



# THE GYMNASTICS PROGRAM IN THE TRAINING OF MILITARY STRUCTURES OF SERBIA SINCE 1850

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UDK 796.41:355.351  
796::93/99(497.11)

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## SUMMARY

Observing the development of physical training classes of the Army throughout history, from the Army of the Principality of Serbia to the Serbian Armed Forces of today, it can be said that, in addition to other program segments, gymnastics was the fundamental factor of physical exercise in the overall process of practical and military training. This development was accompanied by frequent changes in the realization of physical training (program contents, number of hours, methodical procedure, etc.), which again depended on the needs of the army, in other words, on the objective of the training - which was aimed at achieving optimal physical abilities for the performance of military duties in all circumstances. The first written facts about the use of gymnastics in the Army of the Principality of Serbia originate from the period of the founding of the Artillery School (in 1850, a predecessor of the Military Academy), where the basis of physical training consisted of the following contents: fighting, gymnastics, swimming, fencing and riding. A little later, in 1867, within the physical training, gymnastic exercises were performed and were the forerunners of today's morning workout, which is even today an integral part of the training of members of the Army of Serbia. The problem of this research work relates to the implementation of the development of gymnastics in the process of training from the Army of the Principality of Serbia to the Serbian Army.

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The aim of this paper is to indicate the permanent implementation of the contents of gymnastics in the educational process of military structures as well as temporary changes according to the specific requirements of the upgrading of military and professional-specialized skills of military personnel in view of research of relevant materials and data collected. A historical method was used in this study. Research results show the importance and role of gymnastics as a basis of physical exercise for the improvement of the physical abilities of soldiers as the basic element of combat readiness.

**Key words:** army, classes, gymnastics, programs, history, Artillery School, Military Academy

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## INTRODUCTION

The title of the work highlights a prominent phenomenon - gymnastics, so far perceived and studied in the light of the importance of applying its elements, based on a set of specifics that characterize it in the practice of many sports, sporting and artistic events, and programs. This has always been possible thanks to the inviolable basic, educational and biopsychosocial impacts and magically attractive attributes that characterize this complex concept - gymnastics. The basis of gymnastics, then and now, is qualified by a number of characteristics which are based on the various forms of movement, the broad scope of element selection (means), stimulating and versatile impact of complex movements on the positive changes in the development of psychophysical and creative potentials, and therefore the abilities in the broadest sense: motor and general intelligence, coordination, agility, strength, speed and specific endurance, flexibility, dynamic balance, orientation in space and time, a sense of muscle strain, concentration, courage, patience, perseverance, accuracy, analytical skills, willingness to cooperate, and so on.<sup>1</sup>

The developers of various educational programs in teaching military education (for officers and non-commissioned officers) and military training (for the military), looking through history, have considered gymnastics to be almost all the means of the entire system of physical exercise (before the special forms of

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<sup>1</sup> Vukašinić Vladan, Miljan Grbović i Milinko Dabović: „Primena sportske gimnastike u drugim sportskim granama“, u *Dječji sport, od prakse do akademske oblasti*, urednici Branislav Jevtić, Jaroslava Radojević, Irina Juhas, Robert Ropret. Beograd: Fakultet sporta i fizičkog vaspitanja, 2011, str. 437-438.

gymnastics exercise were singled out). Starting from the long-known possible applicability of useful gymnastics elements to achieve multiple objectives, the essence of the concept of military teaching programs was their realization of enviable quality of general and specific physical shape of the subjects of the training program.

Data from the rich and long history of physical exercise on the development and application of some forms of gymnastics exercises reach deep into the past, to the Cretan-Mycenaean, Egyptian, Greek and Roman cultures. At the time of the ancient Greece, gymnastics and gymnastics-related games were a means of educating children and youth. In high schools, students practiced in order to acquire good military shape, while the Spartans used gymnastics in addition to other forms of exercise to educate the agile and hardy soldiers to fight and win. Socrates wrote on the importance of gymnastics, recommending it to his students to reach harmonious education – both spiritual and physical<sup>2</sup>.

The training background of military structures in the Principality of Serbia, then in the Kingdom of Serbia, emerged following a peculiar course of history of the Serbian and Yugoslav peoples intertwined with political, war and social developments in the Balkans and in Europe, and due to the political ambitions of the Obrenović and Karađorđević dynasties to create a strong defense army in an independent and sovereign state. The first forms of exercise for soldiers in Serbia were introduced by Karađorđe with the establishment of a standing army (1808), based on the 'egzercirs' in the Russian army, which was then located in Serbia. Later on, Miloš Obrenović also founded a regular standing army (1826), but a European war egzercir was introduced.<sup>3</sup>After receiving autonomy with an edict (1830), conditions were created for faster economic and cultural development of Serbia, and the rapid development of schooling and education started. Prince Miloš Obrenović, holding the people's army unreliable, as it often found itself on the side of the rebels, opened a Hvardiis'ke school (1830) for the preparation of the officer corps, in which the cadets learned military science and practice. This school did not last long, so the Prince formed "a military education center" (1837), where the classes were taught by the egzercir masters<sup>4</sup> (military exercises/skills).

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<sup>2</sup> Đorđe Glibonjski, *Gimnastičke igre za Srpske narodne škole*. Novi Sad: Štamparija A. Pajevića, 1880, str.1-2

<sup>3</sup> S. Djukić, "Strani uticaji na razvoj srpske vojne doktrine 1878 - 1918. godine". Doktorska disertacija. Filozofski fakultet Univerziteta u Beogradu, 2013, str. 297.

<sup>4</sup> Nikodije Trujić, *Fizička kultura u školama Srbije u 19. veku.* Beograd: Komisija za istoriju, Arhiv i Muzej fizičke kulture Srbije, 1976., str. 207-208.

Several years later, starting with gaining independence, in the Principality of Serbia there were more than 80 schools with about 3000 students (1839), with the already adopted the first curriculum of primary schools (1838) and Guidelines for the work of the High Schools (1839). That same year, the Serbian government under the reign of Prince Mihailo Obrenović sent 10 military cadets to school to Austria and Germany on scholarships<sup>5</sup> in order to obtain educational personnel to work in the civil service as soon as possible. In a short period, physical education started to occupy a visible place in the education of officers and was carried out as an important and specific subject. These were the beginnings of military education in Serbia before the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century.

Based on a review of respective facts of the mainly unpublished scientific dissertations and official documents, the impression was that the importance of the implementation of a gymnastics program in training of military structures of Serbia, throughout history, was seldom a topic to write on, and there was a need to explore the aforementioned problems in more detail. The aim of this study was the structural organization of the collected data on the occurrence and development of gymnastics programs in the military structures, and a review of the application of the gymnastics elements in the educational process of military structures. Based on the defined aim we assumed that the gymnastics and its program elements were given great importance from the very beginning of organizing teaching, that they were permanently applied as the backbone of physical exercise of military subjects, and that they periodically suffered changes, chronologically speaking.

## METHODS

The historical method was used in the paper. The analysis of the wider factual material was conducted in the context of heuristics: monographs, archival documents, guidelines and rules for physical training and physical education, unpublished master's and doctoral thesis, memorials, brochures, and minutes. The data collected from historical sources are sorted, analyzed and compared with respect to different aspects that characterize the studied phenomenon in Serbia from the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century to today.

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<sup>5</sup> Stefan Ilić i Slađana Mijatović. *Istorija fizičke kulture Kneževine i Kraljevine Srbije, deo 3*. Beograd: Fakultet fizičke kulture Univerziteta u Beogradu, 2006, str. 399-400.

## Results and Discussion

In Serbia, there has always been a strong army cult, inextricably linked to the centuries-long history of war and the tradition of cultivating the chivalrous spirit of the nation. The army was a pillar of the defense of independence and territorial integrity of the state where the Serbian people lived, and there have been many of those, thus great attention was paid to the physical training. During this research the flow of frequent changes in the realization of physical training has been observed - program elements, conditions, workload, teaching methods, and so on. Gymnastics, with its accompanying elements, had secured an irreplaceable place very early on, basically since the teaching of physical exercise had been institutionally organized. As a subject, it had various forms and names: physical exercise (simple exercises or body-shaping exercises, see. prim. aut.), morning, fighting ('military') exercise, Sokol gymnastics, gymnastics with weapons, shooting gymnastics, gymnastics using the apparatus and apparatus gymnastics,<sup>6</sup> and so on. Common to the general concept of gymnastics was the attribute of a basic exercise in the process of improving the physical fitness of soldiers and officers.

The first data related to the start of the application of gymnastics as a subject in the teaching of regular physical exercise of the Serbian army in the **Principality of Serbia (1830-1882)** are linked to the Artillery School (established in 1850). According to the 'Ustrojenije' (organizing) dated 6 March 1850, the Artillery school admitted boys to the quarterly 'preselection course' (selection of cadets), where gymnastics was taught as part of the second class. Paragraph 32 of 'Ustrojenije' sets forth swimming (training of non-swimmers), fencing and riding classes<sup>7</sup>. The basics of physical exercise and fighting with a rifle were set forth for the first time in the 'Infantry Egzercir Rules' (1867), and "The Instructions for the Practice of Gymnastics and Physical Exercises" (1875 methodology) defined the gymnastics exercise through the following elements: body exercise, exercise with weapons, fighting with a rifle, apparatus gymnastics, and morning gymnastics<sup>8</sup>.

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<sup>6</sup> Dragana Perić, "Nastava fizičkog vaspitanja u Vojnoj akademiji Kopnene vojske od osnivanja do raspada SFRJ". Doktorska disertacija. Fakultet fizičke kulture Univerziteta u Beogradu, 2000, str. 48-49.

<sup>7</sup> Nikodije Trujić, *Fizička kultura u školama Srbije u 19. veku*. Beograd: Komisija za istoriju, Arhiv i Muzej fizičke kulture Srbije, 1976., str. 257; Војна академија, *Споменица Војне академије 1850 - 1925. године*. Beograd: Štamparska radionica Vojske i Mornarice, 1925, str. 49-50, 61-62.

<sup>8</sup> Stanojlo Stokić. *Regrutska škola, Ratnik knj. II, sv. VII*. Beograd: Glavni Đeneralštab, Državna štamparija, List za vojne nauke, novosti i književnost, 1879, str. 24-27; S. Stokić. *Misli o vežbanju pešadije i združenih rodova vojske u poljskoj - ratnoj - službi*. Beograd: Službeni vojni list, SVL broj 11, 19. marta 1883, 575-580.

According to an 'Excerpt from the Infantry Rules' dated 1867, morning gymnastics was performed every day, before classes and before completing the regular army assignments, in uniforms and boots. These rules set forth a gymnastics goal in the Principality of Serbia: "to develop the strength and agility of soldiers with the proper exercise". Apparatus gymnastics was performed on the high bar, balance beam, vaulting trunk, on parallel bars, ropes, rods, war bars, and with skipping ropes. Also, jumps, hops, chin-ups, push-ups, pull-ups on parallel bars, and swinging were also done<sup>9</sup>. One of the new elements of gymnastics was the 'applicable gymnastics' transferred from the Prussian army to Serbia, and it was set forth in "The Instructions for Using Applicable Gymnastics" in the Russian army 1859<sup>10</sup>.

The Artillery School was renamed into the Military Academy in 1880. In the three-year Primary and the two-year High School of the Military Academy in **the Principality of Serbia (1882-1914)**, the skills studied came from gymnastics, fighting and riding. The educated officers with courses completed taught classes, along with the well-known teachers of sports skills. New elements in simple exercises, fighting gymnastics and apparatus gymnastics were being introduced into the gymnastics teaching plan up until 1903. A polygon with various obstacles was built for the fighting gymnastics at the Academy. In addition to the outdoor gym with gymnastics apparatus, apparatus gymnastics was also performed in the indoor gym, while new apparatus was added to the existing one - original vaulting horse, pommel horse, vaulting table and still rings. Up until 1914, the modifications of the training program of cadets were being made, while the subject of gymnastics at the Military Academy consisted of the following: bodily exercise, exercise with weapons, fighting with a rifle, race walking, apparatus gymnastics and applied - fighting gymnastics<sup>11</sup>.

Ministry of Military strived for the Serbian officers to keep up in terms of the quality of training with the major European armies, and wanted the level of their training to be constantly improved. Over a period of one decade between 1888-1898, between 18 and 42 officers left annually (3% per year) for further education in the European army schools and armies, mostly taking practical classes in Russia, Austria, Prussia, Belgium, and later on in the early 20th century

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<sup>9</sup> Ministarstvo vojno. *Izvod iz pešačkih pravila*. Beograd: Državna knjigopečatna, 1867. Ministarstvo vojno. *Uput za upražnjavanje gimnastike sviju rodova oružja*. Beograd: Državna štamparija, 1875, str. 8-27.

<sup>10</sup> Stokić, 1883, str. 575-580.

<sup>11</sup> Perić, 2000, str. 85-89., 103 ili 111.

in France as well<sup>12</sup>. Upon return, these officers brought program novelties even though gymnastics was developing based on the existing instructions. Captain Stanojlo Stokić was thus performing the 'applicable exercises' as part of the 'Erudite Battalion' training on the Topčider hilltop<sup>13</sup>.

The Military Academy had a high-quality teaching staff. From the time the Artillery School was established to the beginning of the Great War (1850-1914) the teachers, officers (out of a total of 286 teachers, 200 Serbian officers were teaching too) and non-commissioned officers - teaching assistants in the Primary School of the Academy were all teaching<sup>14</sup>. The main and the most well-known fencing teacher at the Military Academy was Charles Ducee. The teachers and officers that kept on coming and going were not any lesser known: Jovan Zamastil (taught gymnastics, fighting and swimming for five years), fencing teacher Đorđe Marković - Koder, first-class infantry captain Lazar Cukić (gymnastics), engineering first class captain Dimitrije V. Karadžić (son of Vuk Karadžić, taught gymnastics), infantry major Fedro Mihoković (gymnastics, fighting and swimming), high school teacher Ljubomir Ilić (gymnastics and fighting), infantry Colonel Stevan P. Jovanović (gymnastics), Jovan Stojanović, attorney at law (gymnastics), Colonel Svetislav G. Mišković (fighting and gymnastics), Dr Dragiša Stanojević, reserve infantry Colonel, Atansije M. Popović (gymnastics), artillery Colonel Dragomir T. Nikolajević (gymnastics and fighting), a Czech Sokol frontrunner and Sergeant, and a Ministry of Education gymnastics inspector Miroslav Vojinović (his name was František Hoffman before he changed it) (taught gymnastics).

The officer staff at the time was an important part of the first expert staff for the propagating and development of gymnastics, in addition to the military skills, not only in the Serbian education system, but also in the civil exercise societies. With the Law on the Organization of High Schools (1863), advanced students had the opportunity to learn gymnastics, in addition to church singing and music. Although it was started to get introduced into the primary school programs in the late 1868, gymnastics became a mandatory course in as late as 1882, while the gymnastics programs were passed in 1883. Since the 1882/83 school year, officers and non-commissioned officers taught gymnastics at the theology school and in the teaching schools in Belgrade and Niš, as well as in high

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<sup>12</sup> Dejan Gavrilović. *Velikan srpskoga sporta pukovnik Dragomir Nikolajević*. Beograd: samostalno autorsko izdanje, 2011, str. 113.

<sup>13</sup> Stokić, 1883, str. 653-654.

<sup>14</sup> Gavrilović, 2011, str. 106-107.

schools, and junior highs all across Serbia. This type of engagement of the officer staff solved the problem of insufficient number of gymnastics teachers<sup>15</sup>.

This type of approach to exercise in schools was the result of political ambitions of the Obrenović dynasty, Prince Mihailo and King Milan, to have the Serbian army train in a modern manner and develop as prepared a substitute staff as possible, recruited from the lines of high school students. However, after a one-time withdrawal of officers from teaching (1890), due to a pronounced military approach to exercise and proposals to separate the army exercise from the body exercise (due to a lack of the teaching staff, gymnastics and 'military studies' were combined into one course), there was no teaching gymnastics<sup>16</sup> across many schools in Serbia during the entire last decade of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. There is an interesting piece of information that among the authoritative, responsible and meticulous teaching staff in Schools across Serbia there were also the famous Serbian dukes, sublieutenant Živojin Mišić in the First Belgrade Junior High School and infantry sublieutenant Stepa Stepanović in the Kragujevac High School (1882-1884)<sup>17</sup>. Not any lesser in significance, there was the well-known contribution of the officers of the Kingdom of Serbia to the establishment and development of the Serbian Olympic sports. Many officers, with Captain Svetomir Đukić at the forefront, are responsible for the establishment of the Serbian Olympics Club (1910), which had huge support from the ministry, military commands, institutions, and king Petar.<sup>18</sup>

Due to some unforeseen circumstances, the Military Academy had an interruption in its operations during the Great War (1914-1919), and afterwards it was rebuilt by 1921 in the newly formed country of the **Kingdom of the Serbians, Croats, and Slovenians (1918-1929)**. In the teaching program of 1925, the cadets studied gymnastics according to the Tirshov's Sokol system in all the years of study, and had two classes a week; simple exercises, body-shaping exercises, apparatus exercises (high bar, still rings, pommel horse - vaulting over a gymnastics horse and a live horse, balance beam, wall bars, rope, table (great vault), original vaulting horse (traditional vaulting horse) and poles), apparatus exercises (cannonballs, rods, pins - maces), and applied military gymnastics. The

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<sup>15</sup> Vukašinović, Vladan. *Sokolstvo u Smederevu, 101 godina sokolstva i 128 godina gimnastike (1885-2013)*. Smederevo: samostalno autorsko izdanje, 2013, str. 15-16 i 19.

<sup>16</sup> Vukašinović, 2013, str. 16, 29.

<sup>17</sup> Trujić, Nikodije. "Mišić Živojin", u *Sto biografija*, 3. sv, građa za enciklopediju fizičke kulture i sporta Srbije, urednik Radivoje Marković, 180-181. Beograd: Komisija za istoriju, Arhiv i Muzej fizičke kulture Srbije, 1974., str. 180-181; Trujić, 1976, str. 275.

<sup>18</sup> Jovan V. Petrović, „Srpski olimpijski klub (1910-1980)“. *Fizička kultura*, br. 1 (1981), str. 75-76.



military also used these programs and they were periodically changed. As part of the practical courses, body exercises, exercises with weapons, shooting gymnastics and applied fighting gymnastics were performed. In addition to gymnastics, light athletics, overcoming obstacles, fighting, swimming and horseback riding were also used<sup>19</sup>.

Furthermore, in the **Kingdom of Yugoslavia (1929-1941)**, the backbone of the physical education of cadets was gymnastics according to the Sokol system. In addition to gymnastics, fighting and horseback riding courses were present in all programs of the Military Academy. Starting in 1930, the gymnastics programs with 30 classes a year consisted of: simple exercises, apparatus exercises (high bar, still rings, pommel horse, balance beam, wall bars, ropes, table, original vaulting table, rods), exercises using the apparatus groups (acrobatic exercises), boxing as part of the shaping gymnastics exercises, as well as elementary games and light athletics (running short distances, high jump, long jump, depth jump, sprinting, shot put). In addition to the so-called 'applied gymnastics' and exercises with weapons, the cadets overcame obstacles or the so-called fighting gymnastics<sup>20</sup>. In the years right after the disintegration of Yugoslavia, the program elements of gymnastics, according to the teaching plan of the first year of the Primary School of the Military Academy (1939/40) were: body-shaping exercises, apparatus exercises (high bar, original vaulting horse, parallel bars, pommel horse, springboard jump), military gymnastics (rope, pole, tree climbing) and diverse exercises (forward somersault, backward somersault, forward somersault vaulting over a cadet, and so on). In third year the following was added to the program: 'ski gymnastics', as part of the apparatus gymnastics - exercises on the wall bars, as part of the military gymnastics - throwing a bomb into the distance and hitting a target, crawling and skipping over various natural and man-made equipment, long pole vault, and as part of the diverse exercises - handspring, handstand, bridge pose, parallel bars, and so on.<sup>21</sup>

During the reorganization of the Military Academy (1944), a special problem was the formation of the teaching staff for all courses. The first physical education teachers were the well-known former Sokol forerunners Frano Žic and Rafael Ban, also the author of a large number of manual and books on

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<sup>19</sup> Perić, 2000, str. 130.

<sup>20</sup> Arhiv Centralne vojne biblioteke Beograd, inv. br. 2304. HPP za 1,2,3,4. i 5. godinu Niže škole Vojne akademije. Beograd: Autografska radionica Vojne akademije, 1930, str. 3-20.

<sup>21</sup> Vojna akademija. *Gimnastika*, nastavni plan i program za prvu godinu Niže škole Vojne akademije - 67. klasa nastavne 1939/1940. godine. Beograd: Autografska radionica Uprave vojne akademije, 1939, str. 3-19.

gymnastics<sup>22</sup>. **From 1945** onward, gymnastics remained part of the mandatory physical exercise in all military structures, military education facilities and the Yugoslav army **FPRY**, with morning gymnastics programs (zaryadka), apparatus exercise and balancing exercise (using the parallel bars, balance beam, horizontal bar, leaps). During free time there were competitions organized by branches or disciplines for which there were rules, including athletics, boxing, wrestling, football, basketball, swimming). Teaching plans and programs for military schools and troop training of the military units were set forth by the Department of Physical Education of the Fourth Administration of the General Staff (Military Headquarters), the highest body of management in the Yugoslav Army when it came to training. The teaching of physical education was realized based on the 'Physical Exercise Program in the Yugoslav Army' (published by the General Staff) and based on the Instructions for the Physical Exercise in the units (for the army units, publisher the Ministry of Defense, 1945), based on the manuals and instructions of the Soviet army<sup>23</sup>. This type of physical education was applied up until 1950, and then the Administration of the Military Academy took over the production of the new teaching programs according to the guidelines of the General Staff Administration. Due to the need for expert staff, in 1947 'The Military Department of the State Institute of Physical Exercise' was formed and it trained based on the one-year military physical exercise course in Belgrade.

Starting in 1951, 'The Gymnastics, Boxing and Wrestling Manual' was used in the teaching at the Academy, and it provided methodical instructions for the gymnastics program: simple exercises (morning exercise - gymnastics), apparatus exercises - parallel bar, high bar, still rings, single-handle pommel horse, balance beam, vault, and floor exercises. That same year, after the formation of the Yugoslav National Army (1951), the army started to adapt its physical education elements to its own needs, thus the gymnastics program consisted of the simple exercises, apparatus exercises (high bar, parallel bars, still rings, single-handle pommel horse, balance beam), vaults (original vaulting horse, vaulting horse), weight exercises and floor exercises. Transparent competitions were introduced in quadrathlon and sextathlon. As part of the quadrathlon the following events were performed: a combination of simple gymnastics exercises, high bar and balance beam exercises, vaults using the traditional vaulting horse, and mastering the tracks. In this period, gymnastics was building up on the mastering of polygons with the infantry obstacles (starting in 1946 the track was 110m long,

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<sup>22</sup> Perić, 2000, str. 201.

<sup>23</sup> Saša Vajić, „Uvođenje, razvoj i realizacija organizacionih oblika fizičkog vaspitanja u Kopненоj vojsci Jugoslovenske narodne armije u periodu 1945-1995. godine”. Magistarska teza. Fakultet sporta i fizičkog vaspitanja Univerziteta u Beogradu, 2014, str. 9, 36, 73-74.

and in 1953 the obstacle track was 240m long, and it contained 18 obstacles). Based on the achieved results in quadrathlon and sextathlon, the ZREN badges ('charge for the republic') were awarded<sup>24</sup>. It is interesting that the members of the military took part in numerous Sokol rallies before World War II and afterwards (gymnastics, mass joint exercises, archery, athletics, etc.). At the second Gymnathlon (Zagreb, 1957), cadets from the Naval Training Center in Pula had a remarkable gymnastics performance.

In 1960, unique Instructions for Physical Education entered into force, and they were applied in all military structures as a starting point for the plans and programs of the Army (the only thing that differed was the number of training hours), depending on the specifics of the types, branches or services, and the training time limit. These instructions had been periodically changed: 1973 (the Yugoslav army), 1986, 1995 (after the disintegration of Yugoslavia, the army of the **Federal Republic of Yugoslavia**), in 2003 (only the amended instructions for the army of **Serbia and Montenegro**) and in 2011, the new Instructions for Physical Training in the Army of the **Republic of Serbia** that apply today. There were no significant changes to the new instructions up until 2011 in the gymnastics programs, and the gymnastics exercises were still classified into groups: gymnastics exercises with no apparatus (complexes of simple exercises, for wet terrain and winter), moving exercises (walking, running, hops...), in pairs (repressions, tugging), with apparatus (rifle, machine, cube, weight, co-exerciser) apparatus exercises, overcoming the space and obstacles (various movements) and an infantry trail<sup>25</sup>.

The value of gymnastics in the Yugoslav military institutions up until 2011 is evident from the teaching programs. There were over 80 different apparatus exercises. Also, we observed the exercises with high technical requirements (forward and backward salto, cartwheels, on the still rings v-cross, from a hang back/front toss to hang, dismounts, jumps on the large elastic table, and exercises using beams and wheels). It can be assumed that the programs conceptualized in this way were taken from schools and gymnastics association, and were optionally available in line with the ability of the cadets and soldiers, bearing in mind that great attention was paid to the safety measures during exercise. It is known that the realization of the apparatus gymnastics program could be carried out more seriously in military schools due to the uniformity of cadets in terms of their

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<sup>24</sup> Vojni arhiv Ministarstva odbrane Republike Srbije, fond SSNO, K-284, f. 01, 001/001. *Program fiskulture u Jugoslovenskoj armiji*. Beograd: Nastavno odeljenje Četvrte uprave GŠJA, 1946, str. 10.

<sup>25</sup> Vajić, 2014, str. 155-160, 211-212 i 251-253.

abilities and better working conditions. Training in sports gymnastics was performed at the academy in two to four classes per week (1970-1990). The formed Department of Physical Education took care of it, and the program was implemented in areas equipped with the apparatus - indoor (gyms) or outdoor (summer practice sites, polygons).

The reform and reorganization of the Serbian military education from 1991 to 2000 did not have major changes in the physical education program, except that the number of classes was reduced from three to two classes per week. Based on the new reform from 2006/2007 to 2009, after the declaration of independence of Montenegro and the formation of the **Republic of Serbia** (8 June 2006), there were significant changes in the gymnastics program of the Army of Serbia. The gymnastics program elements of today are classified into five groups: exercise with no apparatus, moving exercise, exercise in pairs, exercise using apparatus and apparatus exercises. Although the teaching of physical exercise is diverse (athletics, polygons, fighting, swimming, skiing, sports games), it is indicative that, in addition to the first group - exercise with no apparatus (complex gymnastics exercises, i.e., 21 body-shaping exercises), the last group - apparatus exercises has been reduced almost completely, because only two elements have been retained - the rope climbing exercise and the walking on the beam (balance) exercise. The elements from the field of anthropomotorics belong to the other groups defined as gymnastics groups.

The actuality of the above problem and some other issues (goals and tasks, conditions, safety in the classroom) initiates good enough reasons for competent and responsible institutions and individuals to reference the positive arguments from previous studies, and the achieved good results in theory and practice of this subject in the classroom, and to draw attention to this complex field to change for the better and to eliminate defects. The innovators of the teaching plans and programs should, based on the reformed concept of teaching, plan the use of known and in the past useful gymnastics elements to achieve the positive effect of exercise in the work with military personnel: at least those simple, basic exercises in acrobatics (somersault, handstand, cartwheel), exercises in the air and with resistance, changes in height and resistance on the apparatus (swings, hanging, dismounts), minor leaps, and the use of the practical application of them under different conditions (it is known how much the improvement of gymnastics skills contributes to overcoming the polygon obstacles in the context of military gymnastics more easily and successfully, prim. aut.). The point is that, among other things, the already defined standards in civil education can be used to improve the teaching and learning for the military structures, as they unambiguously specify what knowledge and skills should be developed during the education process, all with the aim to facilitate a wider expression of their potential in knowledge and skills.

## CONCLUSION

With hindsight it can be concluded that the vision of the creators, the former and the latter, of the teaching plans and programs in the military education institutions largely relied on gymnastics. Since 1839, when sending the military cadets of the Principality of Serbia to train abroad began, the physical education class has started to occupy an important place in the military education curriculum, and gymnastics, with its useful program elements and as the backbone of the program has been very much applied. Over a period spanning more than half a century, the gymnastics elements were changed periodically according to the specific upgrade requirements of the military and professional and specialized skills of the military personnel. Today, despite the fact that gymnastics is followed by the positive argument in terms of the importance of its application in the teaching process, these elements are not present even to the minimum extent. The number of apparatus gymnastics elements, although necessary to the younger generations, has been completely reduced. This clearly indicates that the process of training of cadets and soldiers lacks the necessary incentives and effects provided by this basic activity - biological, health, motor, education, upbringing, hygiene, preventive, corrective and aesthetic effects, which ultimately has serious repercussions. The results of this study, as a summarized research presentation, indicate how the former elements were respected in professional circles because of the positive functions to the final outcome of teaching and training. The displayed factography in this paper could draw attention or give rise to the competent professional circles in the Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Serbia and the Army of Serbia to in the foreseeable future and on the basis of professional expertise propose amendments to the existing standards for the evaluation of the physical abilities of soldiers in the voluntary military service and professional military personnel, unit commands and military institutions, and in this regard, redefine the Instructions for Physical Training - the program resources and planning, preparation and verification of performance.

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## ПРОГРАМ ГИМНАСТИКЕ У ОБУЦИ ВОЈНИХ СТРУКТУРА СРБИЈЕ ОД 1850. ГОДИНЕ

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### САЖЕТАК

Посматрајући развој наставе физичке обуке војске кроз историју, од Војске Кнежевине Србије до данашње Војске Србије, може се рећи да је, поред осталих програмских сегмената, гимнастика била темељни чинилац физичког вежбања у свеукупном процесу практичне и војне обуке. Овај развој пратиле су честе промене у реализацији физичке обуке (програмски садржаји, фонд сати, методски поступак и др.), што је опет зависило од потреба војске, односно циља обуке – усмереног на достизање оптималних физичких способности ради извршавања војних задатака у свим околностима. Први писани трагови о примени гимнастике у Војсци Кнежевине Србије датирају из периода оснивања Артиљеријске школе (1850, претеча Војне академије), где су основу физичке обуке сачињавали следећи садржаји: борење, гимнастика, пливање, фехтовање и јахање. Нешто касније, 1867. године, у оквиру телесног „вежбања“, реализоване су гимнастичке вежбе које су биле претече данашње јутарње гимнастике, а која је и данас неизоставан део обуке припадника Војске Србије. Проблем рада се односи се на примену развој гимнастике у процесу обуке, од Војске Кнежевине Србије до Војске Србије. Циљ овог рада је да се на основу истраживања релевантне грађе и прикупљених података укаже на перманентну примену садржаја гимнастике у образовном процесу војних структура и повремене промене према специфичним захтевима надградње војних и стручно-специјалистичких вештина војних припадника. У истраживању је коришћена историјска метода. Резултати истраживања указују на значај и улогу гимнастике као основе физичког вежбања за унапредјење физичких способности војника као основног елемента борбене готовости.

**Кључне речи:** војска, настава, гимнастика, програми, историјат, Артиљеријска школа, Војна академија

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## ПРОГРАММА ОБУЧЕНИЯ ГИМНАСТИКЕ ДЛЯ ВОЕННЫХ СТРУКТУР СЕРБИИ С 1850 ГОДА

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### АННОТАЦИЯ

Изучив историю развития организации физической подготовки в армии, начиная от армии времен Княжества Сербии до современных сербских Вооруженных сил, можно сказать, что наряду с другими составляющими, программы по гимнастике были основополагающим фактором физкультурных занятий в процессе практической и военной подготовки. В истории развития армии произошло много изменений в реализации физической подготовки (в содержании программы, количестве часов, методических особенностях и т.д.) и сегодня она снова отражает потребности армии, что проявляется в целях подготовки, направленных на оптимальную реализацию физических способностей в процессе выполнения воинского долга при любых обстоятельствах. Первые факты, свидетельствующие о занятиях военнослужащих гимнастикой в армии Княжества Сербии, находят письменное подтверждение в период основания Артиллерийской Школы (в 1850 году, современное Военное училище), где содержание базовой физической подготовки заключалось в следующем: борьба, гимнастика, плавание, фехтование и верховая езда. Немного позже, в 1867 году, физическая подготовка представляла собой выполнение гимнастических упражнений, а сейчас это утренние тренировки, как неотъемлемая часть обучения военнослужащих Сербской армии. Данная статья рассматривает организацию занятий гимнастикой в процессе подготовки военнослужащих от времен армии Княжества Сербии до современной Сербской армии. Цель статьи – посредством соответствующих материалов и собранных научных данных показать, как последовательно реализуется содержание гимнастической подготовки военных подразделений в образовательном процессе, а также отразить изменения в соответствии с определенными современными требованиями к уровню развития военного искусства и формирования профессионально-специализированных навыков военнослужащих.

В исследовании использовался исторический метод. Результаты исследования подтверждают важность и роль гимнастики, как основы физических упражнений для совершенствования физических способностей солдат – главного элемента их боевой подготовленности.

**Ключевые слова:** армия, занятия, гимнастика, программы, история, Артиллерийская Школа, Военная Академия.

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Received on March 30, 2016  
Accepted on May 18, 2016