



ZRÍNYI MIKLÓS NEMZETVÉDELMI EGYETEM
HADTUDOMÁNYI KAR
Hadtudományi Doktori Iskola

NAGY - VARGÁNÉ JUHÁSZ ÁGNES

**ORGANIZING AND MANAGING THE SUPPLY OF RESERVES FOR VOLUNTEER
MILITARY**

PhD dissertation

Author's guide

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1. Outlining the scientific problem

In 2004 the Hungarian Parliament has abolished peacetime conscription by ratifying the new National Defense act. The changed state of affairs of international security requires the raising of an efficient, skills- and task-based, modern army. The smaller, professional volunteer force has to correspond to the new challenges of the 21th century, to our obligations as NATO and EU members – i.e. missions abroad. In recent times with the transition to volunteering great efforts were made to provide personnel capable of accomplishing basic functions as well as international missions, while the issue of reserves supply was played down. During the years it became obvious that this new kind of force in addition to their ever growing array of tasks is not able to react and lend support appropriately in case of an unexpected situation. The main reason for this is that it does not have sufficient reserves at its disposal to mobilize in times of need. International practice shows that a good way of supplementing volunteer forces during peacetime may be the use of volunteer reserves (henceforth: VRs). The theoretical and legal conditions are given, the volunteer reserves system¹ (VRS) has been there for years in the codes, but it was never introduced in practice. Official publications on VRS claim that “recent years’ experiences show that the general public interest towards volunteering is low”². This statement according to some may not be entirely correct, there is and always has been a willingness to enroll. According my research the real reason for failure lies in a deeper context. Reasons like the imbalance between the evaluation of our security policy and the tasks and conditions of our national defense, or the permanent changes that followed this.

The fresh restart of VRS’s planning imposes unnecessarily complex demands, thus its costs and social burdens are excessive. I believe that the planned number of VR personnel can be achieved by readjusting contract soldiers in volunteer army into VRs or by gaining university students. This latter statement is confirmed by my empirical survey among civilian students of Zrínyi Miklós National Defense University (ZMNE).

¹ Financially compensated and organized by the state, contracted for direct support of armed forces and consists of volunteers. Source: Change of paradigm at military reserves; (New Military Muster, 2006. issue 9. pp 118-129.) by Ottó Cziprák.

² http://www.hm.gov.hu/miniszterium/mh_onkentes_tartalekos_rendszere - date of download: 2010.06.15.

Elaborating the details of an employer's program to ensure personnel is a hindering factor of VRS. In my opinion employer compensation is necessary in Hungary, but only in a part not a full compensation.

In my dissertation I examine the relations of society and military, because with the emerge of volunteer forces, information about the life and state of the Hungarian Armed Forces cannot fully reach society. By abolishing its "mandatory" characteristic, military service has disappeared from families' lives and thus the number of people with direct contact or first-hand experience of the military has been greatly reduced. "By opting for the volunteering system the participation of our members of society in defense has been fundamentally changed."³ In these times of volunteering we have to pay careful attention to reinforce the collaboration between society and military, because the human resource of reserves lies in society's volunteers.

2. Research goals

- To *introduce* the problems of creating reserves, its management and social questions through historical and international examples.
- To *reveal* and *analyze* the course of changes in relations between society and military, and through this describe the reasons for VRS current state.
- To *show* by empirical survey the awareness of ZMNE civil students and their willingness to participate in VR service.
- To *describe* and *analyze* the domestic initiatives of VRS and reveal the real reasons of their current state;
- To examine the significance of re-employment and the necessity and scale of an employer support program.

3. Hypotheses

- Due to its functions the cornerstone of maintaining and operating armed forces is creating reserves during peacetime.
- One of the reasons for the failure of Hungarian VRS is that during the swift and radical transition to volunteer army we failed to establish the management and organizational conditions of building up reserve forces, and there was insufficient political dedication behind it.

³ What will volunteer forces be like? – manuscript by János Krizbai

- Potential candidates for VRS can be students or applicants of higher education, who are willing to participate in order to finance their studies or through other motivation.
- Another pillar of supply for VRS personnel can be the re-employment of former commissioned and non-commissioned officers in volunteer forces.
- By reinforcing the relationship between society and armed forces enrolling the necessary amount of personnel may be achieved without introducing an employer program.

4. Research methods applied

- general – comprehensive historical, chronological analysis
- comparative method – mainly by international examples;
- analytical method – detailed and thorough state assessment and evaluation;
- empirical research method – ZMNE civil students survey;

Field interviews and technical consultations were supplemented to empirical research. In this regard I constantly consulted with tutors of ZMNE's Defense Management Department, with associates of the Government Coordination Committee and with experts who published and researched in this field.

In addition I have pursued widespread research in relevant literature, and my theories inferred from these are integrated into my thesis. The current significance of the issue demanded to follow new concepts, ideas, articles, lectures almost daily. While studying international cases I realized that domestic literature in this field is somewhat scarce, so I had to process a significant deal of foreign material to obtain sufficient information.

5. Summary of completed tasks

In the *first chapter* of my dissertation I examined the history of the Hungarian personnel supplement system, during which I put great emphasis on the volunteer service and reserves system throughout our history.

In the *second chapter* I introduced and analyzed foreign military forces using various personnel supplement methods, for instance the United States of America where volunteering has worked well for many years, the German mixed system, and the distinctive Swiss Army based on militia. From these foreign examples I have deduced consequences regarding the various possibilities rising from volunteering and conscription to create an efficient and

appropriate reserve force, furthermore which elements can be implemented during the establishment of the Hungarian reserve system.

Examples shown in the first two chapters justify the significance of reserves and give guidance to operating such system efficiently.

In the *third chapter* I surveyed and analyzed the relations between society and military with regards to VRS. In this chapter I also showed the communication and education activities of our armed forces toward general public pointing out some flaws as well.

I measured the willingness for VR service among ZMNE civil students and the motivating factors surrounding this issue. I justified my hypothesis that higher education students are potential VRS candidates through the results of a survey. Based on empirical investigation (as well) I worked out a strategy for reinforcing commissioned and non-commissioned officer personnel which requires only minimal financial compensation.

In the *fourth chapter* I pointed out the flaws of the system by examining domestic VRS initiatives and its current state. During my research I highlight the fact that governments have in fact began establishing the conditions to shift to the volunteer military system during our preparation for NATO membership, but in regard of reserves there are serious deficiencies. In the course of elaborating and executing VRS central governmental tasks and responsibilities were neglected. The background for this was the rejective behavior of the political authorities in power and the inappropriate concepts.

I showed that re-employment is a crucial asset to establishing a cost-effective VRS and has a great role in organizing peace- and wartime deployment therefore – based on international practice and on domestic situation - I worked out the segmentation of personnel in the current system and their purpose during aggravated situations.

At defense responsibilities I pointed out some anomalies regarding age limits, which may cause serious problems when deploying volunteer reserves in times of emergency, thus I proposed harmonization.

I pointed out the fact that one of the key issues - and hindering fact too - of introducing VRS is the establishment of an employment program. I showed that the VR number set as goal may be achieved without such complex program by gaining higher education students and by using re-employment. I made recommendations for the key elements of a simplified but working employment program, such as informing the general public about VR service possibilities, normative compensation and other supports of non-monetary nature for employers.

Summarizing my research results I can state that a crucial requirement for establishing a volunteer reserve system is to take into consideration current realities when planning and organizing such system, meaning it must be based on unanimous political will and conceivable economic possibilities.

6. Scientific results

1. Through my research I revealed the shortcomings of the Hungarian Armed Forces' transition to volunteer military caused by flaws management history and methods.
2. Through empirical survey I confirmed that ZMNE civil students with appropriate motivation (financing tuition fee, family support, job opportunities etc.) are willing to enter VR service. Based on this I proposed a system of enrollment of commissioned and non-commissioned officers within ZMNE.
3. Analyzing literature I found that during both peace and wartime re-employment is a necessary and possible solution. I also worked out the segmentation of military personnel.
4. I confirmed that by reinforcing the connections between military and society, by the institution of re-employment and by winning students into reserves the set number of VR may be achieved. I also proposed the establishment a simplified employer program based on normative support.

7. Prospects of utilization of the results of my research

- The bulk of the thesis may contribute to ZMNE students' education.
- My empirical survey among ZMNE students and the proposed training of commissioned / non-commissioned officers may serve as basis for further elaboration for VRS experts.
- The flaws and deficiencies revealed in VRS's current state may also give insight toward the establishment of an efficient system.
- It may expedite the planning and execution process of VRS.
- It may inspire further research on the topic.

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