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Documents on the History of Maintenance in the Russian Air Force Fleet of 1910–17 in the Fonds of the Russian State Military History Archive

Abstract

The article describes the part of the Russian State Military History Archive (RGVIA) fonds, which contains documents related to the maintenance of aircrafts, engines, aircraft weapons, apparatus, radio stations, and photographic equipment of the Russian Air Force Fleet (VVF) in 1910-17; they testify of the emergence of the maintenance department. As the forming department had no management bodies, its documents deposited in the RGVIA do not form a compact fond, they are found in a large array of fonds, some of which have no relation to

aviation. In the modern scholarship on the history of Russian military aviation, there is a lack of the RG VIA reference materials on location of documents on the history of maintenance of the Russian Air Force Fleet. The article is to provide researchers with a detailed tool for searching documents on the history of maintenance in the archival fonds. The author relies on his knowledge of historical development of the Russian Air Force Fleet, his long-term research experience in the RG VIA, and on reference publications on the archive fonds. Having analyzed the RG VIA fonds, he shows what kind of documents on the history of the VVF maintenance can be found there. Features of various fonds and volume of documents on the history of maintenance in them are being described. It has been identified in which fonds the guidelines and instructions for the aircrafts maintenance are stored, as well as reports on technical condition of aircrafts, armament, and equipment in the squadrons, materials on aircraft radio equipment usage, reports on inspection of technical condition of aircrafts in the units, documents on accidents and disasters. The article reviews fonds of various organizations engaged in operation and repair of the aviation equipment, of management bodies of the armed forces, of integrated combined arms force, and of military aviation. The analysis will help the historians of the Russian Air Force to navigate numerous RG VIA fonds and to speed up their search of documents.

Keywords

Review of historical sources, maintenance, operation and upkeep, Air Force aviation, Military air fleet of the Russian Empire, aviation equipment, aircraft, airplane, archival documents, archival fonds, sources, World War I, technician, motorist.

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