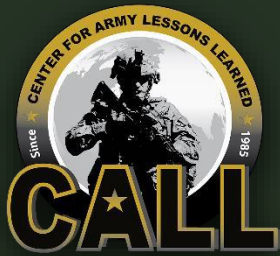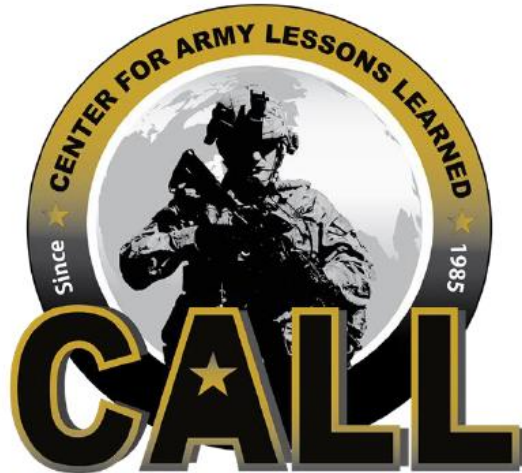# NEWS FROM THE FRONT

Oct 2019

How the Kosovo Security Force Built a Successful
Lessons Learned Program
Oct 2019

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How the Kosovo Security Force Built a Successful Lessons Learned Program

Introduction

Today, the Kosovo Security Force (KSF) has an exemplary lessons learned program that continuously contributes to improving its training and operational performance. The KSF's successful lessons learned program did not happen overnight, but developed over a period of almost 5 years with continual senior leadership support, outside assistance from the United States Army's Center for Army Lessons Learned (CALL), and its own internal, progressive improvements to its program. The following tells the story of how the KSF established and sustained its lessons learned program. The KSF's experience in instituting its lessons learned program can serve as a model for other armies or land forces to emulate.

KSF Leadership

The KSF leadership is the driving force behind the KSF's successful lessons learned program. In 2012, the KSF Commander issued a command directive to create and formalize a lessons learned program within the KSF. The command directive provided guidance to KSF commanders at all levels regarding the establishment and organization of a KSF lessons learned program, and most importantly, set the tone and emphasis for the establishment of a lessons learned culture within the KSF. The directive told KSF commanders at all echelons that a lessons learned system offers them and their units "the possibility to learn from their and others' success and mistakes" and when effective, "encourages positive activity and prevents recurrence of errors."

Shortly following the issuance of the Command Directive, the KSF Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC) published the KSF Lessons Learned Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) aimed at describing in detail the organization, functions, and responsibilities for the KSF lessons learned program. The SOP describes the KSF lessons learned process as a four-step process leading to lessons learned implementation and issue resolution. The four-step process, "collecting observations, analysis, approval/action, and validation and implementation" is depicted below (see Figure 1). A key event in the process is the activation of a Lessons Learned Working Group (LLWG) whose role is to conduct analysis of observations to determine KSF best practices and issues using the capability factors of doctrine, organization, training, materiel, leadership and education, personnel, facilities, policy and interoperability (DOTMLPF-PI). "Interoperability" is from the NATO DOTMLPF-I capability factors.
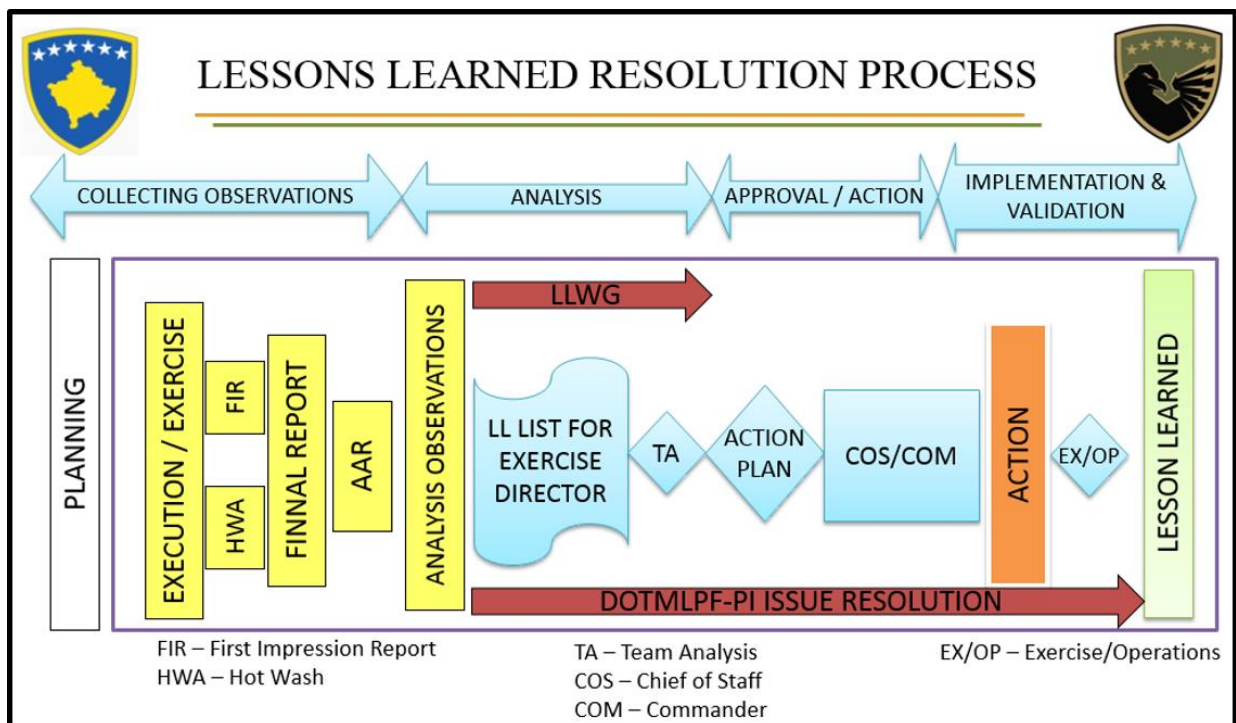

Figure 1. KSF Lessons Learned Resolution Process

KSF and the Center for Army Lessons Learned (CALL)

The KSF's desire to improve its lessons learned program began in September 2014 when the KSF Commander requested a team from CALL to provide the KSF Lessons Learned Program with advice and assistance in order to further improve its capabilities. The KSF Commander specifically sought CALL's assistance to improve the KSF's lessons learned process so it could effectively take the next step to identify and resolve KSF DOTMLPF-PI issues. The KSF's lessons learned process was functioning to collect observations and lessons; however, conducting the analysis to facilitate DOTMLPF-PI effected change still presented a challenge for its lesson learned process.

Working with the KSF TRADOC through the US Embassy's Office of Defense Cooperation (ODC), CALL and KSF TRADOC jointly developed a path of lessons learned cooperation. This path consisted of three phases over a 2-year period, to help the KSF in enhancing the effectiveness of its lessons learned program aimed primarily at identifying and closing KSF DOTMLPF-PI capability gaps, per the KSF Commander's guidance. The KSF TRADOC leadership and CALL agreed to leverage the existing KSF lessons learned process, shown in Figure 1, as it was in place and functioning, to elevate it to the next level to identify and solve KSF DOTMLPF-PI issues.

KSF's and CALL's Three Phases of Lessons Learned Cooperation

The three phases unfolded on an annual basis from October 2014 through November 2016. The first phase, conducted in October 2014 entitled "Lessons Learned Academics," was a seminar facilitated by two CALL analysts with participating KSF leaders and lessons learned personnel. The next two phases, considered the most

important, were lessons learned practicums occurring during the 2015 Eagle IV and

2016 Eagle V exercises where KSF lessons learned personnel, assisted by CALL

analysts, in a field exercise environment applied the collection and analysis phases of

lessons learned and entitled as a practicums. The three phases are depicted below

followed by a discussion of each phase (see Figure 2).
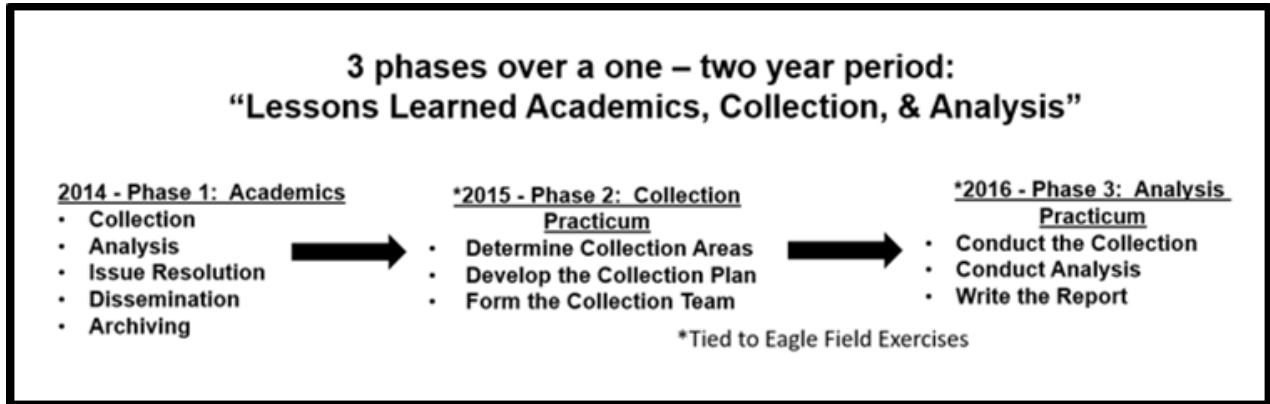
Figure 2. KSF and CALL Lessons Learned Improvement Program

Phase 1: Lessons Learned Academics

Phase 1, Lessons Learned Academics, was a 3-day seminar, facilitated by two

CALL analysts, tailored to the existing KSF lessons learned program. The Academics

were designed to demonstrate to KSF lessons learned personnel how the lessons

learned process, through the collection and analysis of observations, can effectively

identify DOTMLPF- PI best practices and issues to drive positive performance change

within the KSF (see Figure 3).

Lessons Learned (LL'd) Academics

Day 1	Day 2	Day 3

• CALL Overview Brief
• Importance of LL'd
  in an Army/Land Forces
• LL'd Terms of Reference
• US Army vs NATO Lessons
  LL'd Programs
	• After Action Reviews
	• Role of the Observer
	• Develop the Collection Plan
	• Analysis of Observations
		• Issue Resolution Process
		• Conduct Analysis
		• Archiving
		• Dissemination

Figure 3. Lessons Learned Academics

Day 1: The seminar's first day began with a CALL overview brief aimed at

showing seminar students the mission, organization, and processes of an established

and functioning lessons learned program and how it drives positive change within the

US Army. A key point of the presentation was that CALL's lessons learned program is a

formal, Army-sanctioned program governed by an Army Regulation (AR 11-33), "The

Army Lessons Learned Program," serving the purpose of integrating and implementing

lessons and best practices within Army doctrine, organization, training, materiel,

leadership and education, personnel, facilities, and policy (DOTMLPF–P). This key point

served as a transition to the second presentation that highlighted why lessons learned is

an important function within an Army. CALL analysts provided KSF participants several

historical and contemporary examples from recent conflicts of how lessons identified by

CALL enhanced the operational performance of Army units and most importantly, saved

lives. The third presentation reinforced lessons learned terminology by reviewing the

basic lessons learned terms of reference and their respective definitions such as

observe, collect, analyze, issue resolution, and disseminate. CALL analysts discussed

the DOTMLPF-PI framework and warfighting functions and how these both play an

important role in categorizing observations for DOTMLPF-PI analysis to identify best

practices and issues. Day 1 concluded with a discussion of the NATO Lessons Learned Program and how it contrasts with that of CALL's. The main difference between the two is that NATO's process is passive in nature where CALL's is active. CALL actively collects observations by deploying collection teams to exercises and actual operations. CALL also has Military Analysts, known as Military Analysts Forward (MAF), in each of the Army Service Component Commands (ASCC) who actively collect observations.

Day 2: Day 2 was highlighted by CALL analysts facilitating discussions pertaining to After Action Reviews (AAR), collection planning and execution, and analysis. A critical part of the AAR discussion was explaining why AARs are conducted and the contribution AARs make towards promoting a sharing knowledge sharing culture and learning in a non-retribution environment within an Army organization. Also emphasized is why AARs are an excellent source of observations, especially when conducted immediately after a training event or an actual operation. Observations from AARs serve as baseline from which analysts can conduct DOTMLPF-PI analysis to identify best practices and issues in an Army organization. Finally, CALL analysts discussed the difference between both formal and informal AARs, when they are used, and the preparation involved to productively execute them.

Collection planning was the next topic discussed and students were introduced to the two types of collection used by observers, direct and indirect, and how they are both used to collect information through active and passive means. A key part of the collection planning discussion focused on the observer whose role is to engage with a unit during training or operations in order to collect observations. Experienced analysts must train observers beforehand on collection techniques, especially writing a proper

observation that effectively captures it in an issue, discussion, and recommendation format. CALL analysts also discussed the steps involved in forming and training a collection team of observers and how to develop an observer collection plan for a training exercise or an actual operation.

CALL analysts' final discussion focused on analysis of collected observations. CALL analysts discussed qualitative and quantitative techniques, showing how an observation can be categorized under one or more warfighting functions and how DOTMLPF-PI elements apply to the observation that is further used to determine unit DOTMLPF-PI trends and gaps. CALL analysts then showed students examples of CALL collection reports, known as Initial Impression Reports that were the output of a CALL organized collection detailing key observations and their associated DOTMLPF-PI recommendations.

Day 3: CALL analysts highlighted the Lessons Learned Issue Resolution process emphasizing it as the most important function for driving positive change in an Army. Senior leaders should have a practical means of resolving and implementing lessons learned to improve an Army organization's DOTMLPF-PI performance. CALL analysts introduced students to CALL's DOTMLPF-PI issue resolution process to show how leadership, institutions, and issue stakeholders come together to methodically solve issues affecting the Army. Analysts showed examples of how the US Army's issue resolution process, facilitated by CALL, functioned to effectively resolve several challenging Army issues.

For the final discussion of the day, CALL analysts discussed the important role of archiving and disseminating of lessons learned information. Over time, a lessons

learned organization continually collects and archives into its database a wealth of lessons learned information to include AARs, Initial Impression Reports, and many other documents associated with lessons learned. The archived information is valuable to analysts for research, analysis, and answering requests for information that originate from around the Army. Analysts discussed various methods and models for archiving and disseminating lessons learned information that includes the use of databases, lessons learned networks, publications, seminars, social media, and professional military education.

Phases 2 and 3: Eagle Exercises 4 and 5

The KSF annually conducts a major field exercise, entitled Eagle Exercise #, to train its land forces on potential missions such as a natural disaster and refugee control, as was the case respectively with 2015's Eagle Exercise 4 and 2016's Eagle Exercise 5. The Eagle exercises provide the KSF an opportunity to both plan and execute a major training exercise. During the planning phase, the KSF employs the military decision making process (MDMP) from brigade through battalion level and troop leading procedures (TLP) at company level and below. During the exercise's execution phase, a Master Scenario Events List (MSEL) drives incidents/situations on the ground designed to achieve exercise training objectives. The KSF forms and employs observer-controller (OC) teams to collect on both phases giving KSF leaders and units feedback on KSF unit capabilities across all of its warfighting functions from a DOTMLPF-PI perspective in a field operating environment.

Eagle Exercise 4: Collection Practicum

The KSF TRADOC Lessons Learned Team, assisted by two CALL analysts, planned and executed the collection practicum during the 2015 KSF Eagle 4 Exercise. The objective of the collection practicum was to develop an observation collection plan and execute it during Eagle 4. The Eagle 4 Exercise was a 2-week disaster relief exercise driven by a fictitious earthquake scenario. During the exercise's first week, KSF brigades and battalions conducted MDMP planning followed by a second week of disaster relief execution in a field environment.

The US Army Security Assistance Training Management Organization (SATMO) advisory team assisted the KSF in establishing and training an OC team to collect observations from both the MDMP and field phases of the exercise. The KSF OC Team focused its collection on the warfighting functions of mission command, movement and maneuver, and sustainment, providing KSF leadership DOTMLPF-PI feedback on the performance of its units during the exercise.

KSF TRADOC fielded a lessons learned team to work jointly with the KSF OC Team to collect observations using a pre-planned collection plan. The KSF Lessons Learned Team consisted of a team chief and nine KSF officers. Two CALL analysts worked closely with the lessons learned team prior to the exercise, assisting team members in developing a collection plan that collected observations organized by warfighting functions and designed to collect on KSF DOTMPLF-PI related issues and Master Scenario Events List (MSEL) driven exercise events.

Key inputs that went into building the Eagle 4 Exercise collection plan were previous Eagle Exercise AARs, Exercise Director's Training Objectives, KSF Land Force Commander's Exercise Guidance and the United States Army Universal Task List

(AUTL). The AUTL served as an excellent reference for the KSF Lessons Learned Team by providing it a comprehensive listing of universal Army tasks and missions performed by tactical units in a civil disaster operation during both planning and execution. The tasks formed the basis of the collection plan's questions.

Prior to the start of the exercise, the KSF lessons learned team provided the OC team its exercise collection plan. The collection plan's inputs helped focus the OC team's collection efforts on DOTMLPF-PI areas of interest. During the entire exercise, the KSF lessons learned and OC teams collaborated closely, holding daily meetings, to ensure they stayed synchronized with each other's exercise collection activities and objectives.

At the exercise's conclusion, the OC team had collected numerous observations from AARs it facilitated during both the MDMP and execution phases of the Eagle 4 Exercise. The OC team subsequently passed its observations to the KSF lessons learned team so it could begin its DOTMLPF-PI analysis process. The collection practicum's objectives, as stated previously, were completely achieved by both the KSF lessons learned and OC teams. Meeting these objectives was a major accomplishment for the KSF Lessons Learned Team because it demonstrated to them that collection, when done correctly, provides the needed observations for DOTMLPF-PI analysis.

Eagle Exercise 5: Analysis Practicum

As originally planned in 2014 between CALL and KSF TRADOC, Exercise Eagle 5 would serve as the event in which the KSF Lessons Learned Team, assisted by CALL, would focus on the analysis phase of the lessons learned process.

The Eagle 5 exercise focused on a refugee control crisis scenario designed to train the KSF in refugee-related situations. Similar to Eagle 4, it was conducted in two phases: MDMP planning and execution. MSEL injected events during the execution phase occurred primarily on Kosovo's borders, presenting the KSF leadership and units with some unique and real-world refugee control challenges. Distances alone taxed the KSF warfighting functions, especially mission command, movement and maneuver, and sustainment to resolve the various refugee-related problem sets presented over a 4-day period. Some of the refugee events injected during exercise execution were refugee control at border crossings, refugees illegally crossing borders, refugee rioting in refugee camps, refugee safety and welfare, and criminal groups involved in refugee and weapons trafficking (see Figure 4). The red stars on the map at Figure 5 represent the locations where refugee-injected events occurred. Kosovo's civil organizations played
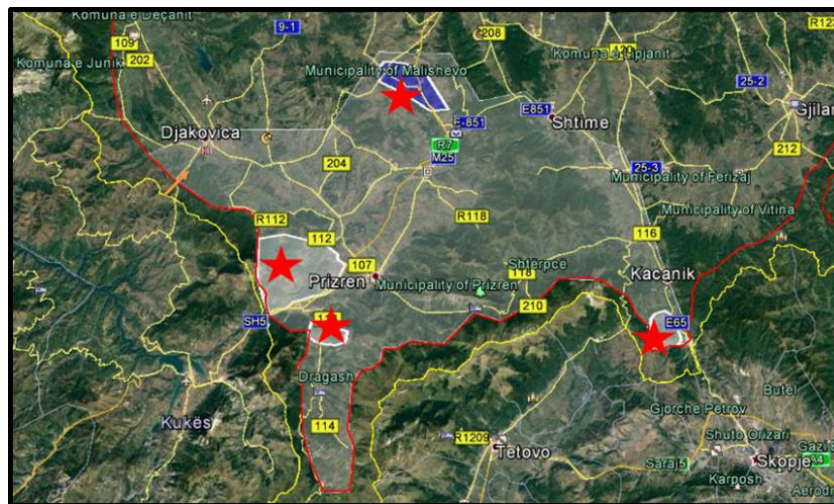

Figure 4. Kosovo Map and Exercise Refugee Events (Stars)

a major role in the exercise, giving the KSF the opportunity to work jointly with its civil partners. The OCs and lessons learned personnel were present at each of these exercise driven events, collecting observations for post exercise analysis.

The KSF resourced its own OC team, employing 35 subject matter experts (SMEs) from within the KSF, much like it did for Eagle 4. OC coverage was comprehensive from brigade to company level. The OC team's primary tasks were to collect observations and facilitate AARs from brigade through company level during the planning and execution phases of the Eagle 5 exercise. The lessons learned team, composed of nine members, developed a collection plan using essentially the same inputs as it did for Eagle 4. However, Eagle 5's collection plan was much more focused on DOTMLPF-PI issues that were identified and carried over from Eagle 4.

Analysis Practicum: Lessons Learned Work Group (LLWG)

Approximately two weeks after Eagle 5's conclusion, at the direction of the KSF Land Force Commander and Deputy Commander, the Land Forces Command formed a LLWG. The LLWG was led by the KSF TRADOC's Chief of Doctrine and participants in the working group were KSF lessons learned and doctrine personnel, KSF warfighting function SMEs, the Eagle 5 OC Team Chief to include members of his team, and two CALL analysts (see Figure 5). The work group's primary goal, after four days of analysis and deliberation, was to generate a DOTMLPF-PI report for the KSF Commander and KSF Land Force Commander identifying the DOTMLPF-PI issues, with supporting observations, for resolution within the KSF.

Figure 5. Lessons Learned Working Group

A key component of the report, exhibited in the report's executive summary, was a list of the key DOTMLPF-PI issues (see Figure 6). Upon KSF leadership approval of the key issues list, it would task a responsible organization within the KSF to develop an action plan aimed at resolving each issue.

Recommendations - DOTMLPF-PI (Doctrine, Organization, Training, Material, Leadership, Personnel, Infrastructure, Policy, Interoperability)									
KEY ISSUES	D	O	T	M	L	P	F	P	I
1.									
2.									
3.									
4.									
5.									
6.									

Figure 6. Key DOTMLPF-PI Issues

The LLWG analyzed over 200 collected observations from the OCs and brigade, battalion, and company written AARs. The format used for each collected observation

was issue, discussion, and recommendation. The LLWG analyzed each observation determining first whether it was still valid, and if it was, further categorizing it under one of the KSF warfighting functions. The analysis work group then determined what DOTMLPF-PI criteria were applicable to each observation.

The LLWG then prioritized the observations into two lists. The first list of observations, considered the most important, were DOTMLPF-PI key issues applicable across the entire KSF requiring the attention of senior leaders and an action plan for resolution. These issues were presented in the report on the DOTMLPF-PI key issues list depicted above and included in the final report's executive summary. The second list were DOTMLPF-PI issues that could be resolved at lower echelons, mainly at the brigade and battalion level.

The KSF TRADOC Commander and KSF Chief of Doctrine subsequently briefed and received concurrence from the KSF Commander and KSF Land Force Commander on the findings within the DOTMLPF-PI report, particularly the key issues facing the KSF. The KSF is now in the process of developing action plans to resolve the identified DOTMLPF-PI issues.

Conclusion

Instrumental in the success of the KSF Lessons Learned Program was the senior leader emphasis and the patient efforts leaders made over time to both sustain and improve the program. CALL played an advisory/assistance role, but it was the continual support of KSF senior leadership that really made a positive, effective difference in the KSF Lessons Learned Program. Additionally, the collection and analysis practicums, conducted respectively during Eagle 4 and Eagle 5 exercises, proved invaluable in that

the KSF truly gained an appreciation for how a fully functioning lessons learned process

can identify and resolve DOTMLPF-PI issues to improve its operational and training

performance.

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