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Education and Training of Austrian Soldiers

Austrian Case

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Research Project „The Image of the Democratic Soldier: Tensions Between the Organisation of Armed Forces and the Principles of Democracy in European Comparison“

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1. Introduction

The Second Austrian Republic had to be a neutral state between the two blocs of the Cold War. In 1955, this was the *conditio sine qua non* of getting rid of the four occupying powers. To remain neutral in the geostrategic situation of the East-West-Conflict meant to build an army of 300.000 soldiers and to train it for fighting an extensive war to try to defend their home country. In these decades, the training of the soldiers of Austrian “Bundesheer” (“Federal Army”) was first of all concentrated on the defense of an immediate aggression (especially by tanks and aircrafts) against the own country. But since 1960, units of this army also take part in peace keeping missions of the United Nations, therefore the preparation for peace keeping operations was important too.

After the end of the Cold War the Austrian army started a transformation process. The abolition of the old threat scenario had the consequence that the heavy weight of the armed forces shifted to be prepared for peace keeping and peace enforcement operations. During the phase of the Cold War, the Austrian troops normally were organized from the top level to the smallest units only as a national armed force, but now they are dispatched into international staffs and into formations which are composed internationally down to the smallest units. But also the tasks in the framework of national defense have changed in the last years where sub-conventional and terrorist threats are expected and also the assistance of controlling the outer Schengen-boundaries is ordered (cf. Aschenbrenner/Stupka 2007: 419). This transformation process has consequences for the education and training of the Austrian soldiers.

When the Second Republic installed its Armed Forces and called it “Bundesheer”, Austrian politicians tied in with the army’s name of the First Republic. But the Austrian foregone history was marked by the authoritarian end phase of the First Republic and afterwards the participation of many Austrian officers and other soldiers in the “Wehrmacht” and paramilitary organizations of the German “Third Reich” from 1938 to the end of World War II. The recruitment of the second Bundesheer had to resort to a pool of personnel which included former officers and soldiers of these undemocratic times. Therefore, for the new democracy it was not self-evident to build up an adequate army. This paper doesn’t look back to the early time of the Bundesheer to analyse the influence of different political forces and the role of military and political traditions. Instead of this, it asks how important a democracy oriented image of the soldier is for the actual education and training in the Austrian army. How can the image of a soldier be reconciled with the principles of democracy? Are the education, training and instructors in line with those principles or does the democratic pretense take a back seat?

It is the objective of this report to offer an overview of the Austrian Armed Forces’ basic structures and analyze education programs, training, and institutions in order to detect common standards of the Austrian Armed Forces. The main focus will be on the part of the commissioned officers and their training. The importance of this position is

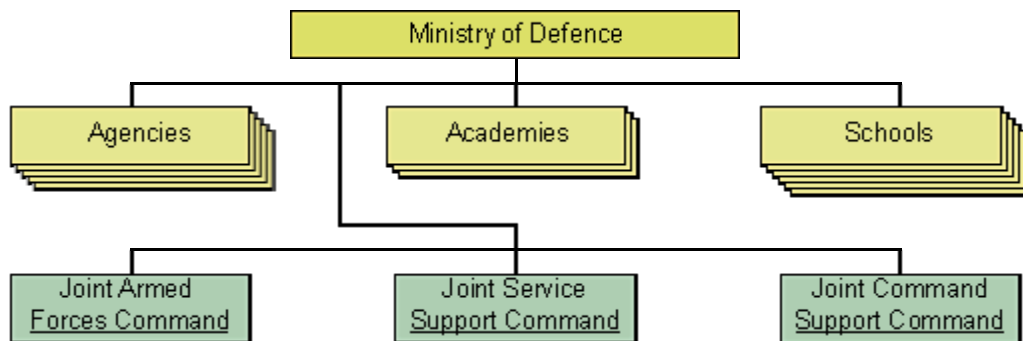
significant not only due to hierarchic considerations but also due to the spectrum of their decisive powers and high level of qualification. Furthermore, the report will elaborate on the innovations and adaptations of the Austrian Armed Forces – especially considering the reform of the Armed Forces in 2010 and the Bologna-System – and illustrate the current status quo along with recent developments.

This research will offer possible scenarios in answer to the question of the “democratic soldier” in context of the organizational and educational areas and training institutions within the Austrian Armed Forces. The conclusion will provide reflection on the findings of this report.

2. The Training of Soldiers

During the Cold War, Austria as a small country required a large and strong army to remain neutral against her bloc member neighbours in East and West. To reach this strength Austria’s defense was based on a conscript and militia (reserve) system with well trained soldiers. Also in the time after, the education and training of the soldiers is very important for the Austrian Armed Forces. That is shown in the following diagram which is found on the English version of the website of the Austrian Ministry for Defense, where military academies and schools are directly subordinated to the Ministry.

Scheme: Organisation of the Ministry of Defence and Austrian Armed Forces¹



¹ Source: <http://www.bmlv.gv.at/english/forces/organisation.shtml>

Overview: Training Institutions of the Austrian Armed Forces

- ✓ Training service for women and conscripts (non-mandatory; duration 12 months; before or after basic military service; min. 6 months of training service equals completion of basic military service)
- ✓ Career officer and reserve officer training / One-year voluntary service
- ✓ Non-commissioned officers academy
 - NCO training
 - Staff NCO training
 - Continuing education training
- ✓ Theresan Military Academy (“TherMilAk“)
 - Commissioned officer cadet course (including Staff Training Course I/ Leader Training Course I (starting with Staff Training Course II) / Leadership Training Course II [← characteristics of university course (LUCH)])
 - Currently graduation with a masters degree in “Military Leadership“
 - 2008 adjustment to bachelor degree (graduation in 3 years)
- ✓ National Military Academy (“LVAk“)
 - higher education for commissioned officers
- ✓ Staff General Training Course (3 years, university graduation with Master of Arts in Philosophy [“Magister der Philosophie“]; + addition to rank: “des Generalstabdienstes“)
- ✓ Seminars: Continuing education and stimulation of knowledge²

2.1 Recruits / Soldiers

The conscript military service is obligatory for male citizens from the age of 18 (after the 17th birthday). Since 2006, its duration was reorganized from eight to six months. Generally, every young male Austrian has to serve in the Bundesheer. Exempts are priests, graduates of theological faculties employed as pastors or at magisteriums, members of the order, and students of theological faculties preparing for ministry. Special

2 Oberst Mag. Dietmar Pfarr, interview, February 14, 2008. (see: Österreichisches Bundesheer, Karriere, <http://www.bmlv.gv.at> [March 9, 2008].)

regulations are in place for recruits of devout Islamic denomination and the Jewish community “to ensure the requirements of their religious environment”³.

Since 1998, voluntary military service is also possible for female citizens. But nobody thinks on the expansion of mandatory draft for women.

Training Content and Developmental Goals for Recruits

The conscript military service is seen by the Bundesheer as well as by most of the Austrian political parties as foundation and integration of the army within the society. The argument is that the annual conscript military service of 30.000 young men is a service for the Republic of Austria, the community, the common Austrian values as well as democracy and freedom.⁴

The education and training in the six months basic service aims on the establishment of capabilities for employment in the field for dedicated assignments. The training is divided in three phases named Basic Training 1-3 (“BA 1-3”). BA 1 is lasting 9 weeks and has the function to gain basic knowledge in combat training, arms training, physical education, field medical aid as well as theory and application of survival training in the field. It is stressed in the official documents that the training of the recruits aims at learning of mental autonomy and sense of responsibility.

In the following two months, during phase BA 2, the training is specific to the branch where the recruit is serving: Study of the drill, weekly physical training (so called “Körperausbildung”): strength and cardio training, study of first aid and introduction to civilian crisis management and disaster relief. In the last phase (BA 3) training in the organization unit is completing the know-how of the recruits. Additionally it is possible to volunteer for drills of the militia (reserve forces).

One-Year Voluntary Service

As entrance for career officers and reserve officers the Bundesheer offers a one-year voluntary service (“Ausbildungsdienst”). Since January 2008, cadets for career officers and reserve officers are differentiated.

The minimum of voluntary service contains a “training service” for women and conscripts of 12 months which can be prolonged by further six months. For male persons who absolve this service the first six months are equivalent to the completion of their basic military service. For women the voluntary service opens a scope of military professions which were until 1998 not typical for women. Afterwards and after further education and training phases, male and female soldiers can enter all military careers and applications.

3 Österreichisches Bundesheer, http://www.bmlv.gv.at/rekrut/stellung_einberufung/rek_stl_stellung.shtml (March 9, 2008).

4 Österreichisches Bundesheer, <http://www.bmlv.gv.at/rekrut/grundwehrdienst/index.shtml> (May 22, 2008).

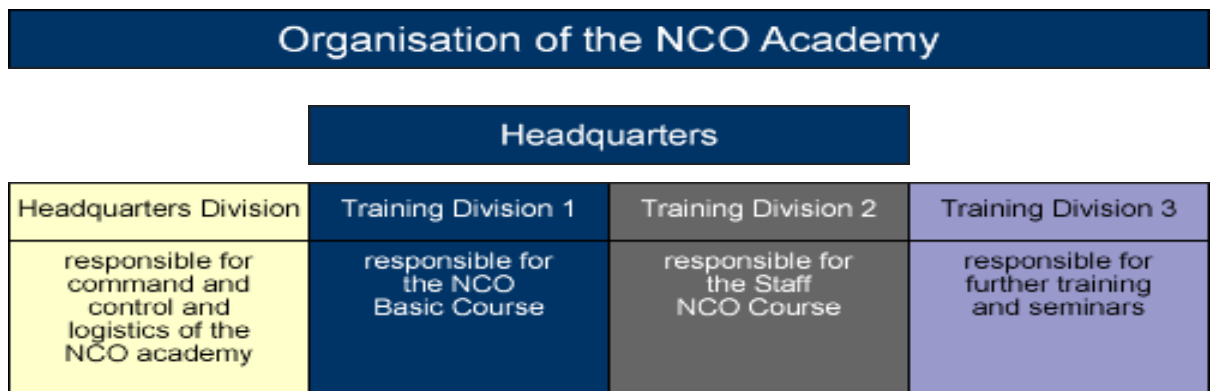
The requirements for entering this service are high school or equivalent diploma, physical ability and psychological adequacy.⁵ From the beginning of this service, young persons earn about €890 after deductions per month by free board and lodging in their caserns which is more than the average income in this age. It is also possible for them to take part in deployments abroad. Besides this, their civil employment is assured for the first twelve months in accordance to the “Arbeitsplatzsicherungsgesetz” (law on safeguarding of jobs). Voluntary servants are allowed to end the contract by a notice of resignation at all times. But by reasons of fairness against the poorly-paid draftees a from the voluntary year early resigning conscripted soldier has to pay back the difference of his salary.⁶

2.2 Non-Commissioned Officers

After the year of voluntary service or after successful finishing the Corporal`s Course, Austrians in the age between 18 and 40 years with personal qualification (mind, body and personality) and professional competence can start their career as Non-commissioned Officers (NCOs). Positive admissions examination (written and applied knowledge: Examination topics: German [orthography], Math [basic arithmetic], combat training, arms training, cartography, topography, physical training [running, push-ups]) – the exam can be re-taken a maximum of two times.

In the army NCOs lead teams, squads and platoons or serve as specialists in one of the branches. In national and international operations of the Bundesheer they have to show dedication, flexibility, mobility and a professional attitude. The solid training serves as a base for this.

Scheme: Organisation of the Non-commissioned Officers Academy



The Non-Commissioned Officers Academy, located in Enns (Oberösterreich), is responsible for the basic, advanced and further training of the Austrian NCOs in order to

5 Österreichisches Bundesheer, <http://www.bmlv.gv.at/rekrut/grundwehrdienst/index.shtml> (March 9, 2008).

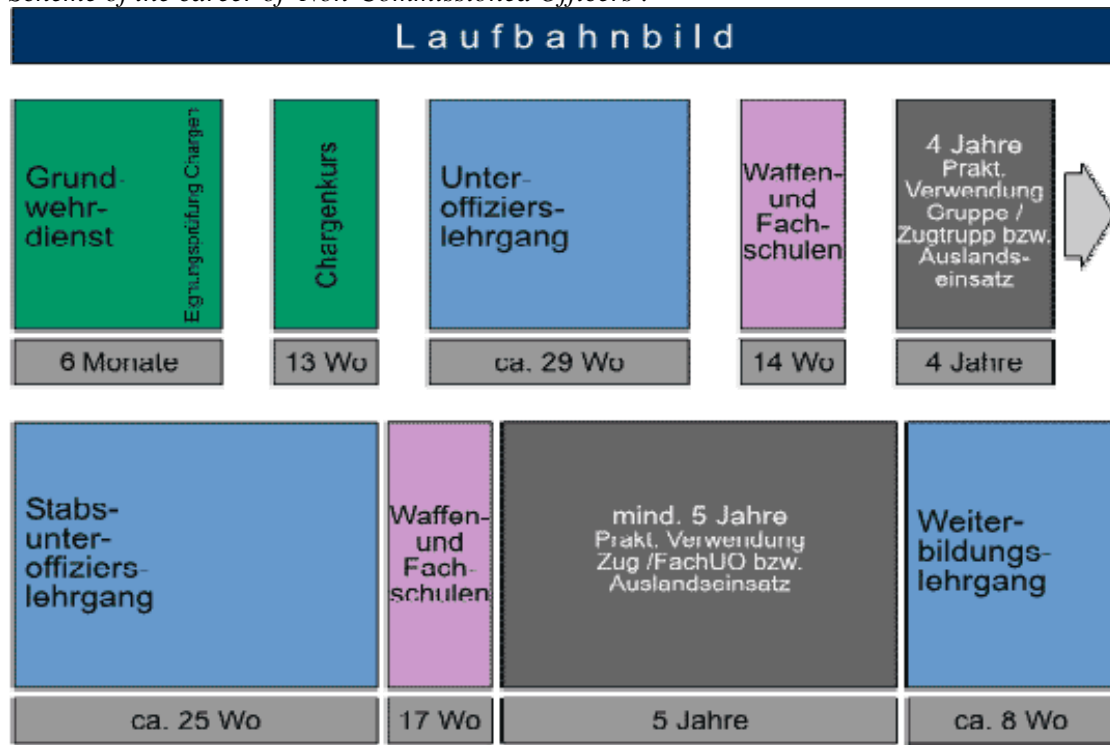
6 Österreichisches Bundesheer, <http://www.bmlv.gv.at/karriere/frauen/ausbildungsdienst.shtml>

develop their leadership techniques. As a result of the restructuring of the NCO training, the Non-Commissioned Officers Academy was upgraded from an NCO School to an NCO Academy in 1995.⁷ It is divided into four parts: The headquarters division and three further divisions (one NCO training department [duration approx. 29 weeks], one staff NCO training department [duration approx. 25 weeks]⁸ and one department for further training and seminars.)

Training is carried out in accordance with the defense doctrine of the Bundesheer and takes into consideration the principles of adult education. In the official description of the Ministry of Defense it is stressed: “The focus is not only on professional but also on social competence.”⁹

The Academy describes its own “vision” as follows: “The Non-Commissioned Officers Academy is the centre of competence for national and international education and advanced training in the Austrian Armed Forces. We develop our course participants by training, consulting and mentoring to successful executives. Our common success appears in the high competence of the Austrian Corps of Non-Commissioned Officers.”¹⁰

Scheme of the career of Non-Commissioned Officers :



Legend: 6 Monate = 6 months, 13Wo = 13 weeks, 4 Jahre = 4 years

7 Österreichisches Bundesheer, <http://www.bmlv.gv.at/karriere/unteroffizier/geschichte.shtml> (March 10, 2008).
 8 Österreichisches Bundesheer, <http://www.bmlv.gv.at/karriere/unteroffizier/grund.shtml> (March 10, 2008).
 9 Österreichisches Bundesheer, <http://www.bmlv.gv.at/english/forces/nco.shtml>
 10 Österreichisches Bundesheer, <http://www.bmlv.gv.at/karriere/unteroffizier/allgemein.shtml>

The NCO Course

The admission requirements for the NCO course are stated more clearly than those for general recruits:

“Previous experience” is a pre-requisite:

- Practical training and application of the acquired education in one of the professional tasks outlined by the NCO course.
- Availability of a training spot at the appropriate course, existence of military employment status for the period in question.

During the first 15 weeks of the NCO training course the general curriculum is especially focused on *leadership and legal studies* along with *applied* training.

Besides the Academy also armament schools and professional schools are involved in the basic training of the NCO. After this course the NCO has to be able to fulfil the following tasks independent from his/her function and branch:

- Leading and safeguarding a marching group in training as in deployment situations.
- Leading a group defending an emplacement under alarm around the clock, under every topographic condition, under ABC- and other threat and physical and psychological stress.
- Leading a group in deployment abroad paying regard to the orders for the use of weapons.
- Leading a motorized or infantry patrol under the danger of mine explosions.
- Deployment as an observer or on a check-point.

Besides this, the NCO can be involved in the education and training of recruits and militia. Then he/she has to be able to prepare, organize, and control the training of her/his substitutes as well as to perform follow-up course work autonomously under the requirements of the commander.

During the general service the NCO has to be able to comment actual security topics, to inform on the tasks, organisation and armament of the Austrian Bundesheer and the essentials of the branch. The NCO has adequate knowledge on the general legal basics and their observance. Last but not least, he or she should identify her/himself with the own role as NCO in the army and in the society by own conviction.¹¹

11 Österreichisches Bundesheer, <http://www.bmlv.gv.at/karriere/unteroffizier/grund.shtml>

Scheme of the Course for DCOs:



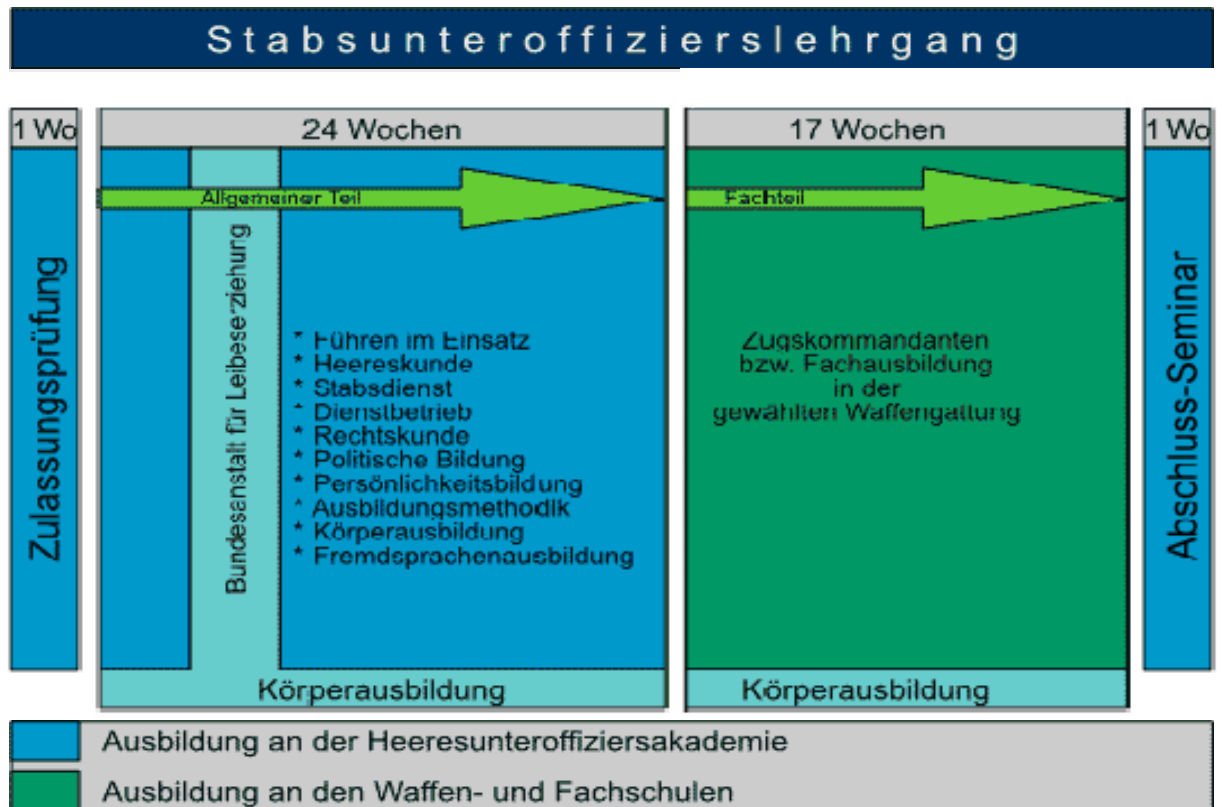
The Staff NCO Course

Four years after working as a NCO it is possible to take part for 43 weeks in the Staff NCO Course. This *continuing education* is the precondition for the next step of the career of an NCO.. In order to participate, an admissions examination testing written and oral English skills, written political knowledge and applied leadership qualities as well as hands-on physical abilities is to be passed successfully.¹² The Staff NCO Course focuses on leadership, legal studies, political science, personal development, training methodology, and foreign language education.

The expectations to the Staff NCOs after this course differ from those to the NCOs in general that they have to be able to lead units, larger than groups, and that they are responsible for subordinated NCOs. This includes the ability to command such a unit under battle conditions. It also includes the ability to inform on the tasks, organisation and armament of the Austrian Armed Forces and of the armed forces of neighbour countries in English when the own unit is part of an international deployment. Beyond this, Staff NCOs have to be able to lead and to advance subordinated commanders, comrades and recruits and to take part in the planning of training.

12 Österreichisches Bundesheer, <http://www.bmlv.gv.at/karriere/unteroffizier/weiter.shtml> (March 10, 2008).

Scheme of the Staff NCOs course:



Continuing Education / Seminars

Not less than five years later, after being acquainted with several tasks on the staff NCO level, Staff NCOs can participate in the next continuing education course of eight weeks. It aims at “[...] qualifying [the NCO] for general national and international leadership and staff command duties as part of a commando in tactical middle management.”¹³ Again, an admissions examination is required, testing the English knowledge and leadership skills. Furthermore, a certification of English Level B (C1-course classification) and an attest of physical capabilities have to be provided.

Among other things, the curriculum¹⁴ focuses on the enhancement of proficiencies and in-depth analysis of the following subjects:

- Leadership, negotiation and leadership support
- Project management, presentation techniques, personal work flow, and projects
- Critical Incident Stress Management (“CISM“)

13 Österreichisches Bundesheer, <http://www.bmlv.gv.at/karriere/unteroffizier/weiter.shtml> (March 10, 2008).

14 Österreichisches Bundesheer, <http://www.bmlv.gv.at/karriere/unteroffizier/weiter.shtml> (March 10, 2008).

- Professional ethics
- Political science and legal studies
- Foreign languages and physical training.

The above quoted subjects of the curriculum demonstrate that the education also focuses on *non-military topics*. These are communicated by civilian coaches of various social backgrounds in order to ensure *diverse interdisciplinary approaches* to the matter and to avoid a narrow minded concentration on training subjects of absolute military nature.¹⁵

The broad continuing education platform featuring seminars and courses proofs this thesis. Some examples:

- Leadership behavior (coaching training)
- Ethics, legal studies, and political science seminars
- Techniques for presentations, discussions, and project planning
- Office and time management
- Education of teachers
- ECDL (European Computer Users License)
- Reserve non-commissioned officers' continuing education.

In 2005, the Non-Commissioned Officers Academy tested in collaboration with the Non-Commissioned Officers School of the German Air Force the Project "ENCOA" (European Non Commissioned Officer Academy), which originally was planned together with the Swiss Army which left the project early in 2005. It shall be part of the 3rd phase of the NCO training. The teaching units included the themes professional ethic education, "Innere Führung" (a wording which is often but not comprehensive enough translated with internal leadership) and the role of NCO in military and society (Brümmer/Kastberger 2006). It was the first internationalization of the training of NCOs in Austrian history. It is insofar remarkable as the German army seems to try to export its leading concept of "Innere Führung". This wording is not used in the Austrian Armed Forces though there is well known its central formula "citizen in uniform" (Hauser 2007: 50). It is planned to involve other European armies in this common project and to continue it in English (Brümmer/Kastberger 2006).

Possible additional qualifications for NCOs in and after the 3rd phase are training as military mountain guide, military ski instructor, IT-systems administrator, coach for leadership behavior and so forth.¹⁶

15 Oberst Mag. Dietmar Pfarr, interview, February 14, 2008.

16 Österreichisches Bundesheer, <http://www.bmlv.gv.at/karriere/unteroffizier/fort.shtml> (March 10, 2008).

2.3 Commissioned Officers

Commissioned Officer Training at the Theresan Military Academy

The commissioned officer training is offered at the Theresan Military Academy (“TherMilAk”), located in Wiener Neustadt and founded in 1751 by Empress Maria Theresia as a “cadet school” with the intent of providing an excellent military education to the most able young men of her empire.¹⁷ Educational components following Staff Training Course II are held at the National Military Academy (“LVak“).¹⁸ The design of training options at the LVak is further discussed.

The TherMilAk was restructured based on new circumstances resulting from the European integration and development of a common European security system. In order to meet current demands, an officially recognized *college course* is being offered within the “Officers Training System 2000” since 1998. Graduates receive the academic title of *Magister (FH)* (equivalent to a master degree) in “*Military Leadership*” (Felber 1998: 4). In accordance with the Bologna-System (see below, 3.2) in 1999 additional restructuring is being undertaken and will be implemented this year. The Master course in Military Leadership takes eight terms and includes 24 weeks of internships.¹⁹

Admission Requirements for the TherMilAk

Quality has priority: The admission process for studies at the TherMilAk is designed to locate prospects *capable* of fulfilling the manifold duties and thus guarantee the quality and efficiency of the Austrian Armed Forces. In order to be admitted to the college course “Military Leadership“ candidates have to be qualified for higher education entrance in Austria or possess relevant professional credentials and experience. Additionally, - satisfying the manifold demands on officers - physical and mental resilience and capacity, social competency, leadership qualities, a developed democratic value system, and proficiency in foreign languages are necessary.

A transfer from a different major subject may be considered if the former field of study is applicable to the requirements of becoming an officer, i.e. educational sciences, psychology, sociology, political science, communication science, electrical engineering, mechanical engineering, and surveying (Schelling 1998: 14). In order to assure equal opportunity non-commissioned officers have the chance to take their high school diploma exam with a two-year course.²⁰ The degree course “Military Leadership” may be attended by students *not* pursuing a military career, i.e. citizens not engaged in the military field.²¹

The Highest Military Education at the National Military Academy (“LVak”)

17 Österreichisches Bundesheer, <http://www.bmlv.gv.at/karriere/offizier/kdt.shtml> (February 20, 2008).

18 Österreichisches Bundesheer, <http://www.bmlv.gv.at/karriere/laufbahnbild.shtml> (February 20, 2008).

19 Theresianische Militärakademie, http://wbt.donau-uni.ac.at/we_demo/miles/_lehre/index_22.html

20 Arbeitsgemeinschaft TherMilAk (1998a), p. 2.

21 Arbeitsgemeinschaft TherMilAk (1998d), p. 7.

The *Landesverteidigungsakademie* (“LVAK”, *National Military Academy*), located in Vienna, is – as mentioned – key to the higher education of officers. It was founded in 1852 as a “k.(u)k. Kriegsschule” (Imperial and Royal War School) (Hoy 2002: 581). After demilitarization in 1945, the training of officers of the so called “B-Gendarmerie” started in 1952 in an Officers’ School, located like the NCO Academy in Enns, followed in 1956 by courses for higher officers as a branch of the TherMilAk in Wiener Neustadt. In 1961 it changed into Staff Academy and it was renamed in 1968 into Landesverteidigungsakademie (Hoy 2002: 582ff.) The LVAK is regarded as the “highest military education and research establishment of the Austrian Armed Forces”²² In 2002, the academy was adapted to current demands by means of restructuring its organizational structure. The academy strives to fulfill its educational mission towards civilian executives of the Federal Ministry of Defense and further civilian contacts by fostering collaborations with universities, academies and research facilities on a national and international level. Military foreign language training is made available to civilian and military personnel alike. The *language center* at LVAK is not only responsible for basic and continuing education; it offers translation, interpretation and examination services. The underlying motto is that of “life-long-learning”; implying a continuous learning process in order to be prepared for international deployment and also to be able to accommodate foreign soldiers attending military studies in Austria. The service includes crash courses, consecutive courses and special interest seminars.

Among the study and research disciplines being supported by an operation-research center and a library / information center are: The faculty of higher military leadership (“Institut für Höhere militärische Führung”) and its departments operation, tactics, logistics, leadership and organizational studies, the faculty of security policy and strategy (“Institut für Strategie und Sicherheitspolitik”) – including international law – and further departments like arms engineering and control, geography, social studies, ethics and pedagogic of the military, military contemporary history, and the faculty of peacekeeping and conflict management (“Institut für Friedenssicherung und Konfliktmanagement”) which analyzes the development of armed forces, their structures, and doctrines.

2.4 Training for Peace-Keeping Operations

Since 1960, Austria is involved in UN-Peace-keeping and other peace support operations (PSO). Since 1995, the country is also member of the NATO Partnership for Peace Program. Early in 1987, the military units being responsible for the training, deployment, personnel administration and logistical support of Austrian PSO troops were integrated in the Austrian Training Center for Peace-keeping Operations (cf. Pernitsch/Menzel 2006: 73). In 2002 the main part was renamed into Austrian International Operations Command (AUTINT). “It is responsible for the planning, preparation, deployment and redeployment of Austrian PSA troops serving abroad.” This includes “the psychological support of the soldiers serving abroad and their families at home” (Pernitsch/Menzel 2006: 74). In this context the Bundesheer offers at its Centre

22 Österreichisches Bundesheer, Auftrag der Landesverteidigungsakademie, <http://www.bmlv.gv.at>.

for Operations Preparation (COP) special training programs for national and international units aiming in preparation for international operations and humanitarian interventions. For this task the Austrian Armed Forces are well prepared because they “have gained 45 years of experience in crisis response operations, peace support operations, and peace operations with a participation of more than 70,000 Austrian troops in numerous missions all over the world” and “have long-term experience within multinational forces on battalion-level. They participate in international NATO-, UN-, EU-, and OSCE-led operations.”²³ The Centre for Operations Preparation, located close to Vienna and its international airport, includes a headquarters division, a training division, a logistic division, and a personnel division.

Before Austrian peacekeepers participate in missions they undergo the specific training required for them. It includes:

- “Conducting crisis response operations training with international participation and specific training assistance,
- conducting major parts of mission-specific crisis response operations training and preparation ‘pre-deployment training’, including key-personnel,
- administrating aptitude testing and deployment as well as acting as rotation centre for crisis response operations,
- implementating crisis response operations specific personnel, national logistics and resupply as well as recreation and welfare.”²⁴

The Officers Course is only accessible for Austrian officers and lasts 2 weeks, the Staff Officers Course is open to officers from foreign countries and lasts 3 weeks. Also the 2 weeks Logistic Course, the 3 weeks Military Observer Course and the 3 weeks Liaison and Observation Team Course are international ones (cf. Pernitsch/Menzel 2006: 77).

3. Leadership Concept

3.1 Educational Focus and Goals of the Training Programs

The requirements of an officer are well diversified. Therefore, it is not an easy task to adjust the educational topics to the necessary complexity of the standards. The following short overview will show some demands that the officers’ education has to satisfy.

The officer: He should act as a *guardian, aide, and fighter*. Being a *teacher, educator, manager, and administrator* is also part of his assignment. The conception of the training course curricula is one of those obligations. *Moral responsibility along with military and*

23 Austrian Armed Forces – The Forces – Centre for Operations Preparation
<http://www.bmlv.gv.at/english/forces/cop/index.shtml>

24 Austrian Armed Forces – The Forces – Centre for Operations Preparation
<http://www.bmlv.gv.at/english/forces/cop/index.shtml>

national security duties – among these the military national defense, protection of the constitutional establishments, the preservation of order and security within the country, assistance after Acts of God, and international assistance (peacekeeping, humanitarian aid, emergency and disaster relief, search and rescue services)²⁵ – have to be accomplished, in order to bear responsibility “for the maintenance of our democracy”.²⁶

This requires not only professional qualifications but also perceptively developed values and norms, managerial, social and pedagogic skills. These are to be applied within the profession of the Austrian Armed Forces and furthermore, on an international scope in cooperation with Allied forces and NGOs (goal: civilian-military cooperation), e.g. by offering training courses.²⁷

To become a military leader, an officer has to place *human leadership* first, including leadership of personnel “while being exposed to personal and mental stress”.²⁸ The term “human leadership” encompasses several expectations: Leadership potential, ability for empathy, the capability to establish a relationship with soldiers as a foundation for loyalty and trust, and thus facilitate a “motivational corporate culture”.²⁹

Corporate culture: The Austrian armed forces recognize themselves as a corporation³⁰, governed by corporate principles. The education has to take these values into consideration: “The ‘traditional image’ of a soldier – ‘when we appear war will be fought’ – does not exist anymore.”(Edelmann 2001: 118) “A complex challenge has to be met by comprehensive education.”(Edelmann 2001: 132)

The above mentioned notions result in the following theories in regards to basic, advanced and further training within the Austrian Armed Forces.

As the occupational area of an officer is quite complex, the objectives are manifold. Priority is given to the (further) development of *professional and social skills*. This is apparent when considering the curricula of the instruction (courses, seminars...) at the *TherMilAk*: Military and non-military topics are covered and advanced on a continuous basis. The percentile distribution of the curriculum’s study subjects can be defined as follows:

39.54% Leadership

24.09% Military educational sciences

13.18% Military politics

25 Österreichisches Bundesheer, <http://www.bmlv.gv.at/karriere/offizier/berufsbild.shtml> (February 20, 2008).

26 Arbeitsgemeinschaft TherMilAk (1998b), p. 5 (see: note of author).

27 Österreichisches Bundesheer, <http://www.bmlv.gv.at/karriere/offizier/berufsbild.shtml> (February 20, 2008).

28 Arbeitsgemeinschaft TherMilAk (1998b), p. 5.

29 Arbeitsgemeinschaft TherMilAk (1998c), p. 6 (see: note of author).

30 “‘Ja, wir sind ein Unternehmen’ betont General Ertl, Generalstabschef des Österreichischen Bundesheeres in einem Presse-Interview“, Die Presse, 15.10.04, S. 5“ (see footnote in: Dengg 2005: 8).

10.91% Professional specialization (15 separate subjects can be selected from, e.g. artillery, anti aircraft, security management, or crisis management)

6.36% foreign languages

4.56% Legal studies

1.36% Others.

The duties and expectations within the frameworks of the EU and NATO attach growing importance to *interdisciplinary studies and teachings*, especially in regards to cross-cultural skills, foreign language proficiency, managerial and leadership qualities. An “ever increasing integration with civilian areas and the globalization of armed forces [requires] the adaptation of educational means and the re-positioning of the officer in the national and international educational arena.” (Aschenbrenner/Stupka 2007: 419)

The curricula of the TherMilAk offer coursework which in laymen’s terms do not correspond to the “classic military image”. On contrary, they show a certain amount of multi-disciplinarily and put emphasis on the required ability to lead:

Military leadership systems (see also leadership courses at the TherMilAk and the LVak), languages (English), education / teachings / studies, psychology, rhetoric and presentation techniques, training and leadership behavior, educational psychology, basics of educational qualifications, study of the Austrian law as it applies to the constitution, the armed forces, their assignments, and their service, martial law, procedural law, international law, international politics, Austria’s current affairs, project management, didactics and methodology for executives, processing of critical incident situations, introduction to communication science, military ethics and so forth (Pichlkastner 2008: 14).

The instructors of the mentioned courses are either professional experts or university professors (or equal qualification) (Pichlkastner 2008:5), and are therefore not necessarily military personnel. A close collaboration has been established with the University of Vienna and other *external instructors*, in order to promote interdisciplinary knowledge and integration as well as a stronger *connection between military and non-military aspects*. This in turn will enable, support and maintain the security policy and thus “political, economical, social, and ecological stability” in times of “paradigm shifts within the security policy” (Pichlkastner 2008: 4).

Main emphasis is on the study and understanding of conflict management techniques – promoting the *autonomous* development of solution methodologies – and interdisciplinary thought and work processes combined with critical reflection (Edelmann 2001: 119), systematic life-long learning and sufficient periods for conditioning (Wagner/Baranyai 2007: 425).

Taking into account all these separate components and considering the bigger picture, the profound *importance of officers* becomes apparent. An officer fulfills the duty of being proficient in several areas and connecting the dots to create a goal oriented approach. This underlines the necessity of putting the main focus on the training of aforementioned officers. Without their high quality education – corresponding with evolving requirements – they would not be able to bear responsibility for guarding, teaching and leading. In

other words: “Until 2010, the Institute of Officers Training wants to become a nation wide and internationally acknowledged centre of competence for professional education of troop officers and comparable executive managers which is looked to contact because of its performance.”³¹

The *National Military Academy (LVAK)* shall not be omitted at this point: In accordance to the leadership concept the *faculty of higher military leadership* is structured in the following departments:

- *Department of Operations*: “Basic, advanced and continuing training of military leaders, members of senior staff, personnel of the central agency and international students.”³²
- *Department of Tactics*: “Basic, advanced and continuing training of officers employed in lower, middle and upper tactical management positions [...] Research of all aspects of warfare and analysis of assignments at crisis locations supports the broad range of responsibilities of the armed forces.”³³
- *Department of Logistics*: “Basic, advanced and continuing training of military leaders, Austrian staff officers and international students.”³⁴
- *Department of Leadership Studies*: “Basic, advanced and continuing training of officers employed in middle and upper leadership positions [...] within the scope of national and international assignments constitutes a major research and study component in theory and application.”³⁵

The functions of the *faculty of security policy and strategy* are focused on three special fields: strategy, security policy and contemporary history. It lays a special weight on “National and international cooperation with universities and other scientific establishments on behalf of the Austrian defense and security policy”.³⁶

The functions of the *faculty of peacekeeping and conflict management IFK* (Research department of the LVAK, founded in 1999) are focused on the special fields: contributions to political advisory, research and study, and public relations.

It is to mention that the *central library* analyzes and keeps records of applicable technical information on a continuous basis, which are then made available to “internal military users” on demand.

31 „Unsere Vision“ in: http://wbt.donau-uni.ac.at/we_demo/miles/_mission/index_1.php

32 Österreichisches Bundesheer, Auftrag der Landesverteidigungsakademie, <http://www.bmlv.gv.at>.

33 Österreichisches Bundesheer, Auftrag der Landesverteidigungsakademie, <http://www.bmlv.gv.at>.

34 Österreichisches Bundesheer, Auftrag der Landesverteidigungsakademie, <http://www.bmlv.gv.at>.

35 Österreichisches Bundesheer, Auftrag der Landesverteidigungsakademie, <http://www.bmlv.gv.at>.

36 Österreichisches Bundesheer, Auftrag der Landesverteidigungsakademie, <http://www.bmlv.gv.at>.

The *faculty of human and social sciences* (“Institut für Human- und Sozialwissenschaften”) of the Austrian Armed Forces researches and teaches the “underlying factors that influence and determine the relationship between soldier, armed forces, society, and the state [noted by author: political system] [...] The intellectual capture of military matters and their significance within the collective context of today’s environment, along with the analysis, classification, and communication of the concepts of military, peace, war, and violence are focal points of the faculty’s research, study, and information activities.”³⁷

The following three specialties that “interact in an integrative and multi-disciplinary way” can be determined:

- Philosophy and sociology (confrontation with ethical and moral questions regarding political and military violence);
- political science and journalism (discussion of issues regarding legitimacy, legitimation, and acceptance of armed forces and their relationship with the public, as well as theory and application of communication and information, and so forth);
- psychology and educational sciences (discussion of the psychological aspects of being a soldier [war and stress psychology, knowledge management, leadership psychology] and the society along with questions regarding the military identity and the theory and application of educational science within the armed forces).

It is important that at this faculty also a three level concept of individual coaching of officers as a method of leadership was developed. It aims on the first level on the coaching and supervision of military leaders by professional coaches, on the second level on coaching of other members of staff by military leaders themselves, and on the third level on coaching officers who come to leave the army for a smooth transition to a civil career by external as well as internal coaches (Dengg 2005: 22).

The *study center* encompasses all courses of the higher officers’ education, offering courses for staff generals, intendants and basic training, leadership training II & III, staff training II, and the leadership training II for members of the reserve as well as any additional seminars. (The current yearly course schedule can be found in the KURSIS.)³⁸

3.2 Restructuring Following the Bologna-System – Opening the Door for a Joint Civilian and Military University?

Very important for embedding military education and training in the civil society is that the study courses (for basic and continuing education) are partly instructed by *civilian* professors in order to support a combination of military and non-military perspectives and further a favorable recognition within the civilian society.³⁹ Another effect of possible merging of military and civil education comes from the process of Europeanization:

37 Österreichisches Bundesheer, Auftrag der Landesverteidigungsakademie, <http://www.bmlv.gv.at>.

38 Österreichisches Bundesheer, Auftrag der Landesverteidigungsakademie, <http://www.bmlv.gv.at>.

39 Oberst Mag. Dietmar Pfarr, interview, February 14, 2008 (cf. Hauser 2007: 50).

In 1999 in Bologna was created the trial to construct a united European higher education arena (Bologna-System). The “introduction of a three-step postgraduate education system” is mandatory for nations adopting the Bologna-System. The first stage is a *Bachelor* followed by a *Master* degree. Subsequently, students may pursue an advanced academic degree as a research doctorate, the *Doctor of Philosophy* (“*PhD*”) (Wagner/Baranyai 2007: 426).

A new education model – similar to the one introduced with the restructuring at the Ther-MilAk - is being pursued in order to adapt to this system and further developing requirements, especially on an *international* level. The final objective will be to conduct academic education at a military university. This will ultimately ensure the proper recognition of military science and the chance of studying within a civilian framework.⁴⁰ Wagner and Baranyai emphasize the autonomy on behalf of the three stages *Bachelor*, *Master*, and *PhD*, which the foundation of a military university and the thus resulting “establishment of military science in the Austrian educational landscape” would support.

Flexibly adaptable and changeable curricula, consistency of studies and the level of education, financing of the study courses, administration, application, and allocation of funds – these are factors that would benefit in efficiency through the autonomy of the establishment. One would create a “win-win situation” on behalf of the officers, the TherMilAk, the LVak (Wagner / Baranyai 2007: 426), and the Austrian Armed Forces, as well as on behalf of new necessary developments of military, educational, and socio-political elements. As Wagner und Baranyai state, this would be achievable “[...] without fundamental structural changes at the military academy and the national military academy [...].” (Wagner/ Baranyai 2007: 429). The reorganization at the MilAk as to accommodate the pursuit of the *Bachelor* degree has been set for this year.

“One of the larger changes during the course of the reform ... was the opening of the academy to civilian students, with the intention of providing them with the skills necessary for hands-on management in fields such as disaster relief organizations. In order to be granted a place at the course, a prospective student will have to be qualified for higher education entrance in Austria – in most cases this means being in possession of an Austrian high school diploma – and pass a series of entry exams. A military applicant aiming to pursue a career as an officer in the Austrian Armed Forces will additionally need to have completed a preparation semester during the course of a one-year voluntary service or already be an NCO.”⁴¹

3.3 Reform of the National Armed Forces in 2010 – Objectives, Transformations, and Background

The reform of the Austrian Armed Forces 2010 is aimed at raising the capability of meeting international demands (Brunner). Co-operations with a variety of international organizations are crucial in order to maintain security and stability through crisis preven-

40 Oberst Mag. Dietmar Pfarr, interview, February 14, 2008. (see: Wagner, Baranyai [2007], p. 426.).

41 <http://www.bmlv.gv.at/english/forces/milacademy.shtml> (June 15, 2008).

tion and management.⁴² Among these institutions are the United Nations, the European Union, NATO, the Partnership for Peace (PFP), and the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council (EAPC) along with the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) and the Council of the European Union. Austria has also joined the initiative Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) with the objective to fulfill the Petersberg-Agenda⁴³ “not in isolation” but within the context of “international and united co-operation” (Platter 2006). For this purpose, the network between EU and NATO has to take a prominent stand in both military and civilian areas.⁴⁴

Regardless of these networks, Austria’s and the Austrian Armed Forces’ main focus is the preservation of Austria’s neutrality and the protection of Austria’s interests despite the European duty of solidarity. Hptm. Hans Brunner argues, “whether this is first of all reasonable and second of all reconcilable with the accepted obligations” (Brunner). This is further discussed in the general considerations regarding the security and defense doctrine of the Austrian Armed Forces. They state that “the standard neutrality following the Swiss example does not exist anymore”. In the course of the gulf war 1991, Austria adopted the legal view point “that the responsibilities as stated in the charters of the United Nations take priority over the responsibilities of the neutrality”. The EU membership has increased the limitation of the neutrality which results in the issue of the concept itself, as pointed out by Brunner. Therefore, the security and defense doctrine of the Austrian Armed Forces defines Austria as “a nation without alliance” rather than “a neutral nation” in the context of public international law.⁴⁵

In order to fulfill the national duties and international assignments, including the protection of principles like freedom, democracy, and the rule of law,⁴⁶ adequate equipment for the Armed Forces and an “increase in professionalism of soldiers” is required. This has to be accomplished without neglecting the “social balance” (Platter 2006) of the Austrian Armed Forces’ task execution. Accordingly, proper budgeting has to be planned for⁴⁷, with the aim of continuing successful operations such as “ALTHEA” in Bosnia-Herzegovina (Platter 2006). Such requirements could not be met without the retention of conscript military service, even after the reduction of duration to six months.

An approach will be to enhance educational offerings, like the “introduction of a post graduate strategic leadership course aimed at executives in politics, economy, the administration, and the military.” Also, political, military, police, intelligence service, economical, social, educational policy, cultural, PR, ecological, and research means along with measures of the internal security will be supported and implemented correspondingly.

42 Bundesministerium für Landesverteidigung BMLV, Sicherheits- und Verteidigungsdoktrin, <http://www.bmlv.gv.at>.

43 Bundesministerium für Landesverteidigung BMLV, Bundesheer-Reform 2010, <http://www.bmlv.gv.at>.

44 Bundesministerium für Landesverteidigung BMLV, Sicherheits- und Verteidigungsdoktrin, <http://www.bmlv.gv.at>.

45 Bundesministerium für Landesverteidigung BMLV, Sicherheits- und Verteidigungsdoktrin, <http://www.bmlv.gv.at>.

46 Bundesministerium für Landesverteidigung BMLV, Sicherheits- und Verteidigungsdoktrin, <http://www.bmlv.gv.at>.

47 Bundesministerium für Landesverteidigung BMLV, Bundesheer-Reform 2010, <http://www.bmlv.gv.at>.

Naturally, control through the parliament has to be obtained. Human rights, public international law, arms control, disarmament, “an active contribution to the improvement of the EU’s non-military competence” and the development of the corporate culture – these are among the main components that require further efforts. The resulting success stories will enhance the desirability of the Austrian Armed Forces as perceived by the civil society.⁴⁸

Taking these factors and demands into consideration, an addition of forces will have to be mobilized and assistance with leadership and logistics has to be made available. The reform in 2010 will encourage a “continuous transformation”, ensuring the progress to be established rather continuously than in single steps. This will take full advantage of the potential of the Austrian Armed Forces and ultimately increase its efficiency.⁴⁹

The career path from recruit to officer and the continuing education options have been discussed amply. Additionally, officers of the Austrian Armed Forces have access to “renew and complement their knowledge” by means of specially offered courses and seminars.⁵⁰ This is imbedded in a “philosophy of education for the Austrian Armed Forces 2010”, including not only soldiers but also civil servants of the ministry.

The guidelines for its realization are published in 2005 (Groß 2005). The objective is to offer an extensive, inter-disciplinary approach to education. Flexibility, anticipating problems before they arise and independence as well as life-long learning are major aspects of the officers’ and civil servants’ career and are instructed by military sponsored as well as outside teachers. Other central aspects of the philosophy are consciousness of values, tolerance, responsibility and leading behavior. These competences are needed especially for the participation in military missions abroad. In this context the guidelines name also the exposure to difficult and stressful situations like injury and death (cf. Groß 2005: 3).

The restructuring of the TherMilAk (Officers’ education 2000) and the recent development of new concepts (military university) illustrate that the Austrian Armed Forces and their executives in-charge are not treading water. In fact, required modifications are being made when necessary; preparation and proceedings are adjusted accordingly. Advancement and change are not being declined but promoted.

4. Norms of Conflict Settlement, Lawfulness and Argument

4.1 Control Mechanisms for the Integration of the Army Into the Society

“Sociologically the Austrian Armed Forces is a societal organization – institutionalized by the state. The armed forces are subordinated to state politics. Questions of creat-

48 Bundesministerium für Landesverteidigung BMLV, Sicherheits- und Verteidigungsdoktrin, <http://www.bmlv.gv.at>.

49 Bundesministerium für Landesverteidigung BMLV, Die Realisierung, <http://www.bmlv.gv.at>.

50 Oberst Mag. Dietmar Pfarr, interview, February 14, 2008.

ing a professional army or a compulsory army, the legal rights and duties of soldiers, the question of leadership, etc. are subject to decisions made by the governmental and constitutional process.” (Hauser 2007: 50) Hauser compiles a list of control mechanisms which strengthen the primacy of politics: Firstly the “legal framework for armed forces and defence: The constitution guarantees that armed forces are essential part of the Austrian society. *Soldiers are citizens in uniform with rights and duties guaranteed by the Austrian constitution.* There is a primacy of democratic policy and parliamentary control of armed forces.” (Hauser 2007: 50, accentuation by the authors) A very important mechanism is the civil, i.e. parliamentary control of the defence budget. “Fiscal expenses of the army must be approved by the parliament.” (Hauser 2007: 50) Other constitutional control elements are:

- “The Commander-in-Chief is the Federal President (civilian, Article 80 (1) of the Federal Constitution).
- The supreme command is exercised by the Minister of Defence by way of his officers and military commanders. The responsibility of leadership is executed by the Minister of Defence to the Parliament (Article 80 (1) and (3) of the Federal Constitution).
- All the armed forces are controlled by the Administrative Court (Article 129 of the Federal Constitution).
- There is no existence of military court during peacetime (Article 84 of the Federal Constitution). (...)
- Each male citizen has to join the armed forces when they become 18 (Article 9a of the Federal Constitution). (...). According to the Federal Constitution, compulsory military service can be refused in case of severe personal ethical or religious reasons. Then, such person is obliged to join civil service.” (Hauser 2007: 50)

When the Bundesheer was founded in 1955, the Nationalrat (Austrian Parliament) installed a parliamentary commission for complaints related with the Armed Forces (“*Bundesheer-Beschwerdekommission*”) as a “democratic legitimized organ of control” and a “self-contained and independent organ of the Nationalrat” (Jahresbericht 2005: 6). The commission’s working periods last six years, the actual period from January 1, 2003 to December 2008. To the commission belong three members of the chair and six further members. The members of the chair are elected by the Nationalrat, the other members are delegated by the political parties in relation to the strength of their mandates in the main committee of the parliament. In the meetings of the commission also the chief officers of the ministry of defence take part to have a steady exchange of views between controllers and controlled is possible. The commission compares its tasks with those of the ombudspersons for justice of the Swedish Parliament and with the Parliamentary Commissioner for the Armed Forces of the German Parliament (Jahresbericht 2005: 7).

The task of the commission is to control the complaints of persons who have the right to complain and to decide on references. The following persons are legitimized to complain to the commission: young men who are drafted or take part in the voluntary year,

soldiers and their deputies as well as members of the militia and reserves. It is allowed to complain on personally concerned deficiencies of the military service. The commission publishes annually a report and the minister of defence has to comment it.

4.2 Violation of Law and Rules and the Punishment of Soldiers

It is a broad spectrum of cases on which the report of the commission has to inform. The reasons for complaints are failures of superiors and not provident behaviour, matters of training situations, mistakes of the personnel department, deficiencies in board, lodging and equipment as well as in medical procurement etc. 311 of 632 complaints came from soldiers during or after their deployment abroad; most of them concerned questions of remuneration and were not justifiable. 9 complaints in this year came from female soldiers, but only a single of them was a justifiable case of sexual harassment (Jahresbericht 2005: 9ff., 18). The report names cases which were to examine by the commission in following fields: grievances during the education and training, forbidden physical assaults, and not allowed treatment of role players during a Force Integration Training (Jahresbericht 2005: 20ff.).

Not all cases of complaints related to violations of soldiers law and rules of behaviour are given to the parliamentary commission because there are also internal structures for punishment of irregularities. Firstly, the Austrian Armed Forces have to follow the national constitution. The special law of the Armed Forces is the "Wehrgesetz" (WG) which regulates the duties and rights of the soldiers (WG, §§ 41-46) and contains also some regulations for punishment (WG §§ 47-54). Persons who infringe upon these paragraphs will be sentenced by an administrative jury to pay money, in most cases up to 700 € but in the case that a young man does not appear to the medical examination up to 7000 €

Soldiers violating their duties during their service are confronted with the Heeresdisziplinargesetz (Law of the disciplinary order of the Armed Forces). As mentioned there is no military court in peacetime, but following to the disciplinary law soldiers infringing their duties can be punished by their superiors and in more severe cases by a "commission in disciplinary proceedings" (Kommission im Disziplinarverfahren). These commissions are only concerned with professional soldiers and those who have a contract for several years as well as for retired professional soldiers.

There are two instances, a "commission in disciplinary proceedings" and a "superior commission". The members of the commissions are appointed for six years. The chair and his deputy as well as fifty percent of the further members of the commissions are appointed by the minister of defence. The other fifty percent are appointed by the central committee of the ministry, the representation body of the personnel. In both cases the members have to be professional soldiers (Heeresdisziplinargesetz, § 16). The commissions organize for the proceedings Senates which consist of the chair of the commission or one of his deputies and two further members, one of them from the group which was appointed by the minister and one of the group appointed by the central committee (Heeresdisziplinargesetz, § 18, 1). In a trial against officers the further members have to be officers, and in trials against non-commissioned officers the further members have to

be non-commissioned officers (Heeresdisziplinargesetz, § 18, 4). Also the Disciplinary Attorney and his deputies who have to plead the official interests are professional officers and are bound to directives of the minister (Heeresdisziplinargesetz, § 19).

5. Conclusion

The socialization of Austria's soldiers and officers is characterized by versatile training, courses, and seminars. They are being prepared, educated, and coached for a multitude of assignments. Civilian and military elements and domains are joined, serving the purpose of control and allowing diverse viewpoints – as it is common within democratic systems. Even the education is aimed at teaching not only military agenda but increasingly social competency and superior leadership skills by utilizing internal and external coaches. The LVAK builds on this educational path by offering advanced officers' training and thus proves itself capable of shouldering the responsibility of continuing education. The "corporation Armed Forces" regards the buzzword inter-disciplinarity as a chance to fulfill democratic demands, to be prepared for international developments, and to progress accordingly, as shown by the reform of the Austrian Armed Forces 2010. Further restructuring of the college course "Military Leadership" – to the point of the conception of a military university of the Austrian Armed Forces – is being undertaken in order to guarantee and even improve on this agenda for the future. First accomplishments are being achieved this year, like the graduate degree *Bachelor*.

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