

# Features of the Modern Approach to the Training of Future Tactical Aviation Pilots for Combat Flights in the Institution of Higher Military Education: According to the Official Methodical Documents

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## Abstract

The article contains some considerations regarding certain important aspects of the issue of modern military pedagogy in Ukraine such as preparation of future military pilots for combat flights (combat training) which has been still quite unexplored. Within the current dissertation research, the author has considered several characteristics of the official approach applied to this complicated issue in the modern higher military education system from a pedagogical standpoint and perspectives. The empirical method of document analysis is used as a research tool in the study. Valid official methodological documents applied in the relevant field of education have served as the object of analysis which revealed certain features of the modern approach to the preparation of future tactical aviation pilots for combat flights in the HMEI. The interrelation between the determined characteristics and the general level of professional training of graduates from the higher military aviation education institutions has been studied herein.

## Keywords

Professional Training, Future Military Pilot, Combat Flight, Tactical Aviation, Institution of Higher Military Education

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## 1. Introduction

Permanent military, political and information aggression against Ukraine since 2014 have updated the revision and modernization of the entire complex of components and measures of the national security and defense sector. A radical overhaul of Ukraine's military strategy, a large-scale renewal of the technical park of the Armed Forces of Ukraine, and a focus on NATO's advanced standards naturally require reform of the military training system.

The existing system in the new conditions does not objectively meet the latest needs. Inherited from the Soviet totalitarian past, it is conceptually and didactically outdated, contributes to the stagnation of professional training of servicemen and is unable to ensure the professional superiority of the Ukrainian Armed Forces over the aggressor at the level of human resources. (It is known that the Russian Federation generally uses a similar system and methods, which creates a qualitative parity of forces in this area, which in terms of quantitative advantages of the aggressor's army does not play in favor of Ukraine).

## 2. Statement of the Problem

This situation seems especially serious in the preparation of future tactical pilots for combat flights by the only multi-disciplinary aviation institution of higher military education (hereinafter referred to as HMEI) of the state—Ivan Kozhedub Kharkiv National University of the Air Force (hereinafter referred to as KhNUAF).

A key strategic (basic, systemic) problem in this matter is the significant gap between the modern requirements for a military pilot and the real information and educational, didactic, technical and material possibilities for meeting them in the process of training in the HMEI. The main tactical (separate components of the strategic problem) obstacles along this path, in our opinion, are: obsolescence of the Air Force fleet of the Armed Forces of Ukraine from a similar resource of the aggressor and especially from the advanced resource of NATO member countries, which naturally contributes to the “preservation” of flight techniques and the extensive nature of the training of military pilots; the inertia of the domestic system of higher military education in general, which has not yet responded dynamically enough to modern challenges in the field of defense and continues to use traditional approaches in terms of professional training of professional military personnel; the scientific and pedagogical basis of this training, which can provide an effective theoretical foundation for it, is not sufficiently developed.

We believe that today the lack of a reliable scientific and pedagogical background in the preparation of future military pilots of tactical aviation for combat flights really slows down the entire system of their professional training in HMEI. In fact, the pedagogical component in it is represented only by a number of traditional, often outdated, but normative flight methods, not linked in an experimentally tested pedagogical system-complex with other components (primarily ground and simulator training), with the clearly dominant role of the psychological factor. In such conditions, the educational process is reduced to a rigid set of prescribed algorithms-tasks that contribute to the formation of stable skills and skills, but not professionally significant competencies.

## 3. Objective

We believe that in order to solve this problem, it is first necessary to critically investigate the features of the modern approach to the preparation of future tactical aviation pilots for combat flights in the HMEI based on these official methodological documents.

## 4. Results and Discussion

First of all, we note that combat flights are the basis of the professional activity of a military pilot, its most important component, since its main professional activity for its purpose is combat (special combat) flights (combat duties, patrols, escorts, air battles, etc.).

It is through the prism of the level of their performance that they demonstrate a level of professional training, physical and psychological readiness for the performance of combat missions, the ability to improve and moral endurance. The actual category of “combat flight” comes from military affairs and military sciences. Not being part of the traditional categorical and pedagogical apparatus, it becomes an additional object of professional (aviation) and military pedagogy on the problem of professional training of future tactical aviation pilots, and therefore its use within these scientific limits is quite correct and justified.

In the classification of flights of state aviation of Ukraine, they belong to flights on assignments. At the same time, in pedagogical literature (including from the branches of professional and military pedagogy), this category is practically not used and is not disclosed accordingly for the professional training of future military pilots.

Therefore, in the framework of the above author’s dissertation study, we propose to consider combat flight as the main type of professional activity of military pilots aimed at fulfilling a combat mission, and readiness for it (physical, psychological, technical)—as a key competent indicator of the pedagogical system for ensuring the quality of training future tactical aviation pilots for combat missions (Nevzorov, 2020).

The ability to effectively carry out combat missions during combat flights, the pilot forms in the process of high-quality professional training for them. We propose to consider high-quality professional training for combat flights of future tactical aviation pilots as a set of special, specially tactical training disciplines and courses, as well as specialized simulator, physical and physiological training, which provides an appropriate level of training and readiness of HMEI pilot cadets for the effective performance of combat missions in accordance with real military requirements and demands of society.

Its pedagogical content is a combination of ground (theoretical-tactical, simulator, special physical and physiological training, as well as simulations in the cockpit) and flight (directly in the air) training. The peculiarities are traced in the applied specific methodical techniques and pedagogical conditions of professional training, which we studied on the

basis of official methodological (methodical-orienting) documents.

The central of them should be considered the Course of ground and flight training of cadets on a combat aircraft (KNLP BL-2018). According to it, the structure of the applied part of the training of cadets of KhNUAF consists of the following elements:

- programs of comprehensive training sessions with cadets (explanation of the procedure for organizing and conducting classes at the airfield, as well as an indicative schedule of classes);
- 5 mandatory training tasks (testing of piloting and navigation techniques during the day in simple and difficult weather conditions, testing of combat applications for air and ground targets during the day, testing of piloting and navigation techniques at night in simple weather conditions, testing of combat applications for air and ground targets at night, examination flights) with instructions on the progress of the task [determine the content of exercises, the sequence and parallelism of learning the exercises of the task, regulatory parameters (number of hours, flight duration, etc.)];
- training classes on the simulator (disclosure of the procedure and topics of training and simulations in the cockpit) (Course of ground and flight training of cadets on a combat aircraft, 2018).

Analysis of the content of this document allows us to come to the following conclusions: firstly, the specific content of preparation for combat flights, although it is systemic in nature, does not differ significantly from previous KNLP of the 2000s and even the 1990s, which indicates its conservative nature, tendentiousness, significant inconsistency with the modern technical state of aviation technology; secondly, the general guidelines and guidelines for each task, as well as for simulator training, are fairly general and largely obsolete; thirdly, realities are not sufficiently taken into account (in particular, the tactical reasons for the combat losses of tactical aviation of Ukraine in clashes with the aggressor in Luhansk and Donetsk regions in 2014).

In fact, this is an educational regulation, which in a normative form sets a rigid algorithm for progressive actions aimed at creating a system of professional skills and skills among cadets. But in the XXI century, in the conditions of dynamic changes in military-aviation equipment and equipment, the tactical picture of conducting air battles and other things, this is no longer enough.

Modern requirements for tactical aviation, which occupies a leading place in gaining strategic superiority in the air, and often on the ground, dictate the need for new generation military pilots—not only professional and professionally armed, but also initiative, stress-resistant and able to instantly navigate rapidly variable combat conditions.

In our opinion, the content of the KNLP BL-2018 in its philosophy is a typical example of the Soviet Flight Training Methodology. The latter, although it is, in the apt words of D. Gander, a “didactic of flying” (Gander, 2010), nevertheless, cannot be considered a full-fledged effective pedagogical system for organizing the combat training of future military pilots, gravitates more to the psychological component of training and uses primarily psychological tools, giving the role to the pedagogical component “Meanwhile, training in general and preparation for combat flights in particular is primarily a pedagogical process, which is superimposed on the peculiarities and specifics of military education and flight”.

Another document of our analysis is the current Educational and Professional Program (hereinafter—EPP) “Flight operation and combat use of aircraft” of the first (bachelor’s) level of higher education, specialty 253 “Military Administration (by type of Armed Forces)”, the branch of knowledge 25 Military sciences, national security, state border security, specialization Flight operation and combat use of aircraft, developed and approved by the Scientific Council of the Kharkiv National Air Force University named after Ivan Kozhedub (protocol No. 5 of 26.06.2019).

A thorough study of this EPP, carried out by the author as part of a dissertation study, revealed the formalized, descriptive, impartial content of this document. The content of the professional (subject) and military-special (specialization) competencies laid down in it significantly coincides with the content of the skills and skills of the educational and qualification characteristic (as a component of the Industry Standard for Higher Education (HEIS)) of the same specialty and specialization of the previous HEIS 2013 (coincidence in content as a whole by 86.4% (respectively in the group of special (professional, subject) competencies—by 88.09% and the group of military special competencies in specialization—by 84.8%), in general in wording—by 55.6%) (Educational and professional program “Flight operation and combat use of aircraft”, 2019).

That is, the military-political realities have changed significantly, and the content of training, expressed in the expected professionally significant competencies of a military pilot, HMEI graduate has largely remained at the level of outdated military doctrinal positions and ideas. In addition, this document, due to the schematics and formalism inherent in such a group of state educational documents, does not disclose at all the pedagogical features of preparation for combat flights in the HMEI of Ukraine.

## 5. Conclusions

Thus, the data of the analyzed official methodological documents indicate the following features of the modern approach to the preparation of future tactical aviation pilots for combat flights in the HMEI at the current stage:

1. The status of preparation for combat flights as the core of professional training of military pilots has actually remained unchanged since the Soviet time, and its character is essentially extensive, focused on the existing military aviation fleet (the average age of combat aircraft operation in the Air Force of the Armed Forces of Ukraine makes 25-30 years, which quite coincides with the main training line, adequate for that period).

2. This type of professional training clearly lacks a scientific and pedagogical basis in the form of an experimentally tested theoretical model that would take into account modern requirements for military pilots and the military-technical level of today's tactical aviation.

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