

## ДОСВІД ЩОДО ПРОВЕДЕННЯ ОПЕРАЦІЙ (АНТИТЕРОРИСТИЧНИХ, МИРОТВОРЧИХ, СИЛ ОБОРОНИ)

Yevhen Honcharenko (Ph.D.)

<https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7654-6083>

Anatolii Tkachenko

<https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7316-5437>

*The National Defence University of Ukraine named after Ivan Cherniakhovskyi, Kyiv, Ukraine*

### LESSONS LEARNED PROCEDURE IN THE ARMED FORCES OF UKRAINE

*The Armed Forces of Ukraine for the last time gained the experience of conducting combat operations. This experience is invaluable for Ukraine. Authors describe term, idea, capability and process of Lessons Learned, who needs to learn lessons in the Armed Forces of Ukraine. The lessons learned process comprises of two phases: Analysis and Implementation, and corresponding stages: Plan, Observe, Analyse, Decide, Implement & Validate, and Share. The article deals with the study of combat experience in the Armed Forces of Ukraine. The purpose of the article is to determine directions for improving the procedures for lessons learning, taking into account the requirements of regulatory documents of Ukraine and NATO partner countries.*

**Keywords:** lessons learned, NATO, Armed Forces of Ukraine.

#### Introduction

The defense forces of Ukraine have been holding back the armed aggression of the Russian Federation for 8 years, and in the last 300 days they have given an incredibly impressive repulse to the enemy's offensive on a front more than a thousand kilometers wide. In such conditions, the Armed Forces of Ukraine (AFU) gained the experience of conducting combat operations, which no army in Europe has had since the Second World War. Ukraine paid for this experience with the lives and health of thousands of its best citizens and the well-being of millions of its residents. This experience is invaluable for Ukraine and extremely interesting for every country in the world that is interested in quality training of its armed forces to repel aggression.

The Armed Forces of Ukraine are conducting combat operations in conditions where the enemy is outnumbered and equipped dozens of times. In order to win in such conditions, the armed forces need to act trained and efficient. In turn, the guarantee of efficiency is the preservation of resources by preventing the repetition of mistakes (inefficient decisions). Thus, the study Lessons Learned (LL) of using the Armed Forces and Defense Forces as a whole will help to improve the quality of training of the command staff and bring Ukraine closer to victory.

The issue of LL in NATO countries occupies a worthy place in military collective training and exercise process [1]. Created The Joint Analysis & Lessons Learned Centre (JALLC), and a number of doctrinal documents are defined [2-4].

Since 2020, the process of creating a regulatory framework for the study and implementation of experience has begun in the Armed Forces of Ukraine,

however, in practice, according to the authors, these processes currently require improvement.

The purpose of the article is to determine directions for improvement of lesson learning procedures taking into account the requirements of regulatory documents of Ukraine and NATO partner countries.

#### The results

*What do we mean by lessons learned?*

The term Lessons Learned is broadly [2-4] used to describe people, things, and activities related to the act of learning from experience to achieve improvements. The idea of Lessons Learned in an organization is that, through a formal approach to learning (i.e. a Lessons Learned procedure), individuals and the organization can reduce the risk of encountering the same problems and increase the chance that successes are repeated. Within NATO, Lessons Learned is an essential part of being credible, capable, and adaptive in warfighting and warfare development through reducing operational risk, increasing cost efficiency, and improving operational effectiveness. Lessons Learned is achieved through the set-up and sustainment of a Lessons Learned Capability.

Lessons Learned describes more than just learning from experience. Learning must be used to justify changes that will lead to improved performance.

- Common elements of a formal approach to learning (Lessons Learned procedure)
- **Lessons Learned Process:** To identify, act, institutionalize, and share lessons to ensure learning from experience is converted into actual improvement via a formal process.
  - **Lessons Learned Information Sharing:** To make use of a portal, databases, websites, reports, or other media to store and communicate lessons.
  - **Lessons Learned Community:** To bring together Subject Matter Experts (SME) at working groups, training courses, conferences, and other events to share experience and learning.

**Figure 1.** Common elements of a formal approach to learning

What lessons learned doctrinal documents used in The AFU?

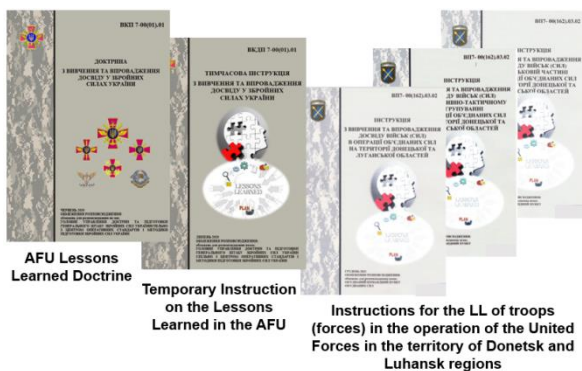


Figure 2. Normative documents used in The Armed Forces of Ukraine

AFU Lessons Learned Doctrine [5]

This Doctrine defines the procedure for organizing the LL (study and implementation of experience), as well as the role of military management bodies, commanders (supervisors) of all levels regarding the organization of the study and implementation of experience in the Armed Forces of Ukraine.

Temporary Instruction on the Lessons Learned in the AFU [6]

This instruction defines the general provisions on the LL, the procedure for working in the System of LL. The order of work regarding the LL in the military unit, in operational level management bodies, in the Commands and in the General Staff is determined. In addition, there are forms of Information Bulletins and Reports are specified.

Instructions for the LL of troops (forces) in the operation of the United Forces in the territory of Donetsk and Luhansk regions [7-9] these Instructions have three levels: Joint Forces, Components and Units.

Who needs to learn lessons?

Lessons Learned doctrinal documents used in the AFU are made according to NATO approaches.

And we have a reason question: Who needs to learn lessons? – Everyone!

General James N. Mattis US Marine Corps, former Supreme Allied Commander Transformation said: “There is no reason to send troops into the fight and get them killed when a Lesson Learned the month before could be sent to a commander who could have used it for training...”

And we know that this saying is very relevant currently for the AFU.

Everyone within an organization needs to be involved in learning lessons approach to be successful. Yet, often it seems that many personnel within NATO are under the impression that the presence of dedicated LL staff frees them of their own responsibility for organizational improvement and learning.

A lesson is not learned until something changes in the way we operate, and the ones who need to change are the ones affected by an issue: the stakeholders.

Stakeholders are likely the first – and often only – personnel who will be aware of potential lessons within their area of responsibility. The right organizational

mindset is required to encourage these stakeholders to share potential lessons via a LL Process in order to learn lessons and enable others to exploit them.

True organizational learning only takes place when driven by leaders, who must also hold stakeholders accountable. Commanders and Chiefs of Staff (COS) should actively prioritize LL activities and follow up with their staff to ensure their organization has actually learned.

However, time and resource constraints in addition to competing priorities often make learning lessons in their organizations a challenge for most leaders. Nevertheless, leaders’ LL guidance and engagement must be evidenced not only by words, but also through prioritizing issues and endorsing, resourcing, and tasking solutions.

Lessons learned capability

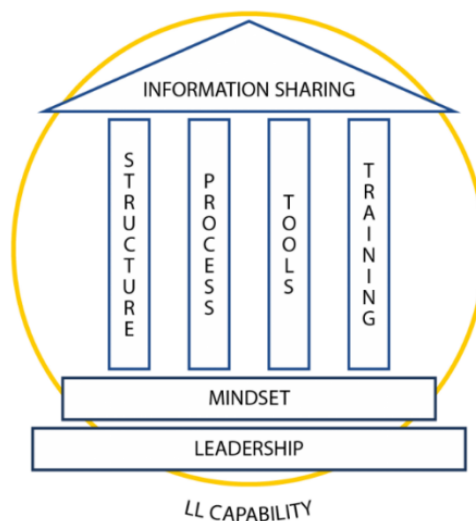


Figure 3. Lessons learned capability

The foundation elements of Mindset and Leadership are fundamental to the social and cultural climate the organization needs for an effective LL capability. The supporting elements of structure, process, tools, and training are needed to facilitate information sharing. Information sharing provides the capstone that ensures the capability works.

Mindset: An organizational culture where learning from others is incorporated into all aspects of work and staff are given the confidence to share their own learning with others.

Leadership: An ability to undertake timely and effective decision-making throughout the LL Process.

Structure: Skilled and dedicated LL personnel allocated to adequate posts within the organization.

Process: A common LL process to develop a lesson, to include sharing and utilizing it appropriately.

Tools: Technology to support collection, storage, staffing, and sharing of LL information.

Training: Providing staff with the skills and knowledge to fulfill their LL roles effectively. Information on LL training opportunities in NATO is provided later in this chapter.

Information Sharing: The will to submit, receive, and re-use information from the LL Capability. In order for information sharing to be successful, it must be credible and come from a reliable source.

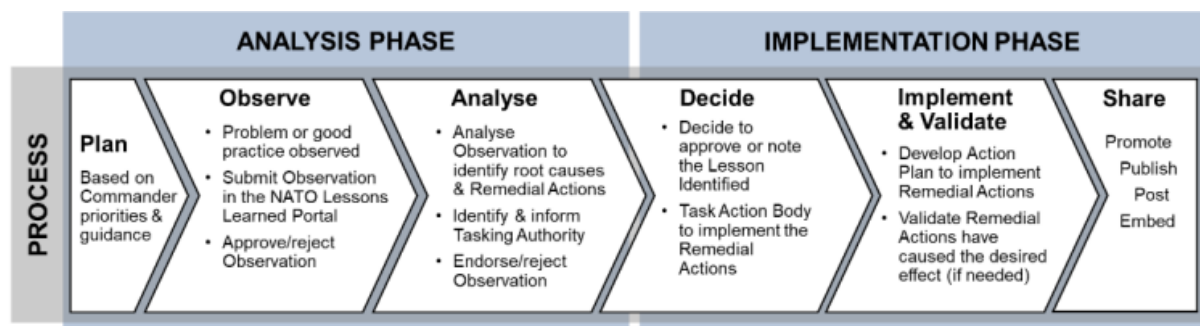


Figure 4. NATO LL Process

### The lessons learned process

A LL process is part of a formal approach to organizational learning that deliberately processes observed issues arising from an activity until either a LL is reached, or the lesson is rejected/noted for various reasons. Figure 4 illustrates the NATO LL Process used by the NATO Command Structure, as described in the Bi-SC Directive 080-006 Lessons Learned (Reference A).

It comprises of two phases (Analysis and Implementation) and corresponding stages (Plan, Observe, Analyse, Decide, Implement & Validate, and Share).

The first phase of the LL Process is the Analysis Phase, which may start with a plan based on the Commander's priorities and guidance. A Lessons Collection Plan may be developed by the authority responsible for leading an activity to actively collect lessons from various sources (e.g. as an integrated part of an exercise or operation plan), rather than waiting for lessons to occur. A Lessons Collection Plan can be a simple list of priorities covering which types of lessons should be collected, but it can also be a detailed plan defining who, when, where, and how lessons are collected for a given priority.

An Observation is a short description of an issue which may be improved or a potential Best Practice.

The next stage is to analyse the observation to elaborate on the factor(s) contributing to why the outcome of the activity differed from expectation and identify a proposed solution. For more complex observations, additional analysis may be required.

The first stage of the Implementation Phase requires the Tasking Authority to decide whether to approve or note.

Next is the Implement & Validate stage, during which the Action Body will prepare and implement their Remedial Action through the use of an Action Plan.

It is important that the LL is then shared more broadly with the relevant stakeholders through the LL Process and other media to allow further exploitation.

In today's context of fighting, there are a number of problematic issues in the study of experience.

### Conclusion

Due to the threat of sensitive information to the enemy, the stage of collecting up-to-date information is complicated.

Not all commanders understand the importance of

generalizing quality experiences to make sound decisions.

Modern methods are not always used during the analysis, such as:

- ✓ Six Ws;
- ✓ Five Reasons Why / Five Times Why;
- ✓ Organization, Process, Technology Categorization;
- ✓ DOTMLPF-I Capability Categorization;
- ✓ Six Thinking Hats;
- ✓ Plus/Minus/Interesting;
- ✓ Pairwise Comparison Analysis;
- ✓ Statistical Analysis.

It is advisable to apply the principles of project management that were important in the military environment:

- ✓ Leadership support;
- ✓ Clarity of roles and responsibilities;
- ✓ Prioritization of resources;
- ✓ Method of communication.

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## ВИВЧЕННЯ ТА ВПРОВАДЖЕННЯ ДОСВІДУ У ЗБРОЙНИХ СИЛАХ УКРАЇНИ

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**Гончаренко Євген Володимирович** (доктор філософії)

<https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7654-6083>

**Ткаченко Анатолій Володимирович**

<https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7316-5437>

*Національний університет оборони України імені Івана Черняхівського, Київ, Україна*

*Збройні Сили України останнім часом набули досвіду ведення бойових дій. Цей досвід є безцінним для України. Автори описують термін, ідею, можливості та процес вивчення та впровадження досвіду, кому необхідно засвоїти бойовий досвід у Збройних Силах України. Процес отримання бойового досвіду складається з двох етапів: аналізу та впровадження, а також відповідних етапів: планування, спостереження, аналіз, прийняття рішення, впровадження та перевірка та поширення. Стаття присвячена вивченню досвіду бойових дій у Збройних Силах України. Метою статті є визначення напрямків удосконалення процедур засвоєння уроків з урахуванням вимог нормативних документів України та країн-партнерів НАТО.*

**Ключові слова:** вивчення та узагальнення досвіду, НАТО, Збройні Сили України.

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