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THE RECRUITMENT REQUIREMENTS - CANDIDATES' LEADERSHIP SKILLS IN VOLUNTARY MILITARY SERVICE IN POLAND

Key words: voluntary military service, leadership competences, leadership skills, candidate, recruitment requirements

Introduction

*Defending the Homeland is a matter and obligation of all citizens of the Republic of Poland and the preparation of population and national property in the event of war and strengthening the defence of the Republic of Poland belongs to all organs of government and government administration, state institutions, etc.*¹ The defensive preparation has long tradition. Until the Four-Year Sejm² in Poland, men between 17 - 48 years of age were a militia. They reinforced the regular army in an emergency, e.g. in case of a war. What is more, during the Four-Year Sejm, the compulsory military service lasted from 6 to 8 years, then it was shortened by the state to 6 years. When Poland regained its independence in 1918, the obligatory military service continued and it lasted from 24 to 27 months. Needless to say, at the time, young people under compulsory military service were made a lot of attractive offers from the military. Therefore, this had a positive impact on the attitude of society to defence. Those principles were included in the *Act on the Universal Defence Obligation of April 9, 1938*. This Act also involves a possibility of shortening obligatory service time for graduates of universities. Furthermore, it was an encouragement for well-educated people to join the army compulsory service.

An offer was also made for other groups of soldiers.³ These are as follows:

¹ Ustawa z dnia 21 listopada 1967 r. o powszechnym obowiązku obrony Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej, Dz. U. 04.241.2416j.t.

² Vide: <https://encyklopedia.pwn.pl/haslo/Sejm-Czteroletni;3973615.html> [access on: 21.04.2018].

³ P. Stawecki, *Zarys dziejów wojskowości polskiej w latach 1864-1939*, Wydawnictwo Ministerstwa Obrony Narodowej, Warszawa, 1990, pp. 642-647.

- complementary military service for people who did not participate in compulsory military service;
- substitute military service designed for soldiers who have participated in conscription for 5 months and were the only breadwinner in their family;
- auxiliary military service in case of a mobilisation or a war.

After World War II, the new rules of conscription were established. To be specific, in accordance with the *Act of a general military duty* of January 30, 1959 originally it was 3 years, and from 1967 it was only 2 years. The gradual shortening of the period of obligatory military service has lasted for the last 30 years. It was as follows: 18, 12 and 9 months. In 2008, conscription was suspended according to the amendment to the *Act of a general military duty* of January 9, 2009. Therefore, all young people who were not participating in compulsory military service were automatically transferred to the military reserve. Nowadays, compulsory military service is carried out as a voluntary military service.

The subject of the paper is to describe the leadership recruitment requirements for the voluntary military service in Poland. The author will answer the questions: 1. What is the importance of voluntary military service? 2. What does recruitment process to the voluntary military service look like? 3. What are the leadership skills? Research methods are the content analysis of the subject literature.

The importance of voluntary military service in defence

Nowadays, the possession of only human potential is insufficient to protect the state and its citizens. In order to ensure security, it is also necessary to have properly prepared community. Furthermore, the society's defensive training is one of the main parameters of ensuring safety as well as technical means of fighting and economic potential of the state. In the technical military era, the human potential is highlighted. As Johannes Gerber said it is "the most expensive, elusive and the most creative source of military power."⁴ Poland as a member of NATO and the EU reduced its military potential. Namely, it has suspended obligatory military service for men and nowadays there is the professional army. However, one of the most essential challenges is modernising the system of training from the military staff to soldiers' volunteer military service.

⁴ R. Lipka, *Idea obywatelskiego modelu obronności, a proces tworzenia społecznego zaplecza systemu obronnego*, [in:] *Spoleczne aspekty skrócenia zasadniczej służby wojskowej: materiały z konferencji naukowej zorganizowanej w AON w dniu 19 listopada 1998 r.*, Departament Społeczno-Wychowawczy MON, Warszawa, 1999, p. 24.

When the amendment to the *Act of a general military duty* has come into force in 2010, the National Guard were created in order to provide personnel reserves in the Polish army. Therefore, the volunteer military service began its functioning, and the army opened its ranks for all willing people (men and women) who had not participated in military training before.

The voluntary military training covers the following stages:⁵

- basic training;
- specialised training.

Firstly, all the candidates have the same basic program of training. After that, the recruits take an official military vow and start specialised training. This training involves specialised activities which prepare young soldiers to do their tasks in the posts they will held in the future.⁶ The voluntary service trains command officers, non-command officers and privates. Being well-educated, they might be used in case of danger.

The recruitment process for voluntary military service

Recruitment process starts in the candidate's place of living with submitting an application.⁷ Furthermore, this application should involve some additional documents, such as documents confirming education (which depends on rank in which the volunteer wants to go on course), driving license, language certificate, etc.

There are also some obligatory conditions which allow the candidate to go on course. These are as follows:

- not being punished for an intentional crime;
- possessing Polish citizenship;
- possessing proper physical and mental condition;
- being over 18 years old;
- graduating from proper education, depending on the rank (graduating from a university for command officers, baccalaureate for non-command officers and primary school for privates).

If a candidate submits the application, the recruitment process will start. After that, there is an interview with a commander of a candidate's district and the checking of all the documents takes place. As a result, there might be a possibility that a candidate with such education will be

⁵ *Rozporządzenie Ministerstwa Obrony Narodowej z dnia 16 marca 2015 r. w sprawie służby przygotowawczej*, Dz. U. z 2015 r., poz. 449.

⁶ *Ibidem*, Załącznik nr 2: *Regulamin kształcenia żołnierzy służby przygotowawczej*.

⁷ *Ibidem*, Załącznik nr 1.

needed in the army. The recruitment process is a competition due to a limited number of places, with a special jury assessing the candidates.

The next step is a medical and psychological examination. If the results (even one of them) are negative, the candidate's application will be rejected. If all results are positive, the person enrolls. A candidate will receive a letter informing about the place and the term of their basic training.

The time of training depends on the rank. For command officers, the course lasts 6 months, for non-command officers it lasts 5 months, whereas for privates these are 4 months. After completing the training, a soldier might obtain a proposition of becoming a professional soldier.

The recruitment requirements - leadership skills

As it was mentioned above, the qualifications, motivation, achievements and predispositions of candidates are assessed in detail during the recruitment process. This is also due to the fact that workplaces in the army are limited and there is a competitiveness during the recruitment process. Furthermore, some skills are particularly useful in military service. Moreover, these skills will be developed while a soldier is on the course. Secondly, soldiers will acquire knowledge which is necessary to properly perform their tasks in the military bases.

Soldiers are on military practise as part of specialised training. They practise commanding in the military bases on the two kind of positions, i.e.:⁸

- deputy commander of platoon (during fortnight) if they are on an officer's course;
- deputy commander of a team (during one week if they are on a course for non-commander officers).

From the basic level of training, candidates are required to have certain competences and skills. As future commanders, they should know how to motivate people to work, organize it and focus on particular aims and objectives. Leadership in the army is seen as a certain skill or ability of finding supporters, influencing others and making soldiers follow leaders' aims. Some people have certain inborn leadership abilities. Others have to learn how to be leaders. Generally speaking a competent leader is someone who:

- has formal general military and specialised qualifications and knowledge;
- knows how to behave in various social situations;

⁸ Ibidem, Załącznik nr 2: *Regulamin...*

- is intelligent, emphatic, cooperative, ambitious, responsible, imaginative, hardworking, demanding and courageous.

Already at the basic stage, military volunteers are required to have certain competences and skills. Therefore, as future commanders, they should demonstrate the ability to organize, focus and mobilize people around themselves. It is connected with achieving the specific goals, because the military leader expresses his or her will by making decisions. Furthermore, leadership in the army is perceived as a certain ability, skill or trait of winning over supporters, exerting influence, as well as creating a vision of development and encouraging soldiers to act. Some people have certain inborn predispositions while others improve their leadership skills during training and gaining new experiences. Generally speaking, one can say that a competent soldier is a person who has:⁹

- personal abilities, predispositions for: communicating with superiors, subordinates and colleagues; helping in difficult situations; conflict prevention and resolution, creating an atmosphere of cooperation;

- ability to behave in different situations of social life: cultural behavior and communication, aesthetic appearance;

- personality values: intelligence, empathy, cooperation, friendliness, ambition, responsibility, courage, diligence, imagination, citizenship, maturity, perseverance;

- military and social experience, which enables a certain stability and regularity of behavior in the army and in the civilian environment;

- scope of proxies, powers and obligations of a specific activity assigned to the environment;

- general and specialist education;

- general and specialized knowledge.

At the training stage of volunteers of the military preparatory service, first of all, social competences are required, and what is connected with them is social communication skills. Therefore, knowing that subordinates differ in attitudes, knowledge, intelligence, physical abilities, educational environments and professed values, the military leader should be able to create an atmosphere for mutual communication. What is more, the aim of communication in the army is to constantly shape, modify or change the attitudes and behaviors of soldiers, so that they are consistent with the values of superiors. In accordance with the above, the military leader should:¹⁰

⁹ M. Kaliński, *Kontrola społeczna jako jeden ze sposobów kształtowania kompetencji społecznych żołnierzy*, [in:] *Kształtowanie kompetencji społecznych żołnierzy*, Departament Wychowania i Promocji Obronności MON, Warszawa, 2004, pp. 129-130.

¹⁰ M. Kaliński, *Komunikowanie społeczne przywódcy wojskowego w okresie skróconej służby wojskowej*, [in:] *Społeczne aspekty skrócenia zasadniczej służby wojskowej: materiały z konferencji naukowej zorganizowanej w AON w dniu 19 listopada 1998 r.*, Dom Wydawniczy Bellona, Warszawa, 1999, p. 166.

- seek to understand personal goals, interests, views and beliefs of subordinates;
- listen and make personal contacts with subordinates;
- express concern and appreciation for subordinates;
- encourage the submission and initiative of subordinates;
- acknowledge mistakes which he or she made;
- show confidence in subordinates and their actions.

The elements of social competence are interpersonal skills. Having them makes it possible to create social bonds by satisfying the needs of contacts with other people. Establishing contacts helps meet the requirements set by society. The remaining elements of social competences are intellectual, emotional, pedagogical, and moral competences, strengthening of security, defense etc.

Modern army requires a soldier to acquire a variety of general and specialist qualifications, as well as the ability to be in a group and with a group. In a military unit, many processes can be distinguished that shape the social competences of soldiers. Moreover, these include processes of self-realization, modeling, social control, fulfilling social roles, etc. Needless to say, an important role in the process of shaping social competence of soldiers is fulfilled by social control, which consists of all measures - negative and positive sanctions (penalties and rewards) that ensure cohesion and action of a given social group.¹¹

Social control in the army is defined as:¹²

- system of social resources: orders, prohibitions, sanctions that serve the group to ensure its compactness and maintain the conformism of its members in relation to the values, norms and patterns of behavior adopted in a given community;
 - a tool to maintain military discipline;
 - the process of supervision over the behavior and actions of individual soldiers or subunits. It is according to the rules contained in the regulations, law, customs and general norms of social life.

Summary

All in all, *soldier as a socially competent person is a soldier with abilities and skills that are necessary to be able to function in a formalized and quite diverse military environment.*¹³

¹¹ *Nowa encyklopedia powszechna PWN*, tom III, Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, Warszawa, 1998, p. 469.

¹² R. Stępień, *Leksykon pojęć dydaktyczno-wychowawczych dowódcy*, Dom Wydawniczy Bellona, Warszawa, 1999, pp. 114-115.

¹³ M. Kaliński, *Kontrola społeczna...*, p.135.

Volunteers are required to have a wide range of leadership competences. These are defined as the ability to perform official tasks. To be specific, these are specialist competences, technical competences and ability to be a military leader. Leader's specialist competences are strictly connected with soldiers' tasks. It is the knowledge of regulations and instructions, knowledge of management and also tactics and command skills. A leader should know how to direct the subordinates.¹⁴

The use of technical knowledge takes place during the operation of the assigned equipment. Technical competences relate to:¹⁵

- formulating training and educational goals;
- defining quality standards for the tasks performed;
- distribution of tasks;
- supporting subordinates in their own development;
- delegating.

Technical skills are mainly the ability to manage devices, methods and technologies in a specific field.

The third part of the professional competence is the ability to perform the function of the commander. One of the important features of the command is good knowledge of subordinates and maintaining direct contact with them. In addition, each commander should have the ability to decide in a risk situation, control the tasks performed, and implement the decision-making process. Moreover, the ability to plan, set tasks, and manage material resources is equally important. Furthermore, in the case of candidates for the voluntary military service, the predispositions and general knowledge are the most important, since specialist knowledge in a given technical position or commanding position is acquired during specialist training and apprenticeships. Conceptual competences are no less important. These refer to the ability to make decisions, analytical thinking and predicting the effects of one's and subordinates' actions, especially in critical situations.

They consist of the following elements:¹⁶

- scope of powers;
- command education;
- personal commanding skills;
- personality values;

¹⁴ J. Tomiło, *Rola przywódcy wojskowego w kształtowaniu morale podwładnych*, [in:] *Vademecum dydaktyczno-wychowawcze*, Dom Wydawniczy Bellona, Warszawa, 1999, p. 205.

¹⁵ M. Kaliński, *Umiejętności interpersonalne lidera – menedżera – dowódcy*, [in:] *Lider wojskowy u progu XXI wieku*, Departament Wychowania i Promocji Obronności MON, Warszawa, 2003, p. 92.

¹⁶ J. Borkowski, *Kompetencje menedżerskie dowódcy*, [in:] *Leksykon pojęć dydaktyczno-wychowawczych dowódcy*, Departament Społeczno-Wychowawczy MON, Warszawa, 1999, p. 103.

- command and social experience;
- universal and special managerial skills.

The lack of conceptual competences of a military leader disturbs the accuracy of the decisions made and does not guarantee proper performance of the tasks entrusted.

In view of the fact that volunteers may in the future be able to supplement the composition of foreign missions, it is also extremely important for them to have intercultural competences. Knowledge of other cultures, religions and customs helps to find a new alien environment without the risk of creating conflict situations.

Intercultural competencies are as follows:¹⁷

- a knowledge of foreign languages;
- getting to know the basics of the culture of the country in which the soldier will be stationed;
- knowledge of body language: gestures, facial expressions, attitudes;
- openness and acceptance of cultural diversity.

A soldier with such competences guarantees the implementation of the set tasks; therefore, people with language certificates and directional education have a better chance of being appointed to the preparatory service. This is particularly important because the number of places is subject to the strict limit of the Ministry of National Defense.

To sum up, as it was mentioned, it is difficult to require from candidates to possess all of the leadership competences. Interviews, physical and mental health tests, documents presented, course certificates, certificates and diplomas give an overview of qualifications and competences of candidates to military voluntary service in Poland. It should also be mentioned that predispositions and orientations to military service are equally important, since people with such competence potential are easier to adapt to the military environment.

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¹⁷ T. Majewski, *Kompetencje dowódcze oficerów Wojsk Lądowych Sił Zbrojnych RP*, rozprawa habilitacyjna, [in:] *Zeszyty Naukowe Akademii Obrony Narodowej*, Warszawa, 2006, p. 26.

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WYMAGANIA REKRUTACYJNE – KOMPETENCJE PRZYWÓDCZE KANDYDATÓW W OCHOTNICZEJ SŁUŻBIE WOJSKOWEJ W POLSCE

Tematem niniejszego artykułu są wymagania rekrutacyjne stawiane kandydatom do służby wojskowej, a dokładniej kompetencje przywódcze brane pod uwagę podczas rekrutacji ochotników do armii. Artykuł ma na celu pokazanie znaczącej roli kompetencji przywódczych już na etapie rekrutacji, a następnie selekcji w organizacji zhierarchizowanej nastawionej na profesjonalne wykonywanie zadań. Autor omawia istotę kompetencji i umiejętności przywódczych wymaganych od ochotników do służby wojskowej w Polsce.

Słowa kluczowe: ochotnicza służba wojskowa, kompetencje przywódcze, umiejętności przywódcze, wymagania rekrutacyjne