

**Sargsyan Alexander Armenak, Psychological Issues of Military Intelligence, Training Manual, Yerevan, Lusabats Publishing House, 2013, 83 pages.**



**Alexander Sargsyan**

Alexander Sargsyan,<sup>1</sup> a participant in the Artsakh Liberation War and an awarded police colonel, authored the textbook "Psychological Problems of Military Intelligence."

The booklet is valuable as the author participated in the Artsakh war and his research is based on his and his comrade-in-arms' military experience. In July 1992, when the Azerbaijan armed units and the Soviet former military launched a large-scale attack, A. Sargsyan and his squad were surrounded, and willingly or unwillingly he was forced to do disruptive-reconnaissance operations in the enemy's

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<sup>1</sup> Alexander Armenak Sargsyan (1952-2015) was born in Mataghis village of Martakert region of Nagorno Karabakh. A police colonel. In 1959, he entered the secondary school of Mataghis, in 1967 continued his education at the Yerevan Shahinyan School of Physics and Mathematics, graduating in 1969.

In 1970-1972, he served in the Soviet Armed Forces. In 1973-1977, he studied at the Yerevan Machinebuilding College. After graduating, he got a degree in mechanics. In 1979-1985, he studied at the evening department of the Polytechnic Institute after K. Marx. After graduating, he received a degree in mechanical engineering. Along with studying, in 1979-1983, he worked as a mechanic in the 2976 military vehicle part, and from 1983 to 1985 as chief mechanic of the same institution. In the same year he studied as postgraduate at the Armenian State Pedagogical Institute after Kh. Abovyan (extramural). Since 1985 - Chief Engineer, since the same year - Director of "Hayaviashin" Trust Automobile Company.

The vehicles of the convoy took part in the liquidation of the Chernobyl disaster. After the earthquake of December 7, 1988, under his personal ordinance, without the permission of superior, he moved the cars working in Slavutich to Spitak and Leninakan, the disaster zone. For that reason he had a dispute with Voronin, the deputy minister of Civil Aviation of the USSR. He sent 14 of the transported cars to Artsakh (6 passenger cars to Mataghis, 2 to Tonashen, 3 to Hakob Kamari, 2 to Dastakert and 1 milk vehicle to Talish). "Jraberd" charitable union was formed which was chaired by Nanagulyan. A. Sargsyan was involved in the council and was in charge of procuring weapons and ammunition and for organizing the squads. Valerik Ghambaryan, Kamo Mirzoyan, Valery Nasachenko and Valerik Hovhannisyan aided him. On March 19, 1991, a 7 member group headed to Dastakert. Those 7 were 1. Me, 2. Oleg Grigoryan (died), 3. Mirzoyan Kamo, 4. Ghambaryan Valerik (died), 5. Simonyan Sokrat, 6. Barsegyan Sergo of Sergey, 7. Barsegyan Valerik, Yedigaryan Valerik (joined in Mataghis). We were armed with six automatic rifles (made in Hayelectro factory), 5.45 mm diameter, 1 AK-47, homemade grenades and homemade mortars. They were sent to organize self-defending detachments from the locals. He was known as Alik of Maraghis or BTR Alik. He commanded a defending squad. The squad of Maraghis operated under the command of Ashot Ghulyan (Bekor Ashot, 1959-1992) of blessed memory. He was wounded twice in the battles. After the war he was in service in the educational complex of the Police of the RA and was a senior lecturer in the department of technical subjects. Awarded with "For Combat Service", "For NKR Military Service", "20th Anniversary of the Defense Army", "Drastamat Kanayan", "Admiral Isakov", "5th Brigade" medals and "Motherly Gratitude" commemorative medal.

Books: Basics of Higher Mathematics (methodical manual), Yerevan 2000, Motor Preparedness (instructional manual), Yerevan 2000, Handbook of Higher Mathematics Problems, Yerevan, 2000, Motor Preparedness (instructional manual for practical training), Yerevan, 2002, Ensuring the Safety of Road Traffic (Instructional Manual) Review, Yerevan 2003, Social-psychological violence and aggression, Yerevan, 2006.

rear.<sup>2</sup> It must be stated that nowadays little research is available that combines theoretical and practical knowledge.

In the preface of the research, A. Sargsyan substantiates the goals and objectives of the research. Notwithstanding the fact that modern armed forces are equipped with the latest military equipment and various apparatus, the significance of the human factor should not be diminished as the importance of a military operation largely depends on it.



**From right to left: Ruslan Marandyan, Ruben Sahakyan and Alexander Sargsyan**

During combat operations and combat protection, many factors affect a soldier, including a scout that in some cases can contribute to the increase of combat capabilities, and in some cases to a decrease. Any military operation, no matter how carefully and in detail planned, is subject to change. "Modern warfare imposes extreme tension on the soldier's physical and psychological capabilities. First of all, the war is an emergency situation, which is a real threat to life."<sup>3</sup> Any operation is constantly subject to change. According to Sargsyan, "even any military plan, no matter how genius it is,

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<sup>2</sup> In the rear of the enemy, three trucks carrying 14 tons of fuel were destroyed. A. Sargsyan remembers. "We were reconciled to death. My health was getting worse as time went on. We had no problem with water, because there were springs all around us. The food problem was serious. We gathered wheat from the fields, but as we could not light a fire to roast the wheat, we filled the holes in the stones with water, left the wheat there for 4 to 5 hours to swell, and then we ate it. In addition, there was a glycyrrhiza plant, which was 20 times sweeter than sugar, and we used this as a food, as well. We treated the wounds with a plant called capparitis, which disinfected the wounds well. Uncle Ohan taught us all these wisdoms. During the First World War he was a volunteer and fought in Andranik's volunteer detachment "(A. Sargsyan told us this information – R.S.).

<sup>3</sup> Sargsyan Al. A., Psychological Issues of Military Intelligence. Textbook, Yerevan, Lusabats Publishing House, 2013: 8.

cannot predict changes in the mental world of a soldier during the fights." (p.8). It follows from that "it is necessary to have a psychological model of combat." (p.9).

Based on this, A. Sargsyan highlights the role of military psychologists. The need for such a specialist has long been acknowledged "in several countries where universities of military psychology exist, and special psychology subdivisions are successfully functioning in the armed forces." (p.6). Therefore, the armed forces cannot function effectively without psychological service.

The author examines the manifestation of fear in combat situations. According to him, one cannot unequivocally claim that fear is a purely negative emotion: "It has its positive aspects, as well. The phenomenon we call caution in reality is a mild manifestation of fear necessary for every person, especially the soldier. However, the highest degree of the fear is not expressed on the battlefield, as in such situations any soldier sees his comrades-in-arms by his side. The image changes dramatically when we speak about a field of military activities, such as intelligence". (p.40).

In general, fear emerges in situations where a person is not used to acting on his own. "In the field of psychological training of a scout, great attention should be paid to the development of the ability to act on his own. The most important thing for a scout is to control his own emotions. A military scout, in addition to having comprehensive knowledge, must first of all be endowed with high emotional stability. Of course, emotional stability does not mean the complete absence of fear." (p.13).

It is a priority to train the servicemen involved in the relevant military intelligence unit so that the feeling of fear does not turn into dread. The scout "must take a conscious risk. Only then the fear will not restrain him. A person is not afraid when he knows for the sake of what he is working." (p.16).

In the part of the study "Psychological methods of overcoming fear" A. Sargsyan examines the methods that help the soldier overcome the fear. As a simplest example, he refers to a method used in ancient times.

It is well known that the human psyche is affected by darkness since childhood, which accompanies it throughout life. Why? According to A. Sargsyan, "Darkness conceals the real world from us, we wander in darkness, looking for opportunities to make the environment visible. Uncertainty creates anxiety, which can completely engulf a person, turning him into a weak-willed being." (p.48). Therefore, it is a priority to explain to the scout that darkness is his most loyal ally, as it allows him to act unnoticed in enemy territory.

One of the reasons for fear is obscurity. However, it must be taken into consideration that the same fear pursues the enemy. During relevant conversations or lectures, it is necessary to explain to the scout that the enemy soldiers are more afraid of a scout, "because the scout becomes a hunter" and they become prey. Especially those who are safeguarding must always be careful, because they do not know where or when to expect a surprise attack. On the contrary, a scout plans his actions in advance, even the ways of retreat. This idea should be strengthened in the

consciousness of a military scout. He has many more advantages than the enemy.

As A. Sargsyan correctly states, there is nothing easier than giving advice, therefore it is necessary to apply theoretical knowledge in practice, which will allow overcoming fear.

Colonel A. Sargsyan highlights the maintaining and ensuring the discipline in the Armed Forces. It is not possible to apply civil interpersonal relations in the army. Referring to his combat experience, A. Sargsyan affirms that discipline itself often becomes an effective method of overcoming fear in military units.

In the part of the study "Methods of overcoming negative emotional states" A. Sargsyan examines the ways of overcoming negative emotional states among servicemen. According to him, the most disturbing thing for a soldier is the uncertainty, which causes overstrain and anxiety. "Soldiers prefer to know the truth, whatever it may be." (p.55). It should be noted that Garegin Nzhdeh realized this truth in his time. For a soldier to be psychologically trained, it is necessary to get rid of negative habits, such as unjustified austerity. Under such conditions, an illusion of discipline will be established in the military unit or subdivision.

According to A. Sargsyan, when the Armenian Army was under formation, it was expedient to have a concept of the Armed Forces, and necessary means for it lacked at that time, as the Armenian people were forced to defend themselves from enemy attacks. According to him, first of all, subdivisions of psychological support should be formed, which would "raise the fighting spirit of the servicemen, to eradicate the vicious interpersonal manifestations, to eliminate the dangerous mental states." Of course, those who want to serve in such units should not only have in-depth professional knowledge, but also be familiar with military service from their own experience." (p.56).

The training of a reconnaissance unit for military campaigns begins with setting a military task and which must have several options as the reconnaissance group may encounter unpredictable changes of situation. As colonel A. Sargsyan mentions, "the military task must be of utter importance. For instance, disabling the communication means or the equipment of the enemy, capture **"the language"** (p.78). etc. By and large, the main goal of a task is to carry out disruptive actions in the enemy's rear.

At the same time, in parallel with the main task, there may be additional tasks, such as revealing the location of deployment of enemy military units and equipment, the concentration of the main forces, and so on. It is of utter importance to detect enemy's military reserves, photographing airports, etc.

The reconnaissance group in enemy's territory must always beware of ambushes. According to the author, the so-called "blind ways" – the poorly examined places in enemy's territory - are especially unpredictable (p.74).

The successful implementation of a military task is greatly dependent on how the ways of retreat will be planned and concealed. A. Sargsyan describes several methods of disguising the retreat, interrogating the captives and checking the truthfulness of the extracted information.

A. Sargsyan describes the profession of military scout as "elite military profession. If one becomes a soldier, a scout is born to be him." (p.80). According to him, the profession of military scout is essential for our armed forces, so it must be constantly improved. According to Sargsyan, "Risk is the father of intelligence, and caution is the mother" (p.74).

Let us add that A. Sargsyan wanted to continue his research on military psychology, but untimely death did not allow him to fulfill that intention.

**Ruben Sahakyan**

*Doctor in History, Institute of History, NAS RA.*

***Translated from the Armenian by Mushegh Ghahriyan***