

**RELEVANCE OF ADAPTING THE BEST PRACTICES
APPLIED IN THE USA IN THE PROCESS OF CONCEPTUALIZING THE
VETERANS POLICY IN UKRAINE: A HISTORICAL ANALYSIS**

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Abstract

This article reveals the relevance and possibilities of adopting the best practices of the United States in Ukraine in the process of conceptualizing the model of the state veterans policy's development. It provides historical analysis of the process of conceptualizing the updated models of veterans policy in the United States and Ukraine, with its key milestones highlighted. Major components of the latest model of the veterans policy have been defined, with the process of its development in the United States analyzed. The historical stages of conceptualizing the state veterans policy in the United States and Ukraine have been consistently studied, with milestone historical events and factors that had impact on its development in each of the countries defined.

The findings of the research make us conclude that the United States have demonstrated a long-lasting evolutionary process of developing the concept of the latest model of the veterans policy. First of all, this concept offering a wide variety of veterans support programs is comprehensive and integrative; being human-centered, it is focused on the process of adapting former military personnel to civilian life. But in Ukraine, the veterans policy's development started only in the last decade. We make conclusions about the relevance of adopting the essential elements of the concept of the veterans policy's latest model at the state level in Ukraine in the context of the full-scale invasion of the Russian Federation. This makes it necessary to further study in detail the expertise of the United

States and carry out comparative historical analysis of the processes of conceptualizing the state veterans policy in Ukraine and the United States in order to identify ways to effectively adapt the American best practices in the process of conceptualizing the veterans policy in Ukraine.

Keywords: *veterans policy, government programs to support veterans, conceptualizing the state policy, Ukraine, the United States of America, Veterans Affairs, Ministry of Veterans Affairs of Ukraine.*

Introduction

Veterans policy is an important area of politics in a modern state governed by the rule of law. Today, the level of development of the state veterans policy shows the state's capability to provide social guarantees to various categories of citizens, promote the integration of former military personnel into civilian life, and build up a national war commemoration policy. The veterans policy is also one of the key components of regulating internal social processes in the wartime or in the post-war period.

An important stage in the development of veterans policy and a prerequisite for its successful implementation is conceptualization, that is defining approaches and principles to the development of state veterans policy, its goals, key objectives and ways to solve them, developing a strategic vision of the place of veterans in the domestic and foreign state police, clearly defining priorities in the implementation of state support steps towards veterans. Actually, conceptualization means the definition of guidelines for the development of a certain area of state policy.

The current trend in the world's best practices in the veterans policy is a human-centric and comprehensive approach, and focusing on the integration of former military personnel into civilian life and making them adapted to civilian roles once again. A typical feature of this area of state policy is a certain universalism in the context of different societies, given the common basic needs of veterans when they return to civilian life. Throughout history, various approaches to the development of veterans policies have been tested. Its recent format was first developed in the middle of the last century in the United States. The key elements of the latest conceptualization of the veterans policy can be defined as follows:

1. Goal: integration of veterans into civilian life, their adaptation to civilian roles.

2. Steps to reach the goal: drawing up relevant laws, searching for sources of government funding, institutionalization of veterans policy, development of various government programs to support veterans.

3. Determining the place and role of veterans in society, in particular, legislative determination of their status and promoting a positive image of a veteran, development of the national war commemoration policy.

4. The system of government programs to support veterans at the present stage of the veterans policy's development includes: pension provision, a system of granting benefits and insurance, healthcare support, special lending for launching veterans businesses and purchasing housing, educational programmes, support for professional development in civilian areas, honoring and memorialization (arrangement of commemoration events, burying and reburying of fallen servicemen, arrangement of military cemeteries), promotion of a positive image of a veteran in society.

The veterans policy is one of the most relevant areas of development of state policy in Ukraine, especially in the context of the struggle for its independence and territorial integrity. Military operations against the Russian federation, which have been going on since 2014, have led to a significant increase in the number of people with combat experience. As of July 1, 2022, there were 851,068 people in Ukraine who had been covered by the Law of Ukraine 'On the Status of War Veterans, and Guarantees of Their Social Protection', in particular, 438,834 people who had participated in the ATO/JFO within 2014-2022 were granted the status of a veteran of the Russo-Ukrainian War (Portret veterana rosiisko-ukrainskoi viiny 2014-2022). It is obvious that in the context of the full-scale invasion of February 24, 2022, the number of veterans in Ukraine will be growing rapidly, as stated by Ukrainian officials, particularly by the Minister of Veterans Affairs Yuliia Laputina, who in March 2022 predicted an increase in the number of persons with the status defined by the law of Ukraine 'On the Status of War Veterans, and Guarantees of Their Social Protection' by four times (it is about both different categories of veterans and their families). Despite the fact that since 2014 the veterans policy began to acquire the status of an independent area of state policy in Ukraine, today this area requires transformation, conceptual reinterpretation, and close review of existing problems, in particular those concerning implementation and full-fledged meeting of the Ukrainian veterans' needs. The reason for this need for changes is not only the current conditions of the full-scale invasion, but also the historical course of development and conceptualization of the veterans policy in Ukraine.

One of the indications of the urgent need to redefine the conceptualization of state veterans policy in Ukraine is the publication in October 2023 of the 'Concept of the Policy for Veterans and Their Families', suggested by representatives of public organizations engaged with the issues of supporting veterans: Veteran Hub, Pryntsyp Human Rights Center for the Military, Space of Opportunities, Legal Hundred, and Veteranka. This document is an important indicator of the current situation and the state of implementation of the veterans policy, since representatives of these organizations are active participants in the processes going on in the veterans' community of Ukraine. The authors of the 'Concept' point out that the current Ukrainian veterans policy 'carries underlying risks for its beneficiaries and the entire Ukrainian society. In particular, we are talking about outdated ideas concerning the principles of veterans policy development and its priorities, paternalism and declarative nature as opposed to implementation, and therefore, about the need to develop a new concept of veterans policy, which clearly outlines the framework and areas for the development of a Unified State Policy for Veterans and Their Families, sets its goal, suggests systemic changes necessary to achieve such a goal, ways of communication between the government and society, and the veterans community. The authors of the 'Concept' are focusing on the fact that the current state of veterans policy in Ukraine is a consequence of the specific aspects of the historical stages of its development, including during the 21st century (Concept of the Policy for Veterans and Their Families, in <https://veteranhub.com.ua/veteran-policy>).

Therefore, the analysis of actions to conceptualize and implement the veterans policy is really urgent today. This analysis is an important factor in the modern understanding of the historically determined issues of the development of the state veterans policy in Ukraine on the way to their overcoming and further improving the policy for supporting veterans. Given the relatively short historical duration of the processes of conceptualization of the state veterans policy in Ukraine, it is advisable to gain insight into and adapt the best practices of other countries, in particular the United States. The unique historical experience of the United States in the area of veterans policy lies in the presence of a historical tradition of this state policy's area of development, which dates back to the first years of the existence of the United States as an independent state, and the duration of this process over several centuries. The example of the United States demonstrates the evolutionary path of developing a conceptual understanding of the state veterans policy, both accomplishments and situations of overcoming urgent social and political issues that arose as a result of the most controversial military conflicts experienced by the United States (Civil War, Vietnam War, and so on). It is

in the United States that the modern model of state veterans policy first appeared, which was an example of the most comprehensive and integrative approach.

The purpose of the article is a historical analysis of the conceptualization of the modern model of the state veterans policy in Ukraine and the United States. To conduct a comprehensive analysis, the article consistently considers the process of forming the sources and development of the latest concept of the modern model of the state veterans policy in the United States and describes the current state of the policy of supporting veterans in Ukraine and the historical events that have led to it.

Argumentation

The analysis of the issue should begin with a review of the historical experience of the United States in the development of the state veterans policy and the emergence of its latest concept. The United States have a long-standing historical tradition of developing state veterans policy. As a matter of fact, the veterans policy was introduced already in the first years of the existence of the United States as an independent state. The long-lasting process of historical development and its duration became the basis for the evolutionary development of conceptualization of veterans policy and finally the creation of a new concept, which became a kind of model to be further adopted by other countries and is relevant, in particular, for Ukraine.

The first historical stage, which demonstrated the development of elements of support for veterans in the territory of the modern United States, is the period of the 17th-18th centuries, when in the English colonies, which would later become the core of the independent state, providing assistance was initiated for former military personnel who had been seriously injured or disabled due to the participation in military operations. Such system of financial aid was being developed on the basis of mutual assistance typical for the inhabitants of the colony and was situational rather than systemic in nature. Despite this fact, we consider this stage important in the process of developing conceptual ideas about the place of veterans and military personnel in society, since such intra-social interaction testified to respect for military service, recognition of veterans as members of society who had the right to respect and support from fellow citizens. Besides, it was about a sense of civic solidarity — a prominent feature of the further development of American society and the state.

The next stage is the years of the American Revolutionary War (American War of Independence) and the first post-war decades. Within the 1776-1850, the first version of a centralized state policy for veterans in the United States was being developed. This stage was important due to the emergence of new conditions, as the United States had become an independent state that was developing rather fast. Given the unprecedented scale of military operations and the paramount importance of the outcome of the American Revolutionary War, the emergence of a policy for veterans was quite natural as one of the important areas of the central government authorities' activity. The government was primarily focusing on the provision of pensions for veterans and families of fallen servicemen. In particular, during the American Revolutionary War, the Continental Congress adopted a number of decisions on the introduction of special pensions: in 1776 — for veterans who had been registered as the persons disabled due to the military operations, in 1778 — for all military personnel, provided that they had served in the Continental Army until the end of hostilities. In 1780-1781, the pension system which was concerned with regulating the pensions for former military personnel, as well as widows and orphans of fallen servicemen, was modified (Revolutionary War Pension and Bounty-Land-Warrant Application Files. Records of the Veterans Administration, Record Group 25). Veterans were also provided with guarantees for obtaining a land plot. At the stage of the American War of Independence, a prominent feature of the veterans' support policy's development was the objectives to implement the steps as follows: apart from solving the immediate problem of protecting the interests of veterans, it was necessary to ensure mobilization into the ranks of the Continental Army and prevent soldiers from deserting (Altschuler , Blumin , Bill, 2009).

After the end of the American Revolutionary War, the policy for veterans was clearly conceptualized, with the pension system and ensuring the rights to be granted land plots being still among its principal features. Within 1792-1828, the reforming and further centralization of the veterans support system was being carried out, particularly, the right to get a pension and a land plot was reserved for all veterans, with due account for the duration of service, combat experience and personal merits, with the rights of family members of fallen servicemen ensured too. In 1832, the process of institutionalizing veterans policy was initiated, when the first institution in charge of implementing steps to introduce veterans policy, the Bureau of Pensions, was established. Apart from that, in 1834, a system of Veterans Homes was introduced; those were specialized healthcare facilities to care for the wounded, sick, and elderly veterans. In general, in 1789-1855, the centralized system of

veterans policy in the United States was first legislated, with the priorities of which being pension and medical support for veterans. Another motivation for the development of the system of Veterans Homes was the subsequent military conflicts of the first half of the 19th century, in particular with Mexico. An important element of the conceptualization of veterans policy was the emergence of the concept of commemoration and honoring veterans on the part of the state and society, the development of a special perception of military service as a citizen's duty and a manifestation of the highest honor (partially taken from the ancient times), which would continue to determine the specific features of state veterans policy in the United States.

The next stage, rather controversial, but important for the historical development of conceptual understanding of veterans policy in the United States, was the Civil War years. This conflict had turned out to be a shock for American society, as in American history at that time it was the cause of the greatest human casualties due to the military conflict, and severe moral and psychological trauma for the entire society. The difficult situation after the Civil War required special attention of the state to the veterans policy, since its implementation could become one of the ways to the post-war restoration of the country and regaining social unity. Since more than 7 million military personnel got injuries of varying severity, in particular, in every thirteenth case it was about the loss of limbs, the key focus of the state veterans policy after the Civil War was medical support and the development of a veterans physical rehabilitation system (Gerber, 2000). In 1865, the National Home for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers had been established — a structure that brought together specialized healthcare facilities throughout the country. A specific feature of the process of implementing the veterans policy after the Civil War was the active participation of the leadership of states and organizations of veterans and their wives (Altschuler, Blumin, Bill, 2009). A new area of focus of centralized state veterans policy was a large-scale program for searching for the bodies of the fallen military and reburying them. As of 1870, more than 300,000 members of the Northern Army were reburied within the framework of the state program, with about 2,000 unidentified dead from both armies buried in Arlington Cemetery, and many graves appeared directly in the territories where the main military operations were conducted (Neff, 2004). Besides, in 1862, military cemeteries were granted the status of national cemeteries (Cook, 2017). Therefore, the commemoration policy had become one of the elements of the state veterans policy.

A new dimension of conceptualization of state veterans policy was initiated during the World War I and the interwar period. During the World War I, more than 4.7 million Americans became participants in military operations in Europe, of which 116,000 were killed, with more than 200,000 injured (Altschuler, Blumin, Bill, 2009). Aware of the potential consequences of participating in a war, the state made proximal decisions. In particular, the Congress reformed the system of providing government assistance to veterans. A new concept of state veterans policy had been developed, which provided for the development of government programs to support veterans in three vectors: insurance of military personnel; payments to veterans who had acquired disabilities as a result of participation in military operations; provision of medical care and rehabilitation to the wounded (Altschuler, Blumin, Bill, 2009). Implementation of these programs was assigned to federal institutions: the Bureau of Veterans Affairs, the Bureau of Pensions, and the National Home for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers. Important changes had taken place in the system of medical support for military personnel and veterans. Under the auspices of the Bureau of Veterans Affairs, the National Home for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers, and the Public Health Service, large-scale construction of new military hospitals had begun in 1918, which later were even arranged on the basis of private hospitals and hotels (Gonzalez, McGee, Kemp, 2020). Special attention was paid to the new nature of injuries caused by the use of the latest machinery and chemical weapons.

During the interwar period, actions were taken to unify federal programs to support veterans and liberalize their accessibility. In particular, in August 1921, the Bureau of Veterans Affairs was established — an institution responsible for implementing all existing programs to support veterans (Act to establish a Veterans' Bureau and to improve the facilities/ 1921). In 1924 and 1928, government programs to support veterans were extended to veterans of the National Guard, female military personnel, and military personnel with disabilities not related to military service. In 1930, the institutional organization of veterans policy was transformed, with the Veterans Affairs Administration established (Executive Order 5398/1930). Therefore, efforts were continued to consolidate and coordinate government actions to support veterans. The Veterans Affairs Administration included the Bureau of Veterans Affairs, the Bureau of Pensions, and the National Home for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers. Further changes in the structure of the Veterans Affairs Administration took place already during the World War II.

During the World War I and the interwar period, significant changes also occurred in the conceptualization of the policy of honoring military personnel and veterans. The role of the government in the processes of commemoration had significantly increased. The main activities of the government were the arrangement of military cemeteries and memorials, in the United States and outside the country, as well as the definition of key elements of the commemoration policy. The leading institution that had been dealing with commemoration issues since 1921 was the American Battle Monuments Commission, which aimed to establish government control over the process of honoring American military servicemen who fought outside the United States. The ABMC's task was to build monuments in honor of the US expeditionary force. Its powers were expanded in 1934 by F. Roosevelt, when the Commission was also assigned to supervise over military cemeteries (previously they had been in charge of the Department of War). After the World War I, nine American military cemeteries were arranged in Europe, with 14 monuments set up in honor of the American Expeditionary Forces (in France, Belgium and Great Britain). There was a number of memorials dedicated to the World War I set up also in the United States, with the National Memorial in Washington being the most prominent one. Today, there are also World War I Museums opened next to the memorials.

The years of the World War II and the early post-war period were a most significant period in the historical process of developing the concept of the latest model of state veterans policy, that is approved officially today in many countries of the world. A radical change in approaches to the development of the veterans policy occurred with the Servicemen's Readjustment Act adopted in 1944. This period of development of veterans policy in the United States can be considered one of the most important as the American best practices to be further adopted in Ukraine, since it demonstrates the priority steps in the process of developing a set of veterans support programs, defining the goals and key objectives of veterans policy, and priorities in the areas of government veterans support programs. It is also important to analyze the public and political discussion about the provisions of the Law, since this process has revealed the main actors in the development of veterans policy and the specific aspects of building up effective interaction between them.

Servicemen's Readjustment Act (its unofficial name is G.I. Bill of Rights) was a 1944 Bill that provided for a range of benefits for World War II veterans (Servicemen's Readjustment Act. 6.22.1944). The Bill was in effect until 1956. Over time, the programs were being modified, but the unofficial name, the author of which is considered to be a

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representative of the American Legion, former journalist Jack Zeynar (Bill, Frydl, 2009) was later applied to refer to the main projects related to providing social support for veterans (Korean G.I. Bill, Vietnam G.I. Bill, which will be discussed below, Post-9/11 G.I. Bill, etc.). This is quite appropriate, since the basic steps of the Veterans Policy defined by the 1944 Bill were further redefined and improved by subsequent regulatory legal acts. In particular, the 1944 Bill introduced a large-scale comprehensive set of government support programs for the World War II veterans. The development of the draft bill and its adoption initially demonstrated the struggle of different groups and active discussion, rather than the presence of consensus. This is how the main groups of influence in solving the veterans issues in the post-war years had been distinguished, the interaction and opposition of which led to the drafting of a bill that was eventually supported by both Congress and the President, as well as society.

The White House initiated the process of developing the draft bill. Actually, even before the United States entered World War II, the political establishment began drawing up plans for the country's post-war development. The issue of the need for government support for veterans first arose in 1940, when the Roosevelt administration was already acting from the position of the inevitable participation in military operations in Europe, and the President signed the bill on conscription and service in the Armed Forces (Selective Service and Training Act. 11.13.1940). By December 7, 1941, the U.S. Army was further reinforced by 1.6 million people. In the next four years after the attack on Pearl Harbor, about ten million people were conscripted into the United States Armed Forces, with some two million people joining the Army as volunteers. The Government had adopted the Disabled Veterans' Rehabilitation Act of 1943, but it was obvious that solving post-war problems would require a more comprehensive approach.

In planning the post-war development of the United States, Franklin Delano Roosevelt relied primarily on government structures established during the New Deal years, which spoke for the initial focusing on centralized regulation of veterans programs in the future. However, the strengthening of conservative tendencies, the growing support for the Republican Party demonstrated in the midterm Congressional elections, and the partial change of Presidential advisers in the second half of the 1930s prompted a gradual revision of the principles of centralized federal governance. Besides, along with representatives of political elite, leading veterans organizations that had emerged after the World War I became a powerful actor in the interwar period: American Legion, Veterans of Foreign Wars,

Disabled American Veterans. These organizations were very pro-active in the 1920s and 1930s. Veterans organizations defined themselves as the main representative and defender of the interests of the World War I veterans, particularly in the context of a large-scale economic crisis. The American Legion had been the most prominent organization, which by 1940 acquired one million members, and during the World War II it was increased by another two million people. Unlike some other veterans organizations, the American Legion not only continued its activities during World War II, but it was even strengthened, for after making amendments to the Charter, the organization began to accept those participating in a new war. (Altschuler, Blumin, Bill, 2009) The issue of protecting the rights of the World War I veterans in the new realities was still relevant for the organization. Besides, the Legion was striving to strengthen the political and social impact of the organization and its position among American veterans. At the beginning of the 1940s, representatives of the organization, World War I veterans were at the age of the greatest civic and political activity, so when discussions about plans for post-war development had started among American politicians, they acted as active participants in the discussion and offered their own vision of solving the veterans issues in the post-war period. Therefore, taking into account its own historical background (Kaye, 2015) and the flexibility shown in the current circumstances of the mid-20th century, Legion became a natural participant in the process of developing approaches to veterans policy.

The direct development of the provisions of the draft bill on post-war veterans policy was preceded by the development of conceptual approaches to its formation, principles in defining and understanding the place of a veteran in American society, and official legislative recognition of the status of a veteran. In 1933, during a conversation with representatives of the American Legion, President Roosevelt articulated the basic approach of the White House to the veterans issue, as follows: veterans are not an exclusive social group, but they should be able to exercise their rights on an equal basis with other participants in social processes. Military service is the duty of a citizen, but it does not turn him or her into a representative of an exclusively privileged category, endowed with a special social and legal status – the duty of the government is rather to honor its heroes and properly protect the rights of veterans, when they mostly need support in returning to civilian life, while the limits of ensuring the rights of other categories of citizens should not be violated (U.S. Congress, Proceedings of the 15th National Convention of the American Legion, 1933). The key objective of the Government was to ensure the most comfortable return of veterans to civilian life, and not to

turn them into a special group of beneficiaries. The same idea had been reflected in the aforementioned 1940 Bill on conscription and service in the Armed Forces, which stipulated the need for the government assistance to veterans during their regaining civilian professions after demobilization (Selective Service and Training Act/ 1940). In 1942, the Bill was revised, and, signing the updated Bill, the President noted that everyone whose education and training had been interrupted by service in the Armed Forces should be guaranteed the right to continue their studies and receive academic or professional education after demobilization (National Resources Planning Board, National Resources Development Report for 1943, Post-War Plan and Programm, 1943). Therefore, at the initial stage of the development of the state policy on the Second World War II veterans, the following approaches had been suggested: veterans were the citizens who had fulfilled the highest duty to the state and society; they should not become an exclusive preferential group that received numerous benefits from the Government – the main thing in the post-war reintegration of a veteran should be the opportunity to take a decent place in society, return to civilian life, get an education and fulfil themselves as professionals; ensuring the rights of veterans and providing them with government assistance should not lead to disregard for the rights of other citizens and any restriction of their capabilities.

When considering the issue of further developing the veterans policy, two expert groups had been created to draw up post-war development plans (Smith, 2008)

The first of them was headed by Frederick Delano, the President's uncle and Chairman of the National Resources Planning Board, the structure that was regulating the economy in the early years of New Deal. Delano's group had drawn up several reports, and the final one was sent to the President for consideration in December 1942. The report contained suggestions how to boost post-war economic growth, on restoration of the energy sector, social services, and demobilization. The veterans issue was considered in the context of guarantees for the provision of safety, health care, and education (National Resources Planning Board, Security, Work, and Relief Policies, 1942). The report of the Delano group was welcomed by the liberal group, but was heavily criticized by conservative circles, who saw the implementation of this program as a threat to the centralization of social policy by the federal government, the drafting of numerous state programs of social support for various groups of the population, as well as strengthening the influence of democrats by activating the operation of structures that had emerged in the New Deal period (Amenta, 1998).

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Another group that had been working on the issue was the Committee on the Post-War Educational Opportunities for Service Personnel, headed by Frederick Osborn. The Committee's work was primarily focused on the issue of educational opportunities for veterans in the post-war period. It should be noted that from the beginning of the development of this concept, the presidential administration had understood that the federal assistance program for access to education could be perceived as an encroachment on the powers of states in solving educational issues. They expected that no opponent would oppose such a federal program to help veterans, given the risks of electoral losses. Another key point in the operation of the Osborn Committee was the need to respond effectively to the threat of mass unemployment among the many millions of demobilized people who would return home from Europe. The underlying idea was to avoid mass unemployment among the demobilized people through their active involvement in the system of academic and vocational education. This would give the labor market some time to respond to a new level of demand, and allow demobilized people to claim better jobs depending on their education. On October 27, 1943, Franklin Delano Roosevelt presented the outcome of the Committee's activities to Congress. The main suggestions of the Committee were as follows: providing free education or professional training during the year for all World War II veterans who had served for at least six months, as well as an additional three years of training for a limited number of men and women selected according to the criteria of special capabilities in a particular field of professional activity.

In November 1943, the American Legion responded to these suggestions. The leadership of the organization stated that the main thing that demobilized people should expect from the Government would be the opportunity to get an education, get a job and take their rightful place in post-war society. The Organization's representatives called for the drafting of a legislative act that would cover all the post-war needs of veterans. In general, the American Legion supported the idea of the Roosevelt administration, but the organization's representatives also suggested their own bill. It was mainly drafted by senators Harry Colmery, Ernest McFarland and Edith Rogers, and also Warren Atherton, Head of the American Legion. As early as January 1944, Senator Joel Bennett Clark, one of the founders of the American Legion, presented his version of the future bill to Congress. In general, while remaining within the framework of the government project, representatives of the organization suggested some amendments. First, the right to get an education within a year was to apply to all military personnel who had served for at least ninety days, with the right

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to get an education within four years granted to all those whose training had been interrupted due to the war. Therefore, the American Legion offered a broader and more inclusive program that would reach a significant number of veterans and provide them with better educational opportunities. Besides, the Committee's draft included the following provisions and proposals: equal and free access to government assistance programs for all veterans; ensuring that veterans are well aware about their rights and opportunities; funding the construction of hospitals, treatment and rehabilitation programs for veterans, with a special focus on the study and treatment of nervous system disorders; facilitating the transition of veterans to civilian life by paying a one-time allowance of up to USD 500 (this proposal was implemented by adopting a separate bill) (Mustering-out Payment Act., 1944.); the issue of veterans employment should be transferred to the competence of the Veterans Affairs Administration, which includes the Veterans' Employment Service; the Veterans Affairs Administration may refuse requests for assistance to veterans who had participated in strikes and were dismissed for misconduct or official offenses, failed job tests, refused to attend vocational training courses or get education within the opportunities offered by the government; providing financial assistance to unemployed veterans in the amount of USD 25 for a maximum of 52 weeks (Altschuler, Blumin, Bill, 2009). It was important for the American Legion to ensure the rights of the World War I veterans, maintaining support programs for them, as well as a certain transformation of the Veterans Affairs Administration, which was supposed to cover the entire veteran community and accumulate the implementation of diverse programs – from providing medical rehabilitation to employment. Thus, the foundations were laid for the development of the federal Veterans Affairs Service, which would cover all possible areas of government interaction with the veterans' community. This, in turn, would facilitate access to the government support programs for veterans by reducing the number of bureaucratic procedures. Besides, the veterans community began to get shaped as a certain social unity, regardless of which wars its members participated in.

The participation of the American Legion in the discussion around the post-war development plans attracted the attention of the general public to this issue. A PR campaign was launched, supported by periodicals of William Randolph Hearst: Chicago American, Boston American, New York Journal American. Specially assigned reporters were informing the public about the discussion and proposals of the American Legion (Altschuler, Blumin, Bill, 2009). This contributed to the growing popularity of the organization's suggestions

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among Americans, provided significant public support, and eventually helped win the option proposed by the Legion.

The information campaign of the American Legion was accompanying the procedure of consideration and adoption of the draft bill in Congress, which lasted for six months. A special feature of this process was the unification of representatives of the Republican and Democratic parties, each of which included representatives of the American Legion. The Senate approved it on March 24, with its consideration slowed down a little bit in the House of Representatives. Over the following months, certain provisions had been clarified and the final version of the draft bill was developed. It provided for the actions as follows: the allocation of USD 500 million to develop a system for protecting the interests of veterans, including the construction of healthcare facilities; the right to get education within four years for veterans who had served at least ninety days (the Government paid up to USD 500 a year for the training of each veteran, and provided for the payment of scholarships in the amount of USD 50 to 75 a month); the advantage in opportunities to get an education belonged to veterans who had been called up before their twenty-fifth birthday and whose training was interrupted by the war; unemployment assistance for veterans in the amount of USD 20 per week for a maximum of 52 weeks; guaranteed loans to buy a farm, a house, or to start a business, up to USD 2,000 at a favorable interest rate (Servicemen's Readjustment Act., 1944)

On June 22, 1944, President Roosevelt signed the GI Bill of Rights in the presence of representatives of the American Legion and Veterans of Foreign Wars. The Veterans Affairs Administration had launched a campaign to raise awareness of the military personnel about the benefits they can get after demobilization. In the first year of the bill's operation, there had been many comments on its individual provisions and mechanisms for their implementation, and the feasibility of the implementation of the educational program had been discussed, with the limits of the powers of state institutions being properly clarified. However, the following years showed that the programs laid down in GI Bill not only had proved viable, but also helped radically transform American society.

The 1944 Bill laid the legal foundations for developing a comprehensive, full-fledged system for integrating the veterans into civilian life and with the implementation mechanisms provided along. The most pressing problems were the issues of medical care for the wounded, rehabilitation of veterans who had acquired disabilities, as well as providing veterans with jobs, which was expected to be carried out provided that they were competitive in the labor

market. According to the 1944 Bill, all issues related to veterans had been transferred to the competence of the Veterans Affairs Administration. Since the end of the World War II, significant transformations had taken place within this institution, which ensured its full-fledged functioning in all necessary areas.

As of 1945, the Administration existed as a combination of three key institutions of the interwar period: the Bureau of Veterans Affairs, the Bureau of Pensions, and the National Home for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers. Given the multidimensional nature and scale of the objectives facing the Administration at the end of World War II, as well as the novelty of individual tasks, there arose a need for structural reforming of the Administration. The main stage of reforming occurred in 1945-1948 – that was the period when General Omar Bradley had been assigned Head of the Administration. At this time, key departments had been established within the Administration that were in charge of the tasks assigned to it: the Veterans Benefits Administration and the Department of Medicine and Surgery. Actually, these changes became the basis for the modern organization of the Veterans Affairs Administration, whose key departments were the Veterans Benefits Administration, the Veterans Health Administration (that was the name the Department of Medicine and Surgery obtained in 1991), and the National Cemetery Administration, established in 1973, after the transition of the National Cemetery system to the Veterans Affairs Administration in 1970.

Therefore, a conceptual framework for the state veterans policy in the United States had been developed. The core area of the Government's activities in this field were medical support for veterans, benefits and special conditions in the process of integrating a veteran into civilian life, and commemoration of the fallen military personnel. The following decades of the Veterans Policy's development in the United States had featured a number of amendments (in particular, the coverage of government veterans support programs had been extended to participants in subsequent military conflicts; with new areas appearing, such as psychological support for veterans since the 1980s) and transformations that, however, had always remained within the framework of a unified concept.

One of the most important components of the concept of Veterans Policy is also the definition of those whom the Government legally recognizes as veterans. In the United States, throughout the evolution of the veterans policy, actions have been taken to integrate as many military personnel as possible into this status. Today, a veteran is considered to be anyone who had served in the Armed Forces for at least 180 days and was not dismissed for reasons of unworthy behavior. ‘The term “veteran” means a person who served in the active

military, naval, air, or space service, and who was discharged or released therefrom under conditions other than dishonorable (Title 38 United States Code, 101(2)). In case of disability, the minimum service life is not taken into account, and military personnel receive veteran status regardless of their experience in combat operations.

Based on the concept of the State Veterans Policy developed in the United States in the mid-twentieth century, Journeys of Veterans Map had also been suggested – a scheme that reflected the stages of a veteran's life path, including servicing in the Armed Forces and the subsequent process of integration into civilian life (Journeys of Veterans Map). This scheme is an evidence of how the government's place in interaction with veterans is determined: the key objective of the state is to ensure the possibility of a productive and fulfilling life for every serviceman after being dismissed from the Armed Forces.

Fulfilling this objective today is vital for the successful development of Ukrainian society, because the number of veterans in Ukraine, most of them having real combat experience, is constantly growing, so the Government and society need to implement certain internal transformations to integrate their citizens into civilian life after serving in the Armed Forces.

The historical experience of Ukraine in shaping State Veterans Policy differ drastically from the American one. Actually, we may talk about the development of the veterans policy as an independent area of state policy since 2014 — the beginning of military aggression by the Russian Federation. Therefore, Ukraine has no experience of a gradual, lengthy and continuous historical process of developing the state veterans policy. The first armed conflict in the history of Ukraine after the restoration of independence in 1991 made the issue of government support for veterans urgent. Previous periods of Ukraine's history were undoubtedly also associated with the participation of Ukrainians in various military conflicts and the appearance of veterans in Ukrainian society, but before that there had been no opportunities for developing their own state policy in this area, in particular due to long periods of occupation. The occupation of Ukraine by the Soviet Union in the 20th century also resulted in the specific features of the development of the state veterans policy in independent Ukraine. In fact, since 2014, Ukraine has managed to start moving from the Soviet past to the introduction of modern practices, although there are still many problems in their implementation, which is clearly articulated by representatives of public organizations and veterans associations. The negative impact of the Soviet occupation on the development of veterans policy is manifested both at the legislative and institutional levels, as well as at

the level of conceptual understanding of the role of veterans in society and the veterans policy as a system of comprehensive support for former military servicemen.

During the 20th century, the issue of the need for government support for veterans was becoming urgent in Ukraine, first of all, after the World War II and the War in Afghanistan. Unlike the United States, the Soviet Union did not introduce a single state policy to support veterans, although after the war, a significant number of people, returning to civilian life, needed medical, financial and social assistance. Special payments for participants of military operations during World War II had been effected only until 1948, and later only veterans with disabilities were getting some small pension payments. They could also get a job, but these were exclusively appointments to positions offered by the government, with no possibility of free choice of profession or even education and a new specialty. Differences in the status of veterans depending on their military rank and place of residence were typical for that time. Veterans living in the cities and those having an officer's rank could apply for a higher pension and could find a job in various industries, unlike veterans living in the villages who had been suffering from poverty. The only legally defined category of veterans were 'disabled combat veterans. They enjoyed the right to receive pensions and benefits for medical care, use of transport, they could get housing and benefits for the utilities payment too. The legal category of a 'veteran' had not existed in the Soviet Union until 1978, when a number of benefits were introduced for veterans participating in the Civil War in Russia and World War II, which absolutely did not solve the problem of integrating a veteran into civilian life, as they had the right to a 50% discount on the use of intercity transport (once a year), the right to get preferential loans for housing construction, the right to go on holiday at a convenient time, the priority of receiving vouchers to be treated at health care resorts, setting up a landline phone at home, the right to visit the same polyclinic after retirement that a veteran had visited while being employed. Obviously, these steps were unable to provide comprehensive support to veterans. It should also be taken into account that far too often it was impossible to get any of these benefits due to prolonged bureaucratic procedures. It should also be mentioned that some groups of veterans not only were unable to receive guaranteed benefits, but also found themselves to be discriminated against. This applied to female veterans and veterans with disabilities, a large number of whom were forced to go begging, and later ended up their lives in specially arranged camps. In particular, in 1951, about 350,000 veterans with disabilities ended up in camps as 'anti-civil and parasitic elements'. It should be emphasized that the official position of the

government in relation to veterans was that any benefits had been a kind of their 'gift', a mercy granted by the state and its leadership. The idea that a veteran must overcome all obstacles on his or her own in the process of returning to civilian life had been promoted in the culture. There had been no opportunities for mutual assistance and development of the veterans community and veterans organizations — the functioning of only a single organization of war veterans controlled by the authorities was permitted, which did not even have the right to create local branches. As a matter of fact, difficult financial conditions, lack of high-quality medical care and government support programs, only some minor benefits, made it impossible to fully integrate a veteran into civilian life. At the same time, the Soviet Union, like the modern Russian Federation, was creating propaganda myths about the World War II, parasitizing on the image of a veteran.

In many ways, the War in Afghanistan had become a similar precedent, as veterans were also left alone with their problems without any government support, which were aggravated by the conditions of political instability in the Soviet Union and the ambiguous perception of participation in the war and veterans themselves. However, the experience of veterans of the Afghan War is somewhat different, as they eventually got the opportunity to create their own public associations in independent Ukraine and more actively influence the process of providing government benefits for veterans.

After the restoration of Ukraine's independence in 1991, the issue of developing a veterans policy was not put on the agenda. In 1993, the Law 'On the Status of War Veterans and Guarantees of Their Social Protection (Zakon Ukrainy) was adopted, and in 1998, the Government adopted the Law 'On the Status of Military Service Veterans, Veterans of Internal Affairs Bodies, Veterans of the National Police and Some Other Persons and Their Social Protection (Zakon Ukrainy), which defined the categories of citizens who fell under the relevant legal definitions, as well as social benefits that they could receive from the Government. However, these laws did not form the basis for the future veterans policy, the concept of state policy for military service veterans, internal affairs bodies, the National Police of Ukraine, the Tax Police, the Bureau of Economic Security of Ukraine, the State Fire Emergency Service, the State Penitentiary Service of Ukraine, the Civil Protection Service, the State Service of Special Communications and Information Protection of Ukraine was explained in the Law of 1998 in accordance with the amendments made in 2004 and 2015, and as for the Law 'On the Status of War Veterans', the Article on the state policy of social protection of war veterans and their families, family members of fallen (deceased) war

veterans, family members of fallen (deceased) Defenders of Ukraine was added only in 2022. The definition made in 2022 is the closest to understanding the state veterans policy as an independent and integrated branch of Government's activity. In the Law, it is defined as 'purposeful, systematic activity of state authorities to ensure social protection of war veterans and their families, family members of fallen (deceased) war veterans, family members of fallen (deceased) Defenders of Ukraine by providing them with benefits and guarantees of social protection in accordance with the law (Zakon Ukrainy). Also, the 1993 Law had been repeatedly amended, which expanded the list of persons eligible for veteran status. However, there are a number of problematic issues regarding both Laws. First of all, we are talking about a rather extensive interpretation of the status of a veteran, the dispersion of interpretations in the context of two laws. Although at the same time, there are still categories of citizens, in particular certain groups of participants in military operations, who have to undergo a complicated procedure for implementing legal confirmation of status, which makes them face prolonged bureaucratic procedures. But the expertise of the United States demonstrates a more successful approach from the perspective of the key objective of the state veterans policy — the widest possible coverage of government programs to support veterans, including through maximum integration of the legal status of a veteran, which contributes, among other things, to streamlining of bureaucratic procedures and access to services. Besides, both Laws of Ukraine refer primarily to a number of social benefits that veterans are entitled to, so the general approach to the issue of veterans needs has for a long time been the same as the approach of the Soviet government, namely, the government provides veterans with individual social benefits, but there is no systematic approach to the integration of veterans into civilian life.

The institutional development of veterans policy in Ukraine clearly demonstrates the evolution of conceptual understanding of the importance of this branch of state policy. Today, the Ministry of Veterans Affairs deals with the issues of social reintegration of veterans, and its history shows the process of gradual and not always successful conceptual understanding of the problem. For a long time, the issue of supporting veterans was mostly still under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Social Policy, and the protection of veterans interests was combined with the social protection of people with disabilities. Thus, veterans were associated primarily with people with disabilities — a principle similar to the approach of the Soviet government. In fact, there was no conceptual reinterpretation of the experience of the Soviet occupation period taking place, which also led to the development of a general public

view of veterans. In 2011, a special state authority was established, the State Service for People with Disabilities and Veterans of Ukraine, responsible for the social protection of people with disabilities, war veterans, and other persons covered by the Law of Ukraine 'On the Status of War Veterans, and Guarantees of Their Social Protection', veterans of labor, military service veterans, retired military personnel, victims of Nazi persecution, children of war, and victims of political repression (Decree of the President of Ukraine 'On the Regulations on the State Service for the Disabled and Veterans of Ukraine). In 2014, in the context of Russian aggression and the beginning of the anti-terrorist operation in certain areas of Donetsk and Luhansk Oblasts, the first attempts had been made to develop the basis of the state veterans policy: state authorities were reformatted, with the State Service of Ukraine for War Veterans and Participants of the Anti-Terrorist Operation established (Postanova Kabinetu Ministriv Ukrainy No.414). Thus, the issues of protecting the interests and meeting the needs of veterans were institutionally defined for the first time. It was on the basis of the State Service of Ukraine for Veterans Affairs that the Ministry of Veterans Affairs was established in 2018. Therefore, the issue of veterans was acquiring a new status in the executive policy system, and the Ministry was assigned a number of tasks, the implementation of which was aimed at further developing the veterans policy: creating a new regulatory framework, developing a strategy, streamlining procedures, developing cooperation with the public and public control, medical and social support for veterans, and their commemoration (Prezentatsiia Ministerstva u spravakh veteraniv).

According to the Provision on the Ministry of Veterans Affairs, 'the Ministry of Veterans Affairs is the principal body in the system of central executive authorities, which ensures the development and implementation of state policy in the field of social protection of war veterans, persons who stand out for special merits in their duty, victims of the Revolution of Dignity, family members of these persons and family members of fallen (deceased) war veterans, family members of fallen (deceased) Defenders of Ukraine', and the key objectives of the Ministry being outlined as:

1. the development and implementation of state policy in the field of: social protection of veterans and their families, in particular, ensuring psychological rehabilitation, social and professional adaptation, employment, increasing competitiveness in the labor market, treatment in healthcare resorts, and housing;

2. provision of lifetime government maintenance allowances, annual payment of one-time monetary assistance;

3. granting, revoking the status and issuing certificates to veterans and family members of fallen (deceased) war veterans, family members of fallen (deceased) Defenders of Ukraine;

4. honoring the memory of veterans;

5. ensuring the rights and freedoms of veterans and their families. (Polozhennia pro Ministerstvo u spravakh veteraniv Ukrainy).

This initial definition of the tasks assigned to the Ministry of Veterans Affairs showed the desire to develop a policy of supporting veterans, which would direct the main efforts to fully integrate the military veterans into civilian life. However, the institutional development process was not completed with the establishment of the Ministry of Veterans Affairs. In 2019, it was merged with another Ministry to establish the Ministry of Veterans, Temporarily Occupied Territories and Internally Displaced Persons Affairs of Ukraine, in 2020, its reverse reformatting took place, and the Ministry of Veterans Affairs became once again an independent department (Postanova Kabinetu Ministriv Ukrainy No. 212) Such transformations demonstrate a lack of awareness of the need for continuous development of the state policy of supporting veterans as a separate branch of government's activity, which speaks for an urgent need to continue the process of conceptual comprehension of the veterans policy.

However, despite the resumption of the Ministry of Veterans Affairs's activities as an independent central executive authority, certain systemic problems are still urgent. In 2020, the Ministry of Veterans Affairs suggested a reform of the state veterans policy, based on the priorities of the Ministry of Veterans Affairs, stipulated in the Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers as follows: restoration and productive life, honoring and respect, reintegration into society. The Ministry stresses the need to further improve the system of state authorities responsible for implementing the veterans policy and turning their system into a powerful vertical management, since as of 2020, more than 18 central and local authorities have been engaged in social protection of veterans, so in order to build up an effective vertical management, a number of Ministries, the State Employment Service, and so on, have been involved in the reforming. The number of legal acts that regulate the process of providing benefits and guarantees for veterans is also impressive. Some of these documents are not implemented or just duplicate other documents, which makes access to social benefits more complicated and unclear. Therefore, the reform provided for clarifying the principles of state policy in the field of social protection of war veterans; improving strategic planning in the

system of social protection of war veterans; coordinating the activities of state authorities, local self-government bodies to organize and ensure the operation of benefits, as well as providing services to war veterans. Among the reform's objectives, the issue of employment of veterans in the civilian environment was highlighted as an important stage after returning to civilian life. In order to achieve positive changes and results in this area, the reform provided for the establishment of cooperation with the State Employment Center in order to increase the level of employment of war veterans in various fields; the development of the national system of war veterans rehabilitation, in particular, improving the quality of psychological rehabilitation services; revision and streamlining the procedure for granting statuses and benefits to veterans by automating individual processes; initiating the creation of jobs for war veterans by concluding an agreement with the joint representative body of employers associations of Ukraine. The overall outcome of the reform was to be the following complex: the possibility to be rendered services of treatment in healthcare resorts and psychological rehabilitation, restoration of physical and psychological health to the required level; the right to obtain services for social and professional adaptation, get an opportunity for their own development, employment and launching their own businesses; the development of a comprehensive program for the glorification of war veterans in society and promotion of a positive image of a veteran; the involvement of war veterans in the process of school and extracurricular national and patriotic education of young people; the creation and commissioning of the National War Memorial Cemetery, the opening of the Memorial in Hallowed Memory of the Fallen Defenders of Ukraine, the burial of war veterans according to the unified ritual; developing and commissioning of the Unified State Register of War Veterans and the E-Veteran service (Reforma pidtrymky veteraniv). So, the draft reform suggested in 2020 generally described the key conceptual foundations of the state veterans policy and possible ways to solve existing problems. However, it is too early to talk about the completion of the process of conceptualizing the state policy of supporting veterans in Ukraine, since in the context of the full-scale invasion of the Russian Federation, the Ukrainian state faces new challenges in meeting post-war needs and protecting the interests of a large number of veterans of the Russo-Ukrainian War. Besides, the process of legislative and institutional improvement of the regulation of the veterans policy has not been completed, so in the future we will talk about the next steps towards the development of the concept of an effective model of the state veterans policy, which will take into account the specific aspects of the historical experience of Ukraine and modern changing conditions.

Today, we can say that within the framework of the Ministry of Veterans Affairs, the process of conceptualizing the veterans state policy is still underway. First of all, the tasks specified in the Government presentation of the Ministry's activities are being implemented, such as setting a strategy for the development of veterans policy and updating the regulatory framework. In the process of structural transformations of the Ministry, the key objectives of the Ministry's departments have been defined, reflecting the vision of the basic needs of veterans.

In particular, the Department of ensuring the transition from military service to civilian life is engaged in the implementation of the key target of the veterans state policy - the integration of former military personnel into civilian life through psychological rehabilitation, including the arrangement of psychological aid; ensuring the transition from military service to civilian life; ensuring employment, increasing competitiveness in the labor market by supporting veterans development and entrepreneurial initiatives; professional adaptation and educational services.

The Department of Social Work is responsible for granting status and issuing certificates to veterans, family members of fallen (deceased) war veterans, family members of fallen (deceased) Defenders of Ukraine; their social protection, organization of the process of providing services; ensuring the rights and freedoms of veterans and their families (Osnovni завдання, функції та напрямки діяльності Департаменту соціальної роботи Міністерства).

The activities of the Department of Civil Identity cover the policy of commemoration and cooperation with representatives of the veterans community and civil society, in particular, honoring the memory of war veterans; events of the national and patriotic and military and patriotic education; development of interaction with civil society institutions and cooperation with public associations; direction and coordination of the activities of the public institution National War Memorial Cemetery; development of interaction and cooperation with public veterans associations; involvement of public veterans associations in providing information and institutional support in the implementation of projects aimed at the development and implementation of state policy in the field of social protection of veterans and their families; development and implementation of state policy in the field of honoring memory of war veterans; planning and organization of activities to commemorate veterans (search, burying and reburying, preservation and arrangement of military graves, memorializing, and so on), coordination of the activities of executive authorities and local self-government bodies to honor the memory of veterans (Osnovni завдання та функції

Departamentu hromadianskoi identychnosti). A separate area of the Ministry's activities is the promotion of a positive image of a veteran in the public consciousness, which was reflected, in particular, in the process of public discussion of the 'Concept of Developing a Positive Image of a Veteran' suggested by the Ministry.

In 2022, the Ministry of Veterans Affairs also established the Ukrainian Veterans Foundation, the purpose of which was to fund veteran startups and projects of non-governmental organizations aimed at supporting veterans. The Foundation's key objectives, set out in its Strategy, reflect the principles of the veterans policy concept, first introduced in the United States, as follows:

1. Reintegration of veterans and their families into active public life, ensuring the preservation and restoration of their physical and mental health.
2. Support of business activities launched by veterans and assistance in their employment (Stratehiia Ukrainskoho veteranskoho fondu).

Besides, the Foundation conducts sociological research that captures the current image of a veteran and the veterans community in Ukraine, the relationships between veterans and society, and defines the basic needs of Ukrainian veterans (Analitika – Veteranskyi Fond).

A typical feature of conceptualization and development of the state veterans policy in Ukraine is the active participation of non-governmental organizations and veterans associations, whose activities often become the keys factors that encourage positive changes in the views of the public and politicians on the veterans issue, provoke discussions in expert circles and put forward ideas for further development of the conceptual understanding of the fundamentals of the policy of supporting veterans in Ukraine. In many aspects, actions to protect the interests and meet the needs of veterans are implemented thanks to the efforts of civil society. Ukraine has developed a network of non-governmental and veterans organizations that deal with various areas of support for veterans: legal (Legal Hundred, Legal Navigator), psychological and physical rehabilitation, social reintegration, employment, and so on. Most of these organizations have been created by veterans of the modern Russo-Ukrainian War, and for many of those who return to civilian life, participation in the activities of such organizations is one of the ways to their post-war fulfilment. At the level of non-governmental organizations, there is an active cooperation with foreign partners, in particular, representatives of the United States (both the government and public sectors). It was representatives of such organizations who developed the 'Veteran's Path' scheme, which

adapts the American model and approach to each veteran from a human-centered point of view, and in the new conditions in 2023, a new concept of a unified state policy for supporting veterans was suggested, as mentioned above (Shliakh veteraniv ta veteranok). Therefore, it can be stated that one of the important areas of the Government's work in the field of veterans support policy is active cooperation with non-governmental and veterans organizations that have experience and qualified expertise in protecting the interests, identifying and meeting the basic needs of veterans. There is an active direct cooperation with representatives of state institutions and veterans organizations of the United States, which is conducted both at the state level and at the level of non-governmental organizations of Ukrainian veterans.

Results

Today, both in Ukraine and in the United States, the state policy of supporting veterans is an independent area of Government activities. The conceptual foundations of veterans policy in both countries are similar, since in Ukraine the development of veterans policy was taking place with due account for the best practices of other countries. Actually, the concept of the latest veterans policy, which was developed in the middle of the 20th century in the United States, was taken into account. However, further understanding of the historical experience of the United States is still relevant in order to effectively adapt the foundations of the concept of a modern integrated model of the state veterans policy:

1. A veteran is a full-fledged participant in social and political processes, a respected citizen who has fulfilled his or her highest patriotic duty.
2. The key goal of the state veterans policy is to properly integrate veterans into civilian life.
3. The government, the veterans community, and civil society are participants in the development of veterans policy.
4. Institutional support for veterans policy is based on an extensive system of state authorities, the central one of which is of national importance, with branches operating at the local level.
5. The main means of implementing the goal of the state veterans policy is the development of veterans support programs.

6. A special feature of the system of government programs to support veterans is the integrated approach and focusing on providing priority assistance, creating conditions for a new start for a former serviceman in civilian life.

7. Areas of veterans support programs are as follows: medical support, educational programs, employment assistance, pension provision, disability compensation, insurance, special lending terms for buying housing and starting a business, honoring fallen servicemen, arranging military cemeteries and memorials, commemorative events, promoting a positive image of a veteran.

However, a significant difference between the expertise of Ukraine and the United States in conceptualizing the state veterans policy is the degree of completeness and historical continuity of the process of developing a policy of supporting veterans. The United States demonstrate an example of the continuous evolutionary development of the state veterans policy, which takes into account the specific historical circumstances of different periods and the conditions of different military conflicts. It was thanks to a long, gradual process lasting in the middle of the 20th century that the United States managed to find the optimal formula for the veterans policy model, which, with further amendments, allowed to create the most integrative and comprehensive system of state support for veterans aimed at integrating and re-adapting former military personnel to peaceful life and civilian roles. It is also important that in the United States, the veterans policy has acquired an independent status already at the first stages of the development of their statehood, and therefore society and politicians have a clear awareness of the need to take actions to protect the interests and meet the needs of veterans. Nevertheless, in Ukraine, taking into account the previous historical experience, in particular the long periods of occupation in the 20th century, the destruction of national identity and state traditions, the veterans policy was not considered for a long time as a separate area of government's activities that required attention. Today, the process of conceptualizing the state veterans policy is underway, and it is carried out not only by state institutions, but also by civil society, thanks to the pro-active steps taken by the veterans organizations. Issues of institutional organization, regulatory support, and the creation of a unified, more holistic approach to the implementation of steps to support veterans are still problematic. The most urgent issue is the perception by the public and politicians of the veteran's place in society and the very concept of integration of veterans into civilian life and awareness of the need to further develop a systematic approach to improving the model of the state veterans policy and its implementation. The system of support for veterans should

operate as an independent direction of state policy, it should be centralized, and provided with clear legislative foundations. Therefore, today it is still relevant to study and logically adapt the US experience in Ukraine, taking into account the specific aspects and differences in the historical path of each of the countries, but also being aware of the universality of the basic aspects of developing the veterans support policy.

Conclusions

Military conflicts accompany humanity throughout its history. They lead not only to transformations of international political landscapes, but also cause domestic and social changes. One of the most significant social processes of the war and post-war period is the appearance of veterans in society, who in certain specific historical conditions can form a new social group. Therefore, a need arises to develop effective interactions between the veterans community, the government and society. In particular, a whole range of issues is becoming urgent: integration of veterans into civilian life, promotion of the image of a veteran and public attitude to demobilized servicemen, public perception of the course of military conflicts of the past and present on the basis of the development of a national historical narrative, honoring the memory of those who fell during military operations, and so on.

For centuries, Ukraine has been fighting for its own independence. Since 2014, the confrontation with the aggressive intentions of the Russian Federation has acquired the features of direct armed confrontation, so it is inevitable that the Government will have to face urgent issues of internal and public regulation in the wartime, in particular, the needs to develop a veterans policy and establish close cooperation with the veterans community. Sociological research conducted in the early 2022 showed that veterans of the Armed Forces of Ukraine, in particular participants in the military operations of 2014-2022, had been forming a new social group that would significantly influence the course of socio-political processes in Ukraine. In the context of the full-scale war, it is obvious that the issue of developing a policy to support veterans will remain one of the most important on the agenda for the coming years. Therefore, conducting scientific research on the specific aspects of interaction between veterans, the government and society is relevant for understanding their own experience in order to further develop a conceptual state veterans policy and its successful implementation.

Undoubtedly important for the development of approaches and implementation of this area of focus is the study and adaptation of the expertise of countries that have long demonstrated the effectiveness, sustainability and efficiency of their own veterans policies. One of the main guidelines can be the experience of the United States of America, with their long-standing historical tradition of developing and implementing veterans support policies. During the second half of the 20th century, the United States had generally developed the conceptual foundations of a modern integrated model of veterans support policy, which was adopted by other states and which is now gradually acquiring clear definition in Ukraine. The defining trends in the development of the veterans policy of the second half of the 20th century - the first decades of the 21st century are human-centered approach, integrated and multi-vector nature ensuring the provision of proper social support to veterans and memorialization of their military merits. The application of foreign expertise (provided the clear awareness of own specific aspects of military conflicts in which the Armed Forces are involved, and, accordingly, the reaction of society to it, the development of the veterans community, and so on) in the field of veterans policy is quite justified, since in many aspects this area has a certain universality, in particular in meeting the social needs of veterans; the development of certain areas, such as the formation of a commemoration policy (honoring the memory of the war, honoring veterans, developing a national historical narrative) requires closer attention to the specific aspects of each state and society. Since in Ukraine we are currently talking about adapting the American experience, it is necessary to analyze its specific features and creatively interpret the possibilities of applying such practices in Ukrainian conditions. Therefore, it is relevant to study the historical course of the veterans policy transformations in the United States and a comparative analysis of the specific aspects of the American and Ukrainian best practices.

It is obvious that the experience of each state and the portrait of society are unique on the canvas of history, and in some aspects they are incommensurable. However, when it comes to borrowing certain elements of the conceptual definition of approaches and mechanisms for the implementation of state policy of another country, making comparative analysis is appropriate, since taking into account the features of each of them is an important factor for successful adaptation as opposed to blind replication.

So, the analysis of the evolution of veterans policy in Ukraine and the United States is appropriate and relevant, given the allied relations and close cooperation between the two

countries, which makes it necessary to study and understand the aspects of the development of veterans support policy through comparing their expertises.

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