

## PROFESSIONAL SOLDIER'S FAMILY

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**Abstract:** *The content of the article is an approach into the problems of military families nowadays, since Slovak Armed Forces became fully professional. The article briefly defines possible approach to the families of professional soldier (military family) and it indicates problems which Armed Forces of the Slovak Republic must address in order to remove tension. This tension arises not only from the impact of military occupation to a family of professional soldier (especially fulfilling the core functions of the family), but also the impact of a professional soldier's family to this profession.*

**Keywords:** *professional army, professional soldier, family, characters of the family, functions of the family, military family, professional soldier's family, families of military professionals volunteering, volunteer's profile, costs-benefits.*

### 1. INTRODUCTION

At present, professional army has to face among other problems also the new forefront issues that affect the lives of military families - the social group of professional soldiers. If we want to solve problems of a military family - or families of professional soldiers, it is necessary not only to define a military family, but also to define the approach to the analysis of this social phenomenon. **Family** affects every human being. On one hand, as the closest possible binding with the experience from childhood, where it seems to be as the *orientation family* to which the person was born. On the other hand, as a *reproduction family*, that is closely linked with the experience of most adults from its establishment and development.

The family is the basic social group, which represents certain unit of the society. Its structure is realized as a family relationship and society as a whole, or as a relationship - family and other social groups. It can be shaped even by both mentioned relations. The structure leads to the fact that its objectives are fundamental in nature and coincide with primary and secondary needs and interests. The objectives of the family may or may not

share the objectives of whole society. This depends primarily on the social level and the nature of the patterns of social action / behaviour (roles) that are accepted and recognized in the family. The social basis of the family is in the relation of people as an expression of their interpersonal needs and not as an expression of service to the society. The family also reflects the complexity of societal social structure.

The family can not be treated just as a social group. Since it is involved through its core functions [1] in the various social processes (from economic to bio-reproductive), it is also a social institution. The family itself has its own laws and regularities of its functioning, but these are limited to the valid laws of the society. Therefore, family receives institutional character, although it is by its nature more like a unit of natural private life of people.

Nowadays, the prevailing concept of family is seen as complex and multifaceted socio-social phenomenon, the essence of which two types of horizontal and one vertical type interpersonal relationships. The horizontal relationships in the family are the relations between spouses (parents) and the relations among children. The vertical

relationships are relationships between parents and children.

There are various definitions of family. Sociologists define a family in two senses: *in a broader sense* as the so-called *multi-generational family*, which include besides parents and children, also other relatives, and *in the strict sense* as the so-called *nuclear family*, which consists of only parents and children [2]. The most commonly quoted are these basic features of the family:

- family is socially approved form of steady coexistence;
- it is composed of persons related to one another by blood, marriage or adoption;
- its members usually live under one roof;
- its members cooperate among themselves in a socially recognized division of roles, while the emphasis is put on subsistence and upbringing of children;
- the greater the movement of family members, the family ties are weaker, and the less it contributes to maintaining of its social position, because the social roles of its members are not fulfilling;
- mental disturbance of one family member is distracting to the whole family;
- in every type of society there is a child care, and care for aging relatives as part of family relationships;
- in all civilized societies, there is a prohibition of incest (sexual intercourse between blood relatives).

The family is a small social group distinct from marriage, which implements the basic functions (bio-reproductive, socializing, economic and emotional). Its members follow persistent patterns of behaviour, which are defined not only by personal and emotional relationships among them, but they are also formed from outside by broader structural system and its level of development. Family has been and always will be the object of institutionalization and has strong features of formalization.

The family is the basic social unit. It arises from informal relationships (love, acquaintance of two people) which formalize by marriage. Families also arise without the

formalization of ties (as official marriage). Hermaphrodite couple living in a particular relationship “unmarried couple” or unisexual couple (two men or two women) living in a particular relationship “registered partnership”.

## 2. THE MILITARY FAMILY

Specific type of family is a military family, more specifically: *military multi-generation family*, *professional soldier's family* and a specific type of professional soldier family - *family of professional soldier participating in mission*. In defining the term “military family” it is necessary on one hand to consider the fact that the family significantly affects the performance of military occupation by military professional (may be the accelerator or the retarder of performance).

On the other hand, it is necessary to consider that this type of family has not only all the general features of the family, but also meets all the basic functions. Certain features, which result from carrying out the military profession by some family members in general or even by crucial person (parent) who guarantees the basic functions of the family especially, do not allow entirely or at least without problems to fulfil some of the basic functions of family. In order to identify the specifications, it is necessary to define the term “military family”.

Existing different approaches to solving the problem will allow even greater differentiation in military families. Military family can be defined from two basic aspects (approaches): *broader* or *narrower*.

In *broader sense* military family is understood as group of people consisting of all the relatives living in the family, where at least one of them is a professional soldier. Since this family includes more generations (parents, grandparents, uncles, aunts, cousins) it can be identified by the term “*multi-generation military family*”.

In narrower sense military family is understood as a social group, which includes relations between husband and wife as well as parents and children. The fact that at least one

parent is a professional soldier partially modifies these relationships. Although this group bonded by marriage, by blood or adoption lives in the same household and the members cooperate with each other according to jointly determined and internally defined roles, the fact that at least one parent is a professional soldier, significantly affects the essential function of the family.

This military family can be described by the term “professional soldier’s family” [3].

### 3. THE PROFESSIONAL SOLDIER’S FAMILY

Professional soldier’s family as one type of military family can be further differentiated in the following way:

- from the aspect of achieving the level of professionalism (the level of identification with the military occupation, the degree of adaptation to the military environment and the level of military training) of professional soldier, who is a parent of the family: *family of military professional*, or just *professional soldier’s family*;

- from the aspect of parents in professional service to a family of professional soldier, in which a military professional is: *only one parent*, either father or mother (may be signs of further differentiation - gender) or *both parents* [4];

- *from the aspect of the length of professional services* of one or both parents to: a *family of beginning professional soldier* (there can also be a specific type of beginning professional soldier’s family - a family of military cadet), or a *family of military professional* (long-serving career soldier who achieved the quality of military professional and the family accepts or at least does not reject this status);

- *from the aspect of types of troops or military professions*: family of military aviator, member of air defence, family of military doctor, etc.

- *from the aspect of combat deployment to: military family outside the combat deployment or family of a soldier deployed for an operation* (military mission).

The above aspects show that a particular type of military family considered in the strict sense - professional soldier’s family, is a *family of military professional*, and *professional military family engaged in a military mission*. Gradually it is more admitted and accepted that every military family professional will be in the period when the military professional would be deployed in military missions (combat deployment cycle). Family of military missionary is just a temporary category covering only the current status.

Nowadays, a new term is being created to designate a *family of military veteran*, military professional family (parent) who participated in several military missions. It will be necessary to give special attention to these families, because especially the deployment of military professional in a military mission and the return from it to a large extent influences the fulfilling of basic family functions. This impact should be properly eliminated or at least partially compensated by appropriate social programs. This requires a change of view to compensations.

Compensations should not be considered just as an objective of a certain social program to alleviate the impact of professional service to a family of professional soldier. It is necessary to consider them especially as a means of maintaining quality of life of military families.

Compensations do not mean just higher costs of the military profession, but they are an integral part of the costs, because the lifestyle of a professional soldier and his family needs to be guaranteed in order for the compensation at all three levels (societal, military and individual) would become part of it. Compensations are not offerings, which the military organization as an employer would give when it wants or can. Compensations must become part of provision in every process within armed forces. Only such comprehended approach with compensations will provide creative nature. This means that they will create an impulse for inventiveness (creativity). They will allow each member of a military professional’s family and military

professional to develop creative thinking and not just quantitatively but also qualitatively. Compensations will enable them to develop fluency (number of ideas), flexibility (variety of ideas), originality (originality of ideas) and elaboration (the ability to further develop creative ideas and implement them).

#### 4. CONCLUSIONS

The issue of family military professional is very complex. Theoretical reflection on this matter should become the basis for practical measures in the field of defence with a particular emphasis on comprehensive social security approach of the Slovak Armed Forces members and their families in the future. In real life this means to map the needs and interests of military families, because even this type of family is not snatched up from the fixation on:

- need of further socializing (strengthening as a social group and gradual integration into the army and society);
- care to ensure the livelihood;
- care about survival - social security of a family [5].

In my speech I could not resolve the issue for obvious reasons. I only suggested some possible approaches to defining these complex

social phenomena in the Armed Forces of the Slovak Republic.

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