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Transformation of Views on the Use of the Airborne Assault Troops of the Armed Forces of Ukraine During the Russian-Ukrainian Armed Conflict (2014-2018)

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Abstract: Today, during the full-scale aggression of the Russian Federation, the need to use the experience of the anti-terrorist operation in eastern Ukraine has become apparent in the context of the Russian-Ukrainian armed conflict. It was during the ATO that profound changes and a number of reforms of the Armed Forces of Ukraine took place, which radically changed the approaches to the use of certain branches of the armed forces and for the second year in a row has allowed us to adequately repel Russian aggression against our country. Since any transformation is possible only on the basis of the analysis of previous experience, it is necessary to analyze the previous experience of the Russian aggression of 2014-2018 in order to further improve the combat capability of the Armed Forces of Ukraine. Therefore, the purpose of the article is to describe the activities of military units of the Armed Forces of Ukraine in 2014-2018 and to analyze the transformation of views on the use of Airborne Assault Troops of the Armed Forces. An overview of individual operations of the Armed Forces of Ukraine in the period 2014-2018 was conducted and the factors of their success or failure were identified. For the purpose of the study, general scientific methods of cognition were used, including a critical analysis of the available scientific literature on the topic, comparative analysis, systematization of practical experience in implementing technical innovations, and the

method of establishing cause and effect relationships. The study presents the main trends that determine the future development of the Armed Forces of Ukraine, which will provide new methods and means for victory in the war, such as: minimizing the loss of manpower and equipment; increasing the effectiveness of military operations; improving the level of training of officers in specialized educational institutions and military departments.

Keywords: Anti-terrorist operation in the east of Ukraine (ATO), Russian aggression of 2014-2018, Russian invasion of Ukraine (since 2022), Ukrainian Ground Forces, Joint Forces Operation (JFO), military operations.

Introduction

Today, the war is rapidly changing not only Ukraine, but the entire world, as it is the largest conflict in Europe since the end of World War II (Kudelia, 2023). Our homeland has suffered the most, although Russian military forces have had only partial success due to incorrect intelligence and, as a result, an ineffective strategy for occupying the territory of Ukraine (Johnson, 2022). The relevance of the research topic is that in order to win, the Armed Forces of Ukraine are actively modernizing and trying to maintain an important synergy between soldiers and weapons Śliwa (2022), changing approaches to training and education of junior officers Bokii et al. (2022), all of which would not have been possible without the analysis and synthesis of the previous experience of using the Ukrainian Ground Forces and the Air Assault Forces of Ukraine during the anti-terrorist operation in eastern Ukraine. Thus, the future outcome of the current war depends on the ability to make the right decisions based on military operations that have already taken place during the Russian aggression of 2014-2018 and to identify the risks and benefits of making these decisions in the Russian-Ukrainian war.

Research Problem

The literature review has shown that there are certain unexplored issues related to the Russian aggression of 2014-2018. Among the unresolved issues is one of the key ones: the activities of military units of the Armed Forces of Ukraine in the period 2014-2018 within the framework of specific operations and the impact of the outcome of these military operations on further reforms. Addressing this issue requires in-depth analysis and systematization of various knowledge and its potential impact on changes in the Armed Forces of Ukraine.

Research Focus

The research focuses on identifying and assessing the opportunities created by the use of the Land Forces and Air Assault Forces of Ukraine during the anti-terrorist operation in eastern Ukraine, including the role of military units of these branches of the armed forces during specific military operations.

Research Aim and Research Questions

The aim of the research is to reveal the activities of military units and subdivisions of the Armed Forces of Ukraine in the period 2014-2018 and to analyze the transformation of views on the use of various branches of the armed forces.

To achieve this goal, the study solved the following tasks.

1. The essence of the concepts of "anti-terrorist operation", "Russian-Ukrainian armed conflict", "Russian aggression of 2014-2018" and "Russian invasion of Ukraine (since 2022)" is considered.
2. The author offers a view on the further development of the Armed Forces of Ukraine through the prism of the use of the Air Assault Forces of Ukraine during the anti-terrorist operation in eastern Ukraine.
3. The results of military operations of the Armed Forces of Ukraine in the period 2014-2018 were assessed and achievements and shortcomings were identified.
4. The main trends that led to the development of Ukrainian military thought and weapons are identified.
5. Recommendations for further research and possible expansion of the topic are given.

Literature Review/Theoretical Overview

Practical and theoretical aspects of the activities of military units of the Armed Forces of Ukraine in 2014-2018 were of interest to many Ukrainian authors and foreign researchers.

Pashchuk (2023) analyzes the organizational study and implementation of the experience of the Armed Forces of Ukraine in international peacekeeping and security operations, concluding that five years of enduring Russian aggression (2014-2018) has revealed an urgent need for cardinally improving the UAF lessons learned capabilities.

Tian et al. (2023) conduct a review of Ukraine's military spending in the period from 2014 to 2021, after the annexation of Crimea and before the full-scale invasion of Russia, and found a 73 percent increase in spending.

Skriabin, Popkov, and Vanovska (2021) examine the issues related to the use of the Armed Forces of Ukraine in the anti-terrorist operation (ATO) in eastern Ukraine (2014-2018), which became a form of repulsion and deterrence of Russian aggression.

Lobko and Fuchko (2020) conducted a study of the Doctrine of the use of state defense forces and identified this as a step forward in the development of national military art and the need to continue working on its improvement and development, in particular, taking into account the events of the anti-terrorist operation and JFO.

The study by Pytlova, Burakov, and Tersky (2022) defines the Russian-Ukrainian war as a powerful impetus for the development of military history museology in Ukraine. The research resulted in a recommendation to expand permanent exhibitions on countering Russian armed aggression and to popularize the heroism of Ukrainian soldiers during the Russian aggression of 2014-2018.

Grant (2021) calls for a rethinking of U.S. military aid that should include greater conditionality on aid, the assumption of program management by a single military commander focused entirely on reform and spending, and greater emphasis on the selection and training of those sent to aid after a much deeper examination of existing problems and challenges.

Bukkvoll (2019) examines the degree of autonomy of Ukrainian volunteer battalions from regular forces during the anti-terrorist operation. The results showed that the Ukrainian state and regular forces ultimately agreed to a higher degree of autonomy, in terms of command and control, from the volunteer battalions than they would probably have preferred. Such a result greatly contributed to the preservation of the sovereignty of the Ukrainian state in 2014-2015, but could also create conditions for challenges to the same state in the future. In the following study, Bukkvoll and

Solovian (2020) examined the influence of the driving forces of reforms and other factors on the pace of defense reform in Ukraine since the beginning of the confrontation with Russia in 2014. The study confirms previous findings that the "threat of losing the war" eventually overcomes domestic obstacles to defense reform.

The research by Adamov, Zavalnyuk, Didyk, and Pechorin (2021) contains the developed research methodology for evaluating the effectiveness of the use of units of the Airborne Assault Forces of Ukraine. It is noted that the advantage of the proposed method is the ease of calculations.

Ukrainian General Zabrodskyi, Watling, Danylyuk, and Reynolds (2022) describe in detail the state and structure of the Armed Forces of Ukraine and the changes that took place from 2014 until the full-scale invasion. The work (Zabrodskyi et al., 2022) contains a number of recommendations for other countries based on the activities of the main branches of Ukraine's armed forces during the Russian-Ukrainian armed conflict. The study is seen as a reliable basis for identifying important lessons from the hostilities.

Despite a significant number of studies on this topic (Table 1), the activities of military units of the Armed Forces of Ukraine in 2014-2018 and the transformation of views on the use of various branches of the armed forces remain an open question and require further research and analysis.

Table 1

Overview of Research on Ukrainian Armed Forces' Response to Aggression (2014-2022)

Author(s) and Year	Focus of Study	Key Findings
Bukkvoll (2019)	Autonomy of Ukrainian volunteer battalions	Higher degree of autonomy contributed to sovereignty preservation
Bukkvoll & Solovian (2020)	Defense reform in Ukraine	"Threat of losing the war" overcomes domestic reform obstacles
Lobko & Fuchko (2020)	Doctrine of state defense forces use	Development of national military art; need for continued improvement
Grant (2021)	U.S. military aid rethinking	Calls for greater conditionality and management of aid
Adamov, Zavalnyuk, Didyk, & Pechorin (2021)	Effectiveness of Airborne Assault Forces	Developed methodology emphasizing ease of calculations
Skriabin et al. (2021)	ATO in Eastern Ukraine	Impact of ATO on repulsion and deterrence of Russian aggression
Pytlovana, Burakov & Tersky (2022)	Military history museology	Recommendation to expand exhibitions on countering Russian aggression
Zabrodskyi et al. (2022)	State & structure of Armed Forces	Detailed overview and recommendations for other countries
Tian et al. (2023)	Military spending review	73% increase in military spending post-Crimea annexation
Pashuk (2023)	Organizational study & international operations	Urgent need for improving UAF's lessons learned capabilities

Source: own development of the author

In the modern world, military affairs and armaments are developing extremely rapidly, which is constantly transforming the Armed Forces of Ukraine. Understanding the impact of the ATO

experience is, and will continue to be, a major challenge for military educational institutions, instructors, and researchers of military development in the future.

Research Methodology

The purpose of the study is to describe the activities of military units of the Armed Forces of Ukraine in 2014-2018 and to analyze the transformation of views on the use of Airborne Assault Troops of the Armed Forces of Ukraine. Due to the rapid growth of threats and the escalation of the Russian-Ukrainian armed conflict, there is a need to understand and analyze in detail the impact of the experience of military units of the Armed Forces of Ukraine during the anti-terrorist operation. Also, to analyze the activities of the Armed Forces of Ukraine during the ATO, parts of interviews with servicemen who were directly involved in operations during 2014-2018 are used, which can offer the most complete picture and confirm the results obtained using thematic and schematic methods. Understanding this experience will help not only to predict future trends of the current war, but also to develop strategies for military educational institutions and structures of the General Staff of the Armed Forces of Ukraine aimed at improving the effectiveness of training and employment of various branches of the armed forces in low-intensity armed conflict. This study is based on a systematic analysis of scientific publications and existing research on the activities of the Armed Forces of Ukraine in the ATO and the problems they face. It is also based on the analysis of quantitative data aimed at assessing the impact of innovations on the dynamics of modernization of the Ukrainian army. Elements of interviews with Ukrainian and foreign military personnel were also used, which made it possible to compare the state of reforms of the Air Force of the Armed Forces of Ukraine and the Air Force of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Kazakhstan. A number of different methods covering a wide range of areas were used in the research process.

The methods used in the study are:

1. Thematic method. The study presents the most relevant data on the activities of military units and subdivisions of the Armed Forces of Ukraine in 2014-2018 and the problems of their use during the ATO.
2. Schematic method. The use of diagrams and graphs made it possible to visualize the complex phenomena, processes and patterns under study. In the context of the study of the use of military units of the Armed Forces of Ukraine in 2014-2018, the diagrams helped to identify the dynamics of the development of such branches of the armed forces as the Ukrainian Ground Forces and the Air Assault Forces of Ukraine.
3. Methods of analysis, synthesis, and comparison. The method of systematization allowed for a thorough review and systematization of the main military operations of the Armed Forces of Ukraine during the ATO, while the method of comparison and synthesis allowed for the formulation of the main stages and features of the development of the involved branches of the armed forces. Comparative analysis can also help in identifying best practices and strategies that could be adapted or avoided. This approach can highlight unique aspects of the Ukrainian experience and draw lessons from other nations' experiences. This comparison would not only enrich the analysis but also make it more appealing to an international audience, increasing the relevance and applicability beyond the Ukrainian context.
4. The methods of induction and deduction were used to critically analyze the information obtained, which made it possible to identify the main trends in the development of the Armed Forces in the future.

5. Method of data triangulation involves cross-verifying information and conclusions through multiple sources or methods, thereby enhancing the reliability and validity of the findings.

Results

Today, during the bloody war for the existence of Ukraine, the experience of using the military units of the Armed Forces of Ukraine in 2014-2018 is more important than ever, because it was this experience that transformed them, helped create a network of reservists, taught them how to use the latest weapons of NATO member countries and ensured a patriotic upsurge among the population and support for waging a righteous war for their existence. The Armed Forces of Ukraine resisted Russian aggression in 2014 thanks to the application of NATO best practices and a unique movement of volunteers who still help fund the war effort (Shelest, 2022).

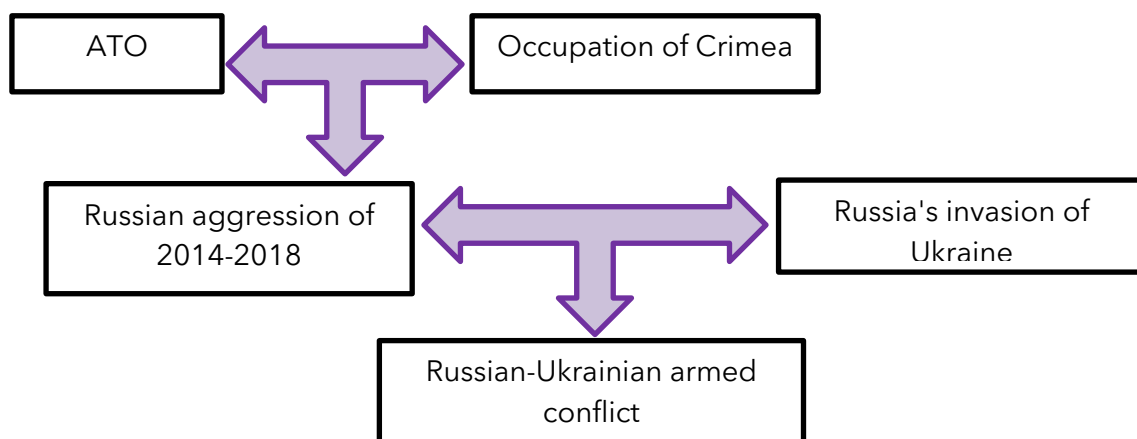
The essence of the concepts "Anti-terrorist operation in the east of Ukraine (ATO)", "Russian-Ukrainian armed conflict", "Russian aggression of 2014-2018", "Russian invasion of Ukraine (from 2022)" are defined as:

1. ATO – a set of measures aimed at prevention, prevention and cessation of terrorist acts.
2. Russian-Ukrainian armed conflict is the result of a long hybrid war of the Russian Federation against Ukraine since August 1991 (Pokotylo & Nashyvochnikov, 2021).
3. Russian aggression of 2014-2018 – the armed aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine, which began with the occupation of Crimea and subsequently caused a conflict in the east of our country, turned into devastating consequences for European and global security (Hrebeniuk, 2020).
4. Russia's invasion of Ukraine is a flagrant breach of the United Nations Charter and an act of war that is a crime within international law. Russia is attacking Ukraine's capital, attempting to remove its legitimately parliament, endangering the lives, safety, and well-being of citizens; its actions cannot be supported on any of the justifications (Tampubolon, 2022).

Figure 1 shows relationship of these concepts.

Figure 1

Connection between defined concepts



Source: author (s) own development.

In order to study the activities of the military units and units of the Armed Forces of Ukraine in the period 2014-2018, it is necessary to consider the results of specific operations and the causes of difficulties during their implementation, so Table 1 suggests aspects of the main military operations for 2014-2018 (Table 2).

Table 2

Aspects of the main military operations for 2014-2018

The name of the military operation	Regular forces involved (Brigades)	Results	Disadvantages
Battles for Luhansk airport (2014)	• 1st Tank Brigade; • 24th Mechanized Brigade; • 128th Mountain Assault Brigade; • 25th Airborne Brigade; • 80th Air Assault Brigade.	• Withdrawal of Ukrainian troops; • destruction of the airport.	• Inconsistency of actions of units; • unpreparedness for the entry of the regular army of Russia; • lack of military intelligence.
Battle of Kramatorsk (2014)	• 95th Air Assault Brigade; • Ukrainian Ground Forces; • Ukrainian Air Force.	• Liberation of the city; • capture of enemy weapons.	• disloyalty of part of the population; • handing over weapons to the enemy; • enemy breakthrough from the city.
Siege of Sloviansk (2014)	• 95th Air Assault Brigade; • Ukrainian Ground Forces; • Ukrainian Air Force.	• Liberation of the city; • partial destruction of the city.	• the Russian army was able to continue to use the smoke screen of "insurgent units"; • militants from Sloviansk were well trained and were used in battles in the future.

Battle at the border (2014)	• Mechanized Brigades: 24, 28, 30, 51, 72; • Artillery Brigades: 26, 55; • 25th Airborne Brigade; • Air Assault Brigades: 79, 95.	• lost control over the state border from Izvaryny to Marynivka; • great losses both in personnel and equipment; • complete loss of combat capability for a number of units, their withdrawal and replenishment in the rear.	• flaws in tactics; • poor planning of the operation caused the encirclement; • lack of engineering equipment for setting up positions; • underestimation of the enemy; • vulnerability of communication lines.
Battles of Sievierodonetsk (2014)	• 95th Air Assault Brigade; • Mechanized Brigades: 24, 51.	• Ukrainian forces defeated the militants and regained control over the cities.	• lack of military intelligence.
Battles for Avdiivka (2014-2018)	• Assault troops of the Armed Forces of Ukraine; • Ukrainian Navy; • Ukrainian Ground Forces.	• Ukrainian forces approached directly to the highway and the Yasynuvat intersection, taking it under fire control; • liberation of Avdiivka.	• Lack of weapon; • lack of engineering equipment for setting up positions; • loss of tactical initiative.
Battle of Ilovaisk (2014)	• 17th Tank Brigade; • Mechanized Brigade: 28, 51, 92, 93.	• Withdrawal of Ukrainian forces.	• fundamental problems in the organization of the country's defense; • disorganization of the management of military operations; • wrong personnel decisions.
Pavlopil-Shyrokyne offensive operation (2015)	• Air Assault Brigades: 79, 80; • Separate Presidential Brigade.	• Shyrokyne came under the full control of Ukrainian forces.	• lack of military intelligence.

Second Battle of Donetsk Airpor (2014-2015)	• Air Assault Brigades: 79, 95; • 93rd Mechanized Brigade.	• Ukrainian forces withdraw to Pisky; • troops entrenched themselves in the immediate vicinity to the west and north of the airport.	• tightening rotations; • operational environment is allowed.
Battle of Debaltseve (2015)	• Ukrainian Ground Forces: 17th TB, 1st TB, 14th MB, 30th MB, 92nd MB, 55th AB, 44th AB. • Separate Presidential Brigade; • 95th and 79th Air Assault Brigades.	• withdrawal of Ukrainian forces from Debaltseve and its surrounding areas; • serious losses in equipment, at least 180 units.	• the threat of dividing the group of Ukrainian troops into several small encirclements; • exposing the flanks due to constant enemy fire; • loss of control over a number of defensive points due to the enemy's superiority in manpower.
Battle of Svitlodarsk (2016-2018)	• 53rd Mechanized Brigade; • 58th Motorized Brigade; • 72nd Mechanized Brigade ; • Azov Assault Brigade; • 4th Brigade of the Operational Assignment;	• Exchange of blows and subsequent consolidation and defense.	• lack of military intelligence; • lack of engineering equipment for setting up positions; • loss of tactical initiative.

Source: Author's own elaboration based on (Hlotov et.al., 2019; Sterenchak, 2021; Ananyin, 2023; Crowther, 2023; Schwartz, 2021; Hosaka, 2021; Yığit, 2021; Fox, 2022; Mykytiv, 2021).

The most common problems that often prevented the Ukrainian forces from fulfilling their tasks are the lack of, or unprofessional, military intelligence and the lack of engineering equipment for setting up positions, which created a number of other problems and cost our troops victory in several battles. It took almost 10 years to resolve the issue of building defense structures and barrier lines and to involve private companies under the leadership of military engineers. Finally, all means of mechanization, engineering techniques, equipment, accessories and tools are used in construction. The boundaries of defense are represented by numerous lines of trenches fortified with sand gabions. They connect dugouts and long-term firing points in a single network (Militarnyi Videonews, 2023).

From the available data on the brigades of the Armed Forces of Ukraine, which participated in the period of 2014-2018, it becomes obvious that in almost every battle the soldiers of the Airborne

Assault Forces of Ukraine took part, since this is the most mobile type of troops capable of performing any task in different conditions. The transformation of views on the use of the Airborne Assault Forces of the Armed Forces of Ukraine during the Russian-Ukrainian armed conflict (2014-2018) is determined by the departure from the Soviet model of training military specialists and an effort to fully master the Western model. It is the preparation that determines the further directions of use of the Airborne Assault Forces. The main problems of the Airborne Assault Troops of the Armed Forces of Ukraine during the Russian-Ukrainian armed conflict (2014-2018) and ways to solve them are listed in Table 3.

Table 3

Main problems of the Airborne Assault Troops (2014-2018) and ways to solve them

Problems	Solutions
Lack of centralization airborne training.	Airborne Assault Troops were defined as a separate type of troops.
Lack of airborne support equipment and property.	Small arms and anti-tank weapons were received from the Allies, some equipment was repaired.
Lack of targeted training of specialists for Airborne Assault Troops.	The ability of the command to influence the ordering, training and distribution of officer personnel in educational institutions.
Appointing a non-specialist officer to a managerial position.	Airborne faculties and special training departments were created.

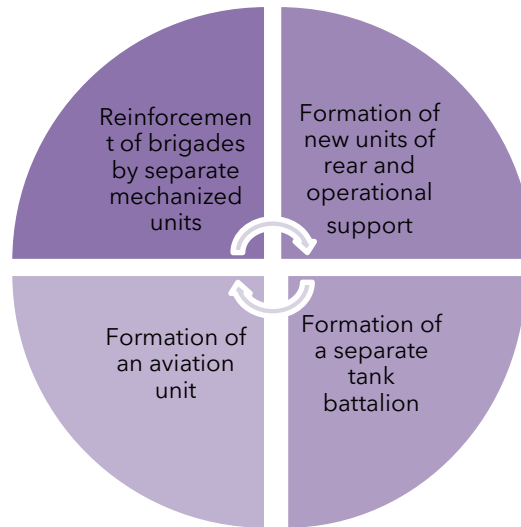
Source: Author's own elaboration based on (Taranets, 2019; Karpenko, 2020).

In the course of analyzing the experience of the use of units of the Airborne Assault Forces of Ukraine in Donbas, it was decided to reinforce the units with tank units. Each of the brigades received a tank company armed with T-80s.

In 2016, a strategy for the modernization of the Airborne Assault Forces of Ukraine was developed, which included a number of important changes for better performance of the assigned tasks. Figure 2 shows the main of these changes.

Figure 2

Important changes for better performance of the Airborne Assault Forces of Ukraine



Source: author (s) own development

There were also plans to increase the number of Airborne Assault Forces of Ukraine to 30,000, but, unfortunately, this was not carried out. At the end of 2021, independent experts estimated the number of Airborne Assault Troops of the Armed Forces of Ukraine at 16,000 servicemen (Defense Express, 2022).

In order to understand the transformation of views on the use of the Airborne Assault Troops of the Armed Forces of Ukraine during the Russian-Ukrainian armed conflict, it is necessary to recall the raid of the 95th Airborne Brigade in the summer of 2014 in the rear of the enemy, also known as the "Zabrodsky raid", since it is the most successful operation of the Airborne Assault Forces troops for the entire period of existence of the independent state of Ukraine. The raid took place in the rear of the enemy and helped to unblock and create a corridor for getting out of the encirclement of units located on the border of Ukraine. During the operation, a number of challenges were identified and answers to

The problems of the 95th airmobile brigade during the raid and the methods of solving them

Problems	Solutions
Leading a river crossing under fire.	Use of mechanized bridge sets between high banks.
Provision of food, ammunition and fuel.	Capture of enemy resources.
Insufficient intelligence.	Capture of enemy personnel and means of communication.
Active actions of the enemy to create an environment.	Using the skills and practical skills of the commander to counter.

Source: Author's own elaboration based on (Shramovych, 2020; "CBC Radio's The House: Can Ukraine hold on?," Last Updated: August 6 2022).

The main trends that still affect the use of the Airborne Assault Troops of the Armed Forces of Ukraine during the Russian-Ukrainian armed conflict (2014-2018) were identified even during the successful "Zabrodsky raid" as:

1. the speed of decision-making at the brigade level;
2. refusal of protracted combat clashes in order to preserve the initiative on the battlefield;
3. use of enemy resources; constant movement and mobility to avoid the environment;
4. regularly obtaining actual data about the enemy by seizing his means of communication;
5. preventing a collision with numerically superior enemy forces;
6. extensive use of ambushes and the factor of surprise.

Discussion

The former commander of the Ukrainian Air Assault Forces Mykhailo Zabrodskyi said in his interview that it is necessary to prepare for maneuver warfare, the effectiveness of which he understood during the raid of the 95th air mobile brigade in the enemy's rear. Mykhailo Zabrodskyi in an interview for *Novinarnya*: "The fact is that the units of any army, in particular the Special Forces, are preparing to carry out the entire range of tasks. Yes, as of today, the war is positional, there are not many dynamics - I mean dynamics, related to the movement of units. But this in no way cancels the task of conducting active combat operations, namely, maneuver warfare. This is precisely our amphibious style; this is perhaps what saved during the execution of tasks in 2014-2015 years. Because when you are dealing with an enemy that surpasses you technically and numerically, only a timely maneuver, only a quick movement, a change of effort from one place to another, from flank to flank, change of direction of movement, etc. will save you» (Klishchuk, 2019). All this became the components of modern fighting tactics during the full-scale invasion of Russia, which once again confirms the importance of the experience gained by the Airborne Assault Forces of Ukraine in the anti-terrorist operation.

Some of the main trends in the development of the Airborne Assault Forces of Ukraine in 2014-2018 are confirmed by the development of similar forces in Kazakhstan. Although the Kazakh army did not have similar experience, it participated in a number of peacekeeping operations in Iraq, Liberia, and Lebanon (Eskendirova, 2023). Deputy Commander of the Airborne Assault Forces of Kazakhstan for airborne training, Nurmakhan Khudaibergenov, in an interview with *Sarbaz.kz*, said: "During the training, much attention is paid to the skills of "independence." Paratroopers are taught to survive far from lines of communication and inflict maximum damage. In addition to physical training, a wide range of classes from medical training to protection against weapons of mass destruction. The result of these classes is the level when fighters feel each other on a whim and act as a single organism" (Zhusupbekova, 2023).

Airborne assault troops of Ukraine already had the experience of using the enemy's resources while in its rear and operating on remote from the lines of communications and supplies during the raid of the 95th brigade, which proves the correctness of the proposed solution to the problem of the lack of support for units operating in the enemy's rear.

Also, for the approval of new standards, the center of peacekeeping operations of the Kazakh Ministry of Defense is constantly developing, in which, as a rule, the Airborne Assault Forces of Kazakhstan are involved (Vaughns, 2023).

The study by Angevine, Warden, Keller, and Frye (2019) reveals one of the problems of the Armed Forces of the 2014-2018 model, namely high losses in personnel and equipment (about 80%) from artillery fire, this problem is a derivative of another, which was identified as the lack of tools to create reliable fortifications.

All this cost the Armed Forces several victories during the anti-terrorist operation in the east of Ukraine. Also relevant is the advice to prepare operations with an understanding of the lack of superiority in the air, since the Russian Armed Forces have more than once handed over equipment to impress aircraft to their proxies and used it themselves against the Air Force of Ukraine. Technological advances and tactical innovations were able to reduce artillery casualties and help conduct more successful military operations. One of the most effective innovations is the counter-battery fight, which consists of many factors and methods. The following are the main ones: the method of determining the coordinates of fire positions by the network of counter-battery rads (Khudov et al., 2021); application of counter-battery radar for shell type classification using artificial intelligence (Park & Jin, 2020); role of artillery reconnaissance in conduct of counterbattery combat (Arifjanovich, 2023). It is possible to reduce the number of losses from artillery only by destroying the enemy's artillery, but then there is the question of maintaining the number of own artillery forces, which requires the Armed Forces of Ukraine to carefully balance and maintain the available stocks of ammunition, work hard to hide and disperse their firing positions, and carefully perform counter-battery tasks. It will have to maintain its communications networks and the logistics it needs to keep its forces in the field, all of which will likely be targeted by Russian units before and during any large armored force movements.

The advice to prepare operations under the assumption of lacking air superiority is extremely relevant, especially considering the technological and numerical advantages of adversaries. This aspect of military strategy underscores the importance of developing robust anti-aircraft defenses and exploring asymmetric warfare tactics. It would be interesting to delve deeper into how the Ukrainian Armed Forces can adapt their strategies to mitigate this disadvantage.

The information from General Mykhailo Zabrodskyi's about calls to the Russian government from the Russian Foreign Intelligence Service and other units for more targeted aggression against Ukraine in 2015 is confirmed by the intensification of battles in the east of Ukraine in 2015, when the following occurred: Pavlopil-Shyrokyne offensive operation (2015), Second Battle of Donetsk Airpor (2014-2015), Battle of Debaltseve (2015) (Zabrodskyi et al., 2022).

These were some of the bloodiest and most intense battles within the Russian aggression of 2014-2018. Also, the information from General Mykhailo Zabrodskyi's article about Russian political maneuvers correlating with intensified military action in Ukraine provides an important perspective on the interplay between political decisions and military tactics. Understanding this relationship is crucial for predicting and preparing for future military engagements (Klishchuk, 2019).

Further research could explore how intelligence and geopolitical analysis can be better integrated into military strategy. An experiment Tomz et al. (2020) was also conducted in Israel and the USA, the results of which determined that public pressure on political elites is the most important factor for their decision-making about the strategy of waging war, which correlates with the situation in Ukraine in 2014-2018, and is expressed in the adoption of the Minsk agreements and the further process of disarmament.

During the anti-terrorist operation, Ukraine received almost no Western weapons, and the domestic weapons in the country were still Soviet and were kept in an improper condition, which

directly affected the failure of some operations due to equipment malfunction. The work by Wu (2019) examines a similar situation in Vietnam, where there was also a large number of Soviet weapons, but after the collapse of the Soviet Union, Vietnam was unable to maintain these weapons in proper condition. To solve this situation, Vietnamese defense planning specialists selected the most important forces and means for further investment in them, and the rest are simply being modernized.

It became obvious that the works of other authors confirm some of the results of our research, within the scope of the topic we considered. Also, the reforms of the Air Force of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Kazakhstan are in many respects similar to those carried out in Ukraine after the ATO, and this may mean the success of these reforms and the importance of the experience gained during the Russian aggression of 2014-2018.

Limitations of the study

Unfortunately, it is quite difficult to find examples of the practical use of war experience to transform views on the use of military forces in the works of domestic and foreign researchers. Also, due to the uniqueness of the military operations carried out during the Russian aggression of 2014-2018, it is necessary to understand the conditionality of any comparison of them with the operations of the military forces of other countries.

Conclusions and Implications

The activities of the military units and units of the Armed Forces of Ukraine in the period 2014-2018 transformed views on the use of the Airborne Assault Troops of the Armed Forces of Ukraine during the Russian-Ukrainian armed conflict. The study analyzes the experience of conducting an anti-terrorist operation in the east of Ukraine and its impact on the modernization of the Airborne Assault Forces. By systematizing the experience gained, it was found that the main directions of transformation of the Airborne Assault Troops are: providing brigades with additional mechanized or tank units; increase in the aviation fleet for carrying out the landing of personnel and equipment; formation of a reliable rear and support methods; professional development of officers. The study analyzes the main battles of Russian aggression in 2014-2018 and gives their results and problems that arose during the battles. The presented view opens opportunities for studying the influence of the experience of the anti-terrorist operation on the activities of the Armed Forces during a full-scale invasion of Russia.

The main trends that indicate the further development of the tactics of using Airborne Assault Troops were identified even during the successful "Zabrodsky Raid" as: the speed of decision-making at the brigade level; refusal of protracted combat clashes in order to preserve the initiative on the battlefield; use of enemy resources; constant movement and mobility to avoid the environment; regularly obtaining actual data about the enemy by seizing his means of communication; preventing a collision with numerically superior enemy forces; extensive use of ambushes and the factor of surprise.

Suggestions for Future Research

During the Russian-Ukrainian armed conflict, the Armed Forces of Ukraine underwent significant changes. This process was facilitated by the use of the experience of military units and units of the Armed Forces of Ukraine in the period 2014-2018. This opened up new opportunities for the Airborne Assault Forces of Ukraine and gave them access to the latest weapons and personnel training standards. However, the impact of this experience on other types of troops in the Armed Forces remains open and requires further research. Despite significant advantages, technological and logistical innovations also bring new challenges and risks, such as dependence on computer equipment (cybersecurity problem), the need to increase the budget for maintaining parts (limited resource's problem), the need to update legislation (limited time problem). Further research may include analysis of the regulatory framework, determination of optimal strategies for the use of Airborne Assault Forces during a full-scale invasion of Russia.

The future of the Armed Forces looks quite optimistic, and it is the application of the experience of the ATO and NATO member states for all branches of the military that can improve their training and the results of future operations. Further research into technological innovation in the armies of NATO member countries will be needed, which will have implications for both academia and practice. Gaining new knowledge and understanding how technological innovations and the transformation of views on the use of different types of troops affect the armies of different countries will allow us to use more effective strategies for planning future military companies. New research can help improve training of personnel, reduce risks, increase the stability of military units during fire contact. The results of further research may even have an impact on changing NATO's approaches to training and deploying troops.

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