Finabel

Modernising Recruitment and Retention Strategies
Developments in Military Employment

FINABEL
European Army Interoperability Centre

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This Food for Thought paper is a document that gives an initial reflection on the theme. The content is not reflecting the positions of the member states but consists of elements that can initiate and feed the discussions and analyses in the domain of the theme. All our studies are available on www.finabel.org

DIRECTOR'S EDITORIAL

In recent decades, the security environment has evolved dramatically. Above all, this has an impact on how hostile wars are fought, particularly by the military methods used. Military revolutions are an inextricable feature of the history of warfare and conflicts. One of the most important drivers for change is technical advancements, with technology pushing this transformation in military affairs at an unparalleled pace today. Drone warfare capabilities, which combine sensor technology with precise strike effectors and communications, are a prime illustration of this. Artificial intelligence (AI), robots, cyber, cloud technology, nanotechnology, and laser systems are among the technical advancements that have been employed and integrated for this purpose. These advancements are complemented by miniaturisation, relatively low costs manufacturing, and stealthy technologies. The evolution of military drones, in particular, has changed both civilian and military missions. While drones have a variety of civilian applications in agriculture, monitoring, cinematography, and other fields, the paper will discuss military drones, unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), and remote-controlled aircraft of different sized that are used to do activities that are too dull, dirty, or dangerous for human personnel. The absence of a person on board is a military drone's major selling point as that is helpful for a variety of reasons: first, it needs fewer pilots to put their lives at risk on the battlefield; and second, the drone is lighter and possibly extremely small due to the absence of flying equipment.

In order to keep the use of force manageable, restrict the danger of escalation, and limit the political risks and harm caused by the use of force, hybrid warfare players prefer to use circumscribed warfare methods with a comparably small military impact. Drone warfare technologies, as well as unmanned and long-range accuracy weapons systems, are practically suited for enabling such methods.

A general understanding of the existing employment of drones in the context of hybrid conflict/warfare must be constructed as a first step, also because despite their increasing deployment, drones remain a contested and controversial tactic. Is it ethical to utilise drones? Is it even lawful? Due to the lack of a legal framework for the use of military drones and the numerous civilian casualties, these are still highly discussed issues. There is the need for a law on the use of drones, both at a European and International level.

This analysis intends to contribute to the academic debate around the use of armed drones in land forces operations, the risks, the challenges and the outcomes. This paper will begin with an introduction to military drones: a description of drone types, with a distinction between military and civilian ones, the military applications, purposes and tactics. Subsequently, will be analysed the legal and ethical controversies on the use of drones in military operations.

Lastly, two case studies will be explained: the first one, on the 44-day battle in the contested area of Nagorno-Karabakh (2020), which offers a sample of the massive impact that these weapons may have on a particular conflict's result; and the second one, on the US attack in Pakistan from 2004 to 2009. It describes the lack of international law regulating the use of military drones on the battlefield and the consequent unlawful killing.

This topic is relevant for Finabel MS, as it may make them aware of the necessity of reviewing their domestic legislation related to the subject as to develop a common understanding of Unmanned Aerial Vehicles. Moreover, the massive usage of combat drones in the 2020's Nagorno-Karabakh conflict may pave the way for new strategies among the Finabel MS by combining drones capacities with artillery.

In conclusion, States must not make rash decisions without carefully examining the full scope of potential consequences for all parties: friendly forces, enemy combatants, civilians, and society.

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INTRODUCTION

The military as an institution is currently experiencing a state of great flux. Prior to recent developments, one could observe a general reorientation in the objectives of professional European armies. However, the consequences cannot yet be sufficiently evaluated, for many policymakers and some military officials the end of the Cold War signalled the obsolescence of traditional military objectives. Such concerns were replaced with a plethora of multilateral 'peace' missions. Soldiers would now not only fight but also enforce or build peace and nations. With this shift in objectives came other changes. European militaries became more modern, professional, and also smaller. Accordingly, further aspects of military orthodoxy were abandoned. The draft, for instance, is (with a few exceptions) now almost extinct throughout Europe. However, this movement away from conscription towards all-volunteer forces (AVFs) brings recruitment and retention problems. Recruitment and retention have become a thorny issue for European militaries as they now compete for their workforce in a dynamic labour market.

This Food for Thought paper seeks to interrogate the issue of contemporary military recruitment and retention and, further, offers some solutions. It proceeds in four sections. The first section outlines the talent requirements needed by the military to deliver defence outputs effectively. Secondly, this paper considers and contextualises the recruitment and retention issues contemporary European militaries face and discusses how the military can overcome such issues through advert campaigns. Thirdly, reform measures adopted by some European militaries and designed to improve recruitment, especially retention, will be considered. Lastly, this paper offers some reflections on the potential 'side effects' of measures designed to improve recruitment and retention rates. In particular, these measures will be tested on their quality and impact regarding crucial military concerns, primarily force cohesion and ethos.

TALENT REQUIREMENTS FOR POTENTIAL MILITARY EMPLOYEES IN 2030

According to a study commissioned by the European Defence Agency (EDA) titled "Exploring Europe's capability requirements for 2035 and beyond," the nature of war remains universal, and the character of warfare continues to evolve and pose new challenges on all sides (Keep et al., 2018, p.16). While the possibility of interstate conflict will continue to exist, conflicts may include elements of hybrid warfare, proxy wars, cyber capabilities,

and strategic attacks to disrupt critical infrastructure such as financial services. Nevertheless, war will retain its fundamental nature as a violent and purposeful activity. According to this study, future conflicts will occur in all physical (land, air, sea, and space) and virtual (cyberspace) domains. Therefore, a conflict will not be limited to only one domain at any one time. Moreover, conflicts on densely populated terrain will increase due to increasing urbanisation.

In this respect, a number of key high-level requirements, which will significantly impact all the generic military tasks of Member States' armed forces, is presented. We will consider concerns, particularly the latest trend of the 'Enhanced soldier.' According to the study mentioned above, there is a need for enhanced resilience among individual service personnel, which may be achieved through human enhancement technologies (either biological or cybernetic) in the future. Thus, enhancing individual soldiers will empower them with improved information gathering mobility and resilience to operate in complex, contested environments. Furthermore, such technologies may also help address the potential need for European countries to mitigate the decrease in the recruitment pool for military forces due to the expected population decline in Europe, thus requiring the existing personnel to serve longer or have more intensive deployments.

In this context, European armies have tried to keep pace with the changes in progress and update their recruitment methods and the skills and characteristics required for those who want to join the army or continue their career within it. Unfortunately, given the scope of this paper we are forced to limit ourselves to an overview of the characteristics and skills required by the various European armies. This is made possible because, in general, the characteristics required for a soldier to meet the needs of professional armies are very similar, regardless of the country considered.

Beyond the eligibility requirements to join the military, which are specific to each country, there are many characteristics that recruiters look for in future service members. Sometimes these are referred to as values.

The first of these is **COURAGE**. All soldiers need courage, both physical and moral. This is because doing and saying the right thing instead of the easy thing is not always intuitive. Showing physical courage and risking an injury or even death to complete the mission is about controlling one's fear rather than a lack of fear. Training and discipline will help soldiers doing their duty regardless of the dangers and discomforts. In fact, there are already established academies dedicated precisely to the continuous training and preparation of the military. According to the British Army's website: "Moral courage is doing the right thing, not looking the other way when you know or see something is wrong, even if it is not a popular thing to do or say."

In the second place, we find **DISCIPLINE,** which is doing things properly and setting the right example. It means that orders are carried out, and everyone is confident that their teammates will not let them down. In this sense, **self-discipline** is the best form of discipline since it depends on high personal standards that will earn the soldier the trust and respect of the other teammates.

Other key factors are **RESPECT FOR OTHERS** and **EMPATHY**. This is because soldiers come in all shapes and sizes, and all of them deserve to be treated fairly. Respecting others is part of the trust that has to exist between soldiers, but, at the same time, soldiers should have respect for others, including civilians, detainees and captured enemy forces and treat them decently. On the other side, due to the hard realities of military life, many people may be surprised to think of empathy as a crucial military skill. Nevertheless, the difference between empathy in military and civilian life is a stark one. It does not mean "going soft" or having shared experience with others; it is more about understanding the motivations of others and learning active listening skills.

What recruiters look for among candidates is also **INTEGRITY**, that is to say, the characteristic of being honest with oneself and with the other teammates. In other words, it means being honest, not lying, cheating or stealing. If one lacks integrity, teammates cannot trust and rely on each other, and, consequently, the whole team will suffer. Integrity seems to be a characteristic that, once lost, takes a long time to be earned back.

Another feature that has long been considered very important in the military is **LOYALTY**. This means supporting the army and, of course, your teammates. It means looking after your colleagues, helping them, putting their needs before your own, not letting them down, even in the most challenging moments. However, this does not mean that one should cover for illegal or unlawful acts committed by the other teammates, as that would show a lack of integrity and moral courage.

Last but not least is the **SELFLESS COMMITMENT**. The army is about teamwork, and therefore teams can only be effective if everyone fulfils their part in full, putting the team and the mission before one's own needs, and trusting each other.

RESPONDING TO NOVEL WORKFORCE DEMANDS

To understand how professional European armies can improve their recruitment and retention rates, as this paper is set out to do, the consequences of recent developments, primarily the move towards AVFs, need to be recognised and contextualised. This section intends to do that by illustrating the changes in workforce demand and outlining how (European) armed forces have responded to these changes. The section proceeds first by discussing the novel challenges faced by European armies in the context of the transition away from conscription to AVFs. Next, this section focuses on how armed forces have responded to these challenges by embracing large scale advertising campaigns. Some best practices in recruitment advertising of interest to military officials throughout Europe are highlighted in this discussion.

With the end of the Cold War, the role of the armed forces in many European countries

underwent significant changes. For instance, in Sweden, military planners abandoned the idea of 'total defence' (Strand, 2021). Accordingly, the Swedish Armed Forces (SAF) were downsized and directed away from territorial or national defence to the participation in multilateral missions under the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) or United Nations (UN) leadership. Given this development, conscription in Sweden was gradually phased out and replaced by an AVF. This development, however, is not unique to Sweden. The military sociologists Haltiner and Kümmel (2009, p. 76) make clear that throughout Europe, "defence, deterrence, and also attack," the traditional role of armed forces, "are no longer the exclusive and most important elements of the military's profile." Instead, a plethora of new international 'peace' missions have become the dominant task of most European armed forces. Strand and Berndtsson (2015, p. 234) describe this development by distinguishing between "wars of necessity" fought in defence of one's homeland and "wars of choice," which are "expeditionary operations" fought nominally to "restore international peace and stability in the name of human rights and international law." Thus, we can observe that the move away from conscription to AVF has emerged in the context of the Cold War's end and a military re-orientation from wars of national defence to international 'peace' operations.

These developments come with significant consequences. The move towards the AVF comes with a certain degree of civil-military estrangement as there is less connection and exchange between the civil and military spheres (Strand & Berndtsson, 2015, p. 235). Consequently, younger civilians are less familiar with military life than their parents, who are likely to have undergone compulsory military training. This can negatively impact recruitment as they might perceive the military as irrelevant and, thus, an unlikely career choice. More importantly, in the absence of the legal coercion associated with conscription regimes, armed forces now need to compete on the labour market with conventional employers. The military, of course, is no conventional employer. Therefore, the armed forces experience three distinct challenges compared to private and other public institutions: lower salaries, greater risk, and ethical problems stemming from soldiering being an essentially violent vocation.

Before addressing how (European) militaries have overcome these three obstacles, the second challenge, namely risk, warrants some attention. Risk is a particularly thorny issue for the military to overcome in attracting volunteer recruits. In recent years, contemporaries of Western societies have become more attuned to risk and give risk considerations greater prominence in their decision making. In political sociology, this development has been referred to as the emergence of the "risk society" (Beck, 1992, see esp. chaps. 1-2). For Beck (1992), risk is essentially defined as the potential for bodily harm. Thus, the soldierly vocation is at significant risk of being negatively affected, particularly in declining rates of young citizens willing to endure the risk associated with military service (see also Haltiner & Kümmel, 2009, p. 76). Moreover, from an anthropological perspective, the increased

importance of risk in individual perception and decision-making can further adversely impact recruitment. According to Douglas (1992, p. 28), "risk rhetoric" pits the individual against the community. Therefore, the "risk rhetoric", which permeates contemporary western societies, potentially undermines the attractiveness of a career in the military as such a pathway is deeply linked to a collective spirit of camaraderie. To sum up, the inherent risk of being a member of the armed forces in combination with the increased attention paid to risk by individuals might explain why in recent years, even traditional AVFs, such as the United States (US) and United Kingdom (UK) armies, have respectively struggled with the so-called "recruitment crisis" (Jester, 2021, p. 58).

Having outlined how AVFs face three specific challenges (i.e., lower salary, risk, and ethical problems), especially regarding recruitment but also retainment, this section will now transition towards a discussion of how armed forces can and have dealt with this situation. The first solution is to embrace large scale advertisement campaigns that present the military in a manner that engages with the concerns of potential recruits. Ultimately, such advertisement campaigns should establish a new perception of the military in the civilian population that counters and transcends obstacles and objections to military service. Examples of such an endeavour can be found in a variety of European countries; the most successful advert campaigns designed to evoke a novel civilian assessment of military service have been conducted by the armed forces in the UK, Sweden, and Germany. The details of these advertisement campaigns, which will be discussed later, should be thought of as best practices in recruitment and are of great interest to any European military looking to modernise its recruitment procedures.

Generally, two themes stand out in recent UK army and SAF advertising examples: self-development and self-fulfilment (Strand & Berndtsson, 2015, pp.237-241). This reframing represents a departure from the classical understanding of military service as a civic duty or obligation to one's country. Instead, military service is increasingly portrayed (via advertising) as an opportunity for self-improvement. Adverts published by the UK army and SAF depict military service as a vehicle, not for serving one's country, but for attaining helpful skill sets that employers value, such as teamwork, leadership, and perseverance. Strand and Berndtsson (2015, p. 240) quote one UK army official who articulates this sentiment by highlighting that "instead of selling the army as a career for life, the offer is being sold as 'come into the army; we give you the skills and the qualifications that you need for the future.'" Such discursive strategies may be valuable to all European armed forces faced with stiff competition in the labour market. The characterisation of the armed forces as a space in which young people are guided towards the future by helping and competent hands mitigates the traditionally low salary of low-ranking service personnel.

Moreover, the other two obstacles (i.e., risk and ethical problems) can be further alleviated by minimising the reference to direct violence in recruitment advertisements. Again,

this discursive strategy has been successfully employed by both the UK army and the SAF. Rather than depicting combat, as was common in adverts from the early 2000s, later British and Swedish adverts present a vision of military service as an opportunity for diverse experiences (Jester, 2019, p. 65; Strand & Berndtsson, 2015, p. 244). The potential here is that the public no longer thinks of military service as risky and ethically dubious but as an adventure, an opportunity for excitement and even enjoyment.

It may be instructive to draw a parallel to the historical experience of the US army. The US army already abandoned the draft and adopt-ed an AVF model in 1973 (much earlier than most European countries!) (Bailey, 2007, p. 48). At the risk of oversimplification, but given the scope of the paper, it shall suffice to note that this transition was more or less imposed on the army for reasons relating to public and elite opinion in the context of the Vietnam War (Ibid pp. 49-54, 72). Nevertheless, rather than resisting the change, the army leadership recognised the inevitability of the shift to AFVs. Accordingly, the army decided that if it was to attract more volunteers, it had to alter the public image of military service. The post-Vietnam climate was, of course, quite different from the current (ideational) context in which contemporary European

An Australian soldier with Task Group Taji, coaches an Iraqi soldier with rifle marksmanship tech, Sgt. Kalie Jones,
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militaries are competing for recruits on the labour market. Despite this substantial difference, the experience of the US army remains valuable for European militaries in their search for best recruitment practices.

Returning to the topic at hand, it is of great interest to highlight that the US army enlisted the services of major advertising agencies (Ibid, p. 57.) On behalf of the US army, these advertising agencies ran sophisticated large-scale TV and print campaigns backed by state-of-the-art social science market research. The result of this research and the final adverts chosen by the US army bear striking similarities to the advertising strategies employed by the UK army and the SAF discussed above. The novel US army advert campaigns also emphasised that military service was an opportunity for self-development and self-fulfilment. This was reflected in the slogan: "Today's Army Wants to Join You" (Ibid, p. 61). Although perhaps somewhat extreme, the slogan and the broader advertisement campaign behind it reflect a genuine commitment to improving the public perception of military service. Therefore, the experience of the US army in the 1970s should be thought of by European military officials, specifically those with a professional interest in recruiting, as a case study for best practices in how to modernise recruitment and retention. After all, the US army was able to successfully remake itself as an AFV under much more difficult circumstances than the ones under contemporary European armed forces operate.

One last trend in the advertisement adopted by some European militaries was coincidentally pioneered also by the US army. This trend is concerned with moving away from relying on the association between traditional modalities of masculinity and military service. In the 1970s, the US army started running adverts targeting women. Such adverts promoted a vision of military service focused on themes discussed above, such as personal and professional development, but also emphasised that the army should not be thought of as an exclusively male space. This message was brought across through slogans like: "In today's Army a girl can be a girl. Live her own life on her own time. Date. Marry if she wants to." (Ibid, p. 65). A similar line of promotion has been adopted, albeit with more rigour, by the Swedish military. A 2018 billboard advert by the SAF assured potential female volunteers that they could indeed menstruate while "in the field" (Stern and Strand, 2021, p. 2, see also, pp. 10-17). Likewise, in a series of adverts titled "The Recruits" [Die Rekruten], the Bundeswehr has attempted to move away from the more conventional association of military service with what may be described as a 'warrior' masculinity. Moving away from this traditional 'Rambo' image of military masculinity, the adverts depict masculinity with great ambivalence, thus portraying military service in a novel way, as a space in which multiple conceptions of masculinity can exist (Stengel & Shim, 2020, pp. 249-53, 263-8). Therefore, a broadening of the base of military recruiting is accomplished. Such a broadening of the base is crucial to the recruitment of volunteers and should be considered by all European militaries.

Throughout the 1990s and 2000s, many European armies ended conscription, and as a result, they now employ all-volunteer armies. This means that armies have to compete on the job market with other employers. Especially during labour shortages, it can be difficult for the military to attract future employees because the military necessitates structural features that do not appeal to all workers, such as frequent moving and long-term commitment (Rongé and Abrate, 2019). Moreover, as younger generations join the workforce, the labour market will experience considerable changes. According to Deloitte, millennials will comprise around 75% of the labour force globally by 2025. These workers want to work for organisations that develop their skills and positively contribute to society (Deloitte, 2014). This change in demographics will require a new working culture and set of expectations and desires. When employee preferences are not considered, this can result in poor employee retention and recruitment. It is essential to focus on employee preferences in the military because this will foster trust and respect within the workplace, leading to increased engagement, effectiveness, and productivity.

Home Ownership and Affordable Accommodation

A report by the British Ministry of Defence found that one of the most important wishes amongst service personnel is to own a house, a place that constitutes a home rather than temporary accommodation. Typically, armed forces want to buy a house to start a family and create a permanent home for their family. Service personnel see the affordability of mortgage deposits and repayments as the largest barrier to homeownership. Some mentioned that they could not save enough money for a deposit because of their low salary. When it comes to the location of the house, there must be employment opportunities for their partner and post-military employment opportunities for themselves in the area (Ministry of Defence, 2014b).

One way of helping out service personnel is to introduce an interest-free loan for men and women in the army who want to buy a home. A modest loan can already be beneficial for paying the deposit and other costs such as solicitor's fees and estate agent's fees. The Ministry of Defence of a given state can allocate a budget to finance these loans. In addition to financial aid, the military could help their personnel by providing information about the housing market and the process of buying a house, as not all members of the force feel like their knowledge in this regard is sufficient (Ministry of Defence, 2014b). The United Kingdom has implemented a loan scheme of this kind, called "The Forces Help to Buy", with a 200-million-pound budget. The scheme enables service personnel to lend up to 50% of their salary, interest-free, to buy their first home or to find a home on assignment. To qualify for the loan, service personnel should have completed the prerequisite

length of service, have more than six months left to serve at the moment of application and meet required medical standards (Ministry of Defence, 2014a).

Affordable service provided accommodation was also mentioned to be of significant importance for armed forces personnel. Offering accommodation at reduced rates allows for variable conditions, compensates for high mobility, and acts as a recruitment and retention tool. Some members of the force argued that inexpensive service accommodation was the most important aspect of working in the military and that it is the primary feature of working in the Armed Forces that keeps them from finding employment elsewhere.

Partner Employment

Partner employment was often mentioned by members of the armed forces as an important factor in their decision making, as many service members are married or in a committed relationship. Hence, the decision to enter the military, or to stay in the military, is not an individual one but rather a family decision. Frequent relocation to faraway destinations can put significant tensions on military families, and it strongly complicates military partners' career trajectories. Armed forces typically have to move to different duty stations every two to three years, and their partners are often forced to move with them. Research has shown that these frequent moves negatively affect the potential for partners to work in their desired field, maintain a long-term career and earn wages that match their experience. Moreover, military partners are more likely to be unemployed or underemployed than their civilian counterparts (Gonzales et al., 2015). In the UK, roughly half of working military partners felt like their job was below the standard of their qualifications and experience. These military partners tended to work in customer service, education, and administrative roles. A very small number of partners were working in management or senior professional roles (Ministry of Defence, 2014b).

Helping military partners find employment and supporting the well-being of military families is therefore important for force retention and recruitment, as partner employment is often a deciding factor for armed forces personnel. Assisting military families with partner employment can be done in several ways. For example, governments can aid military partners with employment by increasing opportunities for them in governmental and private careers. Some of these jobs could be made available only to military partners or take in a fixed percentage of military partners. An online career portal focused solely on job postings for military partners could be helpful to find these vacancies (Gonzales et al., 2015). Additionally, governments can increase opportunities for educational advancement; identify and fulfil the academic, licensing, or credentialing requirements tied to their career objectives; help with the application and hiring processes; offer employment readiness assistance; and facilitate professional connections that could help military spouses in their careers (Gonzales et al., 2015). These points were also mentioned by partners of the UK service personnel, who stated that they would like support in preparation to become job-ready. This included courses for CV writing

and courses to broaden their professional skills (Ministry of Defence, 2014). These initiatives can help military partners to get better job market opportunities that fit their personal needs, qualifications, and desires.

Pay and Benefits

Many people leave the military because they find more attractive employment alternatives elsewhere; this is especially true for highly qualified personnel like pilots, Information Communication Technology (ICT) specialists, technicians, and traffic controllers. Employees with these jobs can easily find a job in civilian life with better pay and benefits. In order to attract and retain highly qualified personnel, the military can use a number of financial incentives. According to a report by NATO, these issues were addressed in Belgium with several wage measures. For example, ICT specialists were given a significant retention bonus twice in order to make them stay in the forces. However, they struggled with identifying ICT specialists that qualified for the bonus as not all of them had received a proper education. Others were trained ICT specialists but no longer worked in this area (NATO, 2007). A possible solution would be to provide retention bonuses simply to those working as ICT specialists, with or without the proper degree, as it is quite common for IT workers to have no degree (Comptia, 2020). In addition, air traffic controllers in the Belgian army were severely underpaid compared to their civilian counterparts. To fix this, the function of air traffic controllers was upgraded to the category of officer, which resulted in a higher salary (NATO, 2007).

An overall pay raise for all military personnel can greatly improve recruitment and retention in the armed forces because military pay is often too low to compete with private sector employment. According to a study by Deloitte for the Belgian Ministry of Defence, regular soldiers used to earn €331 less per month than average police recruits. Now soldier salaries have been brought into line with police salaries (Hope, 2021). However, in other European countries, wages in the military are still very low. For example, in Spain, soldiers are paid between 1000 and 1150 euros per month, which is a fraction higher than the minimum wage. When Spanish soldiers are still in the military training period, they earn 359 euros per month (Gutierrez, 2021). This is similar to Portugal, where soldiers are paid 830 euros in their initial phase of employment; this can later increase to 875 euros. These salaries are the gross salary and therefore still need to be subjected to taxes and other deductions. Recruits who are still in the training period earn 665 euros per month, which is the minimum wage in Portugal (Ferreira, 2021). In France, soldiers earn 1522 euros per month (Romero, 2022), which is less than the minimum wage (JDN, 2022). UK armed forces personnel mentioned that financial considerations were of high importance for staying in the army, particularly benefits relating to education allowance, pension and an appropriate wage (Ministry of Defence, 2014). Increasing salaries and benefits will make a career in the military seem more attractive and improve recruitment.

Commitment bonuses can also be helpful to retain service personnel; the majority of employees who have received a financial incentive indicated that it had affected their

decision to join or stay in the army. Most of the respondents also mentioned that financial retention initiatives would have been more effective at different moments in their career, specifically earlier in their career and at important life points, like when starting a family or when children start school (Ministry of Defence, 2014).

Diversity in the Army

In order to improve retention and recruitment in the military, it is also important to consider the inclusion of women and minorities. While women make up half of the population, they constitute only 6 to 20 percent of armies in Europe and 12% of NATO armed forces combined (NATO, 2019). A separate focus on women and minorities is key to improving these groups' recruitment and retention rates, as they have different needs and wants than traditional military recruits. Besides the benefits of higher recruitment and retention rates, an increase in women and minorities in the army also ensures that the military better reflects the community it serves. Greater diversity in the armed forces is key to maintaining a healthy connection between the military and the rest of society.

Retention and Recruitment of Women and Minorities

Recruitment of women and minorities can be improved by implementing more targeted marketing and advertising strategies. Marketing for a career in the military should address the various needs and wants of all groups capable of joining the army. One study demonstrated that young men and women attribute varying levels of importance to benefits from joining the military. Women valued the following benefits higher than men: belonging to a team, training, forming life-long friendships, home loan benefits, guaranteed medical care, selecting the location of deployment, travel opportunities, social respect and status. Men valued combat and firearms training more (Marshall and Brown, 2003). Taking these different preferences into account can improve targeted advertising and the recruitment of women. Moreover, increasing the proportion of female recruiters can also be helpful to attract more women to the army. According to Major General Snow from the US army, women are 23% better at recruiting women than men. Therefore, increasing the number of females on recruiting duty will improve the effectiveness of recruiting women (Vanden Brook, 2022).

To make women stay in the military for longer, structural improvements need to be geared to women as they tend to leave the army for different reasons than men. According to a US study, women leave the army because they want to start a family, stay home with their children or spend more time with their families. These reasons were mentioned by the vast majority of respondents, while only 12% of respondents said they left the military to pursue a civilian job. Men also occasionally separated from the army for family reasons, but they were more likely to leave to pursue other career options. This difference can be explained by the fact that women are still more likely to be primary child caregivers in our society (DiSilverio, 2003).

These family reasons can be partially resolved by assigning military members to the same base or location for an extended period of time, about 8 to 10 years. This initiative is called Home Basing, and it enables families to develop roots in a community and a support network. A strong support network might reduce absenteeism by relieving stress and giving families options during illness or crisis. Home basing can also make it easier for military partners to establish a career because they do not have to find new employment as frequently. In addition, home basing cuts down on change of station costs because individuals no longer move around as often (DiSilverio, 2003).

Flexible parental leave and childcare are also strong retention strategies that are particularly helpful for women and families in general.

Flexible parental leave means that the leave can be taken any time during 52 weeks, or possibly even longer, after the day the child is born or placed with an adoptive family (Trucano et al., 2017). Allowing parental leave to be taken by both parents as they see fit will give new parents a lot more flexibility. This can be especially useful for families of which both partners work in the armed forces. The length of parental leave for men and women is very different in European countries. Still, in general, longer parental leave will make it easier for families to stay home with their children and spend time with their families. In addition, counting parental leave toward promotion is necessary for the professional advancement of women because they disproportionately take on the role of primary caretaker (Von Hlatky and Shoemaker, 2017). Regarding childcare, parents working in the

French troops from EUFOR RCA arrive at Bangui airport on April 30, 2014, European External Action Service
8 August 2017

military have complained that there are insufficient childcare options near duty stations. In the UK, families either felt that they could not afford childcare or that limiting factors prevented them from using available childcare options (such as opening hours). Sometimes it costs parents more to put the children into childcare than they would earn from their job; as a result, partners will choose to stay at home as a caregiver instead of pursuing a career (Ministry of Defence, 2014b). Providing affordable childcare facilities in the military could alleviate some of these problems for families. Particularly in the larger garrisons, childcare centres could be opened to support women in the army. Because of long and irregular shifts in the military, it is important that childcare options are available at all hours of the day and that discounted rates are available for childcare needs that exceed 24 hours (Trucano et al., 2017).

Lastly, making sure the military is a safe space for anyone who wants to join the army or who is already employed in the army is crucial for recruitment and retention. A diverse workforce can become a place of harassment and discrimination against women and minority groups when no measures are taken to counteract these issues. According to a report by Eurofound, rates of experienced or observed discrimination are higher than in other employment sectors. Tina Weber, research manager at Eurofound, states that the main challenges regarding workplace discrimination are "stereotypes, low awareness of rights and obligations, shortcomings in the implementation of legislation and policies, difficulties around enforcement and sanctions and limited evidence" (Euromil, 2020). In addition, a report by Rand notes that "women are more likely to experience gender discrimination, repeated attempts to establish an unwanted romantic or sexual relationship, and sexual comments about their appearance, whereas men are more likely to be told that they do not act like a man is supposed to act" (Calkins et al., 2021). To prevent these issues from happening, training materials should focus on sexual harassment, gender discrimination and racial discrimination. Training materials about gender should emphasise the most common behaviours experienced for both men and women (Calkins et al., 2021). Moreover, training materials should be geared towards changing attitudes that underlie racist conduct and discrimination by providing sensitisation, leadership and mediation toward harassment issues (NATO, 2007).

RETAINING ORGANISATIONAL COHESION AND ETHOS

Napoleon used to say that in war, the moral is to the physical as three is to one. As history proved him right in his demise, contemporary warfare is no different in being bound to the laws of psychology. Cohesion and ethos are intimately linked with morale, extraordinarily dynamic concepts which need to be assessed in the face of the changes required to go forward into the decade.

Cohesion

In practical terms, cohesion is the binding force behind soldiers doing their part, "even at great, even ultimate, personal risk to themselves" (King, 2015, p. 6). Cohesion is a remarkably multidimensional concept, and a few distinctions must be made: first, "task cohesion is the shared commitment among members to achieving a goal that requires the collective efforts of the group. A group with high task cohesion is composed of members who share a common goal and who are motivated to coordinate their efforts as a team to achieve that goal" (MacCoun & Hix, 2010, p. 139); while "social cohesion is the extent to which group members like each other, prefer to spend their social time together, enjoy each other's company, and feel emotionally close to one another" (Ibid). A second distinction concerns the horizontal and vertical axis. Both task and social cohesion are effectively horizontal forms of cohesion. In contrast, vertical cohesion implies the importance of leadership and the influence of the officer corps over the rank and file.

The general view is that cohesion is very much a bottom-up process, as high commands have "no means even to keep the soldier in view, much less closely supervise his behavior" (Henderson, 1986, p. 5). In this sense, the central focus is on the platoon, which constitutes "a remarkable lifeworld in which the dynamics of the social group is uniquely legible" (King, 2021, p. 8).

But while cohesion is an ever-present constant in warfare, how it can be observed is complicated. Käihkö (2018) argued that the current debate on cohesion is centred around Western militaries and completely ignores wider political factors and most non-Western insurgents and paramilitary groups, which have been fighting many low-intensity conflicts over recent years. Others, including King (2021), rebuke this.

Ethos

Compared to cohesion, ethos is a more finicky but no less important concept. First, it intertwines with ethics in a difficult relationship: with ethos explicitly concerning the spirit inspiring soldiers to fight, "what we would call 'ethics' remains implicit, underlying other 'professional' values such as efficiency and competence which are not intrinsically ethical" (Yakovleff, 2007, p. 6).

Inspiring soldiers is a complicated matter. History far more often witnessed bonds being forged in trenches rather than in officers' speeches. But that is not to say that the process has not been previously tried: in the wake of the Vietnam War, "the US Marines – and by implication, the Army – actually built men" for the conflict (King, 2015, p. 7). While Europe has come a long way since the French élan or Prussian spirit, finding a common European military ethos is not an easy task. In this sense, a unique study by Koivula pointed out three core tenets that seemed to be emerging as common to the European soldier: "pretend to be warlike but don't fight," "master civilian skills," "redefine your patriotism" (Koivula, 2009).

The first concept revolves around how often the EU finds itself embroiled in combat. This depends both on its place in the international system and its inefficiency: of almost two million men and women in arms in the EU-27

members, only 10-15 % can be deployed at any time (Ibid, p. 180). This makes the EU an incredibly risk-averse actor, which often strives for appearance more than concreteness. The second point stems from decades of international operations such as peacekeeping, peacebuilding, peace enforcement, nation-building, humanitarian interventions and broader 'Responsibility to Protect' operations and implies the need for soldiers to be qualified in something other than plain armed fighting. The third represents both the multinational nature of the EU and the international nature of European operations. Being prepared to defend one's homeland loses centrality in favour of being prepared to be deployed throughout the continent or even outside of it. This, in turn, undermines, not necessarily in a negative way, classic nationalistic notions of the military service.

The retention of European cohesion and ethos

The evolution of such variables as cohesion and ethos implies that a great deal of attention must be paid to their determinants. As the armed forces are not a static world, we need to assess the effects of some of the adaptations that have previously been proposed.

First, we need to consider there is often a world of difference between soldiers' expectations and their army life. The key problem is that the choice itself of getting into the military is often influenced by "increasingly sophisticated and savvy marketing studies [...] but the dreams of the consumer marketplace fall beyond enforcement" (Bailey, 2007, p. 73). Military recruiters "face enormous pres-sure to meet their numbers, and most use what they can" (Ibid). We could argue that despite a drift towards all-volunteer armies, how voluntary the process of getting in rests entirely on how informed is that choice – often, not much.

Second, we have previously seen how little paid and protected soldiers are. Armed forces should do more to entice and reward soldiers with what they feel are adequate benefits, which would no doubt improve troops' morale and cohesion.

Another core issue is that of soldierly identity. How soldiers perceive their role in an ever-shifting world is complicated and has seen various degrees of change, accelerated by globalisation and modernisation. Haltiner and Kümmel (2009, pp. 77-78) argue for the existence of three core axis of identification: whether soldiers fight because of "simple impulses" (egotistic gains or obedience to a group structure) or because of "complex" ones (moral/ethical or in any case deeper reasons); whether their context (the armed forces) is generally segregated from society (Huntigton, 1957) or there is good integration between the civil and military sphere (Janowitz, 1960); whether their action is ingrained in a purely national frame (where the soldier's functions are chiefly those of defence, attack and deterrence) or in a post-national, more global one (typical of the post-Cold War era).

Talking about the first distinction (simple vs complex impulses), creating a structure of complex impulses is essential for a cohesive response to crises. Single units fight more effectively if they believe in something instead of simply being ordered to do it. That is not to say that hierarchical obedience should be

reserved a less important role, but the way in which orders are perceived is important.

The second axis (segregated vs integrated military) implies that, in case of an extensive integration between civil society and the military world, the latter could be influenced by the former's "societal and sociocultural developments," some of which may be seen as "unwelcome" changes to contrast "in order to ensure the effectiveness of the institution" (Haltiner & Kümmel, 2009, p. 78). This is particularly important as regards diversity: Janowitz's vision takes into account modern Western values and "strives for the military's acceptance, respect and legitimacy in society" (Ibid).

Regarding the third axis (national vs post-national frame of action), the role of today's European soldier can be defined as that of an "internationally deployed soldier" (Haltiner & Kümmel, p. 78), whom "in analogy to the 'Christian soldier' (miles christianus) of the late Middle Ages, might be dubbed the 'guardian soldier' (miles protector)" (Däniker, 1995, p. 116). This point concerns the aforementioned civilian skills, and it is representative of the ascension of types like the "soldier-scholar" and "soldier-statesman" (Moskos, 1998, p. 11). To better suit their needs, European armed forces should provide such skills: from incentivising and financing degrees, masters and special courses to making use of civilian personnel with soldiers.

Moreover, it is important to stress that racial integration has been generally shown to have little to no negative effects on cohesion. A classical WW2-era study found "religious, racial, class, schooling or sectional differences lose their power to divide the men" (Grink-er & Spiegel, 1945, p. 21). Contemporary studies showed that the effects of diversity are actually positive: "groups that are more racioethnically [sic] diverse also report higher levels of task-specific and generalised group efficacy at the conclusion of their project" (Sargent & Sue-Chan, 2001, p. 442). In the long period, ethnic diversity may become irrelevant altogether: "as time passes, increasing collaboration will weaken the effects of surface-level (demographic) diversity, but strengthen the effects of deeplevel [sic] (psychological) diversity on team outcomes" (Harrison et al., 2002, p. 1031).

Including LGBTQ+ people into the military has been a taboo issue for decades. Still, studies concerning the infamous 'don't ask, don't tell' policy of the US armed forces show that "disclosure behaviours were related indirectly and positively to [LGBT veterans'] perceptions of task cohesion within their units". In contrast, "sexual orientation concealment behaviors were related negatively to their perceptions of social cohesion and indirectly and negatively to their perceptions of task cohesion" (Moradi, 2009).

In the case of women, increased involvement in military roles will not represent a negative factor, as multiple studies have shown that "gender differences alone did not appear to erode cohesion" (Haller & Miller, 1997, p. 54). Gender is one of many variables involved in shaping unit cohesion and tends to be of little impact: members of "loosely cohesive" units "preferred to socialise either on their own or in subgroups but […] were able to work together as professionals", while members of "divided" units "tended to feel either that the divisiveness was caused by lack of at-

tention to the issue by the command or that the command was the source of the problem" (Ibid, p. 55). They concluded that "although gender was mentioned as a cohesion issue, it was rarely mentioned alone and usually as only a part of a larger problem," and that it concerned more social cohesion than task cohesion.

Concerning all three aforementioned categories, in general:

> Shared experiences can contribute to task cohesion [which] is a stronger predictor of group performance than social cohesion. This leads some to argue that the 'sameness' of individuals in a military unit is less important than the shared experiences of the unit. In this regard, some argue that military units that operate in an integrated manner can build task cohesion through integrated training (Kamarck, 2019, p. 4).

That is not to say that homogeneity is necessarily negative, as it might even be beneficial:

> Interpersonal relationships that lead to social cohesion are established more readily between individuals with similar backgrounds, experiences and demographic characteristics […] teams with high levels of social cohesion have less conflict and stronger support networks, which may help individuals to better cope with stress […] those who argue for more homogenous units argue that these units develop stronger interpersonal bonds that provide important psychological benefits and bolster unit resiliency (Ibid., p. 3).

Even the perception that minorities have of the military environment is an important factor: in most cases, "members of minority groups tended to perceive acceptance of both their minority group and other minority groups as lower compared with perceptions of acceptance among majority groups" (Green et al., 2020, p. 145). Thus, working on improving such perception might be desirable.

CONCLUSION

The move towards an AVF impacted the military significantly in terms of civil-military exchange and familiarity. As a result, civilians nowadays do not feel connected to the military, and they know little of the military world. The military is an employer on the labour market, competing with other companies and organisations for talented and skilled workers. Combined with structurally challenging features of the Armed Forces, such as frequent relocation, low salaries, ethical complications and high-risk levels, this has made it more difficult for national armies to recruit and retain talented and qualified employees.

Many efforts have been made to attract more potential recruits to the army throughout recent years. A common tool in this pursuit is the implementation of large-scale advertisement campaigns. Such advertisement campaigns can introduce the civilian pop-

ulation to the military in a positive way by focusing on the advantages of the services, such as self-development and self-fulfilment. This reframing of military service shifts the focus from a nationalist communal benefit to the individual advantages of military service. Advertisements that portray the military as a means for attaining helpful skills, such as teamwork, leadership and perseverance, may be valuable to European armies that want to improve their recruitment strategies. Targeting advertising campaigns at specific demographic groups, like women and minorities, is also crucial. These groups have other priorities than traditional military recruits. Thus, in order to attract them, specific targeted advertisements are necessary.

Aside from advertising, the actual benefits, working conditions, culture and salary are crucial for recruitment and retention. Whereas the army used to consist mainly of young, single men, this is no longer the case. Many employees in the army have a partner and sometimes children. They feel like their job is difficult to combine with family life. Initiatives for partner employment, childcare and home basing can alleviate these concerns and make the army a more attractive employer for couples and families. Competitive salaries are also essential for recruitment and retention because jobs in the private sector often have higher wages. This is especially true for highly

Members of the Armed Forces of Bosnia and Herzegovina's BHAFPC 005, deployed to Bagram AFB, United States National Guard
12 September 2017

qualified personnel. Therefore, raises and retention bonuses can help to recruit and retain more employees.

Lastly, when it comes to retention and recruitment initiatives it is important to target these strategies at specific groups. As we have seen, women, men, and minorities have different needs and wants when it comes to a potential employer. Since women are often still the primary caregiver in a traditional family, they value childcare and parental leave higher than men. To not withhold women from a successful career, time spent on maternity leave should count towards promotion because women usually take longer parental leave. Moreover, women and minorities are more often impacted by harassment and discrimination. To prevent these issues from happening, training materials should focus on sexual harassment, gender discrimination and racial discrimination (Calkins et al., 2021).

Higher levels of diversity in the army, in terms of race, gender and sexual orientation, do not negatively influence cohesion or ethos. Units that are racially and ethnically more diverse tend to have improved task-specific and general group efficacy. LGBTQ+ veterans also noted that openness and disclosure of their orientation were related indirectly and positively to their perceptions of task cohesion within their units. The same can be said for gender, as gender did not impact unit cohesion to a significant degree. Thus, in general, diversity does not significantly alter cohesion and ethos within military groups because cohesion is built through shared experiences, a sense of belonging and shared emotions, rather than through sameness.

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Created in 1953, the Finabel committee is the oldest military organisation for cooperation between European Armies: it was conceived as a forum for reflections, exchange studies, and proposals on common interest topics for the future of its members. Finabel, the only organisation at this level, strives at:

- Promoting interoperability and cooperation of armies, while seeking to bring together concepts, doctrines and procedures;
- Contributing to a common European understanding of land defence issues. Finabel focuses on doctrines, trainings, and the joint environment.

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Finabel contributes to reinforce interoperability among its member states in the framework of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO), the EU, and *ad hoc* coalition; Finabel neither competes nor duplicates NATO or EU military structures but contributes to these organisations in its unique way. Initially focused on cooperation in armament's programmes, Finabel quickly shifted to the harmonisation of land doctrines. Consequently, before hoping to reach a shared capability approach and common equipment, a shared vision of force-engagement on the terrain should be obtained.

In the current setting, Finabel allows its member states to form Expert Task Groups for situations that require short-term solutions. In addition, Finabel is also a think tank that elaborates on current events concerning the operations of the land forces and provides comments by creating "Food for Thought papers" to address the topics. Finabel studies and Food for Thoughts are recommendations freely applied by its member, whose aim is to facilitate interoperability and improve the daily tasks of preparation, training, exercises, and engagement.

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