

FACTORS DETERMINING THE COMBAT MOTIVATION

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Abstract

The article deals with the issue of combat motivation and generally defines motivation, its types, affecting factors, the so-called “demotivators”, theories underlying motivation (D. Uznadze, A. Maslow, B. Newsome, S. Marshal, D. Grossman, etc.) as well as the mechanisms involved in giving preference to one activity over another. Among different types of motivation, combat motivation is discussed along with achievement motivation, which is of increasing interest to scientists and scholars.

The paper focuses on the similarities and differences between a soldier and a warrior as well as combat motivational factors, personal characteristics, personal traits and experiences, and gender-specific achievements and advantages.

As it is clear from the historical and scientific documents reviewed, the performance of a soldier significantly depends on the leader. The leader is the very person motivating him as the leader helps him to transform his needs into desires. Considering this argument, the paper discusses the so-called “Three Circles” concept.

As the article identifies, the warrior does not necessarily mean a leader. Being a leader does not indispensably imply that he will actively fight in the war, although people who have proved to be warriors in combat often become platoon leaders later on. Training, recent experiences and temperament are important factors in developing a warrior. Training can be considered as an extrinsic factor. As for recent experiences, it is a significant determining factor and those who would like to gain the same experience on their own initiative can be considered warriors. Temperament can be identified as will, inspiration of a warrior and the so-called intrinsic individual factor.

The warrior has a commitment to fight a war, and he conducts war himself. Skills and experiences are of paramount importance among his characteristics. However, their absence can be compensated by courage and bravery. A soldier refers to a person who serves in the army and receives a salary. Combat is a part of his activity but this commitment may not necessarily be his calling.

Keywords: Motivation, combat motivation, soldier, warrior, commitment

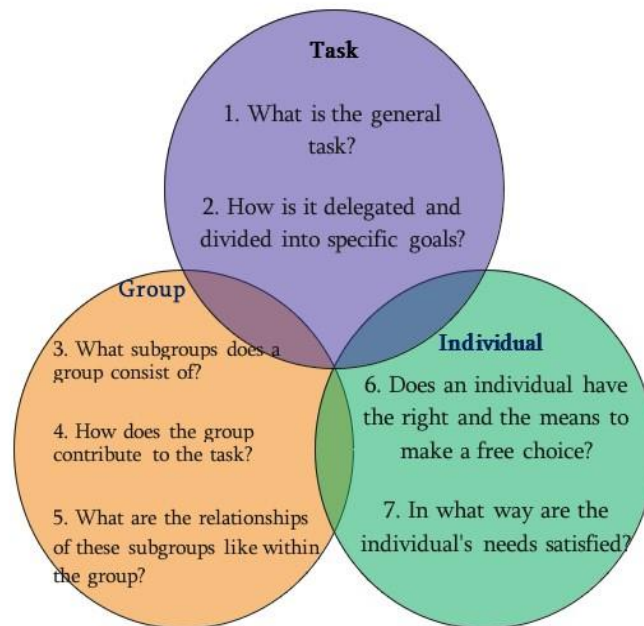
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INTRODUCTION

To this date, when the countries wage war using high technology, it is important to focus on the human role in combat. A person, at a certain stage of his life, analyses the question of the relationship between life and death. Throughout his conscious life, he avoids death and tries to prolong his life. As Dimitri Uznadze states in his “Philosophy of War”, “All forms of our being are developed and caused by the fear of death. This fear is thus the governing principle of all our lives. It is the most important regulatory moment of a person’s entire life.” Even pessimistic people, who are ungrateful and dissatisfied with the current reality, avoid death, and the fear of death comes as no surprise to them. If a person had little respect for the death of an ant or other living being before, the death of another person is considered as a great sin, because the value of a living being is very important to human. However, people make their own choices and stare death straight in the eyes. This is what happens in war. This is the process when the previously existing solid value system and conscience are shaken up and the death of another living being is no longer understood as a sin and remorse. On the contrary, the death of the enemy is perceived as a praiseworthy and creditable, heroic deed. “Thousands of young people go fearlessly and proudly to meet death on their own.” At this time, the national spirit awakens in each member of the community in the measure never given before. This is unity, a common path to walk on, one common goal.

Building and maintaining unity is the ability and duty of a good leader. Notwithstanding that advanced technologies and optimized processes play a significant role in the success of warfare and business, the fact remains that the human factor is still a decisive point in both fields. It is people who can turn opportunities into success or failure. The legendary commander of the Israeli artillery brigade and the developer of new types of tanks, General Israel Tal, was once asked about which one was the best tank in the world: the Israeli Merkava, the American Abrahams, the German Leopard or the British Centurion. Tal answered: “The best tank is the one having the best crew“.

MAIN PART. Human motives are driven by deeper human needs and values. To us, a conscious need is called desire. Frequently, the leader is the very person who helps to transform the needs into desires. In addition, he can individually work with each person to understand these desires in the context of the overall mission, collective or organizational life. Thus, the leader should take into account the so-called «Three Circles” concept at the beginning of his career.



According to this concept, motivation should not be only limited to individual needs. It is also supported by the hidden sources of the task and the group. It is the leader's duty to manage the overlapping needs with individuals so that they are as productive as possible. This means that it is necessary to consider the satisfied physiological and safety needs of people, followed by "higher" needs. Depending on how desirable or undesirable a stimulus is, people either move toward or avoid certain stimuli and activities. Taking the motivation into account helps to explain and predict the behavior. Moreover, "Motivation encompasses the mechanisms involved in giving preference to one activity over another, providing energy and persistence to responses"².

Theories of motivation attempt to find out which motivational force comes from internal sources of the body and which comes from external sources outside the body i.e. from environmental or cultural factors.

Achievement Motivation. Achievement motivation is defined as an attempt to maximize or maintain an individual's advanced skills in all areas of activity that can lead a person to success or failure. Success criteria can be applied in these fields where this type of activity can lead to either success or failure.

One of the important parts of a successful career is seeking for the workplace where the work to be performed and the payment for it will correspond to motivational needs. The scholars examine

² ზიმზარდო ფ., გერიგი, „ფსიქოლოგია ჩვენს ცხოვრებაში“, 2009., გვ. 461.

the overlapping issues of professional calling, personality traits of people, values and needs. In order to maintain the motivation for achieving professional success, it is desirable for a person to have a job that matches his interests and valuable goals. Psychologists measure the need for achievement to make predictions about how a person's life will go and what lies ahead.

Combat Motivation. Countries, throughout their existence, had to wage wars and still have to do so today. The theorist of war, Carl von Clausewitz, notes that “War is a field of physical exertion and suffering. These will destroy us unless we can make ourselves indifferent to them, and for this birth or training must provide us with a certain strength of body and soul”.³ Indeed, despite the technological achievements, combat actions remain a dangerous and shocking experience for many people. Here, Clausewitz remarks that “Strength of body and soul helps the soldier overcome this fear”. It is interesting to figure out what makes some soldiers voluntarily go back to war again, if war is really so horrible? How does he manage to cope with all the challenges of combat?

Based on the experience of war from recent history, the experience gained in combat is overwhelmed with strong emotions. On the one hand, it is the greatest contribution to history, an exalted feeling of love and hatred at the same time. War is frequently perceived as something great and immense. The warrior's attitude towards war is heterogeneous because if we follow Uznadze's definition, “Every warrior, as a servant of realizing the essence of life, must somehow feel the greatness of his work, and this feeling must find its reflection in his heroism and self-sacrifice”.⁴ A similar emotion is the motivator for a warrior in combat. On the other hand, it is a devastating and brutal event where there is a lot of pain, corpses, and crippled people. Combat actions is a more compressed and intensive version of life events. This experience leaves two types of stamps on people: positive – aspiration (longing) and negative – trauma.

The war depends on various factors whether it is important or pointless to a person. These factors involve values, political situation, the expediency of this or that operation, trust in the leader as well as the experience of war that have different effects on people, leaving deep traces.

Bruce Newsome identifies intrinsic and extrinsic combat motivation. Intrinsic motivation is the one that encourages a civilian to go to military service. It is a genetic, cultural and socially conditioned motivation. As for the extrinsic motivation, it is established on the basis of different military activities after socialization in the military environment.⁵

The theories of intrinsic motivation focus on the values existed prior to the military life such as ideology, nationalism, warrior spirit, and rational service.

³ Clausewitz Carl Von, „On War“{1832], trans, and ad. Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton UP 1976), გვ. 101.

⁴ უზნაძე, დ., ომის ფილოსოფია, „შესავალი თანამედროვე აზროვნებაში“, წიგნი II, ილიას სახელმწიფო უნივერსიტეტის გამომცემლობა, თბ. 2014. გვ. 154.

⁵ Newsome Bruce, „The Myth of Intrinsic Combat Motivation”, Journal of Strategic Studies 26/4(Dec.2003), გვ. 24. 5 Ibid. p. 33.

The theories of extrinsic motivation focus on the impact of military training, management, combat or anything that affects the process of military service. This approach encompasses many theories, ranging from the theory of mass behavior to small group dynamics, and focuses on the degree of unity and cohesion.

Newsome criticizes the theories of extrinsic and intrinsic motivation, arguing that it is difficult to draw sharp lines between them. He explains the extrinsic motivation by using the management theories. However, the conclusions Newsome made are insufficient to explain the fighting behavior.⁵

On the one hand, although he emphasizes the difference between combat motivation and the motivation of serving in the army, his conclusions fall somewhere in the middle: active combat actions and simply serving in the army. More precisely, it refers to being constantly at the front, regardless of whether the soldier fights or not. Newsome does not explain the phenomenon of what drives some people to actively fight and take action. He does not speak of the qualitative difference between combat and other activities of a military serviceman. Combat motivation implies the warrior's will to be constantly on the battlefield. While in military service, training only helps the warrior to overcome battle shock. There is no guarantee that he will actively fight, return to combat or have combat motivation. Training is never able to prepare a soldier for war. That is why it is assumed that the combat motivation is different from the motivation of serving in the army.⁶

On the other hand, ignoring intrinsic motivation completely (as Newsome suggests) is about to assume that once a person puts on a military uniform, he immediately becomes equal to other soldiers. This means that we must completely ignore the inherent factors that oppose the researches on war.

During World War II, Colonel Marshall evaluated hundreds of soldiers, both in the Pacific and in Europe, by interviewing them on the battlefield. He found that only a small number of soldiers fired on the front line.⁷ He claims that the number of shooters was no more than 20-25%, despite the fact that firing from complex weapon (weapon that requires several soldiers) was done by almost 100%. However, during the Korean War, the firing level increased by 55%, and during the Vietnam War, it already reached 90-95%.

Before Marshall's study became known, military training involved activities and drills designed to make it easier for a soldier to kill. These activities increased the number of credible shooters in combat. However, this fact still does not help to account for the combat motivation, because the soldiers were fighting wars before this training was included to the military instruction. This implies that some soldiers, without any training, have the ability to kill the enemy without any trouble. In explaining the combat motivation, the main problematic issue is the point that individual differences are not taken

⁶ Matthews Michael D. and Laurence Janice H., „Military Psychology, “ SAGE Volume 4. 2012 §. 83. 272.

⁷ Marshall S.L.A, Men against Fire: The problem of Battle Command in Future War [1947] (Univ. of Oklahoma Press 2000)., p. 54.

into consideration. Even today, there are many people fighting in the military who are motivated to fight without any training. This is the argument for the individual, voluntary combat motivation.

A warrior does not necessarily mean a leader. Being a leader does not indispensably imply that he will actively fight in the war, although people who have proved to be warriors in combat often become platoon leaders later on. Marshall also found out that those who actively fight in combat and demonstrate the warrior skills become tactical leaders because they take the initiative to do so themselves. The qualities of a person who pulls the trigger, tosses a grenade, and takes the initiative are characterized by Marshall as willpower, determination, and mental and physical stability. All these are intrinsic, personal qualities.⁸

Dave Grossman believes that training, recent experiences and temperament are important factors in developing a warrior.⁹ Training is an extrinsic factor (in developing the extrinsic motivation); although the experience of World War II has demonstrated that training does increase the number of combatants (those who actively fight in combat). However, it does not affect all military personnel by 100%. This means that training cannot be an extrinsic factor that uniquely determines the war-fighting capability.

As for the recent experiences, as we have already mentioned above, this is an important determining factor, and those who like to gain the same experience again on their own initiative, can be considered warriors.

Temperament is the same as will, the inspiration of a warrior and the so-called intrinsic individual factors. It involves the following: the concept of a “natural soldier“, a person who gets his greatest satisfaction from his companions and the emotions accompanied by war – strong feelings, excitation, excitement, and conquering of physical obstacles. He is not eager to kill people as such, but he will have no objections if killing people in combat has a moral justification, like war and fighting for survival. However, such people are not many in number and they end up in defence system, forming small groups, for example, assembling in the Special Forces.

Differences between a Warrior and a Soldier - The Oxford English Dictionary defines a warrior as someone “whose occupation is warfare; a fighting man, whether soldier, sailor, or (latterly) airman; a valiant or an experienced man of war”¹⁰. The warrior has a commitment to fight a war and he conducts war himself. Skills and experience are of paramount importance among his characteristics. However, their absence can be compensated by courage and bravery. Also, the definition above makes it clear

⁸ IBid. p.58.

⁹ IBid. p. 178.

¹⁰ Simpson J.A. and Weiner E.S.C., Oxford English dictionary, Second Edition, Volume XVII (Oxford: Clarendon Press1989), p. 935.

that a warrior can be a soldier too. A soldier refers to a person who serves in the army and receives a salary. Combat is a part of his activity but this commitment may not necessarily be his calling.

Another definition states that a warrior is a soldier who has a personal and existential commitment to war, has the willpower and ability to kill others and risk his own life.

It is necessary for a warrior to be a soldier as well, because this gives him the legal right to participate in combat and conduct hostilities. This is a right granted by the government. Being a soldier is not a determinant of warfighting capability. In addition, not all soldiers are warriors. The fact that a warrior must be a soldier at the same time means that a warrior is not a mercenary - he serves his nation.

Personal Commitment – Personal commitment is an individual quality. In this case, we are not talking about a fighting nation or cultures in general. Being a warrior is a personal aspiration and not a culturally determined trait (nations born and bred to be warriors). However, this commitment does not necessarily mean that the warrior possesses it from the very beginning. Commitment to war can develop after the instance when a person as a soldier has already gained experience in combat.

An example of upbringing a person as a warrior is the case when the father of a particular military serviceman or a representative of the previous generation was a military person and he was brought up in accordance with military rules. He was taught to fight, overcome obstacles and survive from the very beginning. When a person, even at an early age, is trained and taught to fight, he is considered to be raised as a warrior. However, it is not necessary to be raised as a warrior from a young age. This trait can be developed after the experience of war - an individual may have a commitment to fight, a desire to return to war.

Existential Commitment - Being a warrior cannot be reduced to material considerations – rather, it is beyond them due to some aspects such as:

- Combat experience encompasses physical sufferings such as hunger, cold, various diseases, wounds, lack of sleep, etc.;
- The status of a warrior in society involves both suspicion and admiration. This means that this status does not imply unequivocal acknowledgement. Many people even have a negative attitude towards the warrior;
- To sacrifice your life and repeatedly put yourself in danger cannot be derived from material interests.

Mastering War: In addition to professional knowledge, the combat experience develops personal skills such as keeping calm under stress, generating will, and aspiration.

His (Man's) Life: Most notably, men are mentioned as warriors. As for women, two questions arise regarding them: Were there female warriors in history? Are they physically fit for combat?

A Jewish military historian, Martin van Creveld, examines the stories of women warriors. He notes that women were mostly the victims of war, and frequently, the causes of war as well¹¹. Moreover, Clausewitz remarks that only a small number of women participated in combat as mercenaries. Thus, the historical records evidence that there have not been many female fighters in the world. Women participated in combat only during total mobilization. However, there were exceptions as well¹².

Willing and Able to Kill: Willingness and ability to kill is combined with the willingness to sacrifice life. Aggressiveness is an additional quality of a warrior. The ability to mercilessly kill the enemy does not mean killing without thought. The Vietnam War veteran Dave Nelson writes, “I had been taught. That made my decision to be a sniper. Killing clean shows respect for the enemy, but to kill civilians or to lose control of your self and your concepts in life in combat is wrong... that is respect for your enemy... that’s the concept behind the warrior. Kill cleanly, kill quickly, kill effectively, without malice or brutality.”¹³

On the other hand, while restraint in killing plays a crucial role, you have no guarantee that you will be able to kill, even being enlisted in Special Forces units. F. Miller reminds the reader: „Contrary to popular belief, not all Special Forces soldiers were ‘bad to the bone’... I found out that not all Special Forces troops were shooters. These guys would go out on missions... but the fact that they couldn’t bring themselves to shoot the enemy caused them grief. They’d take any job in the camp that prevented them from going out again.”¹⁴

Willing to Sacrifice Life: It is difficult to identify this quality in a man, because it is demonstrated only when the warrior breathes his last. The warriors want to survive, not to die. As it was already mentioned, the willingness and ability to risk your life and the willingness to kill the enemy keep balance, conditioning one another. If killing is not in service of lofty goals and does not involve at least a minimal risk of your own life, it becomes simply murder, like a crime and massacre....

When it comes to attachment to war, quality is more important than quantity. It can be difficult to successfully accomplish the high-intensity warfare without qualified and professional warriors. Currently, the western wars are so complex that they involve both tactical and strategic difficulties. According to Clausewitz, experience is as important as talent to overcome all this.¹⁵ Talent is the best substitute for experience, and the warrior we discussed here is in possession of both experience and talent.

¹¹ Creveld Martin Van, *Men, Women & War: Do Women Belong in the Front Line?* (London: Cassell 2001), p. 69.

¹² Matthews Michael D. and Laurence Janice H., „Military Psychology“, SAGE Volume 4. 2012. p. 279.

¹³ Hansen. J.T., A. Owen Susan and Madden Michael Patrick, *Parallels - The Soldiers’ Knowledge and the Oral History of Contemporary Warfare* (New York: Walter de Gruyter 1992), p. 21.

¹⁴ Miller, Franklin D., *Reflections of a Warrior* (New York: Pocket Books, 1991), p. 89.

¹⁵ Creveld Martin Van, „Transformation of War“ (London: The Free Press 1991), p. 108.

CONCLUSION

In summary, we can say that there is a soldier we can call a warrior by nature. This is the one who is much more motivated to experience combat than a private soldier. His attachment to war is most likely to be explained by personal factors and his personal commitment. This commitment is so high that many warriors repeatedly go back to war or fight even in case when victory does not appear possible - for instance, some Germans fought until the end of World War II, as did some Americans in Vietnam. Likewise, a vivid example can be given by the self-sacrificing battles of Georgian fighters against countless enemies not only to protect their own but also fraternal peoples.

Today, it is more important than ever for fighting people to hold positions of responsibility. The actions of many people may have serious strategic and political implications for the new armed conflicts. These situations are often very sensitive and involve the hearts and minds of civilians and the unemotional population. A lot can be said in favor of the fighters belonging to Special Forces, because they are always the first to go to the enemy's territory and to the sites where counter-insurgency and counter-terrorism operations are performed. It is necessary that the first contact with the population is not careless and devoid of sympathy. Instead, it must be sensitive, flexible, precise and cautious, but aggressive at the crucial moment.

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