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Military stress and mutilated bodies of the death: is it possible to minimize negative psychological consequences?

Combat stress is an integral part of any armed conflict. Modern studies of combat stress in the post-Soviet space are very diverse. For example, the work of E. Gumanenko, L. Ozeretskivsky, V. Boyarintsev, D. Shakun, A. Mineev, I. Ushakov, Yu. Bubeev and others has been devoted to the mechanisms of the origin and development of combat stress. Problems of diagnosing the functional state of a person under combat stress were considered by A. Blair, R. Boush, V. Rozhentsov, and others.

In total, the leading researchers of the problem of combat stress in the post-Soviet space include S. Litvintsev, V. Nechiporenko, E. Snedkov, A. Zuykov, A. Utyuganov, R. Abdurakhmanov, B. Ovchinnikov, V. Myakotnyi, A. Reznik, S. Trushelov, V. Lytkin, S. Urazov, I. Dorovskikh, Petrovsky, S. Trebukhov, B. Trifonov, A. Bunkov, L. Volkogonov, and others.

But only in recent years, thanks to the research of Russian scientists, the problems of combat stress among servicemen participating in an anti-terrorist operation are being conducted in the east of Ukraine, a conceptual apparatus and some features, including the determinants of its origin, have been defined. For today, combat stress is understood as the experiences that a serviceman has with the indirect or direct impact of stress factors of combat activity on him and are manifested in the form of emotional, intellectual, physical and behavioral reactions [1]. Among the determinants of combat stress, one can single out situational-environmental, socio-political, accompanying socio-psychological and psychological determinants.

Situation-environment factors have the greatest impact on the psyche of a soldier. The main situational and environmental factors of socio-psychological determinants of the emergence of combat stress are: insufficient professional experience; insufficient experience of participation in combat conflicts; long stay in the war zone; stay under fire, presence of situations threatening life, firing back, hammering an enemy and direct vision of death of other people; injury or injury; contemplation and work with the bodies of the dead, both military personnel and civilians.

Of course, each of these factors deserves special attention for discussion and further development of methods of psychological preparation and minimization of its influence on the mentality of the serviceman, but in this article we consider it expedient to consider the interaction with the bodies of the deceased.

In most cases, such work involves collecting bodies from the battlefield and transferring them to special brigades that send them home. It should be noted that currently there is a group of specialists belonging to the organization "Evacuation 200" [2], functioning under the leadership of the Civil-Military Cooperation Department of the Armed Forces of Ukraine. The purpose of the organization is to return the bodies of the dead to the final burial sites, to help organize their honour and provide opportunities for the families of the deceased to obtain appropriate social protection of the state [2]. The creation of this organization confirms the fact that neither the leadership of the Armed Forces of Ukraine nor the leadership of the state remain indifferent to such a painful topic. In addition, thanks to the representation of the International Committee of the Red Cross in Ukraine, the search groups receive appropriate training, are provided with the necessary specialized equipment and literature.

Within the framework of this project, civil-military cooperation search teams were evacuated from the ATO area for the period from September 3, 2014 to March 1, 2017: bodies (remains) of dead servicemen of the Armed Forces of Ukraine, law enforcement agencies and other military formations - 1117 (of them with temporarily uncontrolled territory - 233) [2].

Despite the creation of the above-mentioned organization, whose employees probably have a special psychological preparation for such work, we should not forget about other subjects of interaction with the bodies of the dead - actually the servicemen themselves, combatants who almost every day face personal losses and watch the bodies of the deceased from the civilian population. It can be stated that when psychological training of soldiers for participation in hostilities, special psychological preparation for such cases is almost absent.

Consider stress factors that affect the soldier and other professionals in dealing with the bodies of the deceased. They can be divided into three groups:

- physical signs;
- personal safety;
- emotional inclusion.

The physical signs include, first of all, those factors that a person perceives with the help of his analyzers.

Appearance of bodies of the deceased. One of the features of the antiterrorist operation is the use of rocket launcher systems, so most of the bodies of the dead are faced by servicemen with a sufficiently disfigured appearance, with severed limbs and developed wounds. Also, the feature of the use of multiple rocket launcher systems is a large momentary loss of personnel. That is, in addition to the qualitative indicator of the most injuries, there is also a quantitative one. This problem was quite acute in 2014. It depended not only on the intensity of the conduct of the most battles, but also on the lack of experience of military personnel on the actions during the shelling and the lack of necessary security for building a high-quality cover.

It should be mentioned that in 2014 there were a large number of downed planes and helicopters and our servicemen also took part in the work with the bodies of the deceased and the collection of material for examination, since almost nothing remains for the crashes from the dead.

"When someone said that the plane was shot down and it was necessary to go, I understood that the work would be difficult ..." recalled Captain Sh. "But I didn't even imagine that it was so. From 49 of deceased more or less was preserved shooter, this was in the tail of the aircraft.

Everything else, forgive me for saying so and you guys forgive me, but everything else was not like people".

The deceased who were burnt along with the equipment are very seriously perceived by servicemen.

Separate attention deserves the bodies of dead servicemen, who were tortured. The fact of violent death causes corresponding cruelty in our servicemen.

"Yes, I'm better now" - says Lieutenant Colonel R. - I feel good myself (silent, long pause, tears begin to appear in his eyes) ... But I will not forgive anyone for anything! Do you hear? Do you hear me well (turns to a psychologist)?! And let everyone hear. I hate everybody. Both those and others. Nonhumans. This is what it is necessary to be an animal, so to scoff at a person? No, animals are better. You would have seen what was left of A. And if I have the opportunity, I will do the same and I don't care what sex and age will be the enemy. Separatist is not a man".

Smell. Another very significant stress factor is smell of rotting flesh. Some servicemen place more emphasis on the smell.

"In the ATO zone, my main job was precisely the interaction with the bodies of the dead. - recalls Major L. - It was very much. Even when I felt that my strength was running out, I couldn't refuse. I'm an officer - this would be a bad example for young people. Moreover, I realized that the guys should be returned home and buried humanly - they deserve it. The smell of rotting flesh was everywhere. When I arrived home I noticed that this sinister smell of death doesn't disappear anywhere. I felt it always, wherever I was, so that I would not do it. I realized that in reality it is not there and this frightened me even more. It seemed to me that I had gone mad. I stopped eating, especially meat dishes. They caused me certain associations, I immediately remembered the charred bodies of the guys ..."

In our opinion, right now it will be expedient to bring the results of a study of psychologists from the British University of Kent on the reaction of man to the "smell of death" - putrescence - a poison released during the process of rotting the body. So, in the course of British research, when conscious and unconscious reactions of a person were discovered, it was found out that even a short interaction of a person with putrescence has a negative psychological effect. This substance can cause a person to watchful behavior or aggressive reaction, even with a small concentration in the air. One of the main reactions that arise in response is anxiety, as well as a desire to protect or escape [3].

Contact sensations. Some servicemen note that sometimes they had to collect and transport with their bare hands the remains of the bodies of the deceased brothers.

"When you collect the bodies of deceased," said a soldier of the Armed Forces - they seem heavy, you quickly get tired, and even some parts are sometimes very difficult to lift".

Sounds. The cries of servicemen in the loss of their comrades add to the terrible picture of the fighting. They cover everyone who is near.

"Even if you don't approach the dead, you don't see them, these cries plunge you into a sense of horror, and your heart starts to jump out of your chest - recalls Senior Lieutenant T. - It seems that this cry destroys your brain. When you hear how grown men start screaming, you get a feeling of helplessness, you want to escape ...".

Thus, the above memories of servicemen give us the right to state that physical stress factors are one of the psycho-traumatic when interacting with the bodies of the deceased.

The second group of stress factors when dealing with the bodies of the deceased belongs to personal safety. Among the factors of danger can be identified real and imaginary. The real danger is the *bombing of the deceased bodies*. At the beginning of the antiterrorist operation, this was very common, since the enemy understood that, in the experience of loss, especially in its acute stage, the question of its own security receded into the background. In this regard, the first who today in the zone of the antiterrorist operation comes to the corpses are sappers. After examining the body, they put it in a certain position (legs crossed, hands behind the head - "outside the resting person" and a T-shirt is pulled over the face), which means "there are no mines".

Some soldiers are afraid of *getting sick from corpses*. As military physicians testify, this is unlikely, except in cases when there is an epidemic in the region, for example, tuberculosis or E. coli. When observing the rules of personal hygiene, the possibility of infection from the bodies of the dead is reduced to a minimum. But it should be noted that hygiene products are not always available.

You should pay attention to the so-called *imaginary danger*. It is associated with various traditional prejudices that are inherent in our people. Especially, in itself fear of death, a fairly difficult experience. So, some servicemen note that they experienced horror before looking at the victim in the eye.

The paramedic, Sergeant G. recalls: "He was dying in my arms ... I understood this and could do nothing. But at the time of his death his eyes didn't close. I still remember them ... This look from the otherworld horrifies, causes a feeling of helplessness and inevitability ... Even when the body was taken away, these feelings did not disappear, they pursued me ... And this, you see, is not the best state for the military man (especially - the medic) on the front line".

There are other fairly common fears: *fear of approaching the corpse* (just approaching), *touching, poisoning with corpse poison*, etc.

The third group of stress factors is emotional inclusion. In situations where the death around you is very difficult, or rather, it is almost impossible to remain calm and balanced. Among the factors of emotional inclusion are the following: the general humanity of the serviceman, the identification of victims, and the projection of the deceased's identity on himself, the personal belongings of the deceased. Let's consider each of these factors separately.

Identification of bodies of the deceased. During the psychological work with military personnel, they paid attention to such difficult moments as recognition of the body. Even when the victims are not numerous, this factor also occurs.

"These were heavy fights. We lost a lot of guys ... -said soldier P. - After the shelling it was necessary to help the wounded and ... (crying), to collect those who died. The commander said that I will deal with this with my friend. Approaching every twisted body I realized that these are not our guys. They were not like them ... Not one".

The phenomenon of "unrecognizability" is a manifestation of the protective psychological mechanisms of the individual (negation). It is quite often observed by the practical psychologists of the State Service of Ukraine for Emergency Situations during the identification by the relatives of the bodies of the victims in various disasters.

Projection of the identity of the deceased on himself. When interacting with the bodies of the deceased, the projection of the deceased person's identity is quite common, that is, the serviceman compares himself to the deceased by certain characteristics: age, sex, the same kind of troops where the deceased and servicemen were serving, one region of residence and others. This comparison plunges the soldier into hard thoughts about his own possible doom.

Personal belongings of the deceased. When inspecting the body, the personal belongings of the deceased can be found. It can be pictures of

relatives, pictures of the child, other personal items. Interaction with these things finally leads to the fact that this loss ceases to be a stranger. It grows into a personal grief, even when a soldier was not familiar with the deceased.

Woe to the loss of comrades causes the following feelings.

Guilt. A sense of guilt involves repentance, humility, sorrow and anger directed at oneself. When people view death as a mistake, defeat, failure, they try to find something that could be corrected ("If I knew ...", "If I stayed ...", "If they called for an ambulance..." etc.) [4]. The sense of guilt in servicemen who have lost their comrades may have varied content:

- guilt of one who has survived;
- guilt for not being able to recognize the bodies of the deceased;
- guilt for being afraid to touch a friend;
- guilt that couldn't collect all the parts of the body of the deceased;
- guilt for the fact that the comrade was buried without the necessary honours (in the environment, when there is no possibility to take out the body);
- blame for his behavior and the reactions of the body when interacting with the bodies of the deceased.

Shame. It should be noted that the guilty serviceman takes his guilt on his own, but the shame is caused by external factors, a certain public thought: "What will they say about me? That I'm a bad commander, I couldn't keep my guys," or "I'm a coward. Where he disappeared. They died, but I was alive".

Anger. Fairly common emotion when experiencing grief. It can be directed both to himself and to the deceased. Servicemen in such a situation tend to look for the guilty.

Disgust. There is a certain peculiarity about the appearance of a feeling of disgust among servicemen, connected not only with the type of blood, certain tactile sensations, to which the soldier should be theoretically ready. For example, a feeling of disgust causes mucus, if the body has lain for a long time, or it can be sticky in case the abdominal cavity is injured. But that's not all. When carrying out psychological work with military personnel, it was impossible not to pay attention to the fact that separatist bodies are causing a feeling of disgust. It was noted that even at very high ambient temperatures, no one wants to hide or hide them - so much was the feeling of disgust and contempt for the enemy, even the dead.

Also, emotional reactions include an increased sense of anxiety, depression, apathy, a certain morbid state, fear, etc..

In the future, in our opinion, it is necessary to consider certain "psychological thresholds" that military servicemen-participants of ATO have to deal with interacting with the bodies of the deceased. Psychological thresholds are those unfavourable situations that need to be overcome by a soldier. Among such psychological thresholds can be identified:

- beginning of the evacuation of corpses (from observations we can say that the bargaining starts at once: "Why me? Let the other one goes." Let's go together");
- when cleaning bodies immediately begin with those who have escaped, then they pass on to the less surviving, then to separate parts (in this case, the following picture is observed: when the goals of the body end, all those who perform this task seem to freeze. It is difficult to go to the collection of parts of human bodies);
- corpses of the enemy, as noted above, are the last ones to touch;
- bury its soldiers near (if it is impossible to evacuate the bodies of the dead, a rather difficult decision is made to leave their soldiers here, for the time being, but at the first opportunity they are returned).

Cognitive reactions that can occur when dealing with dead bodies include: memory impairment (forgetting certain traumatic situations), attention breakdown (the serviceman will focus only on the thoughts about the work that he needs to perform), disruption of objective perception of the surrounding situation, disturbance of thinking and inhibition in decision-making, etc. It should also be noted that the imagination of servicemen will also be negative.

M. Reshetnikov described psychophysiological reactions in his article "psychophysiological aspects of the state of victims in a hotbed of natural disaster" [5]. Among the conditions that arise in people exposed to a natural disaster, M. Reshetnikov identifies exactly the reactions that arise during the first interaction with the wounded and the dead - psychophysiological demobilization: "Duration up to three days. For the majority of the surveyed, the beginning of this stage is associated with the first contacts with those who were injured and with the bodies of the dead, with awareness of the scale of the tragedy ("stress of awareness"). This condition is characterized by the most significant deterioration in the state of health and the psychoemotional state, with a predominance of feelings of confusion, panic reactions (often irrational focus), a decrease in the moral normality of behaviour, a decrease in the level of activity efficiency and motivation for it, depressive tendencies, and some changes in the functions of attention and memory. The majority of the

respondents complained in this phase of nausea, "heaviness" in the head, and discomfort from the gastrointestinal tract, decrease (even absence) of appetite "[5]. M. Reshetnikov also notes that the same period includes the first refusals among rescuers from performing work, especially those related to obtaining bodies of the dead, a significant increase in the number of erroneous actions in the management of transport and special equipment, up to the creation of emergency situations.

Among the behavioural reactions that arise in soldiers when dealing with the bodies of the deceased can be identified: fatigue, excitability or self-closure (depending on the type of nervous system), insomnia, aggressive manifestations, loss of appetite, refusal to perform tasks or excessive dedication, use of a large number of psychoactive substances and suicide attempts.

Having carried out a detailed analysis of the problem of psychological interaction with the bodies of those killed in the war zone, we will provide some recommendations on the process of psychological training of servicemen to work with the bodies of the deceased:

1. It is necessary to make changes in the program of psychological preparation, which would take into account the specifics of working with the bodies of the deceased, that the above.
2. Commanders need to organize work to collect the bodies of deceased, if possible, taking into account the psychological conditions and individual characteristics of the servicemen.
3. In psychological preparation, it is necessary to tell servicemen not only about the stress factors with which they will inevitably encounter in the war zone, but also pay attention to those mental states that will arise in them.
4. When organizing the work to collect the bodies of the dead it is necessary to form groups as follows: a serviceman with experience of such work and a beginner should work in a pair. At the same time, a serviceman with experience will take care of his partner, thus this will distract him from the psycho-traumatic factors a little, and the newcomer will feel the support of a more experienced comrade in this case.
5. It is necessary to control the time of work with the bodies. The rule "The sooner we do everything, the better" in this case does not work.
6. If there is such an opportunity, then after working with the bodies of the deceased to change clothes.
7. To encourage military servicemen after interacting with the bodies

- of the deceased to discuss their own experiences. This will reduce the possibility of the occurrence of psycho-traumatism.
8. You must respect the bodies of the deceased.
 9. To constantly remind servicemen that they are carrying out an important and noble cause.

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сгорбование, антинерпусническа операция, работа с м-лами погибших.

O.V. TIMCHENKO, E.A. KRAVCHENKO. **Military stress and mutilated bodies of the death: is it possible to minimize negative psychological consequences?** Any armed conflict is accompanied by various stress factors, which affect the mentality of servicemen with different intensity, which leads to its depletion and, as a result, to a decrease in the level of combat capability of personnel. Among the main stress factors, one can be singled out, which, in our opinion, has the greatest destructive power for the human psyche - contemplation and interaction with the bodies of the dead, both military personnel and civilians. In the article are represented the psychological features of work with the bodies of those who died directly in the zone of combat operations, the stress factors acting on the serviceman and other specialists in interaction with the bodies of the deceased (physical stress factors, personal safety and emotional involvement), signs of the presence of combat stress in military personnel when working with the bodies of the dead (emotional, cognitive, physiological and behavioral), psychological thresholds that warriors have to face tinning. Recommendations for psychological support of such work are also given. Thus, the material outlined in the article may be useful at the stage of psychological training of servicemen and other representatives of law enforcement agencies to participate in hostilities.

Key words: combat stress of the serviceman, psychological support, anti-terrorist operation, work with the bodies of the deceased.

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POST-TRAUMATIC STRESS: QUALIFICATION AND OVERCOMING TECHNOLOGY

POST-TRAUMATIC STRESS: KWALIFIKACJA I PRZEŁAMYWANIE TECHNOLOGII