

# Medical Network Conference 8-9 April 26

## NSATU & SAG-U JMED

### A Meeting of Medical Minds

The second MEDNET conference was held in Kurmainz Kaserne, bringing together a collection of key Ukrainian medical commanders, NATO allies and other stakeholders to discuss the medical challenges faced by the Ukrainian Armed Forces in their ongoing war with Russia.

The conference enabled the Ukrainian delegates to take centre stage and provided an opportunity to provide the key insights learned over the evolving war. These lessons are key not only for the Ukrainians but are lessons that all NATO allies should learn and be prepared to face.

The Ukrainian delegates outlined the medical challenges that a new era of warfare have created. They also provided an honest account of where there need to improve and most importantly for



**DCOM NSATU Major General Häussler delivers the key note speech:**  
*'Let us challenge assumptions, forge new partnerships, and leave here with a renewed and unshakeable commitment to our unified goal.'*

their allies, how we can help them achieved these goals.

The conference attendees were humbled when hearing the real life experiences from a Ukrainian Combat Medic, whom provided a frank account of life at the front line .

The conference provided opportunities for panel discussions, networking and breakout sessions building key links between organizations, cohering the support we must provide to Ukraine.

## Medicine in a new era of warfare

The War in Ukraine has turned into an attritional battle where the threat from drones and missiles is significant.

As the military has had to adapt, so have the medical services to the emerging threats.

Despite the Geneva Convention medics and medical facilities are actively targeted on the battlefield , placing a strain on those providing life saving care.

This is further compounded by the deliberate targeting

of civilian infrastructure including hospitals and extensive civilian casualties.

With the protections afforded to medics ignored, the personal toll for medics is high and physical protection essential.



### KURMAINZ-KASERNE GERMANY

#### Special points of interest:

- The provision of medical care in Ukraine is facing unique challenges due to the new era of drone warfare.
- The 'Kill-Zone' limits the movements of medics and delays the evacuation of casualties. Prolonged field care is vital.
- Despite these challenges, medical services are force multipliers, rehabilitation returning large numbers of the injured to the fight.

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# Medical care within the ‘Kill Zone’

The ‘Kill—zone’ extends for over 30 km astride the frontline. The complex battle space of electronic warfare, killer drones and mined terrain severely hampers movement.

Medics hoping to maneuver around this space to get to the casualties face significant personal danger, worsened as they are considered a high value target.

Once they reach the casualty they need to provide complex trauma

care with potential resource constraints.

As casualties can’t easily be moved around the battlespace, the care they need to provide can last days and prolonged field care and nursing skills become essential for survival. Telemedicine can help provide this support.

In this austere environment there is degradation of human conditioning and even basic health and dental



problems can prove a challenge. The medic will have to support the burden of Disease Non-Battle Injury (DNBI) from increasing numbers of chronic conditions, whilst potentially providing dental care to maintain the fighting force at the front.

## Evacuation



The constant threat of drones has meant that medical evacuation is a

complex and dangerous endeavor. Throughout the conference we heard the challenges faced and the innovations employed to try and improve survival now and in the future.

The successful utilization of the armored unmanned ground vehicle (UGV) MAUL drone, remotely operated, mine-resistant design, and armored capsule have shown how it

can be achieved successfully.

The ‘Golden Hour’ is a medical concept that is impossible to achieve due to the constraints of the kill-zone. Commanders need to consider how medical supplies, and medics need to be utilized in the battle space to adapt to the constrained evacuation opportunities.

## Training



Training with the intent to ‘Fight Tonight’ but to also sustain for the future are the two fundamental components for medical training. The MEDNET conference allowed for input from all Ukrainian branches and key stakeholders to discuss the training needs of the Ukrainian forces and the steps required to make these goals a reality.

The Tactical Combat Casualty Care - Combat Life Savers Course Tier 2 (TCCC CLS-L2) was outlined. This is

an advanced military trauma course designed all personnel tasked with providing extended lifesaving care in the combat environment. This second level adds additional interventions, assessment skills and prolonged casualty management from the tier 1 TCCC which is taught at basic training. The intent of this course is to prepare combat lifesavers to stabilize casualties when evacuation may be delayed, currently this is mostly due to drone warfare.

Further courses are already planned and being conducted in various NATO nations;

- Platoon Combat Medic (TCCC 3)
- Train the Trainer Course (TCCC 1-3)
- Enhanced Assessment, Stabilization and Transfer Course (EAST)
- Prolonged Casualty Care
- Senior Combat Medic (Administrative)
- Tactical Medical Planning

With several nations running these courses for the Ukrainian forces, they have paved the way for others to assist in any way they can.

This medical network conference has allowed for coordination amongst stakeholders to fundamentally build up training provision .

Training remains paramount to the development and maintenance of medical provision in austere conditions at the front line.



## Subterranean Medical Facilities

The conference allowed for Ukrainian medical forces to showcase their network of sophisticated Subterranean Medical Treatment Facilities (Sub-MTF).

These are a key protection whilst medics are under constant threat . They enable them to deliver higher standards of medical care whilst

protected close to the front line, vital for tactical medical support.

With several now fully functional and with collected data to present, the conference allowed for detailed and open analysis of these facilities

Several nations have assisted

with their construction and development, showcasing how collaborative medical networking can transform into real front line changes.



## The Moral Component

Medical support within Ukraine is important not only for the physical but also the moral health of the force and warfighting effort. The moral, spiritual and psychological well-being of the nation is vital for recovery.

The conference was supported by representatives from the Ukrainian and UK pastoral care systems

They explained how they are helping the soldier with holistic care and

spiritual assistance, providing a broader understanding of the moral component and the effect of moral injury. This was a fascinating insight into the mindset of the troops at the front line.

It led to another very welcomed area of multi-nation collaboration for understanding and assistance, now and into the future.



# NSATU

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The Ukrainian medical services are facing significant challenges providing medical care in the most austere and deadly environment.

To enable them to deliver life saving care, they urgently require the items on their Unified Medical Priority List.

Support can be provided through donations through the KOROVAI donation system, pledging against the vital items on the Unified Medical Priority List. For more information please contact: [ariane.leroux@dcis.nato.int](mailto:ariane.leroux@dcis.nato.int)

Alternatively donations can be provided via the NSATU TRUST FUND. For more information please contact: [DOS-NSATUTrustFund@mod.gov.uk](mailto:DOS-NSATUTrustFund@mod.gov.uk)

## The Unified Medical Priority List

The operational tempo of the war requires a constant supply of medical equipment to all parts of the Operational Patient Care Cycle.

At the frontline tourniquets and specialized bandages are vital to halt bleeding, whilst fluid warmers and blankets maintain the temperatures of the injured until evacuation.

Ambulances including 4x4 and armored variants are needed to extract the patient to forward surgical care. Surgical equipment, oxygen concentrators, monitors and ventilators are essential to provide life saving care.

Once back at a hospital further vital equipment is needed, CT and X-ray machines help to identify hidden injuries. The need is continuous and supply does not always match.

The medical services from the various arms of the Ukrainian armed forces have come together to agree the top priori-

ties needed to provide the needed life saving care.

The Unified Medical Priority List contains 48 items essential to delivering medical care at the frontline, through surgical care and onto rehabilitation services.

This unified demand signal will assist in defining the immediate requirements for consumables and more long term developments.

Supporting the Ukrainian medical capability should be a key target for those wishing to provide non-lethal aid.

Funding streams for these are being investigated through multiple sources, including the NATO Comprehensive Assistance Package or through national donations via the KOROVAI system.

