



Catering of Coalition Soldiers During the Deployment on A Military Operation and the Impact on their Life Satisfaction



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Submission: April 13, 2019; Published: May 28, 2019

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Abstract

The following thesis focuses on the issues regarding catering and food and its impact on health and life satisfaction of coalition soldiers during their deployment on a military operation in the Middle East area. Firstly, it was necessary to find out and describe information from the area of catering of troops in field conditions and fighting food rations which can be provided to deployed soldiers.

The authors' fundamental research question is how the catering and food in the military operational environment affects the life satisfaction and health of deployed soldiers.

Obviously, food is a part of our lifestyle and it is certainly an area affecting our life satisfaction, all the more affecting the life satisfaction of soldiers specifically in an armed conflict environment where they are exposed to higher stress conditions. Furthermore, life satisfaction is one of the variables influencing the work itself. And work influences our lifestyle and vice versa. It can be also said that life satisfaction influenced by the working environment also affects the health of soldiers. It turns out that work satisfaction has a very strong and lasting relationship with life satisfaction, as work is a central factor for most people, influencing their identity [1].

The research part deals with finding about life satisfaction profile of deployed soldiers and the catering and food during the military operation. Furthermore, it deals with comparison of possible differences in profiles between deployed nations (US, UK, DK). We analysed data obtained in 2018.

Keywords: Food and catering; Life satisfaction; Health; Deployment; Military operation

Introduction

Food and catering is a part of our live. Moreover, it is an area that affects our health. According to the one of the health definitions by Křivohlavý, health is defined as the overall (physical, psychological, social and spiritual) state of man that allows him to achieve optimal quality of life and is not an obstacle to similar efforts of other people [2]. And we can say that eating, which is part of a personal lifestyle, is one of the important determinants of health and life satisfaction.

Life satisfaction and health are largely related to the concept of health determinants and moreover also related to the area of wellbeing. The designation of well-being can be also seen in the concept of understanding happiness as the relationship between the amount of positive and negative affects, or their ratio [3].

Among the direct determinants affecting health, we include the healthcare factor, its level, quality, accessibility, efficiency,

health policy (affecting health from about 10-15%), genetic equipment of the individual, population (affecting health from about 15-20%), environmental factors affecting health from about 15-20%) and lifestyle (affecting health from about 50-60%). Here we point out the specific lifestyle and the catering of the soldiers which affects the health of soldiers.

Catering of Troops in Field Conditions - Hygienic-Epidemiological Supervision

Most armies provide, through their medical support elements, within the activities of the troops, hygienic-epidemiological surveillance, both during peaceful life, for example during military exercises in training areas, as well as during deployment in foreign operations. One of the key areas of this activity is water distribution and troop catering. It is an activity that is essential to maintain units' combat capability, and which largely affects operational deployment in the area. The principles of these supervisors are essentially the same for

the home environment as for the foreign operation. However, they differ in certain nuances.

In the peaceful life of the troops, during their normal working duties in the home environment, all supervision and preventive measures are based on valid national legislation. Military catering is not different from those in the civilian sector and must meet the same hygiene standards. Concerning the deployment of troops during military exercises in the home training areas, before the exercise itself, the responsible authorities are surveying the area, focusing on possible sources of risk - sampling from used water resources, exploration of zoonotic areas, etc.

During the exercise itself, it is the commander's responsibility to maintain hygiene standards for his units, in accordance with applicable legislation, in collaboration with the unit's physician and other medical personnel. There is a check of the cooking areas, the hygienic regime of dispensing of food, the containers used for cooking and the dispensing of the food and the personnel working in this catering support. In preparation for the exercise, a binding regulation is issued that prohibits the use of unauthorized water and food resources in the exercise area (berries, mushrooms, etc.). It is also forbidden to hunt and consume wild animals in the deployment training area, as well as to touch found animal bodies that have come from unknown causes in this area. Everything is subject to strict records.

There are several factors that influence this hygienic-epidemiological surveillance within the framework of the foreign operation. It is necessary to take into account in which area the unit is deployed, what are the expected hygienic-epidemiological risks and climatic conditions, whether the unit is within the larger army unit, whether it is logistically independent, whether it has the means to monitor the hygienic-epidemiological situation abilities provide some other element, whether from coalition units or contracted civilian companies. However, the main fact remains that there is a constant need for this oversight.

Although the military is able to provide these services with its forces and resources, it is often the case that it is delivered through civil contracts. However, the military remains the last supervisory body responsible for the relevant conditions, based on national legislation in force - not according to the host state legislation. Thus, although catering, water management, housing and sanitation are often provided by a third party with its own control mechanisms, the armies carry out their own controls and preventive measures that function as quality control services and still provide units with a level of combat capability.

In the area of unit's deployment water sources sampling is realized. As a rule, supplied bottled water from proven sources outside the base without the risk of contamination is used to

prepare the diet. If this is not the case, standards for water treatment and use are set. Kitchen blocks are inspected with surface swabs, according to a valid time schedule. Inspection of disinfection plan of operations, hygiene of food dispensing and cleaning of dishes is carried out. A separate chapter is also the hygienic supervision of the staff, which is often not part of the deployed units. Supervision of food preparation technology is also an integral part, as is the care of hand hygiene, both kitchen staff and boarders. They are all handled by SOPs (Standard Operating Procedures), which are binding. This issue is also summarized in the AMedP 4.5, AMedP 4.6, AMedP 4.7 and AMedP 8.5 alliance doctrines.

Fighting Food Rations

Daily rations have a rich history. Under various names, they were distributed in crisis situations for both the civilian population in the form of food rations, and for the army in varying amounts and quality. As an example, we present fighting food rations from several selected countries

The Czech Republic

Currently, the Army of the Czech Republic has 7 variations of meal allowances under the name Combat Rations (CR) labeled I - VII. In terms of content, these doses differ mainly in the main meal. Most items in the packages are mostly the same. Thus, seven forms are due to diversity in order to alternate between these doses and to be selectable. The nutritional value of the contained diet is governed by Regulation. 266/1999 Coll. (Decree of the Ministry of Defense on the method of providing free meals, equipment and transport requirements and providing accommodation for professional soldiers). One dose contains two main meals of 340g. This means that there are 14 kinds of main dishes.

As for the balance of nutritional and energy values of all packages, they are very similar. Their purpose is to feed the soldier and give him a balanced diet. The entire CR is placed in a cardboard box and then water tightly sealed in a plastic container. Weight of the full-day diet is about 1500 g. One dose will give 3420 kcal.

All CR foods can be consumed without heat, except for instant drinks, with some hot water. The main dishes are enclosed in aluminum bowls, which can also be newly heated with the enclosed chemical heater. Water is not included.

USA

The content of one meal ready to eat (MRE) bag provides an average of 1250 kilocalories (3 MREs are needed per 24 hours). This means that a soldier can receive up to 3750 kcal per day. The weight of the MRE for 24 hours is approx. 1500g [4].

France

The French Army uses the RATION DE COMBAT INDIVIDUELLE RECHAUFFABLE (RCIR). The content provides

an average of 3200 kilocalories and the weight of the package is 1500g [5].

Germany

In Germany fighting food rations are called "Einmannpackung" (EPA). The German army has two types of EPA. Types 1 to 8 have average nutritional value of one pack 3600kcal and the weight of the package is approximately 1800 g. Types 9-12 have average nutritional value 3800 kcal and the weight is 1.2kg [6]. The amount of calories required per a man per day is always individual, but for that selected FIGHTING FOOD RATIONS, the minimum daily amount is set at 3200 kcal.

Meals Influence the Moral and Life Satisfaction of Deployed Soldiers

During the research which was to map current life satisfaction and health factor for soldiers deployed in a foreign operation in the Middle East region we also focused on meals and catering. This is because we wanted to confirm the hypothesis that meals influence the moral and life

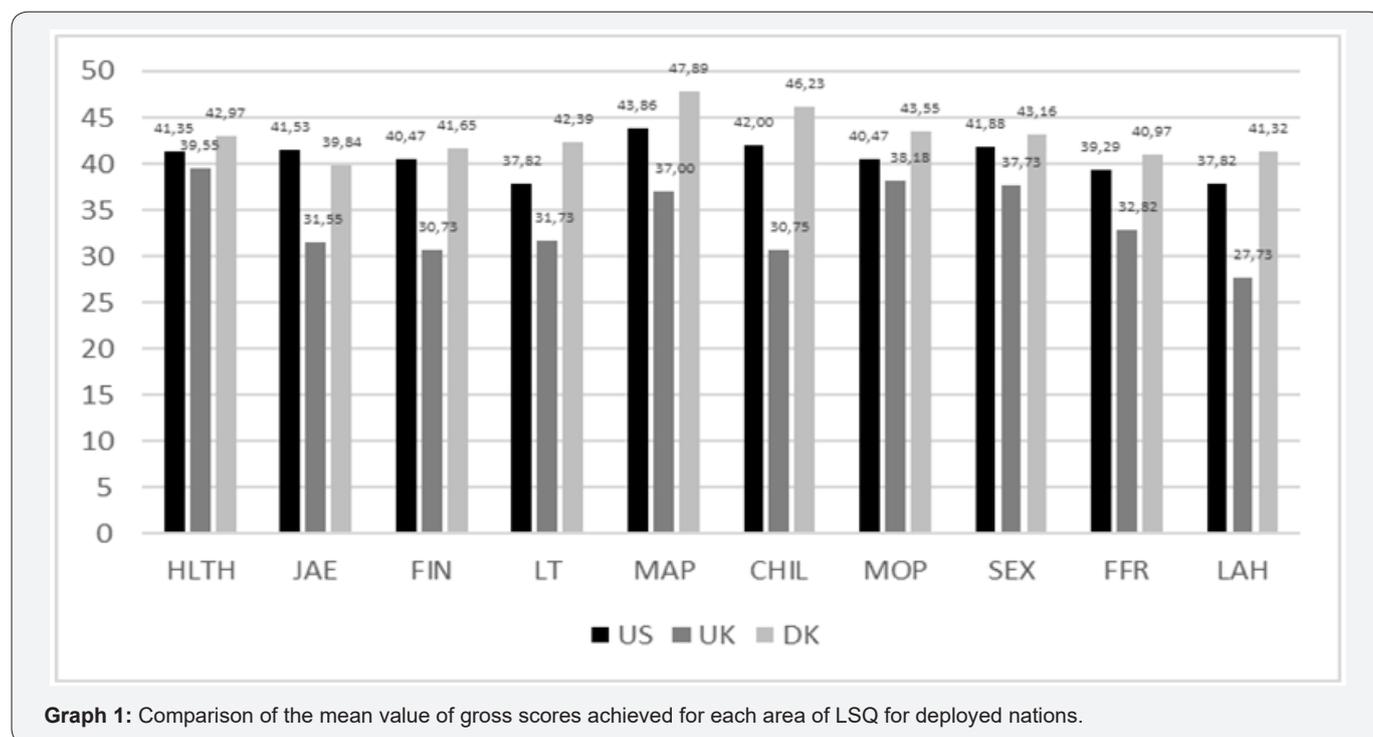
satisfaction of deployed soldiers. Firstly, we identified the profile of the soldiers deployed in a foreign operation in terms of life satisfaction dimensions. We found out the comparison between soldiers from each participant country in terms of life satisfaction. And furthermore, we identified the correlation between the amount of life satisfaction and the satisfaction with catering and food.

To obtain the data, a standardized method for life satisfaction was used: Life satisfaction questionnaire [1].

A total of 98 respondents participated in the research. This sample of participating members can be distinguished by sex - 80 men and 18 women. By Nationality 34 US soldiers, 33 UK soldiers and DK 31 soldiers.

Comparison of the life satisfaction profiles between deployed nations

Comparison and differences of individual LSQ scales between deployed nations is shown in Graph 1.



For US soldiers, the average life expectancy was 279,12, for UK soldiers 238,46 and the DK soldiers 296. The most satisfied with the catering during the deployment were DK soldiers (7,6 points from 10) followed by US (6,3/10) and UK troops (5,7/10).

At the significance level P = 0.05, there was an established significance of the positive correlation between amount of life satisfaction and the satisfaction with the area of catering and food, where the correlation coefficient value is greater than or equal to 0.65.

Conclusion

The research part of this work was mainly focused on finding out the profiles of the research group in terms of life satisfaction. We also focused on finding more detailed and accurate information about possible relationships between overall life satisfaction and food/catering-related issues of soldiers operating in a foreign operation.

All goals were met. We identified the profile of the soldiers deployed in a foreign operation in terms of life satisfaction

dimensions. The comparison between soldiers from each participant country in terms of life satisfaction was made. Furthermore, the correlation between the amount of life satisfaction and the satisfaction with food and catering was identified and the hypothesis that there is a statistically significant correlation between overall life satisfaction and the health dimension was confirmed. We can say, the food and catering plays a very high role in our lifestyle, affects our health and furthermore, the quality of life in any situation.

In life satisfaction, DK soldiers have higher values, followed by US soldiers, and UK men are the least satisfied during the foreign operation. The reasons for differences and their clarification corresponds with the last published "Happiness Index" which is investigated annually by the UN agency [7].

Acknowledgements

This work was supported by the command of foreign operations in the Near East area, by the command of Medical

Treatment Facilities ROLE 2 in the area of operation and the Faculty of Military Health sciences in Hradec Kralove.

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DOI: [10.19080/NFSIJ.2019.08.555749](https://doi.org/10.19080/NFSIJ.2019.08.555749)

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