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The process of development of Polish special forces since Poland's regaining of independence in 1918

Abstract

The aim of this this study is to depict the process of shaping and development of special forces in the Polish historical space since 1918 as well as to illustrate the need for special forces to function as a guarantor of international and national security. The research method used in this study is primarily an analysis in the form of an in-depth study of Polish literature on special forces and special units, as well as synthesis, induction and a comparative method.

Keywords: Polish special forces, sabotage, partisans, GROM, FORMOZA, NIL, AGAT, Jednostka Wojskowa Komandosów, uprising, commandos, military history

Introduction

The period of development of Polish special forces falls on the post-war years when the Polish People's Republic, inspired by Eastern socialist models, began to build its first special-purpose military units. However, the roots of the special forces in the Polish realities should be found much earlier because in the period of early medieval Slavs who long before the formation of the tribe of Polans and Polish statehood conducted a characteristic way of fighting. During the the First Polish Republic, specifically in the period of the Swedish Deluge, the so-called hit-and-run war (guerrilla warfare) was developed, which in fact was the initial form of partisan activities. Its initiator was Stefan Czarniecki, the national hero known from the Polish anthem. In the post-partition period, special operations were carried out as part of both national uprisings. While Poland was regaining its independence, Polish operations in Upper Silesia could certainly be classified as special operations carried out by specially trained groups. However, it was the period of the Second World War that was the foundation for the formation of special forces later in the communist period. Partisan, sabotage and subversive activities developed on a large scale in Nazi-occupied Poland, and the famous Cichociemni are considered the progenitors of modern commandos. For centuries, Poland has been the leader in hit-and-run tactic and guerrilla wars so today it can be presumed that the high reputation of our special formations: GROM, FORMOZA, AGAT, NIL, *Lubliniec Soldiers* and their position in the world special forces are historically justified. It is not without reason that the aforementioned special units in their tradition refer, among others, to the *Cichociemni*, Agat AK, special formations from

the period of Polish People's Republic and whose patrons are Polish national heroes such as Stefan Grot-Rowecki.

Development of the special forces in the interwar period

According to Krystian Frącik, after Poland regained independence in 1918, special operations were used during the Silesian uprisings. In his opinion special groups were organized to reinforce the insurgents' actions. Their tasks included damaging communication lines, breaking connections, and exerting unfavorable psychological pressure on German opponents. As a result of such activities, as many as seven bridges on the main railway routes of Upper Silesia were destroyed. In Frącik's view, it is fascinating that the destructive troops did not suffer fatal losses. Their another success was that they were never deciphered by the German or Entente states' intelligence operating in the plebiscite area. The researcher is of the opinion that without the participation of special groups, the plebiscites in Silesia would have been far more unfavourable for Poland¹.

Bogusław Pacek's position is that the roots of Polish special operations based mainly on irregular activities dates back to the January Uprising, but only after Poland regained independence in 1918, it was possible to take steps to create regular units prepared for the undertake special missions. According to the author it was during that period that the Department of Active Affairs of the Polish Military Organization was established, which functioned within the 1st Division of the Supreme Command of the Polish Armed Forces. One of the tasks of this

¹ K. Frącik, *Geneza polskich wojsk specjalnych*, in: *Wojska Specjalne*, K. Frącik (ed.), Wydawnictwo Akademii Sztuki Wojennej, Warszawa 2017, pp. 14–16.

department was to manage special sabotage and subversive activities. In 1919 formation of flying and partisan units began, which were soon deployed in the Polish-Russian war. These were groups of a dozen or so people to undertake subversive actions in the behind the lines of Soviet troops. In the opinion of General Professor Bogusław Pacek in July 1919 five partisan units and a flying squad were established and they soon began combat and subversive operations. In 1920 a secret subversive organization called the Union for the Defense of the Fatherland was organized, and its task was to carry out subversive and combat operations. However, the union was disbanded in August 1920, after the Polish troops went on the counter-offensive. The author is of the opinion that the subversive activities were also carried out by the Polish Military Organization in Silesia in small flying squads. In 1919, the 2nd Division of the Supreme Military Command organized subversive activities due to the threat posed by Germany.²

In 1921, the Intelligence Department of the 2nd Division of the Supreme Command of the Polish Armed Forces created Department A. It was a special unit for activities in the field of subversion carried out outside the front. Between 1921 and 1923 Department A created a dozen or so subversive and intelligence groups. These groups were deployed in the territory of Germany and on the border with Soviet Russia and Germany. The department was dissolved in 1929 while a year later the department of subversive posts was created, transformed after a short time into Branch no 6, and then into Branch no 2. The same year, five groups were also created to conduct subversive activities in the border area and in neighbouring

² B. Pacek, *Wojska Specjalne Sił Zbrojnych RP*, Oficyna Wydawnicza RYTM, Siedlce 2019, pp. 41–42.

countries. In the opinion of Bogusław Pacek, in 1933, after Adolf Hitler had gained power, Branch no 2 set out to increase a number of secret subversive groups in the Polish-German border zone. The groups that stationed along the borders were commonly known as the *threes*, and their main tasks included conducting diversion, sabotage, and carrying out intelligence and propaganda tasks. The *threes* were prepared to establish communications and conduct combat operations. According to General Professor Bogusław Pacek these groups were also deployed to German territory in 1934.³

In the opinion of the former Commander-in-Chief of the Military Police, another significant activity of Branch no 2 undertaken at the end of the 1930s was the location of sabotage and intelligence posts near ammunition and food depots as well as enemy railways. Their task, apart from reconnaissance, was to prepare for the implementation of subversive activities. According to the researcher, in 1938 the creation of a diversionary network began in Greater Poland, and a year later in the Podhale region. In mid-1939, similar networks were created in the region of Zagłębie Dąbrowskie (Dąbrowa Basin) and in Pomerania. When the war broke out on 1 September 1939, sabotage and defence groups took part in numerous effective actions. In Pacek's opinion after the Germans had imposed the rule to kill three Poles for each German soldier assassinated, the groups limited their tasks to night actions, attacking mainly the German command and equipment. After the September 1939 defeat, special operations carried out under the conditions of the underground in occupied Poland acquired significant importance.⁴

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid., p. 42.

Polish special forces during the Second World War

In the opinion of General Professor Bogusław Pacek with the development of structures of *special forces* in the West during Second World War, the history of Polish special forces units formed in Western Europe began. During that period, the *Cichociemni* branches were formed in Great Britain.⁵ The *Cichociemni* were the elite of the Polish Army, trained to combat the invader and prepared to organize a resistance movement among the Polish population. According to the author the transfer of the *Cichociemni* to Poland was carried out by airborne landing, in accordance with the well-developed British patterns. He claims that the 1st Independent Commando Company were established in Great Britain as well. It was commanded by Captain Władysław Smrokowski, and the proposal to create it came from the Britons themselves in 1942. Volunteers for the company were recruited from the 2nd Rifle Battalion. The formation was included in the allied commando forces as the 6th Company of the 10th Allied Commando and then into the 2nd Motorized Commando Battalion. General Professor Bogusław Pacek unequivocally states that these actions gave rise to the contemporary Special Forces of the Republic of Poland.⁶

It is believed that during Second World War the forces and resources at the disposal of the Polish irregular forces

⁵ See also: K. Śledziński, *Cichociemni – Elita polskiej dywersji*, Wydawnictwo Znak, Kraków 2012; P. Bystrzycki, *Znak Cichociemnych*, Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, Warszawa 1985; Bellona, *Drogi Cichociemnych*, Bellona, Warszawa 2008.

⁶ Pacek, *Wojska...*, op. cit., p. 39–41. Similar position: J. Mędrzycki, *Geneza polskich wojsk specjalnych*, in: *Wojska specjalne w systemie Sił Zbrojnych Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej*, K. Frącik, J. Mędrzycki (ed.), Wydawnictwo Akademii Sztuki Wojennej, Warszawa 2017, pp. 17–22.

(partisan and special) were not inferior to those of their allies or opponents in terms of combat training, will to fight, or initiative in combat operations. The Home Army operating under both German and Soviet occupations was the strongest and best organized underground army operating in Europe at that time. In the opinion of Bogusław Pacek, special operations were also carried out within the Polish armed forces in the Soviet Union, and were carried out by groups of the Polish Independent Special Battalion operating as part of the 1st Corps of the Polish Armed Forces. The battalion was responsible for carrying out special tasks behind the line of the German troops. The Polish researcher states that the soldiers were trained in mining in connection with the planned operation on communication routes, and also underwent parachute training. The battalion consisted of two assault companies, a communications company, a mining company, mortars, anti-tank and heavy machine guns. Curiously, one of the companies consisted exclusively of women. The battalion carried out special tasks for the 1st Corps. In January 1945, the Main Staff of the Polish Army began training special parachute and intelligence groups, which were to be transferred to the eastern territories of the Reich. According to Bogusław Pacek, between January and April 1945, 21 groups were formed and all of them were transferred to the rears of the German troops. Among the soldiers of parachute groups were members of the Polish Independent Parachute Battalion, as well as German deserters and partisans.⁷

⁷ Ibid, pp. 43–48.

Development of Polish special forces in Polish People's Republic

After the Second World War, the Polish armed forces counted around 400,000 soldiers and were organized in line with the models of the USSR army. At the end of the 1940s, the Soviets began the process of creating special-purpose reconnaissance companies and their main task was to support armoured units. In the opinion of General Professor Pacek, the rapid development of Soviet special units (the so-called *Spetsnaz*⁸) took place in the early 1960s. To quote Bogusław Pacek, 'It was then that six special brigades were created in the Soviet army. Their purpose, equipment and training were gradually changed, until the 1970s and 1980s, when Soviet special forces were planned to conduct special and anti-terrorist operations'.⁹

According to researchers and experts in the field of special forces, under the influence of the above-mentioned patterns, the formation of the first special-type sub-units in Poland began in the early 1950s. In 1951, the 5th Independent Reconnaissance Platoon was formed by the 6th Reconnaissance Battalion in Sztum as well as the 6th Independent Reconnaissance Platoon by the 7th Reconnaissance Battalion in Opole.¹⁰ 'Each of the platoons consisted of 37 soldiers. The soldiers of the newly created special units were being trained in the field of tactics of the operations of special groups, they were undergoing engineering, subversive, hand-to-hand combat, topography,

⁸ Rus. *Спецназ – Подразделения специального назначения Российской Федерации*. See also.: M. Ryan, C. Mann, A. Stilwell, *Encyklopedia oddziałów specjalnych*, Dom Wydawniczy Bellona, Warszawa 2003. pp. 178–179.

⁹ B. Pacek, *Wojska...*, op. cit., pp. 48–49.

¹⁰ J. Mędrzycki, *Geneza...*, op. cit., p. 41–47. Similar position: B. Pacek, *Wojska...*, op. cit., pp. 48–49; K. Frącik, *Geneza...*, op. cit., pp. 22–23.

communication, and independent survival trainings in the field. They were performing parachute jumps and were studying English and German. They were wearing camouflage outfits'.¹¹ In 1953, a company was created on the basis of both platoons. The 9th Independent Reconnaissance Company was formed from the 5th Independent Platoon and the 10th Independent Reconnaissance Company was formed from the 6th Platoon. Both formations consisted of the command, a communications platoon, a sapper platoon, three reconnaissance platoons and each company counted 118 soldiers. In September 1954, the 9th and 10th Companies were incorporated into the new unit - the 19th Independent Reconnaissance Battalion in Oleśnica. The first battalion commander was Captain Dmitri Musko.¹² In Bogusław Pacek's opinion the battalion counted 190 soldiers, and its activity and functioning were based on models from across the eastern border. On 20 October 1959 the 19th Independent Reconnaissance Battalion became part of the 6th Pomeranian Airborne Division, which had been operating for six years, and was given a new dislocation site in Bielsko.¹³ To quote Bogusław Pacek, 'Included in the 6th Pomeranian Airborne Division, it was being kept secret since it was entrusted with reconnaissance and subversive tasks. In 1961 the battalion was no longer being kept undercover and its name was changed to the 18th Kołobrzeg Airborne

¹¹ B. Pacek, *Wojska..., op. cit.*, p. 49.

¹² Cpt. Dymitr Muśko – the first commander of the 18th Bielsko Airborne Battalion between 1954–1957.

¹³ Warto w tym miejscu odnotować publikacje o charakterze popularnonaukowym: *Spadochroniarze z bielskiego batalionu nad Pustynią Błędowską*, <https://bielskobiala.naszmiasto.pl/spadochroniarze-z-bielskiego-batalionu-nad-pustynia/ar/c1-1637575>, (access: 29 July 2021 r.).

Battalion'.¹⁴ According to the former Commander-in-Chief of the Military Police, in 1961 a second reconnaissance battalion was created – the 26th Reconnaissance Battalion no 4101 in Wola Justowska. The battalion, apart from the command and staff, consisted of three reconnaissance companies, communication platoons and a transport and economic company, and also had its own parachute. In 1964, the 26th Reconnaissance Battalion was separated from the 6th Pomeranian Airborne Division¹⁵ and handed over to the main Training Inspectorate of the Ministry of National Defense. During that period, the battalion was moved from Wola Justowska to Dziewinów.¹⁶ A few months later, the 26th Reconnaissance Battalion was named the 1st Assault Battalion.¹⁷

General Professor Bogusław Pacek in his publication on *special forces* clearly states that it was the 1st Assault Battalion that began the history of creating fully Polish *special forces* after World War II. Along with the 1st Assault Battalion¹⁸ special companies were separated from it – the 56th Company in the Pomeranian Military District, the 62nd Company in the Silesian Military District and the 48th Company in the Warsaw Military District. The author claims that the 56th Special Company was moved to Szczecin. To quote Bogusław Pacek, 'Apart from the headquarters and the command team, it consisted of three reconnaissance platoons,

¹⁴ B. Pacek, *Wojska...*, op. cit., p. 49.

¹⁵ H. Królikowski, *6 Pomorska Dywizja Powietrznodesantowa*, Oficyna Wydawnicza Ajaks, Pruszków 1997.

¹⁶ A town in Western Pomerania region on the Baltic Sea (its western part is located on the Wolin Island – a tourist centre.

¹⁷ B. Pacek, *Wojska...*, op. cit., pp. 49–50. Similar position: K. Frącik, *Geneza...*, op. cit., p. 23; J. Mędrzycki, *Geneza...*, op. cit., p. 49.

¹⁸ H. Królikowski, *1 Batalion Szturmowy w operacji „Dunaj”*, „Militarny Magazyn Specjalny Komandos” 2008: 9, cz. 1, pp. 34–41.

platoons of divers, communications, transport and economic and parachuting. The company could carry out tasks with twelve reconnaissance groups and three combat groups of divers. There were 7-8 commando soldiers in each reconnaissance group'.¹⁹ According to Pacek, the 62nd Special Company deployed in Bolesławiec had a similar composition and structure as the 56th, except that instead of a platoon it had a transport and economic team as well as a vehicle repair team. According to him, the composition of special groups and combat diving groups were similar. The company could operate in twelve special groups and four diving groups, which were smaller than in the 56th Company. The 48th Special Company²⁰ was stationed in Krakow and, according to the expert in this matter, it was composed of three special platoons, a diving and communication platoon, and a transport and economic team, apart from the command element. Eventually, all three special companies were disbanded in 1993. According to Bogusław Pacek, the soldiers of the disbanded companies continued their service in other special units such as GROM or the 1st Special Commando Regiment. According to the researcher, some of them went to the 6th Air Assault Brigade²¹ and the 25th Air Cavalry Division.²²

¹⁹ B. Pacek, *Wojska...*, op. cit., p. 51; R. Szewczyk, *1 Batalion Szturmowy podczas przygotowań interwencji w Czechosłowacji w 1968 r.*, „Przegląd Historyczno-Wojskowy” 2019: 20, 3, pp. 158–179.

²⁰ A military unit of long-distance reconnaissance of the Armed Forces of the Polish People's Republic, as well as of the period of systemic transformation. Finally disbanded in 1994, its last commander was Capt. Andrzej Knap.

²¹ 6th Airborne Brigade Brig. Gen. Stanisław Sosabowski. See popular science publication for more insight: „Szósta” Brygada na spadochronach, <http://polska-zbrojna.pl/home/articleshow/14565?t=-szosta-brygada-na-spadochronach#>, (access: 29 July 2021 r.).

²² B. Pacek, *Wojska...*, op. cit., pp. 51–52.

Likewise in case of the creation of special units in the land forces in the Polish Navy, similar activities were also undertaken. In 1974, the Research Team for Sea Divers was established, headed by Cdr. Józef Rembisz.²³ Upon completion of the concept work, a decision was made to establish the Department of Divers, which in fact was the Department of Special Maritime Activities. According to General Professor Bogusław Pacek, the city of Gdynia was the location of the Department. The department was located in the territory of the naval port within the 3rd Ship Flotilla, whom it was also subordinated. An interesting question raised by the researcher is the necessity to keep the unit secret. For this reason it was placed in the Torpedo House No. 1, specifically in the building in the Gdańsk Bay, used by the Germans during World War II as a torpedo assembly hall.²⁴ According to Pacek, in September 1987 the Department of Scuba Divers changed its name to the Department of Special Operations. The unit's main Focus of operation was training seafarers in the field of maritime special operations, however it was disbanded as early as in 1990. In its place, a Special Group of Navy Divers was established. In Pacek's opinion it was the foundation of the future special FORMOZA unit.²⁵ The scientist, in his analysis of the history of the creation of Polish special forces claims that, from naval special forces' perspective, the Special Operations Department, unlike

²³ See popular science publication for more insight: R. Starkowicz, *By wspierać "specjalsów"*, <https://gdansk.gosc.pl/doc/2153581.By-wspierac-specjalsow>, (access: 29 July 2021 r.).

²⁴ M. Kardas, Okupacja hitlerowska helu. Wybrane aspekty, „Zeszyty Naukowe Akademii Marynarki Wojennej” 2011: 2 (185), p. 167.

²⁵ Military Unit Formoza Lieutenant General Włodzimierz Potasiński (JW 4026). Currently, the head of the FORMOZA Military Unit is Commander Radosław Tokarski.

special land units, did not use the patterns of other countries, and developed its own training methods.²⁶

Special forces in post-communist Poland

In his publication *The Special Forces of the Polish Armed Forces* Bogusław Pacek, describing the history of creating special forces in Poland, draws attention to the fact that the beginning of the 20th century is still the time of the separate functioning of three special units in the Polish Army: the GROM, the 1st Special Commando Regiment and the Special Frogmen Group. The researcher points out that Poland's accession to NATO in 1999 has brought a number of new challenges and tasks in the field of defense. He emphasizes that the main one was the development of *special forces* and the creation of an independent type of armed forces. The creation of a separate type of armed forces in 2007 and the expansion of special formations was not an impulse decision. As a result of the terrorist attack on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon on 11 September 2001, the world realised that with the escalation of terrorist threats, an era was coming when it will be necessary to prepare for new threats of a special nature. Bogusław Pacek maintains his position that this has given priority to the development of special forces in numerous countries.²⁷

²⁶ B. Pacek, *Wojska..., op. cit.*, p. 52. Similar position: K. Frącik, *Gen-
eza...*, op. cit., p. 25. Krystian Frącik, the divers had to undergo a special
3-year training, during which they were improving their shooting skills,
retraining driving techniques, swimming, and studying foreign languages
as well as boarding and destroying watercraft techniques.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 53.

The newly created Special Forces Command was already a command body at the operational and strategic level heading the fourth type of the Polish Armed Forces - Special Forces established by the Act of 24 May 2007 amending the Act on the universal obligation to defend the Republic of Poland and amending certain other acts²⁸, which entered into force on 4 July 2007. The establishment of the SFC (Pol. *Dowództwo Wojsk Specjalnych, DWS*)²⁹ has become an important element in the adjustment of the command structure of the Polish Armed Forces to the global trends in system transformation in the management and command of troops. In the opinion of Bogusław Pacek, the SFC was the only command in the Polish Armed Forces capable of managing special operations on land, in the air and at sea. Pacek in his publication reports that the SFC, while serving as the entity preparing the army and at the same time the user of the army, clearly differed from the other commands in the armed forces. Only one of these tasks was performed by the other elements. The researcher emphasizes that despite fulfilling all functions, the SFC was the least numerous command body at the operational level in the Polish Army and the command model adopted by *special forces* shortened and simplified the managing relations, which was perceived as a fundamental factor reducing bureaucracy in military structures.³⁰

²⁸ Ustawa z dnia 24 maja 2007 r. o zmianie ustawy o powszechnym obowiązku obrony Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej oraz o zmianie niektórych innych ustaw, (Dz.U. 2007 nr 107 poz. 732).

²⁹ Pol. Dowództwo Wojsk Specjalnych (DWS). See also.: J. Kręcikij, *Organizacja dowodzenia Wojsk Specjalnych Sił Zbrojnych Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej – od normalności do nieudanych eksperymentów, „Bezpieczeństwo. Teoria i Praktyka”* 2016: 3, pp. 63–80.

³⁰ B. Pacek, *Wojska...*, op. cit., p. 55. Similar positions: M. Bieniek, *Siły specjalne – rola i zadania oraz system dowodzenia nimi*, in:

According to the act, the SFC was responsible not only for command, but also for training and preparing subordinate units for combat operations. It was originally part of the special forces, however, unlike other commands, the SFC did not transfer subordinate units to the Armed Forces Operational Command for the duration of combat operations. The information contained in the publication *Wojska Specjalne Sił Zbrojnych RP* (Eng. *Special Forces of the Polish Armed Forces*) by Bogusław Pacek clearly shows that the SFC also played the role of an operational command. According to the researcher, such a solution was in line with NATO standards for the use of *special forces* (both in peacekeeping operations and during war). Major General Jan Kempara,³¹ who served, among others, in the 1st Assault Battalion, is considered to be the initiator and originator of the establishment of the institution managing military units engaged in special operations. To quote Bogusław Pacek, 'the SFC was established by the decision of the Minister of National Defence of 1 January 2007

Wojska Specjalne Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej, M. Bieniek, S. Mazur (ed.), Oficyna Wydawnicza AFM KAAFM, Kraków 2016, p. 15; E. Gruszka, *Zarys wizji transformacji Wojsk Specjalnych Sił Zbrojnych RP*, in: *Wojska Specjalne Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej*, M. Bieniek, S. Mazur (ed.), Oficyna Wydawnicza AFM KAAFM, Kraków 2016, p. 23; P. Patalong, *Rola i miejsce wojsk specjalnych w systemie bezpieczeństwa państwa*, in: *Wojska Specjalne Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej*, M. Bieniek, S. Mazur (ed.), Oficyna Wydawnicza AFM KAAFM, Kraków 2016, p. 33; J. Gut, *Wkład polskich wojsk specjalnych w umacnianie bezpieczeństwa regionalnego i pozycji Polski w NATO*, in: *Wojska Specjalne Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej*, M. Bieniek, S. Mazur (ed.), Oficyna Wydawnicza AFM KAAFM, Kraków 2016, p. 40; M. Olbrycht, *Wojska specjalne widziane oczami dowódcy*, in: *Wojska Specjalne Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej*, M. Bieniek, S. Mazur (ed.), Oficyna Wydawnicza AFM KAAFM, Kraków 2016, p. 49.

³¹ See also a brief biographical note of Gen. Kempara: *Gen. dyw. w st. spocz. Jan KEMPARA*, <https://szkolyfeniks.pl/kadra/gen-dyw-w-st-spocz-jan-kempara/>, (access: 29 July 2021 r.).

and was legally sanctioned on 24 May 2007. The command was formed mainly by soldiers of the Special Operations Headquarters (led by Major General Jan Kempara), which was part of the General Staff of the Polish Armed Forces, and officers of commands and staffs of military units of a special nature'.³² After the creation of the Special Forces Command, special units were subordinated to the single new command. This guaranteed the harmonious development and training of *special forces* based on their own developed doctrines. This solution was also facilitated by the quick, classified and appropriate equipping of troops with the latest generation equipment and weapons.³³

According to many scientists, Polish *special forces*, like such formations from other countries, are intended to carry out single actions and conduct entire special operations both in the country and abroad. These types of troops can operate in times of peace, crisis and war, and are also able to cooperate with conventional troops or act on their own. Tasks carried out by special forces can be of operational or even strategic importance. The structure of the *special forces* after their separation as an independent branch of the Polish Armed Forces, comprises independent units and subunits. The soldiers making part of them are specially selected, trained, armed and equipped. This is to facilitate operating in highest risk environments.³⁴

³² B. Pacek, *Wojska...*, *op. cit.*, p. 56.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ P. Drozdowski, Ogólny zarys operacji specjalnych, w: Teoretyczne aspekty prowadzenia operacji specjalnych, K. Frącik (ed.), Wydawnictwo Akademii Sztuki Wojennej, Warszawa 2018, pp. 24–25; A. Furman, Miejsce i rola sił specjalnych we współczesnej operacji, w: Siły specjalne we współczesnych operacjach, M. Kubiński (ed.), Wydawnictwo Akademii Obrony Narodowej, Warszawa 2009, p. 67; B. Pacek, *Wojska...*, *op. cit.*, pp. 56–59..

Special Forces account for approximately 3 per cent of the size of the Polish Armed Forces, and the cost of their operation accounts for approximately 2.75 per cent of the annual budget of the Ministry of National Defence. In relation to the cost of maintenance the effectiveness of this type of troops is disproportionately high. The development of special forces, as Bogusław Pacek notes, is becoming a global trend due to the nature of contemporary threats. The researcher states that along secret services they become the best response to contemporary asymmetric threats. Being ready to conduct a wide range of special operations, these formations make a significant contribution to the stabilization of international security³⁵, becoming an important weapon in a number of occurrences and solving tasks from the catalogue of special situations.³⁶

According to the former Commander-in-Chief of the Military Police, the Special Forces Command has survived only seven years since its creation in an unchanged structure. To quote Bogusław Pacek, 'As a result of the Act of 21 June 2013 amending the Act on the office of the Minister of National Defence, on 1 January 2014, the Special Forces Command had its name altered. As a result of the reform of the steering and command system of the Armed Forces carried out when the Ministry of National Defence was headed by Minister Tomasz Siemoniak, the General Command of the Armed Forces was established, which included several inspectorates together with the Special Forces Inspectorate.'³⁷

On 1 January 2014 pursuant to art. 11 of the Act amending the Act on the Office of the Minister of National Defence

³⁵ E. Gruszka, *Zarys...*, op. cit., pp. 23–24.

³⁶ B. Pacek, *Wojska...*, op. cit., pp. 57.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 37.

and certain other acts³⁸, the Special Forces Command was disbanded, and its legal successors, taking over the tasks of the SFC, were the Armed Forces General Command and the Armed Forces Operational Command. Generally speaking, the newly created Special Forces Command was subordinate to the same general commander as the tactical-level command with military units subordinated so far. The Special Forces Inspectorate was established at the level of the general command. Another decision of the Ministry of National Defence of 3 January 3 2014, established Special Operations Centre – Special Forces Component Command in place of Special Forces Command and subordinated it to the Armed Forces Operational Commander.³⁹

Conclusion

Summarizing the history of creating *special forces* in Poland, one might claim that after more than nineteen months since the disbandment of the Special Forces Command, on 3 August 2015, the Special Operations Center – Special Forces Component Command was transformed into the Special Forces Component Command. The newly created command received a large part of the SFC tasks existing until December 2013 in the new command structure.

³⁸ Ustawa z dnia 21 czerwca 2013 r. o zmianie ustawy o urzędzie Ministra Obrony Narodowej oraz niektórych innych ustaw, (Dz.U. 2013 poz. 852), art. 11.

³⁹ S. Gulak, S. Bylina, *Jednostka Wojskowa AGAT*, in: *Wojska Specjalne Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej*, M. Bieniek, S. Mazur (ed.), Oficyna Wydawnicza AFM KAAFM, Kraków 2016, p. 75. Similar position: B. Pacek, *Wojska...*, op.cit., pp. 57–58; K. Frącik, *Geneza...*, op. cit., p. 25; M. Bieniek, *Siły...*, op. cit., p. 21

SFCC⁴⁰ reports directly to the Armed Forces General Commander. In addition, the Special Forces Inspectorate is still located in the structures of the Armed Forces General Command. Finally, encapsulating the history of the creation of Polish *special forces*, it can be concluded that the changes that followed were the result of long and arduous efforts by Brigadier Jerzy Gut and the Inspector Major General Piotr Patalong. Currently all *special forces* units are under the SFCC, while the SFCC staff is the core of the Special Operations Component Command (SOCC) created with the main participation of Polish *special forces*⁴¹.

⁴⁰ Pol. Dowództwo Komponentu Wojsk Specjalnych (DKWS), Eng. Special Operations Centre – Special Forces Component Command (SOC SFCC)

⁴¹ K. Frącik, *Geneza...*, op. cit., p. 31.

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