Soldier’s Morale as a Chance for Winning the Military Conflict

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ABSTRACT
This paper presents the analysis for the phenomenon of soldier’s morale. Construction of papers provides the opinion of the representatives of the strongest arms force in the world - the United States of America. The vision of American analysts, scientific researchers and military theoreticians is presented in this paper. There are also provided practical examples. The purpose of this analysis is instructing that the morale phenomenon, as a component of soldier’s preparation to the conditions of contemporary battlefield, plays an important role in military effectiveness of army and in future victories at time of war.

Keywords: Morale, Soldier’s, battlefield, war, military

1. INTRODUCTION
Soldier’s morale is a real indicator and is a derivative variable for preferred and not preferred events and incentives existing in soldier’s civil life (private) and military life (service), both. The condition of morale depends on two basic elements:

- events that happened before;
- events that may happen in the future (Michael Bess, 17).

The level and condition of soldier’s morale is one of the most important components of army’s combat readiness to combat operations in given time, altogether with soldier’s spirit.
and psychical condition, that have significant influence on the preparation of army to the
orders of battle (Wollom A. Jensen and James M. Childs Jr., 94).

In the American military discourse the “morale” phenomena is sometimes described as
an “invincible” soldier’s weapon, or army’s “hidden force”, because it means the level of
battle spirit in soldier, soldier’s ethical attitude, psychics of whole army and will for fighting
and psychical resistance to toils, what can be decisive in the victory or loss on the
contemporary battlefield (Martin L. Cook, 24).

2. MORALE IN THE VISION OF AMERICAN ANALYSTS, SCIENTIFIC
RESEARCHERS, MILITARY THEORETICIANS

According to Leo Murray\(^1\), “morale” is a very vague, fuzzy term of many meanings,
that is hard in definition and measurement (L. Murray, 11). Whereas the American general,
James Alexander Ulio\(^2\) stated, that “morale in army” is interconnected with morale in society
on significant level, because it interacts and reacts in inseparable way, as well as it is
generally based on the loyalty to the same values. General declared in own analysis, that “the
morale of army” is specific type of morale, as it originates from the process shaping the
soldier’s attitude to duty of protecting the Homeland and to the performance of soldier’s
duties, that are consciously perfected by soldiers and commanders aspirations for high level
individual and team training, what is indispensable condition for rational and efficient
commencement of combat operations (James U. Ulio, 321-322). Thus, morale in the army
should be considered both as ethical-moral value, and frame of mind, body and soldier’s
spirit.

George Creel\(^3\), the Head of the United States Committee on Public Information, that
was established by president Thomas Woodrow Wilson when America joined the First
World War, the office that was governmental agency of propaganda responsible for i.e.
pursuing the war information policy of US government, sustaining the morale in the society
and army, administrating the press censorship and spreading propaganda outside the US
boarders, stated that the level of army morale directly comes from the condition of morale in
the society, in which soldiers form integral part, whereas the nation’s frame of mind should be

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\(^1\) Leo Murray - a pen name for military analytic and former soldier, the author of „Brains & Bullets: How
psychology wins wars” bestseller, that is psychological analysis of combat on the basis of inside stories
from various battlefields, combined with the results of scientific researches in terms of warfare. The final effect
provides the extraordinary insight into the changes that can be made in human mind by war. This book does not
talk about generals and strategies, but it is focused on the lowest tactical level - it concentrates on simple soldiers
who fight face to face with enemy.

\(^2\) Maj. Gen. James Alexander Ulio (1882-1958) - he performed the duties of Adjutant General of the US Army
(Administrative Officer of US Army) from 1 March, 1942 to 31 January, 1946. More, James E. Hewes, Jr., From
Root to McNamara - Army Organization and Administration, Government Printing Office, Washington D.C

\(^3\) George Creel (1876-1953) - American investigative journalist and politician, mostly known for the position of
the Head of the United States Committee on Public Information, so called Creel Commission, with task of
massive exploitation of propaganda by White House and President Woodrow Wilson. Propaganda materials
were prepared even by British Intelligence, and its purpose was convincing the Americans for US participation
in the First World War, that had anti-war attitude, so far. More, Chris Hedges, Death of the Liberal Class, Nation
at least similarly mobilized and organized to the productive and defensive power of civilian capital and human resources (Steven Vaughn, 26).

It particularly pertains to the situation when military activities become strength test between the idealised ethical-moral values represented by enemy forces and public opinion that is in the opposition, that is general social strength, whereas one method for strengthening such opinion is forming the permanent system of information for society and its armed forces (G. Creel, 340).

On the one hand, each form of war censorship oriented on rising the morale in army and society leads to the weakened social trust, trust that is the heart of morale. On the other hand, the activities of propaganda are important component in the fight for sustained morale in own army and society.

The example of such adopted propaganda activities oriented on rising the morale in own army at time of war and decreasing the morale in the enemy’s forces can be activities of Finns and Russians, i.e.:

- **Simo Häyhä**, alias „White Death“ - Finnish sharpshooter, the most effective sniper in the history of war – 705 confirmed lethal hits, in total. The hero of Finnish-Soviet War. His sniper achievements at time of so called “winter war” demoralized and frightened the Soviet soldiers, who tried to annihilate the Finnish ace many times with the use of own snipers, even with means of heavy artillery and aircrafts. All of this in vain.

- **Wasilij Grigorjewicz Zajcew** - the Soviet sniper from the Second World War times, recognized as one of the most effective snipers of all times, who probably killed 242 enemy soldiers, according to some sources. His character was broadly exploited by Soviet propaganda with purpose of rising the morale in army, therefore his actual dimension of achievements is controversial (Michael Bess, 170-174).

More examples for propaganda actions and so called “black propaganda” and phenomenon of psychological activities undertaken at time of war can be found in Stanley Newcourt – Nowodworski’s publication, “Black Propaganda: In the Second World War”, where extensive description of Ally Radio Station activity with destructive influence on the condition of morale in German submarine troops was provided.

Edward Louis Bernays, who is taken for the creator of “public relations” in the United States, who was recognized by “Life” magazine as a person among the hundred most outstanding Americans in the twentieth century, developed the elitist attempt to propaganda in the following way: “The conscious and scientific manipulation with opinions of broad masses is important component of democratic society. [...] We have never heard about some people, who manage us, impose frames of mind, shape our tastes and provide ideas. Nevertheless, it is completely logical way for development of democratized society”(Martin L. Cook, 28).

Renown American journalist and the winner of influential Pulitzer Prize in 1931, Hubert Renfro Knickerbocker⁴, declared in 1941 that American society generally defines

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⁴ Hubert Renfro Knickerbocker (1898-1949), American journalist and correspondent. The graduate of Southwestern University in Texas. He studied psychiatry at Columbia University. He was correspondent in Berlin in the years 1923-1933, but as a consequence of own opposition to Hitler he was deported when Hitler took power. In 1931 when he was correspondent for „New York Evening Post“ and „Philadelphia Public Ledger“, he was awarded with Pulitzer Prize for the series of articles with topic on practical functioning of five-
the “morale” in a very simple way: “soldier thinks that his army is the best in the world, his regiment is the best in the army, his company is the best in the regiment, his troop is the best in the company and he is the best soldier” (H. R. Knickerbocker, 96).

“Military Leadership” Instruction (Manual) binding for American army from that times defines the “morale” as “mental, emotional and spiritual frame in an unit” (US Army. Military leadership, 228). Such definition was totally adopted by contemporary studies and research studies on the condition of “morale”, what is certified by definition adopted in such environment: “Morale is the confident and positive frame of mind and motivation existing in an individual, endurance and readiness for complete commitment to common goal pursued by group, especially in the face of difficult and complex conditions, i.e. at time of proceeding military operations (warfare)” (G.A.J.van Dyk, 128).

According to Leo Murray, one key asset for winning the warfare is leading to the weakened morale in the enemy in order to discourage him from commencing warfare (L. Murray, 6).

It is confirmed with the words of renowned commanders who participated in many victorious campaigns, i.e. Napoleon Bonaparte’s words, who stated that moral power is more decisive for victory than numbers, and Bernarda Law Montgomery’s words, who was British Army Marshal, who always emphasized that high morale is a pearl of enormous price, and the most surest way for taking the pearl is leadership in the battle (Wollom A. Jensen and James M. Childs Jr., 95).

Jonathan Fennell in the book, „Combat and Morale in the North African Campaign: The Eighth Army and the Path to El Alamein” (Cambridge University Press, 2011), emphasised the fact of existing strong correlation and affinity of “the frame of morale” in soldiers with such factors as:

- quality of military technology and firepower (Technology firepower and morale);
- social education and educational activities (Welfare education and morale);
- military leadership (Leadership command and morale);
- and level of military training (Training and morale).

Even the most modern army - without soldiers who are ready for battle and for devotion, having true faith in the rightness of military purposes and brimming with the responsibility for Nation and Homeland, who trust own commander, friends and armaments, as well as who have high moral qualities and respect military discipline and martial law - is two-bit.

According to sociologist, Alexander Leighton, morale is group’s ability for enduring cooperation and for consequentially pursued, commonly settled goal (A. Leighton, 68). Following this, the duty of each military commander, despite running general military and battle trainings, should be also permanent work oriented on developing and maintaining the high moral framework with means of:

- creating strong spirit of friendship in the corps (esprit de corps);

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atmosphere of mutual solidarity and cooperation;
- the sense of duty and commitment for the case;
- shaping desired soldier’s attitudes in the service;
- feeling own worth;
- shaping respect to commander;
- faith in victory;
- no complexes towards the enemy;
- soldier’s identification with army;
- soldiers engagement in the performed tasks.

3. CONCLUSIONS

Reassuming, it should be stated that a soldier has high morale when he knows and believes in the chance for winning the settled goals, that will be pursued by him even in adverse conditions, whereas soldier’s low morale always comes from the predominating frustration and lacking will for the performance of tasks.

Thus, having opposite opinion to the Erving Goofman’s statement is hard, who declared that researches on the condition of morale, in such a hierarchic and closed structure as army, have both the psychological and sociological dimension (E. Gooffman, 128).

References


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