

## **THE ROLE AND TASKS OF THE TERRITORIAL DEFENCE FORCE IN THE NATIONAL SECURITY SYSTEM**

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### **ABSTRACT**

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The detachments of Territorial Defence Force (TDF, Polish: *Wojska Obrony Terytorialnej*) are an important element in the new structure of the Polish Army. The article presents the challenges the Territorial Defence Force, a new branch of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Poland, are currently facing. The author discusses the origin of TDF as well as the basic normative and legal documents that specify the role and tasks of TDF in the national security system. The principles of recruitment to TDF, the basic criteria laid down for candidates for service and a timeline of TDF development in 2016–2019 are described. Particular attention is paid to the cooperation between TDF and operational forces in case of an armed conflict, which poses a serious challenge to the new type of armed forces. Additionally, research suggests that the range of tasks assigned to TDF indicates their significant role within the crisis management system. This requires the TDF command to work closely with public administration and to gain trust and esteem in local communities in the regions of their operation.

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**INTRODUCTION**

The creation of proper conditions for the functioning of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Poland under the process of full professionalization in the context of modern threats requires permanent structural and functional changes.

As a modern organisation, the Polish Army has to adjust to the transformations observed in the contemporary world, including the labour market. Certain changes can already be seen in its regular operation. When compared to the past, issues such as the nature of professional service by present-day professional soldiers, their working hours (definitely more standardised now), time spent on testing grounds, rights and responsibilities, the abolition of compulsory military service, business trips outside the town of residence, or women entering the military as professional soldiers, are approached in a completely different way. Professional officers have lost many privileges granted to them formerly and are becoming more and more familiar with the current obstacles on the labour market.

Significant changes have been introduced in staffing regulations: the proposed solutions mainly centre on ensuring proper recruitment, selection and the rational use of human resources of the professional Armed Forces.

Several new terms were used in the *Act on military service of professional soldiers* (Polish: *Ustawa o służbie wojskowej żołnierzy zawodowych*) that define the course and the methods of the development of the professional careers of currently employed servicemen. The development is based primarily on the time served in the present position, i.e. the period of service in an official position specified in the personnel decision by which a professional soldier (in this case, an officer) was appointed. Another vital issue regarding officer careers is the corps administrator (in this case, the officer administrator). It is a person appointed by the Minister of National Defence who, due to their official function and high qualifications, has an impact on the development of officer careers by participating in the recruitment and career development processes, the assessment of official position description sheets as well as in issuing prognoses with reference to the conduct in the service.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *Ustawa o służbie żołnierzy zawodowych z 11 września 2003 r.*, art. 6, item 1, subparagraphs 12 and 19.

The basic documents that regulate the principles of joining professional military service are the following: *Act on military service of professional soldiers* of 11 September 2003, and the *Act on Amending the act on military service of professional soldiers and other acts* (Polish: *Ustawa o zmianie ustawy o służbie wojskowej żołnierzy zawodowych oraz niektórych innych ustaw*) of 24 April 2009, Journal of Laws of 2009 no. 79, item 669, legal state as per 1 January 2010.<sup>2</sup>

The above changes adjusting the regulations and the tasks of the Polish Army to the modern challenges are reflected in the creation of a new branch of armed forces, the Territorial Defence Force (TDF, Polish: *Wojska Obrony Terytorialnej*), formed in 2017. The new formation was given a high priority and, at the same time, very little time to fully prepare for carrying out its duties. The establishment of the new branch of armed forces was received with interest by society. It should be mentioned that the interest in joining the new formation was a surprise even for the creators.

#### THE ORIGIN OF TDF

TDF is the fifth branch of the Polish Armed Forces. The creation of the Polish territorial defence system was initiated on 30 December 2015, when the Minister of National Defence appointed a Representative for the Establishment of National Defence. In the next stage, the Minister of National Defence signed the *Act on the establishment of territorial defence* on 25 April 2016. TDF was established on 1 January 2017, based on the *Act of 16 November 2016 on amending the Act on the general obligation to defend the Republic of Poland and other acts*, signed by the President of Poland on 20 December 2016. On 29 March 2017, the Territorial Defence Force Command obtained the capacity to act and officially took command over the first three TDF brigades located in Białystok, Lublin and Rzeszów. In line with the amendment to the *Act on the general obligation to defend*, the Commander of the Territorial Defence force is a Commander of Armed Forces and, like the General Commander of Armed Forces and Operational Commander of Armed Forces, reports to the Minister of National Defence.

#### THE ROLE AND DUTIES OF TDF IN THE NATIONAL DEFENCE SYSTEM

In the target organisation of the Armed Forces, the TDF Command is to have the same position as other commands of the Armed Forces, and is to report to the Chief of the General Staff of the Polish Armed Forces. Nonetheless, this will only be possible when TDF obtains the capacity to perform tasks in accord-

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<sup>2</sup> <http://www.polskieustawy.com/print.php?actid=4590&lang=&adate=20100101> (accessed 28.05.2010).

ance with the combat purpose. Until then, the TDF Command will report to the Minister of National Defence.

Owing to the fact that TDF is hierarchical in structure, its functioning is conditioned by normative and legal acts. The main documents specifying the duties, role and position of TDF detachments in the national defence system are listed below:

- Decision no. 140/MND of the Minister of National Defence of 28 June 2017 on the adoption of the heritage of traditions by the Territorial Defence Force Command;
- Decision no. 92/MND of the Minister of National Defence of 28 April 2017 on the acquisition of military equipment by the Territorial Defence Force;
- Regulation of the Minister of National Defence of 14 March 2017 on granting funding of costs of studies, education, internship, course or specialisation to soldiers in territorial military service;
- Regulation of the Minister of National Defence of 24 February 2017 on drafting staff to the territorial military service and the method of performing the service;
- Regulation of the Minister of National Defence of 10 February 2017 on the qualification of soldiers in territorial military service useful in the Armed Forces of the Republic of Poland.<sup>3</sup>

TDF continues the traditions and heritage established by the Home Army Headquarters (Polish: *Komenda Główna Armii Krajowej*), that operated in the period 1942–1945. Adopting heritage from an organisation which was so prominent in the history of Poland clearly indicates the role and importance attributed to the Territorial Defence Force by the Ministry of National Defence. This is a great challenge but also an honour for the TDF Command. As regards cooperation with operational forces, the compatibility of equipment seems to be a relevant issue. This is the purpose of the Decision no. 92/MND of the Minister of National Defence of 28 April 2017 on the acquisition of military equipment by the Territorial Defence Force. It specifies the method of acquiring military equipment, parts, components and all types of technical elements and services necessary for TDF to operate properly. According to the document, the TDF Command is the Administrator, although the activities of other National Defence department post holders have also been defined under the process.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> <http://mon.gov.pl/d/pliki/rozne/2017/02/rozporzadzenie.pdf> (accessed: 12.11.2018).

<sup>4</sup> *Decyzja nr 92/MON Ministra Obrony Narodowej z dnia 28 kwietnia 2017 r. w sprawie pozyskiwania sprzętu wojskowego Wojsk Obrony Terytorialnej*, section 1.

Great stress is placed on the professional development of the soldiers and on raising their qualifications, which is, in turn, reflected in the challenges and needs resulting from TDF's tasks. These needs are addressed in the Regulation of the Minister of National Defence of 14 March 2017 on granting the funding for studies, education, internships, courses or specialisation to soldiers in territorial military service. Any TDF soldier may apply for this funding. The commander of a soldier's territorial unit may grant funding for education on written request submitted in paper form by the soldier. A funding application submitted by TDF soldiers has to specify in particular:

- 1) type, scope and amount of the requested funding;
- 2) name and type of the educational institution;
- 3) stage, major and mode of study;
- 4) dates and places of receiving education;
- 5) planned completion date;
- 6) qualifications (degrees) gained after the completion of education;
- 7) total cost of education calculated by the educational institution.<sup>5</sup>

As can be seen, conditions created for TDF soldiers who seek further development are more than favourable. The government provides considerable support for such educational opportunities. The development of the entire formation, and therefore a significant role in a strong territorial defence system, lies with educated, competent TDF soldiers.

However, from the point of view of TDF candidates, the regulations of the Ministry of National Defence on drafting and qualifications of TDF soldiers are the most important documents. *The Regulation of the Minister of National Defence of 24 February 2017 on drafting staff to the territorial military service and the method of performing the service* specifies the conditions which must be fulfilled by candidates applying for service in TDF, as well as describes the recruitment procedure and the role of the Army Recruiting Commander.

In line with the applicable laws, a TDF candidate has to complete the following requirements:

- Polish nationality;
- physical and mental capability for active duty;
- at least 18 years of age;
- no record of intentional crimes;
- has not been assigned to alternative service;

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<sup>5</sup> *Rozporządzenie Ministra Obrony Narodowej z dnia 14 marca 2017 r. w sprawie udzielania żołnierzom pełniącym terytorialną służbę wojskową dofinansowania kosztów studiów, nauki, stażu, kursu lub specjalizacji*, section 2.

- is not in any other active duty or does not have a disaster response assignment;
- is not exempted from active duty in case of mobilisation, war or organisational and mobilisation assignment in the form of a collective list in a unit intended for militarisation;
- fulfils at least the following education criteria:
  - » higher education – in the case of service in an official position in the officer corps,
  - » secondary education – in the case of service in an official position in the NCO corps,
  - » basic education – in the case of service in an official position in the private corps.<sup>6</sup>

Reserve soldiers who have completed active duty and took an army oath after registering with the Army Recruiting Command and filing the proper application along with the required documents, are qualified by the Recruitment Committee for territorial military service and, once they obtain a recommendation, they are directed to a military psychological institute to receive an opinion certifying that there are no contraindications for active duty or service in positions requiring special psychophysical predispositions. After fulfilling all the requirements, a reserve soldier is called up for territorial military service once a month, on the first day of the obligatory rotational territorial military service planned in a particular unit.

Reserve soldiers who have not completed active duty and have not taken an army oath after registering with the Army Recruiting Command and filing the proper application along with the required documents, are qualified by the Recruitment Committee for territorial military service and, once they obtain a recommendation, they are directed to a military psychological institute to receive an opinion certifying that there are no contraindications for active duty. When all the conditions are met, the person is called up for territorial military service, typically once a quarter, and informed about the place of basic training. Persons who have not received an opinion certifying fitness for military service or those who have obtained category D of the said fitness after registering with the competent Army Recruiting Command and filing the proper application with the required documents attached are directed to the following institutions after receiving a recommendation from the Army Recruiting Command:

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<sup>6</sup> <http://mon.gov.pl/obrona-terytorialna/dolacz-do-nas/procedury-rekrutacji-r2016-12-28/> (accessed: 12.11.2018).

- military medical board – to determine fitness for active duty;
- military psychological institute – to receive an opinion certifying that there are no contraindications for active duty.<sup>7</sup>

When all the conditions are met, the person is called up for territorial military service, typically once a quarter, and informed about the place of basic training. Persons who have not been in active duty and have not taken a military oath may be called up only to an official position in the private corps. It is worth mentioning that service in the territorial defence provides great opportunities for professional development, often in specialised fields, and the common objective shared by all the people engaged in its creation and functioning guarantees an integrated team, whose priorities, apart from the good of the country, include such values as trust, honour, bravery, respect, sensibility, commitment and teamwork. However, the performance of professional duties depends to a great extent on the official position in TDF, similarly as is observed in other branches of the Armed Forces. The process of improving the performance of duties consists in training in a military unit for up to two weekends each month from September to June, 20 days per year on average, and 9–10 days during summer holidays. During this period, each battalion are to complete integrated military training held in training centres on a national level. Service in TDF lasts from 1 year to 6 years and may be further extended.<sup>8</sup> Training for civilians without military training is to be conducted in two stages: basic training, which lasts 16 days, and internal training within individual detachments, which lasts 3 years. The first year is devoted to individual training, the second year – to bringing the team/platoon together, while training in the third year consists in integrating the company.<sup>9</sup> Within this period, soldiers are to receive special, individual training and should be able to act as part of their detachments. After basic training, soldiers will undergo training within individual detachments in accordance with the adopted TDF training scheme. Details on training will be included in the *Training Programme*. In line with the programme objectives, all reserve officers and NCOs are to take positions corresponding to their specialties in the respective TDF detachments. It is the key aspect, emphasised in the formation. Moreover, such soldiers would not participate in basic training again. Instead, they would attend training within their own detachments, in accordance with the training programme. The commanders and personnel to

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<sup>7</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>8</sup> <http://mon.gov.pl/obrona-terytorialna/pytania-i-odpowiedzi/sluzba-system-szkolenia> (accessed: 10.11.2018).

<sup>9</sup> *Ibidem*.

be commanded and instructed by the officer should receive extended training. Training is to take place during the weekends, beginning on Fridays. The scope of subjects is to revolve around preparing officers/NCOs for command and training. Moreover, a launch of a complementary 'remote training' programme is planned.

Why has such a large portion of the article been devoted to TDF training? The answer results directly from the specifics of the tasks assigned to TDF. The scope of the tasks suggests that TDF should be a complementary unit in the Polish defence potential alongside the land forces, air force, navy and special forces.<sup>10</sup> The basic tasks of TDF in the Polish defence system include:

- cooperation with operational forces in case of an armed conflict;
- within the scope of crisis management tasks: protection of civilians against natural disasters, removing its effects, protection of property, conducting rescue and search operations, protection of human life and health;
- protection of local communities against the effects of destabilisation and disinformation;
- cooperation with other entities within the national defence system, in particular with voivodes and local government authorities;
- protection of local communities against the effects of cyber-attacks;
- promoting upbringing based on patriotic values.<sup>11</sup>

The above tasks indicate a wide scope of operation of TDF in the national security system. The task consisting in cooperation with operational forces in case of an armed conflict requires particular attention. It is a serious challenge for the newly formed type of armed forces. Additionally, TDF has received numerous tasks under crisis management. They are related to civil protection and evacuation as well as the elimination and prevention of threats. In this case, the ability to cooperate with other uniformed services and formations on the local level may prove necessary. Such services should be included in crisis management plans and in cooperation plans with the National Fire and Rescue System. This poses further challenges for the TDF command and for the commanders of individual voivodeship brigades.

As has been mentioned above when discussing the origin of the Territorial Defence Force, three brigades have already reached the capacity to complete their duties. The remaining detachments are to reach this capacity in the long run. Details can be seen in Figure 1.

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<sup>10</sup> <http://mon.gov.pl/obrona-terytorialna/o-nas/zadania-wot-n2016-12-27/> (accessed: 12.11.2018).

<sup>11</sup> <http://mon.gov.pl/obrona-terytorialna/o-nas/zadania-wot-n2016-12-27/> (accessed: 12.11.2018).



FIGURE 1. TIMEFRAME OF TERRITORIAL DEFENCE FORCE FORMATION 2016-2019



Source : <http://mon.gov.pl/obrona-terytorialna/o-nas/plany-budowy-wot-q2016-12-27/> (accessed 12.11.2018). BOT – Territorial Defence Brigade (Polish: *Brygada Obrony Terytorialnej*; editor's note).

It should be stressed that the formation of TDF brigades in the eastern part of the country (with brigade command headquarters in Białystok, Lublin and Rzeszów) was motivated by the analysis of the potential of the Polish Armed Forces and the current political and military situation. Next TD brigades are to be formed in the Warmian-Masurian Voivodeship. This is mostly owing to the fact that the military units subordinate to the 16th Pomeranian Infantry Division are presently being dislocated in this voivodeship. Battalions are to be created together with brigades. As seen in Figure 1, each voivodeship in Poland will have one TDF brigade, in accordance with the administrative division. The Masovian Voivodeship is going to be an exception, with two TDF brigades.

## CONCLUSIONS

Professional career in the army is gaining special meaning. It has been a subject of numerous long-term research studies conducted by sociologists from Poland

and abroad. According to Van Doorn, the military profession should be analysed from the institutional point of view due to the fact that it is performed solely within an organisation. On the one hand, the organisation is seen as bureaucratic, driven by rational processes owing to its goal orientation. On the other hand, it is an organisation whose existence is in the interest of the entire society.<sup>12</sup> Faris claims that the military profession may be treated as an occupation or activity performed within an organisation.<sup>13</sup>

Recruitment to the modern professional Polish Army must be based on clear, specified requirements. The Territorial Defence Force detachments will be important elements in the new structure of the Polish Army. The duties they have received are a great challenge, as, apart from cooperating with operational forces, they must be closely integrated with the territory on which they function. They have to cooperate with the public administration and gain trust and esteem in the local communities. It seems that these are the key conditions for TDF to succeed and reach the full capacity to complete its tasks.

The threats of the 21st century have necessitated structural changes in the Polish Army as well as its active participation in stabilisation missions outside the country. These conditions contributed to the rising expectations towards professional soldiers, even as early as at the recruitment stage. The Army has become one of more desirable employers on the current labour market. It is reasonable to expect that as more and more advanced specialised equipment is gradually introduced in the Polish Army, in part owing to properly devised and consequently implemented normative documents, our Army will soon consist entirely of uniformed professionals, who will be able to tackle increasingly demanding challenges faced by the Polish Army.

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<sup>12</sup> J. Van Doorn, *The Officer Corps: A fusion of profession and organization*, "European Journal of Sociology" no. 6, [in:] Maciejewski J. (ed.), *Oficerowie Wojska Polskiego w okresie przemian społecznej struktury i wojska. Studium socjologiczne*, Wrocław 2002, p. 74.

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