
SPECIALIZED MILITARY JOURNALISM IN THE SYSTEM OF MASS COMMUNICATION DURING THE RUSSIAN-UKRAINIAN WAR (2014-2022): COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF WORLD AND UKRAINIAN MASS MEDIA

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Abstract

The article gives an analysis of world military publications and militarized journalism in comparison with the Ukrainian comparables in historical retrospective view and in the context of Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, which is still ongoing. Special attention is paid to international military-focused media standards and specific military (mainly print) mass media: *Stars and Stripes*, *Milli təhlükəsizlik və hərbi elm-lər*, *Narodna Armiia*, *Narodna Armiia (People's Army)*, *Army Inform*, *Officer of Ukraine*, *on occasion – The Washington Post*, *The New York Times* and others. In the process of research, it was found out that military journalism has almost completely transformed into universal journalism. And for some reason, specialized printed editions of military focus have closed down in recent years. And if in Ukraine it is associated with the denationalization of the mass media, then abroad, it is most likely connected with the processes of digitalization and the separation of journalism from ideologies and state policies. As a result, the remaining military mass media are also changing their format, approaching global brands such as *The Washington Post*, *The New York Times*, *Le Mond*. However, this does not prevent them from putting information and analytics about Russia's war against Ukraine in the foreground and highlighting key points as reality and the principle of objectivity require. And although the Ukrainian mass media in this regard are far from ideal, their ideological bias should be attributed to the war, an organically inherent ritual model of communication and still a close connection with the socialist past. Since military journalism is currently working in extreme conditions, it is difficult to draw comprehensive conclusions, but it is already clear that specialized military media are relevant and promising for scientific research.

Key words: *Military Mass Media, War, Ukraine, the US, Eurasia, Propaganda, Standard*

INTRODUCTION

The full-scale invasion of Russia into Ukraine on February 24, 2022 stimulated scientific studies in the realm of specialized (military) mass media activity. Until now, we have believed that such journalism was not necessary, because in the period of armed conflicts, every publication and its employees involuntarily become military, since it is impossible not to write about the war, even about completely civilian problems. This issue was also covered in the international monograph published before the full-scale war, “The role of technology in the socio-economic development of the post-quarantine world”, that came out two years ago in Katowice [Kosiuk 2020]. Frankly speaking, our opinion has not changed until now, but the prepositional assumption requires additional confirmation. And now we will not once again analyze the leading mass media of Ukraine and the world (perhaps only in some cases), but we will turn to the specialized media and monitor whether they exist, how they work, whether they changed at the beginning of the war between Russia and Ukraine and the most important focus is how they differ from ordinary ones. For the research, we will use content analysis as a way of obtaining information from search engines, comparison and analogy to compare different mass media, modelling (to determine types of communication) and chronological analysis to determine the history of development and the process of mass media transformations, etc.

In Ukraine, the question “How to revive military journalism?” appeared back in December 2014, when the number of media professionals killed at the beginning of the Ukrainian-Russian war broke all anti-records. The discussion, in which theoreticians and practitioners took part, arose on the pages of the popular edition *Den* (Day) [Ghryvinskyj 2014]. Then the diverging views were expressed by the experts: some believed that military journalism and specialized media were necessary and their representatives should study and practically improve and take the oath at military universities, others thought that during the war all journalism is transformed into military and any universal journalist should be able to work in the zone of armed conflicts. We agree with the latter opinion and as a theoretical basis we will use the work of authoritative foreign authors on reporting and news production, who do not single out military journalism. For instance, Mitchell Stephens [Stivens 2008], offers the following list of topics in the approbation chapter “Reporting the News” such as “Tragedies” (officials, witnesses, doctors), “Crime” (the police, courts), “Politics” (meetings, speeches, press conferences, campaigns, polls, investigations, protests, economy, sanctions).

International legislation will also be an important basis for our research. The rights and duties of journalists in war zones are defined by IHL (International Humanitarian Law), the norms of which are recognized by most countries of the world. IHL main documents are the Hague Conventions and Declarations of 1899 and 1907 (the Law of the Hague), the Geneva Conventions on protection of war victims (1949) and Additional Protocols to them (1977) (the Law of Geneva) and United Nations General As-

sembly Resolutions. In particular, the Law of the Hague determines the norms for the use of weapons and aspects of protection of all those who are in the front-line zone and directly in hot spots, but they are not military personnel (civilians, prisoners, wounded, etc.). Thus, the Hague law defines the means and methods of warfare and the use of weapons, and the Geneva law defines the standards of protection of those who accidentally find themselves in the conflict zone. Collectively, humanitarian law is used by the International Committee of the Red Cross, which combined both laws into one document [Buromenjskyj 2016].

Rule 34 of International Humanitarian Law states that “Civilian journalists engaged in professional missions in areas of armed conflict must be respected and protected as long as they are not taking a direct part in hostilities.” [Rudjuk 2004]. The direct rights of journalists are fixed in Convention respecting the Laws and Customs of War on Land (1907), Convention relative to the Treatment of Prisoners of War (1949) and in Protocol I Additional to the Geneva Conventions relating to the Protection of Victims of International Armed Conflicts.

There have always been two categories of media professionals: military media soldiers who are permanently accredited to armed conflict zones and independent media workers sent by specific mass media, which have the legal right to send journalists “to places of armed conflicts, to the location of terrorist acts and the elimination of dangerous criminal groups” [Rudjuk 2004]. Both categories are civilians who are under the protection of the Geneva Convention and the relevant provisions of Additional Protocol I (1977).

The specified legislative norms separately refer to the duties of military journalists and war reporters, it is stated that not all and not any information can be recorded and disclosed, in particular plans of special units, which constitute the secret of investigations; the number of weapons and equipment, places of dislocation, statements, reports, acts of terrorist organizations; propaganda texts; own analytics, etc. First of all, the published materials must contain a specific, genre-driven list of facts and opinions that are not classified as “secret” (due to military secrecy). Particular attention should be paid to the identification of experts who give comments and the names of witnesses and victims should be clearly written, because their condition is monitored by relatives and friends. In general, the triad (experts, witnesses, victims) should be balanced: opposition experts, several witnesses who observed the phenomenon from different angles, victims who can speak unemotionally and have a more or less aesthetic appearance. This is especially important in reports (however, you cannot “expose” the faces of the participants if it threatens someone’s life).

The greatest attention should be paid to the officiality of the sources. And even the most respected expert sources should be checked: you have to take into account the opinions of opponents and direct participants of the events. If necessary, use refutations and additions. This is not a sign of poor quality or deficiencies – information circulates quickly, becomes more expressive and needs to be clarified. In critical

cases, one should rely on self-censorship and remember that a journalist is obliged to remain neutral, even if they are not indifferent to what is happening. In the news it is not allowed to give the floor to the leaders of terrorists to voice slogans about infringement of the territorial integrity, preaching the ideology of violence and military aggression. There may be exceptions in the situations when the speakership is given to the head of an enemy country. And that only in order to confirm undeniable facts and identify war criminals. By the way, the entirely patriotic positions of all the participants in the journalistic material also arouse fair suspicions. In order to clearly balance arguments and facts and solve the problem, it is better to conduct a live talk show, and write materials based on its results (not forgetting the format of the genre in which we put them). However, there will always be complaints against journalists, as they are in professional opposition to everyone.

Only a journalist who has the trust of the editorial office, the support of his colleagues, the resources for self-defence and confidence in their own safety can act in a qualified and unbiased manner. The mass media that sent a journalist are held responsible for violations of international standards.

Moral and ethical norms and rules of behaviour function separately; they do not seem to be strictly regulated (although they are fixed in codes of ethics [Lytvyn 2008]) and are a matter of conscience and self-censorship. In the context of violations of ethical norms, the names of journalists are often mentioned, e.g. Kevin Carter, who, while recording the war, between helping the victims and “great shots” chose the latter. Even after receiving the highest awards, such media persons bear a heavy moral responsibility. They cannot endure it and take their own lives.

To analyze and compare military publications, we will use the following criteria: content, readership, internal policy, authorship and mass media structure; design quality, frequency, volume, circulation, etc. [Ghurjjeva 2006]. Observance of professional norms, coverage of important topics, reflection and actualization of key problems and search for their solutions are considered as markers of quality journalism. And although special-purpose publications concentrate on their own topics, this fact does not deprive them of the need to adhere to domestic and international standards.

1. FOREIGN MILITARY PUBLICATIONS. EXPERIENCE OF EURASIA AND THE USA

There are not so many specialized military mass media in the world, unless they are, of course, classified (according to the terms of their own Charter). In Europe, for example, we do not find such links on the official websites of the ministries of defence. However, as we have witnessed time and again, important information of a military nature immediately appears in all the world's leading mass media, which have their own correspondents in the hot spots of the planet or have access to world news agencies. In this regard, Asia is no different from Europe (we found newspaper *Azərbaycan Ordusu* and magazines *Hərbi Bilik* [Azərbaycan 2022], *Milli təhlükəsizlik və hərbi elmlər* only at the website of Ministry of Defence of Azerbaijan in the tabbed section “Military

Press” (other sites are either closed to third parties, such as the Ministries of Defence of Tajikistan and Turkey, or do not contain links to mass media), however, these mass media also ceased to exist in 2018, 2019, and 2020. The remarkable thing is that it happened before the beginning of the Second Karabakh War. As of August 16, 2022 the website of the Ministry of Defence of Azerbaijan does not even contain a mention of Russia’s war against Ukraine. Instead, there are many reports about shelling of the state border by Armenia, training in Turkey, visits to Iraq, etc. Since there are no printed editions in Europe and Asia, and websites are rather promotional mass media, because all organizations, institutions, and informal communities have them now, we turn to the publication of the US Ministry of Defence *Stars and Stripes* [Stars and 2022], which has been issued since 1861 and has a special status: it is designed for contingents of the Armed Forces of the United States of America stationed abroad. In this way, we seem to unite Eurasia and the USA into informational integrity.

It is immediately obvious that the mass media is quite independent as for its military status: the issue of freedom of speech was implicitly discussed here even during the First World War. Contributors to *Stars and Stripes* are civilian and military staff of the US government and special correspondents, who work in Germany, Italy, Japan, Korea, Spain, Great Britain, the Middle East and actually in Washington. Offices were temporarily opened in Guam, Paris, Honolulu, Brussels, Vienna, Casablanca, Belfast and other cities (we did not find information about dislocations on the territory of Ukraine). Journalists accompany the armed forces during wars, military exercises, peacekeeping missions on land and at sea. Until the early 90s, the publication was a paper edition, and then a website appeared. Until the present day, several original issues of *Stars and Stripes* have been preserved, which were published as facsimile reproductions by the AEF publishing association back in 1920 (these are pages of issues published during the First World War). Rarities can be viewed in the funds of Ohio State Libraries.

The newspaper periodically wins in various nominations; in particular, during the Second World War it repeatedly received the Pulitzer Prize (for cartoons by editorial cartoonist Bill Mauldin and publications by Mark Watson, Russell Jones, Nan Robertson, etc.). Among the newspaper staff periodically were journalists Andy Rooney and Steve Kroft; poet and songwriter Shel Silverstein; comic book artist Tom Sutton; writers Gustav Hasford and Ralph G. Martin; painter and cartoonist Paul Fontaine; television news correspondent Tony Zappone; cartoonist Vernon Grant, Hollywood photographer Phil Stern, Allen Morrison and others.

It is difficult to call this publication independent, because the military media have always been censored, so to speak, by their very nature. However, the level of objectivity here mostly depends not on the status, but on the professionalism and steel-like hardness of a journalist. In particular, when in 2008 the Pentagon banned *Stars and Stripes* from covering the reactions of troops stationed abroad to the US presidential election, their own correspondents in the Middle East and Europe ignored this decision and were held responsible.

Regular readers of *Stars and Stripes* are considered to be American military personnel and their families (mostly those who are outside the country). In fact, a wider au-

dience is interested in the publication, as it does not differ from global brand media in terms of content and competes successfully, making materials publicly available and free of charge (which in itself is already a rarity for well-promoted mass media). Over time, the newspaper acquired a special status. Now it is a member of Defence Media Activity (DMA), which, in its turn, is a part of PR Office at the United States Department of Defence. As a result, *Stars and Stripes* works in three directions: European, Pacific, Middle Eastern. Depending on the localization, the materials may be different and may not coincide in the analytical dimension. As a rule, weekend issues are produced for Europe and Pacific Region on Friday, and issues for Middle East are from Friday to Sunday.

The semantics of the newspaper name was outlined in 1987, when the U.S. Congress adopted “Stars and Stripes forever” as the official National March. The thought-out media concept is complemented by a logo made in the form of interweaving of two national flags and a brand red and blue font (8 pages of the publication are in colour, the rest are in black and white) with exclusively own, not network or ordered, images (real-time and archive), as an exception, there are photos from official sources.

Stars and Stripes also hides some (obviously the most resonant) materials and offers to purchase them for a separate fee, however, unlike other mass media, as an option, it presents an absolutely free monthly access to the digital space. This way you can get exclusive access to innovative digital features, multimedia publications and photos. The readership also gets free access to the website and mobile app (with reports on military events, coverage of veterans’ issues, archival photos of the day and access to protected information from planetary US bases) for monthly or annual subscriptions. The electronic version can be gifted to friends and community members. So far as it is always unique information that is constantly updated, even in social networks the newspaper has more than a million branded stable readers.

The monthly subscription in 2020 was 3.99 USD. The annual one is 39.99 USD. A two-year subscription saves \$10. You can use the demo for \$0.99 or \$39.99 for four weeks. The digital version provides unlimited access to independent content. The subscription also includes access to the mobile application with more readable fonts and a more convenient interface. The application supports both Apple and Android devices. The package of services is complemented by a free email distribution of news, weekly exclusives, internal analytics, and information about veterans, military stories and news from Europe. It is only necessary to choose one of the newsletters to consume relevant information. The editors do not offer to send the full electronic version of the publication, obviously due to its large volume, but you can find it on the official website in the tab ePaper.

Key headings: “War”, “United States”, “Nation”, “World”, “Ranking” (Sport), “Comics”, “Crosswords”, “Faces”, “Opinions”, “Currency rate” and “Weather”. Each material is authorized immediately after the title (according to the established pattern of scien-

tific publications). We are going to analyze separate issues of *Stars and Stripes* (till February, 2022 and during the full-scale Russian invasion into Ukraine).

The issue from November 12, 2020 opens with a photo of a mother and child undergoing a PCR test. In this way, the publication focuses attention on the main problem of 2020 – the COVID-19 pandemic. The three most important, in the editor's opinion, materials about the events in Iraq (a personal story of a warrior), military faces of show business and sport are presented above. Readers' attention is immediately drawn to the rhyming slogan "However you read us, wherever you need us" and faces of authors who you can be in touch with. Advertising of world brands also catches the eye (in the analyzed issue it is "Honda").

As military communication is specific and takes place according to a ritual pattern [Kosjuk 2012], newspaper interviews are more like essays with inserts of expert comments. Informative journalism is realized according to the established news format in the form of notes and correspondence about the White House, opening of the Army Museum on Veterans' Day, Trump's arrival there, etc. There are also provocative and secular sketches such as "Female hit a 74-year-old woman with a sandwich". In a separate rubric-appendix *Stars and Stripes* is conducting a survey among members of deployed teams about the best local entertainment, services, facilities and destinations on and off military bases. The result of survey "Best of the Pacific" becomes a kind of guide for those interested. The sixteenth page presents humorous comics, crosswords and cryptograms (with answers to the previous ones). Next to them there are banners with the QR-code from which a Smartphone usually invites us to the publication's official website.

Separate materials from the archive (1.2 million historical tomes) are also permanently highlighted, mainly from the period of the world wars and from the hot spots of the planet in Europe, Northern Ireland, the Mediterranean Sea, separately – in Africa and others.

Today, the newspaper is published five times a week and consists of 40-64 pages. With the beginning of the full-scale invasion of Russia into Ukraine, the emphasis spontaneously shifted to our state... For example, on August 14, 2022 the flagship publication was "On the Kherson front lines, little sign of a Ukrainian offensive". It is about the importance for the Armed Forces of Ukraine to retake Kherson, however, it is clear that this is unacceptable for the Russians, so the publication honestly reports that the situation is dead-end and it is unlikely that victory on the southern front should be expected in the near future [Morris 2022]. The cover story seems to be "overgrown" with other materials, forming the central nave. Satellite publications discuss the demand for the supply of additional weapons for the war in Ukraine, report on the dangerous situation in Energodar at the nuclear plant, outline the level of China-Taiwan confrontation and emphasize the shaky stability of the Taliban regime in Afghanistan. As a consequence, the most essential information gets into the epicentre. And, what is important, it is covered critically and impartially.

In order to be non-biased, let's look at the content of the website dated a month ago (July 14, 2022). At that time, the material "Air Defence" became central. It stated that NATO would deploy missile defences along the eastern edges of the Alliance to strengthen defence to protect against any potential threats that could arise from a full-scale Russian invasion into Ukraine. Then, for this purpose, the leaders of US, France, Germany and others even visited a number of Border States and monitored the situation.

To see the general picture of the fullness of materials about Ukraine, we will apply content analysis by keyword (we only select the publications that are a month old). On July 14, 2022 by link "Ukraine" we see materials about the blockade of Kalinin-grad by the Baltic citizens, the visit of the head of the Russian Federation Vladimir Putin to Iran and talks with President Ebrahim Raisi on the sidelines of the summit of the Caspian States in Ashgabat. Among other things, it is noted that Iran is increasing uranium enrichment, suppressing dissent and deepening ties with Russia, thereby challenging the United States and Europe. The material for July 13, 2022 shows how a Russian opposition politician and municipal deputy of the Krasnoselsky District Ilya Yashin is standing in a cage in the courtroom at the Basmanny District Court of Moscow. They write that the system imprisoned the oppositionist for criticizing its armed forces. It is also noted that Yashin is one of the very few well-known oppositionists who did not leave Russia, despite the unprecedented pressure of the authorities on dissidents. As you can see, under the name "Ukraine" the site publishes materials about Russia, fitting them in the context of the war with Ukraine. And this means that our state still loses in terms of its self-worth for America. Information about Ukraine becomes relevant and consumed only in tandem with Russia and the full-scale war. Therefore, the publication does not create false propaganda tricks and shows the situation as it is.

We can state that the most popular military mass media is not much different from other world media that work according to the principle of universality. *The Washington Post* is even ahead of *Stars and Stripes* in some respects: it opened a bureau for military issues in Ukraine in May 2022. In July *The New York Times* did it too. Of course, it should be taken into account that journalists from *Stars and Stripes* are, probably, secretly and constantly in the war zone. In order to see a clearer picture of the daily content connected with information about the war in Ukraine in all three publications, let's try to compare the issues of the three newspapers as of August 18, 2022 (we will analyze headings of articles, announcements and leads).

The Washington Post [The Washington 2022] reports, that "In Ukraine, a Russian mercenary group steps out of shadows. Wagner's infamous group is recruiting. Killers are only welcome". There are also discussions about the situation in Kharkiv, the UN discussion of the nuclear threat due to provocations at the Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant, new strategies of the Armed Forces of Ukraine in the occupied Crimea.

The New York Times [The New York 2022] announces the UN discussions of grain exports and nuclear safety, continuation of reburials of numerous victims in Bucha, indignation of Turkey and Russia about the fact that one of the sleepy Greek resorts becomes a US weapons centre.

Stars and Stripes [Stars and 2022] points out, “On Thursday, April 28, 2022 Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy is going to receive his Turkish colleague and the head of the UN for negotiations regarding the implementation of the agreement on the restoration of grain exports from Ukraine, the unstable situation at the Russian-occupied nuclear power plant and diplomatic efforts aimed at ending the war”. Further, it is reported that Russia is deploying hypersonic missiles in its Baltic exclave; Ukrainians are fleeing the bleak life in Russian-occupied Kherson; Trevor Reed, a former prisoner in Russia, calls on President Joe Biden and US Congress to classify the Russian Federation as a state-sponsor of terrorism.

So, all three newspapers singled out the most important topics: discussions at the UN on nuclear safety and grain transportation and added some more actualities using their own sources and authorship. However, *Stars and Stripes* gets the top prize in the specialized field if only because the other information in it also concerns military problems in Afghanistan, the DPRK, South Korea, Somalia, etc. The newspaper also covers civilian topics, but it focuses on its own specialization, therefore, in our deep conviction, it is an example of the highest quality military mass media that does not violate either the Statute or international legislation.

2. SPECIALIZED MILITARY JOURNALISM IN UKRAINE

Until recently, the Ministry of Defence of Ukraine was also directly involved in the implementation of state defence policy. And it was in charge of the functioning of military publications such as *Narodna Armiiia* (People’s Army), *Viisko Ukrainy* (Army of Ukraine) and others. However, reforms took place four years ago, as a result of which specialized mass media were reduced to a digital minimum. How it happened, why and whether it was necessary, we will try to find out.

On December 29, 2018, an announcement appeared on the website of the Central Printed Body of the Ministry of Defence of Ukraine *Narodna Armiiia* that this issue was the last. The Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine enacted the Law of Ukraine “On Reforming State and Communal Printed Media” [Burmaghin 2017], by closing all military-related paper publications (which were subject to denationalization). This is how the almost century-long history of the printed military press came to a sad end. However, the field, and everything that happened in the zone of the ATO (Anti-terrorist Operation), later the OOS (Joint Forces Operation), still required specialized coverage of the events about the recapture, stabilization and revival of the occupied territories of Donbas and Crimea. In order to save the situation, the Ministry of Defence initiated changes and additions to the media legislation. However, it was not possible to save the traditional mass media and the journalists were scattered and went who where,

mainly to the newly created Internet resource *Army Inform*, which should be discussed separately. In the meantime, following the chronology of events, we are going to consider the concept of the oldest military edition of Ukraine.

Like *Stars and Stripes*, *Narodna Armiiia* (People's Army) (transformation of "Lenin's Flag") is very old: it was created during the Second World War as an official body of the Kyiv Military District [Vitajemo 2017]. During the occupation, the editorial office was periodically moved from the capital to Chernihiv. However, the newspaper did not become a popular brand of the USSR, as, for example, *Krasnaya Zvezda*, although, compared to other mass media, it quite boldly covered not only internal military events, situations in the hot spots of the planet, but also liquidation of natural disasters, extinguishing fires, above all – in Chernobyl (one thousand five hundred articles), the collapse of the Soviet empire, democratic changes during Perestroika, etc. Since October 11, 1991, the media was the Central Printing Body of the Ministry of Defence of Ukraine (the editors of which always took a military oath).

Since the newspaper was intended for military personnel, their entourage and all interested parties, its columns recently featured issues of social protection for soldiers and their families, training of personnel of the Armed Forces of Ukraine and security forces, military history and culture, key aspects of military and patriotic education, reforms in the Armed Forces of Ukraine, etc. Journalists of the *Narodna Armiiia* occasionally worked in Liberia, Lebanon, Kuwait, Iraq, Afghanistan, Syria, etc. In this way, the media performed a wide range of general and special functions: informative, communicative, cognitive, propagandistic, educational, promotional, value-oriented, entertaining, social, organizational, etc. Despite the narrow specialization, *Narodna Armiiia* as well as *Stars and Stripes*, covered and tried to professionally analyze all the most important events in Ukraine and the world. What is important is that a separate branch was functioning on the territory of temporarily occupied Donbas; it was a publishing office that produced a field "pocket" version of the mass media for soldiers on the front lines [U zoni 2016].

Artistic customization should also be considered quite effective: each issue contained a wide variety of materials (mostly analytical): stories, reviews, articles, interviews, reports, news selections, even investigative journalism. All posts were accompanied by high-quality images of own production and the brand olive-black colour palette, as well as high-quality fonts and perfect layout. The lack of diffusion of genres is especially impressive, which implies a formal mastery of the presentation and the accuracy of information "inputs".

It is impossible to find the archive. We managed to open the issue for April 28, 2016 [Narodna 2016]. The central advertisement of the front page presents a publication about the orientation of the Ukrainian army to European and American standards. Next to it there are a few more announcements of materials: about the evacuation of the population the day after the accident at the Chernobyl nuclear power plant, positive attitude of the Ukrainians towards NATO, events in the Stanytsia of Luhanska,

an artilleryman who returned from the ATO to paint icons in the church, a comedy show in Ternopil that collects funds for the ATO and congratulations on Happy Easter. We scroll down the pages in search of something more interesting than the announcements. Here is an extensive review on page ten (“From tape recorders “Maiak” to mortars, machine guns, sniper rifles”) about conversion of the plant “Maiak”. The material is informative both in the technological aspect and in the prognostic aspect (on the eve of a full-scale invasion, which was probably suspended by the pandemic). The spread is complemented by related information that more than forty drones have been transferred to the combat zone and a chronicle of Russian aggression. As we can see, there is no analysis, sensations, and, accordingly, balance on the pages of *Narodna Armiiia*. That is the nature of militarized communication. However, the premonition of a great war is present. Perhaps the official closure of the resource is due to that fact.

Since Army Inform has become a kind of continuation of the cancelled print media, let’s consider the content of this site as of August 10, 2022. The red sign reads: “168th day of defence of Ukraine continues”. Above the sign there is a link to *Armiya FM* radio. Under it there is a shift to TELEGRAM. Next there is a selection of news in which the topics of the discussion are support for Ukraine during the visit of the US president to Latvia, the trial and punishment of former law enforcement officers who filmed the location of the positions of the Armed Forces of Ukraine on video, an announcement of state awards, the demand to ban the crossing of European borders for citizens of the Russian Federation (quote by Dmytro Kuleba), voicing distrust of Russia, which consistently violates agreements (quoting Mykhailo Podoliak), the call of the USA and the EU to stop Russian military operations around Ukraine’s nuclear facilities, information about the conviction of the DPR members to 15 years in prison, demining the liberated territories of Ukraine with the help of eVorog chatbot, the call of the G7 Foreign Minister to the Russian Federation to urgently return control of the ZNPP to Ukraine, reports that the Armed Forces destroyed a bridge in the area of the Kakhovskaya HPP, a statement that Danish instructors will train our military in Great Britain, the detention of an enemy agent who was directing fire at Bakhmut, information about the fact that the launch issue OPEN VOLUNTEER SCHOOL took place in Kharkiv, confirmation of the transfer of American protective equipment for dogs to the Armed Forces of Ukraine, video of live broadcasts from the war zone. To see more, click on the additional link. Under the news there is a heading “This day in history”. Next, the site focuses on individual regions (“War#Kharkiv_Tribunal”). The most popular news are “ejected” and scrolled in the central niche. Under which we see a scoreboard with official information about enemy losses and sports news of the Armed Forces. Then analytics is presented, “In the border regions with Ukraine, Russia forcibly transports reservists to “military training””, “The only thing that didn’t hit our position was a tactical nuclear shell”, “ The Grammar of War: How Inverted Commas Hurt Ukraine”, “Trials of Ukrainian prisoners of war are an attempt to de-

moralize Ukrainians and sow discord”, “”Rusotourists” should live only in the “Rusky mir””. Next is the column of current honours “Heroes of unconquered Ukraine”. Below it there are “Russian fakes”. Below there are video materials. Then is “Chronicle of the defence of Ukraine”. Blogging and expertise are on the side. Then there are reports, messages from the regions, psychological information, the publication’s own products, presentation of new equipment (“Weapons and equipment”), economic rubric, sketch stories of warriors, information blocks “The world supports Ukraine”, “National resistance”, “Bubble greatness of the RusArmy”, “The Ukrainian people are invincible”. On the side there are sections “Ukrainian Humour”, “LIFESTORY”, “Pantheon of heroes”, “Ordinary fasciZm”, “ZSU Sergeant”, “Social security during the war”. So, the site is quite full, but you can see with the unaided eye that it lacks balance and impartiality – each material is presented in a propaganda style.

In addition to the *Narodna Armia* and its digital modifications, military publications of Ukraine include the Information Agency of the Ministry of Defence of Ukraine “ArmiaINFORM”, “Military television of Ukraine” (Central TV and Radio Studio of the Ministry of Defence of Ukraine), radio “Armia FM” (Central Teleradio Studio of the Ministry of Defence of Ukraine), TV and Radio Studio “Bryz”, as well as scientific, educational and youth magazines *Science and Defence*, *Dignity and Law* (National Academy of National Guard of Ukraine), Modern information technologies in the field of security and defence (Kharkiv Air Force University named after Ivan Kozhedub, the Ministry of Defence of Ukraine), *Collection of scientific papers of the centre of military and strategic research*, *National University of Defence of Ukraine named after Ivan Cherniakhovskiyi* (National University of Defence of Ukraine named after Ivan Cherniakhovskiyi) etc. These mass media are included in the list of scientific and specialized publications of Ukraine. We will focus special attention on the mass media of military universities, because their content should show what the Armed Forces of Ukraine are preparing for in the near future and what is a priority for the army.

The press organ of the National Academy of Land Forces named after Hetman Petro Sahaidachny *Officer of Ukraine* was created twelve years ago (2010). Editor in Chief is Ihor Makhno, the circulation is 500 copies. Since the publication is educational, it focuses on the problems of combat training in the conditions of the training ground, sports and cultural components of the formation of a future officer, military history of Ukraine (in particular, biographies of warlords, especially the patron of academy Petro Konashevych- Sahaidachny). The media is youthfully bright, fashionable and attractive. Anyone can become a contributor.

Let’s consider impartially, without choosing specially, issue seven (from January 27, 2017). Obviously, the warning that “the opinion of the editorial board does not always coincide with the opinion of the authors” should be considered a calling card of freedom of speech and independence of this mass media, however, to maintain “the format” “the editors reserve the right to use materials, edit and shorten them as they see fit”. Gray and blue colour range prevails, but insets and titles of some pub-

lications are presented in crimson and burgundy tones. Of course, it would be more presentable if all titles and leads were printed the same, because the multicolour on the pages of serious military media creates a chaotic effect and eliminates a part of the potential readership.

The analyzed issue of *Officer of Ukraine* has 18 sections. On the cover is a portrait of Lieutenant Mykyta Yarovyi, who, according to Decree of the President of Ukraine No. 581/2016, was posthumously awarded the title of Hero of Ukraine and awarded the Order of the Gold Star. Below is more detailed information about this extraordinary event and a presentation of Yarovyi's entry into the Pantheon of Heroes of Ukraine.

"Our Pride" captures a post by an anonymous reader about the first days of the attack on Donbas in 2014. The question arises – why is everything so veiled? Most likely, because at that time Russia was still playing a "closed game" and there was no 100% evidence of its direct strategic presence at the level of diplomacy. However, the author quite frankly talks about the initial clashes of a separate battalion with separatists and Russian mercenaries, the establishment of roadblocks in Svativ District of Luhansk Region, snipers, prisoners of war and the deceased near Druzheliubovka and Rubizhne.

The publication "Awarded by the President" is repeated twice and to some extent duplicates the cover, but on a slightly different level: here is information about the lifetime awarding of the Order for Courage (3rd grade) to Oleh Tkachuk, a local third-year student at the National Academy of Land Forces named after Hetman Petro Sahaidachny. The message is accompanied by a photo report.

Another interesting topic is "International cooperation". There are promising materials by topic "Ukrainian experience for the armies of Asian countries" and "Joint work will contribute to bringing the Armed Forces of Ukraine closer to NATO standards". It turns out that such information was always up to date, and did not become relevant only after the full-scale invasion of Russia into Ukraine on February 24, 2022. The value of the materials is enhanced by colour photos.

The largest section (4 pages) is "From the ATO zone". In it there are essays by Ihor Parbuskyi ("The destination point is war") and by Oksana Voitko ("The war changed his life"). The materials are emotionally intense, entirely in the style of art journalism. Analytical and informative genres would be inappropriate here, because it is about "visualization" of the zone of military operations, which is prohibited to show too realistically at the level of legislation.

The educational vector of the publication is confirmed by the rubrics "The floor to the graduates", "Department and learning process", "DAP is the citadel of wisdom", "Academic and teaching staff", in which six alumni first talk about the advantages and disadvantages of employment and the difficulties of professional adaptation, and later the teachers share their own experience and present the university. In order to visualize the materials as much as possible, but not to turn them into advertising, the authors prefer photo illustrations of essay topics. The only interview (also pre-

sented more like an essay) meticulously explains “why a future officer should know physics” [Oficer 2017].

There are separate blocks of materials that offer to reflect on “what we mean by the word “Sobornost”” [Mosejchenok 2017] and those as “Historical truth” which are built in the form of debatable essayistic reflections, designed for the future. “Memory Eternal!” and “Heroes do not die”, for obvious reasons, do not give special grounds for creative approaches; however, these blocks of information contain many eloquent photographs. On the last page there is a flash mob advertisement: students of the Academy support the fighters of the Joint Forces Operation.

Under the heading “Officially” the floor is given to: the President of Ukraine – Supreme Commander of Armed Forces of Ukraine Volodymyr Zelenskyi (he emphasizes the free choice of Ukrainians regarding European and Euro-Atlantic integration), Minister of Defence of Ukraine Andrii Taran (he points out that European partners highly appreciate the achievements of our country in the defence reform), Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces Colonel-General Ruslan Khomchak (he notes that, despite the successes of the reforms of the Armed Forces, there are problems related to legislation, separation of powers, etc., but the process continues), Commander of ZSU Land Forces Colonel-General Oleksandr Syrskyi (he says that “the transition of the military administration to the NATO structure is one of the important elements of the large-scale changes that are being implemented in the army today”). The citations are accompanied by high-quality passport-type portraits. The column “Military education” informs that the meeting of the leadership of the military education system of Ukraine was held in the “context of Ukraine’s movement towards NATO and the implementation of our standards to those in force in the member states of the Alliance”. The last issue (December, 2021) is completely promotional. It might be a tribute to the time. To make sure, let’s turn the pages relative to the civilian issues and the first already shooting war ones. The archive contains materials only from 2014. The first issue is educational: it introduces interesting personalities, achievements of the academy, reforms of specialized education, etc. Only the column entitled “2014 is the year of combatants on the territory of other states” is intriguing here, it is the article “Wars end and leave not only memories” in which an interview with the head of the Lviv regional organization of veterans of Afghanistan is presented. Although the expectations of some intrigue are not confirmed, because M. Maherovskyi monotonously tells about the sequence of the introduction and withdrawal of Soviet troops to the territory of Afghanistan in the early 1980s and current measures to commemorate and celebrate anniversaries [Oficijno 2021]. Similar material is periodically repeated. For example, in the first and second issues of 2019 in the article “Afghanistan of the 1980s. We’ll never forget...” The interview here is more sensational. It tells about the battle in the Maravar Gorge on April 21, 1985. Former fighters, by the way, recollect how “dushmany (mujahideen) killed the wounded with axes, and then mocked the dead, putting out their eyes” and “how dead comrades were taken out on infantry

fighting vehicles, pouring them with diesel fuel to get rid of the smell and insects [Mosejchenok 2014]”.

The war really and tangibly enters the pages of the magazine from issue №6 in 2014 in the form of six obituaries (“Eternal memory to Academy graduates who died during the Anti-terrorist operation in the East of the country” [Mosejchenok 2019]. Apparently, the readers reacted painfully to the material, so no more such information appeared – only messages about feats and awards. However, in the seventh issue we can already see a publication entitled “Freshmen from the ATO zone”) [Vichna pamjatj 2014]. In fact, it is not about sending students untested by fire to the front (as it is implied), but about soldiers from the war zone who entered the Academy (probably without exams) to improve their skills.

During the seven years of the war *Officer of Ukraine* is analogous to *Uriadovy Courier* (literary Governmental Courier) in some way: the current presidents and their environment are steadily in the epicentre of attention, as well as award decrees, sketches with airbrushed reality from the war zones. However, it is possible to find analytics among propaganda materials. So, already in the seventh issue of 2014, we see actual considerations on the topic “The resuscitation of Novorosiya as a manifestation of the Kremlin’s imperial syndrome” [Mosejchenok Pershokursnyky 2014]. And although issue 9 does not tell a single word about the Ilovaisk trap (it should have been mentioned about), however, it presents critical reflections on the consequences of Russification (“How to cut the Gordian knot of ethnopolitical conflict”) [Voljvych 2014]. Issue 1 of 2015 contains a lengthy article about the heroes of Kruty (apparently, it is a “worthy” substitute for information about DNA identification and reburial of a critically large number of victims at the end of the summer of 2014). Issues 9 and 10 of 2020 record a forward-looking material about “Changes in the constitution of Russia – consequences for Ukraine and the world” [Rudjuk 2014], which shows how the “good neighbour” is preparing for a full-scale invasion of Ukraine, leaving the “eternal” President Putin in office, allowing the use of nuclear weapons and critically limiting the rights of the indigenous peoples of the Russian Federation. By the way, the publication also contains photo information about the numerous protests of Russians who went to individual pickets with the following posters “No amendments to the Constitution”, “We do not need the expired President”, “Whether you vote or not, you will still get a new Constitution” etc. So, at the end of 2020, a critical tension is felt in the relations between Russia and Ukraine, as well as between Russia and the East and Europe and America.

CONCLUSIONS

We see that military publications, as well as military journalism, do not exist in their pure form today, because mass communication focuses on current events, which can be of various topics (including military). Accordingly, time-tested mass media are being modified into electronic ones or are closed. Regarding the American media *Stars and Stripes*, which produces news from combat zones for military deployments of a planetary scale, of course, it is, in no way, inferior to global brands, but not due to specialization, but precisely because of the fact that it promptly responds to current problems and attracts talented journalists to cooperation.

The situation in Ukraine is specific. Its oldest military mass media are closely related to the socialist past and the history and ideology of the USSR, which negatively affects their transformation processes, since the transmission (Soviet) model of communication is almost superimposed on the ritual (totalitarian) model, according to which military communication takes place organically. While American and European military mass media are being modified into universal ones (because journalism at the turn of the 20th-21st centuries finally separated from states and ideologies and became self-sufficient), the Ukrainian ones continue to exist according to established patterns and either turn into propagandistic ones or close down (similar processes are also observed in the post-Soviet states of the East, for example in Azerbaijan).

In our opinion, instead of reviving propaganda pocket media for frontline soldiers and their entourage, it is better to improve all-Ukrainian brands such as *Den* (Day), *Dzerkalo Tyzhnia* (Mirror Weekly) and others: introduce large military sections in each of the publications and fill them with objective events and serious analytics. Then there will be no need to call military personnel on the front line to get fresh information („bypassing” the official one), and the soldiers themselves will not laugh at the primitive mass media that are distributed to them as advertising, but will become active participants in discussions on comprehensive topics. This will also benefit the popular mass media, which will be more serious about working in war conditions and will once again more carefully review international standards and domestic legislation. Actually, in the field of militarized information space, there are so many questions that still remain open and stimulate scientific discussions. But to put the things right, it is obvious that we should wait for the end of the war.

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