

THE EXPERIENCE OF THE UKRAI- NIAN ARMY IN COUNTERING RUS- SIAN AGGRESSION

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Abstract: To defeat the enemy, which has a significant advantage in means of air attack, missiles, artillery and other weapons, the Army's military formations are forced to act non-standard, non-template, sometimes defiantly. The chosen courses of action must be as effective as possible, unexpected for the enemy and inflict maximum losses on the enemy, provided that friendly forces are maintained in a combat-ready state.

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Introduction

The main components of the Army in the Armed Forces of Ukraine are mechanized, tank troops, missile troops and artillery, army aviation and the Army Air Defense Forces [1]. But the main focus will be on considering some issues related to the armament and equipment of military units only mechanized and tank formations, some issues regarding the tactics of units and views on operational art, as well as certain steps aimed at improving the military education system, individual and collective training.

These issues will be considered in chronological order and in three stages: the first - from the moment Ukraine declared independence until the start of semi-hidden Russian aggression against our country in 2014, the second – during the anti-terrorist operation and the Joint Forces operation; the third is the stage of countering the full-scale armed aggression of the Russian Federation in the period from February of this year to the present.

Military comparison

With regard to the experience gained by mechanized military formations during the reduction of armaments (quantity and types), rearmament and development of new modern types of weapons, several important factors can be identified that significantly affect the combat potential and methods of conducting military operations. Approximate numerical data showing that before the beginning of Russian aggression in 2014, the number of armored combat vehicles in the Army was reduced by more than 3.5 times, and the number of military personnel – by almost 6 times compared to 1991-th year. During this period, several programs for the development of the Armed Forces of Ukraine were introduced, none of which was fully

implemented. The programs stated that the troops should be small, but well equipped and trained. In fact, the troops became small, but equipped with old weapons and poorly trained personnel. The funds allocated for combat training were not enough to conduct full training of military specialists. As a result, the drivers did not have sufficient practice in driving combat vehicles, there were significant limitations in conducting shootings, tactical exercises, etc.

As a rule, only the equipment of the training and combat group was exploited. Often, the technical condition of such equipment was unsatisfactory, and sometimes it was necessary to complete this equipment, taking components from the combat group, which was just standing for a long time (at best in storage, at worst – in the open air). The above-mentioned factors, in combination with many other factors, led to the fact that at the beginning of the anti-terrorist operation, the brigades were able to staff only one battalion combat group (at worst, a company) from all subordinate units. To deploy the rest of the forces, it was necessary to make significant efforts to restore equipment and train personnel. Some politicians say that this stage was preparatory for Russia to weaken Ukraine and that Russia made a lot of efforts to bring the Armed Forces of Ukraine to this state.

The negative consequences of the first stage are felt even today, since a large part of the mobilized human resource was trained in the armed forces during this period, so they do not have the necessary knowledge and skills. Therefore, a lot of time should be spent on training military personnel to acquire the necessary skills for managing domestic equipment and an order of magnitude more time on mastering foreign equipment.

Tank troops (as well as infantry) have undergone significant changes since the creation of the domestic Armed Forces. The number of tanks in the Army compared to 1991 at the beginning of 2014 decreased by more than 8.5 times. But thanks to

the fact that in Kharkiv, Kyiv, Lviv and other cities there were factories that created and repaired military equipment, Ukraine continued to modernize and develop new tanks.

Russian aggressions in 2014 and 2022

Russian aggression in 2014 forced the state leadership and the entire Ukrainian people to face the problems of the Armed Forces in general and the Army in particular. The issues of staffing, armament, financing, provision of measures to prepare troops for operations began to be resolved much more effectively, and this showed a positive effect, which we could see in February 2022, and this momentum is pushing our troops on the battlefield today.

From the beginning of the national Armed Forces creation until today, the Army military leadership uses operational art and tactics developed in the Soviet Union. The field manuals, which were valid until 2016, were developed on the basis of the 1989 statutes, translated into Ukrainian. Since 2016, domestic doctrinal documents have taken into account the experience of the ATO and slightly changed approaches to the preparation and conduct of operations. For reference, until 2008, the Ukrainian Army was guided by the Soviet combat statutes and studied tactics, which were developed at the Moscow Frunze Military Academy. Some officers from the beginning of the aggression said that if you want to be successful, plan your actions differently than the statute says, because its provisions are known to the enemy.

Large areas of operations and limited forces prompted the search for effective courses of action for small tactical groups, which are still used today to counter the enemy. Thanks to international cooperation, the basic principles of military art, which are observed by the armed forces of NATO member countries [2-6], were studied and laid down in domestic documents. Also, the introduction of the principles of "mission command" played an important role in achieving superiority

over the enemy in matters of the command and control system effectiveness. Currently, there are still some inconsistencies in domestic approaches and NATO standards regarding the determination of the commander's intent, the structure and content of operational orders (mission orders) [7], and the risk management system needs to be improved.

At the initial stage of the defense operation, in almost all operational areas, Army formations in cooperation with other security and defense forces components performed identical tasks, namely: blocking the enemy; prevention of advancement in depth; defeating the enemy who penetrated the defense and restoring the position along the front edge (carrying out counterattacks). Thanks to the active actions of mobile fire groups and counterattacks, it was possible to effectively implement several principles of war – such as offensive, maneuver, surprise, and others.

Since the enemy's forces were significant at the initial stage, it was impossible to block his actions in front of the forward line of own troops (FLOT). The troops had to conduct one of the types of retrograde operations – delay [2, 6] (in domestic doctrines, this is one of the maneuverable defense types). They often talk about a new type of defense that is not written about in field manuals. This is a focal defense that small units (a company, a platoon) conduct in combat positions prepared for circular defense (so-called defense nodes), which are dispersed at a great distance from each other and cover only the important directions of the enemy's probable actions.

After blocking the enemy in front of the final phase line, an important task was to push his forces away from important administrative centers to ensure the safety of civilians, critical facilities, etc. Counterattacks proved to be effective not only those conducted by small tactical groups, but also skillfully designed the brigades and regiments level offensive operations. And today, thanks to the combination of defensive ac-

tions in one direction with offensive actions in another direction, clear synchronization of operations between neighboring units, Army formations together with Airborne Assault Forces, units of the Territorial Defense, National Guard and others are liberating our land from the invaders step by step.

But commanders and soldiers gain experience not only on the battlefield, but also during the educational process. A powerful Soviet school remained in Ukraine, which continued to function for many years (until 2014, and even beyond). Since the 1990s, a small number of personnel have been trained in parallel with NATO partners; military personnel have participated in international exercises, operations to maintain peace and security, etc. But this was not enough to fundamentally change the system. The situation radically began to change with the beginning of Russian aggression in 2014, when NATO partners increased military aid, including regarding training in training centers both in Ukraine and abroad. Instructors from the USA, Lithuania, Germany, Poland and many other countries helped to significantly raise the sergeants and soldiers training quality, as well as junior officers.

The situation was somewhat different with senior officers. For example, approaches to the training of senior officers at the National Defense University of Ukraine named after Ivan Chernyakhovsky changed significantly only in 2020. The reason for this was the first visit of officers of the Lithuanian Military Academy (Vytautas the Great Command and Staff Course), which took place in 2017. Then a joint exercise was held with Ukrainian and Lithuanian students in Kyiv. Later, there were visits of Ukrainian delegations to the Baltic Defense College, to Vilnius in 2018 and 2019, a number of international command and staff exercises, etc. Thus, since 2020, the educational programs at the university have been revised and we have somewhat brought our educational standards for the training of battalion and brigade level officers closer to NATO standards. Of course, this work continues today. Despite the war, approaches to training specialists are

improved at all levels, and the entire civilized world is helping Ukraine in this.

The development of tactics and operational art directly depends on the weapons that the Army has, and the effectiveness of the use of these weapons, as well as the skillful use of theoretical provisions of military science on the battlefield, is directly proportional to the level of training of military specialists. If one of the components of this chain is weak, the chain can crumble at the most critical moment and the entire structure can fly into the abyss.

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