

Original article

Interaction of the clergy with the Armed Forces of Ukraine in the patriotic education of service members: historical and legal aspect

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INFORMATION

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ABSTRACT

The article considers the main milestones in the formation of military-religious relations in independent Ukraine, analyzes the guiding documents regulating the activities of military priests in the field of patriotic education of military personnel, and examines the main directions of chaplains' work with the Ukrainian combatants during the armed conflict in Eastern Ukraine.

KEYWORDS

chaplains, military clergy, Armed Forces of Ukraine, framework, patriotic education



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Introduction

The events that unfolded in Ukraine in 2014 led to the strengthening of religion and military clergy's role in the education of the personnel of the Armed Forces of Ukraine to strengthen the positive character traits and moral qualities of military personnel. Several Ukrainian scientists have studied the history of military chaplaincy in the Armed Forces of Ukraine. O. Voroshchuk studied the formation of military-religious relations in independent Ukraine, the development of religious relations in the Naval Forces of the Armed Forces of Ukraine is reflected in the scientific works of S. Sokolyuk. The activity of priests during the armed conflict in Eastern Ukraine was studied by O. Tomchuk, I. Lukovenko, and A. Romanik. T. Kalenichenko and R. Kohanchuk covered the main directions of pastoral work during the armed conflict.

After the proclamation of independence, the clergy's activities began to extend to the military formations of Ukraine, but military chaplaincy as a phenomenon did not exist. With the beginning of the armed aggression against Ukraine in 2014, reviving the institute of military chaplaincy in Ukraine has become relevant. Equally important, nationally significant tasks included strengthening the patriotic education of the personnel of the Armed Forces of Ukraine and using the potential of churches (religious organizations) in the educational sphere.

Methods: an analysis of the guiding documents regulating military priests' activities in independent Ukraine; generalization based on the experience of participation of military chaplains in patriotic education in the conditions of armed conflict; the comparison of approaches to the patriotic education of religious organizations with different political views.

The purpose of the article is to consider the legal framework for the interaction of the clergy with the Armed Forces of Ukraine in service members' patriotic education.

Presentation of the main material

The Law of Ukraine "On Freedom of Conscience and Religious Organizations" adopted in 1991, among other things, gave service members the right to participate in worship services and perform religious rites. After the proclamation of the declaration of independence, the formation and introduction of the Institute of military priests (chaplains) in Ukraine were repeatedly discussed at Christian military conferences and other events with representatives of religious organizations and military authorities.

Besides, religious organizations began to be widely involved in patriotic activities in the Armed Forces of Ukraine. The Ukrainian Orthodox Church had two branches: the Kyiv Patriarchate and the Moscow Patriarchate, whose representatives took part in the patriotic education of service members of the Armed Forces of Ukraine. From 1999 to 2006, units for cooperation with security and defense structures were established in churches and religious associations' internal structure. In particular, it is the Synodal Department of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church for cooperation with the Armed Forces and other military formations of Ukraine; Synodal Department of spiritual and patriotic education of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Kyiv Patriarchate in relations with the Armed Forces and other military formations of Ukraine [1, p. 24-5].

The Synodal Department of spiritual and patriotic education in relations with the Armed Forces and other military formations of Ukraine was established to spread the Christian faith, interact, coordinate and provide pastoral care for military personnel and their families. The representatives of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Kyiv Patriarchate signed several agreements with the heads of law enforcement agencies on cooperation in the formation of patriotic, cultural, and spiritual values of military personnel. That made it possible for priests to visit military units to perform religious rites, conduct lectures of a spiritual and educational nature and individual conversations with religious service members. With the assistance of the department, the first congress of military priests (chaplains) of Ukraine was held, dedicated to improving the service members' patriotic education.

In turn, representatives of the Synodal Department for Interaction with the Armed Forces and Other Military Formations of Ukraine of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate held regular meetings with pedagogical and cadet teams of higher military educational institutions, as well as lyceum students on the occasion of religious and state holidays. Examples include prayers and blessings of cadets for successful training on the Knowledge Day; organizing leisure for cadets and students; participation in scientific conferences devoted to the problems of patriotic education of youth and organized by higher military educational institutions, etc. [2, p. 18, 32].

At the same time, the search for ways to improve cooperation and interaction between the Christian churches of Ukraine of different religious faiths and the Ministry of Defense of

Ukraine in the direction of patriotic and spiritual education of service members of the Armed Forces of Ukraine and their families, strengthening their patriotic spirit and moral health continued. Another document that regulated the activities of priests in the Armed Forces of Ukraine was the Directive of the Minister of Defense of Ukraine “on regulating the issues of meeting the religious needs of military personnel of the Armed Forces of Ukraine.” The Directive provided for such forms of cooperation with representatives of religious organizations in meeting the religious needs of military personnel:

- organizing religious holidays in military units, conducting services and other religious rites, religious holidays for military personnel,
- blessing military personnel before or after performing combat training and peace-keeping tasks,
- organizing excursions for personnel to places of spiritual, cultural, and historical value,
- conducting conversations on moral, ethical, and patriotic topics [3].

In 2009, the Order of the Minister of Defense of Ukraine approved Regulation on the Council for Pastoral Care at the Ukraine Ministry of Defense. The established a representative inter-confessional advisory body was to act voluntarily at the Ministry of Defense of Ukraine. The main tasks entrusted to the Council included discussing topical issues of ensuring the religious needs of members of the Ukrainian armed forces, preparing proposals to the leadership of the Ministry of Defense of Ukraine, participation in discussion of draft laws of Ukraine and normative-legal acts on the priests’ activities in the military, promoting interfaith cooperation and harmony in a military environment, preventing sectarian conflicts, consolidating efforts of religious organizations in the spiritual and patriotic education of the Motherland defenders, etc.

Thus, military-religious cooperation was carried out in the following areas: meeting the religious needs of military personnel of the Armed Forces of Ukraine and their family members; spiritual, cultural, moral, and patriotic education; care for the preservation of morality in military collectives, prevention of offenses; preservation, revival, and development of historical and cultural heritage; social activities of churches (religious organizations); support for the family institution. Normative documents in the field of military-religious relations adopted by the Ministry of Defense of Ukraine indicated that patriotic education was an essential area of priests’ work with members of the Armed Forces of Ukraine.

A fundamental document in Ukraine’s military-religious relations is the Concept of Pastoral Care in the Armed Forces of Ukraine, approved in 2011 by the order of the Minister of Defense of Ukraine. The implementation of the Concept was aimed at deepening cooperation between the Armed Forces of Ukraine and the Church, improving the legal basis, educational, scientific, organizational, and other activities of structural divisions of the Ministry of Defense of Ukraine and the General Staff of the Armed Forces of Ukraine in the field of meeting the religious needs of military personnel of the Armed Forces of Ukraine. The Concept defined such forms of activity of clergy in the process of providing pastoral care of military personnel:

- implementation of moral and patriotic education of military personnel on the principles of national and historical traditions of the Ukrainian people,
- conducting special moral and educational programs (anti-alcohol, anti-drug, against suicide, divorce, on child education, etc.),

- other tasks related to the spiritual, moral, and educational component of the life of the Armed Forces of Ukraine [4].

At the end of 2013, a draft Law of Ukraine “On Amendments to Certain Laws of Ukraine” (on the introduction of the institute of clergy (chaplains) in military and law enforcement agencies) was developed but not accepted. It defined the right to get pastoral care for representatives of the security and defense sector of Ukraine. However, the Law did not mention the role of chaplains in the service members’ patriotic education. The main tasks of involving clergy in the activities of the Armed Forces of Ukraine and ways to implement them were outlined in the Guidelines for the military authorities to involve clergy of those churches (religious organizations) whose believers serve in the Armed Forces of Ukraine in spiritual, moral, ethical, and patriotic education. In particular, the formation of high morale and the Fatherland defender’s fighting spirit in service members, a sense of patriotism, the formation of positive motivation in service members and civilian youth for military service in the Armed Forces of Ukraine; and the consolidation of military units around the idea of Ukraine’s independence, its territorial integrity and inviolability were identified as one of the main tasks.

At the same time, the situation in the Autonomous Republic of Crimea was ambiguous. The local clergy representatives declared the “unifying” role of the Orthodox Church on the peninsula, not dividing service members of the Armed Forces of Ukraine and service members of the Russian Federation’s Black Sea Fleet, but positioning them as a single flock [5, p. 6]. In effect, during the blockade of the Ukrainian military units and ships in the Autonomous Republic of Crimea by Russian troops in February–March 2014, representatives of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate incited officers of the Ukrainian Navy to join the Armed Forces of Russian Federation. At the same time, during March–April 2014, the priests of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Kyiv Patriarchate and the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church in Crimea, despite the difficult situation, supported the personnel of the Naval Forces of the Armed Forces of Ukraine. Until this day, the priests of Ukrainian churches, who remained on the peninsula, continue to serve under the Russian occupation [6].

The invasion of military units of the Russian Federation’s Armed Forces and the Autonomous Republic of Crimea’s illegal occupation in early 2014 highlighted several objectives, including improving the system of service members’ patriotic education. The military priests’ services became particularly necessary during the active hostilities in the Donbas in 2014-2015. During the first period of the armed conflict in Eastern Ukraine (from April to September 2014) [7, p. 20], the “chaplain movement” in the anti-terrorist operation area was mostly spontaneous. The priests of different faiths from many regions of Ukraine came to the front line for several days to meet the religious needs of military personnel and provide charitable assistance. When the conflict became protracted, there was a need for priests’ permanent stay in military units. It was necessary to restrain fighters from possible destructive behavior, depressive states and maintain motivation to perform official duties, especially in the conditions of the enemy’s information and psychological operations.

In July 2014, the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine instructed the relevant ministries to develop regulations on military clergy service in the Armed Forces of Ukraine, the National Guard of Ukraine, and Ukraine’s State border service and to select candidates [8]. The Armed Forces of Ukraine were most interested in the activities of chaplains in their units. The candidates were carefully selected, recommended by the heads of churches or their authorized representatives (who are members of the Council for pastoral care under the Ministry of Defense

of Ukraine), and met specific qualification requirements. Their dispatch to the anti-terrorist operation area was carried out centrally, in coordination with the Ministry of Defense of Ukraine and the General Staff of the Armed Forces of Ukraine. As a rule, they were instructed about their troops' activities and had passes for persons who follow the troops as military chaplains, as required by international humanitarian law. They were attached as non-staff chaplains to staffs, divisions (brigades, regiments, battalions), or institutions (mobile and rear hospitals). The clergy were among the military for 30 days on a rotating basis. In December 2014, a chapel was erected at the headquarters of the anti-terrorist operation, and later in the brigades [7, p. 64-5].

Simultaneously, military personnel's religious needs continued to be met by volunteer priests of various faiths who periodically visited certain military formations. Their stay on the front line could range from 3 to 10 days. In some cases, their activities covered several districts, or the clergy visited only those units where they became "familiar" with the soldiers with which they established a friendly and trusting relationship [9, p. 14-5]. Despite the lack of support from the state, the pastoral care of the personnel of volunteer formations that were not part of the state power structures was carried out mainly by volunteer priests. They were visited mainly on the occasion of religious holidays or the delivery of charity aid.

In addition to individual priests-volunteers, who periodically visited military units on the front line, there were also volunteer formations and public organizations of a religious nature, such as the First Ukrainian battalion of military chaplains or the Interfaith battalion of military chaplains, etc. [10, p. 118]. However, they did not coordinate their activities with official Church institutions, and their clergy sometimes did not meet the requirements of the level of education and work experience, for which they were subject to criticism from the churches. Despite this, the clergy of the Interfaith battalion served at the Donetsk airport from autumn 2014 to spring 2015, meeting the religious needs of the Armed Forces of Ukraine, the National Guard of Ukraine, and volunteer formations [11, p. 127].

The psycho-emotional stress and difficult living conditions were also reflected in the work of confessors: morning and evening prayers were held after the forming, confessions at any time of the day, a blessing before the battle. Worships had to be held in "field" conditions – "chapels" were built directly in dugouts or separate tents. During the fighting, requests for christening or rites, confession, or prayer increased. Besides, the fighters' spiritual requests concerned explaining the reasons for the war, why God allows such injustice, who the fighter is in this situation, and what his mission is [12, p. 119]. Confessions and individual conversations were important in working with the military. Collective worship services, aimed at uniting military groups, directing their further combat missions without fear or doubt, and armed defense of the independence and territorial integrity of the state, also had great educational potential.

The cases of military personnel being unprepared for crises, the presence of weapons, different religious views, and lack of experience in interacting with the Church sometimes became a real challenge for the clergy. In general, the priests present side by side with soldiers in a combat situation, communication on essential topics for them (without preaching), joint life (cooking, cleaning, landscaping, etc.) helped to establish close relationships increase confidence in the clergy and respect for their work [13, p. 429].

Not only the religious aspects of their work (sacramental service, prayers, religious training, pastoral counseling, cooperation with local religious communities of different faiths) were

in demand, but also the universal qualities (the ability to listen, care and support military personnel, contribute to conflict resolution, and assist in crises). The main methods of patriotic education of service members of the Armed Forces of Ukraine during the armed conflict were the convictions and personal example of the clergy, who bore the burden of hostilities on a par with the soldiers. The primary forms included individual and group conversations, discussions, celebrations of religious holidays and other dates dedicated to anniversaries, significant events in Ukrainian history, etc.

On return from the area of the antiterrorist operation, the clergy's work acquired other, equally important areas such as special religious events (pilgrimage for veterans and their family members), rehabilitation programs for the military at churches and monasteries, work with demobilized people and their families, support for women that had lost husbands in the fighting, rehabilitation of children of the ATO participants, social and cultural events, etc. [12, p. 120]. Military chaplains were widely involved in patriotic activities at higher military educational institutions, holding commemorative events on the territory of the Ministry of Defense of Ukraine, where the Memory Hall was opened to hold a prayer event on holidays, during the celebration of public holidays, and ceremonial events.

Such activities of the clergy also became extremely important as a reflection of their patriotic position on Ukraine's military-political situation. The issue of pro-Ukrainian and pro-Russian positions of priests, "patriotic" and "non-patriotic" religious figures has become a decisive factor influencing Ukrainian society. In particular, the unpatriotic position of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate had several public confirmations, such as the situation in the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine in 2015, when deputies declared a minute of silence for the Ukrainian service members, who had died in the East of Ukraine, and representatives of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate remained seated.

In 2015, the Synodal Department of spiritual and patriotic education was renamed the Synodal Department of military clergy. Besides, the Regulation on the clergy's military service (chaplain service) in the Armed Forces of Ukraine was developed [14], which determined the composition of the chaplain service, namely: a unit subordinate to the Ministry of Defense of Ukraine, territorial divisions, and military priests. The Regulation provided for a wide range of tasks for military chaplains and in the field of patriotic education, namely:

- military personnel's education to high patriotic feelings and fighting spirit based on the moral and spiritual potential of the Ukrainian people's religious and cultural heritage,
- familiarizing personnel with the history of the national, cultural, and religious formation of Ukrainian statehood,
- assisting military personnel in developing their personal and collective moral qualities (fraternity, courage, bravery, responsibility, moderation, sacrifice, discipline, sanity).

Moreover, the priest received the right to participate in planning and decision-making on personnel's educational work and patriotic education. Later, in 2016 the structure of the military clergy service was reorganized. It includes, in addition to the priests themselves, divisions of the Ministry of Defense of Ukraine and the General Staff of the Armed Forces of Ukraine, instead of territorial divisions. The requirements for military chaplains' activities in the personnel's patriotic education were also clarified, mostly their role in this direction was reduced [15].

The need for volunteer priests on the frontline became less noticeable after introducing full-time chaplains to the security forces. Before the appointment, the applicants must pass a higher military school (military training unit of an institution of higher education), including the basis of military affairs, the military-humanitarian, and military-psychological training. Thus, besides exercising pastoral care, the chaplain must be ready to serve in combat, provide emergency medical care, etc. [16, p. 301]. In 2018, the highly mobile internal communication groups consisting of specialists in moral and psychological support and representatives of religious organizations were formed in the Armed Forces of Ukraine. Their activities extended to the units involved in the Joint Forces Operation tasks in Donetsk and Luhansk regions. The groups were to promote the formation of service members' national and patriotic beliefs on the examples of the Ukrainian people's struggle for self-determination and the creation of their state; dissemination of combat experience, examples of courage, the propaganda of heroism, and traditions of combat brotherhood. Thus, one of the groups ("Alpha") included a chaplain responsible for religious and educational activities, pastoral care in the interests of strengthening the unit personnel's moral and psychological condition, providing methodological assistance in implementing national military traditions, and organizing and conducting national-patriotic training of personnel [17].

Strengthening Ukraine's position in the international arena and strengthening religious relations in the country on a national basis was achieved by creating a single Orthodox Church in Ukraine at the end of 2018. It became possible thanks to the support of the Ecumenical Patriarchate. Relevant amendments were made to the law on freedom of conscience [18]. In particular, a religious organization subordinate to a religious organization whose headquarters are located in a state that has carried out military aggression against Ukraine and temporarily occupied part of its territory is obliged to reflect its affiliation in its full name. At the same time, the law restricted the activities of representatives of such churches in the Armed Forces of Ukraine [19]. However, as of September 2020, there were 59 chaplains from the Orthodox Church of Ukraine in the Armed Forces of Ukraine, 20 – from the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church, while only one chaplain from the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate.

At the end of 2020, the draft bill "On military chaplaincy in the Armed Forces of Ukraine" was submitted to the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine. One of the military chaplain's principles was the recognition of the official position of the Armed Forces of Ukraine in relation to existing or possible enemies of the state and their destructive actions. Thus, the ideological qualities and patriotic feelings of the clergy themselves became important. However, in November 2020, the authors withdrew the bill.

Conclusion

The proclamation of Ukraine's independence led to the beginning of cooperation between the army and the church. Religious organizations formed units responsible for interaction with the Armed Forces of Ukraine to provide pastoral care for service members, including patriotic education. Priests of various denominations participated in the patriotic education of service members of the Armed Forces of Ukraine. Nonetheless, given that Ukraine did not consider the Russian Federation as a possible adversary, pro-Russian priests kept influencing military personnel's worldview, especially in the Autonomous Republic of Crimea.

Thus, the cross-cutting theme of religious life in Ukraine after 2014 was national identity and patriotism. In times of threats to national security, patriotic education has become a priority

of national importance. The armed aggression against Ukraine led to increased use of the potential of the church and the clergy in consolidating the population and strengthening the patriotic feelings of service members of the Armed Forces of Ukraine, as well as the transition of Orthodox communities from the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate to the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Kyiv Patriarchate.

During the anti-terrorist operation in Ukraine, the range of activities of priests is significantly expanded, not limited only to the purely religious component, but social and psychological work, charitable activities, and patriotic education, which aimed at strengthening patriotic feelings, motivation to perform the duties of armed defense of the state, spiritual support of activities of the servicemen. At the same time, priests' activity required clarification of their tasks, regulation of their activities in military units, especially those who performed tasks in the area of hostilities. Given that, several documents were adopted in the Ministry of Defense of Ukraine and the General Staff of the Armed Forces of Ukraine for defining rights, duties, and powers of military priests, including patriotic education of the service members.

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Conflict of interests

The author declared no conflict of interests.

Author contributions

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

Ethical statement

The research complies with all national and international ethical requirements.

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(ie chastynoiu) relihiinoi orhanizatsii (obiednannia), kerivnyi tsentr (upravlinnia) yakoi znakhodytsia za mezhamy Ukrainy v derzhavi, yaka zakonom vyznana takoiu, shcho zdiisnyla viiskovu ahresiiu proty Ukrainy ta/abo tymchasovo okupuvala chastynu terytorii Ukrainy” vid 20.12.2018 [Law of Ukraine No. 2662 “On Amendments to Article 12 of the Law of Ukraine “On Freedom of Conscience and Religious Organizations” regarding the names of religious organizations (associations) that are members of structure (are a part) of a religious organization (association), the control centre (management) of which is located outside Ukraine in a state that is recognized by law as having committed military aggression against Ukraine and/or temporarily occupied part of the territory of Ukraine” 20.12.2018].

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Interakcje duchowieństwa z Siłami Zbrojnymi Ukrainy w wychowaniu patriotycznym żołnierzy: aspekty historyczny i prawny

STRESZCZENIE

Artykuł rozpatruje kluczowe momenty w kształtowaniu się stosunków między wojskiem i religią w niepodległej Ukrainie, analizuje dokumenty przewodnie regulujące działalność duchownych wojskowych na polu wychowania patriotycznego żołnierzy oraz bada główne kierunki pracy kapelanów z ukraińskimi uczestnikami walk podczas konfliktu we Wschodniej Ukrainie.

SŁOWA KLUCZOWE

kapelani, duchowni wojskowi, Siły Zbrojne Ukrainy, struktura, wychowanie patriotyczne

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