

# Strengthening International Cooperation: 709th Military Police Battalion Participation in a German Bridging and Gap-Crossing Operations Course

By Captain Anatoliy I. Silchuk

In a move to enhance tactical knowledge and strengthen international military cooperation, the 709th Military Police Battalion, Vilseck, Germany, recently participated in a 2-day course hosted by the German *Feldjäger* (military police), on the role of military police in bridging and gap-crossing operations. The course, conducted in collaboration with the *Bundeswehr* (German armed forces) Engineering Corps, provided a comprehensive look at the planning and execution of complex gap-crossing operations through the blending of theoretical instruction with practical application. As the assistant operations officer for the 709th Military Police Battalion, I had the privilege and honor of attending the Bridging and Gap-Crossing Operations Course.

## Day 1: Theoretical Instruction

On the first day of the course, the *Bundeswehr* Engineering Corps focused on theoretical instruction, covering many topics such as: logistical challenges, unit coordination, and the critical role that military police play in securing and managing traffic during gap-crossing operations. During this instructional phase of training, emphasis was placed on the importance of integrating military police throughout operations and ensuring safety during movement by reducing challenges associated with managing traffic, securing key locations, and supporting rear-area efforts of military and civilian supply lines.

## Day 2: Practical Fieldwork

The second day of the course involved practical, hands-on experience. The class of 27, including four lieutenant colonels (one of whom was the deputy commander of the *Feldjäger* Regiment), was divided into four teams, all of which visited a projected river-crossing site to compare their map-based, classroom-developed plans to real-world conditions. The lieutenant colonels served as advisers and reviewers, providing valuable feedback throughout the entire process. Each team was tasked with developing a warning order for a simulated river crossing. During this phase of the exercise, I was responsible for assessing security concerns while planning traffic control measures around the crossing site. The practical fieldwork exercise revealed various challenges that were not apparent during the planning phase, emphasizing the need for constant coordination between military police and engineering units.

## Insights From a Seasoned *Bundeswehr* Sergeant

One of the highlights of the fieldwork exercise was the opportunity to receive valuable feedback from a seasoned *Bundeswehr* sergeant first class soldier who had extensive experience in bridging and gap-crossing operations. Drawing from lessons learned in modern warfare, particularly recent conflicts such as the war in Ukraine, the sergeant stressed the importance of a daptability, flexibility, and situational awareness in the face of unpredictable threats.

## Key Takeaways

Attendance at this 2-day course represented a valuable learning experience that provided a holistic view of the military police role in bridging and gap-crossing operations. The combination of theoretical knowledge and practical application, enriched by insights from real-world combat knowledge and experience, reinforced the importance of early military police involvement during planning stages and the ability to adapt to various field conditions.

## International Military Cooperation

The participation of the 709th Military Police Battalion in the *Bundeswehr* Bridging and Gap-Crossing Operations Course reaped many significant benefits, expanding tactical knowledge and strengthening international military cooperation. The opportunity for knowledge exchange fostered mutual understanding, allowing both U.S. and German military police to refine their approaches to similar challenges.

Continued participation in such joint training events will help solidify the relationship between U.S. and German military forces, building trust, improving interoperability, and enhancing the overall effectiveness of North Atlantic Treaty Organization operations. These training experiences better prepare U.S. military police to integrate with foreign counterparts, ensuring that they are well-versed in the planning and execution of complex military operations in coalition environments.

## Conclusion

709th Military Police Battalion participation in the 2-day Bridging and Gap-Crossing Operations Course has not only enhanced tactical knowledge but also reinforced the importance of international military cooperation. The lessons

learned from our German counterparts improved communication between military branches, while exposing Soldiers to real-world scenarios that contribute to the professional growth of the U.S. military police participants as well as the entire battalion. Continued involvement in these events will further strengthen Soldier skills and interoperability, ensuring that U.S. military police remain a valuable asset in future coalition operations.



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*Captain Silchuk is a military police officer currently serving as the movement officer (S-3) for the 709th Military Polic Battalion. He holds a bachelor's degree in criminal justice from Florida Atlantic University, Boca Raton, Florida, and a master's degree in international relationships from Webster University.*