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## **THE HISTORY OF AIR DEFENCE TROOPS OF UKRAINE**

Stud. O. Salivon

Scientific assistant professor N. Gudkova  
Kyiv National University of Technology and Design

The Air Defence Troops of Ukraine are forces created to provide protection from enemy air strikes.

The birth of the Air Defence Troops of Ukraine, their establishment and development are strongly linked with the history of our country. An Air (Visual) Detection, Warning and Communication Service was organized in the middle of 1915 for detecting enemy aircraft, tracking of their activity and informing air defence forces and facilities on their approach. The modernization of air defence facilities and systems was started during the years of military reforms in 1924-1925. The general air defence systems included not only aviation but anti-aircraft artillery as well as other branches of troops. As per Directive of the Ukrainian Military District Headquarters the anti-aircraft defence of Kyiv was organized on February 15, 1929. The central air defence administrative bodies were improved simultaneously. At the beginning of The Great Patriotic War, the anti-aircraft defence of the territory of Ukraine, the part and parcel of the general plan for building the country's air defence, was an orderly system. Three air defence zones such as Kyivska, Pivdenna and Kharkivska were organized on the territory of Ukraine in June 1941.

During the years of the Great Patriotic War the air defence troops fulfilled with honor the task placed upon them. They shot down more than 7300 planes, destroyed more than 1000 tanks and some 1500 guns and mortars, as well as a great deal of other military hardware and enemy manpower.

The forms and methods for the military application of the air defence troops, the organization of their structure in connection with the implementation of new machinery and armaments were further developed in the postwar period. The development of the air defence troops took place on the basis of all-round analysis of WW2 experience, achievements and perspectives for the development of modern military science. Beginning with 1952 the air defence troops began receiving principally new equipment: anti-aircraft missile complexes and systems, which made it possible to transform the anti-aircraft artillery into a new branch of troops – anti-aircraft missile troops of anti-aircraft defence. Automatic control systems were widely introduced in the forces. Units and subunits for electronic reconnaissance and jamming of the radioelectronic facilities of airborne opponents were organized.

The new chronicle of the Air Defence Troops as a separate branch of the Armed Forces of Ukraine began after the independence was proclaimed in Ukraine announcing it as a sovereign independent state. The Air Defence Troops of Ukraine were formed on the basis of formations and units which at the time of proclamation of independence were stationed on its territory. At the present time the Air Defence Troops are fulfilling the responsible task of defending the sovereignty and inviolability of Ukraine, its air space, and have clearly defined tasks in peace and war time designated for warning against air or missile attacks, waging battles with airborne opponents, protecting the country's most important administrative, political and industrial centers, troops formations, strength of the fleet, other government and military facilities from enemy air and missile attacks. Anti-aircraft missile forces and radio-technical troops, which are a branch of the air defence troops as well as the troops of direct cover, communication, special support units and subunits and military training establishment, are included into the composition of the Air Defence Troops of Ukraine.

Today the development of the Air Defence Troops of Ukraine is being carried out on the basis of the State Program for Building and Reformation, and the creation of a single air defence system of the country and Armed Forces.