

FEATURES OF THE APPLICATION OF BATTALION TACTICAL GROUPS IN ARMED CONFLICTS

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The article explores the development of battalion tactical groups (BTGs). It provides a historical analysis of their preparation and employment in armed conflicts of recent decades. The requirements for the composition and structure of a battalion tactical group are identified, while the challenges within its training system and potential solutions are defined. Emphasis is placed on preparing for mission accomplishment in accordance with the unit's designated purpose and within short timeframes

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The modern development of military equipment and weaponry has led to tactical-level units becoming increasingly autonomous in fulfilling combat missions. Military practice shows that, currently, battalion tactical groups (BTGs) are successfully managing these tasks. According to the Military Encyclopedic Dictionary, 'a battalion tactical group is a temporary formation created on the basis of a battalion for the purpose of conducting combat' [1, p. 69].

Modern BTGs are based on motorized infantry, tank, or air assault battalions, reinforced with attached units of artillery, tanks, anti-tank assets, reconnaissance, electronic warfare (EW), NBC (nuclear, biological, and chemical) and engineering platoons, as well as air defense units. The composition and missions of battalion tactical groups are determined by the decision of the superior commander and depend on:

- the nature of the assigned combat mission;
- the composition and character of the enemy's actions;
- the specifics of the theater of operations, the time of year, and the time of day.

The issue of preparing BTGs for mission accomplishment in accordance with their designated purpose remains highly relevant today and is driven by:

- the inadequacy of the units' training and material resources (training facilities) for BTG preparation;
- the incomplete alignment of the BTG training process organization with current requirements.

In order to enhance the level of BTG readiness and prevent unnecessary casualties during mission execution, the issue of training quality must be addressed with specific consideration for the terrain where the combat mission will take place. An analysis of the historical experience regarding the preparation and employment of BTGs confirms the expediency of their use in fulfilling combat missions within local wars and armed conflicts.

For instance, the combat operations conducted by the U.S. Armed Forces in the Persian Gulf in 1990–1991, code-named 'Operation Desert Storm,' demonstrated that the employment of BTGs was highly effective. A battalion tactical group typically consisted of a motorized infantry battalion as its core, reinforced with tank companies, a 155mm self-propelled howitzer battery, mortar sections, an anti-tank platoon, and an air defense unit. This composition ensured the steady fulfillment of combat missions and was tailored to the BTG's combat capabilities required



to conduct operations against the Iraqi Armed Forces [2].

Drawing on the experience of the U.S. Army's employment of battalion tactical groups in the Persian Gulf, the Russian Armed Forces began forming similar units and utilizing them to execute combat missions during the counter-terrorism operation in Chechnya in 1994–1995 [3].

The combat operations of the Syrian Armed Forces against 'ISIS' armed groups demonstrate that 'the primary combat units are BTGs, which possess maximum combat capability and autonomy in mission execution' [4].

Calculations indicate that the combat capabilities of contemporary battalion tactical groups are equivalent to those of military units and formations from the Great Patriotic War era. To enhance the combat power and autonomy of formed BTGs, they are reinforced with combat and logistics support units. Typically, modern Russian Airborne Forces (VDV) BTGs are manned by contract servicemen and consist of a core parachute (air assault) battalion, reinforced with:

- up to a tank company;
- reconnaissance units;
- artillery and mortar batteries;
- anti-tank units;
- UAV (drone) units;
- Electronic Warfare (EW) units;
- engineering units;
- technical, logistics, and medical support units.

Certain requirements for the preparation of battalion tactical groups have emerged: 'conduct unit training tailored to their specific operational direction; provide training for commanders on the organization, coordination, and support of organic and attached units; and account for the physical and geographical conditions of the theaters of operations when preparing for combat missions' [5, pp. 23–28].

The foundation of these requirements is the training of contract servicemen and the 'improvement of the personnel training system for conducting combat operations in extreme conditions' [6, pp. 44–49].

Currently, the ability to prepare BTGs within short timeframes has acquired particular significance. Consequently, when a decision is made to deploy them for combat missions, less time will be required for preparation compared to a standard, scheduled training cycle. To achieve this, it is necessary to develop specialized training programs tailored to the specific missions the BTG will face, while accounting for the theater of operations and the probable nature of enemy actions.

There is a growing necessity to develop guidelines for improving BTG recommendations to ensure mission accomplishment according to their designated purpose in armed conflicts:

- conduct BTG training for combat missions while accounting for the specifics of the theater of operations, at any time of year or day, and the probable nature of enemy actions;
- devote particular attention during training to the cohesion of organic and attached BTG units and their coordination during mission execution;
- integrate simulators and information-based training systems into the BTG preparation cycle to enhance training quality while significantly reducing time and material costs;
- improve the individual training of all commanding officers in unit leadership to implement a unified information space and utilize automated command and control (C2) systems;
- enhance combat, technical, logistics, and medical support for the fulfillment of combat missions.



As a result of the study, the following conclusion can be drawn: overall, the evolution of BTG employment in modern local wars and armed conflicts has shown that they remain one of the most vital components of the combat power of permanent readiness units within the Armed Forces. The primary trends in the application of battalion tactical groups in armed conflicts include an increase in the tactical autonomy of units, the expansion of the nature of combat missions across various types of engagement, and the rapid concentration of forces on decisive axes during operational maneuvers [7, pp. 30–33]

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