



Fraud in Russian Military Sanitoria

OE Watch Commentary: During the Soviet era, one of the primary benefits for military personnel (both active duty and veterans) was the opportunity to visit a sanatorium for recreation and health care. When the USSR collapsed, funding for these facilities was significantly reduced, and many sanatoria had to privatize some portion of their operations to stay afloat. Today, if they are able to secure a reservation, injured veterans and active duty personnel can pay reduced rates to visit most of these sanatoria. In the brief excerpt from the military weekly, *Voyenno-Promyshlennyy Kuryer (Military-Industrial Courier)*, the author complains how some “unscrupulous military pensioners” are falsifying records to gain access to these facilities.

The author begins by describing an officer who had “never been to Afghanistan, but when sending an application for spa treatment he constantly indicates that he has this privilege as a participant in the hostilities.” The officer’s wife also claims that she is “the wife of a participant in the hostilities” and because the regulation states that “combatants have a pre-emptive right to receive sanatorium-resort treatment,” the family is provided with a reservation. The author is indignant that the Ministry of Defense (MoD) does not have a better system to ascertain whether applicants are actually eligible for sanatorium visits, while “commanders of nuclear-powered ships and missile units, liquidators of the Chernobyl accident,” are ineligible.

The bulk of the article deals with the author’s many attempts to inform MoD authorities of this fraud, claiming that ultimately, he “had to turn to the administration of the President of the Russian Federation, and then to the chief military prosecutor of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation with a complaint.” Despite his dogged efforts to expose this swindle, he realizes that “impostors can continue to deceive the employees of the department of selling vouchers for military sanatoriums, posing as veterans of military operations, to enjoy the pre-emptive right to sanatorium-resort treatment.” He concludes by hoping that the “Russian defense minister will read the *Military-Industrial Courier* newspaper with this material and make the right decision” to fix this problem. **End OE Watch Commentary (Finch)**

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Source: Valery Gromak, “Санаторно-курортные войны,” [Spa Wars] *Voyenno-Promyshlennyy Kuryer* 8 July 2020. <https://vpk-news.ru/articles/57679>

Reserve captain Sergei Melnikov has never been to Afghanistan, but when sending an application for spa treatment he constantly indicates that he has a privilege as a participant of these hostilities. On November 25, 2018, for example, he sent an application to the Saki Military Clinical Sanatorium named after N.I. Pirogova. A day later, on November 27, his wife sent an application there, noting that she was the wife of a participant. So easily, with a shortage of places in sanatorium-medical institutions, some rogues solve these issues. And how does the Russian Ministry of Defense look at it?

...In accordance with the order of the Minister of Defense of the Russian Federation No. 333, combatants have a pre-emptive right to receive sanatorium-resort treatment, the Melnikov family was soon issued a notice on the provision of a permit. At the same time, military pensioners turned out to be ineligible — commanders of nuclear-powered ships and missile units, liquidators of the Chernobyl accident, who did not have the status of a participant in hostilities.

This fact became known to the holder of military awards, a participant in these hostilities, Colonel Reserve B. “How is this possible? - the colonel of the reserve was indignant. “Why do the employees of the department for the implementation of vouchers for military sanatoria, when considering applications for veterans of hostilities, not require supporting documents to weed out false veterans and their wives?”

Questions are fair. In November 2019, I redirected them to the military prosecutor of the Evpatoria garrison. A year has passed. But no changes at the level of existing statutory documents and orders in this regard appeared. Therefore, on November 26, 2019, the same question was addressed in writing to the Minister of Defense of the Russian Federation, Army General Sergei Shoigu.... The Minister of Defense ignored my appeal. Major General Igor Konashenkov, the head of the Department of Information and Mass Communications of the Ministry of Defense, also said nothing.

...That is, any unscrupulous military pensioner can safely write in the application for a ticket that he is a war veteran, and immediately get the pre-emptive right to sanatorium-resort treatment. When applying for a sanatorium, no one will ask him to confirm this “pre-emptive right”. It turns out that the order of the Minister of Defense of Russia dated March 15, 2011 No. 333 does not really explain anything and does not address this issue. Moreover, it introduces confusion and helps unscrupulous retirees of the Armed Forces to receive vouchers for sanatorium-resort treatment in an advantageous manner.

...In this regard, I had to turn to the administration of the President of the Russian Federation, and then to the chief military prosecutor of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation with a complaint.

What can I say? The circle, as they say, closed. This means that unscrupulous military pensioners and other impostors can continue to deceive the employees of the department of selling vouchers for military sanatoriums, posing as veterans of military operations, to enjoy the pre-emptive right to sanatorium-resort treatment.

*...It remains to be hoped that the Russian defense minister will read the *Military-Industrial Courier* newspaper with this material and make the right decision.*