

CONTRIBUTION OF THE INTERNATIONAL MILITARY SPORT COUNCIL TO THE ORGANIZATION OF TOP SPORT EVENTS AND TO PROFESSIONAL READINESS OF SOLDIERS

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Abstract

The aim of the study is the presentation of brief history, current state and perspectives of military sport and training with the emphasis put on the role of the International Military Sport Council (CISM – Conseil International du Sport Militaire) based on the SWOT analysis. The CISM organizes various sporting events for soldiers of its 133 member countries. The ultimate goal is to contribute to world peace by uniting the Armed Forces through sport. The Military World Games are the top event. For the really young soldiers, the CISM World Cadet Games were held in 2010. Current CISM sport disciplines involve 26 sports on the world level. Among them, especially the military sports support the military training and represent a very good motivation for soldiers' developing physical performance.

Introduction

The physical training is a basic part of preparation of every soldier. Since antiquity, it has been represented by sports, which has become an important phenomenon of our time as well. The interwar boom of sporting clubs and organizations, both on the national and the international levels, institutionalized the sporting activities. The standpoint of sport performance started to be fully considered in the 1950s, when it became a prestigious issue. Most countries currently respect the still growing social importance of sports and seek for ways how to support and develop it. One of them lies also in supporting sports within the Military.

1 CISM – history and present

CISM was founded in Nice, France, on February 18, 1948. The founding countries were Belgium, France, Denmark, Luxemburg, and the Netherlands. Although these are European countries only, they have intended the organization to be a global project since the very beginning.

Desire of the troops to fight within sport competitions instead of martial fields did not represent a new idea in 1948. The first Allied Games were held right after the World War I on the basis of the initiative of General Pershing and his associates. Eighteen nations representing all five continents took part in the Games. So, in 1919, there competed 1,500 athletes in 24 sport disciplines in front of a great number of spectators in Joinville in the suburb of Paris. The idea of a sport council of the allied troops was revived after the World War II. The second Allied Games were held in Berlin in 1946. However, there were organized athletic contests only. The need of soldiers' meetings was a stronger motivation than the performance itself. In May 1946, there was founded the Sport Council of the Allied Forces and, two years later, Colonel Debrus and Major Mollet founded CISM with its global vision.

The main task of CISM is to develop friendly relations among the Armed Forces of its member countries, support physical training and sport, provide mutual technical aid, help the developing

countries in the name of friendship and solidarity, contribute to balanced and harmonic development of military staff and help the international efforts aimed at world peace. This idea is anchored in CISM motto: “Friendship through Sport”.

Since its foundation, CISM has gradually admitted countries of all continents. Its enlargement was interrupted by the Cold War. The foundation of the Warsaw Treaty and its own sport organization, i.e. the Sports Committee of Friendly Armies (SCFA), prevented CISM from gaining the global status needed for acknowledgement by the International Olympic Committee. SCFA was founded by 12 countries: Albania, Bulgaria, Hungary, Vietnam, the GDR, China, the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, Mongolia, Czechoslovakia, Poland, Rumania, and the USSR. Its motto was: “Sport for One Peaceful World”. The two organizations existed independently until the 1980s, when they started to consider potential union. The political changes of the late 1980s and particularly the fall of the Berlin Wall brought a crucial turn. On April 10 1991, representatives of the two organizations signed an agreement on their union preserving the name of CISM. This brought CISM a fast enlargement. In only four years (1991-1995), 31 new member countries joined the organization. Based on the initiative of the staff of the Department of Physical Education and Sport, the Czech Republic submitted an application for joining CISM in 1990, and on May 10, 1991, the Czechoslovak Military was adopted as the 84th member of this organization. The fast development brought CISM acknowledgement of various international institutions (for instance, it was acknowledged by the International Olympic Committee in 1994).

CISM is currently one of the largest multidisciplinary organizations worldwide, which associates soldiers of 133 member countries. Every year, it organizes approximately 20 world championships in various kinds of sports and a number of continental and regional competitions. It can currently choose from 26 sport disciplines, which are divided according to their character into following groups:

- military sports (Air Force pentathlon, Navy pentathlon, Army pentathlon, skydiving, and shooting),
- individual sports (athletics, including cross-country running and marathon, cycling, golf, yachting, skiing, modern pentathlon, orienteering, swimming, equitation, and triathlon),
- fighting sports (box, judo, fencing, taekwondo, and wrestling),
- collective sports (basketball, soccer, handball, and volleyball).

The top sport event is the Military World Games, which have been held since 1995 every fourth year, actually one year before the Summer Olympics. Besides these, there were held the Winter Military World Games for the first time in 2010 and, in the same year, also the first World Cadet Games for young soldiers – students of military schools, academies, and universities in the age of 17 – 24 years. The figures regarding the participating countries, sportsmen, and disciplines are shown in the following table.

Tab. 1 Overview of the most important sport events of CISM.

Event	Year	Place	Disciplines	Participants	Nations
1 st MWG	1995	Rome, Italy	17	4,017	93
2 nd MWG	1999	Zagreb, Croatia	20	6,734	82
3 rd MWG	2003	Catania, Italy	11	2,215	87
4 th MWG	2007	Hyderabad, India	14	4,738	101
1 st WMWG	2010	Aosta Valley, Italy	6	more than 800	43
1 st MCG	2010	Ankara, Turkey	5	more than 500	22

This year, Rio de Janeiro holds the 5th Military World Games. In advance, more than 5,000 sportsmen registered for the Games. They are to compete in 19 sport disciplines.

2 CISM and professional readiness of soldiers

CISM is the top organization of military sport in a huge number of countries. It is clear that the activities of this organization vary in different countries and are influenced by a number of factors. Nevertheless, the general principles, on which it is based, are applied more or less everywhere. Here are some of them:

- CISM observes the general rules expressed as “Mens sana in corpore sano” (A healthy mind in a healthy body) and “All men are born free and equal” (Article 1 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and Liberties based on the United States Declaration of Independence),
- CISM supports the general right of every man for sport based on his own choice,
- CISM supports its member countries in organization of maximum sport competitions based on equal opportunities, friendship, solidarity, and fair play,
- CISM develops sport through performing it on all levels and through research in the field of physical education, sport, and sport training,
- CISM cooperates with international institutions and organizations, which pursue similar goals.

Sport in the Military is a phenomenon, which must be supported by everyone who is responsible for physical readiness of soldiers. However, this presumption can be applied on a general level only. Current training of a top sportsman is specific [5] and the same applies for a soldier to a great extent as well. The goal of them both is professional readiness. As for the sportsman, this regards his specific sport, in which all features of sport training [1] are applied. The soldier focuses on his specific function and tasks flowing from his service. Professional readiness of soldiers represents efficient performance under the conditions of multilateral load (covering the spheres varying from different levels of combat and peace operations up to the help after natural disasters). The structure of professional readiness [2] is formed by military-expert, mental, and physical readiness (Fig.1).

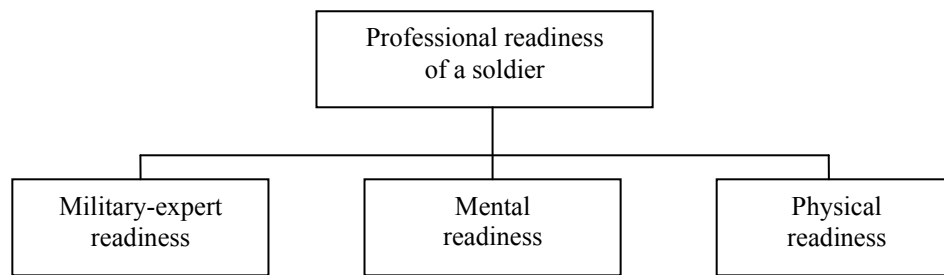


Fig. 1 Physical readiness, a part of the professional readiness of a soldier

Based on the above-mentioned overview of sports, which are implemented in CISM, it is obvious that their importance for the professional readiness varies. The most important sports are the fighting and military ones. However, also other sport disciplines (except for golf) can be used within the military training. A soldier, similarly as a top sportsman, must be prepared well, both mentally and physically, which helps him efficiently perform his duties also when in stress or discomfort. Last, but not least, he must master his professional qualification and use it well. In sport training terminology, this is called technical and tactical readiness. Air Force, Navy, and Army pentathlons are closest to the training of individual military qualifications. Based on their specifics, all these sports support development of basic motoric skills and capabilities of a soldier. Therefore, commanders usually support them. Their basic disciplines are hurdles, shooting, obstacle swimming, and running in various modifications. The latter sport disciplines have one more specific feature. Along with skydiving, these are non-Olympic sports, so they should not require as high performance as the Olympic sports. However, converse is true. Currently, when a great attention is paid to the professional training of soldiers, we can find almost professional teams engaged in these sports. Regarding the structure of the Armed Forces, it is clear that the highest representation belongs to the Army pentathlon, which is also one of the most performed sports within the CISM top events. These sports also connect the military top sport and military training.

3 Sport in the Army of the Czech Republic

Physical training and sport has been building its position within the Military and society since the establishment of the First Czechoslovak Republic in 1918. Already in the early 1920s, the Army experienced a boom of various competitions and contests. In 1920, there was founded the Military School of the Ministry of National Defense for Physical Education in Prague and, in 1921, there was founded the Military Equitation School in Hodonín, which had close ties with famous equitation schools in Italy, France, and Germany. Equitation, along with shooting and fencing, became sports, for which the Ministry of National Defense was responsible. This included also participation of soldiers in the Olympics.

During the World War II (1939 – 1945), we cannot speak about the sport in the Military, since, de facto as well as de jure, the Czechoslovak Army did not exist in the territory of the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia.

However, physical education and sport remained a part of the war life. This was shown not only in the very training of units, but also in sport competitions organized both within the units and, in case of suitable conditions, among sportsmen of the allied armies. So, for instance, in 1944, England initiated the competition of military teams fighting for the “Britannia Shield” dedicated to the memory of cobelligerent troops participating in the battle for Britain, after it had stayed alone against Germany and Italy after the fall of France. The competition disciplines were related to military training and these were as follows:

- military gun shooting,

- swimming,
- fencing,
- cross-country running on a racing circuit,
- boxing

The teams of the British RAF and Ground Army, Belgium, Czechoslovakia, France, Holland, and the United States took part in the competition. There were given points according to the standings in individual disciplines and the final sum of these points decided the ranking. Winning of this trophy showed not only the fitness of Czechoslovak soldiers, but also the good condition of the system of the Czechoslovak physical education. Military sportsmen repeated this victory once again in 1946 and in 1947, they took the second position [3]. However, further contacts were stopped by the post-February development.

The day of foundation of military top sport is considered October 1, 1948, when a special military formation called the Military Gym Club was established. In the following years, depending on the conditions within the society, this Club has been transformed many times. The last transformation led to establishment of the modern, still existing Military Sport Center of Dukla Praha.

Development of top sport in modern history of our society has been always closely connected with development in the field of physical education on one hand, and, on the other hand, dependent on political-economic development in particular. Until 1989, top sport played its vicarious, but crucial role in development and maintaining of physical performance of soldiers (and thanks to the two-year compulsory service also of the entire society). However, the political-economic changes initiated after November 1989 brought a number of changes also to military sport. Lots of reorganizations led not only to reduction in the number of sportsmen, but also in sports performed by the Military. Financially demanding sport branches as soccer or ice hockey exceeded financial capabilities of the Armed Forces. Not only these changes, but also and particularly professionalization of sport (which has formed a necessary condition for success within the top sport disciplines since the mid 20th century) have gradually decreased the influence of military sport on military readiness. Currently, this influence is more or less vicarious and the main importance lies in public representation of the Army of Czech Republic. Although following facts focus on situation in the Army of the Czech Republic, the mentioned pros and cons, opportunities and risks regard also CISM to a great extent.

The strong points of the military sport unambiguously include its successes. Since its beginning, it has been connected with development of the Olympic movement and, along with the other sport organizations and clubs, it has enjoyed a significant share in representation of our country abroad. In the history of the Summer Olympics, military sportsmen won almost one third of all medals and almost one half of all medals of the state representation at the Winter Olympics [4]. We must not forget the countless number of medals and valuable prizes won at World, Europe, or National Championships either. Another chapter has been written by successful representation of the Army of the Czech Republic at competitions organized by CISM, both on regional or world levels. Also junior sportsmen associated in youth sport centers established practically at all senior military sport centers of Dukla achieved successes. Of course, success of top military sportsmen cannot be measured by the number of won medals only. The political and economic benefit, which the Czech Republic gains through successful representation, is of much higher importance.

Military sport has been weakened by abolishment of compulsory service and transition to the fully professional Armed Forces. The development of the professional Armed Forces also led to their reduction and restriction of inner sources. Many sportsmen had to decide, between the career of a professional sportsman or a professional soldier.

In spite of lasting negative influence of many re-organizations, the military sport has to use all opportunities to attract positive attention. The interest of the mass media and sponsors in our top level athletes brings good opportunities to form a favorable profile of the professional Armed Forces in the sport area and related social life. For instance, military athletes can be seen in

uniforms at many official social events. In this way, they can significantly influence the public's attitude to the Armed Forces and the CISM membership and cooperation among the Armed Forces worldwide (for example, the "Sport for Peace" Movement).

The ongoing cuts in military budget, which, of course, also touch the sport field, make the most significant threat to the top sport in the Army of the Czech Republic, and also to CISM. Another problem lies in cuts or termination of support provided to the non-Olympic sports. Last, but not least, this regards also more and more declared and implemented priority mission of the Armed Forces, which lies in defense of the Czech Republic and participation in the missions abroad.

Conclusion

CISM became an important guarantor of development of youth physical education and sport development worldwide. It made close working ties with the International Olympic Committee, national sport federations, and all international sport authorities.

CISM is a real pioneer in the field of sport solidarity, includes projects organized in cooperation with the International Olympic Committee and other organizations, as UNESCO, the European Union, or the World Health Organization (WHO). Besides this aid, there also exists a number of bilateral support activities, which regard air transportation of sportsmen to the place of a championship, provision of training equipment, or organization of training camps for delegations from less developed countries.

At the beginning of the 21st century, still growing CISM is a clear example of general understanding, healthy and controlled development of physical activities worldwide. Also the organization of the World Cadet Games, which engaged military youth under the CISM auspices, can be perceived as a very important and well directed event.

Literature

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PŘÍSPĚVEK MEZINÁRODNÍ RADY VOJENSKÉHO SPORTU K ORGANIZOVÁNÍ VRCHOLNÝCH SPORTOVNÍCH SOUTĚŽÍ A PROFESIONÁLNÍ PŘIPRAVENOSTI VOJÁKŮ

Cílem studie založené na SWOT analýze je stručný přehled historie, zhodnocení současného stavu a perspektiva vojenského sportu a tréninku s důrazem na roli Mezinárodní rady vojenského sportu (CISM – Conceil International du Sport Militaire). CISM každoročně organizuje mnoho sportovních akcí pro svých 133 členských zemí. Rozhodujícím cílem je přispět k udržení celosvětového míru spojením ozbrojených sil prostřednictvím sportu. Vrcholnou sportovní událostí jsou Vojenské světové hry. CISM v roce 2010 poprvé pořádala pro mladé vojáky Světové hry kadetů. V současné době CISM zahrnuje 26 sportů, v nichž se soutěží na světové úrovni. Zejména vojenské sporty, které mezi ně v první řadě patří, podporují vojenský trénink a jsou jedinečnou motivací k rozvoji tělesné výkonnosti vojáků.

DER BEITRAG DES INTERNATIONALEN RATES DES MILITÄRISCHEN VEREINES ZUR ORGANISATION VON SPITZENSORTVERANSTALTUNGEN UND ZUR PROFESSIONALEN BEREITSCHAFT DER SOLDATEN

Das Ziel dieser auf einer SWOT-Analyse aufgebauten Studie ist eine kurze geschichtliche Übersicht, die Bewertung des gegenwärtigen Zustands und der Perspektive des Militärsports und des Trainings mit einem Schwerpunkt auf der Rolle des Internationalen Rates für Militärsport (CISM – Conseil International du Sport Militaire). Der CISM organisiert jedes Jahr für seine 133 Mitgliedsländer viele Veranstaltungen. Das entscheidende Ziel ist es, zur Erhaltung des Friedens auf der ganzen Welt durch die Verbindung der Streitkräfte mittels Sport beizutragen. Zu den Spitzensportereignissen gehören die Militärischen Weltspiele. Im Jahre 2010 veranstaltete der CISM zum ersten Mal die Weltspiele der Kadetten für junge Soldaten. Zurzeit umfasst der CISM 26 Sportarten, in denen die Wettbewerbe auf Weltniveau veranstaltet werden. Zu diesen zählen vor allem Militärsportarten, welche das Militärtraining unterstützen und eine einzigartige Motivation zur Entwicklung der körperlichen Leistungsfähigkeit der Soldaten bilden.

WPLYW MIĘDZYNARODOWEJ RADY SPORTU WOJSKOWEGO NA ORGANIZACJĘ WYCZYNOWYCH ROZGRYWEK SPORTOWYCH I ZAWODOWE PRZYGOTOWANIE ŻOŁNIERZY

Opracowanie oparte na analizie SWOT ma na celu krótką prezentację historii, ocenę stanu obecnego i perspektyw rozwoju sportu wojskowego i treningu z naciskiem na rolę Międzynarodowej Rady Sportu Wojskowego (CISM – Conceil International du Sport Militaire). CISM co roku organizuje wiele imprez sportowych dla swoich 133 państw członkowskich. Głównym celem jest wspomaganie utrzymania pokoju na świecie poprzez połączenie sił zbrojnych za pośrednictwem sportu. Głównym wydarzeniem sportowym są Światowe Wojskowe Igrzyska Sportowe. CISM w 2010 roku po raz pierwszy organizowała dla młodych żołnierzy Światowe Igrzyska Kadetów. Obecnie CISM obejmuje 26 sportów, w których rozgrywki organizowane są na szczeblu ogólnoswiatowym. W szczególności sporty wojskowe, które do nich w pierwszej kolejności należą, wspomagają trening wojskowy i stanowią wyjątkową okazję do rozwoju sprawności fizycznej żołnierzy.