



Time Management and Re-Enlistment

OE Watch Commentary: Even with better pay and benefits, the Russian military continues to struggle in attracting enough young men to serve as contract soldiers. Unless there is a radical change in the near future, plans to reach 500,000 contract soldiers by 2020 will likely not be met. Low re-enlistment rates may be a key factor as to why the Russian military has had such problems in expanding the number of contract soldiers. While the Ministry of Defense (MoD) apparently regards re-enlistment figures as classified, the accompanying excerpt from the centrist news source, *Kommersant*, suggests that harsh and arbitrary working conditions among the rank and file may be a primary reason as to why contract soldiers are reluctant to extend their military service.

The article focuses upon a recent directive issued by the Chief of the General Staff Valeriy Gerasimov, whereby he mandates that commanders maintain a realistic duty schedule – particularly with regard to their subordinates. According to the article, “commanders are prohibited from holding work conferences in the night hours and on days off and holidays, and they have been ordered to end the practice of keeping servicemen on duty ‘until the leadership departs.’” To ensure that this directive is followed, “the National Defense Management Center has been tasked to conduct daily monitoring of adherence to the plan of the day in the Army.”

The article suggests that instead of streamlining command and control, new technologies may actually be partially responsible for this poor time management. It points out that “in a number of military command and control agencies, the holding of conferences two or three times a day has become the norm,” forcing commanders “to spend a large part of their working time day in front of web cameras,” causing these leaders to delay making decisions, which then results in longer hours for subordinates. This “breach of working-time regulations” combined with a chronic shortage of housing for contract soldiers, “is the main factor influencing servicemen’s motivation to continue serving in the Armed Forces’ ranks.”

The current Kremlin leadership has made military readiness a top priority, and coupled with the ongoing conflicts in Syria and Ukraine, the Russian military operating-tempo remains intense. As this article illustrates, without better time-management, maintaining such a high-level of readiness will likely stymie Russian plans to build a more professionally-staffed military. **End OE Watch Commentary (Finch)**



Chief of the General Staff Valeriy Gerasimov.
Source: Kremlin.ru, <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/57480> CC-BY 4.0.

“The Armed Forces General Staff chief notes that, ‘in combination with problems of providing service and permanent housing in a number of regions,’ breach of working-time regulations is ‘the main factor influencing servicemen’s motivation to continue serving in the Armed Forces’ ranks.’”

Source: Ivan Safronov, “Валерий Герасимов взялся за расписание (Valeriy Gerasimov Has Taken Charge of the Schedule),” *Kommersant*, 3 September 2018. <https://www.kommersant.ru/doc/3731077>

Kommersant has learned that Valeriy Gerasimov, the Russian Federation [RF] Armed Forces General Staff chief, has ordered the commanders of districts, commanders of combat arms, and commanders in chief of branches of service to end the practice of breaching the working-time regulations in the troops. Henceforth, commanders are prohibited from holding work conferences in the night hours and on days off and holidays, and they have been ordered to end the practice of keeping servicemen on duty “until the leadership departs,” and also to exclude their continued presence at their workplaces during off-duty periods without necessity. The National Defense Management Center has been tasked to conduct daily monitoring of adherence to the plan of the day in the Army....

“An inspection has revealed that, in a number of military command and control agencies, the holding of conferences two or three times a day has become the norm,” the RF Armed Forces General Staff chief writes. “A tendency to abuse the conduct of conferences in videoconference mode is being observed. As a result, individual commanders are compelled to spend a large part of their working time day in front of web cameras and to begin work with the personnel in the afternoons, and, as a rule, beginning with another conference.” The general notes that the practice is continuing in the Army of setting tasks with a stipulation of the shortest deadline for executing them (“immediately,” “by tomorrow morning,” “by Monday”), which results in a breach of the servicemen’s working-time regulations and in getting them to work at night and on days off and holidays.

...Therefore, [Col.] Gen. Gerasimov notes, personnel suffer a buildup of tiredness and their ability to work is reduced, which negatively impacts their emotional and psychological state, increases the social tension in military collectives, and, in his opinion, even becomes a cause of family breakdown. The Armed Forces General Staff chief notes that, “in combination with problems of providing service and permanent housing in a number of regions,” breach of working-time regulations is “the main factor influencing servicemen’s motivation to continue serving in the Armed Forces’ ranks.”

...The majority of complaints were connected with the non-standardized work schedule and the difficulties involved in getting their allotted days off....