

DOLEČKOVÁ, Tereza; KUBÍNYI, Ľubomír. *The service appraisal and career management of soldiers of the Army of the Czech Republic*. In: INTED 2016, 10th International Technology, Education and Development Conference. Valencia, Spain: IATED Academy, 2016, p. 7619 – 7625. ISSN 2340 – 1079. ISBN 978 – 84 – 608 – 5617 – 7.

## THE SERVICE APPRAISAL AND CAREER MANAGEMENT OF SOLDIERS OF THE ARMY OF THE CZECH REPUBLIC

Tereza Dolečková<sup>1</sup>, Ľubomír Kubínyi<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *University of Defence, Faculty of Military Leadership (CZECH REPUBLIC)*

<sup>2</sup> *University of Defence, Faculty of Military Leadership (CZECH REPUBLIC)*

### Abstract

This contribution deals with the importance of the service appraisal of soldiers of the Army of the Czech Republic mainly in connection with remuneration, planning and career management. It determines the basic changes in mentioned processes in connection with the change of the Act on Professional Soldiers. Furthermore, it deals with the selection of soldiers for higher systemized places within the career management. The appointment of soldiers to higher ranks is subject to fulfilling of the qualification requirements and servicing at least the given minimum length of service. The qualification requirements are fulfilled through training of soldiers. The transparent and objective system of the service appraisal of the soldiers and the use of its results is another means to ensure fair career management ruled by the central authorities. The service appraisal has to provide enough amount of objective information about the soldier's performance also with a view to identifying the needs of soldier's development. This contribution determines the basic changes in mentioned processes in connection with the change of the Act on Professional Soldiers. Furthermore, it deals with the selection of soldiers for higher systemized places within the career management. It analyses achieved results of success of the service appraisal of a chosen rank in years 2012 to 2014; it gives basic experience with the use of the service appraisal within chosen armies. It points to the possibilities of the use of foreign experience and approaches leading to raise the objectivity of the service appraisal, the possibility to choose modern forms of evaluation and the pieces of knowledge of foreign armies.

Keywords: Career, career management and planning, human resource management and development, remuneration, service appraisal of soldiers, the Army of the Czech Republic.

### 1 INTRODUCTION

Depending on the ongoing changes in society and economy, the role of career (mainly in its holistic conception) significantly strengthens from the individual, social and organizational point of view. The term career is generally understood as the advancement in working or service placement which implies the advantages e.g. benefits, higher social status, higher incomes etc. [1] Currently, the individual is responsible for the career development in the first place and then the organization. [5] The decisive condition for the career advancement is usually the performance principle. Due to it, the evaluation systems have to offer sufficient amount of information about the employees' performance usable for professional and personal development of the employees.

According to Barták, the quality evaluation system is one of the key requirements of a successful career management. If the organization is able to evaluate the working results properly, it gains the key pieces of information to properly use the employees' potential on proper working places not only currently but also for the future promising needs of the organization. [2]

The career management of the Army of the Czech Republic reacts to the changes in the labor market and worsening demographic development at least to the extent that its character allows. The aim is to ensure sufficient amount of applicants corresponding to the rising demands on the needs of the organization of the professional soldiers.

The Army of the Czech Republic respects the specifics of its internal environment; it depends on the political will which influences it mainly in the field of funds. The processes of planning and career

management of the professional soldiers proceed from the amendment of the Act No. 221/1999 Coll. on Professional Soldiers.

The amendment of the Act introduces the fundamental changes within the soldiers' remuneration which is connected to the achieved military rank and the results of the service appraisal influences the amount of so called performance allowance. In connection with this amendment, a new salary system for soldiers has been introduced. This system lowers the number of items of the soldiers' salary from twelve to seven. New items are: service tariff, performance premium, work abroad allowance, extra allowance, allowance for increased responsibility, allowance for service alert and bonus. [14] [17] [18]

The hierarchical organizational structure is typical for the Army of the Czech Republic which is preparing for fulfilling the tasks in a specific environment. There was the change of the system of the authority of the service authorities deciding the beginning, duration, changes and end of the service of soldiers of the Army of the Czech Republic. The authority was entrusted to the director of the Personnel Agency of the Army of the Czech Republic (the advisory function when planning the realization of personnel arrangements and the possibility to express recommending or non-recommending statements remained to the chiefs and commanders). The aim of stated arrangement was to ensure the transparency of the personnel work and coordination of planning and managing careers of professional soldiers.

The director of the Personnel Agency together with authorized service authorities realize stated personnel arrangements with soldiers who are subordinates of the Chief of the General Staff of the Army of the Czech Republic and who are on systemized places intended rank up to the Colonel. [7] [11]

The soldiers are ranked to the places which represent the places in the structure of the organizational entity of the Ministry of Defence. The service places are defined by name, description of work, qualification requirements, qualification and material requirements. [9]

The transparent selection of soldiers for systemized places with stated rank of Captain and higher and systemized places of Chief and Staff Warrant Officer by selection committees was introduced. [8] There is a selection procedure on systemized places; after the selection, the ranking of applicants based on the evaluation of particular selection criteria is released and the ranking is also available in the Staff Information System.

A soldier can be appointed to a higher rank or else he can transfer to a higher rank after passing the qualification requirement, serving at least the minimum length of the service in the rank and after passing other requirements for the service appointment of soldiers. Other requirements for the service appointment of soldiers are stipulated in the Order of the Ministry of Defence No. 63/2015, Some Regulation about the duration of the professional soldiers' service. It is crucial for keeping the united passing through the career management of soldiers of the Army of the Czech Republic in terms of the Act on Professional Soldiers. [10] The performance principle is a decisive requirement for the advancement of soldiers in the system of service careers. The results of the service appraisal are important for ranking of soldiers to higher service places.

The Act No. 221/1999 states that the service appraisal is the basic for deciding in terms of the soldier's service. The appraisal is based on evaluating of the service performance, the soldier's obligation, and evaluation of his/her expert and mental capability for the service ranking including health and physical capability for other service performance.[18] Due to it, the system was created this way to provide sufficient amount of information about the soldier's performance during the service and to ensure the objectivity of the service appraisal.

Following aims were set for this article:

- To define the basic changes which follow from the amendment of the Act No. 221/1999 Coll. On Professional Soldiers which are in connection with soldiers' service appraisal;
- To make an analysis concerning the success of the rank of Junior Officers of the Army of the Czech Republic in years 2012 – 2014, as a first part of the research on soldiers' service appraisal and interprets discovered facts;
- To define the possibilities of other development and suggest proposals to raise the quality and objectivity of service appraisal of soldiers of the Army of the Czech Republic.

## 2 MATERIALS AND METHODS

This article is mainly based on the amendment of the Act No. 221/1999 Coll. on Professional Soldiers, other implementing and internal regulations of the ACR (commands, directives, regulations) and technical literature from the field of careers and career management; it uses the data from the Information Service about the service of professional soldiers of the Army of the Czech Republic concerning the results of the service appraisal.

The key method used in this article was the method of collecting and analysing of technical documents. In addition, the method of description was used to define the terms and to describe the current state of the analysed issue. The induction and deduction methods were used to formulate the conclusion. The method of comparison was used too. The analysis concerning the success of a chosen rank during the service appraisal in 2014 was made. This analysis will be the data basis for doing the comparison of the results of the service appraisal in 2015 (the connection of the results of the appraisal with remuneration).

There were changes in the ranks of the Army of the Czech Republic as amended by the Act No. 272/2009. These changes were taken into consideration when doing this analysis. [19] The reference periods for the comparison of the success development of the applicants of a chosen rank are years 2012, 2013 and 2014.

In 2012, the military service in the rank of Junior Officers was carried out by: 3 319 soldiers; in 2013: 3 367 military professionals and in 2014: 3 315 soldiers. In total 21 011 soldiers carried out the military service in 2014. [22]

## 3 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### 3.1 The analysis of results of the soldiers' service appraisal

Before the amendment of the Act on Professional Soldiers, the soldiers' service appraisal was defined by the Regulation of the Ministry of Defence No. 414/2009 as a continuous assessment of soldier's professional qualities. All together there were 9 fields (criteria) assessed on the scale 0 to 4. The success rate was expressed by the point method of evaluation, rounded to two decimals. Current service appraisal is valid from 1. 7. 2015 and assesses the soldier's success rate in ten criteria. [14] [15] The indicators of fulfilling particular criteria are defined for each criterion; they are mostly general so they can be used for all specialities and ranks. We suppose that it is important to unify the interpretation of the level of achieved results. We consider the preparation of the evaluated people and mainly the commanders and chiefs (evaluators) to be important for raising the motivation of soldiers.

Considering the fact that likewise the previous evaluation, the total evaluation is expressed numerically; by using statistical methods, it is possible to come to the comparability of total results in a chosen rank.

**Table 1: The coefficient of the resulting soldiers' service appraisal**

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The average coefficient of soldiers' service appraisal in the ranks lower than Officers

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	2012	2013	2014
<b>Second Lieutenant</b>	2,39	2,42	2,43
<b>First Lieutenant</b>	2,51	2,55	2,55
<b>Captain</b>	2,63	2,67	2,69

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Source: [20], the author's arrangement

**Table 2: The conversion table for comparison**

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Verbal evaluation	Service appraisal up to 2015 (the coefficient of the success rank)	Service appraisal in 2015 (point range)
<b>excellent</b>	3,41 - 4,00	86 - 100
<b>very good</b>	2,53 - 3,40	64 - 85

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<b>good</b>	1,81 - 2,52	46 - 63
<b>sufficient</b>	1,17 - 1,80	30 - 45
<b>insufficient</b>	0 - 1,16	0 - 29

Source: [14] [20], the author's arrangement

**Table 3: The success rank of the members of the ranks lower than officers in 2014**

The success rate of the rank during the service appraisal in 2014			
	<b>Second Lieutenant</b>	<b>First Lieutenant</b>	<b>Captain</b>
<b>excellent</b>	0,79 %	1,09 %	3,11 %
<b>very good</b>	34,38 %	50,42 %	66,00 %
<b>good</b>	62,78 %	47,80 %	30,49 %
<b>sufficient</b>	1,92 %	0,67 %	0,30 %
<b>insufficient</b>	0,11 %	0 %	0,07 %

Source: [20], the author's arrangement

After the service appraisal of 2015, the achieved results of the evaluated period according to the Table 3 will be compared with the results of the service appraisal after the implementation of the amendment of the Act No. 221/1999 Coll. in 2015 in a chosen rank of junior officers.

The mentioned rank was chosen because it is responsible for a comprehensive management and command of the group, platoon, stands, battery, and company or set [13] and it is considered to be a middle management of organization which has a direct responsibility for achieved results of the entrusted organization entity.

The conversion table was used for the comparison of results of the service appraisal. The point range was converted to the coefficient of the assessment on the basis of forms of the service appraisal from years 2009 and 2015. [14] [15]

### 3.2 Discussion

The principles of the career management are regulated by the Act No. 221/1999 Coll. on Professional Soldiers and by other implementing and internal regulations. These documents underpin the career management.

The career system as a comprehensive document dealing with the career management of the Army of the Czech Republic does not exist. Although it would significantly help to create, make clear and determine the principles of the efficient career management of soldiers covering quality selection, admission, professional training, placement of soldiers to the appropriate service positions, raising the qualification etc.

The appointment of soldiers to higher service places is conditioned by passing qualification requirement and serving at least the minimum length of the service in the rank. Other factor influencing the soldier's service placement is the result of his/her service appraisal. The transparent and objective system of the service appraisal of the soldiers and the use of its results is another means to ensure fair career management ruled by the central authorities. Because the system of the service careers is in the form of a pyramid and only the best soldiers should achieve the top posts of this imaginary pyramid. The service appraisal has to provide enough amount of objective information about the soldier's performance.

A higher extent of objectivity of the service appraisal is supposed to be achieved by the changes of the process of the service appraisal following the amendment of the Act on Professional Soldiers, namely by the extension of the amount of considered criteria. The suppression of the evaluator's subjectivity (even though a certain amount of subjectivity will always exist when evaluating) when service appraising of soldiers and subsequent use of this appraisal is the means for efficient career management of the soldiers' career advancements. The suppression of the evaluator's subjectivity (even though a certain amount of subjectivity will always exist when evaluating) when service

appraising of soldiers and subsequent use of this appraisal is the means for efficient career management of the soldiers' career advancements. To raise the objectivity, more criteria for the appraisal and consideration of new aspects were introduced.

The relevant time is introduced, it is a part of the amendment of the Act on Professional Soldiers, and was introduced to prevent the stagnation of the soldiers' career advancement and to support the performance principle. The basis of the relevant time is to eliminate the cases of stagnation of the soldiers on one post or rank for many years without any effort to develop and advance. This is generally considered to be a negative phenomenon in the career system (with the exception of very specialized expertise.) The relevant time is a period of time during which the soldier can remain in one post. The relevant time for particular service placement of soldiers follows from standard service placements. The relevant time for soldiers and commanders is 4 years; for staff service placement 5 years and for service placement of specialists 7 years. [13]

The amendment of the Act on Professional Soldiers prepares the framework into which the unified Career System can be put. This Career System does not exist yet in the ACR even though it has been discussed for many years. The Career System would make clearer and more efficient the career management of soldiers of the Army of the Czech Republic and that is why the attention should be paid to the creation of this key document.

Although some changes took place in the service appraisal of soldiers, its new form can still slow down the efficient career management of the ACR. There is still only one form for the service appraisal of soldiers that is from the lowest to the highest ranks in the army. Just one form cannot respect the differences in the nature of the posts arising from the service appraisal of soldiers and holding post. The service appraisal is still too one-sided because the appraising is done by the closest superior of the soldier. If the service appraisal should be considered to be the crucial base for the career advancement of a soldier (appointment to a higher rank, extension of the service duration etc.), it is still necessary to find ways how to suppress the subjectivity of the appraisal (even though it is not possible to eliminate it fully.) There is a possibility to use modern methods in the civil sector e.g. to use more sources for the appraisal, to involve more evaluators into the evaluation. Currently, the evaluation is mostly done by the closest superior. The use of higher number of sources for the appraisal enables the evaluators who have detailed knowledge about the performance of the evaluated person and can judge his/her performance and who usually are the internal customer to participate in the evaluation. Another way how to raise the objectivity is, according to the article, to involve the competence models describing knowledge, skills and other attributes leading to the expected working performance.

On the other side, according to Veteška and Tureckiova, the results of the evaluation can be used for identification and measurement of the competences which are important for fulfilling the required level of performance. [21]

E.g. there are more evaluators involved to the service appraisal in the US army. They express themselves in the evaluating forms. They are evaluators who are called rater, intermediate rater and senior rater; moreover, there is a possibility of expressing the evaluated person's opinion on his/her future development where he/she can state so called self-development goals. [3]

To achieve the expected effect of the service appraisal, it is important to connect it with other personnel activities which are the basis of the concept of the working performance management. According to Koubek, the working performance management represents more integrated approach to the management of human resources based on the principle of managing the human resources on the basis of the agreement about the future performance. [4] The support manager for approved level of the working performance uses the motivation management which includes not only regular evaluation but also the adjustment of changes and support of professional and personal development of the employee; this is a part of working activities based on regular communication. We could say that current system of the service appraisal and remuneration of soldiers can be integrated into the mentioned concept provided that it will be closely connected with educational and development activities. The Concept of the Personnel Preparation of the Ministry of Defence for years 2012 – 20018 emphasizes higher connection of the preparation of military professionals with the evaluation systems and preparation of the military personnel. [8]

The efficient and objective system of the service appraisal and the use of its results are connected to the principles of the career advancement; only the best soldiers can advance in the system of the service careers to higher positions. That is why it is necessary to improve the service appraisal so it would provide the maximum information about the performance of a soldier and it would also motivate

the soldier in his development. The attention should be paid to the service appraisal of the soldiers of the Army of the Czech Republic to achieve as much objectivity as possible.

After introducing the new system of service appraisal, the need for other changes can be expected. Considering that the Army of the Czech Republic introduces similar evaluating form which has been used in current form in Slovakia since 2009 [6] [12], it is desirable to use the knowledge of experts of the Armed Forces of Slovakia to eliminate the lacks in newly introduces system of the service appraisal or in determining the ways of other development.

The minimum limit of 80 points for promotion was introduced in the Armed Forces of Slovakia in 2009. According to Rejt, there has been a significant raise of the success rate of soldiers appointed to rival selections since given year. Based on the author's data, the average of evaluating results raised from 70.76 points to 83.49 points in 2012. In total numbers, the raise concerns 876 evaluated soldiers in 2007 and 4 796 soldiers in 2012. [16]

The reasons of the raise could be find out only by a qualitative research. It could be said, that the organization has a proper method which could partially influence the division of the service appraisal. It is a method of forced distribution of results. We know that the usefulness could discuss.

We suppose that considering the use of results of evaluation for remuneration of the members of the Army of the Czech Republic, it would be eligible and it would be in accordance with the intentions of the career management. It is important to think about the approaches leading to the raise of the objectivity of the service appraisal and protection of the soldiers against non-objective evaluation. The mentioned field is legally discussed in the Regulation No. 189/2005. [14]

According to the authors of this article, among other ways leading to the raise of objectivity in evaluation is to use more sources to evaluate which involve more evaluators into the evaluation. Another way is to use statistic evaluation of the evaluator's demands considering the demands of other evaluators.

The aim of the authors is the verification of the success rate of the service appraisal within a specific research. The aim of this research in following period is to prove the development of the success rank of evaluated soldiers in a given rank; considering that the service appraisal has a direct influence on the amount of the performance allowance.

The theoretical solution of the specific research project will be the concept of economic and sociological theory rational choice. In connection to the mentioned concept, we assume that soldiers are rationally acting human beings who make decisions when considering the benefits and possible lost opportunities. The evaluation of the data connected to the service will offer the basis for creating the proposals for the development of trends. To make clear the reasons leading to the expected higher motivation, it will be necessary to do a qualitative research on respondents of a given rank in the roles of evaluated people and evaluators. Only on the basis of the qualitative research, it will be possible to say if the new service appraisal fulfills the motivation function in the researched rank.

## **4 CONCLUSION**

The article determines basic changes concerning the fields of the service appraisal of soldiers in connection with the amendment of the Act No. 221/1999 Coll. on Professional Soldiers. The analysis of data concerning the success rate of evaluated soldiers of the ranks lower than officers was done. This analysis represents the first part of the data base which is completed by the analysis of the success rank of the military professionals in the service appraisal in 2015. The reasons of possible marked differences will be identified and described on the bases of the results of the qualitative research within the approved specific research of the authors of the contribution in 2015. The aim is to approach the soldiers of both groups; the soldiers participating in the role of evaluators and evaluated. The representative sample of respondents will be constituted of the members of the rank lower than officers.

## **Acknowledgements**

This article has been elaborated as one of the outcomes of research project Optimization of the service appraisal of soldiers of the Army of the Czech Republic.

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