

O. NESTULIA**REINTEGRATION OF WAR VETERANS INTO PEACEFUL LIFE IN UKRAINE: CURRENT STATE AND FUTURE CHALLENGES**

Research on reintegration programs of leading countries has shown that it is impossible to fully apply the experience of any of them in Ukraine due to numerous specific factors that need to be considered when developing a state strategy for the reintegration of war veterans. The study of Ukrainian legislation has established that a war veteran is a general term that encompasses all participants in the Russian-Ukrainian war or other conflicts, regardless of their status during service. Veterans can be combatants or war participants. A combatant directly participates in combat operations, while a war participant serves during the conflict but does not engage in combat. The same person can have both statuses. This terminology is important for the implementation of veteran reintegration programs and understanding the target audience of each program. The process of reintegrating war veterans in Ukraine is complex and long-term, dependent on many factors such as the duration of the war, which increases the number of veterans needing rehabilitation; the insufficient level of respect for veterans from society, which requires the formation of a long-term state strategy; and the complicated regulatory framework, which complicates the implementation of support programs. For effective reintegration, it is necessary to simplify and optimize legislation, taking into account the specific needs of veterans. The reintegration process includes psychological support, social integration, economic reintegration, medical assistance, legal support, educational programs, housing provision, support for veterans' families, community initiatives, and informational support, all of which contribute to their return to a full life in society. The reintegration process of war veterans in Ukraine is complex and multifaceted, requiring systemic and large-scale support from the state and international organizations. There are national and international programs such as the reintegration program from IREX, the "eRobota" projects and the Ukrainian Veterans Fund, the "eOselya" program, new experimental government projects, as well as support from the EU and IOM. These programs are aimed at comprehensive support for veterans, including employment, vocational training, psychosocial and physical rehabilitation, access to housing, and legal assistance. However, given the number of veterans and the continuation of hostilities, these programs are insufficient, and it is necessary to expand and scale them at the national level to ensure effective reintegration.

Keywords: veterans; reintegration; war veterans; combatants; war participants; the process of war veterans' reintegration; war veterans' reintegration programs in Ukraine

O.B. НЕСТУЛЯ**РЕІНТЕГРАЦІЯ ВЕТЕРАНІВ ВІЙНИ В МИРНЕ ЖИТТЯ В УКРАЇНІ: СУЧАСНИЙ СТАН ТА МАЙБУТНІ ВИКЛИКИ**

Дослідження реінтеграційних програм провідних країн світу показало, що в Україні неможливо повністю застосувати їхній досвід через численні особливості. Масштабність та жорстокість війни в Україні просто вражає і потребує абсолютно безпрецедентних підходів до реінтеграції ветеранів війни в мирне життя, оскільки має кожен п'ятий відноситься до цієї категорії населення, і жодна країна світу не має такого досвіду адаптації військових у післявоєнний період. Ветеран війни – це загальний термін, що охоплює всіх учасників російсько-української війни чи інших конфліктів. Ветерани можуть бути учасниками бойових дій або учасниками війни, і одна й та сама особа може мати обидва статуси. Ця термінологія важлива для реалізації програм реінтеграції. Визначено, що процес реінтеграції включає психологічну підтримку, соціальну інтеграцію, економічну реінтеграцію, медичну допомогу, юридичну підтримку, освітні програми, забезпечення житлом, підтримку сімей ветеранів, громадські ініціативи та інформаційну підтримку, що сприяє їх поверненню до повноцінного життя в суспільстві. Процес реінтеграції ветеранів війни в Україні є складним і довгостроковим, залежним від багатьох факторів, таких як тривалість війни, недостатній рівень поваги до ветеранів з боку суспільства та ускладнена нормативно-правова база. Для ефективної реінтеграції необхідно спрощувати та оптимізувати законодавство, враховуючи специфічні потреби ветеранів. Процес реінтеграції включає психологічну підтримку, соціальну інтеграцію, економічну реінтеграцію, медичну допомогу, юридичну підтримку, освітні програми, житлове забезпечення, підтримку сімей ветеранів, громадські ініціативи та інформаційну підтримку. Існують національні та міжнародні програми, такі як програма реінтеграції від IREX, проєкти «eРобота» та Український фонд ветеранів, програма «eОселя», нові експериментальні проєкти уряду, а також підтримка від ЄС та МОМ. Ці програми спрямовані на комплексну підтримку ветеранів, включаючи працевлаштування, професійне навчання, психосоціальну та фізичну реабілітацію, доступ до житла та юридичну допомогу. Проте, враховуючи кількість ветеранів та продовження бойових дій, цих програм недостатньо, тому їх необхідно розширювати та масштабувати на національному рівні для забезпечення ефективної реінтеграції.

Ключові слова: ветерани; реінтеграція; ветерани війни; учасники бойових дій; учасники війни; процес реінтеграції ветеранів війни; програми реінтеграції ветеранів війни в Україні

Introduction. Today, the national economy is focused on population support, mobilization processes, socio-economic stabilization, and military issues. At the same time, the longer the war lasts, the more the number of veterans grows. According to the data of the Ministry of Veteran Affairs of Ukraine, as of May 2024, 1.2 million veterans were officially registered, and after the end of the war, including family members, their number will increase to 5-6 million people [2]. But in Ukraine, and to this day, there is no proper legislative framework and an active citizen's position regarding the realization of their rights and interests, and the process of reintegration of veterans in general is mostly entrusted to public organizations, which are formed from the same war veterans. But the issue of reintegration of veterans is very important during the war, and especially in the post-war period, since the participants

of the hostilities, who will not be reintegrated into peaceful life, will begin to unite and separate into their own closed groups, which in some places will be dangerous for the population and for these soldiers themselves, who over time will not want to return to a peaceful life.

The international experience of countries that have experienced active hostilities shows that it is the state that must ensure proper regulation of the veteran environment, especially with regard to defining its legal and social field. In addition, it should be noted that the attitude towards war veterans is directly dependent on the readiness of the next generation of Ukrainians to carry out military service, and therefore ensure a high level of the country's defense capability in the future.

It should also be noted that approximately 15-20% of the population will have the status of a war veteran, which

is a significant category of citizens who need special rights, benefits and services for reintegration into peaceful life. This number requires unprecedented approaches to the formation of a post-war space for war veterans, where they become an active part of civil society. Based on these facts, reintegration and rehabilitation are very important and relevant. Without an effective reintegration system in place, veterans will face many problems and challenges: legal, financial, psychological, etc. The impossibility of solving these issues, in the long-term perspective, can cause illegal behavior that will be a threat to the civilian population, as well as to themselves. It is necessary to recognize the state and society's responsibility and duty to war veterans, who give the most valuable thing they have, their health, and sometimes even their lives.

Therefore, an effective mechanism for the reintegration of war veterans is a necessary element of the socio-economic development of Ukraine, both during the war and in the post-war period.

Overview of the latest sources of research and publications. Wars have existed as long as mankind has existed. And as soon as new interstate conflicts or wars arise, scientists, of course, do not stand aside and work out effective mechanisms for the reintegration of war veterans into peaceful life. Russia's war against Ukraine is no exception. The works of foreign scientists who study the risks and challenges of a veteran's transition from military to civilian life are of great importance for the implementation of research tasks: J. Ahern, S. Horbenko, R. Zhilenko, T. Zakharina, D. Ishchenko, O. Kokun, I. Pishko, V. Oliynyk, S. Khoruzhiy, M. Syrytsia, T. Kolenichenko, O. Lozova, L. Shymanovska-Dianich.

Despite the significant development of scientific research in the field of reintegration of war veterans into peaceful life, the scale and brutality of the war in Ukraine is simply astounding and requires absolutely unprecedented approaches to the reintegration of war veterans into peaceful life, since every fifth of the population belongs to this category of the population, and no country in the world does not have such experience in the adaptation of the military in the post-war period. That is why our research is relevant and timely.

The purpose of the study is to analyze the current state of reintegration of war veterans in Ukraine and identify future challenges for improving this process.

Main material and results. To date, in Ukraine there are concepts of "war veteran", "war participant" and "combatant", all of them are defined in the Law of Ukraine "On the status of veterans, guarantees of their social protection" dated October 22, 1993. Thus, Article 4 defines that "war veterans are persons who participated in the defense of the Motherland or in hostilities on the territory of other states. War veterans include: combatants, persons with disabilities as a result of war, war participants" [1]. Article 5 of the same Law states that "participants in hostilities are persons who took part in military tasks for the defense of the Motherland as part of military units, formations, associations of all types and branches of the Armed Forces of the active army (navy), in partisan units and underground and other formations in both wartime and peacetime" [1]. Article 8 also states that "military personnel who served in the Armed Forces of the former USSR

during the war, rear-line workers, as well as other persons provided for by this Law are recognized as participants in the war" [1].

In other words, we can define that a war veteran is a sufficiently broad term that covers all persons who participated in the Russian-Ukrainian war or other wars or ATO, regardless of their status during service. And war veterans can be either combatants or war participants. In some cases, the same person can have both statuses. Thus, a combatant is a person who directly takes part in hostilities, directly performing combat tasks to protect the country. This category includes servicemen who took part in combat operations, as well as those who performed tasks in conditions of direct confrontation and fire contact with the enemy [1]. Unlike a combatant, a combatant is a person who served in the Armed Forces during the war but did not directly participate in hostilities.

Demarcation of these military categories is extremely important for the processes of reintegration and provision of social support. According to each of them, its own algorithm for reintegration into civilian life and its own list of social benefits and adaptive programs are provided. The process of reintegration of war veterans is complex and long-term, which requires taking into account many of its components and factors affecting it. In our opinion, there are several main factors on which the effectiveness of reintegration will directly depend:

— duration of the war – every year, every month and every day the number of war veterans increases. Due to constant shelling of the civilian population, the number of war veterans who will require long-term reintegration and rehabilitation is increasing. Due to active hostilities, the number of participants in hostilities is also increasing, and they will require comprehensive reintegration at the state level, and possibly at the international level. In other words, the duration of the war directly determines the extent of reintegration of war veterans;

— insufficient level of respect for veterans on the part of society - the process of reduction is gradual and has several reasons: unformed state content to support the veteran's image, poor countering of disinformation to Russian narratives, society's misunderstanding of the needs and psychological state of the military, low level of tolerance of the population and focus on their own needs. Thus, the Ukrainian Veteran Fund of the Ministry of Veterans Affairs in Ukraine and the Sociological Group "Rating" conducted a nationwide survey "Veterans in Ukrainian society". According to the survey, the following data were obtained: in July 2022, 55% of respondents spoke about the undeniable respect for veterans on the part of society, then in September 2023, this number was already 79%, and in March 2024 - 76% [3]. The results indicate that respect for veterans is not permanent and must be formed according to the principle of a long-term state strategy;

— complicated legal framework for the reintegration of war veterans. In Ukraine, the experience of war starts from 2014, from the period of occupation of Crimea, parts of Luhansk and Donetsk regions. Accordingly, to date, the process of providing benefits and guarantees to veterans is regulated by more than 150 legal acts, which causes

ambiguity in their interpretation and complicates their implementation in practice. In addition, some laws and by-laws were adopted urgently and do not have a clear order of implementation, which leads to unsatisfactory social protection of veterans.

— Ukraine faced a full-scale invasion of Russia on its territory, which was unprecedented in its scale after the Second World War. That is why since 2014, and then since 2022, a new category of population has appeared in Ukraine - war veterans, and as a result, the urgent issue of their reintegration into civilian life. In our opinion, the experience of other countries in the reintegration of war veterans can be useful for Ukraine to form its own effective mechanism for adapting the military to peaceful life.

Today, such programs exist in almost every developed country in the world. Yes, the US has a Veterans Affairs (VA) program that provides a wide range of services, including medical care, psychological support, vocational training and employment assistance. The special emphasis of the program is on the detection and treatment of post-traumatic stress disorder and other psychological problems in former military personnel. In Israel, the Zahal Disabled Veterans Organization (ZDVO) program operates, which provides medical and psychological assistance, as well as rehabilitation services for veterans. This program is particularly focused on the reintegration of veterans into society through professional growth and lifelong education [4]. In Canada, the Veterans Affairs Canada (VAC) program offers medical assistance, psychological support, financial assistance and vocational training programs. Special attention is paid to supporting not only the veterans themselves, but also their families, who quite often need no less psychological help than the military himself. In Great Britain, there is a program called Veterans UK, which provides medical care, psychological support, employment assistance and financial support. After World War II, Germany developed comprehensive reintegration programs for veterans, including medical care, psychological support, and vocational training. Australia has a Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) program that provides medical care, psychological support, financial assistance and vocational training programs [15]. France also has programs that provide medical and psychological assistance to veterans, as well as support for employment and social integration. The Netherlands has a Veterans Institute program that provides medical care, psychological support, financial assistance and vocational training programs.

The above countries demonstrate that successful reintegration of veterans requires a comprehensive approach that includes medical and psychological care, vocational training and social support. It is important to consider the specific needs of veterans and their families to ensure effective reintegration [7]. Several approaches used in other countries may be useful for Ukraine: comprehensive medical and psychological care, as in the US and Israel, it is important to provide veterans with access to quality medical care and psychological support, especially for the treatment of PTSD and other mental disorders, which will help veterans better adapt to a peaceful life; vocational training and employment, programs similar to those in Canada and Australia can help

veterans acquire new skills and find jobs that will contribute to their economic independence and social integration; social support and integration, namely the experience of Germany and the Netherlands shows that it is important to support veterans in social integration through educational and vocational programs, as well as through support for veterans' families; financial assistance, as in the UK and France, providing financial assistance to veterans can help them overcome economic difficulties and provide stability during the transition to civilian life.

Implementation of these approaches in Ukraine, in our opinion, can significantly improve the process of reintegration of veterans, providing them with the necessary support and resources for a successful return to a peaceful life [9].

The vision of scientists, politicians and civil servants of the components of the process of reintegration of war veterans in Ukraine is no less controversial. It is from the understanding of these components that it will depend whether reintegration programs will cover all spheres of rehabilitation of military and veterans. We offer our own vision of the components of the process of reintegration of war veterans (Table).

As you can see, the process of reintegration is complex and multi-component, which requires systematic, balanced and large-scale support from the state and international organizations. Several national and international programs aimed at the reintegration and support of the military are already operating in Ukraine:

IREX Veterans Reintegration Program, which aims to improve the quality and access to services for veterans, including employment, vocational training, psychosocial and physical rehabilitation [3]. It should be noted that this program has been in effect since 2014, and with the beginning of the full-scale invasion of Russia on the territory of Ukraine in 2022, it has only expanded its areas of activity.

The "eRobota" project and the Ukrainian Veterans Fund - these projects support veterans in creating their own businesses and provide grants for the development of entrepreneurship [4].

"eOselya" program - contract civil servants, medical workers, pedagogic and scientific-pedagogical workers can get access to affordable mortgage loans and compensation for the purchase of housing [5]. Although the program provides for the possibility of a mortgage for military personnel, in our opinion, there should be a separate program specifically for war veterans, which significantly expands the categories of people who can claim to participate in it.

New experimental projects of the government - these include the Programs "Electronic cabinet of a person with disabilities", "Social support of servicemen and their families in military units" and "Formation of vitality" from the Ministry of Social Policy of Ukraine, which include the provision of complex social services, such as social - psychological assistance, development of social skills and adaptation. Support from the EU and IOM, which includes training, support for the transition to civilian life, business development, as well as activities to strengthen communities and support for veterans' centers.

The above-mentioned programs are aimed at providing comprehensive support to veterans, helping them to adapt to civilian life and integrate into society, and considering the number of war veterans and the continuation of active

Table - Components of the reintegration process of war veterans in Ukraine

Composite	Characteristic
Psychological support	Provision of qualified psychological assistance to overcome stress and injuries for the opportunity to fully live and work in society
Social integration	Facilitating the return of veterans to active social life, including participation in communities, transfer of experience to the younger generation, formation of a socially active class of veterans
Economic reintegration	Support in employment, professional training and business development. Military experience quite often provokes a complete change of profession and profession, and therefore all opportunities should be created for obtaining education, improving qualifications and acquiring new competencies. Disability acquired during war will also shape the need for a change of profession and accordingly companies must be ready to work with co-workers with inclusion and disability.
Medical assistance	Ensuring access to medical services, including rehabilitation and treatment. Given the degree of moral and physical damage inflicted on veterans during the war, medical care should be provided throughout the life of a soldier and his family members.
Legal support	Provision of legal assistance and advice on the rights of veterans. Due to the complexity and number of legal acts regulating the issues of reintegration and social support, veterans have a constant urgent need for legal support
Educational programs	Advanced training and retraining programs for adaptation to civilian life. It should be noted that these programs should be coordinated and systematized at the state level, and veterans should receive the requested profession for free
Housing provision	Ensuring access to housing and improving living conditions. The housing issue has always been acute for veterans since the time of the ATO, as state programs for providing them with housing were ineffective and did not cover even 10% of housing needs.
Support for families of veterans	Helping families of veterans adapt and overcome difficulties. Reintegration of veterans, first of all, involves returning to the family and building new relationships, which is why support is needed not only by the military, but also by all members of his family.
Public initiatives and events	Organization of events and programs to support veterans and their integration into society. Every veteran should feel respect and his importance in society. Therefore, the active involvement of veterans in active social life will only speed up the reintegration process.
Information support	Providing information about available services and veterans' rights. In our opinion, a single information field for veterans should be formed in Ukraine, where they could receive all the necessary information about the implementation of state programs and initiatives for their reintegration

Source: compiled by the author based on [10,12,15]

hostilities on the territory of Ukraine, these programs for the comprehensive reintegration of war veterans in Ukraine are insufficient, considering that most of them are still in the war, and after its end, every fifth Ukrainian will need help and adaptation, so now it is necessary to develop and scale reintegration programs at the national level.

Conclusions. As a result of the analysis of the current state of reintegration of war veterans in Ukraine and the identification of future challenges for improving this process, we have drawn the following conclusions:

1. The study of the reintegration programs of the leading countries of the world showed that in Ukraine it is impossible to fully apply the experience of any of them due to numerous features that must be taken into account when developing a state strategy for the reintegration of war veterans.

2. As a result of the study of Ukrainian legislation, it was established that a war veteran is a general term covering all participants in the Russian-Ukrainian war or other conflicts, regardless of their status during service. Veterans can be combatants or war veterans. A combatant directly participates in combat operations, while a war participant serves during a conflict but does not participate in combat. The same person can have both statuses.

3. The process of reintegration of war veterans in Ukraine is complex and long-term, depending on many factors, such as the duration of the war, which increases the number of veterans in need of rehabilitation; insufficient level of respect for veterans on the part of society, which requires the formation of a long-term state strategy; and a complicated regulatory framework that complicates the implementation of support programs. For effective reintegration, it is necessary to simplify and optimize the legislation, taking into account the specific needs of veterans.

4. The process of reintegration of war veterans in Ukraine includes psychological support, social integration, economic reintegration, medical assistance, legal support, educational programs, housing, support for veterans' families, public initiatives and informational support, which together contribute to their return to a full life in society.

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Надійшло (received) 12.03.2025

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