

Pooling & Sharing Mountain Training Initiative 2024 Expert Talks
BLED 16 -18 April 2024



2024 Expert Talks
16 - 18 April 2024
BLED

Minutes of the Meeting

Pooling & Sharing Mountain Training Initiative 2024 Expert Talks
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The European Union Pooling & Sharing Mountain Training Initiative (EU P&S MTI) 2024 Expert Talks took place from 16 to 18 April 2024 in BLED, SLOVENIA.



The conference was hosted by the NATO Mountain Warfare Centre of Excellence and conducted by the Austrian Armed Forces Training Coordination Division.

Representatives of ten participating nations (Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, France, Germany, Netherlands, Poland, and Slovenia), the NATO MW COE as permanent guest, and the guest nations Montenegro and Romania took part in the conference. Spain and Sweden were not present at this Expert Talks.

List of Attendees see Annex A (List of Attendees)

Summary of results and conclusions achieved as well as decisions taken during the Expert Talks 2024

Syndicate Needs & Offers (N&O)

Within the framework of N&O, concerning information was exchanged and announcements regarding various subjects (e.g. Trainings, Exercises, and Competitions) were made. In addition, N&O in connection with Manoeuvre Training Areas (MTA) were dealt with. The nations presented their N&O, followed by bilateral talks between AUT and BEL, CZE and NLD.

- **Exercises:**

- **BGR Exercise Series Rhodope**

- After an informative presentation about the Rhodope 24 LTC DIMOV (BGR) announced the intention to continue the RHODOPE Exercise Series with the next edition in 2027. No details are available yet.

Syndicate Capability Development (CapDev)

The focus was set on the development and the current status of writing and revising NATO mountain warfare documents, and on the necessity of implementing the mountain cell attached to certain unit HQs and the benefits of such. The basis for this process was the official P&S MTI document “Military Planning for Operations in Mountainous Environment”¹.

The following main topics were discussed in a modern interactive style:

- Why mountain warfare
- Risk Management – contributing to the Mountain Cell
- A Mountain Cell must be deployed as a staff element to MtnBn and MtnBde-Level
- Currently available MTI mountain doctrine and guidelines – NATO handout
- Upcoming workshops
- Special features of mountain troops
- “Residual risks”
- Historical example from the 19th and 20th century – mountain troops

Syndicate Lessons Identified / Lessons Learned

The following main topics were elaborated:

- Data base for Mtn-equipment
- Fact sheets of MTI *participants*
- Evaluation of the RHODOPE 24
- LI from the BEL SOF arctic training, with special focus on movement and equipment.
- Related experiences contributed by some syndicate members

The focus was on observations and experiences concerning the RHODOPE 24 FTX and the BEL SOF arctic training.

Details see Annex B (Results Syndicate Work)

¹ This document was approved by all P&S MTI participating nations in a ratification process.

Sequence Minutes of the Meeting

Tuesday, 16 April 2024

Ice Breaker

1900-2200 hrs: The hosting NATO MW COE invited to the Ice Breaker in the Hotel Lovec in BLED, where the COS COL SPINI gave his opening speech. Afterwards, the Acting Chairman of the Initiative COL RITZ greeted all participants and asked for the personal introduction of all delegations in alphabetic order. The excellent Ice Breaker provided the highly appreciated environment for the positive start into the upcoming days.

Wednesday, 17 April 2024

Opening Ceremony

0800-0930 hrs: The COS of the NATO MW COE, COL SPINI, opened the official part of the Expert Talks 2024 with information about the latest development in NATO mountain doctrine. Then, COL SPINI received the approved outcome of the syndicate work from previous EU P&S MTI events, the official P&S MTI document “Military Planning for Operations in Mountainous Environment”², from the next speaker COL RITZ.

The Acting Chairman highlighted the way ahead concerning this document as follows: A common P&S MTI and NATO MW COE publication is planned to be produced in the near future.

Furthermore the NATO MW COE has the intent to implement respective parts when revising ATrainP-6 (MOUNTAIN WARFARE EDUCATION AND TRAINING) and ATP-3.2.1.3 (CONDUCT OF LAND TACTICAL OPERATIONS IN MOUNTAINOUS ENVIRONMENT).

The NATO MW COE staff officer MAJ ZDUNSKI presented the administrative topics, and the group photo was taken at the lake very close to the event location.

0930-1000 hrs: COL DIMOV, CDR 101. Alpine Regiment, BGR, gave a presentation of the EX RHODOPE 24, conducted IVO SMOLYAN in the Rhodope Mountains from 18 – 27 March 2024. Mountain troops from AUT, HRV and BGR took part in the EX.

It was the number four in a series of mountain training exercises in BGR and the next FTX is scheduled for 2027. Sustainment, Mobility and Enemy Engagement were the main training objectives. Main issues in regard to Observations/Lessons Identified were: different communication systems, language barrier, and unexpected number of high-ranking visitors at the “Media Day” and lack of simulation systems

Needs & Offers

1000-1115 hrs:

Eight national presentations were given in the plenum, in the following order:

² This document was approved by all P&S MTI participating nations in a ratification process.

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MAJ SIXT presented Austria's offers, a big variety of mountain training courses and COL RITZ added some details to the sequence of modular trainings. The importance of using the officially provided request formats for training areas was stressed IOT avoid possible delays.
(03_20240417_AUT_Needs&Offers_Ext_2024.pptx)

CPT MEUNIER presented Belgium's needs focused on training areas in Austria and specific trainings (e.g. Mountain Guide, Skidoo Driver) in participating nations. Belgium offered several courses to the international audience (e.g. Survival, Tactical Urban Climbing).
(04_20240417_BEL_Needs&Offers_Ext_2024.pptx)

CPT PROS presented the Czech Republic's needs focused on a FTX on regimental level, personnel qualification trainings, and training areas. COL RITZ remained on the time limits for training area requests. The Czech Republic offered the participation in a mountain sniper initiative, which is still in its development phase, and a marching event.
(05_20240417_CZE_Needs&Offers_Ext_2024.pptx)

LTC LOCKNER presented France's needs focused on arctic environment, staff officer training, and mountain qualification courses. Other needs are for mountain training areas in Austria. The offers for 2024 are limited by the military requirements for the Olympic Games in Paris. The offers for 2025 were not yet available because of the fact that the international cooperation plan was still in progress. It was delayed because of the involvement of the armed forces in the Olympic Games.
(06_20240417_FRA_Needs&Offers_Ext_2024.pptx)

MAJ JAKUCKI presented Poland's offer of regular marching events. He explained required skills for the different levels and highlighted the prestigious badges the finisher receive.
(09_20240417_POL_Offers_Ext_2024.pptx)

LTC TECARU presented Romania's offers focused on courses provided by the Mountaineering Training Centre (i.e. Climbing Instructor, Skiing Instructor). Prerequisites for the courses are to be found on the training centre's website (see the presentation attached).
(10_20240417_ROU_Offers_Ext_2024.pptx)

WOI VERHEIJ presented Netherland's needs focused on mountain training areas for up to 600 troops with APCs, including FTX. Additionally, requirements for several qualified courses were mentioned (e.g. Mountain Guide, Skiing Instructor, Skidoo Driver, and Sniper). The NLD Army intends to establish an urban climbing course in the near future.
(08_20240417_NLD_Needs&Offers_Ext_2024.pptx)

LTC GACEVIC presented Montenegro's mountain warfare training capabilities (i.e. unit structure and locations), and offered some courses (e.g. Basic skiing). He also gave an overview about previous field trainings and upcoming trainings and courses. The Needs identified were individual qualification courses and trainings (i.e. staff officers, small unit leaders). LTC TEMMEL contributed with examples of achievements, Montenegro and Austria reached in very close cooperation.
(07_20240417_MNE_Offers_Ext_2024.pptx)

All Presentations are available on the P&S MTI Website (<https://www.mti.bmlv.gv.at/expert-talks-2024-polje-slovenia>) in the area of the respective conference.

Syndicate Work

1130-1700 hrs: The audience split up into the two syndicates Capability Development and LI/LL.

Parallel to the syndicate work bilateral talks between AUT and BEL, CZE and NLD concerning N&O, as well as bilateral talks between AUT and FRA concerning the next conferences were held. Furthermore, AUT discussed possibilities of further cooperation between P&S MTI and MNE.

Results Syndicate Work see Annex B (Results Syndicate Work).

Hosted Dinner

1830-2130 hrs (including shuttle): The Dinner was hosted by the NATO MW COE in the VILA BLED, a state owned historical facility. The COS of the NATO MW COE, COL SPINI opened the official event and the Chairman of the EU P&S MTI, BG HOLZER gave his official speech. The Chairman greeted all participants and expressed his sincere gratitude to all who contributed to the enormous progress of the MTI since its foundation in 2015. BG HOLZER was delighted to greet the BGR representative COL DIMOV and congratulated him to the successful conducted FTX Rhodope 2024. He was glad that BGR will also offer the Rhodope planned for 2027 to the P&S MTI participating nations. BG HOLZER also thanked the NATO MW COE for excellently hosting the Expert Talks 2024 and for being a long-lasting and trustworthy partner for the MTI.

Thursday, 18 April 2024

Site Survey

0800-1230 hrs:

After a brief introduction of the proud history of the SVN ELAN Factory, the members had the possibility to look around and test the gear they had on display.

Visit NATO MW COE

COL SPINNI introduced all guests and highlighted the main topics the NATO MW COE is working on at the moment, before LTC ÖLBÖCK went further into detail. Afterwards a hosted lunch took place.

Syndicate Work

1245-1400 hrs:

The syndicate work from the previous day was continued and finalized.

Results Syndicate Work see Annex B (Results Syndicate Work).

Final Presentation of Results and Way Ahead

1440-1600 hrs:

The outcome of the Expert Talks 2024 were summarised in the following order:

Needs & Offers: COL RITZ informed about an additional AUT offer, namely the Military High Mountain Instructor Course for SOF only. Furthermore, he announced that the BEL, CZE and NLD needs regarding training were discussed and basically covered. He explained that the responses regarding needs on Manoeuvre Training Areas in AUT will be submitted by the end

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of July 2024. Beyond that, he expressed his pleasure that there had been talks between FRA and BEL to meet the needs of BEL concerning snow mobile driver trainings.

Syndicate Capability Development: LTC OELBOECK provided information about the topics his syndicate had worked on:

- Mountain Warfare Concept
- NATO ATrainP-6
- Handout content explanation
- Residual Risk
- Mountain Cell
- Production of common P&S MTI and NATO MW COE publication “Military Planning for Operations in Mountainous Environment”³
- ATP-3.2.1.3

(17_20240418_COE_CapDev_PDF)

Syndicate LI/LL : LTC TEMMEL

- Database Mtn-equipment
 - AUT database to be updated
 - 3 nations provided their databases prior/during the 2024 ExT
- Fact sheets
 - 3 nations provided their fact sheets prior/during the 2024 ExT
- EX RHODOPE 24
 - Exercise Planning
 - Exercise Conduct
 - Mountain Cell advantages
 - Individual skills and knowledge
 - Unit capabilities and limitations
 - Ideal training conditions for smaller armed forces
- BEL SOF Arctic Training
 - Equipment
 - Clothing issues and possible solutions
 - Means of transport
 - Activities

CSI: MAJ EIBINGER gave a brief update to the internet platform, in particular how to create an account. The Acting Chairman informed about the possibility of providing information about exercises and other projects on the platform, but therefore the information has to be transmitted to AUT in advance.

Way Ahead: COL RITZ announced the dates of upcoming activities as follows:

- Alpine Defense 24
 - Date: 16 - 27 September 2024
 - Location: MTA Hochfilzen AUT
 - MPC: 24 - 26 April 2024 Hochfilzen AUT

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- FCC: 3 - 4 July 2024 Hochfilzen AUT
- 10th PCM & 2024 Annual Conference
 - Date: 15 - 17 October 2024
 - Location: FRA/Grenoble

Concerning the Expert Talks 2025 MNE (with priority 1) and NLD (with priority 2) will examine the possibility of hosting the talks.

Afterwards AUT was pleased to announce that AUT will organise the 11th PCM & 2025 Annual Conference in AUT for the 10th anniversary of P&S MTI and the 75th anniversary of Austrian Armed Forces.

(19_20240418_AUT_Way_Ahead.pptx)

All heads of delegations expressed their appreciation and sincere gratitude to the NATO MW COE and the EU P&S MTI representatives COL SPINI and COL RITZ.

COL SPINI and MAJ ZDUNSKI finished with handing over the NATO MW COE Coin and some farewell words. As the last official act before the closing of the conference, the P&S MTI Flag was handed back to COL RITZ by COL SPINI. The Acting Chairman then formally handed over the flag to the representative of the next hosting country FRA, LTC LOCKNER.

At 1555 hrs, COL RITZ officially closed the 2024 Expert Talks.

All Presentations are available on the P&S MTI Website (<https://www.mti.bmlv.gv.at/expert-talks-2024-polje-slovenia>) in the area of the respective conference

Annex A: List of Attendees

Annex B: Results Syndicate Work

List of Participants (in alphabetical order of nations)

Lead Nation

Austria

BG Josef HOLZER (17 April 2024)
COL Matthias RITZ
COL Stephan LEHNER
LTC Heimo TEMMEL
MAJ Gernot SIXT
MAJ Johann EIBINGER
WOI Michael SCHWEIGHART
WOI H.-Guenter ARMBRUSTER
WOI Thomas KRAXNER (17 April)
WOII Matthaues FRUEHMANN

Host and permanent guest:

NATO MW COE

COL Italo Giacomo SPINI
LTC Miha KUHAR
LTC Friedrich OELBOECK
LTC Petr KRIZ
MAJ Jakub ZDUNSKI
CPT Adrian CUDALBU
CPT Miran DERNIKOVIC
CPT Sandra KLINAR
1LT Roman SPITALAR
SSGT Sebastjan SILAR
SSGT Drago PRASNIKAR
CIV Ana SLEVEC
CIV Tomaz KLINAR

Participating Nations

Belgium

CPT Thomas MEUNIER
CPT Francois HUMBERT
WOI Gunther SMOLDERS
WOI Pierre HANSION
SSG Peter DECOO

Bulgaria

COL Stefan DIMOV
1LT Nikola ANDREEV

Croatia

LTC Josip BRNJAK
MAJ Tihomir KLARIC

Czech Republic

MAJ Michal MASEK
MAJ Eduard ZIKA
CPT Jakub PROS
WOII Robert OTAHAL

France

LTC Pierre LOCKNER

Germany

COL Kai BEINKE

Netherlands

WOI Rick VERHEIJ

Poland

1LT Maciej JAKUCKI

Slovenia

LTC Danilo KLINAR
CPT Jernej ALIC

Guests:

Montenegro

LTC Milos GACEVIC

Romania

LTC Ionut-Cosmin TECARU
CPT Paul NECULOIU

Results Syndicate Work

Syndicate Needs & Offers

The bilateral talks between AUT and BEL, CZE and NLD concerning N&O, as well as bilateral talks between AUT and FRA concerning the next conferences were held. Furthermore, AUT discussed possibilities of further cooperation between P&S MTI and MNE.

2024

Military Mountain Instructor Course Summer (MMIC-S) – Q1:

08.07. – 19.07.2024

NLD received 20 slots and will bring 5 instructors (at least Military High Mountain Specialists).

CZE received 4 slots and will bring 1 instructor (at least Military High Mountain Specialist).

Fixed Installation Course (Sicherungsanlagenbau) – Q2:

23.09. – 11.10.2024

Depending on free capacities NLD will received 4 slots

Military Ski Instructor Course (MSIC) – Q2

02.12. – 13.12.2024

Depending on free capacities BLE will received 1 slot

Depending on free capacities NLD will received up to 3 slots

2025

Military Mountain Instructor Course Summer and Winter (MMIC) – Q1:

To fulfil the NLD and CZE Needs, NLD will forward possible timeslots. AUT will determine if AUT can contribute with a Course Director and a coordinator for the named periods.

Remarks: Pre-training (Military Ski Basic Training) will be conducted under national responsibility if necessary.

Military High Mountain Instructor Course Winter (MHMIC-W) – Q2:

03.03. – 14.03.2024

Prerequisite: MHMIC- Summer

Remarks: Since CZE, NLD and NATO MW COE reported that the skiing skills of the planned participants are sufficient enough, a participation in the offered pre-training (Military Ski Basic Training) will not take place.

CZE received 1 slot and will bring 1 instructor

NLD received 2 slots,

NATO MW COE received 1 slot

if the total strength of the course allows a second international group of four students

CZE will receive 2 slots and will bring 1 instructor

NLD will receive 5 slots, and will bring 1 instructor

NATO MW COE will receive 1 slot

Military High Mountain Instructor Course Mountain Warfare (MHMIC-MW) – Q2:

05.05 – 16.05.2024

Prerequisite: MHMIC- Summer and Winter

CZE received 1 slot and will bring 1 instructors

NLD received 2 slots

NATO MW COE received 1 slot

if the total strength of the course allows a second international group of four students

CZE will receive 2 slots and will bring 1 instructor

NLD will receive 5 slots, and will bring 1 instructor

NATO MW COE will receive 1 slot

Military High Mountain Instructor Course Summer 1 and 2 (MHMIC-S1 and 2) – Q2:

30.06. – 11.07.2024 and 28.07. – 08.08.2024

Remarks: Students can either start with part 1 or 2. AUT can offer accommodation (on request) for the time between the two courses but no further support during this time.

Military High Mountain Instructor Course Summer 1 (MHMIC-S1) – Q2:

NLD received 4 slots and will bring 1 instructor

if the total strength of the course allows a second international group of four students

NLD will receive 8 slots, and will bring 2 instructors

Military Ski Instructor Course (MSIC) – Q2

01.12. – 12.12.2025

Depending on free capacities NLD will received up to 4 slots

Way Ahead N&O

For the required MTAs/AUT 2025 the Nations will be informed NLT End of July 2024.

Syndicates

The syndicates were comprised as follows:

Syndicate 1 “CapDev”	Syndicate 2 “LI/LL”
Syndicate Leader COL OELBOECK (NATO MW COE)	Syndicate Leader LTC TEMMEL (AUT)
CPT SIXT (AUT)	COL LEHNER (AUT)
WOII FRUEHMANN (AUT)	CPT MEUNIER (BEL)
WOI SMOLDERS (BEL)	CPT HUMBERT (BEL)
WOI HANISON (BEL)	SSG DECOO (BEL)
1LT ANDREEV (BGR)	COL DIMOV (BGR)
WOII OTAHAL (CZE)	MAJ MASEK (CZE)
CPT PROS (CZE)	MAJ ZIKA (CZE)
LTC LOCKNER (FRA)	COL BEINKE (DEU)
MAJ KLARIC (HRV)	LTC BRNJAK (HRV)
WOI VERHEIJ (NLD)	1LT JAKUCKI (POL)
MAJ ZDUNSKI (NATO MW COE)	CPT ALIC (SVN)
MAJ KLINAR (SVN)	LTC GACEVIC (MNE)
LTC TECARU (ROU)	CPT NECULOIU (ROU)

Syndicate Capability Development:

Syndicate Capability Development

The syndicate started with some examples for the urgent need of mountain warfare capacities. Followed by an overview over NATO MW COE publications and an explanation of the ATrainP-6, and the ATP-3.2.1.3. Then, he presented an outlook to the NATO MW COE

“Military Mountaineering Series” and upcoming workshops. The topics Mountain Cell and Residual Risk were discussed, as well as specifications of equipment for mountain troops. Useful internet tools for mountain cell/troops were practically presented on the screen. The syndicate was closed with a summary and the way ahead for 2025.

Introduction:

- Why mountain warfare, historical examples combined with specifications of modern battlefields

Overview over NATO MW COE publications

- the way to ATP-3.2.1.3 and ATrainP-6
- ATP-3.2.1.3 since 16 April 2024 approved (32 NATO member states, consent of 18 necessary, 20 approved).
- Congress book and other publications

Explanation of the ATrainP-6, chapter 1 to 6

1. Introduction
2. Consideration for mountain warfare
3. Specific requirements, joint functions in mountain warfare
4. False elements, capabilities in mountain warfare
5. Conceptual approach to training and education for mountain warfare
6. Training planning, considerations and training

Explanation of ATP-3.2.1.3, chapter 1 to 5

1. Introduction
2. Environment
3. General tactical principles
4. Tactical operations and tactical activities in mountain warfare
5. Remarks

(15_20240417_COE_CapDev_PDF)

Outlook

The NATO MW COE “Military Mountaineering Series”

1. Risk management
2. Drones (UAV)
3. Specific mountaineering techniques
4. Sustainment
5. Joint Fire Support

Upcoming workshops

- Drone workshop, 16 – 19 September 2024, formal invitations follows

Mountain Cell

- The basis for this process was the official P&S MTI document “Military Planning for Operations in Mountainous Environment”⁴
- Where to find parts of the Mountain Cell in the ATrainP-6
- Necessity to implement more of the Mountain Cell in the ATrainP-6, in the upcoming rewrite session
- Special features of the mountain troops

⁴ This document was approved by all P&S MTI participating nations in a ratification process.

(16_20240417_COE_CapDev_PDF)

“Residual Risk”

Importance of implementing the “Residual Risk” in mountain warfare documents.

- An example for “Residual Risk” was presented, based on a tragic avalanche accident, that occurred one week prior to the conference

Specification of equipment for mountain troops

- Drones (UAV) in mountainous terrain

Presentation of useful internet tools for mountain cell/troops

- Avalanche Training Hazard Map
- skitouren.ch
- armymaps.com
- Military Maps
- Peak Visor (App)

Example of a battle fought in 1916, in which Austro-Hungarian maritime, ordinary infantry and mountain troops operated together to accomplish their set goal in the mountainous cost line of Montenegro.

Summary and Way Ahead 2025

- Second harmonization draft of ATrainP-6

Syndicate Lessons Identified/Lessons Learned:

At the beginning, the syndicate leader presented the tasks that were given by the MTI-Planning Committee to elaborate on.

In context with the *Data Base Mountaineering Equipment* a list of mountaineering equipment used in the Austrian Armed Forces was presented, and explained how to fill it out. Then he asked the syndicate members to contribute to that list IOT create an inventory register usable for all participating nations for capability comparison. For the same reason, another template – *Fact Sheet* – was introduced, concerning unit structures, national aims for MTI participation, and national MTI inputs. Respecting possible national restrictions, the registers should be completed as soon as possible and sent to the MTI chair via e-mail <http://www.office.mti@bmlv.gv.at>

The next topic covered the evaluation of the FTX RHODOPE 24. The Syndicate Leader explained the importance of the *Bi-SC Collective Training and Exercise Directive 075-003* in general and for the derivation of major deliverables like the EX-aim/objective and the training objectives for an EX. For the R-24 these then were: mobility, sustainability, engage (defensive and offensive manoeuvres).

Other lessons identified were (mainly from the AUT perspective):

- Different interests/targets of recce elements and intelligence elements subordinate to the MtnRegt's HQ.
- The CO 101st MtnRegt (BGR) COL DIMOV assisted with personal remarks and observations, which were already slightly touched in his previous presentation (e.g. weather conditions, training situations).
- Vehicle movement, demanding for drivers and unit leaders due to the long distance from AUT to the exercise area in BGR.

- For the deployment, AUT and HRV agreed upon a common military flight from an Austrian air base to Bulgaria. Out of the idea of Pooling & Sharing and because of ecological thoughts, the HRV contingent joined the AUT contingent on their flight, using an Austrian C130 military plane.
- From the APOD PLOVDIV the HN supported the deployment to the Training Area SMOLYAN.
- Combining tactical requirements and visitor/media necessities was challenging.
- AUT deployed a “mixed unit”, composed of personnel with different levels of training (i.e. conscripts, ready reserve, and professional soldiers). That required adapted training and tasks. It also resulted in some deficits, mainly due to the fact that they were not used to operating together.
- Taking care of individual soldier’s health is mandatory IOT to avoid injuries and limitations on mission capacity.
- Accurate planning, giving appropriate orders concerning individual equipment and behaviour, and consequent controlling was not always sufficiently done.
- The Mountain Cell established at the Exercise Directorate was very useful in its capacity as avalanche threat assessor and advisors to the CO and staff.
- Reports concerning difficult conditions on the route have to be forwarded immediately, and every command element must act accordingly (i.e. issuing timely orders).
- Identification and allocation of appropriate firing positions for different phases of manoeuvre is essential.
- Having deployed troops to “Peacekeeping Operations” for the last decades resulted in the loss of combat capabilities, and it is necessary to bring them back to the soldiers. This should be possible because there are still experienced and qualified personnel within the ranks.
- The RHODOPE exercise series is a perfect opportunity to improve personnel capabilities from squad to EXCON level. The BGR colleagues proved to be supportive, professional and easy to approach. Language barriers were overcome.

CPT HUMBERT, gave a presentation on Belgium Special Operations Forces Arctic Training 2024 LI/LL – Over snow Mobility – Arctic Cold Weather Exercise Equipment highlighting the following:

- Five weeks duration (29 January – 1 March) in the south eastern part of Norway, up to 1,500 meters above sea level, up to minus 20 degrees, - a part of the period with bad weather conditions, perfect for the appointed training purpose. A further part of the training period was wet cold weather with temperatures around zero degrees.
- First autonomous BEL exercise of that kind (on another terrain than the Alps).
- Air insertion (Para drop) is one of the fastest ways to project forces to the poles – Arctic terrain.
- Nordic skies are used in Nordic countries for sustainability (leather boots) and especially on the flat terrain. A basic/introduction training with Nordic skies was conducted for operators and instructors.
- A broad variety of soldering skills and military tasks were trained, reaching from survival skills to avalanche procedures, and airborne insertion.
- Training audience was one (1) SOF company.
- Different means of transport were used (i.e. Snowshoes, Alpine skies, Nordic skies, Pulks, Ski Joering, Snowmobiles and Haeggglunds-tracked vehicles).
- The content of backpacks/rucksacks proved sufficient and acceptable, but pulks are necessary to transport all the material to survive several days in the arctic environment.

- The new “PYRAD” Gore-Tex uniform proved insufficient for extreme climate conditions because of the lack of sufficient breathability. It became very wet, contrary to older Gore-Tex products already in use in the BEL forces. Three layer Gore-Tex material (not “PYRAD”) is recommended.
- Missing mission essential equipment was detailed into three categories (i.e. clothing, accessory, and mobility). The necessity of a common approach when acquiring new equipment was stressed (e.g. new vehicles need driver courses, mechanics, spare parts, garages, trailers...).
- Material acquisition – ongoing project for new contracts (outdoor material) - gave a detailed overview of the current situation of the BEL SOF.

All presentations are available on the P&S MTI website (<https://www.mti.bmlv.gv.at/expert-talks-2024-polje-slovenia>) under the respective conference.