

# Assure and Deter: 1<sup>st</sup> Infantry Division's Commitment to North Atlantic Treaty Organization Allies

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Soldiers from 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, 34<sup>th</sup> Armored Regiment, of 1<sup>st</sup> Infantry Division's 1<sup>st</sup> Armored Brigade Combat Team (ABCT) hosted the Abrams Operation Summit (AOS) at Drawsko Pomorskie Training Area (DPTA) in Poland April 26-28, 2022.

The summit was designed to introduce Polish Land Forces and Polish soldiers to the systems, procedures and training that support successful Abrams tank operations at company and battalion levels. U.S. Soldiers from companies A, B and H led and participated in multiple leader panels, discussions, classroom instruction, hands-on training and live-fire demonstrations to teach and mentor our Polish allies. They learned about the Abrams' capabilities, U.S. armor tactics, sustainment operations and master-gunner operations.

With that in mind, AOS demonstrated U.S. commitment to the defense of North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) members while also improving the interoperability, lethality and part-

nership with our allies.

## Background

The Poles' deputy prime minister and Ministry of National Defense in July 2021 announced Poland's intent to purchase 250 M1A2 SEPv3 tanks from the United States. In February 2022, U.S. Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin announced approval of this program during his visit to Poland. In addition to the Abrams tanks, the agreement also included recovery and mobility vehicles, a training program and logistics support.

This foreign-military sale represented a significant strategic investment in Poland's national security and relationship with the U.S. military. After the signing ceremony at Wesola, Poland (1<sup>st</sup> Warsaw Armor Brigade), in April 2022, the Polish government and Polish Land Forces expressed the desire to begin crew training immediately to produce and facilitate trained and ready tank formations as soon as possible. U.S. Army Europe and Africa (US-AEUR-AF), V Corps and 1<sup>st</sup> Infantry Division began the planning process and established a course of action to meet the Poles' requirement to begin

training as soon as possible to shorten the learning curve for future M1 crew operators and leaders.

Poland's Armed Forces General Command (GENCOM) developed the program of instruction (PoI), and 1<sup>st</sup> Infantry Division tasked the 2-34 Armor "Dreadnaughts" to plan, improve the PoI and execute AOS. The event introduced critical concepts related to combined-arms tactics, sustainment, organization and master gunners. The summit helped inform modernization efforts of Polish Land Forces doctrine, organization, training, materiel, leadership/education, personnel, facilities and policy (DOTMLPF-P) efforts and improved interoperability.<sup>1</sup>

The Dreadnaughts approached this mission with five key tasks:

- Conduct training in a learning-conducive environment that encourages the sharing of information and open dialogue between U.S. and Polish army members.
- Convey to our allies the importance of master gunners and the role they fill in creating, training and maintaining a combat-credible armored formation.
- Share the challenges associated with an M1 Abrams-equipped force and what measures we take to overcome them. Provide best practices on stabilizing crews, anticipating maintenance challenges and integrating collective-live-fire gates.
- Train our allies on all aspects of logistical operations supporting an M1 equipped force: recovery operations, unit-maintenance collection point (UMCP) operations and refueling considerations.
- Use live demonstrations to reinforce and visualize the concepts taught in leader forums and subject-matter expert (SME)-driven classes. The 2-34 Armor's endstate was to provide Polish leaders and soldiers with



Figure 1. SSG Steven Brozyna (foreground), a tank commander assigned to 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, 34<sup>th</sup> Armored Regiment, monitors the camera during the start of the combined-arms-breach exercise at Bucierz Range, DPTA, Poland, April 28, 2022. This exercise demonstrated the strength of the M1A2 Abrams tank in action as part of AOS. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by SGT Tara Fajardo Arteaga)

foundational understanding of how to employ the M1 Abrams tank, operate in large-scale ground combat operations, provide logistical support for the M1 Abrams and incorporate it with enablers.

In conjunction with company commanders and first sergeants, 2-34 Armor's staff created a concept, and several Poles centered around one decisive operation and three shaping operations. Decisive to the AOS was the full display of combat capabilities demonstrated at full scale with live-fire conditions. To achieve this, 2-34 Armor tasked Company B to perform a live-fire demonstration of a combined-arms breach and a gap crossing on Bucierz Range as the final event of the summit. The combined-arms breach and mobility demonstration would exhibit the full combat capability and strength of the Abrams platform with enabler support.

Shaping Operation I was the master-gunner cohort, which would establish the base familiarization of training management and crew development. Shaping Operation II, the tactics cohort, would generate understanding of Abrams employment considerations during offensive and defensive tasks.

Finally, Shaping Operation III, the sustainment cohort, would educate Polish leaders and soldiers about crew- to organizational-level sustainment practices, equipment and planning considerations for the operational and logistical demand of an Abrams formation.

The 2-34 Armor tasked Company A to provide the primary instructors and equipment for the master-gunner cohort. Company A also provided instructors, equipment and support to the sustainment cohort, and created and developed multiple Poles on the role of the master gunner in company and battalion operations, master-gunner training and development, and Integrated Weapons Training Strategy (IWTS).

Also in support of Company H, 2-34 Armor's sustainment cohort, Company A created and developed the POI on the field-maintenance team (FMT), motorpool operations, Abrams preventive-maintenance checks and services (PMCS), command maintenance, semi-annual/annual services and FMT equipment layout (M88 recovery vehicle, contact truck and forward-repair system (FRS)).

Company B, in support of the tactics cohort, developed and facilitated

classes and live demonstrations of direct-fire control, limited-visibility operations, movement-to-maneuver transitions, movement planning and actions on contact. Also, in conjunction with Company H, Company B developed and participated in a series of field-sustainment demonstrations focusing on UMCP/field-maintenance operations, recovery operations, service-station resupply and refuel-on-the-move.

One of the challenges 2-34 Armor faced was the language barrier. While there were some experienced translators available to support, translating technical jargon about the Abrams tank across languages to a military that had never used Abrams tanks proved to be a challenge. The role of master gunner itself didn't have a direct translation to Polish. Therefore teaching the classes required the non-commissioned officers (NCOs) and SMEs to tailor their language and develop products in a way that translators could accurately and quickly translate.

To further complicate the challenge at hand, all the Poles – including the scripts, PowerPoint slides, teaching boards, handouts and maneuver concepts – had to be developed in less than seven days to ensure time for proper translation and compliance with foreign-disclosure regulations.

## Day 1

Day 1 of the summit was primarily a senior-leader panel in the morning, followed by multiple concurrent SME discussions, leader panels and live demonstrations across DPTA in the afternoon to support different cohorts.

Upon arrival to DPTA, Polish leaders and soldiers were split into four cohorts:

- Senior-leader cohort;
- Master-gunnery cohort;
- Tactics cohort; and
- Sustainment cohort.

Each cohort maintained a 12:1 instructor-to-student ratio, which ensured efficient discussions and classroom instruction with the Polish translators.

The senior-leader panel and discussion included both American and



**Figure 2.** SSG Daniel S. Allen, a Bravo Company motor sergeant assigned to 1<sup>st</sup> Infantry Division's 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, 34<sup>th</sup> Armored Regiment, teaches Polish soldiers the process of powerpack removal for an M1A2 Abrams tank as part of AOS at Bucierz Range, April 27, 2022. The 1<sup>st</sup> Infantry Division is among other units assigned to V Corps, America's forward-deployed corps in Europe that works alongside NATO allies and regional security partners to provide combat-credible forces. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by SPC Hedil Hernández)



**Figure 3. 1LT Christopher Landin, Alpha Company platoon leader assigned to 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, 34<sup>th</sup> Armored Regiment, speaks with a Polish soldier about the functions of the M1A2 Abrams tank as part of AOS at Drawsko Pomorskie, Poland, April 26, 2022. The 1<sup>st</sup> Infantry Division is among other units assigned to V Corps that works alongside allies in the European theater, remaining an integral part of demonstrating alliance readiness, interoperability and capability. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by SGT Tara Fajardo Arteaga)**

Polish senior leaders (battalion to corps level) and focused on the DOT-MLPF-P of an Abrams organization. Company A, 2-34 Armor, taught and facilitated a roundtable discussion during the senior-leader panel about the role of the master gunner in company, battalion and brigade operations. Company A explained to Polish senior leaders the importance of the master gunner as an SME, empowering NCOs and advising commanders on gunnery-training courses of action. Company A also explained how master gunners could advise senior leaders of the Polish Land Forces on the best practices for gunnery, training and crew management.

Concurrent to the senior-leader panel, the three other cohorts arrived at three locations across DPTA to begin SME discussions, live demonstrations, practical exercises and leader panels. Companies A and H received the sustainment cohort at the DPTA motor-pool to begin demonstrations and SME discussions on the forward-support company (FSC), field maintenance, FMT equipment, PMCS, command maintenance and services.

Company H Soldiers familiarized the sustainment cohort with the common

sustainment systems, pieces of equipment, tools and maintenance facilities found in an Abrams organization. Company H leaders informed the cohort on the best tactics, techniques and procedures surrounding the employment of the FSC and FMTs, as well as providing Polish soldiers the opportunity to view the support vehicles, equipment and tools their country recently purchased. This was done by providing a full layout of an M88 recovery truck, a contact truck and an FRS.

Company H then handed off the sustainment cohort to Company A to begin the SME discussions on PMCS, command maintenance, semi-annual and annual services, as well as a full layout of basic-issue items (BIIs) and another Abrams with BII stowed according to the battalion load plan. These discussions and layouts provided the sustainment cohort with best practices for maintaining the Abrams tank, crew responsibilities in the PMCS process and the responsibility of leadership at the platoon and company levels during maintenance and services.

The services and PMCS discussion were conducted in the DPTA

maintenance bays where Company A conducted annual services. This allowed SMEs from Companies A and H to discuss the platform-specific needs of an Abrams fleet, including bay space and lift considerations.

The sustainment cohort was well received, and Polish GENCOM requested a sustainment-focused summit shortly after the conclusion of AOS for later in the year. The 2-34 Armor Soldiers provided more discussion topics for the future leaders of the Polish army that were centered on the responsibility of tank crews to maintain their own equipment.

Concurrent to the sustainment cohort, Companies A and B leadership received the master-gunner and tactics cohorts at Bucierz Range and escorted them to the range's classrooms to begin classroom discussion, SME discussion and practical exercises.

U.S. tank master gunners from Company A were the primary instructors for the master-gunner cohort. They led discussions on the roles and responsibilities of the master gunner, training development and IWTS. The master gunners highlighted the importance of the master gunner's role during operations and gunnery while also providing training examples to Polish soldiers on Sabot Academy concepts, master-gunner professional timelines and collective-live-fire training requirements.

The classes concluded with a leader panel discussion on how the U.S. Army's standardized training strategy informs readiness and the benefits of standardized training requirements across the armor force.

Company B leaders in another classroom on Bucierz Range introduced maneuver to the tactics cohort through multiple discussions and live demonstrations. The 1<sup>st</sup> Platoon, Company B, provided classroom instruction on direct-fire-control measures, engagement-area development, limited-visibility operations, fratricide avoidance, mitigation techniques and movement-to-maneuver transitions. Company B concluded these discussions with a live demonstration on Bucierz Range, demonstrating movement techniques, forms of maneuver,

actions on contact and transitions with a tank platoon led by 1<sup>st</sup> Platoon Soldiers. This live demonstration allowed Polish soldiers to become familiar with the common tactical-employment considerations of an Abrams platoon.

## Day 2

Day 2 of the AOS encompassed discussions and live demonstrations of Abrams gunnery operations, field maintenance and sustainment operations. Company A NCOs began the day with the master-gunner cohort, leading two discussions on shot-sheet development and the considerations of running an Abrams tank range. Both classes familiarized Polish soldiers and leaders with supporting gunnery operations, target engagement and range throughput considerations.

Upon completion of the classes and discussion, leaders from across the battalion, brigade and division escorted the tactics and senior-leader cohorts to the Bucierz Range's viewing area to observe a live-fire demonstration of Gunnery Table VI. Tank-crew evaluators walked the master-gunner cohort and senior-leader cohort through gunnery operations while concurrently running a crew-gunnery Table VI to standard.

Upon completion of the demonstration, Polish leaders and Soldiers were able to sit in on an after-action review (AAR) led by the tank-crew evaluators. Company A NCOs stood by to answer questions about scoring, point deductions, qualification standards and best practices when running an AAR.

In the forest behind the gunnery range, Companies B and H welcomed the sustainment and tactics cohorts to a fully operational UMCP to conduct a round-robin discussion and demonstration on different aspects of field maintenance and recovery operations. They used the terrain to select the UMCP placement and mixed artificial camouflage with the natural foliage.

It was both an excellent teaching point as well as great training for the FMT. Maintenance takes time, and the sustainment cohort did an excellent job of demonstrating how to conceal themselves to safely execute maintenance and repairs. Company B's FMT demonstrated the removal of an Abrams engine using an M88 to perform field maintenance. The demonstration included how the M88 conducts recovery operations in a field environment and the vehicle's other capabilities.

Company H Soldiers led discussions

about location selection for the UMCP and how clerks order parts to continue maintenance and services while in the field. These discussions culminated in the live demonstration of a service-station resupply and refuel-on-the-move to illustrate the transitions between resupply and maneuver.

## Day 3

Day 3 of AOS started with SME discussion and a leader panel in the morning, focused on the combined-arms breach and gap crossing facilitated by the engineer platoon assigned to 2-34 Armor. Leaders from the task force focused on familiarizing Polish leaders and soldiers with the planning factors, coordination requirements and best practices regarding a breach and gap crossing for Abrams formations. The discussion concluded with introducing Polish soldiers to the echeloning of fires, breaching fundamentals, enablers needed to conduct a breach, mineplow and roller operations, and sustainment operations during breaching. Following these discussions, Polish Land Forces senior leaders, Polish soldiers and all cohorts moved to the gunnery-range viewing stand for the final event.

Following remarks from both Polish and American senior leaders, AOS concluded with the decisive operation, the live-fire demonstration of a combined-arms breach and gap crossing. This culminating event displayed all the lessons-learned during the three days of AOS, showing the Abrams tank in operation as part of a combined-arms team.

A tank company, the engineer platoon, one Bradley platoon and the battalion mortar platoon conducted a combined-arms breach demonstration. On order, Company B uncoiled from their tactical assembly area. Employing the characteristics of the offense, Company B maneuvered from low ground and used surprise to establish support-by-fire positions. They acted audaciously by aggressively engaging targetry while simultaneously maneuvering their breaching elements.

With the enemy suppressed, engineer assets were able to use a Joint Assault Bridge (JAB) to gain assured mobility against the protective obstacle (an



**Figure 4. SFC Carlo Martínez Ruiz, a tank-company motor sergeant assigned to Alpha Company, 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, 34<sup>th</sup> Armored Regiment, teaches a class on sustainment to Polish soldiers as a part of AOS in the motorpool at Drawsko Pomorskie, Poland, April 26, 2022. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by SGT Tara Fajardo Arteaga)**

anti-tank ditch). The JAB created a crossing for the advancing tanks and Bradley Fighting Vehicles to flow directly into reverse breaching operations. With the support-by-fire set and the assault element staged and ready to attack, the engineers went to work employing bangalores to breach the wire obstacle.

The battalion assaulted through the breach immediately following its reduction. Firepower and maneuver allowed the assaulting element to maintain tempo through the breach, seizing the enemy-based objective on the far side of the breached obstacle. The impressive display of the Abrams main battle tank slewing tank turrets, whining engines and churning track during a combined-arms breach definitively solidified and demonstrated the United States' commitment to its NATO allies.

## Conclusion

Although AOS was initially briefed as a three-day crash course that would introduce critical concepts related to combined-arms tactics, sustainment, organization and master gunners to Polish soldiers, the impact ended up being far greater and of more strategic importance than expected. USA-REUR-AF and V Corps have highlighted AOS as a model for future engagements with other NATO countries. Also, planners are looking to

incorporate the AOS model for the fielding of other equipment, including air-defense artillery and the M142 High-Mobility Artillery Rocket System. AOS generated significant discussions between the U.S and Polish Land Forces, and there are now two more follow-up joint training programs (the Abrams Apprentice Program and Abrams Tank Training Academy) and a request from Polish GENCOM for a logistics-focused summit to occur later in 2022.

The tough, realistic training for the Polish tank crews and familiarization on the Abrams' capabilities and systems was a big step in increasing Poland's lethality. AOS was significant strategic steppingstone in assuring NATO allies that, together with the United States, they can rapidly surge combat power across all warfighting functions to maintain overmatch and increase lethality against adversaries.

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## Notes

<sup>1</sup> "1<sup>st</sup> Infantry Division Support to the Polish Abrams Tank Program," 1<sup>st</sup> Infantry Division, Poznan, Poland, June 15, 2022.



Figure 5. Polish soldiers stand at an observation point as M1A2 Abrams tanks pass by during a range walk as a part of a master-gunner class during AOS at Bucierz Range, Drawsko Pomorskie, Poland, April 26, 2022. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by SPC Hedil Hernández)

## ACRONYM QUICK-SCAN

**AAR** – after-action review  
**ABCT** – armored brigade combat team  
**ABOLC** – Armor Basic Officer Leader's Course  
**AOS** – Abrams Operations Summit  
**BII** – basic-issue item  
**CLC** – Cavalry Leader's Course  
**DOTMLPF-P** – doctrine, organization, training, materiel, leadership/education, personnel, facilities and policy  
**DPTA** – Drawsko Pomorskie Training Area (Poland)  
**FMT** – field-maintenance team  
**FRS** – forward-repair system  
**FSC** – forward-support company  
**GENCOM** – General Command  
**IWTS** – Integrated Weapons Training Strategy

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## ACRONYM QUICK-SCAN

**JAB** – Joint Assault Bridge  
**MCCC** – Maneuver Captain's  
Career Course  
**NATO** – North Atlantic Treaty  
Organization

**NCO** – noncommissioned officer  
**PMCS** – preventive-maintenance  
checks and services  
**Pol** – program of instruction  
**SME** – subject-matter expert

**UMCP** – unit-maintenance collection  
point  
**USAEUR-AF** – U.S. Army Europe  
and Africa

## Honoring our Armor and Cavalry Medal of Honor Heroes

Derived from Center of Military History information provided at <https://history.army.mil/html/moh/civwaral.html>. Listed alphabetically. Note: Asterisk in the citation indicates the award was given posthumously.

### PORTER, AMBROSE

Rank and unit: Commissary sergeant, Company D, 12th Missouri Cavalry. Place and date of action: Tallahatchie River, MS, Aug. 7, 1864. Entered service: Rockport, Atchison County, MO. Born: Allegany County, MD. Date of issue: Aug. 24, 1905. Citation: Was one of four volunteers who swam the river under a brisk fire of the enemy's sharpshooters and brought over a ferry boat by means of which the troops crossed and dislodged the enemy from a strong position.

### PORTER, WILLIAM SGT

Unit: Company H, 1st New Jersey Cavalry. Place and date of action: Sailors Creek, VA, April 6, 1865. Born: New York, NY. Date of issue: July 3, 1865. Citation: Among the first to check the enemy's countercharge.

### POWELL, WILLIAM H. MAJ

Unit: 2nd West Virginia Cavalry. Place and date of action: Sinking Creek Valley, VA, Nov. 26, 1862. Entered service: Ironton, OH. Born: England. Date of issue: July 22, 1890. Citation: Distinguished services in raid, where with 20 men, he charged and captured the enemy's camp, 500 strong, without the loss of man or gun.

### POWER, ALBERT PVT

Unit: Company A, 3rd Iowa Cavalry. Place and date of action: Pea Ridge, AR, March 7, 1862. Entered service: Davis County, IA. Born: Guernsey County, OH. Date of issue: March 6, 1899. Citation: Under a heavy fire and at great personal risk went to the aid of a dismounted comrade who was surrounded by the enemy, took him up on his own horse and carried him to a place of safety.