

## Physical education and sport at the Czech Armed Forces

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Distinguished ladies and gentlemen, dear guests and colleagues,

In my presentation I am ready to familiarize you with the system of physical education under the conditions of the process of preparation and life of the forces of the Czech Army.

At the beginning allow me to express the **fundamental statement that describes physical education and sports as a phenomenon influencing the life of both human beings and the entire society**. From this view the sound, harmonically developed individual who is capable of fulfilling, in a full-valued, meaningful and targeted manner, his or her needs, is simultaneously a significant element that fulfills the requirements whose character is society-wide. This requires a close connection of personal interests with collective interests. In the sphere that is the most challenging for us physical education personnel this relates to a positive working upon the physical and psychical aspects of human personality, through the means of physical education and sports in particular.

There is a number of human activities that, due to their character, require the need of necessary level of both the personality components. One of them is the preparation for fulfilling the task of the protection of human health and the task of defence of society against all kinds of endangerment. Among such endangerments we can classify elementary disasters, environmental catastrophes, terrorism etc. and also the war conflicts of various extent.

The experience from the war conflicts both historical and recent confirm the need to develop and maintain a high level of bodily ability and psychical resistance of human beings. The analysis of the 20<sup>th</sup> century conflicts confirms this precondition in connection with the successfulness of waging combat activities of long-term character, under various climatic conditions, in various terrain and with various quality and quantity of material outfit. It is only the versatily, profesionally, psychically and physically prepared soldier who is capable of fulfilling his or her tasks in a precise manner, with quality and and speed required, without unnecessary emotions and with minimum casulties.

Physical education is therefore integrated into the training of modern armies as a necessary component. Physical education has therefore taken a role of the means which, in a significant manner, influences the level of overall *professional preparedness* of soldiers in modern armies. The professional preparedness allow the soldiers to preserve, even under the conditions of manysided load, a high level of readiness for work and action. In the structure of this overall capability the following constituents can be found: see *Figure No. 1*

- a) military professional preparedness
- b) psychical preparedness
- c) physical preparedness

By determination, close relations are expected between individual constituents. A lowered quality of any constituent always negatively works on the overall professional preparedness of soldier. To this effect each of the mentioned constituents is **unreplaceable**.

The notion "physical preparedness" contains a complex of optimally developed and functionally interconnected physical and motion abilities. The level of physical preparedness is given by the

abilities of essential functional systems (nervous, cardiac, circulation, respiratory, emotional, etc.) and readiness of the systems for mobilisation in load situations. The level of physical preparedness is also based upon general and special physical efficiencies, motion abilities (the condition aspect) and special motion skills (the technical aspect). **Physical preparedness** is being created and improved first of all in the process of **physical preparation**, the process is influenced by the functioning of the forms of military professional and psychological preparation.

The development of the necessary qualities of the physical and psychical character in modern armies is realized in a **system of physical education**.

In the Czech Republic this system stem from the national traditions that interconnect individual physical training activities of spontaneous character and the organized activities of voluntary physical- training-and-sports organizations. Also the Army's physical education as a component in the system is based on its experience from the past and at the same time the Army utilizes the knowledge from foreign armies. And it is especially recently, when the Czech Republic and its Army prepare for the integration into the structures of NATO, that professional working contacts are being entered into. The experience gathered in the armies whose largeness is similar to the Czech Army are being analyzed and in many spheres the experience is more or less utilized in the creation of a new system of physical education and sports of our Army. We obtained much experience from partner armies of Belgium, the Netherlands, Sweden, Finland, Austria, Norway and also of France, the FRG and the USA. The experience of the members of the Czech Army who graduated from professional military courses and schools with foreign armies is also entered into the system. Several successful graduates from the RANGERS Course in the USA are also among such members. Some physical training chiefs of units worked successfully in the Czech battalion in the framework of multinational UN forces in the former Yugoslavia, IFOR and SFOR in Bosnia.

In the following part of my presentation I will try to describe the system of physical education and sports in the Czech Army.

In our Army the *system of physical education and sports* is implemented as a comprehensive, logically organized and internally integrated process. In this process further tasks are implemented in addition to the targeted and intentional working upon the development of the basic and special constituents of physical preparedness. The further tasks are connected in particular with the relaxation and health aspects that remove the influences incident to military service. The function and standing of physical education in the Czech Army are given by the physical education statute of one of the **main** subjects of the troops preparation and training. This reality is, though in our opinion in an insufficient manner, embedded in the Carrier Code and in the contents of rating the qualities of professional soldiers.

The *objective and targets of the system* are established on the basis of the above mentioned realities.

The *objective* is to contribute, through forming and perfecting the basic and special constituents of physical preparedness, to reaching high military professional preparedness of the subjects that the system works upon. The subjects are as follows:

- a) soldiers on basic service and those on alternate service
- b) regular soldiers and those on additional service
- c) civil servants

The *targets* of the system are as follows:

- 1) to develop general bodily ability and motion efficiency
- 2) to form and perfect special motion habits and skills
- 3) to positively influence physical and mental resistance
- 4) to strengthen health, the right regimen and hygienic habits
- 5) to contribute to active and purposeful utilization of spare time
- 6) to be helpful in preventing negative social pathological phenomena in the Army (alcoholism, drug and other addictions, criminality, etc.)

The *main function* of the system is to provide the optimal preconditions for reaching the objective and targets of the system.

The *basic element* which creates the proper virtue of the system is the **process itself of physical preparation**. The process is a specific kind of pedagogical process implemented under the conditions of the Army, with applying specific methods, forms and means. From a broader view, physical preparation is implemented in the form of military-service physical training and also in various forms of military professional trainings (engineers' training, tactical training, airborne troops' training, etc.) including the application of forms, methods and means of psychological preparation.

In the process of physical preparation, forming intentionally the individual elements in the structure of physical preparedness of soldiers takes place, and namely the following elements are being formed:

- 1) **motion abilities**
- 2) **special motion skills**
- 3) **physical resistance**
- 4) **psychical control mechanisms**

Three constituents create the structure of physical education and sports in the Czech Army: see *Figure No. 2*

1) **Military-Service Physical Training** - is the main constituent of the system of physical education in the Czech Army. Within the structure of the constituent a physical training process runs which aims at the fulfillment of the objective and targets of the entire system. This physical training process can be characterized by the intentional working upon the development of basic and special physical and psychical abilities and habits as the precondition for **successful conduct of action, regeneration of power and strengthening health**.

The contents of the military-service physical training is implemented through a physical training process organized and directed by commanders and professional physical training

personnel. The process runs mostly during the time of routine and in justified cases, also outside that time.

The military-service physical training contains two **constituents** in its structure:

- a) **physical preparation**
- b) **selected physical education**

**Physical preparation** is one of the **main kinds of trainings** for soldiers. *Basic physical training* and *special physical training* are integrated into its structure.

Commanders, in an enumerative manner, can be ordered to ensure the performance of physical preparation during working hours for duration and individual subjects as follows:

- soldiers on basic or alternate service - three hours of exercise per one week
- regular soldiers or those on additional service - per one week, four hours of exercise, or six hours of exercise for flying personnel, Military Police and reconnaissance units
- selected civil servants - four hours of exercise per one week

Physical preparation at military schools is held in the same count of hours as with regular soldiers and within the **subject "physical education"** in accordance with an essential study documentation corresponding to a given type of school.

The *basic physical training* covers the sphere of compulsory service-activities. The contents of basic physical training are such physical training activities that work upon the general development and maintenance of bodily capability, health and psychical resistance of individuals. The activities develop the basic motion abilities (perseverance, strength, speed, mobility and dexterity) and elementary motion skills and habits.

The *special physical training* in its meaning relates to the process of basic physical training. The special physical training has been a new element in the system of physical education in the Czech Army since 1994. The training has a large motivation charge influencing the quality of training of individuals. The rehearsal of special activities and skills has thus come nearer to the needs of troops, in the preparation of special units in particular.

**The target of special physical training** is to generate and develop the special constituents of physical preparedness. This means:

- to purposefully develop and strengthen the individual motion abilities
- to create and develop special motion skills and habits
- to strengthen physical resistance
- to form psychical control mechanisms

The process of special physical training ensures an entirely purposeful formation of motion abilities and skills incident to the professional specialization of the members of the Army and reaching up to their **extreme** physical and psychical strengths.

The **contents** is a set of exercises of both elementary and complex character that are proper to the motoric manifestations of soldiers in a real activity, action in particular. The special physical training process by decision of commanders and professional physical training personnel can contain the following activities:

- **overcoming artificial and natural obstacles**
- **movements (movements by march route, ski movements, vessel movements)**

- military practical swimming
- self-defence and fighting at close quarters (MUSADO)
- military practical climbing and overcoming extreme terrains
- special physical preparation of flying personnel
- acquiring skills and habits for survival under extreme conditions in both summer and winter

Because the special physical training process through both meaning and contents is closely related to the process of basic physical training, in practice an interlacing of both the types of training occurs, however with a time lag in the starting of the special process. The planning documents orientated toward the contents of physical preparation and the **programmes of preparation** for individual kinds of forces. A requirement for proportional shares of basic and special physical training has been respected during the processing of the general subject.

Under the conditions of the Czech Army the process of physical preparation has basically been implemented in individual **organizational forms**, this means in the following forms:

- *hours of exercise* - these are the basic organizational form of physical preparation, the counts of hours of exercise per one week are defined in an enumerative manner (as mentioned above)
- *demonstration and instructional methodical routines* - these are organized at need, target being to prepare the trainers and instructors of basic and special physical trainings
- *short-term training concentrations and courses* - these fulfill the tasks of larger character and are only designed for selected groups of soldiers
- *complex routines* - these are organized in connection with other subjects of preparation of troops (such as tactics, overcoming streams, etc.)
- *morning exercise* - this is organized before the beginning of working day and lasts 20 minutes, at present a new form is being prepared (daily condition training which lasts 30 minutes daily and is held by decision of commanders before the training day or after its ending, the contents are mostly drills orientated toward the development of perseverance and strength)
- *checking exercises* - these are orientated toward the checking of successfulness and effectiveness of the physical training process and are conducted to established standards, in disciplines and age categories

The successfulness of the physical training process working in the Czech Army is, unfortunately to a large extent, negatively influenced by the relatively low level of overall bodily ability of the young conscripts that go to the Army. This is caused by conforming to a passive, consumption style of living of the young generation which prefers the activities where the exercise of motion is entirely missing. The quoted problem fully manifests itself with conscripts and soldiers on basic service. With the students of military schools the problem can be seen as rare because it is already during the selection for study where the necessary attention is paid to the input physical efficiency that is verified during the selection procedures.

The other and important constituent of the military-service physical training is the **selected physical education**. This education enlarges the possibilities of physical training activities by particular conditions with military units and establishments and by individual motivations of the participants, which motivations are in harmony with the needs of the Army. All the organizational forms of selected physical education are organised and ensured by commanders and are considered as service activity. The goal of the activities organised in the framework of selected physical education is **to conveniently complete** the controlled motion activities exercised in physical preparation.

The **main targets** are concentrated toward satisfying the needs of individuals, strengthening health, compensating the burdens of psychical and physical character, and last but not least toward an active spending of spare time.

Both *competitive forms* and *noncompetitive forms* work in the structure of selected physical education.

In the **competitive forms** a significant role is played by the **Army Sports Games**, which are organized as progress contests in the direction from units to the Army Championship and allow to contest and measure the strength under the conditions of the Army. The contents of the Games are mostly the events of popular sports and contests with a military practical character. This is a controlled process which allows to ensure motion activities for a broad basis of participant and to make comparisons in the levels of acquired motion skills and habits, of special character in particular.

**Commander's Days of Sports** follow a similar target as the above mentioned element, however they do not have the progress nature. Their contents and orientation are prepared for the members of a certain component or territory. This organizational form allows commanders at all levels to conduct sport contests during working hours for all soldiers and civil servants.

The **short-term and long-term contests and tournament** are another possible organizational form of selected physical education of noncompetitive character. They allow to conduct the contest activities that are suitable and traditional for certain places and conditions or that respond to vogue trends and sports asked for.

The **representation of the Czech Army at international levels**, first of all in the **contests of military practical character**, is organized in a linkup to the system of sport contests organized within the Czech Army.

The participation of the Czech Army representative teams in the contests organized by the International Military-Sports Committee **C.I.S.M.** has been orientated especially toward Air Pentathlon (AP) and Military Pentathlon (MP). Both the sport contests has a long tradition in democratic armies and has become a standard in the training of troops. The endeavour of the physical education personnel in the Czech Army is to introduce these contests into the structure of contests in our Army.

The **noncompetitive forms** differ from the competitive forms in especially the preferences and motivations of participants. The preferences and motivations consist in maintaining or increasing physical condition, in psychical and physical relaxation and in developing and maintaining health.

Also the activity of the **sports circles** with units belongs to the noncompetitive forms. The sports circles satisfy the needs of recreational sports in favourite activities. The sports circles are being established by commanders of units in accordance with strict principles and regulations.

**Condition and recreation stays** denote the short-time and one-shot activities that are prepared with a subject orientation and implemented in unit training and education establishments, mostly located in nature.

The **long-term movement modes** have emerged recently in connection with the introduction of the physical training diagnostics programme WELLNESS into the environment of the Czech Army. The gist of this element of physical education system is the possibility of professional evaluation of health, physical and psychical status of individuals, and on the basis of the evaluation the professionally prepared physical training personnel can design an optimum programme of motion and diet modes.

The **preventive rehabilitations (PR-I) with controlled physical education programme** that in cooperation with the VLRZ (Military Spa and Recreation Establishments) are prepared and directed by professional physical training personnel from the Army units and facilities have become an important element of selected physical education for the group of regular soldiers during the last two years. This form fulfills several important tasks that influence sound style of living of military professionals.

The project anticipates an active interest of participants in selected activities in the Military Spa and Recreation Establishments, the selected activities are controlled by professional physical training personnel. The contents of the PR-Is are motion activities performed in dependence upon season, physical training material outfit and suitable physical education facilities.

Another and recently more and more important target in the Czech Army physical education and sports system is the activities organized in the framework of **prevention and fighting against social pathological phenomena**. In the Army environment the negative phenomena connected with taking toxic narcotics and with addictions of various kinds have manifested themselves more and more.

The activities of physical education and sports play an important role in the fighting against the above mentioned negative manifestations in the life of young people, especially in the following spheres:

- ensuring active spending of spare time
- education for sound style of living
- hygiene and strengthening and developing health

2) **Top and Representative's (i.e., Czech Men's) Sport** - is orientated toward ensuring the representation of the Czech Republic by selected sportsmen who are obliged to discharge their basic military service. This sport does not have any direct influence upon the fulfillment of objectives and tasks specified in the sphere of combat preparation of soldiers. This sport is directed, organized and supported in cooperation with the Ministry of Education, Youth and Physical Education of the Czech Republic, outside the Army combat units and in accordance with special principles and instructions.



3) **Off-Duty Physical Education and Sport** - contains other physical training and sports activities in which the members of the Army are engaged during off-routine time. These activities share in the development of physical preparedness of the members of the Army. As far as motivations are concerned, these activities are based upon personal relationship of individuals to the motion activities involved, to their own health status and to their condition in general. In practice this relates to active sports activities in civil physical education associations, for instance in the Military Physical Education Units that are associated in the Union of Army's sports clubs.

The relationship of all the three constituents of physical education and sports in the Czech Army corresponds to the structure of the system of physical education and sports in the Czech Republic and copies the system in full.

The system of physical education and sports in the Czech Army and its structure has been conceptually dealt with and implemented in practice. Its full implementation and further development through completing with modern elements is limited in particular by the its level of **support**. On the basis of the knowledge acquired abroad and in available materials it can be stated that the system is at least at a level comparable with foreign armies as far as system viewpoint, methodology and personnel viewpoints are concerned. Large drawbacks and differences are in the backwardness of quality, quantity and complexness of physical education facilities and in the quantity of monies put in the sphere of the physical aspect of human personality. This to a large extent is given by the different grasping and attitude of commanders and military economists toward the importance of physical education in general. From this it follows that the quality of physical education process is largely influenced by the *level of support* for the quality. The following factors create the support:

- the elements of commander and expert control
- methodological support
- the level of education of commanders and physical education personnel at all levels
- financial and material-operational support
- sanitary support
- scientific and research support
- legislation support

Military-service physical training is commander supported as one of the main subjects of training and life of soldiers of all categories.

The physical training process is controlled along both commander way and expert way at both horizontal level and vertical level created as follows:

- commanders at lower levels (platoon, company)
- commanders at higher levels (brigade, kind of forces)
- professional physical-training chiefs of units and teachers of physical education at military schools
- special physical-training instructors
- instructors for: morning exercises, hours of exercise of physical preparation and sports activities performed in spare time

In the structure of the Army, the functions of **physical training chiefs** are planned at the General Staff and with all the headquarters of kinds of forces, brigades, important units and



establishments and at military schools. The chiefs are being prepared and trained at Faculty of Physical Education and Sport of Charles University in Prague.

The tasks that are fulfilled by physical training chiefs are concentrated especially toward the following activities:

- to influence the planning of the process of physical training with units and regiments and at military schools
- to organize and professionally direct all the forms of physical education
- to direct preventive rehabilitations with physical training programmes
- the training and methodical work activities orientated especially toward the commanders at the lowest levels, and the preparation of instructors for basic and special physical trainings
- to influence and direct the active spending of spare time, such spending is targeted at the prevention of social pathological phenomena
- care of physical training material
- to organize the checking activities in physical education
- to direct hours of exercise of sanitary physical education
- to design the contents, organization and means of motion mode of soldiers

The basic **methodical preparation of commanders** is conducted during their study at military schools. An important role is played here by the Military Academy Vyškov where the lowest commanders are being prepared in the sphere of conducting routines of basic and special physical trainings.

**Financial means** for physical education are provided through calculated expenses. The standards for such calculations are created in dependence upon the needs of financial support for the entire structure of physical education. However, performance of needs, to a large extent, is influenced by economic situation that expresses the quantities of monies put in the Army. In general it is possible to state that this constituent of the support for physical education is the weakest point of physical education. The necessary physical training facilities for troops are missing, financial means for lease of the facilities in civil sector and for the physical education material, for special physical training in particular, are also missing. The level of financial support therefore to a large extent negatively influences the quality and effectiveness of the physical training in the Army.

The **legislation support** is the decisive item in the military-service physical training, as this support creates legal cover and legal certainty for a successful functioning of the entire system. The legislation support is dependent upon the quality and legal strength of generally effective legislation acts created and working in society and in the Army as society's element.

In the Army the legislation support works on the following factors:

- the legal definition of the competencies and forms of training, which definition is determined by the subject and contents of physical education
- professional preparation of those who lead routines and their legal certainty in damage, loss of material, injury or death of soldiers
- the organization of training by the right methodical process
- the adherence to didactical principles
- the quality material support and performing the revisions and checking of the material support
- influencing a sound style of living of soldiers and their social insurance

At present, expressive changes in legislation in its entire broadness occur in the Czech Army. Also in the sphere of physical education such measures are being taken which respond to new targets and to the new knowledge from abroad. The Programmes of preparation of troops are overworked and new methodical aids are being created for special physical training and for other subjects. The new conditions influenced, most of all, the fundamental and main legal document for military-service physical training, the instruction, "předpis Těl-1-1". The new version is just being processed.

Dear audience, the existing system of physical education and sports in the Czech Army is capable of ensuring the requirements of the Army Headquarters laid upon the physical preparedness of the members of the Army. The system is being developed on the concept that respects the modern trends in physical education in general and that can withstand in comparison with the armies of comparable countries. If the time and content fund of the service forms of the physical training process is utilized in full, the basic requirements of bodily ability, motion efficiency, level of military practical motion skills and habits and adequate psychosomatic resistance can be ensured that are laid upon all members of the Army.

Thank you very much for your attention and allow me to wish you great success during the implementation of physical education targets in the training and life of soldiers. I believe that from now on the working and friendly contacts that have already been entered into will be developed and will lead to a further mutual recognition, understanding and tolerance and, in the end result, to the installation of permanent peace in the world.

Figure No. 1

## STRUCTURE OF THE PROFESSIONAL PREPAREDNESS OF SOLDIER

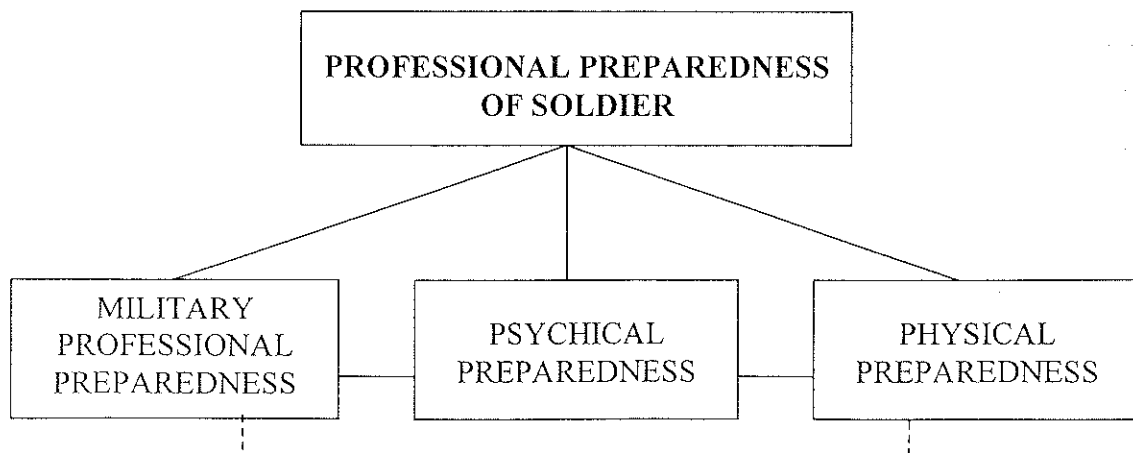


Figure No. 2

## SYSTEM OF PHYSICAL EDUCATION AND SPORTS IN THE SECTOR OF THE CZECH MINISTRY OF DEFENSE

