Navy hosted in Pattaya, Chon Buri Province. Later on, Military Exercise English Preparation focused only on two exercises – CARAT (Cooperation Afloat Readiness and Training) and Cobra Gold for the reason that these two exercises take place every year so it is important for the Naval Medical personnel to be acquainted with the said exercises.

Just recently, Academic Affairs Division has successfully rendered a 30 hours Military Exercise English Preparation Course for Cobra Gold in Sattahip dated February 11th- 14th, 2020. It aims to prepare Naval Medical personnel for their future military exercise participation by providing them with certain practices they are expected to encounter during the exercise.

Cobra Gold is currently the largest Indo-Pacific, multinational military exercise held in the Kingdom of Thailand every year. It is among the largest multinational military exercises in which the United States participates with allied and partner nations.¹ Its stated goals are to improve the capabilities of participating nations to plan operations and conduct them together, build relationships and enhance maritime security and response to natural disasters.

Participants of this exercise come from many different countries so English plays a vital role. It becomes the official communication tool for all the participants to understand military planning process, terms, abbreviations and acronyms and to be able to manage military tasks.

As the lingua franca of military communication, English can help facilitate the necessary interconnection between individuals and organizations, between the national and the international, between the local and the global.² Thus, this Military Exercise English Preparation Course for Cobra Gold will not only provide the Naval Medical personnel the knowledge on military vocabularies and terminologies but more importantly, it will help them improve their English skills for international communication and develop their confidence so they will be able to communicate effectively in the language used in the military environment. In addition, upon completion of this course, the Naval Medical personnel will understand more clearly the different types of military exercises, particularly those in which the Royal Thai Navy participate, will master the art of making small talk and proper communication etiquette, be familiar with radio telephone procedures and develop skills in giving military briefing.

In order for you to have an idea about the course, I will elaborate details on how Military Exercise English Preparation is conducted on a day-to-day basis and the learning outcome of each topic and activities given.

Day 1: Introduction/ Getting Acquainted

This day is all about what you need to know about the course-background and objectives, outcomes, duration, instructors and guest speakers involved and the overall schedule of activities.

This encourages the Naval Medical personnel to gain facts and to get to know one another. Why is it important to get to know each other in the classroom? It is because they are more likely to participate in class discussion if they feel they are among friends.



On this day, Naval Medical personnel will have to present details of the following:

- **Basic facts:** Rank, name, the place where they were born and where they live now. Where are they from? What outside interests or hobbies do they have? What are their career goals?



- **Academic background:** What is their year in school and their major? What have they studied previously? What experiences do they have or how many years they have worked for the navy?
- **Skills and experience:** What they are currently doing or what department they are working?
- **Motivation:** Why are they enrolled in the course? What do they hope to learn?
- **Expectations:** What do they want to know about the course? What are their expectations?

The teachers also have certain activities to break the ice and take steps that will help the Naval Medical personnel to get to know one another.

Learning Outcome: By the end of this day, Naval Medical personnel will be able to be acquainted with the course, and will develop positive relationship to the teachers and their fellows. This will also develop their ability to talk in front of the class and therefore will improve their self-confidence.

Day 2: Small Talk/ Communication Etiquette

The ability to make small talk comfortably is one of the most desired objectives of almost any English learner. This lesson helps Naval Medical personnel learn



the art of small talk to address every situation especially in the military setting. It will also provide numerous strategies, techniques and examples of phrases and expressions used in showing interests on conversation, asking follow up questions, traditional greetings and saying goodbye and leave-taking.

Making small talk isn't as easy as it sounds; it isn't as challenging as it sounds either. Conversing with strangers can be awkward, stilted, even distressing, but there is an art to it, and it can be mastered!

Learning Outcome: By the end of this day, Naval Medical personnel will be able to identify appropriate small talk topics for making small talk, will learn how to begin or continue a brief conversation on several appropriate topics and will identify proper

etiquette in communication. In addition, they will improve their small talk skills that they can use in military setting and any given situation.

Day 3: Types of Military Exercises/ Military Acronyms, Terminology and Jargons

Military vocabulary and military abbreviations are essential to Cobra Gold Exercise planning. The participants should know and should have an idea of military acronyms, terminologies and jargons. It can be said that the more understanding of military vocabulary the participants have, the more effective exercise planning will be.



On this day, Naval Medical personnel will also learn various ranks and insignia from different military services. Understanding the rank and the structure of each service is important for the Naval Medical personnel to be familiar with and to distinguish differences of ranks in each service.

Learning Outcome: Naval Medical personnel will be equipped with the knowledge on military exercises and will have broader vocabulary for discussing military issues. Being familiar with ranks will help them the proper way of introducing a colleague to a higher ranking person or vice versa. Also, they will learn how to address different ranks which is very essential in any military exercise.

Day 4: Radio Telephone Procedures/ Overview of Cobra Gold

What will you say when someone calls over a radio telephone? If you can't relate to it yet, we will help you learn this skill. This day, Naval Medical personnel will gain useful information about radio telephone procedures which includes general operating procedures, proper manner in which a radio message is to be structured and sent, as well as the International Phonetic Alphabet used to avoid confusion and provide clarity when spelling words. Naval Medical personnel will practice and be trained using real radio telephones in the class and will definitely enjoy the drill.



Cobra Gold overview will also be presented so Naval Medical personnel will have the idea of the scope, the schedule of activities and other related matters with regards to Cobra Cold Exercise. Up to date information will be discussed in class by guest speakers who have expertise on the said topics.

Learning Outcome: Having essential information about the upcoming exercise is an advantage for the Naval Medical personnel to be able to perform their task effectively. On the other hand, learning radio telephone procedure will provide them with the basic knowledge to improve their skills in the use of radio communication which is one of the common means of communication in the military.

Day 5: Military Briefings and Culmination Activities

Briefings are necessary and ever-present element of communication in the military. It is the most efficient and common means to present information to commanders, staffers, soldiers or other specified audiences.

Naval Medical personnel will learn different types of military briefing as well as develop briefing skills- that is the ability to construct, organize and deliver an effective briefing, and to present ideas clearly.

Learning Outcome: By the end of this day, Naval Medical personnel will confidently present an information briefing on different military exercises which the Royal Thai Navy participates. It will provide them a thorough understanding of different military exercise and they will acquire tools and techniques to make briefing process easier, develop a method of answering questions and be prepared to handle any problem which may arise during the briefing. Learning the skills in giving military briefing is significant for anyone responsible for designing or delivering briefs to military or government audience.





Moreover, Naval Medical personnel are often engaged in meetings and conferences, therefore effective presentation skills obtained from this course will be of great benefit.

Military Exercise English Preparation Course is designed to help prepare and train aspiring Naval Medical Personnel to be ready to be deployed in military exercises by applying the knowledge and skills that they have acquired in the entire length of the course. Its approach to learning ensures progress through active participation and continuous language development.

Mastering English language has become essential for the global military citizens of the new era since they are supposed to operate as part of joint organizational structures coordinating air, land, maritime, space, and special operations.³

Naval Medical personnel may still encounter difficulties when using English both in their daily life and workplace but with constant practice and engaging yourself in Military English courses will definitely help you develop your intercultural competence and to be capable enough to carry out duties when assigned to join international cooperation. If you are often engaged in different military exercises, this course will definitely help you! So, we hope to see you on our future Military Exercise English Preparation courses.

Acknowledgement

The completion of Military Exercise English Preparation Course is made possible through the invaluable guidance and efficient teaching expertise of Rear Admiral Patchara Wat-aksorn. Currently, she works as a Language Advisor from the Office of the Royal Thai Navy Commander-in-Chief. Her effort in providing instructional materials, coordination with other guest speakers and her passion in sharing her knowledge and experiences to the Naval Medical personnel is greatly appreciated.

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