ANALYSIS OF FORMS AND TASKS OF BORDER PATROLS’ PSYCHOLOGICAL TRAINING

O. Lazorenko
National Academy of the State Border Guard Service of Ukraine
46, Shevchenka Str., Khmelnytskyi 29003 Ukraine
lazoav@rambler.ru

Abstract: Successful completion of the tasks set for the Border agency involves psychological training of border units. Organization of border guards’ psychological training as a part of their preparation for sustainable and efficient activities for assigned purposes has been analysed based on the theoretical analysis of national and foreign sources, including regulatory documents. A two-fold task of border guards’ psychological training – formation of psychological readiness and stability - has been specified. The main objective in this direction, which is to prepare the mentality of border guards for sustainable and efficient executing of assigned tasks in the process of border guard service, has been determined. Effective methods that enable systematic and scientifically grounded impact on feelings, will and intellect of border guards, shaping and developing their essential moral qualities have been discussed. Principal forms of border guards’ psychological training determining effectiveness of its implementation have been presented.

Keywords: psychological training, forms, tasks, border patrol.

Introduction

An important challenge facing the State Border Guard Service of Ukraine (SBGSU) is to develop a complete personnel and materiel readiness system to respond to emergencies and abnormal situations at the state border. This implies that the border guards, including those involved in the carrying out of duty in border patrols, possess a system of psychological qualities that will enable them to overcome the difficulties of service at the border and to execute set objectives. Organization of focused psychological training of border guards to perform service tasks of border protection is a possible solution for this task.

However, as practical activity has shown, non-scheduled events that are randomly held in units of border protection do not always meet needs and requirements of both law enforcement agencies in general and specialist’s personality in particular. The lack of relevant scientific works significantly complicates this issue and makes it urgent to search for effective forms and tasks of psychological preparedness of border patrols.

Method

According to the analysis of scientific papers, the problem of psychological training was studied by national and foreign researchers in various fields of science. Some issues and peculiarities of personality and military groups’ training for law enforcement activities at the state border were reflected in the studies of S. Maksymenko, P. Melnyk, B. Oleksiyenko, E. Potapchuk, O. Safin et al. Psychological training of Army units was revealed in the works of O. Boiko, G. Vorobiov, V. Zaman et al. The study of psychological work with the personnel of law enforcement agencies is conducted by I. Prikhodko, O. Timchenko, S. Poltorak et al. A. Kuzmin analyzed the best practices of psychological training in foreign countries. These studies made a significant contribution to updating of the contents, essence, organization and realization of psychological training of various categories of law enforcement agents. However, the problem of psychological training of border patrols to act in extreme conditions has not been the subject of a separate study. In addition, the need to improve the state border guarding system requires strengthening of psychological training of the personnel of border protection units, defining its tasks, finding and implementing efficient forms and methods of work.

Taking the foregoing into account, the purpose of this article is to analyze the forms and tasks of psychological training of border guard units’ personnel engaged in carrying out of duties in border patrols.

Results

An important part in education of border guard units’ personnel is professional training that covers the entire system of border guards’ professionalism development by maintaining and improving of the skills
necessary for them to execute specific tasks. According to the order of the Administration of the SBGSU of 04.12.2013 № 124 "On the personnel training for the State Border Guard Service of Ukraine in 2014" the main focus in practical training of border guard units' personnel is personal safety and the use of force, which includes: 1) physical training; 2) weapons practice; 3) environmental security of the state border; 4) medical training; 5) psychological training.

It should be noted that from the legal perspective the above areas of practical training, with the exception of psychological training, do not foresee direct psychological training of border guards, though there is no doubt as to its necessity. At the same time, the psychological training is indissolubly related to professional training, still it has its own contents, features, forms and methods, without which it is impossible to solve the tasks of border guards’ training in state border protection.

It is important to note that in current researches the system of law enforcement officers’ training to act in extreme conditions is considered in terms of ensuring professional reliability of personality under the conditions of stressful effects of external and internal factors of service activity. In particular, Prykhodko and other researchers (2013) consider psychological training as a set of psychological measures, aimed at formation, maintenance and development of professionally important psychological, moral and practical qualities of law enforcement agents, internal self-control in conflict situations, communicational norms, psychological readiness for professional activity in extreme situations, positive motivation aimed at choosing of safe technologies to perform service tasks.

Foreign psychologists regard the psychological training as a process of instilling personnel’s capacity to carry out combat missions under the conditions of modern warfare, withstanding any physical and mental stress (Kuzmin, 1975). At the same time the major areas of psychological training of the personnel of the NATO forces are: formation of fundamental knowledge and ideas about military operations; development of commitment, readiness for self-sacrifice and deeds of valour for victory; positive motivation for military service; promotion of patriotism, loyalty to national values; enhancing of professional and combat skills and abilities; increasing of mental and physiological stamina; studying of the basics of applied psychology (psychotechnics) to decrease battle exhaustion. Similar topics are included to the system of psychological training of the Armed Forces of Ukraine.

Review of the aim and objectives of psychological training enable us to clarify its essence. The dictionaries define the aim as "the goal that someone aspires or wants to achieve" (Kusaykina and Tsybulnik, 2009). Scientific literature defines the purpose of psychological training as "formation of stable mental qualities required to perform any task under various conditions of service activity as well as the ability to withstand psychologically stressful factors" (Maksymenko et al., 2002, p. 504). Analysis of the approaches of the leading experts in the field of psychology of activities in special conditions, that provide the grounds for understanding of the subject, which should be the focus of psychological impact, suggests that the essence of psychological training is to achieve the twofold goal – formation of psychological readiness and psychological stability. These qualities may be formed during case studies in classroom environment and during professional training which is to be carried out in conditions close to real border guarding.

It should be noted that psychological endurance is considered by Potapchuk (2011) as a system of border guards’ mental qualities, determinin their potential for overcoming the difficulties of border guarding and ability to successfully perform any given service task. Speaking of the concept of "psychological readiness", it may be defined as goal-oriented and mobilized mental ability of border agents to address future challenges in the line of their duty, which also ensures reliability and quality of the tasks of state border protection, according to their complexity, significance and importance.

Generally accepted is the fact that the goal of psychological training stipulates its task. A dictionary defines a task as "something that must be done, performed, executed, etc" (Kusaykina and Tsybulnik, 2009). Considering the scientific researches (Vorobyov, 2012) and the specificity of border service, we believe that the psychological training of border patrols shall solve the following problems:

- give the personnel psychological knowledge necessary for competent assessment and consideration of psychological aspects of service activity;
- develop professionally important qualities: vigilance, courage, professional memory, etc.;
- form the ability to use psychological techniques in order to improve service problems solving;
- form functional reliability of border guards’ mentality for effective combating of physical and psychological stress in extreme conditions of service;
form the skills and abilities needed for joint activities, to provide self-help and mutual aid (psychological, educational, medical, etc.).

Thus, the main objective of this field of work is to prepare the mentality of border guards for reliable and effective actions for specific purposes in the course of border guard service.

Qualitative psychological training and effective solving of its tasks are ensured by skillful use of various techniques and methods of influence on the mentality of border guards in both in classroom conditions and during practical training carried out in situations that simulate real border guarding. Effective methods (Potapchuk, 2011, Vorobyov, 2012) that create systematic and scientifically grounded effect upon feelings, will and intellect of border guards, build and develop their necessary moral qualities are listed below.

The method of exercises and practical training (the system of multiple intensifying repetitions of specific actions and deeds in order to form border guard’s necessary moral and psychological qualities);

The method of critical situations (the system of techniques and means that simulate actions of border guards in complex environment of operational and service activities);

The method of stress exposure (a range of techniques and means with the help of which emotional tension of various levels is created for a border guard to form high endurance and stamina).

Effectiveness of psychological training depends not only on the methods of impact on the mentality of border guards, but also on the forms of its organization. As stated in the explanatory dictionary of the Ukrainian language, the form (from Latin “forma” - appearance, structure) - is the outward expression of something that is determined by internal content, a way to organize something (Kusaykina and Tsibulnik, 2009). Thus, the form of any phenomenon, including psychological one, determines its internal organization, the contents of any object or phenomenon and includes its system of stable interconnections. In particular, the authors of the textbook "Military Pedagogy and Psychology" regard forms of learning as the outward expression of coordinated activities of officers and soldiers, carried out in the prescribed manner and under certain rules (Maksymenko et al., 2000, p. 297).

The analysis of psychological and pedagogical literature enables us to interpret the forms of psychological training of border patrols as outer expression of certain organized actions of psychological training subjects and their procedure aimed at forming of border guard’s set of components of psychological readiness. Forms of psychological training are seen as organization of interaction between an instructor and trainees during the process of certain academic material processing. In border units these forms depend on the specifics of personnel training; on the requirements to a border guard and a unit as a whole; on characteristic features of guarded area; on the typical problems that may arise during the service; on the level of psychological readiness of border guards for performing of tasks and on other factors.

To determine the most effective forms of psychological training of border patrols to act in extreme conditions, scientific researches of the scholars working in this field have been used. Specifics of border guards’ professional training have also been taken into account. We defined the following main forms of such training:

1) psychological education (lectures, reports, interviews, speeches, memos, flyers, information sheets, etc.)

2) practical training, using the methods of active learning (training sessions, role plays, group discussions, problem-based learning, etc.)

3) self-study (independent learning) by border guards of ways and methods of self-control (will mobilization, relaxing and mobilizing breathing, contrast muscle relaxation, self-persuasion, self-suggestion, self-command, complex psycho-adjusting systems (autogenous training, autohypnosis, meditation, neuromuscular relaxation), etc.).

Various forms and methods of psychological training and conditions for their implementation may give a good result only when combined during all forms of professional training and education of personnel and other types of border guards’ training. This requires paying attention to the methodological and practical mechanisms and basics of professional readiness; simulation exercises and training in extreme service situations; mastering the potential of psychological knowledge and skills necessary for the border guards.

It is important to note that the main subjects of psychological training are the heads of border guard departments and their deputies on personnel morale who organize and carry out the above activities within their scope of functions. For the psychological training to be proper and relevant, officers should improve their psychological and pedagogical knowledge; consider the laws and principles of education as well as
individual characteristics of border guards when conducting psychological training; actively use efficient methods and techniques, forms and means of psychological training.

Conclusion

Summarizing the review of psychological training of border patrols we suggest to interpret it as organized and systematic process aimed at forming and development of knowledge and skills that ensure effective action aimed at protection of the state border and overcoming psychological problems of operational and service activity. The main objective of this area of work is to prepare the mentality of border guards for reliable and effective specific actions in the process of border guard service. The purpose of psychological training of border guards is formation of their psychological stamina and readiness based on self-improvement of personal traits and development of professionally important qualities. The system of psychological training of border guards is a complex entity which includes specific objectives, contents, forms and methods. The effectiveness of psychological training is determined by the following forms of its conducting: psychological education, practical lessons using interactive types of studying, independent learning by border guards of ways and methods of self-regulation.

References