

DEVELOPMENT OF THE CONCEPTS FOR PROVIDING CLOSE AIR SUPPORT

Hristov MANUSH

“Georgi Benkovski” Air Force Academy, Dolna Mitropoliya, Bulgaria
hristov_65@abv.bg

Abstract: *The main objective of the study is to trace the perceptions of the task of an aviation component to provide direct aviation support to both ground and naval forces. Part of the study is devoted to tracing the combat experience gained during the assignment by the Bulgarian Air Force in the final combat operations against the Wehrmacht during the Second World War 1944-1945. The state of the conceptions at the present stage regarding the accomplishment of the task in conducting defensive and offensive battles and operations is also considered. Emphasis is also placed on the development of the perceptions of the task in the armies of the United States and Russia.*

Keywords: close air support (CAS); Air Force; air troops; air strikes; CAS operations; Ground Forces; NAVY; Armed Forces

1. Introduction

After the first successful attempts to control airspace, the idea of using the Third Dimension was born in the interest of various fields of human activity. From the distant 1912, when the debut of the aircraft as a combat vehicle was made in the region of the Edirne fortress, in the conditions of a real war, to this day the idea of its introduction in combat conditions has been constantly developing. Our ancestors, with their sense of pragmatism, considered that it was appropriate to form three airplane squadrons to be attached to each of the armies operating at the East Thracian Theater of War. The basic concept is oriented towards the idea of assisting from the air in the interest of the operations carried out by these groups, with the aviation formations performing various tasks in their interest in their designated action lines.

The experience gained in the two Balkan wars is well-considered and further

developed during the First World War. The aircraft becomes a decisive tool for defeating the enemy in both defensive and offensive operations.

In the period between the two world wars, efforts were being made to find new uses for the expanding air component as part of the military might of the leading countries in military construction.

During the Second World War, aviation reached its height as a means of enforcing victory in combat on land, sea and in the air. Over time, the main types of armed forces - land and naval and the troop types that are part of them - had become increasingly dependent on the assistance provided from the air. The fighting near Moscow, Stalingrad, the Normandy assault force, the fighting of the Bulgarian troops in the regions of Bitola and Prilep, the defeat of the elite German Division "Prince Eugen", the conquest of Berlin and others firmly confirm it. This in turn necessitates its emergence as one of the primary tasks

for aviation formations carrying out activities in this direction. The situation is similar in local conflicts and wars from the recent past in Korea, Vietnam, the Middle East, Afghanistan, Iraq, Chechnya and at present in Syria.

This indisputable fact requires the experience gained to be refined, systematized and reduced to a specific algorithm that will increase the effectiveness of operations in providing aviation support to the operations of the naval and ground components. Efforts in this direction are fraught with a great deal of dynamism and tension, while expanding the scope of application of aviation support in the various aspects of combat activity of the forces and means involved.

The foregoing requires a systematic knowledge of activities related to the theory and practice of air support. The present paper also studies that issue.

The main objective of the study is to discover, on one hand, the essence of the task itself, and, on the other, to outline the development of perceptions of its fulfillment, depending on the peculiarities of the conditions and the new realities.

Lessons learned from the combat practice of the Bulgarian Air Forces during World War II

This part of the study will look at the status of the practical implementation of the task by the Bulgarian Air Forces during World War II. The choice is not accidental. It seeks to uncover continuity in the traditions of the branch of the armed forces and to prove that the task is no stranger to the combat experience of troops which have a legitimate claim to be one of the founders of the combat use of the Air Force in real combat.

The air support provided to its troops engaged a considerable part of the forces and resources of the Bulgarian aviation during the First period of the war against Germany.

The concepts focus the efforts mainly on the enemy's artillery assets, the alleged

concentration of reserves, etc. Assault actions against headquarters, military columns (approaching reserves) are carried out under favorable conditions and appropriate equipment. Assault actions on battlefield elements are deemed ineffective [20].

Under the influence of the established ideas, air support in the offensive actions of the formations is reflected in the following stages:

- Aviation preparation of the attack. The objects attacked from the air are fortification works, battery positions and approaching reserves.

- Aviation fire support of the offensive in depth. The main targets of the aviation are batteries and combat vehicles.

Approaching reserves and enemy reinforcements are also hit in order to destroy or delay them [9].

- Aviation fire support for troop movements applied in a very limited and schematic manner. It finds a major expression in supporting the actions of the Armored Brigade on September 17, 1944.

- Aviation fire support of the attack is not practiced for several main reasons: there is a lack of aircraft with adequate combat survivability of the Il-2 type; the management and interaction system is not yet in place; identification of own troops by the aviation units is imperfect, with many gaps, etc [15].

The understanding that air support is part of the enemy's destruction by fire, which is done in cooperation with artillery and other arms, is still in its infancy. The positive ideas laid down in the Combat Service Regulations do not find application. The preparation of a firing plan for grouping and coordination of the fire of the infantry, artillery, and air forces in accordance with the accepted basic idea of combat, remains in theory [19].

Something more! The use of aviation and artillery is carried out with the strict separation of their actions across time, regions and objects [15].

Under the influence of the experience gained and the cooperation with the Soviet aviation, there are significant changes in the understanding of the activities in this direction.

Air support is rendered mainly to the 15th and 17th Infantry retreating from Vardar Macedonia, and to the troops defending the main lines to our western border.

The direct actions against the enemy's artillery are also a significant part of the combat activities. This is not a coincidence, but a completely natural reality, which manifests itself under the influence of several major factors.

For the most part, the combat areas are mountainous, broken grounds of limited capacity. This greatly facilitates the defensive. With the skillful deployment of relatively small artillery units, they are able to hold a significant portion of the attacking forces for a long time. The oncoming grouping is forced to set aside bypass and range groups, which results in wasted time and effort. On the other hand, in the interest of the basic task of securing the withdrawal of its troops, the enemy concentrates in advance enough artillery in sufficient quantity and size. When necessary, its type and composition are enhanced at the expense of the withdrawing columns. With the skillful application of wheel and fire maneuver, it enhances the endangered sections on which defense resilience as a whole depends. With intense and well-grouped fire, artillery is capable of inflicting heavy damage on advancing troops and weakening the force of the impact.

The third, but not the least important, factor is related to the concept of using aviation as an important and reliable means of fighting artillery. The Commander-in-Chief himself - Gen. Ivan Marinov considers the second most important task of the assault aviation to be in this direction. It has to do with "attacking the artillery in positions when it is out of range of one's own artillery, or in case of a great shortage of artillery" [14].

As a former pilot in the First World War, he has the opportunity to take into consideration the accumulated combat experience. Subsequently, as commander of an army unit and in his capacity as Commander-in-Chief of the BA, Gen. Marinov understands the increased firepower of the artillery assets and appreciates the role of the aviation in destroying them.

The analysis of the aviation support draws the following conclusions:

I. Regarding the subordination of the objectives:

Efforts are allocated to achieving certain goals. At some stage, each of them is directly dependent on the nature of the actions of the ground forces in whose interest it is carried out. The distribution of goals in chronological order and by directions is as follows:

1. In the beginning of combat operations, air support is provided to our forces retreating from Vardar Macedonia (15th and 17th Infantry Divisions) and to the forces defending the main operational areas.

1.1. The aviation support provided in the interest of the 15th Infantry Division is focused on three main areas:

1.1.1. Support for the actions of the encircled parts of the division, in the area of Bitola and Prilep;

1.1.2. Assisting from the air in reestablishing and maintaining the connection between the Division Headquarters and the General Command;

1.1.3. Assistance to the units of the division in the course of their withdrawal from Vardar Macedonia.

1.2. The aviation support of the troops defending the main operational directions to our western border is expressed in two main activities:

1.2.1. Carrying out tactical air reconnaissance in the interest of units and formations engaged in combat.

1.2.2. Providing air support to the troops.

1.3. The air support for the offensive

operations of the formations is particularly expressed in the following basic directions:

1.3.1. Air support for units and formations fighting to capture and secure control over heavily fortified positions and important areas. It finds the clearest manifestation in the zone of operation of the 1st and subsequently of the 4th army.

1.3.2. Fighting against the enemy's artillery. Extremely diverse, but it is carried out in several ways:

- Striking targets with known coordinates and newly discovered ones in the course of the combat;
- Striking objects discovered in the course of performing other tasks in a particular area;

- Conducting reconnaissance with a subsequent strike on the targets discovered.

1.3.3. Providing support and supply from the air of units detached from the main forces and without tactical connection with them (1st Infantry Regiment). The main directions of air support are:

- Organizing and conducting tactical reconnaissance in the interest of the regiment's defensive battles and establishing its position;

- Performing special activities for the delivery of food, ammunition and medical supplies by air, to the regiment's forces engaged in combat. This is the first time in our history that the supply of our troops has been organized and carried out by air;

- Repulsion of the enemy attacks by the aviation.

II. With regard to the allocation of tasks:

1. The desire of the General Command to find the most optimal use of the Squadron's strengths and means will, in some cases, lead to a series of errors and weaknesses:

1.1. The loads on the individual units and subdivisions of the Squadron as a whole are uneven and do not correspond to the situation on the front. Norms of combat tension are determined at random.

1.2. In many cases, the tasks that are assigned are impossible to complete with

the available resource. Strikes are planned on sites that are highly combat viable and significant in quantity.

III. Concerning the preliminary preparation.

1. Preparation for the accomplishment of the tasks is carried out in an acute shortage of time. The dynamic situation disturbs the commanders, which increases the number of demands for immediate actions.

2. The end result of the time deficit is the schematic setting of tasks. On a number of combat days, details are updated on the radio when the planes are already in the air.

3. The hastiness in assigning tasks leads to cases where the objects of attack remain undiscovered. In this situation, some of the crews return to the airport with their payload, while others drop their bombs at random targets.

IV. Concerning the organization and the task itself:

1. In certain aspects, the pre-established task accomplishment organization is at a very good level. This applies especially to those in the 1st Bombardment wing. An equipped room, the required quantity and scale-appropriate topographic maps are provided, and the division of activities is by personnel category. The positive practice of conducting a post flight debriefing is also introduced [10].

2. In a number of cases, the exact location of targets is not specified and no target reconnaissance is carried out prior to the air strike.

3. As a result of the lessons learned from practice, a positive experience has been accumulated. The 1/5 Bomber Command starts sending a single crew that reconnoiters the targets prior to the attack, and then directs the other planes in the group.

4. The lack of up-to-date target information leads to unnecessary waste of aviation resources and also to limited results.

5. Most often, this regards information for

the enemy artillery. Striking at the geographical location (the alleged location of the battery) is inappropriate because, in most cases, it has been moved and repositioned. In such a circumstance, crews decide for themselves what other object to strike. Improvisation is resorted to, instead of setting and ordering reserve targets in the same or adjacent area.

6. The numerous requests for air support compel the Squadron's command and headquarters to assign the tasks to small-scale forces. The effect of the strike is limited in scale, necessitating its subsequent repetition. This puts additional pressure on the crews and consumes limited aircraft resources.

7. There are no conditions and no effective organization is set up to carry out control reconnaissance of the results of the strikes, through observation and photographing. Oral reports from crews upon their return are what is relied upon. In the presence of anti-aircraft fire and dust from the blasts, targets are monitored for a short time. In most cases, the information on the damages is unclear and fragmentary.

V. Regarding the forms and methods used for conducting combat activities.

1. The main form of combat operation used by the Squadron is the air strike.

2. Of the different forms of combat use, bombardment is carried out (50 kg, 250 kg bombs and cluster bombs). Aircraft on-board armament is also used. Depending on the targets and their characteristics, the most commonly used variants of aviation means of destruction are: infantry in position - with artillery-machine gun armament and cluster bombs; motor cars - with bombs and cannon fire; batteries in position - most often with 50 and 250 kg bombs; trains - with bombs and cannon fire (mainly on the locomotive) [11].

According to the composition of the forces involved, single strikes carried out by small strike groups (1, 2 and 3 aircraft, flock, wing) predominate. On certain days,

depending on the available airplanes and the situation, mixed groups are also involved. In this case, the actions take the form of a group strike to hit an enemy object in a limited area.

A number of special operations are also executed, such as those in the interest of the 1st Infantry Regiment, the 1st and 4th Army Artillery Regiments, and the 15th Infantry Division.

3. The following basic methods of combat are most commonly applied:

- Consecutive strikes on the immediately opposing enemy objectives and those located in its close rear areas;
- Depending on the efforts made, the most common are the dispersed actions of aviation formations (in particular, assault and bombing); in terms of distribution of effort over time, consecutive actions are predominant;
- The tasks are performed both on pre-planned objects and on those discovered in the course of the battle;
- Independent search and detection of potential targets is an exception to the rule;
- A considerable part of the strikes take place at a pre-set time, but very often they have to be carried out with scrambling the aircraft on ground duty position.

Development of the concepts in the US and Russian Armed Forces

The USA

In the United States, the performance of the close air support task is seen as an extremely important element of the commander's toolkit, which can be used to succeed in combat. Activities in this direction are regulated in the regulatory documents issued in the 1980s.

The United States Field Manual (AFM1-1) states that it facilitates the execution of the tasks of both ground and naval forces and provides maneuver security and cover. Furthermore, its extremely wide range of application is highlighted.

It is strongly emphasized that the success of both the defensive and offensive operations of ground forces and naval forces is directly

dependent on the mass deployment of aerospace firepower in critical locations.

In the course of counter-offensive operations, close air support enhances their effectiveness by creating the necessary breakthroughs in enemy defenses. At the same time, it helps in protecting one's own flanks and prevents the execution of counter-maneuvers by the enemy's naval and ground forces.

In the event that forces in defensive positions are required to hold the onset of the enemy, close air support may also be required.

Air support is also being considered for facilitating the maneuvering or retreat of both ground and naval forces, as well as its importance for securing rear areas and creating the necessary conditions for troop withdrawal [16].

Based on the importance and capability of the close air support, it is ranked fifth in the nine available air-space forces missions.

The main objective of aviation is supporting the operations of both ground and naval forces by striking at enemy objects in the immediate vicinity of their own troops [17].

In the further development of the concept of close air support, the emphasis is put on the detailed coordination and integration of its implementation with the fire and maneuver plans of its own ground and naval forces. It also emphasizes the need to assess the battlefield situation, provide timely intelligence and the accurate use of weapons.

In assessing the role and location of close air support in the course of hostilities involving the other two types of armed forces, its contribution to enhancing their combat capabilities is indicated. This is achieved through the transfer and delivery to the defense facilities of a wide range of weapons and the amassment of firepower in critical locations [18].

In another major regulatory document, US Air Force Manual - AFM-3-1, the close air support is ranked third among the

major combat missions that tactical aviation is tasked with.

At the very beginning of the outlining of the characteristics of the task, it is pointed out that the actions of the tactical fighters are directed against targets located in the immediate vicinity of their ground forces. This strongly necessitates the full interaction with them and their means of fire.

The scope of activities is oriented towards the achievement of 3 main objectives:

- **The first** of these is aimed at enhancing the firepower of the ground forces;

- **The second** is related to the desire to assist their troops in carrying out and developing the breakthrough;

- **The third** is intended to minimize ground losses in the presence of sufficient aviation resources.

The reality is that, in practice, close air support is reduced to enhancing the fire capabilities of its ground forces in their actions against the opposing forces. Its effectiveness is enhanced when troops conduct maneuvers in which case they are in motion and in direct contact with the enemy [1].

The analysis of the accomplishment of the task in the course of the offensive actions takes into account the fact that the formations feel the urgent need for additional firepower, which will help to develop the achieved success and to ensure the further movement into the enemy position.

The needs of the retreating units are aimed at providing air cover and holding off the enemy's offensive operations.

In conducting positional actions, the effectiveness of close air support is decreased. This is due to the fact that in most cases the enemy is well prepared, its forces and means are located in trenches and shelters, carefully masked and adapted to the terrain.

Under these conditions, target detection is difficult, requiring close interaction between the aviation and the ground

component. The close air support coordination is handled by a forward air controller (PAN), whose position can be both on the ground and in the air. The effectiveness of the strikes is closely dependent on the organization of the interaction and on the management of the actions of the tactical fighters. They should cover the range of time including the pre-flight and post-battle activities.

Usual air force targets:

- Positions of the rocket troops and artillery;
- Motor vehicles and tanks;
- Concentration of troops;
- Heavily fortified positions;
- Command posts [2].

The selection of targets is closely dependent on the nature and composition of the enemy troops.

In the event that the enemy has mechanized formations equipped with a large number of armored vehicles and artillery units, they are in close dependence on the logistical supply, which makes the transportation system a priority target.

Alternatively, the enemy forces might be poorly equipped with technical means. In this situation, the main objectives are the troop concentration points, field warehouses for combat and food supplies, personnel, etc. This, of course, does not mean that automobiles and all types of vehicles should be excluded as potential targets.

From what has been said so far, it is necessary to conclude that the choice of targets to be struck is closely dependent on the detailed knowledge of the opponent. This allows one to identify its enemy's weaknesses and direct actions against them. At the same time, however, it should also be based on the degree of threat posed by the hostile means of combat. In this case, the ones that are most dangerous to one's own troops are initially destroyed, and then the attack is focused on the targets that form the enemy's offensive capabilities [3].

Russia

Air support is envisioned as a task by Soviet military art as early as the 1930s.

Presently, the tendency of air support to be considered a primary task remains. The definition formulated by leading Russian theorists states: "Air support is the striking from the air of the troops and the combat equipment of an enemy at the entire depth of their operational structure in an offensive (defensive) operations carried out in the interest of creating favorable conditions for the effective performance of the combat tasks of the ground forces, units and formations with minimal combat losses in manpower and combat equipment. Air support for the troops is a major part of the overall effort of destroying the enemy by fire" [12].

General Kurnakov notes: "One of the main asks of the Air Force has been, is, and will be, air support for the ground forces as well as the Navy" [12].

According to Russian military experts, the experience gained is at the heart of the completion of the task.

Statistics show that in the years of the Great Patriotic War, every second combat flight of the frontline aviation was in the interest of the ground forces [12].

At a later stage, the Chechnya war unequivocally confirms that the role of air support for the troops is increasing even in the face of such complex combat operations as those in a major city. In addition, the war against the Chechen separatists has led to the reestablishment of the position and recognition of the importance of forward air controllers, who have reliable means of maintaining multi-channel interference-resistant radio communication as well as a tested and reliable target designation system at their disposal [13].

It is firmly believed that the transformed Air Force (HCV) of Russia should be ready, in the future 21st century, to carry out the air support for the troops task not only in armed conflicts and local wars, but also in regional ones, as well as in large-

scale classic war. In doing so, they should build on the rich military experience gained in the 20th century. It is also acknowledged that a leading role in the new understanding for conducting air support for the troops can and will take the positive theoretical knowledge and practical experience of the Soviet and Russian armed forces. To deny this experience would be an utterly irreparable mistake in the process of construction of the military forces, with regard to the Air Force (HCV) in particular [13].

The basic guidelines in the content of air support in modern-day conditions are as follows:

First: At the present stage and in the foreseeable future, the problematic issues of air support should be investigated theoretically as well as verified in practice during military exercises. Attention should be focused on its impact on the two main types of combat - defensive and offensive (counter-offensive), which are in a certain dialectical relationship with each other.

In this case, the idea of the Russian theorist and historian A. A. Svechin should be laid down as a fundamental and guiding principle: "Whoever cannot defend themselves will not be able to attack" [13].

Second: In the modern context and in perspective, it is appropriate to emphasize on both the theory and the practice of the close air support in the following periods:

1. In the front (army) defensive operation:
 - aviation counterpreparation;
 - air support of the troops in defensive at each defensive line, which in turn is divided to air support of the troops in reflecting the enemy's attack and support from the air of the defending troops in depth;
 - providing air support to attacks and counter-attacks carried out by the army and the front;
2. In the offensive (counter-offensive) operation of the front (army):
 - Aviation preparation of the attack;
 - Aviation support of the attack;
 - Aviation support of the advancing troops

in depth [13];

Third: Air support of the troops in defense and offense is an integral part of the destruction of the enemy by fire. It is implemented within the allocated flight resource under the plan of the Army Commander (Front). In other words, in today's conditions, the close air support is an integral part of the enemy destruction'.

Taking into account the fact that rocket troops, artillery and army aviation are involved in the fire strike, specific recommendations are made for the organization of the interaction.

At operational level, cooperation between the forces and means involved in a fire strikes should be organized in areas where they primarily operate.

At tactical level, it is recommended that the interaction should be carried out at the target sites located in each of the areas where the predominantly allocated forces and means operate [13].

Fourth: The depth of the primary action zone in general is determined by the difference between the maximum reach of one or the other means and the distance of its starting position from the front line. For aviation, this is the difference between the tactical radius of flight of the aircraft (group of aircraft) and the distance of the airport from the combat area [13].

The comparison between the capabilities of the frontline aviation and those of the Army aviation, of the rocket troops and of the artillery shows that at the present stage and in the near future the area of preferential actions of the aviation exceeds 3-4 times all the others. In doing so, it covers the entire depth of the operational deployment of the troops of a potential adversary in the Western strategic areas.

Some of the important conclusions to be drawn on the issue under consideration are in the following 2 directions:

First of all, the success of ground forces units and formations in combat, battle and operation, now and in the foreseeable future, will be directly dependent on the

level of effectiveness of close air support. Secondly, it is argued that the theory and practice of the close air support are an integral part of the theory and practice of the establishing and maintaining dominance in the air. The effective resolution of the two main problems by Russian operative art is seen as a fundamental condition for the success of the ground forces, both in defense and offense, in a classical war, regardless of its scale [13].

Concepts in the Bulgarian Air Force at the present stage

In the course of exploring the issue of the close air support, it should be noted that the Bulgarian Air Force, as part of NATO's military-political alliance, also shares the idea of the role and importance of activities involved in providing close air support. Moreover, they have their own traditions, which were outlined in the first part of the study. It should also be taken into account that theoretical formulations and their practical implementation are subject to correction and development.

The main regulatory document in the Bulgarian Armed Forces at this stage is **the Air Operations Doctrine**, adopted in 2014. It states: "Close Air Support (CAS) - Air actions directed at enemy targets in proximity of one's own and/or friendly forces that require detailed integration of each air mission with their fire and /or maneuver" [6].

The definition thus presented has been further developed and supplemented in content by the following guidelines.

It is stated that the close air support includes actions of aviation means that are directed against the combat potential of the opposing ones. The requirement is to achieve detailed integration between the air component and the ground forces' maneuver in order to avoid "friendly fire". Crews in the air receive targeting from specialized units – forward air controllers.

The applicability of the support is wide-ranging. The ground forces can be supported both in defensive and offensive

operations and actions at all times of the day. Depending on the degree of fire damage achieved, opposing enemy forces that are in close proximity or in contact with one's own troops may be suppressed, destroyed, deflected and delayed [7].

Based on the capabilities of the aircraft, such as substantial firepower, mobility and speed, the focus is on their ability to provide, in real time, immediate support for the forces assigned to land operations. This applies in particular to cases where the enemy's forces and means of combat are difficult to access or positioned so that they remain invulnerable to the fire of the ground forces.

The possible methods for providing close air support are limited to two main ones:

- Based on a preliminary plan;
- Immediate.

According to the preliminary plan, the aviation resource is allocated for a fixed time or for a certain period. In that case, it is tailored to the needs of the supported component.

Under these conditions, it is also differentiated into two distinct types, which may be:

- On preliminary request;
- On call [7].

The preliminary request includes the planning element, which is related to the allocation of the required aviation resource by types and over specific areas of the battlefield. In this case, the times are predefined and in accordance with the previously planned needs. An important indicator of the effectiveness of the actions is the availability of the necessary intelligence for the potential targets, which allows to optimize the choice of flights and weapon options [8].

On call, the close air support is provided using pre-deployed ground-based aircraft or aircraft deployed in specific aerial zones for specified periods of time. In this case, the support provided is expected to be less efficient. It is caused by the lack of prior reliable information about the targets, which

makes it impossible to choose the most appropriate means of defeating them [8].

Immediate support may be required by a particularly critical battlefield situation. In such circumstances, the diversion of part of the dedicated aviation resource provided for other missions and its redirection is performed, using ground-based or airborne aircraft. This method is most commonly used when it is necessary to act against the so-called "dynamic" targets or for time-critical targets [8].

The analysis of the concepts for the implementation of close air support by the air force component in Bulgaria and in the leading countries leads to several main conclusions:

1. The experience of the Bulgarian Air Force and that of the Air Forces in countries such as the United States and Russia clearly shows the actuality of the task, both during World War II and in the ensuing local wars and conflicts.
2. Crucial to the effectiveness of the

performance of the task is the organizing of the interaction between the forces and the means involved.

3. The air support is an integral part of the destruction of the enemy in which the Air Force plays a crucial role.

4. The air support is applicable for both offensive and defensive operations carried out by the Armed Forces.

5. The use of the new technologies in different weapons and combat equipment is constantly changing the conditions of the combat activity of the troops. They are becoming more dynamic and changing. This leads to the need for adequate measures in the organization, planning and implementation of the air support. They, in turn, require continuous monitoring by the military theory, as well as their verification in the course of the ongoing exercises and rationalization of the combat experience from the conflicts with varying degrees of intensity and scale.

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