
DOES MILITARY SCIENCE BELONG TO A LINE OF PROFESSION?

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ABSTRACT

The present article deals with military science as one of the professional occupations that we will meet today in the list of future activities presented to young people. The article aims at answering the questions such as: What is military science as a profession? Why should a young man serve in military service? When is a military serviceman deemed to be a professional? In general, what should be done by the state and the Ministry of Defense as well as society to develop a person into a professional military serviceman, etc.

For these purposes, the paper provides the definitions of terms such as line of profession, professional, traditional and modern professional occupations, professional military service, necessary personal characteristics, etc.

Additional emphasis on the definitions of concepts was conditioned by the progress of our life, which resulted in the expansion of the employment area and the creation of new professions. Therefore, over the last century, all this has led to a significant expansion of scientific terms, including the words denoting professional occupations and similar activities related to it.

In addition, the paper deals with the rights, duties, professional obligations, basic values and credits of a military serviceman as well as those motivational influences that will push him/her to do his/her best beyond the call of duty and by putting his/her own life at risk he/she will be able to save others. The behavior of a military serviceman is further strengthened by the legislation that regulates the engagement of Defence Forces in the so-called "hot points" during an emergency situation and/or a state of war in order to protect the country and its population. These and other facts give us the right to classify military service under risky professions.

In the work presented by me, you will meet the personal characteristics necessary for a military serviceman to receive an appropriate education, to advance in his/her military career, and to go through a difficult and stressful professional path. Unfortunately, not so rarely, the society does not quite understand the responsibilities and obligations of a military serviceman. On the other hand, at the beginning of the professional path, the individual understands and analyzes quite well that in general, it is the values and credits of both the defence system and the armed forces that make the military science more dignified, attractive and great as a professional occupation leading the true military serviceman to be a real professional of his/her activity.

Key words: Professional occupation, professional, military science, obligation, responsibility, decision.

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INTRODUCTION

Before addressing the question of whether military service constitutes a profession, it is essential to first define what it means to be a professional. Especially if military service is considered a distinct and unique profession, it becomes important to explore its ethos and fundamental values.

In contemporary usage, the term "professional" appears in a variety of contexts. At times, it refers to someone who is merely paid for their work, while at other times, it characterizes an individual who excels in their respective field. For instance, if we assert that a carpenter performed a genuinely professional job in comparison to what I might accomplish with wood, we are implying that the carpenter is indeed a true professional.

But what exactly constitutes a profession? Although this term is widely debated, most definitions share common elements, suggesting that members of a given profession provide significant public service, possess specialized or expert knowledge not available to those outside the field, are regulated by professional bodies, and adhere to a specific code of conduct. In other words, **professionals govern their behavior primarily by standards that are not obligatory for individuals outside their field.** The concept of a profession generally refers to a type of work performed within a particular occupation, defined as “a set of tasks and responsibilities characterized by significant similarities.” An individual holding a position may be associated with a profession in their current, past, or future employment.²

Historically, the traditional professions were considered to be the clergy, medicine, law, and so on. It could be argued that professions were originally defined as “the respectable pursuits of noble-class individuals.” All traditional professions embodied the aforementioned characteristics, distinguishing them from other contemporary occupations. Representatives of these professions historically occupied higher ranks of the social ladder and were often regarded as leaders within their communities. This likely contributed to the term “professional” acquiring its positive and esteemed connotation. Over time, the expansion of employment opportunities and the emergence of new professions over the last century have significantly broadened the meaning of the term.

Still, is military service truly a profession? Clearly, military personnel provide a public service: they are responsible for the defense of the entire state and its people, not just select individuals. Additionally, officers and non-commissioned officers (NCOs) possess specialized knowledge and expertise that is often inaccessible outside the military domain and can only be legitimately applied within the military profession. Military personnel are governed by

² პროფესიების საერთაშორისო სტანდარტული კლასიფიკატორი.(2012). შრომის საერთაშორისო ბიურო. ქ. ჟენევა. ISCO-0808 I გამოცემა.

their own code of conduct, and aside from extremely serious cases, all disciplinary matters are handled within the profession.

As we can see, the first three criteria for defining a profession are met. However, how do military personnel exercise professional discretion in their work? Unlike other professions, military personnel receive orders from the government and execute them. In democratic states, professional soldiers do not decide what actions to take on behalf of the state. This has led some sociologists to argue that the armed forces resemble a bureaucratic apparatus more than a genuine profession. The lack of autonomy suggests that military personnel are, in essence, representatives of the state machinery.

The fact that professional service implies obligations for military personnel does not mean they are directed in every aspect of their work. While a soldier may not choose their mission, how they carry out their duties falls under their core professional military competence.

It is important to note that officers and NCOs do not merely apply their specialized knowledge routinely; they are expected to exercise professional discretion and autonomy in their activities. This factor likely explains the difference in expectations between officers, NCOs, and rank-and-file soldiers, much like how we have different expectations for architects (typically considered members of a professional group) and craftsmen, who are not. However, I believe that senior NCOs are also expected to exercise discretion in their military duties, suggesting that officers are not the sole representatives of the military profession.

MAIN PART

Professional Responsibilities

Professionals are often granted special rights or privileges due to their professional status. For instance, certain medical professionals are authorized to prescribe medications - a right not granted to ordinary citizens. These special rights, however, come with moral obligations that surpass those expected of the general public. Historically, doctors have been morally obligated to assist those in need of medical help at any time and in any place.

Many professional roles create specific moral obligations, the fulfillment of which is essential to maintaining one's status within the profession. Does the military profession entail unique professional obligations? We have already determined that military service, or at least a significant portion of it, can be considered a profession. Now we must determine whether it is unique. According to the ISCO-08 (International Standard Classification of Occupations), military-related professions are classified into different subgroups at various qualification levels (12 and 4).

The first level of qualification involves performing simple, routine physical tasks. The second level requires a relatively high level of literacy, numerical skills, and the ability to read

safety instructions and prepare written reports on completed tasks. The fourth level involves solving complex problems, making decisions, and applying creativity based on a broad spectrum of theoretical and factual knowledge.

One of the distinctive characteristics of military service is the "unlimited liability contract," which may place military personnel in life-threatening situations.³

Over the years, Georgian servicemen, through their participation in international missions, have repeatedly demonstrated a high level of combat readiness and the ability to accomplish extremely challenging tasks, solidifying Georgia's reputation as a reliable ally in global security (International Missions).⁴ For instance, in the international mission in **Iraq**, 8,495 Georgian servicemen participated across 19 rotations at various levels. "From 2008 to 2021, 22143 Georgian servicemen participated in over 100 rotations (ISAF RSM) as part of international missions in **Afghanistan**. Of these, 253 were injured, and 32 were killed" (Ministry of Defense of Georgia, 2022).⁵ The Georgian Defense Forces have also been engaged in international missions in the **Central African Republic** since February 2017, conducting 12 rotations.⁶

According to the Law of Georgia on Defense, the Ministry of Defense and the Georgian Defense Forces are responsible for responding to emergencies, states of emergency, and wartime situations (Law of Georgia, 2004). For instance, on August 21, 2022, by order of the Prime Minister, the Defense Forces were mobilized to participate in rescue operations to prevent natural disasters and conduct effective firefighting actions (Prime Minister's Order №210). The Defense Forces also played a crucial role in assisting the population during the COVID-19 pandemic.⁷

Military service requires maintaining continuous external motivation for servicemen. The motivation to go beyond what is required by duty and to risk one's life to save others is precisely what is expected of individuals who choose high-risk professions. Do we have the same expectations of military personnel?

Military personnel may be legally ordered to act in situations where the probability of death is high. For example, when involved in international missions, soldiers are often tasked

³ T.Kropadze, Factors Determining The Combat Motivation. International journal. Gori.pp.41-47. 2022. ISBN-978-9941-8-5055-4.

⁴ <https://mod.gov.ge/ge/mission>

⁵ <https://infocenter.gov.ge/nato/international-missions/misia-avghanethshi/>

⁶ ნ.გვალაია, საერთაშორისო მისიებში საქართველოს თავდაცვის ძალების კონტრიბუციის როლი და მისი მნიშვნელობა ქვეყნის საგარეო პოლიტიკაში, სამეცნიერო კონფერენცია: „ქალები, მშვიდობა, უსაფრთხოება-კონფერენცია 2021“, თბილისი, 2021.

⁷ https://www.gov.ge/files/562_82863_846175_210.pdf

with clearing areas of mines, an activity they execute with great honor and bravery. In this regard, military service is unlike any other profession.

Regarding the use of lethal force, if we compare the armed forces to the police, a police officer may only use deadly force to protect life. They cannot be ordered to destroy a target and take lives. This authority is reserved exclusively for military personnel.

Thus, we can confidently assert that military service is not only a profession but also an inherently risky and stressful occupation. Therefore, developing and maintaining the mental health of professional servicemen is a critical component of their long-term effectiveness.

Ethos and Core Values

Given the seriousness of the risks associated with military service, every profession has its own set of personal characteristics, fundamental values, and guiding principles. These form the foundation of the behavior and character expected from individuals serving in these institutions.

A professional soldier must be resilient, courageous, emotionally balanced, and capable of making rapid decisions in critical situations. Despite these attributes, military service is often accompanied by various forms of mental health disorders due to stress, the most common being Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), which may require the involvement of specialists.

Personal characteristics manifest in corresponding behaviors and are heavily influenced by the values and principles that serve as their foundation. The values guiding the Georgian Defense Forces include loyalty, courage, integrity, care, responsibility, and selfless service (MOD, 2020).⁸ While these values are specifically tailored to the Georgian Defense Forces, they are applicable to the armed forces of any nation.

These values are reinforced by the oath of loyalty, in which officers pledge allegiance not to government officials but to the state itself. This signifies that soldiers swear their loyalty not to a leader, prime minister, or president, but to something far greater. While the government, the people, and the state are often seen as one entity, this is not always the case.

Professions have red lines that their members must not cross. For instance, a doctor cannot be ordered to harm a patient or deny medical assistance to a wounded prisoner to extract information. Respecting the boundaries of professional conduct is essential, as such actions would be entirely inconsistent with the professional oath of loyalty.

By the same principle, it does not matter who gives the order or how important the person may be. Members of the armed forces have a legal and professional obligation to disregard orders that would violate the laws of armed conflict.

⁸ https://mod.gov.ge/uploads/ministris_khedva_2020/xedva_2020.pdf

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, military service is undeniably a profession—one that is highly respected, honorable, and difficult to attain. Those who choose to pursue this field, and meet the necessary conditions, will develop into true professionals. Citizens who gain academic and practical knowledge in the military and embrace the core values and professional obligations of the system will exhibit their professionalism in challenging situations, maintaining their mental health and making sound decisions with dignity and trust.

It is equally important that the government and society provide support to those who aspire to serve in the armed forces. This includes the proper selection, training, and education of personnel, as well as constant monitoring and promotion of mental health for military personnel and their families, especially in high-risk, stressful situations.

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