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POWS' WORRIES IN THE PSYCHOLOGICAL CHOICE ENVIRONMENT

The article deals with the problem of military captivity. The basic characteristics of the psychological environment of choice between life and death have been reviewed. The main roles of POWs who face the choice between death and captivity have been estimated: a person who decides his own fate and a person who makes the decision. A study of the moral anxiety of POWs concerning responsibility for their decisions has been carried out. The article deals with the psychological characteristics of worries of servicemen in conditions of capturing, transporting, interrogation, detention and exchanging of prisoners of war between different units.

Keywords: servicemans, prisoners of war, psychological choice environment, anti-terrorist operation.

Ю.М. Широков ПЕРЕЖИВАННЯ ВІЙСЬКОВОПОЛОНЕНИХ У ПСИХОЛОГІЧНОМУ ПРОСТОРИ ВИБОРУ

Стаття присвячена проблемі військового полону. Розглянуті основні характеристики психологічного середовища вибору між життям та смертю. Визначено основні ролі у яких військовослужбовці постають перед вибором між смертю та полонем: особа, яка вирішує власну долю та персону, яка приймає рішення. Проведено дослідження моральних переживань військовополонених, пов'язаних з відповідальністю за прийняті рішення. У статті розглянуті психологічні особливості переживань військовослужбовців в умовах захоплення, транспортування, допиту, утримання та обміну військовополонених різними підрозділами.

Ключові слова: військовослужбовці, військовополонені, психологічний простір вибору, антитерористична операція.

Ю.Н. Широков ПЕРЕЖИВАНИЯ ВОЕННОПЛЕННЫХ В ПСИХОЛОГИЧЕСКОМ ПРОСТРАНСТВЕ ВЫБОРА

Статья посвящена проблеме военного плена. Рассмотрены основные характеристики психологического среды выбора между жизнью и смертью. Определены основные роли в которых военнослужащие стоят перед выбором между смертью и пленом: лицо, решает свою судьбу и лицо, принимающее решение. Прове-

дено исследование нравственных переживаний военнопленных, связанных с ответственностью за принимаемые решения. В статье рассмотрены психологические особенности переживаний военнослужащих в условиях захвата, транспортировки, допроса, содержание и обмена военнопленных различными подразделениями.

Ключевые слова: военнослужащие, военнопленные, психологическое пространство выбора, антитеррористическая операция.

Formulation of the problem.

In recent years, the problem of military captivity attracted attention of researchers in various fields of scientific studies. This issue is relevant today for the Armed Forces of Ukraine, which are actively involved in anti-terrorist operations in the eastern part of the country. According to the official data, more than three thousand prisoners who were in the territory of self-proclaimed republics, were released since the beginning of the conflict in Donbas region, but more than 100 soldiers are still being held captive today [1].

Questions of setting the captivity environment in modern warfare remain insufficiently explored. According to the paradigm of research, which is scheduled by the military science, in most cases a POW appears to be only a statistical unit, subject or victim of war. The question of the individual soldier experiences in captivity is not paid enough attention to [2].

In K. Pahalyuk's opinion, the purpose of capturing, institutional environment, as well as detention regime, health, food and forced labor, make up captivity environment, which is characteristic for specific wars [3]. We believe that during the capturing of a soldier an institutional environment of decision-making concerning prevalence of life to death is formed, which creates a psychological choice environment and leaves negative impact on the identity of those held captive.

Thus, the problem of captivity environment remains relevant today, the features of the individual experiences of POWs while in the psychological environment of choice between life and death haven't been estimated yet, which creates basis for independent research.

Objective: To distinguish the levels of POWs' emotions while in the psychological environment of choice between life and death in the zone of the antiterrorist operation based on the synthesis of theoretical and empirical data.

Research results.

Status of POW gives a soldier a chance for the preservation of life, as well as more or less humane treatment, but the history of wars shows that lives of POWs are not always preserved [4].

Most publications regarding military captivity always include descriptions of how people made a choice between life and death. Ivan Skobelev wrote in his memoirs, that when his subdivision was cut off from the bulk of the troops

in 1814: "Some of the best officers with the delicacy of every kind gave me a sense that (...) our death is inevitable, but by surrendering, we will save people who are destined to die here for no good reason and bring them back to the homeland. My heart could not agree with it, but seeing eight hundred people sentenced to death seemed very cruel and even unfair to me. Heavy sadness fell on my heart, and I confess I began to hesitate ... "[5].

In his studies of World War II O. Bartov explained Wehrmacht's raised anxiety concerning the Soviet capture by fear of revenge for the criminal policy of the German authorities in the occupied territories and ill-treatment of Soviet prisoners of war [6].

It is the fear of being in the "hands" of Soviet soldiers which explains the tendency of German soldiers to surrender to the British and Americans at the final stage of the war. Only in April 1945 alone, more than a million soldiers and officers of the Wehrmacht capitulated to the Allies. Surrendering to the allied troops was accompanied by the risk of being shot or becoming a subject to other forms of violence by Soviet troops. Typically, these murders were a spontaneous reaction to the death of Soviet military comrades and Nazi atrocities in occupied territory [7].

Giusto M.T. points out in his research that the aggression was mostly manifested on the SS soldiers, pilots, soldiers of the Russian Liberation Army ("Vlasov"). POWs were run over by tanks, thrown grenades at, left naked and shoeless to die in the cold [8].

In the modern warfare attitude to POWs is as well defined by their profession, but in a counter-terrorist operation not only professional identity of the captured soldier is important, but also the type of unit that detains him.

The survey carried out among the soldiers released from captivity (94) made it possible to define categories that perceived capture as a direct threat to life most acutely. Respondents had to choose among categories of pilots, artillerymen, tankmen, paratroopers, scouts, snipers, sappers, grenade throwers, machine gunners, artillery fire spotters, forward air controllers, and volunteer military units, those who are most in most danger if captured. According to the respondents the most acute threat to life in captivity is perceived by snipers (94,6%), volunteer military units (80,9%), scouts (76,6%), paratroopers (54,3%) and pilots (42,6%) who are hardly ever exchanged, besides, 100% of respondents indicated that under certain circumstances (difficulties with the convoy, getting captured by mercenaries or reconnaissance and sabotage groups) there is a direct threat to life for any soldier, regardless of category.

In addition, in terms of anti-terrorist operation, modern POWs can be divided into three types:

1. The military captivity of psychological type "military unit" (76,5% of respondents), which is staffed by soldiers of the army of neighboring countries,

and is characterized by capture of prisoners to stop resistance and display of force, detention camps for prisoners of war, beatings during interviews and attempts to persuade to provocation, cooperation and joining the enemy side while sending troops home.

2. The military captivity of psychological type "unit of professional mercenaries" (11,7%), the specific features of which are capturing soldiers to display strength, skill and intimidation of others, keeping prisoners in pits, which reduces the number of guards and creates a possibility of quick elimination of those detained, interrogations characterized by torture, violence, murder of prisoners; during the exchange mercenaries make their exposure impossible by causing serious injury to POWs.

3. The military captivity of psychological type "gang" (11,7%), which is formed by representatives of criminal elements and local residents, and is characterized by gaining profit and information being the main goal of capturing, keeping prisoners mainly in the chamber-type premises, humiliation and violence against prisoners during interrogation, shooting videos of the process and further blackmailing, and a sudden change in relation to prisoners after receiving guarantees of buyout or agreements on the exchange.

Thus, the decision in the psychological choice environment is influenced not only by the category which the soldier belongs to, but also by the kind of unit that tries to capture him.

That's why the situation of military captivity, depending on the category which a serviceman belongs to or type of unit that tries to capture him, predetermines moral component in the choice between life and death.

In the psychological choice environment such moral category as responsibility is manifested as the reverse side of the decision. Soldiers who survived captivity distinguish two roles: 1) a person who decides his own fate; 2) a person who decides for the group or unit, 30.8% of respondents indicated that being the one who decides for others strengthens moral experiences in captivity, especially when violence or torture are used against prisoners of war whose fate they had to decide. Besides, the survey among the respondents who experienced the situation of military captivity made it possible to determine the kinds of moral responsibility according to the status which the soldiers have in the psychological environment of choice between life and death (Table. 1).

In terms of anti-terrorist operation responsibility for fellow servicemen has been identified as the most significant for those who decide their own fate (71,3%) as well as for people who make decisions for the group (93,6%), this is due to horrible conditions of detention of prisoners of war in some types of units (mercenaries gang), besides, the behavior of one of the captives could be a verdict for others, just as careless information leakage could lead to serious consequences for fellow-soldiers.

Also, according to the soldiers who got captured to save their wounded comrades, this choice is explained by concern for the life of fellow-servicemen and strong emotions together with a feeling of responsibility for the fate of a person who needs help.

Table 1

Types of moral responsibility according to the status in which the soldiers are in a space of choice

№	types of responsibility	a person who decides his own fate (%)	a person who decides for the group (%)
1	responsibility for oneself	69,1	50
2	responsibility for family	36,2	56,4
3	responsibility for fellow servicemen	71,3	93,6
4	responsibility for one's country	8,5	22,3
5	responsibility for the whole world	1,1	2,1

Responsibility for oneself for the fact of having been captured is more significant for people who independently decide their future 69,1%, some were captured in a state of injury or concussion, but they point out that certain circumstances (questioning, transportation, involvement in economic activities) returned them to the psychological space of their choice periodically. As for people who made the decision, 50% of respondents indicated that they are mainly responsible for themselves, but some military men (7,4%) who had this status note that while deciding the fate of the wounded, they have nothing to be ashamed of, they saved the lives of their subordinates sacrificing themselves.

According to 56.4% of the respondents responsibility for specific actions and deeds to families and relatives, military personnel, which were held captive together, are inherent in people who make decisions for the whole group or unit. As it has been estimated by commanders, who were captured along with their units, in cases when subordinates died during torture, or became invalids after beatings, it was responsibility for the decision to surrender that became a great moral burden which affected the psyche. Anxiety before the upcoming meetings with relatives of the subordinates killed in captivity who were friends of a person that made a decision was especially important. As for the people who decide their own destiny after being captured their worries, according to 36.2%, are related to the fault of those who survived. They have noted that they felt a moral responsibility to the families of fallen comrades.

As for responsibility for the country, we can note that it is higher for officers and NCOs, regardless of whether this soldier is a person who made the decision, or the person who decided his own fate.

Such kind of responsibility as responsibility for the whole world is characteristic of only the faithful soldiers.

Thereby, the following types of moral responsibility were crucial: for people who made the decision, it was responsibility for fellow-servicemen, for family, for oneself and for the country; for those who decide their own destiny, it was responsibility for fellow-servicemen, for oneself and for their families.

According to the polled servicemen who survived captivity the weight of moral responsibility may vary in the different phases of captivity. The dynamics of these changes depends on several factors:

70,2% of the respondents are sure that in terms of having been captured by the enemy side the most severe moral worries are associated with self-made decision to surrender, the medium-level anxiety is caused by choice made forcibly under certain conditions during the war (environment, lack of ammunition, food, communication etc.), low moral worries were typical for the soldiers who were in captivity due to injury or rescuing the wounded, but they claimed that the fact of coercion possibility and even threat to life does not release them from moral responsibility;

As it has been noted by 56,4% of the soldiers who survived captivity, during the transportation the prisoners also are in the psychological choice environment, they make a choice whether they should attempt to escape or accept the fate. The degree of moral responsibility for their testimony also changes according to the decisions made, the worst worries are connected with the complete refusal of escape, attempts to escape or even considering such a possibility, such troops did not follow the route of their movement, did not count the duration of travel, speed which they were transported at, all of that became a moral burden later on. Medium-level worries are connected with the loss of time and opportunity to try to escape during transportation, the awareness of the increasing distance from the boundary of the warring sides and the stronger protection of prisoners worsened their anxiety. Low-level worries include those connected with successful attempts to escape or impossibility of such attempts, for example, serious injury, concussion, or a professional escort (binding, inability to move, blindfolding, etc.).

75,5% of respondents indicated that psychological choice environment, which was created during interrogations, also carried moral worries for the POWs. Under these circumstances, moral anxiety is associated with providing of representatives of the enemy side with information. Especially hard feelings are connected with the freewill cooperation with the enemy, or unintentional disclosure of certain evidence. The fact of hurting comrades, who are held

captive together (exposure of certain categories of snipers, machine gunners or providing personal information about their family and friends who live in the temporarily occupied territory) also adds significance to the committed actions. The medium-level worries are associated with providing of information as a result of beatings, threats and humiliation, in addition, the exposure of the comrades who are fighting on the front line was very important as well. Realization that this information could harm military personnel in case of getting captured or could be used in the enemy's information environment (uploading videos to the Internet), in terms of a choice between life and death significantly increased the moral worries of a POW.

Thus, detention of prisoners varies according to the level of anxiety: high-level worries include freewill cooperation or actions that could be interpreted as treason; medium-level worries are characterized by the forced choice of cooperation under the influence of beatings, threats and humiliation, and the low-level worries accordingly can be caused by acts committed under the influence of torture or acts of self-sacrifice.

Return from captivity can be considered as the last important phase of captivity, in other words, a POW receives a message about his exchange and further transportation to the boundary line between the warring parties and his immediate return to the unit or hospital. This stage, according to respondents, also has a gradation of anxiety connected with the return to the psychological choice environment. Thus 80.9% of soldiers who survived captivity indicate that while receiving a message concerning forwarding a soldier to the location of his troops, each POW was offered to sign an address to their comrades, confession of guilt or even give an interview, 2,1% respondents indicate that they agreed to these terms. Until the very departure POWs were being provoked, asked for cooperation and even offered to join the enemy side. The most difficult anxiety was experienced by those soldiers who "broke" before their return, their behavior is characterized by constant attempts to justify their action and prove that they behaved bravely in captivity all the time, but could not stand bullying. Medium-level moral worries are typical for soldiers who decided to cooperate with the enemy to save their lives; these worries are primarily connected with the possible liability to the laws of our country. The low level of moral anxiety has been shown among the soldiers who made the decision not to cooperate with the warring parties in the choice environment (avoided frank talks, limited information about the survivors, changed the topic of conversation to the deceased, etc.).

Thus, being in the psychological choice environment in the phase of return from captivity is characterized by varying degrees of moral worries connected with the decision on cooperation or non-cooperation.

Conclusions.

1. The psychological environment which consists of the specific features of capturing, transportation, detention, interrogation and exchange of prisoners of war, creates environment of choice between life and death.

2. Psychological choice environment is limited to making a decision which is influenced by: the category which the soldier belongs to (sniper, scout, regular serviceman), the type of unit that holds a POW captive (military division, professional mercenaries and gang)

3. Being in the psychological choice environment in the different phases of captivity is characterized by different levels of moral worries connected with the role which the soldier makes a choice in (a person who decides his own fate and a person who makes the decision for a group or division) and cooperation or refusal to cooperate with the enemy.

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