

# The Experience of the Soviet Postwar Period and the Modern Stage of Reforming the Training System of Reserve Officers: It's Significance for the Far East Federal District of the Country

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**Abstract.** The proposed study presents a brief history of originating, formation and evolution of the training of reserve officers in civilian higher educational institutions; main stages of its development have been identified. An assessment has been made of the historical experience of developing a system for training a mobilization reserve of officers in the framework of solving current problems of the Russian Far East Federal district. The content of the stages of originating, formation and development of the training system of reserve officers has been analyzed, as well as the logic of the development of the military training system in civilian higher educational institutions has been investigated. A structural assessment of recent changes in the training system of reserve officers in the Far East Federal district of Russia has been carried out. The role of military training in civilian higher educational institutions, as well as the significance of the implementing reform for the Far East Federal district of Russia has been determined. The interconnection in solving the problem of improving the life quality of the Far East population and perfecting the system of military training in civilian higher educational institutions has been identified. Historical and modern conditions have been indicated that determine the need for further reform of military education. Some specific directions of reforming the system of military training in civilian higher educational institutions of the Far East Federal district of Russia have been proposed. The principles underlying the development of the training system of reserve officers in the Far East Federal district and the conditions for achieving the goals of its reform have been formulated.

## 1. Introduction

The Far East Federal district in modern Russia is the object of increased state attention as a region with a special geopolitical position that determines the importance for the country. The wealth of natural resources and vast territory, underdeveloped road and railway networks, remoteness from the densely populated western regions of the country, low population density and harsh climatic conditions of the Far East Federal district - this is not a complete list of the problematic issues of regional development. In 2019, V.V. Putin noted in the annual Message of the President of the Russian Federation to the Federal Assembly: "All the Far East Federal districts of the Russian Federation should move to a higher level than the average regions in Russia in strategic social-economic indicators and in the life quality of people" [1].

Paying attention to the last aspect, namely on the life quality of people, one should note the deep complexity of this indicator on the one hand and its enormous significance for the district on the other one. It is difficult to overestimate the value of this indicator in the context of the continuing outflow of population from the Far East Federal district [2].

Life quality is a concept that, in addition to many components, filling its meaning, also includes issues of education (its relevance, accessibility and quality) and safety issues, including military security. Education and security, on the other hand, are also multidimensional concepts, underlying the studying matter: training systems for reserve officers.

The urgency of the research topic is that the training system of mobilization reserves currently requires a comprehensive study with a view to understanding and evaluating as one of the factors for improving the life quality of the population of the Far East Federal district - the high-priority task of its development.

The training of military reserve officers' cadres should be considered as an independent issue, having significant social-economic, historical and social significance. The task of searching the most rational and effective ways of military reform in modern Russia, including the processes, connected with the training of officers for the security agencies of the state, becomes particularly relevant. The relevance of the topic is also due to the consideration of military training of citizens in universities as an independent scientific problem, because the training of officers' cadres is an important component of improving the combat capability of the Armed Forces of the country.

The purpose of this study includes:

studying and summarizing the experience of creating and developing a training system of reserve officers in Russia in order to solve social and economic problems and problems of ensuring the security of the Far East Federal district;

identifying predicted patterns and formulating the properties of the training system for reserve officers; principles underlying its development in the Far East Federal district; conditions for achieving goals in the modern reform of the system of military training in civilian higher educational institutions.

In modern science a number of researchers have been actively studying the issues of formation, improvement and prospects for the development of the training system of reserve officers. Historians, economists, sociologists and educators, including Khovrina L.N., Mashkin N.A., Udin E.G., Filkov S.M., Kunbutaev L.M., Tarasov A.A., Yulin V.N., Karpov S.I., Satsuta S.A. and others have been working to create concepts for the implementing reforms in military education; they have been searching for solutions to a multitude of problems, both regional and federal ones, including in matters of security.

Currently, the next scheduled (post-Soviet) reform of the military training system at civilian higher educational institutions is being carried out in the country on the initiative of the Ministry of Defense of the Russian Federation [3].

The main idea of the reform is the unification of approaches and methods of implementing military training at higher educational institutions: in the creation of military training centers [4] instead of military arts divisions, faculties of military education and military educational centers.

The specified changes from the time of introduction of the legislative initiative [5] have aroused the heightened interest in society, they also have provoked heated discussions concerning the need for a reform of military training at civilian higher educational institutions in general and about possible other options and directions for reforms, in particular. Thus, according to the point of view of the ex-deputy of the State Duma of the Russian Federation (deputy of the third and fourth convocations), retired colonel, Alksnis V.I., "The closure of military arts divisions will lead to a reduction in the number of reserve officers" [6]. However, graduates of military arts divisions, replenishing the mobilization reserve of the country, are increasingly in demand in active military service under the contract. To a greater extent, this fact is due to the "staff shortages", connected with the reorganization in 2007–2012 (in fact - with the liquidation) of many military schools and military academies. Taking this into account, the Ministry of Defense of the Russian Federation sets the goal of the implementing reform -

to increase the effectiveness of managing the process of teaching students of higher educational institutions in the existing areas of military training [5].

## **2. About the history of the creation, formation and development of the training system of reserve officers. The experience of the Soviet postwar period**

The system of military training at civilian higher educational institutions in the Russian Federation, developed by 2018, has had a long and rich history of origin, evolutionary development, and multiple transformations. Military training, being its part, is at the intersection of higher and military education in the general education system. For this reason, some authors, in particular Filkov S.M., Satsuta S.A., make the assessment and formulate the historical stages of training of reserve officers. Beginning from the VI-VII century, when a certain system of accumulation and dissemination of knowledge, necessary for military affairs, was being generated – that was the initial stage in the formation of the Russian state and society.

From this perspective, Filkov S.M., referring to the historical experience of training domestic military staff, presented in various sources [7, 8-48; 8, 347; 9, 44], offers historical periodization, in accordance with special social-economic, social-political, social-cultural, and military political conditions for the development of Russia, in the next stages of development of the system of military training at civilian higher educational institutions [10]:

1. The stage of originating and development of the system (from the beginning of the formation of the Russian state to the turn of the XVII - XVIII centuries). As already has been mentioned, this is the stage of accumulation, preservation and dissemination of the special knowledge, skills and experience of military affairs.

2. The stage of early (pre-revolutionary) formation (from the turn of the XVII-XVIII centuries to 1917). Military training in its various forms was present at civilian higher educational institutions from the turn of the XVII – XVIII centuries, when, in the course of reforms of Peter I, the system of higher and specialized vocational education was created in the Russian state.

Later, by the XIX century a system of educational institutions was being created in Russia, such as: universities and institutes, various schools and colleges, cadet and military schools, as well as cadet corps. These educational institutions trained competent specialists who were ready to work, including (optionally) and in military service.

The end of the second stage of development of the system of military training at civilian higher educational institutions was due to a number of events catastrophic in its destructive power, namely: the First World War, February and October Revolutions of 1917, the Civil War of 1918 - 1922.

Military training at civilian higher educational institutions, incomplete in its structure, not realized as an invariable and integral system, was destroyed along with the statehood of tsarist Russia.

3. The recovery stage of the system and its deployment in the Soviet era (from the mid-1920s to the late 1980s.). The realities of life and time dictated the need to create a higher education system in the Soviet Union. Factually speaking, the renewal (restoration) of military training of students began with the organization of the highest pre-prescription military training of students.

From the beginning of the Great Patriotic War, the re-establishment of the system of training military staff at civilian higher educational institutions played a significant role in ensuring the mobilization. In the first month of the war alone, 650 000 reserve officers were called up, many of whom had been trained at civilian higher educational institutions [10]. By the end of the war, military arts divisions at higher educational institutions began to re-establish; their main task was to regain military training of reserve officers.

In the postwar years, for various reasons, both objective (foreign political situation, goals of military construction and internal development of the country) and subjective nature (goals and directions of domestic and foreign policy after the death of I.V. Stalin) were significantly changed; the content and organization of the system of military training of students was repeatedly modified and defined more exactly. Meanwhile, until the early 1960s, the need for reserve officers vanished.

The turn towards the creation of officers' reserves along with the need to recreate the powerful Armed Forces in the Soviet Union was outlined with the beginning of the armament race, provoked by the Caribbean crisis in October 1962. In the 60-70s of the XX century, in the Soviet Union a powerful military training system (more than 500 military arts divisions and faculties) was established at the higher educational institutions. Despite the dimensions, this system was clearly adjusted and coordinated in all functional matters. Graduates of civilian higher educational institutions began to be called up for service in the army and navy on the positions of officers, some of them remained for career enlistee service.

By 1987, the structure of military training included 497 military arts divisions and departments of military training of civilian higher educational institutions; they were trained in all command, engineering and administrative-economic profiles, including a number of specialties in which higher military educational institutions were carried out. The military arts divisions provided the annual reproduction of more than 100 thousand reserve officers required, both for the reserve and for staff formations of all types of the Armed Forces of the USSR [10].

For the reasons of the insuperable forces (as it later turned out), leading to the destruction of the Soviet state in general, in particular, the system of military training of reserve officers in the 1980s entered into a crisis state which was characterized by the following factors:

- compulsory military training at civilian higher educational institutions;
- cancellation of deferment from the draft for students of higher educational institutions;
- low status of teachers of military arts divisions;
- low level of financing and provision (including modern equipment and technology) of military training at civilian higher educational institutions;
- reduction of military training level in relation to the level of teaching specialized disciplines in civil specialty;

at many higher educational institutions the profile and content of military training programs did not correspond to the profile and content of basic professional educational programs, etc..

In November 1989, the All-Union Student Forum adopted a resolution "On the restructuring in the sphere of military training of students of civilian higher and secondary specialized educational institutions of the country" [11]. Transparent students' presentations were supported by a significant part of the faculty of universities and institutes.

The reform of the training of reserve officers at civilian higher education institutions started in connection with changes in the social-political situation, with the introduction of new regulatory documents. The Regulations on the military training of students in officers' training programs were approved in 1990 [12].

New principles of organizing military training at civilian universities were formalized, according laws and regulations:

- the voluntary nature of training under the programs of reserve officers on the basis of the conclusion of the contract between the Ministry of Defense and the student;
- binding orientation of military training to the main specialties of the higher educational institution;
- computerization of the educational process and the introduction of modern teaching methods in military arts divisions;
- stimulation of teaching and research activities, strengthening the scientific potential of military arts divisions;
- attraction of young officers inclined to scientific and pedagogical activity to the military arts divisions;
- improving the quality of educational work with youth, the elimination of the course of party and political work;
- payment of additional scholarships to students, successfully mastering the program of military training, etc..

The reformation period, proclaimed by M.S. Gorbachev, was carried out both in relation to higher education, and in particular with regard to the system of military training in military arts divisions. The

result, to one degree or another, resembles the end of the second stage - the destruction of the state, the elimination of the higher education system in general (though not total, but with “destructive mutations”), in particular, the system of military training of reserve officers. The decline in the prestige of military service and the armed forces led to a sharp decrease in the motivation for military service, as well as military training at military arts divisions of universities and institutes. But above all, the implementation of new principles of organizing military training in universities has become impossible due to material reasons. We relate these regressive processes to the fourth stage, at the beginning of which the improvement of the military training system was practically stopped.

### **3. The modern stage of reforming the training system of reserve officers: its significance for the Far East Federal district of the country**

1. The period of reforming the training system of reserve officers that had been established in Soviet times, or the current stage of development, began in the late 1980s - early 1990s. Since the beginning of this period and to the present time, the constant reform of the system of military training at higher educational institutions has been not ceased. The contradictory nature of the implementing transformations, on the one hand, is due to the equivocation of the processes occurring in the post-Soviet space, and, on the other hand, to imbalances in global policy.

The number of military arts divisions and faculties of military training counted: in 1987 - 497, and in 1990 - 441 [11]. With the collapse of the USSR, a part of the higher educational institutions with provided military training turned out to be outside the Russian Federation. There were only 252 higher educational institutions in the country that preserved military arts divisions. [13].

With the beginning of reforms, after implementing of some attempts of structural reforms, including on the basis of foreign experience, liquidation mechanisms of the training system of reserve officers were launched in central institutions of higher education in the country by directive instructions from the Government of the Russian Federation and the ministries in charge of universities (Ministry of Education, Ministry of Defense, Ministry of Health).

In 1993, more than 2/3 of the total numbers of military arts divisions at civilian educational institutions were reduced (from 252 to 81 military arts divisions) [14].

The Resolution of the Government of the Russian Federation “On Approval of the List of Military Art Divisions at State Educational Institutions of Higher Professional Education” provided training only in engineering and technical specialties. Military departments that trained in many rare and knowledge-intensive military specialties, as well as military accounting specialties with a humanitarian focus were eliminated on the basis of directives. At the same time, many specialties had no analogues in the training system of career officers. In addition, citizens who were trained according to the training programs for reserve officers should have been called up for military service as an ordinary soldier.

The negative results of the transformations of the early 1990s, as well as the conclusions of scientific research conducted in this area, forced the state to revise the concept of the functioning of the training system of reserve officers, and from 1996 to 1998 an active process of restoring military training at higher educational institutions was carried out. Work on the restoration of military training in the following years was carried out with the active participation of academic councils of universities and institutes.

The approaches of the state and military authorities of the Russian Federation to the organization of military training at civilian higher educational institutions have been constantly changed since the late 1990s and the first decade of the 2000s. Therewith, it should be noted the positive aspects of the development of these events:

comprehension of the need to preserve the training system of reserve officers at civilian higher educational institutions was revealed as a result of an analysis of events, occurring at the turn of the centuries, as well as in the course of a systematic search;

the course on the formation and improvement of the legislative base has been outlined, a clear legal basis has been created for the development and functioning of the military training system at civilian higher education institutions;

the state assign the relevant funds for material support and provision of military education.

The creation of military training centers along with military arts divisions and faculties of military education was considered to be the intermediate result of the reform in 2008 [15]. The peculiarity of the military training centers was that the students, upon completion of their studies at the higher educational institutions, were obliged to enter the army service under contract on military positions to be replaced by officers, that is, in fact, these centers provided training of career officers [16].

1. In 2008, 37 military faculties and military arts divisions (there were about 250 in total) were transformed into military training centers. However at the same time, 167 faculties of military training, military arts divisions and departments of military and extreme medicine at state, municipal or state accredited in relevant areas of training (specialties) of non-state educational institutions of higher professional education were liquidated, 15 of them were in the Far East Federal district of the country. There were only 3 training military centers in the Far East Federal district from all the established ones. 68 faculties of military training and military arts divisions at federal state educational institutions of higher vocational education were created for preparing the mobilization reserve, and only 5 of them were located in the Far East Federal district of the country. The geography of their location is limited to three cities: Khabarovsk (two higher educational institutions), Vladivostok (two higher educational institutions) and Komsomolsk-on-Amur (one higher educational institution). It is obvious that such a number of educational institutions that carry out military training is not enough for the largest district in the region.

In 2013, the President of the Russian Federation, in order to create a skilled mobilization reserve, made a proposal: “to change the system of military training at higher educational institutions; to give all students the opportunity to undergo military training in the course of their studies and subsequent military gathering and receive a military specialty” [17]. Only in 2017, the relevant Federal Law [18] was adopted, which gives the right to full-time students of higher educational institutions that do not have military arts divisions (military education departments) to undergo military training in military arts divisions of other universities according to training programs for sergeants (soldiers) of the reserve. However, most students of higher educational institutions in the Far East Federal district didn’t have a possibility to use the right to undergo military training due to the number of objective reasons:

an insufficient number of higher educational institutions, where there are military arts divisions (faculties of military training);

lack of a mechanism for fulfillment the provisions of the Federal Law on the implementation of the right to undergo military training.

Currently, the latest round of military training reform at civilian higher educational institutions is based on the foundation of legal developments in modern Russia and is aimed at creating a unified structure that is permanent and flexible in real conditions to systematic changes of the requirements for quantitative and qualitative indicators of training of reserve officers. In 2019, 93 military training centers were established in place of the abolished military arts divisions, faculties of military training and military training centers in Russia, on the basis of the order of the Government of the Russian Federation [19]. There are 8 higher educational institutions in Far East Federal district, at which military training centers have been established. And although the geography of Far East higher educational institutions with military training centers has been expanded: three educational institutions in Vladivostok, one educational institution in each of the following cities: Ulan-Ude, Khabarovsk, Petropavlovsk-Kamchatsky, Chita and Komsomolsk-on-Amur, its number and location, on the other hand, don’t allow to properly implement the right of students to undergo military training.

1. The protectionist policy should be carried out in the state to prevent a massive outflow of population from the Far East Federal district. [20]. The authors of scientific articles (Ponomarev S.V., Loskutnikova E.A., Evseeva M.S., Teterina K.A.) offer various measures in this regard, in particular:

increase of the number of budget places at higher educational institutions;

introduction of unique educational programs for which training will be carried out only in the Far East Federal district;

organization of internships at relevant enterprises with subsequent employment for graduates;

introduction of deferment from the draft for young professionals, assistance in solving the housing question, etc..

In the light of the foregoing article, it seems necessary to supplement this list with measures to improve the training system of reserve officers in the course of reform, taking into account the problematic issues of the Far East Federal district, namely:

to enshrine in law higher educational institutions that do not have military training centers for universities that carry out military training and create mechanisms for the implementation of the right by all students to receive military specialties (for that purpose, to consider the issue of additional creation of military training centers or their branches in the universities of the Far East Federal district);

to introduce training in new military specialties in the military training centers of the higher educational institutions of Far East Federal district, including by means of their reduction in the central regions of the country;

to redistribute the state order for training officers, sergeants and reserve soldiers in the direction of increasing control figures in the Far East Federal district of the country.

#### **4. Conclusion**

Analyzing the content of the stages of originating, formation and development of the training system of reserve officers (the system of military training at civilian higher educational institutions), it is possible to reveal some inherent properties of the functioning of this system:

the system of military training at civilian higher educational institutions still remains a requested vital necessity of preserving and protecting the state (being one of the forms of military training, a part of military education, this system inherently plays its role in the training of career officers, but at the same time remains the basis for creating a mobilization reserve);

the system of military training at civilian higher educational institutions, as well as the education system as a whole (including military education), reflects and immediately responds to any internal political processes in the state. It is obvious that there is a mutual influence of the education system and students, the state and youth. The attitude of citizens to the state, to its Armed Forces is a very sensitive criterion, an indicator of the state's health and the political maturity of citizens.

Considering the system of military training at civilian higher educational institutions, as one of the factors determining the quality of development of the Far East Federal district of Russia, the formulated properties have a significant impact on the preservation of the main resource of this development - human potential.

In connection with the continuing reduction in the number of young people in the framework of the implementation of the "Concept of the demographic policy of the Far East Federal district of Russia for the period up to 2025" [21], it is planned to take a set of measures to organize educational migration to higher education institutions in the Far East Federal district from other regions of the Russian Federation. It is also planned to take a set of measures to retain young human resources in the Far East Federal district of Russia by means of special measures of supporting youth employment, state vocational education programs, and supporting young qualified professionals as well as young families. It stands to reason that the enforcement of the right to get a military specialty with obtaining military rank in the course of training at the higher educational institution, as well as the realization of the possibility of serving in the security forces of the state for the youth of the Far East Federal district of Russia is a serious argument against the desire to leave in search of the possibility of enforcement of these rights in the western regions of the country. On the other hand, manning and equipping of the Armed Forces on a contract basis with officers, sergeants and soldiers from the reserve in the Far East Federal district of Russia is, if not the main one, then at least the prevailing one due to the shortage of military staff. Thus, in 2016, the command of the Far East Military District was forced to send special

delegations to the central regions of the country in order to engage officers from the reserve to volunteer military service to the units and formations of the district [22].

Assessing the above properties of the training system of officers in the reserve, it is possible to formulate the principles underlying its development in the Far East Federal district:

the system of military training at civilian higher educational institutions should ensure the right of every student to receive training in military occupational specialties;

the system of preparation of mobilization reserves should be improved with the development of science and technology; it should meet the modern technological requirements of students' training;

the academic teaching staff in the system of military training of civilian higher educational institutions should obtain high, constantly improving qualifications that meet modern requirements;

the military training system at civilian higher education institutions, having a powerful, constantly updated educational and material base, should flexibly respond to qualitative and quantitative changes in the indicators of the state order in the existing military accounting specialties, and if necessary, have the potential to change and supplement military accounting specialties in a specific higher educational institution;

the system of military training at the higher education institutions of the Far East Federal district of Russia has always been, and remains the outpost of military-patriotic education, not only of citizens who are directly enrolled in military training programs, but also of all students of the higher education institution.

It is obvious that the effective achievement of goals in reforming the system of military training at civilian higher education institutions at the present stage is only possible if the following conditions are met and fulfilled:

clear formulation of the goals and objectives of the reforms;

conducting a comprehensive analysis of the past social-political changes, forecasting further vectors in the evolution of the system with lawmaking and improving its legal framework;

meaningful use of historical domestic and foreign experience of creating and comprehensively providing a training system of reserve officers.

Summing up, it is worth noting that the history of military training at civilian higher education institutions (as the subject of our study) is rooted in the distant past. It means that Russia has serious experience in preparing mobilization reserves in order to ensure the security of its regions, as well as deep traditions of education and military training and patriotic upbringing of citizens. The solution of many problems of the Far East Federal district of Russia depends on the use of this experience. The development and transformation of the structure and content of military training requires systematic study, comprehension in the context of certain historical events. It stands to reason, only taking into account the geopolitical features of the Far East Federal district of Russia, the state will be able to effectively reform the training system of reserve officers, objectively assess the processes occurring in this process, specifying the vectors for further changes, the necessity and dimension of additional managerial influences and points of force application for their implementation.

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