

## CIKEL USPOSABLJANJA BATALJONSKE BOJNE SKUPINE

### BATTLE GROUP TRAINING CYCLE

**Povzetek** Bataljonska bojna skupina (v kopenski vojski ZDA angl. *Task Force, NATO – Battle Group*) je orodje za izboljšanje bojnih zmogljivosti celotne Slovenske vojske, saj ne gre le za pehotni bataljon, temveč za enoto, ki vključuje vse zvrsti in nujno podporo. Cikel usposabljanja kot del operativnega cikla pomeni poslanstvo bataljonske bojne skupine, kar je skladno z določili Zakona o obrambi, Vojaške doktrine in drugih strateških dokumentov – ohranjanje pripravljenosti za zagotavljanje vojaške obrambe. Čeprav je ameriška kopenska vojska veliko večja, mora skozi enake stopnje kolektivnega usposabljanja bataljona kot bataljon SV, kar je tudi eden izmed vzrokov, da smo za primerjavo izbrali cikel bataljonskega usposabljanja kopenske vojske ZDA. Po drugi strani imajo ameriške enote več izkušenj z usposabljanjem in bojevanjem, SV pa veliko izkušenj z usposabljanji kopenske vojske ZDA. Za zagotovitev uspeha je treba jasno določiti seznam bistvenih nalog (SBN) za izvedbo poslanstva (Mission Essential Task List – METL), ki daje ustrezne usmeritve in podlago za razvoj načrta za usposabljanje enot (Unit Training Plan – UTP). Usposabljanje brez evalvacije je brez pomena, zato je evalvacija sklepna faza vsakega usposabljanja. Na podlagi predpisanega poslanstva, SBN in UTP ter jasnih evalvacijskih standardov smo usposabljanje bataljonske skupine SV primerjali s kopensko vojsko ZDA, da bi tako izboljšali cikel usposabljanja bataljonske skupine SV.

**Ključne besede** *Bojna skupina, cikel usposabljanja, poslanstvo enote, seznam bistvenih nalog za izvedbo poslanstva (METL), kolektivno usposabljanje.*

**Abstract** Battalion Battle Group (Bn BG) (U.S. Army term Task Force) is a tool to improve combat capabilities of the entire Slovenian Armed Forces, since it is not just an Infantry battalion, but it includes all the branches and support that comes with it. The main mission of the Bn BG is the training cycle as part of the operation cycle, which is in line with what Defence Law, Military Doctrine and other strategic documents stipulate – “maintaining

readiness to execute military defence”. Even though U.S. Army is a much larger force, it still has to go through the same stages of battalion collective training as SAF battalion, which is one of the reasons why U.S. Army battalion cycle was used as comparison. On the other hand it has much more training and war experience, and the SAF has a lot of experience with U.S. Army training. In order to be successful, it is necessary to have a clear Mission Essential Task List (METL), which gives guidance and constitutes a basis for the development of the Unit Training Plan (UTP). It is a waste to perform any training without evaluation, which is why BG evaluation is the final stage of every training. With the assigned mission and METL, developed UTP and clear evaluation standards, SAF Battalion BG training cycles were compared with the U.S. Army in order to improve SAF Bn BG training cycle.

**Key words** *Battle Group (BG), Task Force (TF), training cycle, unit mission, mission essential task list, collective training*

**Introduction** After the breakup of Yugoslavia in 1991, Slovenia initially adopted a conscript army, since that was the concept of the Yugoslav army, well known to the SAF. That was suspended completely in 2003, even though by 1997 the first professional battalion (Bn) was established. Another important event for the SAF was joining NATO in 2004, which gave the defence forces a new approach and a lot of things to be improved. The training of a professional force developed through the years and is still developing. The transition from hourly prescribed training for conscript soldiers, to a “mission command” type training is still underway. Currently, commanders of the units do not receive much guidance, except mission and organization, and since doctrine is evolving, it is hard to come up with a training plan that would match the available resources. This is critical today when the Slovenian Armed Forces (SAF) is facing drastic budget cuts.

Even though the SAF is composed of two manoeuvre Brigade Combat Teams (BCT's) in reality half of the size of a U.S. Army BCT, complemented with army aviation units, a naval detachment, Special Operations Forces unit and a Logistic Support Brigade with roughly 7,500 active and 1,500 reserve soldiers, training one Battle Group (BG) at a time is the main goal. BGs rotate between the two manoeuvres BCTs, which also provide direction, guidance, support and combat support elements for the battalion that they are developing. The BCT has a goal to both develop and train the BG or to have an operationally ready BG normally partly deployed to NATO operations like International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) or Kosovo Force (KFOR) or others. So while one of the Bn BG is training within one of the BCTs, the other one is operational in the other BCT. This rotation between BCTs is normally done within an 18-month cycle.

The Bn BG is not just the SAF's main training mechanism; it is also a tool to develop the whole Slovenian Armed Forces. Since there are all branches included in the multifunctional BG, this also provides a chance to develop their capabilities. It is a development concept for organizational, training, doctrine, equipment and other

perspectives. However, for the purpose of this research, only the training part was examined. Interoperability within the NATO structure is also one of the aspects that can be tested throughout the training and deployment cycle.

Within this concept of multifunctional BG, armies like the SAF can develop doctrine, organization, training, equipment, leadership, education, infrastructure, and interoperability. We can use this concept to develop all the elements of the SAF. Multifunctional BG also allow the SAF to execute a combined arms operations, like U.S. Marines do with the Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU), or the US Army does with BCTs. We can train for a joint fight with all the combat support multipliers all together with other services as well. Combat service support also has to be employed and developed as necessary.

Beside the manoeuvre infantry battalions, which are normally motorized with 6x6 or 8x8 Armoured Personal Carriers (APC), there are other elements such as; an artillery battery, combat engineer platoon, air defence platoon, reconnaissance -intelligence element, civil-military cooperation (CIMIC) and psychological operations (PSYOPS) group, nuclear biological and chemical (NBC) element and a Forward Support Company (FSC) logistic element. All of this is to be part of the multifunctional BG concept, not just to provide capabilities but also to provide a development basis for all different elements within the SAF.

The main question concerns training of the multifunctional BG from a qualitative perspective. Even though U.S. Army is a much larger force than the SAF, battalion training cycle still goes through similar stages in most of the armies in the Alliance. SAF training cycle can thus be compared with a US Army Infantry Bn/BCT. On the other hand, we have Infantry and Stryker BCTs. Even though they are larger in size, these units still execute the same stages of training and use an 8 x 8 Stryker APC like the SAF. Therefore, the main research question for this paper was: what improvements can be made to the training cycle or concept for training a multifunctional BG for the SAF?

The other research questions are: how can we improve the SAF's BG training cycle as part of the Army Force Generation Cycle (AFORGEN) comparing it with the US Army? What are the best situated missions and METLs to drive training and how to develop them? How to develop a Unit Training plan? How to evaluate BG readiness?

This research is significant for the whole SAF since it develops not just the multifunctional BG, but also all other elements. Addressing doctrine, organization, training, material, people, leadership, facilities (DOTMPLF), for each element of the BG drives the development for the whole SAF. Slovenia could build larger armed forces in case of emergency using multifunctional BGs with reintroducing conscription, which would provide an additional 25,000 troops. On the basis of the BG training cycle, the SAF would be able to generate and develop a force within relatively short period, if resourced properly.

Along with most of the armies of the Western countries, the SAF is also facing drastic budget cuts. Optimizing our training cycle with a common goal and understanding what drives our army as a whole, should make available resource use more efficient. Another assumption is that Slovenia as part of the NATO will not have all the capabilities of a larger army. That is one of the main reasons why we are part of the Alliance, and with this said it will develop what is needed with the resources that are currently available. Even though there are some thoughts to reduce the army, events like the ongoing refugee crisis in Europe prove again that small countries need a capable army to not only do its primary mission of national defence, but also to assist police and other agencies when security challenges are raised, or when natural disasters occur.

The scope of this paper is limited to the training of the multifunctional BG, since organization, doctrine, and other elements of DOTMPLF would be too extensive for this study. The SAF has conducted BG training cycles for almost ten years and is constantly changing and developing the cycle focusing predominantly on SAF experience.

## 1 METHODOLOGY

A qualitative research methodology was used to examine NATO and U.S. Army training doctrine and management systems in light of the requirements of the SAF, to determine improvements that should be made to the SAF multifunctional BG training cycle. This research will add to the literature on the topic, which is necessary to improve military readiness and leadership preparedness within the SAF and Slovenia's defence system.

The research process consisted of three main phases. The first phase consisted of the collection and selection of data and information. The second phase was identification of key areas of difference between current SAF multifunctional BG training cycles and U.S. Army and NATO training management systems and doctrine. These areas of difference provide substance for the assessment process. In the final phase, collected data and information were analysed and a clear and concise conclusion is proposed.

The ability to understand training quality and efficiency of resources was gained using doctrinal literature and documented empirical examples. Data was collected from the different training models and training examples. Qualitative analysis, first of doctrinal data and also of executive documents (different examples of BG training models), as well as training orders, BCT and Bn Commanders guidances and SOPs were included.

Documentation review was the first step to actually examine all available doctrinal publications and materials. It was first necessary to study in depth all the available documents regarding NATO training, SAF Bn training and then US Army Bn /BCT training. After that it was necessary to study BG cycles for the US Army IBCT and

Bn. All available U.S. Army publications were used, together with prior research that covered some aspects of training cycles. A part of this step was also a review of how to develop a mission, how we develop our training goals, and what tasks the SAF is supposed to train for. Both of the armies use Mission Essential Task List (METL), but the level of detail and the approach used to develop them is different. It was also important to study how the NATO Universal Task List (UTL) and Army Task List (ATL) impact certain METL.

In order to answer other research questions of “how to develop a Unit Training Plan,” part of the research was a review of how to plan battalion training in detail and provide resources. There are different models that are being followed for successful training plans. The U.S. Army and the SAF both have guidelines. The question is how can SAF improve or learn from the U.S. Army and improve SAF multifunctional battalion training cycles. Resources are another challenge, especially for smaller militaries like the SAF during an economic crisis. Different approaches with a common goal, to be better, and especially to be more efficient are even more important for smaller militaries. In the SAF, there is no standard model of resourcing the training cycle; a lot depends on the BG commander and his ability to influence decision makers. Resourcing training also depends on our NATO allies, mostly the US Army in Europe. Since the SAF does not have a BG training area and capabilities to develop an environment (HICON, role players, OC-T, etc.) to conduct a BDE seize exercise, the SAF tries to utilize U.S. BCT size exercises and align SAF training goals with theirs in order to maximize SAF training opportunities. The US Army is not dealing with those issues to such an extent, so finding better ways to improve SAF resourcing of the training cycle was another part of the subject of this research.

To address the main research question, this research focused on training cycles that are the most relevant to the needs of the SAF. Since Slovenia is a NATO member, NATO requirements must be met. According to NATO Bi-SC Capability codes and capability statements from Jan 2016 (NATO, Supreme Headquarters allied powers Europe, *BI-SC Capability codes and capability statements* (Mons, 2016), 65.), a Light infantry battalion should be able to:

Capstone capability statement: Capable of employing organic motorized infantry at battalion level (predominantly dismounted) in land tactical activities to deliver operational and strategic agility by exploiting light Protected Patrol Vehicles (PPV), which will provide basic protected mobility to ensure operational and strategic mobility.

Even though the concept of military training cycles has been around for a long time, there were significant changes through time. A long time ago for U.S. forces, and 15 years for SAF, military training was for conscript soldiers, which requires a completely different approach than with the training of professional soldiers. While conscript armies conduct training for a limited time, normally from 6 to 12 months which limits the level of professionalism and readiness, professional soldiers stay in

the SAF for at least 5 years (minimum contract for the SAF). This allows individuals and units to be better trained, not so much for individual skills, but definitely much better trained in collective tasks from platoon to brigade level.

The next step of this methodology was to examine the training cycle. The SAF multifunctional BG training cycle was examined and then the training cycle of a U.S. Army infantry battalion. It is necessary to determine the initial status of the unit entering the training cycle. All the individual training should be done and units should be from at least 90% to 100% in personnel and equipment. This screening criteria is necessary to ensure a valid evaluation between units and prevent making judgements based on units that are dissimilar. The examination of different kinds of training elements such as shooting, simulation training, situational and command post exercises (STX, CPX), provided a good basis for evaluation. The unit's training calendar for the whole training cycle, with all important training events, allows for examination of the differences between current SAF multifunctional battalion training cycles and U.S. Army and NATO training management systems and doctrine. The differences between SAF training cycle examples were based on different Unit Training Plans (UTP), where it is obvious which events including repetitions had been conducted.

The next important step is how to evaluate the readiness of a certain unit. This is tied to the secondary research question of "How to evaluate BG readiness." Training is all about achieving standards, so how do we determine if the units are trained to a certain standard? In the past, the US Army used the Army Training Evaluation Programs (ARTEP), which were exact measures for either confirming or denying readiness of certain units. Those were adopted also in the SAF, and were especially used at the SAF Combat Training Centre (CTC). So there is an institution in the SAF that it is in charge of training and more importantly certifying units within the SAF, either when achieving final readiness capabilities or as part of pre-deployment training. Most of the observer controller - trainers (OC-T) are trained by the US Army; however they can process just one company at a time. The U.S. Army can process at least BCT size element through its collective training programs at the NTC or JRTC at one time, together with all the combat multipliers. On the other hand, U.S. forces abandoned ARTEPs and are using just official reports from CATS, the so-called Training Evaluations and Objectives (TE&O). Within NATO, there are also different approaches to evaluation, as for example the Combat Readiness Evaluation (CREVAL) method, which is focused on higher headquarters such as corps and divisions. To determine what a better solution is for the SAF, it was necessary to study in depth and examine different examples to establish results of the different training cycles.

The third step of this methodology was to review the differences produced by different training cycles and the reasons behind them. This way the results produced by different armies, which conduct parts of the training cycle differently, can be examined. It provided some results with which the SAF multifunctional Bn training cycle could be improved.

The end result of this analysis was a set of recommendations to improve the SAF's multifunctional BG training cycle. It provided concrete solutions for certain challenges. This produced an optimum training cycle with a variation of possible sets of training events that make it better, possibly cheaper and more effective. This research methodology at the end presents a broad review of different factors affecting training cycles of the SAF, and US Army training cycles. A complete and thorough research of published publications and articles helped produce a comprehensive analysis, which provided several recommendations for improvement.

## 2 ANALYSIS

The first glance at the doctrine and documentation review in chapter two reveals that it is obvious that U.S. Army doctrine is much more prescriptive than SAF doctrine. This is understandable, since U.S. Army has significantly more resources and can afford more of them being dedicated for doctrine development. Another argument is also that the U.S. Army has much more experience in training a professional force, with the best evaluation – combat, which forces militaries to train better. The SAF on the other hand cannot afford a robust TRADOC element. It has had a professional force for only a good decade, and combat experience is very limited. Part of the SAF doctrine relies on the NATO alliance doctrine.

### 2.1 Assigning Mission and METL

The basis of the whole Bn training cycle is development of the mission statement. According to the SAF Manual for education and training, unit training has to be aligned with mission, METL and operational training cycle. For the battalion training cycle, the General Staff of the SAF is responsible for mission, organization and training standards according to the battalion Battle Group Directive. In the same above-mentioned directive, there are basically two missions: one is an “independent, self-sufficient, purposed built capability, which conducts joint combat of all the branches in full-spectrum operations for a certain period, and is capable of integration in the higher unit within the Alliance”, and the other (which is stated in Annex A of the same document), is national defence within the Alliance. This could easily be confused with the mission statement. However, it is just an extract of the SAF Doctrine (the highest doctrinal document of the SAF). The same directive also states that the mission will be provided by the SAF General Staff.

On the other hand, the U.S. Army uses three kinds of mission types, which allow training to focus on certain areas and can be used simultaneously for one unit. First of all, there is the core mission, which guides the overall training or the unit's primary task. The next one is the training mission, which guides short-term training; and there is the deployment mission, which is obviously used as guidance while training for deployment. They are all scoped by higher headquarters one level up, but are normally prepared by the unit itself. The core mission statement is used as an overarching statement. It provides a broad focus for training and is based upon the

unit design. It is important to stress that units are equipped, organized and skilled to provide capability for the entire army. For example, an infantry unit is primarily built for offensive, defensive and stability operations. So, normally, its mission would be to conduct decisive action as part of the land force operations to win the nation's war. The units could also change their mission from one phase to another, and thereby focus their training on certain areas. For example, in the first phase, units could focus on offense, while in the next on defence. According to the focus of the training, units could also have temporary short-term missions. Tasks or capabilities for a certain type of the unit can be found in the CATS. There is a long list of tasks, and since all of the tasks cannot be performed by every unit, the army uses METL to focus the training.

While SAF units have great flexibility with assigning METL to certain units, the U.S. Army has developed METL all the way from BDE down to the company level. Before 2005, U.S. Army units could develop their own METLs according to the mission, but that caused issues with tracking readiness and the use of different resources. Therefore, the U.S. Army assigned METL tasks to BCTs. However, this proved so much better that the U.S. Army assigned METL tasks all the way down to the company level. Again, similar as with the mission, units could have three sets of METLs. The base one that supports the core mission is the core METL (CMETL), which normally supports overall training. When a certain unit would be assigned with a concrete deployment, that unit could shift its training with a new METL, called the deployment METL (DMETL).

BN METL	A/B/C Company METL
Conduct Mission Command (ART 5.0)	Conduct Mission Command (ART 5.0)
Conduct an Attack (07-6-1092)	Conduct an Attack (07-TS-2112)
Conduct a Defense (71-8-7222)	Conduct a Defense (07-TS-2113)
Conduct Area Security (07-6-1272)	Conduct Area Security (07-TS-2114)
Conduct Stability Operations (07-TS-1004)	Conduct Stability Operations (71-TS-2115)
HHC (Headquarters Co) METL	FSC (Forward Support Co) METL
Establish the Battalion Command Post (71-TS-1205)	Perform Company HQ Functions (T63-S-2098)
Execute the Operations Process (71-TS-1201)	Conduct Maintenance Platoon Operations (63-TS-3398)
Conduct PLT Zone Reconnaissance (17-TS-3103)	Conduct Distribution Platoon Operations (63-TS-3392)
Conduct PLT Screen (17-TS-3604)	Establish Unit Area (63-TS-2094)
Employ Fires (71-TS-1077)	Conduct Air Delivery Operations (63-TS-2096)
Conduct Medical PLT Operations (71-TS-2124)	
Conduct BN FM Retransmission Communication Support (71-TS-1211) Example of the U.S. Army infantry Bn METL (SAF examples are used and explained in text)	

The SAF Manual for education and training reads that the METL should support the war-time mission. When studying previous training cycles in the SAF, this was frequently not the case. For example, we can find tasks such as Humanitarian Assistance, which is obviously not a war-time mission. Another example is force protection. Even if it is a very important task that the unit has to perform, it is an activity in every unit, not a task, and as such it does not focus its training. On the other hand, warfighting tasks such as occupying an assembly area, alarming and movement, and tactical movement are basic and lower level tactical tasks and again do not scope the BG training which they should.

Even though the CREVAL determines the areas of evaluations, it cannot be confused or used as a METL, which should drive the training. The same goes for the ARTEPs in U.S. Army. ARTEPs too are not used as METLs, even though their tasks can be used for evaluation purposes. In one of the examples of the training cycles in the SAF, CREVAL was used as a base for assigning METL. It is clear that the unit did not train according to their METL, but according to the evaluation, which is wrong. One of the examples of the METL is Plan and Conduct education, training, and exercises. This is obviously what a unit has to do, but it is not guiding or focusing training in any direction or area.

“Resources cannot limit the METL,” says the same manual. Even though this is annoying to every commander, units should conduct battle-focused training and the higher unit should assign resources. It is hard nowadays to follow this training principle, but it is important that commanders do not hinder their unit’s training. Resources are critical; they should not be in question. The SAF should estimate how much money is spent for the training cycle, and that amount should be provided for every Bn in the training cycle. This principle can be used as an argument to get the needed resources and conduct training.

Another important METL fact is that a unit’s METL has to be aligned with the higher unit’s METL. This sometimes causes problems in the SAF, since the BDEs normally do not participate as part of the training cycles, and their METL focuses on their peacetime mission, which is again wrong according to the doctrine. Nowadays, the SAF BCT headquarters assumes an “admin” role. They focus on day-to-day business, and training is their last concern. Excuses, such as that they have to write reports for higher; that they do not have time to deploy out to the field, since they have to deal with regular day-to-day business, are obviously shallow. If they were deployed in the field for exercises they would be able to perform their core job, and reports and day-to-day business would disappear, or those that are necessary would be done in the field since they would have more time. So it is important to stress that not only admin but also training of the higher HQ of the BG, should be conducted. At the end of the day, the superior commander is the one that signs and approves the METL for a subordinate unit. In this case, the BCT commander has to make sure that the BCT and BG METL are aligned.

Even though the SAF has no aircraft to deploy soldiers with parachutes or helicopters to conduct airborne operations, units like to assign such tasks to their METLs. In U.S. Army, this is impossible, since tasks and METLs follow the organization and Table of Organization and Equipment) TOE. So, if you do not have that equipment you cannot have that task. On the other hand, the SAF also does not have an establishment to train instructors, which would then train units. Again, equipment is completely different if you are jumping from an aircraft or marching or using an APC on the battle field. It is interesting that the SAF realized that our helmets were not suited for parachute jumps, since that was not the requirement when the SAF ordered them. So, how can one of the METL tasks be air assault, if the SAF does not have this ability, equipment or transport aircraft? On the other hand, it is important to stress that this kind of operation also changes the whole concept of the unit; support has to be air dropped too and logistical supplies as well.

A lot of times, the SAF battalion training cycles forget to establish a METL for the headquarters. Even though company units are the focus of the training and the battle, headquarters elements also have to have METLs that will focus their training. In this case, mission command or command and control would be one of the main tasks for headquarters. Integrating all the elements of the unit, not just companies, but combat support elements and service support elements as well must be a key function of the training cycle.

METL is just another step in the training development. It should be followed by supporting tasks development, battle drills that support collective tasks, crew drills and individual skills. This together with other trainings such as shooting, key leader training and others should develop a unit training plan, which is basically a training calendar. In the SAF, developing the METL is the last step when developing collective training; it should be followed by development of supporting tasks, battle drills, crew drills, and individual training.

According to this analysis SAF should prescribe METL not just down to companies as the U.S. Army does, but all the way down to platoons, since platoons are elements of the BG. This should be done by the General Staff, since the BG is the SAF primary manoeuvre capability and not the BCT. The SAF BCT has to be part of the Bn training cycle, even if the other two battalions and other support elements are not fully capable. It is still necessary to develop BCT capabilities especially within BCT headquarters, since they became “admin” instead of fighting headquarters, because the BCT may be called to support a national defence mission.

## 2.2 Developing Unit training Plan

When mission and METL are assigned to specific units, it is time to develop Unit Training Plan (UTP). UTP will include cascade key training events, mainly including tactical training and shooting activities. Other training events such as key-leader development, staff rides, NCO time are part of the training as well. Units will produce a long-term plan, but the focus with all the details will be for the next

quarter. As soon as the brief to the superior commander is done and he approves the training calendar, it is time for the execution phase.

The handbook for training headquarters and units in the SAF does not prescribe; it only recommends roughly how the training should be conducted. Since it is only a recommendation, the majority of the units will not follow it; they will produce their own training cycle, which causes confusion. Additionally, the BCT HQ and the General Staff as superior authorities do not have an oversight of how the training is conducted. The end result is training, and the use of resources is not very efficient. Even though we have a simulation centre and a CTC, they are rarely part of the training cycle, and even when they are, it is more individual effort than a part of the concept (see Picture 1, p. 113).

When analysing two SAF Bn BG cycles and comparing them to U.S. Army, it is clear that one cycle is very different from another. This is a proof that there are no major prescribed directions on how to conduct the SAF Bn BG training cycle, what the key events are and how to progress from one level of collective training to another. It is also obvious that the amount of time spent in the field as one of the metrics, differs from one to another. It is impossible to train a SAF battalion to a standard, if during one of the cycles, the unit spent only 16 days in the field, not to mention missing the entire virtual and gaming environment in addition to all the training in the field.

Another important thing within the training cycle is the progression of the training. As we can see with the U.S. Army, it is clear that a unit first has to conduct a Tactical Exercise without Troops (TEWT), followed or concurrent with the virtual or gaming example, which saves resources. When this is satisfactory, a unit progresses to Situational Training Exercise (STX), which includes environments designed for a specific event or task, and can be repeated multiple times, as long as the unit does not feel confident with the achieved training standards. Only then a unit is prepared should it conduct a Field Training Exercise (FTX), where they combine all the events in ongoing “Force on force” exercise. For headquarter elements, it is important to practice their procedures before going out in the field. Command Post Exercises (CPXs) are a great tool to drill staff procedures. Only when a unit has mastered their staff procedures, they can command and control subordinate units on the ground. In addition to a CPX, as we can see from the table, there are Communication Exercises (COMEX) and Fire Coordination Exercises (FCX). First is making sure that units are proficient in using their signal procedures and equipment, and the other one that units know how to best utilize their fire support assets.

Live Fire Exercises (LFXs) are important part of the collective training, besides being the culmination of the training; they assure self-confidence in the troops. They are progressive from individual all the way to company, sometimes even battalion level training. Important part of the LFX is also integration of the combat support elements. It is important for combat troops and combat support troops to develop training where they combine skills of combat troops, with the skills of other

supporting troops. The synchronization of different levels of combat support to the smaller unit on the ground is one of the goals.

But the most important element when creating a training calendar is an integration and synchronization of all the training within one unit and with available supporting units. First planners have to take into consideration that training just one unit after another, without other supporting players is a wasted training opportunity. It is important to integrate combat units and support units, since they will be in battle together. First are the units within the same battalion, such as manoeuvre companies and reconnaissance platoon, maintenance platoon, etc. We have to use one event to combine and train as much as we can different units. When this is done, planners should also think about who are the available combat multipliers, such as field artillery and close air support. This adds a new dimension to the training, even though it is sometimes challenging, it is not just worth trying but almost obligatory. The last part of the training plan is the synchronization of all the training troops, into a single training event or exercise.

## 2.3 Training Evaluation

The U.S. Army uses TO&Es for evaluating collective training as part of training development. They are prescribed for each task and are part of the Combined Arms Training Strategy (CATS). The U.S. Army has formal and informal evaluations, which can be done internally or externally. It is known that training without evaluation is a wasted training. The primary evaluators for their units are their commanders. However, formal evaluation is done two levels down (company commander evaluates squads). The next level of evaluation includes the CTC, National training Centre (NTC) or Joint military training Centre (JMRC). These are not the establishments to train troops, but to evaluate them with Mission Readiness Exercises (MRX).

According to AR 350-1, commanders must use Army Training Management System (ATMS), Digital Training Management System (DTMS) continuously to determine the unit's proficiency in mission essential tasks. A unit is proficient when it performs to standard all the METs with supporting tasks evaluated by Standards in Training Commission (STRAC)/CATS. The evaluation encompasses mission command, live fire, and technical/tactical manoeuvre.

Another part of the units' evaluations are the Certification Training Exercises (CTE). These are formal evaluations conducted by external evaluators, normally in the CTCs. According to JBLM Reg. 350-1, all brigade combat teams and multifunctional brigades are required to conduct a CTE before entering the available phase of the ARFORGEN cycle (Department of the Army, Headquarters, I CORPS, *Leader development and Training management*, (Washington, 2013), 5-1) In order to do this, CTCs will be utilized with Warfighter Exercises (WFX) as their (BCTs) CTE.

Similar to the U.S. Army doctrine, the SAF doctrine also assigns responsibility to commanders. It is their final say to confirm whether a unit is trained or untrained

according to its mission and METL. Again, the SAF has the same types of evaluations which are formal or informal, and internal or external. Another important document in the SAF that specifies the evaluation of the Bn BG, is the Bn BG Directive from 2015. It specifically specifies that SAF will use NATO prescribed Combat Readiness Evaluation (CREVAL) for BG evaluations. The SAF has therefore officially prescribed BG evaluations. However, the evaluations of companies and subordinate combat support and service support elements are not prescribed. CTC uses Army Training and Evaluation Program (ARTEPs) as a tool for evaluations, which is considered as detailed enough to state that a unit is trained (T) or untrained (U), since CREVAL is a more administrative “Check-the-block”-type evaluation. It is necessary to prescribe the lower part of the evaluation as well; it should not be left up to the individual evaluator.

As we can see, all three main parts of the evaluations have space for SAF BG improvements. First there is assigning proper mission and METL, even though the SAF uses similar principals, the outcomes can be very different from those in the U.S. Army. Then, there is the design of the training calendar or the UTP. Two major improvements should include the progression of the training with key events, and integration of combat support and service support in the training cycle. The last part of the analysis focused on the evaluation. Here, CREVAL is again prescribed, the attaining of training standards in subordinate units is left up to commanders.

## **Conclusion and recommendations**

The mission drives focused training together with METL. It is impossible to be trained in all AUTL tasks for the infantry battalion, and there is also no need to be; not to mention the limitations of time and resources. That is why militaries came up with the concept of focused training. Since the “mission command” approach to training is new, together with a professional force, SAF is looking for other perspectives in order to improve their own training. Since the U.S. Army has a lot of experience and resources, the author used their approach to conduct training within the infantry battalion and BCT as a comparative model.

The first step of every unit training is the assigning of a mission and METL development. Sometimes, this is confusing in the SAF, since the units use mission where it should not be used, and, where it should be used, it is used incorrectly. In order to clarify this confusion, it is thus necessary to distinguish between core mission, training mission and deployment mission. The core mission is used for every unit no matter if they train for deployment or they just perform day-to-day duties. The units that are in any kind of training cycle can use a training mission, and those who are getting ready to deploy, can use a deployment mission focusing their training on the area where they are going to be deployed.

An METL focuses training in even more detail than the mission. It focuses their training tasks into five areas according to the TO&E. There can be again different sets of METLs, such as core METL or key tasks, training METL and deployment METL. This would prevent confusion of what is the day-to-day METL or key task,

and what is their training METL, which could also be deployment METL. However, the main part of METL development is not the METL itself; it is the tasks that should be developed in order to support the METL. In the SAF, those supporting tasks are often not developed at all; especially regarding headquarters and staff METL. Supporting tasks should further be supported by other collective tasks that support main tasks. These should further be supported by battle drills at different levels, and crew drills whenever we are talking about combat vehicles or weapon systems. In the end, all of these tasks should be supported by individual skills and training, which all together assure that a unit performs to standard. So, in order to understand and develop training programs according to the concept that we adopted, the SAF should train its personnel within career courses and develop detailed guidance on how to develop training calendars.

The mission and METL are useless or at least limited if units do not have a proper training plan or calendar. With a detailed guidance on how to develop training from individual, crew, battle drill, and collective training, the substance (what to train) should be resolved. The next step would be putting the whole training package into the unit training plan or calendar. It is important to stress that the progression of training, especially collective training, is the key. The SAF should prescribe key events within the training plan and those should be logically followed step by step.

The SAF should improve collective training management and execution in order to use resources more efficiently. The TEWT is the basic step in collective training. It is a waste of resources if a battalion goes out in the field when the key leaders are not on the same page. They need to be aligned with each other's training goals horizontally and vertically. Even though the SAF has some of the virtual/gaming/constructive possibilities, units rarely use them. The next phase of the training cycle should be the STX, training events designed for a special task to be conducted. When all the collective tasks are mastered with STXs, then it is time for FTXs. Those should be used to assist the commanders to be able to find shortfalls and focus on them in this phase. LFX are conducted concurrently with all the collective training at various levels (individual up to battalion). When all the technical and tactical knowledge is gained, units should be focusing on integrating the training for the whole Bn BG. Again, before they go out in the field, a CPX should be the first step to synchronize units with the battalion HQ. Only when this is complete, should the battalion conduct an FTX.

There are also other types of exercises which assist units in maintaining and training without using a great amount of limited resources. Each unit should conduct a COMEX during the training cycle and later when the unit is in the available phase, to maintain its readiness. Another type of battalion training is an FCX, which makes sure that the battalion-level fire support is synchronized and used properly. Each unit should also conduct an FCX during the training cycle and in the available phase to maintain readiness.

With these directed key training events it would also be easy to assign and track the required resources. It would define minimum days to spend in the field and also how much finance is needed to conduct training. As for the field training, U.S. Army battalion commanders estimated at one of the symposiums that 30 days of uninterrupted training is a minimum requirement for every battalion collective training. On the other hand, it would make training more efficient, since it would not allow units to conduct battalion or company FTXs, if they had not conducted TEWT, STX, and possibly virtual training, before any FTX. It would also minimize communications issues in the field by using a COMEX and fire coordination confusion with an FCX.

Training of the headquarters is often neglected, since HQs are dealing with admin issues while manoeuvre units are conducting training in the field. By directing that battalion and also BCT HQs conduct at least a CPX and possibly a Staff Exercise (STAFFEX) prior to an FTX, it would again minimize HQ issues and synchronize staff procedures before deploying in the field with the whole battalion. This kind of training using their METL, should focus battalion HQ training and their efforts to achieve proficiency together with manoeuvre units. The TEWT, COMEX and FCX are primary concerns of the battalion HQ, in addition to the CPX, and STAFFEX mentioned above. The SAF BG HQ should also consider other types of HQ training, such as logistical exercises (LOGEX) and deployment exercises (DEPEX), since this is the highest level HQ that will be deployed by the SAF.

The SAF should improve the integration and synchronization of combat support and service support unit training with manoeuvre unit training. The main part of developing an effective and efficient training cycle for the SAF multifunctional BG, is integration and synchronization of combat support and service support units. Since the SAF multifunctional BG consists of manoeuvre units along with other vital support, it is crucial for supporting elements and manoeuvre units to understand and train together, so each understands what the other elements can bring to the fight. So whenever a combat unit is scheduled to perform training in the field, there should be an opportunity to consider what kind of support element could be included in their training event. Integration and synchronization will also save a lot of money. Instead of conducting five separated training events, units should integrate their training goals in one training event. This would greatly improve training efficiency.

The SAF should improve the evaluation of training events. It is a waste of training if there is no evaluation to determine if the training has been done to standard or if the training objectives have been met. Evaluations could be done in the form of AARs or formal external evaluation, but everyone will benefit more from training if an analysis of some kind is conducted. As for the evaluation of SAF multifunctional BG, the NATO methodology using CREVAL has been adopted since the SAF is part of NATO. The one part that the SAF has to improve with CREVAL is how to implement it; to determine who is responsible and who will help them out. For example, the CTC is responsible for evaluation, and since they do not have enough

resources and manpower, it is necessary to reinforce them with observer controllers. These additional observer controllers should be from a unit that has done a CREVAL before. Neither should the CREVAL just be a “check-the-block” thing, but should include a quality approach. That means that it is not enough for a unit to have an SOP for operating in an NBC environment; the evaluation should also determine if it works, i.e. if the units are able to conduct operations in an NBC environment.

Since the CREVAL is more of a HQ evaluation methodology, training units also have to be proficient in tactical and technical skills and procedures. Since there is nothing to officially say that certain units are capable of performing METL tasks, it is necessary to prescribe an evaluation procedure which certifies platoons and companies as well. The SAF uses ARTEPS for evaluation of units up to the battalion level, but they are not officially prescribed for the Bn. Although only commanders can say at the end of the day, if a unit is ready or not, sometimes in the case of the SAF this is not enough. As discussed above regarding the mission and METL relationship with the development of the unit training plan, ARTEPS should also be prescribed for certification or evaluation of subordinate units. Directed use of CREVAL for the battalion HQ, and ARTEPs for the platoons and companies, would result in more realistic evaluation and consequently a more effective training.

This research not only gave the author an insight into different approaches to training cycles, but also offers a number of improvements for SAF training. The SAF will never have resources to develop a training management system such as the U.S. Army has; however, these findings should serve as the basis for a new SAF training directive or at least training guidance for a new multifunctional Bn Directive. NATO provides strategic and operational guidance, technical execution of training is up to the member countries. If the SAF adopts the recommendations from this research, it can greatly improve the efficiency and effectiveness of training for its multifunctional Bn BG which will allow the SAF to better fulfil its responsibilities.

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Slika 1:  
Glavna  
usposabljanja  
pripradnikov  
stalne sestave  
(I/C/S-  
individualno/  
skupno/  
oddelčno,  
PLT-vod,  
CO-četa,  
BN-bataljon)

Figure 1:  
Main training  
events of the Active  
Component  
Training Cycle  
(I/C/S-Individual/  
Collective/  
Squad,  
PLT-Platoon,  
CO Company,  
BN-Battalion)

