

Original article

Military Gendarmerie in the context of pro defense activities

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INFORMATIONS

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ABSTRACT

The article presents tasks and responsibilities realized by the Military Gendarmerie. The article aims at identifying pro defense activities compatible with obligations executed in order to maintain cooperation and shaping pro defense attitudes of society. For that reason, selected survey results regarding pro defense activities practically executed by the Military Gendarmerie are discussed. Research methods of educational character including a questionnaire, analysis of literature and research results, which constitute substantive grounds for training students at the Military Gendarmerie Training Center, are also applied.

KEYWORDS

Military Gendarmerie, defense, security



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Introduction

The Military Gendarmerie executing basic tasks as a law enforcement authority, prevention entity, anti-terrorist units or just support units conducts pro defense activities. In the Polish Armed Forces there is a limited number of such universal formations used at such various levels. Activities carried by gendarmes on daily basis relate to tasks defined by The Act on The Military Gendarmerie and Military Enforcement Authorities. Execution of these tasks must correlate with changes ongoing both in Poland and in the world. The Military Gendarmerie through its activities directly impacts on increasing the security and the defense system of the state [Gurba et al. 2015].

1. Scope of activities of Military Gendarmerie

1.1. Tasks and responsibilities of Military Gendarmerie

The Act on The Military Gendarmerie and Military Enforcement Authorities and its article 4 in particular defines tasks executed by the Military Gendarmerie as the component of the Polish Armed Forces foreseen for the Gendarmerie.

The task of the Military Gendarmerie [*Ustawa z dnia 24 sierpnia... 2001*] are as follows:

- ensuring compliance with military discipline,
- maintaining public order at premises and objects of military units and at public places,
- protecting lives and health of individuals and military property against acts posing threat to these values,
- investigating criminal offences and violations, including tax offences committed by individuals under the Military Gendarmerie jurisdiction, disclosing and prosecuting their perpetrators as well as disclosing and protecting evidence for these offences and violations,
- analyzing financial statutes of professional soldiers and providing its results to the Minister of National Defense,
- preventing commitment of offences, violations and other pathological misconducts by individuals remaining under jurisdiction of the Military Gendarmerie, notably alcoholism and substance dependence in the Polish Armed Forces,
- cooperating with Polish and foreign security, public order and Military Gendarmerie authorities,
- combating natural disasters and extraordinary environmental threats, eliminating their effects, active participating in search, rescue and humanitarian operations aimed at protecting life, health and property,
- executing other tasks determined by separate regulations.

While executing the above-mentioned tasks cooperation with other military components' soldiers, officers of uniformed services such as the Military Counterintelligence Service, the Internal Security Agency, the Gendarmerie, the Border Guard or the Government Protection Bureau is at the utmost importance. Among pro defense tasks, these associated with crisis situations are worth noticing. Soldiers of the Military Gendarmerie can be involved in undertakings related to combating natural disasters and extraordinary environmental threats as well as in their recovery. Experience of soldiers and civilian employees of the Military Gendarmerie allows them for participating on search, rescue and humanitarian operations aimed at protecting life, health and property. Tasks assigned by supervisors can be conducted both in the country and during overseas operations. Regarded for their skills and work effectiveness, gendarmes serve in commands of Polish military contingents and in structures of multinational Military Gendarmerie units.

1.2. Pro defense activities of the Military Gendarmerie

Pro defense activities executed by the Military Gendarmerie constitute one of the most significant assumptions and the crucial element of the national security system. The main concept of the Act of Universal Duty to Defend the Republic of Poland states that "the defense of the Fatherland is the issue and the duty of all citizens of the Polish Republic" [*Obwieszczenie Marszałka... 2016*]. Applying this thesis pro defense activities are to be defined as a basic task of an individual citizen. The Polish Armed Forces de-

velop and then execute a pro defense training directed towards familiarization of trainees with both theory and practice of adequate behaviors and activities.

Due to alarming events, among others in Eastern Europe, pro defense activities constitute one of the most significant aspects of the Polish state's functioning. In July 2015, the Ministry of National Defense established the Pro Defense Office which main task is defined by "supporting the defense system through utilization of the defense potential of non governmental pro defense organizations and students educated in the so-called uniformed classes and strengthening their identification with tradition, national heritage and the Polish Armed Forces" [Biuro do spraw... n.d.]. It is to be underlined that approximately 100,000 people are members of pro defense organizations or actively support defense in Poland [Gurba et al. 2015].

It is also worth noticing that besides associations, uniformed classes counting approximately 55,000 students in January 2017 are increasingly visible and they significantly impact on shaping young people. Within the framework of cooperation between schools and Military Gendarmerie units, students of uniformed classes have the opportunity to be familiarized with specificity and activity of the formation, gain various practical skills and improve physical fitness. Aggregate activities conducted within the cooperation between gendarmes and schools enables for obtaining necessary experience and skills required in order to serve in uniformed formations and in particular, for achieving an appropriate level of civil defense by individual students.

The Military Gendarmerie owing to its flexibility and ability to adapt to various situations is able to conduct numerous trainings related to defense or security modules. Lectures aimed at increasing civil defense knowledge include elements of first aid, self-defense, orienteering or physical training. Abilities characterizing each of the aforementioned domains cause that man becomes well aware of threats or possible crisis situations and is able to properly assess and react in problematic situations [Krysze-Jasinski et al. 2016]. The Military Gendarmerie lays strong emphasis also on prevention among society. Preventing occurrence of such addictions as alcoholism, substance dependence, smoking and road safety trainings result in awareness and understanding of possible consequences of undesired situations that turns into strengthening of the state security through shaping appropriate attitudes and behaviors.

1.3. Results of research conducted among uniformed classes

The survey among 11 uniformed classes with total number of 279 students was conducted for the purpose of the article. Applying a questionnaire the influence of uniformed classes the remaining under the auspices of the Military Gendarmerie and all activities and duties included in the curriculum on shaping both patriotic conducts and pro defense behaviors were researched. Presentation of correlations between attending a uniformed class of pro defense profile and daily behaviors and more importantly capabilities as well as civil and military defense of students constituted the secondary objective of the research.

Illustration of specifics and nature of activities directly affecting defense capabilities and security of the state constitutes one of the objectives of pro defense activities. Ideas and expectations of uniformed classes' students refer directly to activities included in the pro defense training, in which they participate. Figure 1 represents understanding the notion of pro defense activities by students of uniformed classes.

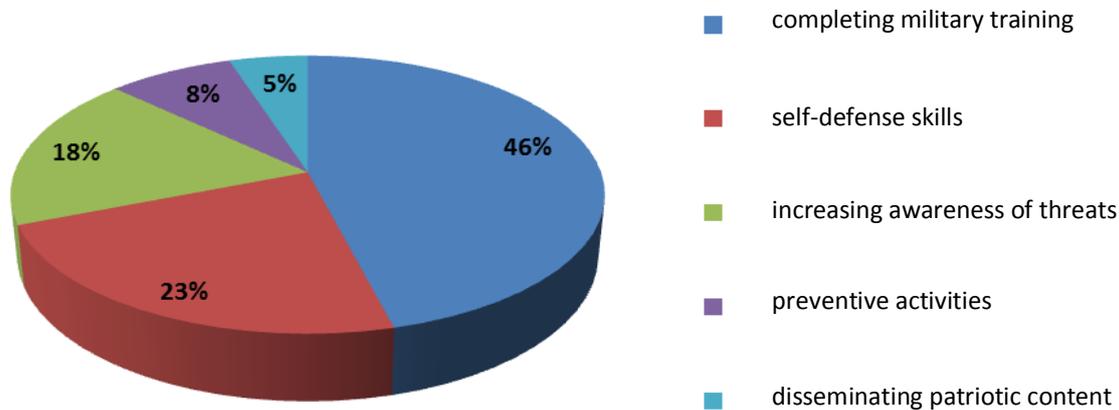


Fig. 1. Notion of pro defense
Source: [own study].

It can be stated that the awareness of uniformed classes' students is developed at the relatively high level. However, it is worth noting that all addressed in Figure 2 activities directly affect enhancement of young people within the scope of security, intensifying obtaining knowledge on the most essential abilities.

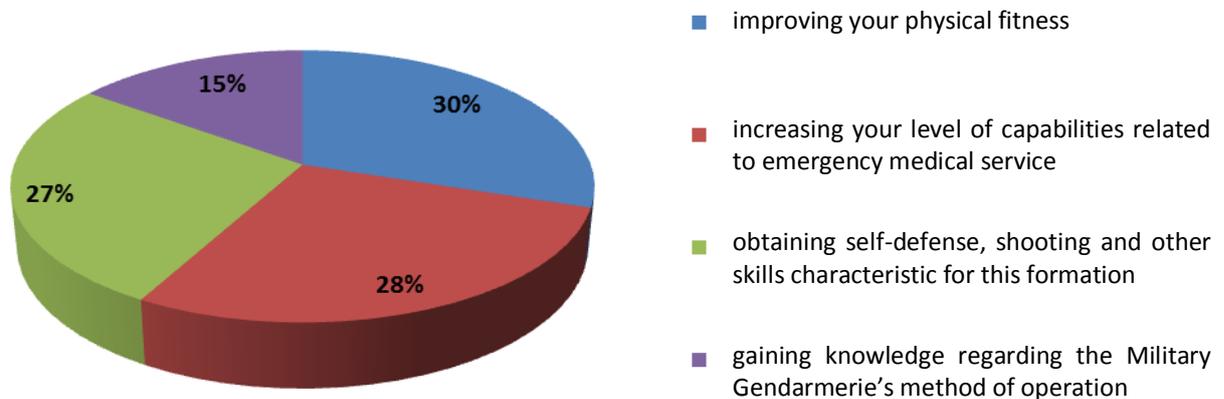


Fig. 2. Training with the Military Gendarmerie soldiers
Source: [own study].

Requirements and expectations of uniformed classes students in correlation with lectures conducted by instructors of the Military Gendarmerie evolve in pro defense educational programs. Abilities and skills listed in Figure 2 are desired among students, shape their attitudes and characters through appropriate providing knowledge and experience which ultimately is of significant importance as far as strengthening security

of society is concerned. A single student receiving adequate training determines defense potential of a state bringing into daily routine abilities of assessing and appropriate reactions regarding problematic situations.

Representatives of Poland in taekwondo, karate and other martial arts as well as members of associations such as "Strzelec" or graduates of first aid courses are among 279 students of uniformed classes. Therefore, multidimensionality of interests or selecting various subjects as major specialty is hardly surprising.

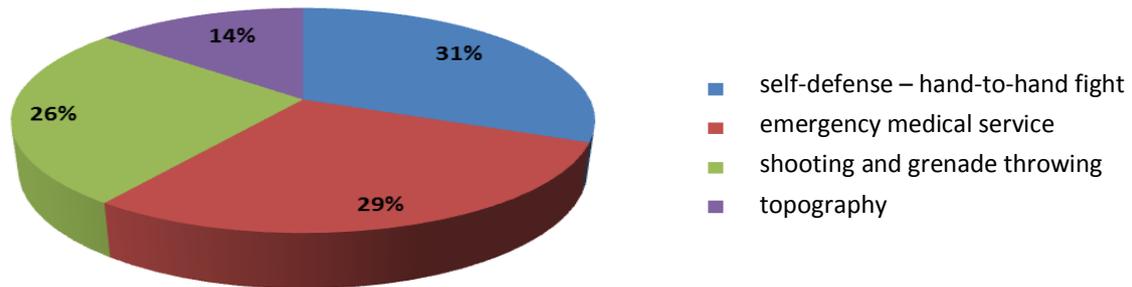


Fig. 3. Lectures Provided by instructors from the Military Gendarmerie Specialized Unit in Minsk Mazowiecki
Source: [own study].

Figure 3 illustrates how distinct interests of uniformed classes' students correlate with their curriculum subjects, which facilitates the educational process causing it simultaneously effective and satisfactory. It is worth noting that aforementioned subjects directly affect defense capabilities, providing the state young people able to take care of themselves and react to situations occurred.

Pro defense activities of the Military Gendarmerie in the form of lectures and trainings conducted by its instructors for uniformed classes students bring the desired effect due to the fact that their topics in the majority of subjects correlate with pro defense governmental programs. The substantial part of training conducted by gendarmes directly is consistent with the set of elementary activities aimed at strengthening security of and supporting defense system of the state through utilization of the potential of students from uniformed classes [Knecht et al. 2015].

Conclusion

"Defense of the Fatherland is the duty of the Polish citizen" [Konstytucja... 1997] – these words from the Constitution of the Republic of Poland clearly determine the obligation of a single Pole. Conducted and above-presented research and their results confirm effectiveness as well as suitability of pro defense activities fulfilled by the Military Gendarmerie. Civil defense educational programs have brought numerous benefits and didactic successes. The educational programs supplemented by civil defense and military activities facilitate shaping relevant attitudes and instilling elementary knowledge on defense, security or patriotism into people.

The Military Gendarmerie, taking into account its specificity, character, education, abilities and obtained experience, offers society the high level of pro defense education based on practical exercise. Instructors of the Military Gendarmerie who provide trainings are highly experienced which transfers into the abilities of sharing knowledge and its scope. Cooperation with uniformed classes is one of examples of shaping attitudes by the Military Gendarmerie. The basic content of the training that includes, among others, self-defense, emergency medical service or topography allows for steadfast preparation for possible service in uniformed services and what most importantly broaden knowledge and increase abilities constituting pro defense activities. All components of the training embedded in civil defense educational programs cause that young people entering adult life are resourceful and independent and their abilities and skills acquired and mastered during 3-year secondary school mark them a fundamental link of the defense system of Poland.

Diligence of the Military Gendarmerie instructors and teachers involved in education of uniformed classes and ambition and desire for self-development of students cause that after completing the educational process and achieving a diploma confirming secondary education, young people create expected foundations for shaping citizenship and pro defense attitudes. Awareness of threats and possible crisis situations as well as particularly abilities owing to which they are able to cope with advertises and problems are the attributes indispensable at present. Subject of security and its maintaining and adequate civil defense constitute elementary issue for graduates of uniformed classes. Educational programs of uniformed classes undoubtedly succeed on a scene of shaping appropriate attitudes behaviors among young people which looking through the perspective of the current and future, particularly turbulent times, represents correctness and indispensability of uniformed classes development.

Conflict of interests

The author declared no conflict of interests.

Author contributions

Author contributed to the interpretation of results and writing of the paper. Author read and approved the final manuscript.

Ethical statement

The research complies with all national and international ethical requirements.

ORCID

Piotr Rumak – The author declared that he has no ORCID ID's

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Biographical notes

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