



"HENRI COANDA"
AIR FORCE ACADEMY
ROMANIA



"GENERAL M.R. STEFANIK"
ARMED FORCES ACADEMY
SLOVAK REPUBLIC

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE of SCIENTIFIC PAPER
AFASES 2012
Brasov, 24-26 May 2012

CURRENT STATUS OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT IN TERMS OF THE ARMED FORCES OF THE SLOVAK REPUBLIC

Jaroslav NEKORANEC*, Katarína STOLÁRIKOVÁ**

* Department of Management, Armed Forces Academy of General Milan Rastislav Štefánik in Liptovský Mikuláš, ** Security and Defence Department, Armed Forces Academy of General Milan Rastislav Štefánik in Liptovský Mikuláš

Abstract: *Human Resource Management is one of the key parts of the management of Armed Forces of the Slovak Republic. Human Resource Management system in the armed forces has undergone several significant transformational changes and went through couple of the development stages. Practice and previous experiences confirm that the principles governing military staff will need a systematic change. This change will contain mainly the legislative aspects which will affect new law. These regulations significantly influence the decision-making of citizens to serve in the armed forces. On the other hand, there is also the labour market development determining these decision-making processes. As important as the regulations mentioned above is the stabilization of the military staff. Streamlining and optimizing Human Resource Management in the armed forces will need appropriate and sufficient funding.*

Keywords: *human resource management, professional soldiers, staff planning, professionalization, labour market, crisis management*

1. HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT – A CRUCIAL FUNCTION OF THE MANAGEMENT

Human Resource Management is one of the crucial managerial functions which significantly influence the progress of the organization in a turbulent market environment. According to M. Armstrong, one of the major management theorists, „Human Resource Management is a strategic and sophisticated logical approach in governing the organization’s most valuable assets –

people who work in it and who individually and collectively contribute to achieving the economic goals.” (2002, p. 27). This definition is associated with the need for continuous quality enhancement of the organization’s most important resource – its employees which are necessary to achieve its objectives and the organizational strategy fulfilment. An effective dialogue with employees which makes them feel important and valuable for organization plays an essential role in motivation and performance of employees. Furthermore, employees deepen their relationship with the

organization by this active dialogue and feel the interdependence of their individual aims and organizational objectives which overlap and strongly affect each other. This leads to the recruitment of a stable staff with an eliminated risk of fluctuation to a minimum. This characteristic of Human Resource Management, taking into account the specific environment and tasks, applies also in the Armed Forces of the Slovak Republic.

Human Resource Management (hereinafter "HRM") contains a wide range of coherent activities, such as: job analysis and description of created jobs, staff planning, acquisition, selection and recruitment process, staff evaluation, staff deployment and termination of employment, remuneration of employees, training and employee development, employee welfare, relations with employees, military information system.

In terms of the Armed Forces of the Slovak Republic are individual functions of Human Resource Management expressed by the "Act 346/2005 Coll. on state service of professional soldiers of the Armed Forces of the Slovak Republic and on amendment and completion of certain laws", which came into force on 1 September 2005. The appointments of this law have been developed in a variety of different regulations of individual levels of management of the Armed Forces of the Slovak Republic.

2. HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT IN A MILITARY ENVIRONMENT OF THE ARMED FORCES OF THE SLOVAK REPUBLIC

In terms of the Armed Forces of the Slovak Republic (hereinafter "AF SR"), as well as in the civil sphere, it is necessary to ensure continuous improvement of skills and abilities of human resources, which are represented by *professional soldiers* working in *squad* structure, *non-commissioned officers*, *warrant officers*, *officers*, *generals*. It is not just about the continuous enhancement of their knowledge, technical competence or physical preparation but also about the improvement of *mental endurance*, *moral standards* and *discipline*.

One of the main tasks attributed to Human Resource Management is a requirement to ensure a sufficient number of applicants for

civil service entry with the required skills and capacities for the AF SR. The main objective of the military staff reform was the establishment of a *uniform HRM system* for military staff which has to be able to ensure the inclusion of quality staff with the right skills into a right unit in the required time. This aim was achieved through following activities:

- reducing the number of high military ranks, changing the structure and increasing the recruitment of professional soldiers in rank of squad and non-commissioned officers,
- development of military staff with emphasis on leadership, career growth and competitive selection for preferment,
- implementation of an effective HRM system that ensure the continuous professionalization of the AF SR.

The starting point of military staff management is *centralization*. Military staff of the AF SR is managed by the Chief of the General staff of the AF SR. Because of central planning of resources and priorities, funding and material resources intended to supplying all professional soldiers has to be planned from one point.

HRM processes are centralised and standardized. This applies especially to the following processes:

- recruiting and keeping staff,
- system of assigning staff to functions,
- system of evaluating the staff,
- system of preferment and competitive selection of staff,
- system of staff records,
- system of quantity management,
- career development, education, training, rotation of positions,
- leaving active service and care for military retirees.

The entire process of centralisation sets united HRM system for military staff. Centralised system of service evaluation ensures compliance with established standards by professional soldiers in accordance with their rank, their skills and their level of experience. It guarantees equal opportunities for professional development.

The centralised system of preferment considers all professional soldiers in a way



"HENRI COANDA"
AIR FORCE ACADEMY
ROMANIA



"GENERAL M.R. STEFANIK"
ARMED FORCES ACADEMY
SLOVAK REPUBLIC

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE of SCIENTIFIC PAPER
AFASES 2012
Brasov, 24-26 May 2012

that allows the selection of the most qualified staff with the highest potential. Centralised information system of HRM takes care of stable, accurate and timely data flow of staff records enabling refilling and keeping staff, ensuring maintenance of joint qualification standards and allowing targeted application of personal and financial resources to achieve stated objectives.

3. PROFESSIONALIZATION OF THE ARMED FORCES OF THE SLOVAK REPUBLIC AND MODELS

Establishment of the AF SR raised many issues and attitudes that were for but also against professionalization. These attitudes were not of a destructive nature, on the contrary they brought new approaches. The professionalization process in terms of the AF SR was a very complex issue. The main reasons that led to the professionalization of the AF SR in our conditions were similar to reasons in armed forces of industrialized countries, especially:

- objective requirements to increase the commando force, combat ability, combat readiness and preparedness,
- enhancement of the level of consistency and effective fulfilment of social roles in society in terms of fulfilling its reliable defence and security,
- performance enhancement in terms of using all available resources,
- improvement of maintenance of advanced technology and care of military equipment and weapons,
- enhancement of their compatibility, integrity and standardization with much less fragmentation.

The professionalization of the AF SR was related with a problem of the change in the nature of military profession. *Military*

profession ceased to be a lifelong occupation. Legitimate social security benefits for professional soldiers still arouse interest in this profession among young generation primarily from poorer regions of Slovakia where is a lack of job opportunities.

At present, the professionalization is based on the process of recruitment of professional soldiers through a transparent selection based on unbiased choice enabling people with the major assumptions to promote for short-term and long-term service.

Complicated process of transformation and reorganization of the AF SR took place alongside the professionalization. This process is still not finished and will not be finished. Since the beginning of the transformation process, several documents describing the direction the AF SR should move and what objectives must be achieved each year were issued. These follow-up documents are known in practice as *models*. These *three models* have been created:

Model 2010 was put into force in 2001 as the first model with its full name "A long-term plan of the structure and development of the AF SR". This model considered as the aim of the development of the AF SR the transformation of the Army of the Slovak Republic to a relatively small but high-quality, reasonably armed and trained AF SR.

Model 2015 with full name "A long-term development plan of the of the Ministry of Defence with a view to 2015", governing the AF SR today, set preconditions for operation and development of the AF SR. *Limits of defence resources consisting of human, material and financial resources* are the decisive factor. The size of the available resources directly influences the quality and quantity of tasks and measures that ensure the defence of Slovak Republic.

Model 2020 is the latest model which should be implemented during years 2011-2012 and will be valid from 1 January 2013. Responsible top managers (executives) recommend retain the structure of the distribution of funds assigned to the Ministry of Defence of the Slovak Republic in a ratio of 80% for operation and 20% for investments and modernization.

Each of these models involves a requirement for admission of new professional soldiers to improve the individual members and the AF SR as a whole.

To conclude this part it is necessary to note that the models constructing the AF SR, as they were declared, are influenced particularly by political and economic factors. Many intensions have therefore not been implemented yet, mostly in the area of technology modernization but also in area related to the development of new social and personnel laws.

4. PERSONNEL PLANNING AND RESPONSIBILITY FOR ITS IMPLEMENTATION IN CONDITIONS OF THE ARMED FORCES OF THE SLOVAK REPUBLIC

Issues like *how many professional soldiers to recruit* and *which features will be considered as most important* should be planned in advance. Hence the personnel planning are necessary for efficient selection of professional soldier in conditions of the AF SR. Personnel planning has to be based on established strategy and outlined objectives of organisation and has to be in compliance with mission and vision of organisation.

Personnel planning in the AF SR are provided by two control components:

1. Ministry of Defence of the Slovak Republic (MOD)
2. General staff of the AF SR (hereinafter "AF GS")

MOD is internally divided into a number of basic organizational units, where the *Section for defence policy, international relations and legislation* has a leading position for personnel planning. The area of personnel planning consists essentially of activities related to *the*

human resource policy, remuneration policy, social and housing policy, education including foreign language courses and professional sport as well as sending members of the AF SR in operations and missions abroad.

AF GS is internally divided into many components, where the *Staff for supporting operations* is the most important component in the area of personnel planning. Staff for supporting operations itself is divided into three departments and the most important for necessary tasks of Human Resource Management is the *Department of Personnel Management* divided into four divisions: *division for staff planning, division for integration of programs, division for staff development and division for staff supporting.* Among these divisions, mainly the *division for staff planning* is responsible for activities in the area of personnel planning and ensures particularly fulfilment of these tasks:

- elaborates the policy and concept of human resources for conditions of the AF SR and assures their implementation in relation to professional soldiers and employees performing work in the public interest,
- processes internal normative acts, standards and regulations for the implementation of personnel and social policy and the performance of personnel management in relation to professional soldiers and employees performing work in the public interest,
- processes the tables of numbers of units and equipments of the AF SR,
- oversees the personnel management system in all its areas,
- processes the documents for systematization of military ranks based on the approved internal organizational structure on the unions, formations, units, offices and equipments of the AF SR,
- processes the draft of systematization of functions for professional soldiers in the AF SR and in scope of the head of the staff at the ministry, processes the draft of systematization for temporarily allocated professional soldiers and ensures compliance with the limits of military ranks set by systematization,



"HENRI COANDA"
AIR FORCE ACADEMY
ROMANIA



"GENERAL M.R. STEFANIK"
ARMED FORCES ACADEMY
SLOVAK REPUBLIC

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE of SCIENTIFIC PAPER
AFASES 2012
Brasov, 24-26 May 2012

- manages the overall limits on the numbers of professional soldiers in accordance with the species of the armed forces, military expertise and military ranks, determines limits for refilling of staff,
- assesses the state of personnel readiness as a part of operational readiness of units,
- plans and manages refilling and development of the AF SR.

Process of personnel planning culminates in the formation of a personnel plan with a specified number of professional soldiers which need to be recruited into the AF SR. Subsequently, personnel planning must be followed by *recruitment and process of refilling of personnel*, where requirements generated from personnel planning are implemented into practice.

The AF SR recruiting *strategy* is based on the search for future professional soldiers among students of secondary and higher education. The situation on the national labour market as well as the number of graduates allows refill the number of professional soldiers with required education.

Recruitment and selection of new professional soldiers is provided by *Personnel office* which is subordinated to AF GS and located in the Armed Forces Academy. *Personnel office* has also eight subordinate *Groups for refilling of personnel* which were recently known as recruiting centres. They are located in county capitals and their current deployment is in these towns: Bratislava, Trenčín, Nitra, Banská Bystrica, Žilina, Trnava, Prešov a Košice. *Groups for refilling of personnel* follow plan indicating their main task which consists of contacting qualified citizens and obtaining the necessary number of them with the required skills.

All people interested in accessing to the AF SR after their successful admissions have to

undergo the vocational training whose length depends of their future enlistment. After meeting strict criteria of selection, they confirm by signing a *three-year contract* their function in the AF SR. After those three years, a selection among professional soldiers takes place, when less quality soldiers are obliged to leave the AF SR and are replaced by new applicants. All successful members obtain a proposal for a new contract. The success of the AF SR requires the system of refilling new professional soldiers that is complementary with maintenance programs that are considered a type of recruitment and selection of experienced soldiers during their service.

The entire process of refilling of personnel consists of several selective activities leading to a success. These activities are composed of series of steps like dissemination of information, identification of potential applicants or explanation of options offered by the AF SR. The AF SR need a permanent implementation of *personnel marketing* to obtain a sufficient number of applicants for state service of professional soldier, leading to the formation, maintenance and stabilization of required composition of professional soldiers.

Selection process is the main tool for recruitment and selection of new members of the AF SR of citizens who have registered as candidates for admission into the state service of professional soldiers. If the applicant meets all assumptions progresses to the next round of selection provided by the *Centre of personnel selection* located in Armed Forces Academy in Liptovský Mikuláš. Process of selection in this centre takes two days. First day all applicants undergo the verification of their mental competency by a psycho-diagnostic screening carried out by a psychologist. He also detects their individual and moral assumptions through personal questionnaires and projective

tests and their level of performance through *performance tests*. After completing and evaluating the tests, the applicants undergo an interview with a specialist – psychologist who offers successful applicants the appropriate specializations. The failure in the verification of psychical resistance is the leading cause of rejection of the candidate. *One quarter of candidates fails in psychological tests*. Those who succeed and are considered mentally competent for execution of state service of professional soldier are undergoing tests of physical ability carried out by testing physical performance of citizen under the Announcement of MOD no. 495/2005 Coll.

The career of professional soldier represents a progression of the professional soldier in individual functions during the service. In individual rank corps, the models of military career are generating for each specialization of military expertise.

The process of the career of professional soldiers, their planning, organizing and managing is influenced by these factors:

- minimum time of the state service in rank – after its expiry, the professional soldier is assigned to the first competitive selection,
- second competitive selection which takes place one year after the first competitive selection – these results decide about preferment or inclusion in maintenance program or release of the professional soldier of the service by expiration of the period of his/her state service,
- setting of the period of the state service in rank – before its expiration, the results from the second competitive selection will decide on the perspective of a professional soldier – on his/her preferment or inclusion in maintenance program or termination of the service,
- maximum time of the state service in rank – after its expiry, the professional soldier is released from service,
- release from service by reaching the physical age of 55 the professional soldier.

5. PROBLEMS AND POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS OF THE CURRENT SYSTEM OF HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT IN THE ARMED FORCES OF THE SLOVAK REPUBLIC

Since its inception, the system of personnel management in the AF SR has undergone several changes which impacted positively but often also negatively the implementation of human resource strategy and policy. The adoption of several laws affecting the state service of professional soldiers (Act 346/2005 Coll.) as well as the Act on social security of policemen and soldiers (Act 328/2002 Coll.) played an important role.

The original Act on state service of professional soldiers (Act 346/2005 Coll.) was modified by successive unsystematic changes to the detriment of the system. The proposed amendments have not been fully accepted and mostly withdrawn because of their large size. At present, a new Act is in preparation on the basis of the original Act with a partial change in philosophy from the temporary service (for some categories of soldiers) to the long-term (permanent) service.

The implementation of the personnel strategy and policy as well as the entire HRM system in the AF SR is determined by financial limits. These limits significantly affect the options for repletion the created structures of the AF SR. The numbers which can be funded should be monitored instead of the table numbers because they truly influence real numbers of the armed forces (since 2010, the AF SR can fill only 92% of positions, which means 13 567 professional soldiers), while the funding ability actually dropped to the current 86,25%.

To the 31.12.2011 was thus repletion of professional soldiers and employees as following: 12 719 professional soldiers of planned 14 747, 4 308 employees of planned 4 422 (97,42%).

Negative phenomena affecting Human Resource Management

The AF SR continues to lose their elaborated position on the labour market,



"HENRI COANDA"
AIR FORCE ACADEMY
ROMANIA



"GENERAL M.R. ŠTEFÁNIK"
ARMED FORCES ACADEMY
SLOVAK REPUBLIC

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE of SCIENTIFIC PAPER
AFASES 2012
Brasov, 24-26 May 2012

which also means a loss of competitiveness of military profession on the civil labour market.

To the 31.12.2011, 747 professional soldiers have left the AF SR for various reasons compared to an acquisition of 459 professional soldiers. This fact is affected by a number of factors such as:

- continual organizational changes,
- unstable legislation, which makes the whole system unstable,
- floating degree of costs on defence, etc.

We can consider the fact of *the loss of illusions about military service* upon arrival to a military unit as very negative, where because of *the financial options* a soldier cannot perform the tasks for which he was received.

Commanders often misunderstand the transversal system of releasing the starting positions for recruitment and the related selection of staff to a preferment and replacement after the fulfilment of the commitment.

In conditions of the AF SR, it is not possible to occupy positions that are multiple overpaid in the civil labour market. The increasing of wages in the armed forces ceased to copy the increasing of wages in the civil market. Benefits provided by the armed forces, are overcome by many employers in the civil sector. Uncertainty in the social security of professional soldiers also acts on candidates interested in military service in a demotivating way, and causes interest in the release at own request. Military staff is getting old what creates assumptions for increasing the percentage of releases from obligatory reasons.

For these and the other reasons, the aim of the area of management of military staff will be the reducing of releases of professional soldiers up to 600 in 2012. It will be necessary to *balance the ratio of releasing the professional soldiers and recruitment.*

Admittedly, the stabilization of the AF SR is indispensable.

Future development of Human Resource Management in the Armed Forces of the Slovak Republic

At the end of our view at the current state and perspectives of HRM in the conditions of the AF SR it is needed to outline some aspects which give a presumption of its quality development. In this context, it is evident that the entire issue of the management of the military staff depends of the allocated financial resources in the future. Simultaneously, legislation or rather enactment of new laws on military service and social security of professional soldiers play a significant role. In particular, we mean the motivating and stimulating nature of these laws that will affect the stabilization of the staff. In terms of the fulfilment of the personnel strategy and policy of other personnel functions, it is possible to outline as an example the need of quality enhancement of information in the implemented *integrated information system* and by this make the system of personnel management more efficient.

In cooperation with the Armed Forces Academy of the general M. R. Štefánik in Liptovský Mikuláš, there is the possibility of permanent refilling of the armed forces by professionally and linguistically qualified staff and ensure its career support and lifelong learning. It is also possible to provide qualified staff for the needs of national and international crisis management and the needs of filling positions in international organisations.

From the perspective of the implementation of international commitments related to the reorganisation of NATO command structures, it is necessary ensure the practical implementation of political

commitments in this area – 100% occupancy of the allocated international positions within the headquarters and agencies of NATO.

To ensure the tasks of national and international crisis management, it is necessary to design and after the necessary legislative changes to implement:

- effective use of the system of active backups,
- develop military tradition and develop work with families,
- develop work of interest groups, etc.

REFERENCES

1. Armstrong, M.: *Human Resource Management: The latest trends and practice*. 2002. 10th edition. Praha: Grada Publishing a.s., Pp 27. ISBN 978-80-247-1407-3.
2. Bláha, J. – Mateicius, A. – Kaňáková, Z.: *Human Resources for small and medium companies*. 2005. Brno: CP Books, a.s., 284 p. ISBN 80-251-0374-9.
3. *The Doctrine of Human Resource Management of the Armed Forces of the Slovak Republic*. 2008. Bratislava: GS AF SR.
4. Hvasta E.: Current issues and future development of staff of the Armed Forces of the Slovak Republic: Command assembly of the Chief of the General Staff of the AF SR, Bratislava, 31 January – 1 February 2012
5. *Career Order: The Methodology of the career models of professional soldier by the Chief of the General Staff of the AF SR*. Bratislava: AF SR, 2009.
6. *The System of the military staff management of the AF SR*. Bratislava: MOD SR, 2003.

Contact:

PhDr. Nekoraneč Jaroslav, PhD.
jaroslav.nekoranec@aos.sk
Mgr. Katarína Stoláriková
katarina.stolarikova@srvs.sk