



Krzysztof Kubiak

Prof., Jan Kochanowski University in Kielce
ORCID: 0000-0002-9623-923X

Military Education in the Western Culture of War¹: Reflections on the Origins, and the Question on the Future of the System

Introduction

The origins of institutionalised military education go back to merely 200–250 years ago, and, interestingly, such education only took its more mature shape about 150 years ago. On the one hand, it is truly a short time span; on the other hand, when one takes into account the pace of technical and technological advancements, as well as the multitude of social changes that have been taking place, it is clear to see that it is indeed a period that abounds with events and processes whose consequences

¹ The Author's standpoint is that war is actually a cultural issue that develops a set of conspicuous formal and informal norms, behaviour patterns, values, rules, principles, as well as institutions, including those related to military education, as mentioned in the title of this paper. For further reference, see: E. Olzacka, „Kulturowy zwrot” w badaniu i prowadzeniu wojen: nowa perspektywa analityczna’, *Zeszyty Naukowe AON*, 2012, no. 4, pp. 305–320. The theses laid down in the paper have been further developed by the authoress in her work entitled *Wojna a kultura. Nowożytna rewolucja militarna w Europie Zachodniej i Rosji*, Kraków 2018. The issues related to the culture of war and the cultural approach to looking into wars have also been raised by K.O. Dunivin in ‘A Military Culture. A Paradigm Shift?’, *Air War College, Maxwell Paper*, 1997, no. 10; *idem*, ‘Military Culture: Change and Continuity’, *Armed Forces and Society*, 1994, Vol. 20, no. 4, pp. 531–547; В.Д. Грачев., В.Н. Гребеньков, ‘Особенности языка военной культуры, Волгоград’, *Известия ВГПУ*, 2006, no. 2 (15), pp. 24–29; Е.Н., Романова, ‘Военная культура и ее основные характеристики’, *Вестник Сам ГУ*, 2008, no. 1 (60), pp. 213–218.

cannot be predicted with ease. The goal of this paper is to provide an outline of the historical background of military education from ancient times to the period in which the army developed its institutional maturity. The overriding idea that lies behind this paper is to ponder the following question: to what extent has the model of the education of soldiers inherited from the industrial age been compatible with the needs and demands set by modernity?

Getting a soldier – or a warrior, a knight, or an armed combatant² – ready to take up arms effectively, required and still requires – if one takes the liberty of adopting a somewhat simplified approach – equipping him with three distinct types of competences. At the lowest level, there were individual manual skills – such as handling a weapon, preparing a variety of field fortifications, setting up an encampment, gaining the necessary fitness and psychological resilience – as well as the ability to function in smaller groups – such as sections, teams, or companies – and to be commanded by a designated senior who would nowadays be commonly referred to as a warrant officer, or a junior officer. These skills and competences were acquired by, or imparted to, soldiers by means of individual and/or group training schemes based on a frequent use of physical strength, sometimes in a rather brutal manner³. Therefore, what can be dubbed individual or group training seems to be the first component for preparing a fighter to be more efficient in the battle field, to be able to defend a stronghold, or to besiege it successfully. By saying this, there is no risk of making an error if one admits that despite the evolution of the entire technical training equipment, these days this principle is still accurate and up to date.

Another equally significant element, though frequently brought up secondarily, was the task of equipping a warrior with an adequate level of motivation. Admittedly, this stood in clear defiance to the willingness and emotional

² These categories were distinct. In Polish, the word *żołnierz* derives from the German word *Söldner* (which literally means *serving for soldy*, i.e. money), which, in turn, goes back deeper to the Middle-English word *soudeour* and the Old-French words *soudeer* or *soudeour*, which meant a servant fighting for money. *Sou*, *soud*, and at a later stage *szyling* are the commonly used words to denote coins. Going deeper, *soudeer* or *soudeour* is the linguistic transformation of the Latin word *soldarius* (i.e. an armed man who gets money for his work), derived from the word *solidus*, which was used to refer to the late-Roman coin circulating in the Byzantine Empire. In Old Polish, the word that was originally adopted was *żołdnierz*, i.e. the man who got his wage by the name of *żołd* (a loanword borrowed from the German *Sold*, which meant payment for service), which was then transformed into *zoldat*, *żołdak*, and eventually into *żołnierz*. Please note that *żołnierze*, who would originally fight for money and who were regarded as middle-category combatants in feudal times, were opposed to those men who came from a higher class, and who were naturally predisposed for fighting. In Poland, another term that has been widely used is *rycerz* (derived from the German *ritter* – an equestrian or rider, a nobly born warrior), or *kawaler* (from the French word *chavalier*, or the Spanish word *caballero*, which also denoted an equestrian). See: W. Kopaliński, *Słownik mitów i tradycji kultury*, Warszawa 1987; A. Nadolski, *Broń i strój rycerstwa polskiego w średniowieczu*, Warszawa 1979; A. Markowski, *Jak dobrze mówić i pisać po polsku*, Warszawa 2000.

³ Contrary to the beliefs held by ardent pacifists, it was not common practice, as it was really hard to apply training methods based on violence used against soldiers – free citizens of the Greek *polis* – or the mediaeval municipal militias put out by a majority of the population who enjoyed a certain financial status and were born and bred in the urban areas.

readiness to becoming exposed to the danger of risking one's health or losing one's life, undoubtedly rooted in the basic human instinct of self-preservation. On the whole, this factor shares a lot of commonalities with the idea of indoctrination, although it needs to be made clear that, in this paper, this notion will be applied in a defining – i.e. descriptive – meaning, rather than in an evaluative – i.e. axiological – one, and thus understood as an intentional and systematic process whereby an individual is trained to accept a particular set of beliefs. As regards those who were taking part in armed fights, a wide range of motivational techniques were applied that were primarily geared towards building certain patterns of community behaviour: from shaping loyalty to one's immediate peers⁴, through special signs and names given to the divisions⁵, by awakening a sense of local, regional, communal, cantonal, municipal, or national patriotism, which – given the relatively late process that led to the birth of nations in the contemporary meaning of the word – was a somewhat arduous task – to the sense of a uniform state provenance⁶, or highlighting religious unity, which was a key factor in a large number of cases. At present, this challenge is equally as valid as it once used to be, but given the progressing social atomism and the development of means of communication that make it possible to target a specific recipient with a neatly psychologically profiled stream of content, it has indeed become a real challenge to attain a set of objectives that are desirable from the point of view of a state and the military forces.

⁴ The Latin notion of *comiltiones*, the Spanish concept of *compañeros de armas*, the French idea of *camarades dans les bras*, the English phrase *comrades (brothers) in arms*, the Russian expression *товарищи (братья) по оружию*, the Swedish phrase *kamrater i armarna* – can all be translated into Polish as *towarzysze broni*. Interestingly, this notion, attempting to clarify the special nature of the relation moulded between the participants of armed combat, has actually never been comprehensively defined in a dictionary.

⁵ One can mention the Roman vexillological symbols, which perfectly illustrate the evolution of the specific burden of military indoctrination. In Mid-Republican Rome, when soldiers were appointed to be citizens bearing arms – mostly farmers – they were featured with a table bearing the following letters *Senatus Populusque Romanus* (the Senate and the Roman People), which implied that a legion or a cohort was a common good of the Roman citizens, and the Republic. Following the so-called Gaius Marius reforms, which actually introduced the notion of a professional army, a symbol of an eagle (*aquila*) appeared without any references made to the civic ties between a soldier and the state. See E. Frank, 'Marius and the Roman Nobility', *The Classical Journal*, 1955, Vol. 50, no. 4, pp. 149–152.

⁶ It seems that this played a major role during the scuffles that were taking place between the plebeian infantry and the cavalry. In order to oppose the outstandingly high standard of offensive and defensive weaponry and the impeccable individual training of the fighters who came from the noble spheres, the plebeians could merely take advantage of their relentlessness, and the dense arrangement/layout of their formation. To a large extent, it stemmed from what we would these days refer to as team spirit, rather than from being aware of the fact that breaking apart their grouping would end up in carnage. Not by chance, though, the most effective infantry divisions throughout the Middle Ages were made up of people who had always enjoyed freedom, who did not know the idea of restrictive fear of their masters, i.e. the English *yeomans* – free farmers and landholders who would use long bows made of yew, as well as the equally formidable Swiss highlanders, equipped with piques (long spars), and at a later stage with Lucerne hammers, which also arose a sense of awe.

From the legionares of Gaius Marius to the Wallenstein's mercenaries

Training and indoctrination have always been an inherent part of war. The written sources that have been preserved, the iconography retrieved from various ages in the form of bas-reliefs, ceramics and miniatures, as well as other archaeological artefacts, leave no doubt in this respect. The one that took on its institutionalised form at the latest stage was the third element that lay behind the preparation of a soldier, and it can be referred to as education. This notion can be defined as an intentional and consistently conducted process, geared towards equipping a given group of combatants with theoretical knowledge, as well as a set of practical skills necessary for planning and carrying out military activities on an extensive spatial and temporal scale, and securing them effectively from the logistic point of view. With time, the scope of this knowledge and these skills was enhanced by the ability to efficiently take advantage of the technical novelties that were appearing on the battlefields, and it seems that it is indeed this last component that has played a major role in the institutionalisation of military education.

Acknowledging the need to simplify things, one can assume that training, combined with indoctrination, is necessary for a private soldier and a tactical lower-rank commanding officer – who can acquire certain habits and principles of conduct by means of an individual example, or by watching other more experienced combatants. Military education, in turn, is required throughout the preparation of senior-ranking commanding officers who have already mastered a set of advanced technical solutions, set against their times, obviously. Systemic and institutionalised solutions in this area appeared in the Western European culture of war at a relatively late stage.

The underlying causes of this situation are rather complex. In the oldest armies, the ones who would hold commanding duties and responsibilities were the rulers, or the representatives of the highest social strata who were closely connected to them. Leading an army to fight and commanding it was, therefore, a privilege that stemmed from a birth-related status. All the relevant skills and competences were acquired throughout extensive practice with more senior and experienced men, or – as can be legitimately assumed – during classes held by preceptors, who were fully conversant with writing – and frequently originated from sacerdotal circles, although this was not a rule. In republican states, in turn, the decisive factor that assigned leading roles to certain individuals was the highly capricious will of the people, i.e. the actual balance of forces that occurred among the individual coteries or parties⁷. One of the characteristic features was the intertwining

⁷ For example, in Athens, from the turn of the 5th and 6th centuries, strategists (i.e. military commanding officers) were selected by the Ecclesia (a popular assembly) for a period of one year. Each of them commanded a unit of hoplites appointed by an administrative district (*fylo*). Originally, all the strategists would go to the field, and they took turns to be in charge of a one-day command. Only after the Persian wars did a maximum number of three set out to the field, and sometimes only one. In that period, Athens saw the emergence and growth of the role of first strategist, which in the years 443–429 BC was held by Pericles. For fear of imposing a one-person rule in the form of a tyranny, the popular assembly maintained an overwhelming impact on appointing their chosen

of incidents related to the military career and the civil career; however, as a rule, success in the battle field was the stepping stone to all sorts of distinctions and privileges in one's civil activity. Clearly, European antiquity witnessed a growth of a rather abundant and diverse literature devoted to military issues: from the classical works of art, which can be dubbed political and military studies⁸, through diarist literature⁹, to one focused on military and technical matters¹⁰. Yet it served primarily the purposes of individual studies, which originated from the cognitive needs of the readers. The already mentioned body of literature was never used within the institutionalised, state-run cyclic system of education of a soldier and officer, as such a system simply did not exist. On the one hand, the factor that played the most prominent part in the decision-making process related to holding top commanding positions was the privilege of birth combined with a particular set of individual predispositions. They made it possible for a person to stand out from the existing social system thanks to his unique military talent, which, with a large dose of luck, helped to avoid getting injured or dying on the battle field. In the case of lower-ranking commanding officers, talent and luck were of key importance. Yet, at this point, one needs to make it clear that Republican Rome, and at a later stage even Imperial Rome, had worked out a highly flexible system of awarding promotions, understood both in terms of stepping onto the subsequent rungs of the military career ladder, and those of the social ladder. On the other hand, the most spectacular cases of careers made by the so-called military emperors – also known as Illyrian emperors, because of their provenance – prove not so much the overall

individual for the role of a strategist. One of the people who experienced the consequences of this was Themistocles, an illustrious leader in Athens. His political opponents first led to chasing him away from Athens, and then, following a number of dubious accusations of plotting with the Persians, to sentencing him to death. In republican Rome, in turn, the role of supreme commanders was entrusted to consuls appointed by the Senate. As a rule, two legions were directly under them (consular army). In an emergency, a legate could be granted the rights and privileges of a dictator for six months. If larger forces were grouped, they would alternate in their duties as commanding officers. A consul's staff would be made up of legates (elected from the senators), military tribunes (appointed by the tribune assembly) and military prefects. Following the contemporary nomenclature, most of those positions were political, except a part of the military prefects who were appointed by the consul from a group of most experienced centurions. They, in turn, being the backbone of the command and control system, as well as the system of training provided to the Roman army (combining the modern roles of senior warrant officers, and junior officers) came from the most outstanding legionaries. There was no institutionalised system of training them. Above them were tribunes who were commanding the cohorts – they were typically young men from well-off families for whom military service was their first stage on the path leading to distinctions and privileges (*Cursus honorum*), i.e. a ladder of social promotion sanctioned by custom and norm, where the military period was merely one of the many rungs.

⁸ For example, *History of the Peloponnesian War* by Thucydides (Polish edition: Tukidydes, *Wojna peloponeska*, translated from Greek by K. Kumaniecki, Warszawa 2003).

⁹ Referring to this area of literature, an unparalleled model for the subsequent authors are *Commentari de bello Gallico* oraz *Commentari de bello civili* by Gaius Julius Caesar. Polish edition: Cezar, *Wojna galijska*, translated by E. Konik, Wrocław 2004; *idem, O wojnie domowej*, translated by J. Parandowski, Warszawa 2001.

¹⁰ See e.g. Vitruvius, *De architectura libri decem*. Polish edition: *O architekturze ksiąg dziesięć*, translated by K. Kumaniecki, Warszawa 2004.

flexibility as rather an overt degeneration and the progressing degradation of the institutions of the Roman Empire¹¹.

The foundation of barbarian states on the rubble of the Roman Empire, set against the need to fight back the enemies who would frequently have a competitive advantage of being more mobile (Scandinavian Vikings, Magyars, Arabs), led to the formation of a new social order dominated by the stratum of equestrian warriors. The peculiar social consensus, which went down to a neat subdivision into those fighting with weapons and those who were supporting them, brought about the birth and subsequent strengthening of the feudal system. As time went by, it was becoming increasingly more formalised, and the possibility of moving up the social ladder as part of it was becoming more and more restricted. Its foundation rested on the military (chivalric) stratum, which owed its privileged status both to the state and to the duty of military service under arms. It is indeed at this time when a specific knightly culture took shape, which can be labelled as elitist and profoundly militarised, but also individualistic to a large extent. War, which, admittedly, was to a certain degree subjected to ritualization, became the core and the driving force of the existence of that social class. The training process of a warrior commenced very early, i.e. at the age of seven, and went on throughout one's entire life. It was comprehensive as far as individual training and commanding a tactical unit were concerned¹², but also when it comes to actions taken by a larger division, which at that time was a squadron made up of knight's entourages. A far lower level could be noticed in the area of training, which these days would be referred to as tactical, or tactical and operational – which was actually not held at all. Once again, just as before, the thing that had a major impact on getting senior commanding positions was not so much a formal education as rather the practical experience matured by assisting the more accomplished men, a specific set of individual characteristics, the ability to prove one's skills, being able to show courage on the battle field so as to arouse a sense of respect in other people, a current network of political connections, and some sheer luck that any soldier needed. At this point one needs to stress the fact that the faults and vices that were so frequently ascribed to the knighthood – especially at the final stage of the Middle Ages – most of which boiled down to extreme individualism and a lack of discipline, seem exaggerated to a large extent. The armies whose core hinged on a knight's sense of chivalry were capable of carrying out a number of relatively complex manoeuvres on the battle field, and their commonly distorted notion of a lack of discipline very often stemmed from the political

¹¹ See e.g. *Historycy cesarstwa rzymskiego. Żywoty cesarzy od Hadriana do Numeriana*, translated by H. Szelest, Warszawa 1996; A. Krawczuk, *Poczet cesarzy rzymskich*, Warszawa 1991.

¹² A knight who was setting out onto the battle field would lead his entourage with him, i.e. the basic unit that would perform its combat functions and guarantee self-sufficiency from the logistic point of view. Apart from the commanding knight, a copy was made up of a squire or a few squires who would protect the knight's back during the fight, and equestrian light-armoured bowmen, who were in charge of reconnoitre, getting the forage, or some liaison and reporting tasks. Their operations were secured by servants and craftsmen. The number of the entourages depended on the affluence of the knight who was getting them ready for the fight. The poorest knights would only come on horseback and armed, with just one servant, or even without him.

animosities that could be discerned between the individual leaders, rather than being an immanent characteristic of the chivalry as such.

The situation around military education began to slowly change along with the erosion of the feudal system on the one hand, and the increasingly quicker pace of the development of military technique on the other. Throughout the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, the knightly stratum (hereditary warriors) began to transform into the landed gentry, which was less and less interested in maintaining its military advantage¹³. Personal military service was, therefore, gradually replaced with the pecuniary equivalent that was paid out in the form of a tax that would, in turn, go right into the royal chest, or by providing the ruler with a specific number of soldiers. What is also important is that the falling revenues from possessing land, combined with the progressing fragmentation of feudal bestowals – e.g. in German countries – led to the appearance of a relatively broad stratum of free knights, ready to offer their swords to anyone who was ready to pay for them. In England, in turn, where the principle of primogeniture was in operation, the younger noble sons had no choice but to join the clergy, try their luck at sea, or become a member of salaried military companies. Paradoxically, this led to a situation where it was a lot harder for the rulers to maintain internal order – even when compared with the period of feudal lawlessness – as in this particular case they had to deal with numerous well-armed, experienced and determined people for whom the only source of income was war. This provided yet further impetus for the creation of standing state armies¹⁴.

For the faith, the king and the homeland

The development of military techniques, which gained momentum at the end of the Middle Ages¹⁵, led to a significant growth in the importance of two – rather disregarded at first – military specialties that originated from the guilds, rather than from the knighthood. The first group were artillerymen, whose career began thanks to bell founders, who cast cannons/guns and handled them, and gunsmiths, who originally were mostly to be found among the middle class formations of urban militias. The second group of specialists were military architects and sappers – military engineers, in general – i.e. experts in erecting and seizing strongholds. They were still deeply

¹³ The one who depicted it in the best possible way was Miguel de Cervantes (a soldier who bravely took part in the battle of Lepanto, and then spent five years imprisoned by Barbary pirates) in *Don Quijote de la Mancha*, his major work. The Knight of the Sorrowful Countenance from La Mancha arouses just fun, jeer and derision, although only a few decades have passed since the times of the chivalric tradition which he is attempting to refer to.

¹⁴ M. Howard, *Wojna w dziejach Europy*, translated by T. Rybowski, Wrocław–Warszawa–Kraków 1990, pp. 40–42.

¹⁵ A full description of this process and its dynamics goes far beyond the scope of this paper. Of the abounding literature devoted to the changes in military technique and their impact on the course of armed struggles, one can recommend two equally valuable – albeit overtly different – works: J. Keegan, *Historia wojen*, translated by G. Woźniak, Warszawa 1998; J. Maroń, *Wokół teorii rewolucji militarnej. Wybrane problemy*, Wrocław 2011.

rooted in guilds, in this case stonemason guilds, but along with the development of artillery and the increasingly more complex nature of fortification systems from the point of view of their construction and spatial arrangement¹⁶, a distinct personal corps was formed. Its members were expected to master not only strictly combat skills, but also those pertaining to the organisation and management of earthworks on a large scale. Thus, they were warriors, but also organisers and managers of grand construction enterprises and logistic efforts aimed at securing them appropriately. They were frequently realised with the use of emergency and/or *ad hoc* measures. However, the process that began from the shaping of a professional engineering and sapper corps and eventually led to the start of a state-planned and organised education of soldiers – mostly high-ranking officers – which would serve its core interests, was indeed lengthy and at times convoluted.

This required transforming the state itself from an estate monarchy into an absolute monarchy – which took place in the majority of European states – or into an efficient oligarchic monarchy with a king sharing his powers with a parliament, a model which took shape only in England and Britain, following a series of revolutions, civil wars, and the restoration of the monarchy¹⁷. At this point, it has to be made clear that one of the first impulses that eventually led to the growing absolutist tendencies of the rulers, stemmed from the need to deal with the various perversions and distortions of the military system at the turn of the Middle Ages and the Modern Age, i.e. the gangs of soldiers of fortune who were out of work and who ravaged the country during peace time.

It was actually, among others, the need to crack down on marauders terrorising vast areas of the country and frequently operating in too large a group for the local feudal civil administration to be able to cope with that induced the French king Charles VII to make serious attempts at organising a standing army. The damage caused by the deeply corrupt combatants deprived by the cruelties of war were so extensive, and the fear of *militis furorem* (military fury) so big, that in 1439 the French Estates General (*États généraux*) decided to levy a special tax (*taille*) dedicated to serve this purpose. The so-called orderly companies, formed in 1447 mostly of former paid soldiers, paved the way for a standing royal army, which was indeed a major breakaway from both the feudal army, appointed to a large extent as a noble levy-en-masse, as well as an army based on hired units, for the commanding officers of which war was above all a means of making a profit¹⁸.

¹⁶ They were: the Old-Italian school, the New-Italian school, the Old and New Dutch school, and the Vauban system – to name but a few.

¹⁷ Formally, the Kingdom of Great Britain came into being on 1st May 1707, following the ratification of the Acts of Union, i.e. a treaty that replaced the personal union between England and Scotland with a real union. The first queen of Great Britain was Anne Stuart. In 1714, the throne was passed on to George I of the Hanoverian dynasty, and in 1901 to Edward VII from the Saxe Coburg Gotha dynasty, who in 1917 changed its name into Windsor, and royal members of this dynasty have held the throne since. Once the real union was extended to include Ireland, on 1st January 1801, the name of the state was changed into the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, and in the aftermath of the birth of the Free Irish State in 1922 – to the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

¹⁸ M.G.A. Vale, *Charles VII*, Berkeley 1974, pp. 320–327.

The process that lay at the foundation of the formation of standing armies was not linear. Because it implied a significant limitation of influence and political importance of the traditional aristocracy and nobility, who had the privilege to legally use armed violence and who took advantage of the royal army to appropriate the state, this fact aroused abundant opposition. Various experiments were conducted that were frequently accompanied by animated discussions in the military literature. One of the issues pondered was whether the standing army was to be based on the mercenary soldier who served for a long time – hence, indeed a professional combatant – or rather a soldier who was drafted. They brought a range of diverse results. Although the conscripted Spanish infantry, arranged in the well-known *tercios*¹⁹, would dominate for almost a century in numerous battlefields across Western Europe, the efforts aimed at forming an infantry based on conscription made by the Swedish king Gustavus Adolphus (1594–1632), arguably the most eminent military reformer and commanding officer of his time, did not yield positive results. The outcomes of the national enlistment, which was actually a conscription held based on parishes during the Kalmar War (1611–1613), were so discouraging that a decision was made to go back to the idea of replenishing the army on the basis of enlistment²⁰.

Despite the numerous turbulences and its non-linear nature, the process that lay behind the taking over by the state of the entire area related to managing armed violence was in the long run clearly irreversible. On the international level, this process was accelerated and sanctioned in a major way by the Peace of Westphalia, which put a definite end to the Thirty Years' War in 1648. Indirectly, to some extent, its provisions made the state one of the major subjects of international relations and the only legal gestor of armed violence both towards one's subjects and beyond its borders. Thus, clearly agreeing to a certain dose of conventionality, this was the time of the symbolic demise of the age of feudal armies in Western Europe, summoned by the royal vassals, but frequently operating according to the principle whereby the vassal's vassal was not my vassal, and by other grand *condottieri* with political ambitions²¹.

¹⁹ *Tercio español* – a unit of infantry that was also an administrative and economic structure made up of approx. 3,000 soldiers subdivided into 10, and later into 12 companies which in combat formation were divided into smaller subunits of up to 30 soldiers each. They were clearly the equivalents of the Roman maniples; in the whole concept, it is clear to see a strong influence of the ancient military school of thought. The *tercio* comprised: pikemen, soldiers bearing swords and other types of handguns, arquebusiers, and musketeers. The formation was capable of operating both in its entirety of forces, a model arrangement in 12 lines and 59 rows, and in their parts. The Spanish infantry dominated on Europe's battlefields in the sixteenth and at the beginning of the seventeenth centuries. The demise of its grandeur came with the Battle of Rocroi, fought on 19th May 1643, in which Louis I de Bourbon successfully took advantage of its own artillery against the Spanish infantry, blocked in its multiple manoeuvres. Ever since, the battalions of the Spanish Foreign Legion (*La Legión Española*) have been carrying the name of *tercio*. They include the following *tercios*: *Gran Capitán*, *Duque de Alba*, *Don Juan de Austria*, *Alejandro Farnesio*.

²⁰ J. Sikorski, *Zarys historii wojskowości powszechnej do końca XIX wieku*, Warszawa 1972, pp. 313–314.

²¹ One of the most eminent 'dogs of war', brought to political power thanks to his military skills, was undoubtedly Frederico di Montefeltro, who began his career as a soldier of fortune at the age of 16, and he deceased in 1482 as a highly respected prince of Urbino, nicknamed the 'light of Italy'. Following into his footsteps were several soldiers of fortune. The last of the great *condottieri*, although apply-

State's armies

One can assume that in the eighteenth century, in Western Europe wars were waged by professional armies. On the social level, there was a specific type of feedback discernible in this respect. The standing army was becoming increasingly more symptomatic of the growing possibilities and effectiveness of the state – including the fiscal dimension – and at the same time, the armed forces that were subordinate to the monarch were the instrument which served to further extend the control exercised by central power over the entire system of material and demographic resources. A permanent army was, therefore, both the emanation of the absolute monarchy and one of its cornerstones²². This mechanism is best reflected by the gradual ban imposed on having one's private fortifications in France, a law that had been initiated by Cardinal Richelieu. The major cause for this rule was, clearly, to deprive the Huguenots of their points of reference, as since the Edict of Nantes of 1598, these people had enjoyed a certain religious tolerance whose guarantee rested on the strongholds and towns that they held. One of the best-known examples, enscribed upon the pages of history was La Rochelle, a stronghold besieged successfully by the royal armies from September 1627 until October 1628²³. By the way, opportunity was seized to demolish private strongholds inside the country that could be used as potential trouble spots for riots and upheavals against the royal power. The standing army, in turn, which was remunerated from the royal chest, shaped a completely different type of commander who, indeed by no accident, started to be commonly referred to as the officer²⁴, which highlighted his close ties with the state, associated strictly – personally or dynastically – with the monarch. This was a professional soldier who fought out of different motives than fulfilling his honorary obligation, or feudal duty. He was not a contractual employee either, hired to do a specific job. Hence, the officer with

ing this term in his case does not seem so obvious any more, was Albrecht Eusebius Wenzeslaus von Wallenstein. A small Czech nobleman by birth, during the Thirty Years' War he was feared by both his enemies and Holy Roman Emperor Ferdinand II Habsburg, his formal sovereign.

²² An excellent example proving this thesis is provided by Austria. In 1770, Empress Maria Theresa decided to hold a general census in the Western part of the monarchy. This task was entrusted to the army, because the attempt to carry out a similar task a few years earlier, based on parish curates and the local administration, had failed. Both the priests and the local clerks related to the noble and landowning elite were providing false information, understated, and geared towards the lowering of taxes. Contrary to a number of fears, the peasants eagerly agreed to take in the military census representatives, who were simply counting of the subjects, calculating of the possessions and arable land and forests, and assigning numbers to buildings, which, in turn, laid the foundations for the modern land administration. The peasants believed that they were providing accurate data and information to the empress, who was back then regarded as the defender of the lowest-estate subjects against the abuses of the nobility. Thus, the state and the army were gradually becoming a some kind of unity. See P.M. Judson, *Imperium Habsburgów. Wspólnota narodów*, translated by S. Patlewicz, Warszawa 2017, pp. 29–30.

²³ In popular literature, in turn, a real siege was depicted by Alexandre Dumas, who set one part of the plot of his *Three Musketeers* at the Huguenot stronghold.

²⁴ It has to be highlighted that the notion derives from the Latin word *officiarius*, which can be translated as clerk, public functionary, or even manager. In Polish, it refers to the military sphere, as well as to the extra-military uniformed services, and to nautics. In other linguistic areas – the Anglo-Saxon and Romance ones – it is related to the higher education, the world of business and health care, and denotes a person who manages and is in possession of a substantial range of executive powers.

a licence became a state functionary with a guaranteed employment status, regularly remunerated, and with prospects of promotion both in terms of his financial and social standing. His basic task was to serve the state, which – contrary to the individual regions or provinces – he identified with. Thus, for the nobility – interestingly, the group of officers was still dominated by sons born into noble families – the service provided in the officer ranks became a peculiar melting pot where the modern state ethos was gradually formed. As Michael Howard rightly put it, at that time, a clear subdivision of the society took place: on the one hand, there were professional military men – for whom war preparations and planning, followed by conducting an armed fight were at the heart of their professional activity – and on the other were civilians, who were not in any way directly related to military activity, except for their casual role as providers of services and suppliers of goods²⁵.

It was only after the state – through its administration – had taken on its shoulders the responsibility to keep and maintain a standing army during peace time, to remunerate it, to provide food to the soldiers, as well as supply it with the arms and other pieces of equipment ordered to be made at state workshops and manufacturers or other entities commissioned by the state, that proper conditions appeared that made it possible to launch a highly institutionalised system of educating the military staff. By agreeing to bear the high costs of maintaining an army, the ruling monarch wished not only to be certain that such a costly and sophisticated tool would be used in an appropriate manner, but also that it would have a desired impact on the attitudes and approaches of those who were managing violence, acting in his name and on his behalf.

Clearly, there had been several attempts to establish military educational institutions before. Here, one could mention, for example, the military school set up in Sedan in 1606 by Henri de La Tour d' Auvergne, Maurice Prince of Orange's brother-in-law, stadholder and captain general of the Netherlands, prince of Bouillon. In 1617, Johann VII, prince of Nassau-Siegen, called it the War and Knight Academy (*Kriegs und Ritterschule*)²⁶. From 1608 to 1610, the Venetian Republic established four similar institutions: in Padua, Treviso, Udine, and Verona; in Hessen, the academy endowed by the elector Maurice Hessen-Kassel was founded in 1618, and in 1623 in Denmark Christian IV established a facility in the town of Sorø that offered military education. Even the last great *condottiere* Albrecht von Wallenstein made several attempts at actualising military education in Gitschin – at present the Czech town of Jičín – which, beyond any doubt, proved his dynastic ambitions. In Spain, Gaspar de Guzmán y Pimentel, prince of Olivares and the prominent minister and favourite of king Philip IV, set up the *Colegio Imperial* in 1625, which was supposed to be one of the ways of improving the level of general education and military qualifications of the military social elites, by breaking the sequence of the major failures that the state had to deal with²⁷. Most of these initiatives, whose

²⁵ M. Howard, *op. cit.*, p. 85.

²⁶ *Military Education: Past, Present, Future*, eds. G. Kennedy, G.C. Kennedy, K. Nilsen, Westport 2002, p. 4.

²⁷ J.H. Elliott, *Richelieu and Olivares*, Cambridge 1989, p. 133; F. González de León, *The Road to Rocroi: Class, Culture and Command in the Spanish Army of Flanders, 1567–1659*, Leiden–Boston 2009, p. 150.

overall number totalled a few dozens, did not stand the test of time and died away naturally in the aftermath of the death of their benefactors, or for other reasons that frequently went down to financing issues. It has to be emphasised that in a vast majority of cases, despite having been given such names as Knight Academies or War and Knight Academies, they were not profiled to offer a strictly military education. They were rather focused on enhancing the level of education of the higher social strata, acting as an equivalent of colleges offering a certain military rite and run by the Jesuits in catholic countries, and in the areas dominated by the Protestants – by lay teachers. In the strictly civil schools, dedicated to young people who came from more well-off families, several subjects were taught that were regarded as overtly military, such as e.g. geometry, or architecture. On the whole, one can admit, however, that from the social and cultural point of view, these experiments were premature, just like the far too weak level of centralisation of states and their fiscal capacities, which, in turn, translated into their inability to maintain a number of relatively costly institutions that did not yield any quantifiable results in a foreseeable time perspective. Besides, at that point, there had still not been a commonly accepted intellectual justification for the functioning of such institutions. In order for the system of military education to transform, the armies themselves had to undergo change, and this, in turn, was the end result of the evolution of the states that were forming and maintaining them.

The officer of the industrial age

One hundred years later, the state had at its disposal an array of much larger possibilities. However, despite the ongoing changes, in the majority of academies – apart from practical classes such as fencing, horse-riding and military drill – there was still a discernible domination of subjects that were useful mostly to military architects and artillerymen: maths, geometry, or cartography, to name but a few. The tactic at a level that was needed by a junior officer was regarded rather as something practical, acquired only after one was assigned to a regiment. Leadership, in turn, was seen as a skill, or rather as an inborn faculty that stemmed from the appurtenance to a given social class. As far as philosophy itself was concerned, or the core of military education, the changes were relatively insignificant.

Against this backdrop, the Prussian system stood out in a major way, as it was commonly regarded as “perfectly organised, draconian, and effective”²⁸. It offered education not only to military commanders, but also to administrators and gestors, thus serving the grand objectives of the state administration. Paradoxically, it was the rulers of absolutist Prussia who seemed to have realised that the spreading ideas of the Enlightenment (understood by them, Catherine II, Maria Theresa, or Joseph II as the eulogy of the enlightened absolutism), which laid the foundations for creating a more united ethnical and linguistic community that was gradually turning into a nation as understood these days, influenced the way in which education was regarded as such – especially military education. This tendency was

²⁸ J. Child, *Armies and Warfare in Europe, 1648–1789*, Manchester 1982, pp. 91–93.

impeccably epitomised by the Viennese erudite by the name of Joseph von Sonnenfels, who as early as in 1771 – i.e. before the French Revolution, which convulsed Europe’s foundations – wrote: “[...] A Greek man or a Roman brought his son up not merely for his own family. He was also raising and moulding a citizen of the republic. The young man in question would quite early learn about the virtues of his homeland and get used to taking note of its perfect nature, something which other states were clearly lacking in. It was obvious that he was deeply moved by such perfection, and this was indeed an edifying experience for him”²⁹. The Prussian kings, together with the military elite that they had shaped, were of all the states of the then Europe closest to attaining the educational ideal that had been laid out by Sonnenfels.

It was in fact the Prussian models – which at that time were deemed the best that one could relate to – that lay at the heart of the foundation of the Nobles’ Academy of the Corps of Cadets in 1765, commonly referred to as the School of Chivalry. In February 1766, by virtue of the king’s order, the Royal Cadet Company merged with the Artillery Cadets Company into a uniform entity by the name of Royal Corps of Cadets. The academy was sustained from the financial resources originating from the state treasury, as set out by the relevant resolution of the Sejm adopted in 1766, which for its functioning allocated 400,000 Polish zlotys per annum from the crown treasury, and 200,000 from the Lithuanian treasury. The goal of the academy was to prepare the youth for military service, and civil public duties. The overriding idea behind its foundation was steeped in the firm belief that the entire society was to be educated through the education of individuals³⁰.

The assumptions mentioned above concerned the preparation of a junior officer, and, as a matter of fact, a certain pattern of forming him rather than educating to allow him to take up the first commanding position. As regards the higher level of military actions, the dominating belief was based on the premise that waging a war was possible thanks to the application of a closed set of rules and principles – some kind of specific military chess played with the use of geometrical methods on the battle field, marked by geography, and driven by logistics. Acquiring these rules and the ability to use them in practice was, according to many senior-ranking officers of those times, more important than the talent to command³¹. Such a mechanistic approach was obviously convenient and did not stray away from the engineering, geometrical and architectural intellectual basis that lay at the foundations of the education model of an officer. It also did away with the need for excessive

²⁹ J. von Sonnenfels, *Über die Liebe des Vaterlandes*, Vienna 1771 [reprint 2018], p. 24.

³⁰ This issue has been discussed at length in the publication of the Office for Analyses and Documentation – Team for Analyses and Thematic Studies, *Dzieje Szkoły Rycerskiej – Korpusu Kadetów w latach 1765–1794*, Warszawa 2015.

³¹ Such an opinion was voiced, among others, by the British general Henry Humphrey Evans Lloyd in his works entitled *The History of the Late War in Germany between the King of Prussia and the Empress of Germany and her Allies*, published in 1766, especially in the part added in 1781 to the second edition titled *Reflections on the Principles of the Art of War* (the author of this paper has referred to the American edition: Lebanon 2018). Lloyd’s views were essentially at the height of the manner in which war was conceived of during the Enlightenment, which was based on the general conviction that human actions/behaviour is rational and foreseeable both in relation to the individuals and to large communities.

creativity; yet it was intellectually shallow and sterile, though adapted to the social and economic reality of the time.

The demise of this concept came with the French Revolution and the great hecatomb of the Old Continent, originally referred to as the wars with revolutionary France, and later as the Napoleonic Wars. Although the Congress of Vienna had seemingly restored the order going back to before 1789, actually Europe at that time was profoundly different. However, despite the fact that the idea of the Concert of Europe³² was restored as the basic element of shaping international reality, it was impossible to undo the far-reaching social transformations, just like the changes that had taken place within the art of war.

It was not by chance that a major consequence of the Napoleonic Wars were the fundamental works related to the theoretical dimension of war. The insightful, multidimensional social and political depiction of this phenomenon, building up on the basis for further reflections steeped in a combative attitude, was presented by the Prussian officer Carl von Clausewitz in his book entitled *On War (Vom Kriege)*³³. The Swiss officer Henri Jomini, who for many years served both in the Helvetic militia and in the French and Russian armies, focused on the secret of the Napoleonic success, looking at issues in strategy and operational art, which he labelled grand tactics. His major work was called *Summary of the Art of War (Précis de l'art de la guerre)*³⁴. Their views were subject to so many reviews and comments – though one frequently gets the impression that without a deep knowledge of the texts themselves – that any attempt of follow-up in this paper is absolutely pointless.

The period that followed the Napoleonic Wars was accompanied by an intensive growth of science, technology and a further evolution of manufacturing, which ultimately took the form of the so-called second industrial revolution. Along with the already mentioned social changes, this forced far-reaching transformations within the system of military education. The officers' layer – or rather caste – was made to open up to a whole set of environments from beyond the then traditional commanding background of the army³⁵. However, the dynamic of this process was different across countries. The technical know-how and tactical training of junior commanders had also become of greater importance. Thus, one can propose the thesis that it was indeed at that time when – to a large extent and once again under the influence of the Prussian experiences worked out by the General and erudite Gerhard Johan von Scharnhorst – the scheme was formed that lay at the basis

³² The Concert of Europe, also known as the Congress System, was a political alliance made on 20 November 1815 by Great Britain, Russia, Austria and Prussia, joined by France in 1818, and based on the idea of coordinating international politics in order to maintain European balance. Essentially, the agreement was truly anti-revolutionary and anti-liberal overtone, geared towards petrification of a system arranged and agreed by the Congress of Vienna. See: D. King, *Wiedeń 1814: jak pogromcy Napoleona, bawiąc się, ustalali kształt Europy*, translated by N. Radomski, Poznań 2009, p. 403.

³³ C. von Clausewitz, *O wojnie*, translated by A. Cichowicz, L. Koc, Warszawa 1958.

³⁴ H. Jomini, *Zarys sztuki wojennej*, translated by F. Dziedzic, Warszawa 1966.

³⁵ This gave rise to several social tensions. A noteworthy remark in this respect was made by Tadeusz Klimczyk, who argued that one of the several reasons why the German bourgeoisie so fiercely supported the growth of the Wilhelmine navy was because in the land forces the Junkers blocked the career paths of the bourgeoisie. See: T. Klimczyk, 'Hochseflotte – wielka mistyfikacja?', *Morze*, 2017, no. 8, p. 70–77.

of professional preparation of junior officers, geared towards an effective performance of his chief duties as a commanding officer³⁶. The solutions adopted in this respect in other states, despite the explicit sense of their distinctiveness, were, in fact, possibly not so much a simple replication but rather a repetition of the above mentioned model to a large extent. At this point, one needs to bear in mind that states were acting under the overwhelming pressure of time. As their economies grew, and conscription was introduced, it was possible to discern both the rising numbers of active armies and the groups of reservists. Interestingly, in 1870 only 1 in 47 adult French men and 1 in 34 German men had gone through military training; in 1914, these rates went up to 1 in 10 and 1 in 13, respectively³⁷. Without any exaggeration, one may claim that the organisation of mass production translated into the need to train officers on a mass scale as well.

The model of educating senior officers also takes its roots in Prussia, as well as from the intellectual and organisational accomplishments of Scharnhorst. Having said this, it only spread much later, mostly due to the victories of the Prussian army over Austro-Hungary in 1866, and above all over France in the years 1870–1871. At that point, the Prussian army had won the popular recognition of the most efficient and effective military instrument across Europe, whose major component rested on the skills and competences of its officers, and the role of the General Staff, whose personnel had been prepared for duty by the Prussian Staff College, also known as the Prussian War College (*Preußische Kriegsakademie*).

Conclusions

The institutionalised system of educating officers, applied extensively in most – if not all – modern states, takes its roots in the European culture of war of the industrial age, which back then was dominating on a global scale. It was moulded gradually as part of a certain set of social, economic and political circumstances that were closely related to the French Revolution, as well as the first and second industrial revolution. It was at that point when its foundations took their final shape, and on this account, any professional who these days visits the Military Academy at West Point, or the National Defence Academy in Yokosuka, does not feel a shadow of doubt about what kind of institution he or she is in. By adding certain minor changes, military systems seem to be rather satisfied with this situation. The syllabi of the courses, or the modules, are indeed subject to modifications across the different countries, and the relations between the individual blocks of subjects vary, or the levels of motivation of the cadets are shaped differently, yet the core of the system remains unchanged. Having said this, the very nature of war itself is changing so dynamically that at times it is

³⁶ In 1801, deeply shocked after the first phase of wars waged with revolutionary France, the Prussian king Frederick William III agreed to establish the *Akademie für junge Offiziere der Infanterie und Kavallerie* in Berlin. It was the academy for junior officers of the infantry and cavalry, which was later transformed into the War Academy (*Allgemeine Kriegsschule*). In 1810, it was restored by Gerhard von Scharnhorst.

³⁷ M. Van Creveld, *Dowodzenie na wojnie. Od Aleksandra do Szarona*, translated by J. Tomczak, Warszawa 2014, p. 202.

impossible to grasp. This issue has been delved into at length in the literature of the subject, and at this point there is no need to elaborate on it. Therefore, the author of this paper wishes only to admit that on one pole, we can discern a certain renaissance of tribal wars, waged with the most primitive methods and tools by means of a ruthless exploitation of the local peoples, and on the other pole, there are actions that rest on the state-of-the-art technologies and accomplishments of modern science, which offer some sort of feedback between the information-based reality and the outstandingly effective techniques of social manipulation. The area that lies between these extremes is filled by indeterminacy and unpredictability. So, against the backdrop of the circumstances outlined above, can an officer who has been formed by a system whose mental roots go back to the grand century of progress, steam and electricity be effective on the battle field? It is indeed high time this question was pondered unconditionally in the public domain. Its answer, but also the actions taken as a result of getting it, will have a major impact on a lot of issues to come.

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Edukacja wojskowa w zachodniej kulturze wojny – refleksje o genezie i pytanie o przyszłość systemu **Streszczenie**

Zinstytucjonalizowana edukacja wojskowa jest na przestrzeni dziejów naszego kontynentu zjawiskiem relatywnie młodym. W postaci, która doprowadziła ją do kształtu obecnego, powstała około 200–250 lat temu. Było to konsekwencją głębokich zmian w strukturze społeczeństw, a także daleko idących przeobrażeń kulturowych, wpływających pośrednio i bezpośrednio na charakter, rolę, funkcję, zadania i kompetencje państw. Autor przedstawia rys historyczny edukacji wojskowej od czasów najdawniejszych po okres uzyskiwania przez armię instytucjonalnej, protospółczesnej dojrzałości. Szczególną uwagę zwraca na zależność między kulturowo-społecznymi uwarunkowaniami działania państwa posiadającego armię a sposobami wyposażania kadry dowódczej w niezbędne kompetencje.

Słowa kluczowe: historia, wojna, armia, Europa, edukacja wojskowa

Military Education in the Western Culture of War: Reflections on the Origins, and the Question on the Future of the System **Abstract**

Institutionalised military education is a relatively recent phenomenon against the backdrop of the long and complex history of our continent. It began approximately 200–250 years ago in the form that has led it to its current shape. This was the effect of the profound changes that reshaped the structure of societies, and triggered a number of far-reaching cultural transformations that have had both a direct and an indirect impact on the character, role, function, tasks and competences of states. This paper presents

a historical overview of military education since ancient times up to the period when the army developed its institutional proto-modern maturity. Particular emphasis has been placed on the connections and correlations between the cultural and/or social setting of a state which has its own defence force and the ways of equipping the commanding military staff with the necessary skills and competences.

Key words: history, war, army, Europe, military education

*Militärische Bildung in der westlichen Kultur des Krieges.
Gedanken über Ursprung und Frage nach der Zukunft
des Systems*

Zusammenfassung

Institutionalisierte militärische Bildung ist im Lauf der Geschichte unseres Kontinents eine relativ junges Phänomen. In der Form, welche sie Entwicklung bis zur gegenwärtigen Form geführt hat, ist sie vor ca. 200–250 Jahre entstanden. Es war die Folge tiefer Änderungen in der Struktur der Gesellschaften, als auch der weitgehenden Kulturumwandlungen, die einen unmittelbaren Einfluss auf den Charakter, Rolle, Funktion, Aufgaben und Kompetenzen der Staaten hatten. Der Autor stellt einen historischen Überblick über die militärische Bildung seit den frühesten Zeiten bis zur Zeit, als die Armee die institutionelle, protomodern Reife bekam. Besondere Aufmerksamkeit zieht die Abhängigkeit zwischen den kulturell – sozialen Gegebenheiten für die Tätigkeiten eines die Armee besitzenden Staates und den Arten der Ausstattung mit notwendigen Kompetenzen der Führungskräfte.

Schlüsselwörter: Geschichte, Krieg, Armee, Europa, militärische Bildung

*Военное образование в западной военной культуре –
размышления о происхождении
и вопросы о будущем системы*

Резюме

В истории европейского континента институционализированное, военное образование является относительно новым явлением. В том виде, в котором военное образование существует сегодня, оно сформировалось около 200–250 лет назад. Это было следствием глубоких изменений в структуре обществ, а также фундаментальных культурных преобразований, косвенно и прямо влияющих на характер, роль, функцию, задачи и компетенции государств. В статье представлен исторический очерк военного образования начиная с древних времен и заканчивая периодом приобретения армией институциональной, современной формы. Особое внимание уделено взаимосвязям между культурно-социальными условиями действий государства, обладающего армией, и способами предоставления необходимых профессиональных компетенций командному составу.

Ключевые слова: история, война, армия, Европа, военное образование