

The Role of the “Rudolf Perešin” Training Center in the Military and Defense Segment

Melita Boltužić

Abstract

Military training is carried out within the military system with the aim of acquiring knowledge and achieving adequate skills of its members. Active military personnel must be highly trained in order to transfer their knowledge to their trainees who have a high volume of work on military assets. The complexity of the work is constantly changing and challenges can only be overcome through lifelong learning. The focus of the work is the presentation of military training with an emphasis on the implementation of training, specifically in the Training Center “Rudolf Perešin” as a unit within the Croatian Air Force. The key programs and trainings that active military personnel are trained as part of the Training Center were presented. The work of the teaching staff, their abilities and characteristics is presented. The goal of the work is to raise awareness of the importance of training active military personnel.

Keywords

military education, training, instruction, active military personnel, methodology, didactics

Introduction

Military training is a process based on the education, training and instruction of members of the military system in order to improve and perfect it in all areas of activity. The mission of military training is to develop the intellectual, mental, physical and professional abilities and skills of active military personnel. Military training, through the process of training and educating of members, enables solutions to the challenges they face. Its goal is to manage crisis situations in order to bring people's living conditions and safety to the highest possible level. Military education is fundamental for every member of the Armed Forces, while training is a form of education in a specific field. Instruction defines a member for the implementation of specific tasks, which will be discussed in the following text.

The first part of the paper discusses the history of military training and mentions the Homeland War, which accelerated the laying of the foundations for military training in Croatia. The second part of the paper explains the types of training of active military personnel. Later, concrete examples of training in the Croatian Air Force - a branch of the Armed Forces of Croatia - are presented. The continuation of the work brings the very core of the work, i.e. the work of the Training Center "Rudolf Perešin", the forms of teaching and its implementation, lecturers and their contribution to the entire military system.

History of military education

Military education reached its peak between the two world wars, while in Croatia it was experienced at the beginning of the Homeland War due to the challenges faced by members of the military system. The first foundations were laid in 1991 in Kumrovac, Varaždin, Zagreb and Samobor with the implementation of training courses. The initial form of military training was introduced with the establishment of the Military Officer Center in 1992. In the same year, the training of the first generation of the Officers' School began, and the year after the first generation of the Non-Commissioned Officers' School. Following this, the Naval Training Center in Split for

members of the Croatian Navy and the Aviation Training Center in Zadar for members of the Croatian Air Force and Air Defense are being established. Buklijaš (2005:p.102) states that "it is possible to better train officers for their functional duties in units with better organization, greater involvement of teachers and students, revision of existing and creation of new curriculum, linking theoretical teaching with practical-applied forms of training ."

Military education, training and instruction

The military system is an organization that functions on the principle of hierarchy. The character traits of every soldier, non-commissioned officer and officer are born, but it is the education system that shapes individuals ready to think critically with the skills to meet challenges in peace and war. According to Anić (2003), "competence represents a recognized expertise, that is, an ability that someone possesses". Competences are acquired through education and experience. Through military education, training and instruction, competences are acquired for the best possible execution of assigned tasks and challenges. These are basic and specialist military capabilities. Kozina states (2018:p.122) "how military education is carried out at the Croatian Defence Academy (CDA) "Dr. Franjo Tuđman" in Zagreb through military studies with the support of the University of Zagreb". Pursuant to the Law of Services in The Armed Forces of Croatia art 78 NN 75/15, military training is lifelong acquisition of knowledge and skills for all military personnel and is carried out in military schools. General military training, the so-called successively increasing is carried out through four levels of training for officers and non-commissioned officers. Specialist military training trains a military person to perform the duties of a certain military specialty. Military trainings are conducted within units that are specifically organized for the implementation of these activities.

According to Pastuović (2012:p.26), "education is a special form of education, narrowed down to specific, predetermined and directly applicable knowledge and motor skills of narrower transfer value". Through military training, an active military person acquires a number of competencies necessary for performing a certain military duty. Military training provides

narrower specialization for a precisely defined field of work. According to the Law of Service in The Armed Forces of Croatia NN 73/13, 75/15, 50/16, 30/18, 125/19, dated 21. 12. 2019. "military education is a time-limited planned process of acquiring theoretical knowledge and skills in schools and other educational institutions. Unlike military education, military training is a permanent process of acquiring knowledge, skills and abilities of military personnel through education and training. Military instruction is an organized form of activity by which active military personnel are trained to carry out specific tasks". In order for an active military person to be complete, it is necessary to go through all aspects of acquiring knowledge, skills and abilities. It is a process that requires high motivation and courage, all with the aim of acquiring competencies for quality work in the service.

According to Žižak (1997:p.3), there are three basic elements of an expert's professional competence:

- "Professional knowledge that includes all knowledge acquired during education that strengthens and supports professional forms of behavior
- Professional skills that include specific cognitive, interpersonal, social and motor abilities that operationalize professional identity
- Personal potentials, i.e. personality traits, appearance, life experiences, special talents that a person uses every day in fulfilling his professional role."

In order for active military personnel to be able to think critically and have the skills and abilities to perform assigned tasks, they must complete appropriate military education, military training and military instruction.

Military training in the Croatian Air Force

Three branches operate in the Ministry of Defense of Croatia: the Croatian Army, the Croatian Navy and the Croatian Air Force (CAF). The Croatian Air Force has the following units: 91st Wing, 93rd Wing, ZMIN Battalion, Command Company and Training Center (TC).



Figure 1. The organization of the CAF

In the field of military pedagogy and andragogy, the Training Center of the Croatian Air Force “Rudolf Perešin” certainly stands out. It is a key organizational unit for the instruction of all CAF members.

History of the training center

According to the portal of the Croatian technical heritage, The training center was founded on December 15, 1992 at the “Šepurine” military base in Zadar as the CAF Aviation Training Center. The current structure, CAF Training Center “Rudolf Perešin” has been operating since January 1, 2008 in the “Colonel Mirko Vukušić” barracks in Zemunik Donji. The location of the barracks is in an extremely favorable position, just 10 km east of the center of Zadar, near the access to the A1 Zagreb-Dubrovnik highway and not far from the Gaženica Passenger Port. In the immediate vicinity is Zadar Airport, with which it shares a runway.



Figure 2. Organization of the TC

The mission of the Training Center is training and education of CAF members, i.e. cadet pilots, officers, non-commissioned officers and soldiers.

Operation of the training center

TC covers two specialty areas: aviation technical service and aviation surveillance and guidance. Training and education in the technical service are:

- theoretical parts of instruction for aircraft ZLIN 242L, PILATUS PC9, BELL 206B-III, OH-58D Kiowa Warrior, Mi-8/Mi-171Sh, AT-802, CL-415
- technical classrooms for ZLIN 242L, PILATUS PC9, BELL 206B-III, OH-58D Kiowa Warrior, Mi-8/Mi-171Sh, AT-802, CL-415
- support of CMA "Dr Franjo Tuđman" in the implementation of the specialist part of the training
- instruction for technicians in the first level of aircraft maintenance
- instruction for engineers in the first level of aircraft maintenance

- instruction of trainers
- functional instructions.

All the mentioned trainings are divided by specialties into Aircraft and engine, Instruments, radio-radar and electrical equipment of the aircraft and Aircraft armament.

Trainings and educations in the field of Aviation monitoring and guidance are:

- basic course for maintaining the FPS-117 radar
- advanced course for maintaining the FPS-117 radar
- FPS-117 radar operator course
- IDO and TPO courses in peace
- IDO and TPO courses in crises and conflicts
- communication subsystem course
- support of CDA "Dr Franjo Tuđman" in the implementation of the specialist part of the training
- functional instructions for duty.

Also, it is important to note that the TC participates in international activities through the NATO smart defense initiative - the Braad project. The courses conducted by the TC are:

- radar technique
- console masses
- process functions.

Partner countries are Bosnia and Herzegovina, North Macedonia and Montenegro.

The area in which the Center operates is wide, including instructions that are conducted on a large number of aircraft, assets, radars, consoles. It is necessary to carry out detailed and high-quality instructions, because even a minor mistake is enough to make the entire system fail.

TC actively cooperates with the University of Zagreb and Zadar. In this way, space is created for connecting academic with military knowledge, skills and abilities. Civil-military cooperation certainly contributes to strengthening the

system. According to Corum (2012:p.19), “the sixth key principle of quality military education is close cooperation between the military and civilian institutions”. Kozina (2018:p.125) states that “military education becomes a synergy of academic knowledge and military skills and abilities”.

Implementation of training and instruction

Education and training are conducted according to a predetermined plan and program in order to increase its quality. The main goal of learning is to improve and professionally train participants for further work on the means. Active military personnel who are highly trained for their work, train candidates to work on modern technologies and aircraft whose volume and complexity of work is constantly changing and strives for lifelong learning of new skills, knowledge, entrepreneurship, critical thinking. They are divided into officers and non-commissioned officers, that is, lecturers and instructors. Lecturers conduct training, and training instructors. Thus, the lecturers transfer their knowledge to the participants in the form of theoretical learning, while the instructors carry out practice in squadrons and at radar stations. Lecturers and instructors need to know the techniques and methods of teaching that will motivate the participants and raise the training to a higher level. Through motivation, we greatly influence the acquisition of competencies and their development. A motivated participant remembers more easily and quickly, and more successfully acquires new knowledge better and builds on existing knowledge. Lecturers and instructors play a major role in motivating students. Through their work, they can make classes interesting and thus encourage students to think critically, be active and motivated.

Through lifelong learning, lecturers and instructors gain experience and knowledge for successfully conducting education and training. Continuous professional development is very important for them, because by developing their competencies, they raise the entire military system to a high level. Instructors are the ones who take responsibility for the quality of the educational process. Kozina (2014:p.38-39) states “how by developing their competencies, officers encourage the quality of work, the development of

their organization and unit, and thus experience success, achievements and advancement in the service or promotion to a higher rank". Therefore, it is of great importance to work on the training of instructors so that they can properly train their trainees and the entire military system with their competencies. Only a professionally and methodically trained lecturer can guarantee the fulfillment of the goal of training and instruction. Also, an educated active military person achieves faster progress in the service and a positive contribution to his unit.

It must be emphasized that the quality of the instructions of active military personnel is also affected by the place where training is carried out. These are special cabinets equipped with teaching aids such as a blackboard, computer, projector, but also engine parts, aircraft, simulators, weapons and the like. This way of learning helps the participants to master the teaching material easier and faster because there is no dry learning that is tiring and weakens concentration and motivation. The classroom atmosphere is more pleasant, and the achievements of the participants are higher because the didactic aids and work on concrete resources give the possibility of a clearer presentation of the teaching material.

Impact of the pandemic covid-19

It is impossible not to refer to the pandemic caused by the COVID-19 virus, which caused changes in all activities. The aforementioned pandemic also had a negative impact on the education system. Every crisis brings a psychological strain on the individual, a decrease in concentration in the performance of tasks. However, in every negative situation, it is necessary to find an adequate solution as quickly as possible. By overcoming difficulties, new ways to grow and develop are found. The TC readily accepted the challenge, and classes were conducted in accordance with epidemiological measures. Interruption of training and education should not be an option because it leaves unfavorable consequences for the entire system. The most important response to the pandemic was the continued instructing of CAF members. It is a process that must be continuous and flexible so that unpredictable situations do not undermine the goal of the system. In that critical period,

teaching took place smoothly through various models such as remote work or shift work. The lecturers and instructors, as well as the participants, gave maximum engagement. The highest level of the entire military system was achieved through the complete coordination of training in military units. It is a process that requires constant upgrading and developing competencies for making adequate decisions in unpredictable situations.

Conclusion

The Homeland War stimulated the accelerated growth and development of military education and training in the Armed Forces. The military pedagogical process within the military system effectively prepares employees for top-notch work and making adequate decisions in different situations. Military training is divided into military education, training and instruction of active military personnel. In the paper, emphasis is placed on instructions and their implementation in the TC "Rudolf Perešin" - CAF unit. Due to the wide range of challenges in which aviation operates, it is necessary to carry out high-quality instructions for the employees of the Armed Forces. Instruction providers develop their competences in working with participants. They also necessarily follow the professional literature and thus upgrade their work. They also attend professional training to achieve teaching competencies such as initiative, didactics, digital competence, knowledge of foreign languages, and other knowledge and skills in teaching. In this way, the goal of the instructions is achieved - the training of the participants for quality mastering of challenges and adequate completion of tasks. Only in this way can the military system function as it should.

The aim of the work is to point out the importance of continuous growth and development of the military organization through the processes of education, training and instruction. The knowledge and abilities of members are key factors that guarantee overcoming challenges, achieving goals and further developing the system. Through the interaction of academic and military knowledge, optimal results are achieved in the training of active military personnel. The training center is a representative example because it shows how investing in active military personnel encourages the growth

and development of the individual, the success of the military organization and the maintenance of national security as a whole. From this comes the necessity of showing the way and scope of work of the Training Center, as a key link in the Croatian Air Force.

Abbreviations

CDA - CROATIAN DEFENCE ACADEMY

CAF - CROATIAN AIR FORCE

TC - TRAINING CENTER

References

Anić, V. (2003) *Veliki rječnik hrvatskog jezika*. Zagreb, Novi Liber

Buklijaš, M. (2005) Izobrazba časnika na Časničkoj školi HVU „Petar Zrinski“ od 1994. do 1996. *Polemos*. 8, 85–103

Corum, J. C. (2012) Some key principles of multinational military education. *Connections*. XI (4).

Kozina, A. (2014) Ključne kompetencije vojnog nastavnika. In: / Matijević, M. & Žiljak, T. (eds.) *Ključne kompetencije u obrazovanju odraslih*. Zagreb, Hrvatsko andragoško društvo, 2014. str. 83-99

Kozina, A. (2018) Profesionalno vojno obrazovanje: izazovi za Oružane snage Republike Hrvatske. *Strategos* 2 (1), 119–136.

Pastuović, N. (2012) *Obrazovanje i razvoj*. Zagreb, Učiteljski fakultet Sveučilišta u Zagrebu.

Žižak, A. (1997) Elementi profesionalne kompetentnosti socijalnih pedagoga. *Kriminologija & socijalna integracija*. 5 (1-2), 1–10.

Portal hrvatske tehničke baštine. <https://tehnika.lzmk.hr/srediste-za-obuku-hrz-pzo-rudolf-peresin/> [Accessed 7th March 2023]

About the author

Captain MELITA BOLTUŽIĆ (melita54@gmail.com) is a holder of specialist degree of traffic from the Faculty of Transport and Traffic Engineering in Zagreb. She is a training officer at "Rudolf Perešin" Training Center of the Croatian Air Force. Captain Boltužić trains aircraft engines, maneuverability and aviation regulations. Her areas of interest and research are professional military education in aviation technology.

Uloga Središta za obuku „Rudolf Perešin“ u vojnome i obrambenom segmentu

Sažetak

Vojnoj obuci koja se provodi u vojnome sustavu cilj je omogućiti pripadnicima oružanih snaga stjecanje potrebnih znanja i razvoj odgovarajućih vještina. Djelatne vojne osobe moraju biti vrhunski obučene kako bi svoje znanje prenijele polaznicima obuke koji se u velikoj mjeri služe vojnim sredstvima. Složenost posla neprekidno se mijenja, a izazovi se mogu prevladati samo cjeloživotnim učenjem. U ovom je radu prikazana vojna obuka s naglaskom na provedbi obuke u Središtu za obuku „Rudolf Perešin“ kao postrojbi u sastavu Hrvatskoga ratnog zrakoplovstva. Predstavljene su najvažniji programi i obuke kojima se djelatne vojne osobe osposobljavaju u sklopu toga središta. Prikazan je rad nastavnog osoblja, njihove sposobnosti i osobine. Svrha je ovoga rada podizanje razine osviještenosti o važnosti obuke djelatnih vojnih osoba.

Ključne riječi

vojna izobrazba, obuka, nastava, djelatne vojne osobe, metodologija, didaktika