PECULIARITIES OF TACTICAL ACTIONS OF ASSAULT UNITS OF THE ARMED FORCES OF UKRAINE IN THE WAR AGAINST THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION

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The armed confrontation with the Russian Federation started back in 2014, and gained its full force during the full-scale invasion in 2022. And since then, the approach to warfare has changed significantly, because war is just one of the forms of evolution. So, if there is no eternal learning from our mistakes or using the experience of our predecessors, all conflicts would last forever. As an example, let’s take one period of history, the period of the beginning of the Gulf wars, the period when the United States was involved in the conflict between Iraq and Kuwait. Exactly at that time the system of satellites was first used and it allowed to target and correct, and brought many other innovative decisions in the wars US Army against Iraq. This period showed the world that military progress does not stand still. As to our current topic, we will consider how the tactical actions of Ukrainian units have changed since the beginning of the full-scale invasion.

First of all, it is necessary to consider how the Ukrainian military confronted during the first case of armed aggression on the territory of Ukraine. This is the period from 2014 to 2018. At that time, before a certain transition from the outdated doctrine of military strategy and the outdated Soviet principle of warfare, which were no longer relevant at that time, Russian troops invaded the territory of Ukraine and, outnumbering our units, planned to perform a surprise maneuver. However, drawing a parallel between 2014 and 2022, it’s important to point out, that in 2014 Russian troops did not encounter such an opposition movement by the local population as compared to 2022. One of the main consequences was the creation of the self-proclaimed republics, the so-called "LPR" and "DPR", in the occupied territories. These factors contributed to the not-so-successful actions of the
Ukrainian military, as it was then that the first ideas about revising the tactics and strategy of warfare were born.

The beginning of a full-scale invasion was met with a rather unexpected opposition of the Armed Forces of Ukraine to Russian aggression for several reasons such as the unwillingness to be captured and enslaved, the military experience allowed us to learn and understand how to counteract the enemy, the comprehensive support of Ukrainian troops by volunteers and ordinary citizens who have done and are currently doing a great job in providing the military with drones, attack drones, and all kinds of military aid. Ukraine got support of its Western partners, which began to help Ukraine with military equipment and began to train personnel abroad and contribute to the development of the confrontation with the Russian aggressor. So, from that moment on, the integration and development of tactical and assault operations of Ukrainian units began.

In the war against Russia, the assault units of the Armed Forces of Ukraine play a key role in providing effective resistance to the aggressor and carrying out tactical actions on the front line. Operations of assault units require excellent training, coordination and courage on the part of Ukrainian soldiers. Since 2014, quite a lot of volunteer units have been organized to defend Donbas, and over time, some of them have disintegrated or organized new ones, which later came under the auspices of the Armed Forces of Ukraine, leaving veterans who created a new type of unit at the beginning of the invasion as assault battalions or brigades, For example, the Third Separate Assault Brigade, the K-2 Battalion, the Da Vinci Wolves Battalion, the Azov Regiment, and there are many other units. These are the units that, in conjunction with the Armed Forces, are carrying out combat missions to counterattack Russian units.

The main characteristics of an assault unit are flexibility and mobility. It means that the assault unit is ready to adapt to the situation that is happening or may happen in a given situation, which allows both the commander and each individual soldier to make decisions.

Special training of units is the type of training of assault units that is much higher than the training of basic infantry units. It implies training of personnel with the situation as close as possible to the one they will face in real combat, training with weapons and practicing the assault of not separate buildings, that is similar to special forces, but practicing situations in different conditions.

Coordination with adjacent units is considered basic, as without support any assault can collapse and come to naught. A modern assault is not complete without basic communication between a commander and a subordinate, observation of the battlefield from a drone and adjustment of artillery covering our forces. For better effect, the unit can be reinforced by aircraft controlling the situation in the sky.

With the beginning of the transfer of modern equipment and systems in service with other countries by foreign partners, assault units are equipped with combat vehicles such as M-113, BMP-2, APC, Abrams tanks, Leopard 2A5, modern artillery systems such as Archer, PzH 2000, Paladin of various modifications, which allows us to increase our advantage over Russian systems that remained in use after the collapse of the Soviet Union.

Personally, each soldier is required to have stress resistance and psychological endurance, as this is a considerable burden on the mind, so determination and the ability to maintain concentration in any conditions is mandatory.
Reconnaissance and analysis of the operation before it begins is important to ensure the viability of both each soldier and the operation as a whole. Analysis of the enemy's conditions contributes to preparation and allows to find out about the enemy's intentions, numbers, location, resources, and builds the strategy.

As an example, here is the tactics of one of the Ukrainian assault units. The fighters of the "Third Separate Assault Brigade" develop an assault plan with special care. In order to prevent human losses, they learn from the command the place or area of advance and reconnoiter the terrain, landscape features, number and weapons of the enemy in order to know what means are best used, so as not to use unnecessary means for successful advancement to the position. They always calculate possible deviations from the plan, after the forces and means have been determined, the artillery supports with the help of a drone corrector, and the company or platoon commander observes with the help of an observer drone, the advance to the enemy concentration area takes place. Each assault aircraft was previously instructed in the situation and only after that, after disembarking from the transport as part of a group or several groups, the assault on the enemy positions begins. After the assault is successfully completed, the group clears the area and is replaced by other units that hold the area, i.e. artillery is brought in and control is ensured.

However, it is important to note that Russian troops have also changed their strategy and tactics during this war, and have abandoned the classic Doctrine of Warfare that they used during the conflict with Georgia in 2008. Since then, in the conflict with Ukraine, they have started using mercenaries from the so-called Wagner PMC and Ramzan Kadyrov's units. Their strategy has been to fight not by the quality of personnel but by the quantity. They use mobilized and untrained personnel as a decoy to find out the weaknesses in the defense of Ukrainian troops and then bring in more trained units. Currently, the enemy's powerful electronic warfare system, which is able to jam the signal of Ukrainian attack drones, which have been used since the beginning of the invasion and have been very successful, remains a big problem. Russian troops manage to jam the signal of even such complexes as Himars while they attack Russian positions. The Russians have even managed to deflect missiles from the given coordinates, but these are only isolated cases.

As a conclusion, we can notice that at present the assault units of the Armed Forces of Ukraine are making a turning point in the resistance to Russian aggression and the ways of warfare and the strategy of the Ukrainian troops are gradually changing. Every day the approaches to warfare are changing and contributes to the liberation of the occupied territories.

References: