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Personnel Management in the Aviation Corps of the Supreme Command Reserve during the Great Patriotic War, 1941–1945

Abstract

Despite a significant number of scholarly works devoted to the history of the Great Patriotic War, the issue of organizing personnel management for the command staff of the Soviet Armed Forces, which was carried out under intense combat conditions across a vast front and involved a huge amount of human and material resources, remains understudied. Experience shows that the level of combat readiness of units and formations directly depended on the quality of personnel management. This was especially true for such a technically complex branch of the armed forces as the Red Army Air Force, where the personal example of a commander was a crucial element in achieving victory over the enemy in aerial combat. Currently, the body of archival documents covering this issue and accessible to a wide range of researchers is insignificant. This circumstance hinders a comprehensive and objective study of key aspects of military development during the years of resistance to Nazi aggression, where the task of timely and high-quality staffing of the active army with command personnel was a key factor in achieving victory. The publication of a report on the work of the 6th Guards Bomber Aviation Corps's personnel department for 1942–1945 introduces information to scholarly dissemination, allowing for a clarification of the procedures for maintaining records of the Red Army Air Forces' command personnel, organizing their service, conferring promotions, awarding the distinguished individuals, studying morale, selecting and promoting the most deserving candidates to higher positions, and processing incoming letters and appeals. The selection of materials from a personnel department at the level of the Reserve of the Supreme Command (RVGK) aviation corps is explained by the role these units played in organizing the strategic reserves of Soviet military aviation during the war. After the first months of research, this form, developed based on combat experience, proved to be the most optimal. Experience quickly demonstrated that it was fully consistent with the conditions of armed conflict that prevailed on the Soviet-German front. Due to these circumstances, the quality of the RVGK air corps' command staffing was a crucial prerequisite for their high combat readiness. Studying the results of personnel management efforts achieved during this most difficult time for our country is relevant and will contribute to both a broader understanding of the Great Patriotic War as a whole and a scientific justification for the need to improve our Armed Forces now and in the near future.

Keywords

The Great Patriotic War, the Air Force, aviation corps, command staff, personnel bodies, personnel management.

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