



The 6th International Scientific Conference
**“DEFENSE RESOURCES MANAGEMENT
IN THE 21st CENTURY”**
Braşov, December 02-03, 2011



HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT IN THE GERMAN FEDERAL ARMY (BUNDESWEHR)

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Abstract:

With its 320 thousand civilian and military employees, federal army represents one of the largest German employers. The German Armed Forces offers a wide range of varied and interesting professions and future careers for the military personnel.

Key words: management, policies, human resources, career, military profession, recruitment, selection.

1. Introduction

According to the basic military structure, federal army has primarily a technical orientation. What makes the federal army powerful is the people, the military personnel, men and women of the armed forces. Based on internal management concept and the principle of citizen in a uniform, federal army professes a culture of enterprise, at contemporary standards. Thus, it provides each serviceman the possibility to involve himself actively and responsibly. The armed forces need young people who are able to take responsibilities in an autonomous way.

To fulfill its tasks, the federal army is divided into armed forces and civil administration.

The armed forces include five military domains, as follows:

- Land forces;
- Air Force;
- Navy;
- Central Health Centre;
- The Armed Forces Base.

Information about civil defense administration are found in the brochure publication “*Federal Army Administration as an employer*” [1].

2. The Human Resources Recruitment and Selection System of German Federal Army

In the German Federal Army, the work of human resources is carried out independently of the control act.

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Personnel policies are developed in the Human Resources Headquarters of the Federal Ministry of Defense and the management at the level of subordinate structures. Personnel records, personnel file processing, the transfer, the deployment, sending to courses, are centralized within the personnel structure that is responsible for that particular staff category. Personnel management structures report directly to the central structure.

Individual career management is performed as follows [2]:

- In the personnel office at the unit level, for conscripts, professional soldiers and lower rank NCOs;
- Within the personnel structure responsible for NCOs from that particular category of armed forces, for higher rank NCOs;
- Within the personnel structure responsible for officers, for all Federal Army officers, except for those classified by function in the Federal Ministry of Defense;
- Within the Staff Headquarters, for officers with the rank of colonel, employed in the Federal Ministry of Defense, and for generals/admirals, too. Personnel structures of German Federal Army are:
- *Personal, Sozial und Zentral Angelegenheiten (PZS)* represents the personnel central structure, situated within the Federal Ministry of Defense. It is responsible for the draft of personnel policies and for management of staff officers with the rank of colonel and of generals. Livestock: about 300 persons (officers, NCOs and civilians).
- *Personalamt der Bundeswehr* represents the personnel structure responsible for the management of staff officers up to the rank of colonel. It directly reports to the personnel central structure and subordinates the Officer Selection and Orientation Center. Livestock: about 350 persons (the Officer Selection and Orientation Center inclusively).
- *Stammdienststelle des Heeres* represents the personnel structure responsible for the management of Land Forces NCOs and of professional servicemen from the Medical service, of the three Armed Forces categories. On the command line it reports to the Land Forces Staff but on the specialized line it is subordinated to the Staff Central Structure. Livestock: about 530 persons.
- *Stammdienststelle der Luftwaffe* represents the personnel structure responsible for the Air Force NCOs management. Livestock: 250-300 persons.
- *Stammdienststelle der Marine* represents the personnel structure responsible for Naval Forces NCOs management. Livestock: 250-300 persons.

The more mobile a serviceman is (accepts to be moved onto several positions, even on the same level), he is considered to have gained more experience from distinct fields of activity, the more chances of career promotion he has. As a rule, the personnel position switch is aimed at every 4 years.

For each category of armed forces there is an education structure responsible for developing the education curricula and for the management of all training institutions of that particular armed forces category.

3. Military Career Management

3.1 Recruitment, selection and personnel training

Recruitment, selection and personnel training for each armed forces category is characterized by:

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a) Conscripts who perform compulsory military service:

- Recruited and incorporated by Regional Military Centers;
- The military service lasts for 9 months.

b) Conscripts who perform extended military service:

- come from conscripts who sign a contract for another 14 months (according to the law they can work in the army for 23 months, while the employer retains his working place);
- occupy conscripts positions, they are promoted to a higher rank without changing position, according to assessments and funds made available;
- are recruited for this category, conscripts who require it in a written form, if they receive a favorable characterization from the commander and in case there are positions suitable for them in the state of organization;
- from the moment they exceed 9 months of compulsory training, they receive a salary.

c) Professional Enlisted:

- They are servicemen with a 4 year contract (exceptions are for 8 years);
- They come from the conscripts who request it after the end of the specialized military training (after the first 6 months);
- When the contract expires they benefit of retraining;
- The military personnel that occupy special (bus drivers, long vehicle transport, flammable materials, military technique maintenance), have a maximum period contract;
- They receive salary according to their rank; they are promoted in rank without changing positions.

d) Junior rank NCOs (the first 2 ranks of the same category of personnel):

They are soldiers engaged under contract on a *limited period of 4, 8 or 12 years, as follows:*

- They are servicemen engaged in the so-called “special general service” because they are specialists in a certain proper civilian field;
- They come from conscripts, who perform the compulsory military service and from among the young, selected by the NCOs Regional Military Selection and Orientation Centers;
- They receive the military rank according to their civilian training (for example a high school graduate with diploma, who chooses this career is enrolled directly as a conscript with the rank of sergeant);
- After the first 6 months of military training, it is to follow the training within an NCOs School (for 3 months);
- Depending on education and training they have when they join the army, they receive the preparatory civilian training (lasting up to 21 months);
- They occupy positions in the military hierarchy, similar to those of professional rankers: staff, logistics, supply, cooks, drivers, transport, machinery and armament maintenance, signal officer, computer operators;
- cannot be assigned to positions within the military command of conscripts (e.g. squad leader) but only to positions of aid instructor (foreman in training centers);
- they can choose to change their career;
- when the contract expires they benefit of retraining.

e) NCOs with senior ranks:

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- They are found among the warrant officers;
- They come both from conscripts, who perform compulsory military service, and from the young people, selected NCOs Regional Military Selection and Orientation Centers;
- The staff management of this personnel category is run within the Staff Structure of the Force Category;
- Their training lasts for 3 years;
- After 3 years they receive the rank of warrant officers Class 2 and are employed as squad and crew leaders;
- According to their education and training they have when they join the army, they benefit of civilian training measures (lasting up to 9 months);
- Positions they may occupy: squad leader, platoon commander, company warrant officer Class 2, staff NCO for all echelons;
- They may choose to change their career: joining the specialized military career, the professionals, the officer staff;
- when the contract expires they benefit of retraining.

For this military category 5 ranks are provided: Warrant Officer Class 2, Warrant Officer Class 1, Master Sergeant, Staff Sergeant, Sergeant Major.

Career development:

- after the first 3 years of training, they receive the rank of Warrant Officers and are employed in the position;
- the promotion to the rank of Warrant Officer Class 1 usually happens after 2 years of military service (minimum 1 year);
- the promotion to the rank of Master Sergeant happens after 3 years of military service as Warrant Officer Class 1 (minimum 1 year);
- the promotion to the rank of Staff Sergeant happens after 16 years of service as Warrant Officer, no matter the last rank military service period;
- the promotion to the rank of Sergeant Major may happen after 1 year of military service into the former rank but it is conditioned by the number of available positions.

No matter the career development, all NCOs (military professionals) have the chance to be promoted to the last rank provided by that particular category of personnel.

f) Officers:

- They come from conscripts, enlisted professionals, NCOs and young people, selected by Officers` Selection and Orientation Centers;
- The management of this category of personnel is done centralized by the Officer Staff Department;
- their training lasts for 3 years;
- after 3 years they receive the rank of lieutenant and are appointed into positions of platoon commander;
- in the beginning of their career all of them are in troop service and are servicemen employed on contract basis;
- after 39 months, military service as platoon commander, they can attend higher civilian university courses of a for 3-4 years;
- university studies are not compulsory for officers;

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- they may choose to change their career: the change to specialized military career, to professional army, or they may remain in the troops service, and after the contract expires they may retire;
- when the contract expires, those who belong to this category benefit of retraining;
- the rank of staff captain is only for specialized military officers.

3.2 Types of career

According to personnel categories and the military existent relationships, the following types of career are distinguished in the German Army [3]:

- *career for the enlisted*: conscripts (after the first 3 months), conscripts with extended contract, enlisted professionals (only servicemen by contract);
- *career from the specialized general service*: NCOs with junior ranks (Sergeant, Staff-Sergeant);
- *career from troop service*:
 - NCOs with junior ranks that are appointed into positions as instructor assistant, apply only for servicemen by contract;
 - NCOs with senior ranks, servicemen by contract and professionals;
 - officers, servicemen by contract and professionals;
- *career from specialized military service*:
 - NCOs with senior ranks, only professionals;
 - officers, only professionals, come from the previous category or are activated from civilians; the highest rank is of staff captain.

The minimum age to be accepted among the military professionals is 24. Up to that age, all of them are servicemen by contract. (enlisted, NCOs, officers).

4. Conclusions

In the German Federal Army, the Human Resources Management is a viable system, coherent and transparent, developed and verified in time throughout tens of years of democratic experience. This system aims at providing equal chances to all categories of personnel and promotion is realized according to skills, abilities and performance [4]. By organizing staff structures, principles of career evolution and by maintaining the independence of human resources activities towards the command act, within the German army, the equality of chances was transformed from utopia into reality.

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