

COMBAT MOTIVATION OF THE POLISH FORCES

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Edmund Walendowski

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To my Mother, Father and Brother

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Preface

In this book I discuss the reliability of Polish forces in the event of a NATO–Warsaw Pact war. This is a topic which has been much discussed and debated in the West. The question is not simply whether the Poles would or would not fight. In this study I investigate the complex social military phenomenon known as combat motivation (or fighting spirit) in relation to the lower ranking members of the Polish military. In other words, how do the principal determinants of combat motivation – small unit cohesion, ideological conviction and discipline – influence the fighting spirit of Polish soldiers.

Some of the questions I investigate are: Does the social fabric of the Polish military itself raise or lower the potential fighting spirit of Polish soldiers? What segments, if any, of the Polish military would be willing to fight for the Soviet Union? Under what conditions could Poles be considered reliable or unreliable? What would motivate Polish soldiers to fight the West or even undertake actions inimical to the Soviet Union in the event of war?

In order to obtain a better insight into these questions, I employed information from Poles who once served in, or had knowledge of, the Polish military between the years 1956–82. Wherever possible, these responses were supplemented with written statements from the Polish military press, oral interviews and a general overview of the actions of Polish soldiers during political crises in Poland beginning in 1956.

The purpose of my book is to present an investigation which focuses more on the psycho-sociological factors than on military hardware. It is my intention that this will present a broader picture of Warsaw Pact military capabilities.

It should be noted that some of the results presented in this book were obtained from detailed statistical calculations. For brevity, these calculations were not included. However, those readers who are interested in how I calculated the population score (Chapter 1) as well as the t scores (Chapters 3–5) are referred to Appendices II–VII in my dissertation entitled ‘The Polish Soldier: A Study in Combat Motivation, 1956–1982’. A copy of this dissertation may be found at the Claremont Graduate School, Claremont, California.

This work was made possible through the assistance of many people and organisations. To them this section is gratefully dedicated.

I am especially indebted to Professor Lewis Snider of the Claremont Graduate School for his continual guidance, support and interest in my research and graduate career. I would also like to thank professors Mark Lipsey, Jack Sullivan and Stuart Oskamp for their efforts on my behalf.

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Finally, I thank all those individuals and organisations who wish to (and must) remain anonymous owing to the sensitive nature of this work.

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