



Mher A. Harutyunyan, Military Construction in Artsakh (1991–2006). Yerevan: Kachar Scientific Centre Publishing House, 2024, 416 pages, illustrated. ISBN 978-9939-1-1846-8

The monograph written by Mher Harutyunyan, PhD in History, Associate Professor, and Researcher at the Department of Modern History of the Institute of History of the National Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Armenia, presents a theoretical, methodological, and epistemological analysis of key issues in military construction in Artsakh between 1991 and 2006, a subject that has not previously been the focus of comprehensive academic research.

Various aspects of this issue had been previously explored by Mher Harutyunyan in monographs, articles, collections of materials from international conferences, and a specialised thematic encyclopaedia.

The reviewed monograph consists of an introduction, three chapters, conclusion, summaries in Russian and English, a list of abbreviations, bibliography, indexes of names and geographical locations, as well as an appendix containing 32 documents, most of which are published for the first time, and three tables.

In the introduction, the general characteristics of the work, the relevance of the research topic, its objectives and tasks, chronological framework, the state of research on the issue, the source base, scientific novelty, theoretical and practical significance, methodological principles and research methods, approbation, structure, and content of the work are outlined.

The first chapter, “Features of the Organisation of Self-Defence of the Republic of Artsakh and the Construction of Armed Forces (1991–1994),” is dedicated to the analysis of measures taken by the authorities of Artsakh to organise self-defence and repel the aggression of the Republic of Azerbaijan. The processes of forming self-defence management bodies and elements of territorial defence, as well as the role of the Defence Committee of the Republic of Armenia in establishing the self-defence infrastructure and providing military personnel to the newly proclaimed republic, are examined.

A significant focus is placed on the analysis of the activities of the headquarters of the Self-Defence Committee, including issues of planning military operations, training command personnel, and increasing the efficiency of troop management. Mechanisms for improving command skills in newly established training centres, as well as measures to enhance the combat readiness of the troops, are explored.

As an expression of progress in military construction, the work examines the expansion of repair bases for equipment and weaponry, the organisation of their maintenance during hostilities, the improvement of the medical support system, and logistical supply. In this context, particular attention is paid to efforts to enhance air defence and strengthen the security of the airspace of the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic amid the adversary's attempts to achieve absolute air superiority.

The transformation of self-defence forces into a fully-fledged Defence Army and the completion of its legal formalisation are also examined in detail. The military successes and defensive capabilities of the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic are presented as key factors that compelled Azerbaijan to sign the ceasefire agreement.

The second chapter – “Improvement of the Defensive System of the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic and Military Construction in the Post-Truce Period (1994–1999)” – analyses the process of strengthening the defensive complex of the Republic of Artsakh, the development of strategic directions in the field of defence, and the qualitative and temporary aspects of military construction.

The characteristics of army construction in the conditions of a truce, the establishment of the defence department of the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic, and the role of the Defence Army as a guarantor of the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic's security are comprehensively studied. The issues of military personnel training, troop recruitment organisation, and the legal framework for replacing volunteer personnel with conscription service are thoroughly examined.

The relationship between economic recovery processes and mobilisation readiness, as well as the introduction of effective mechanisms for logistical support of the Defence Army, are analysed. Significant attention is paid to improving the military command system and optimising troop deployment.

Furthermore, key issues of military construction and factors influencing it are studied, including the regulatory and legal support for army construction and the strengthening of ties between the army and society.

The third chapter – “Main Trends and Features of Military Construction (2000–2006)” – focuses on the legislative support for issues of military and border security of the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic, the development of a strategy for improving the quality of army construction, increasing combat capability, and establishing necessary units.

The issues of modernising and upgrading armaments and military equipment, as well as the technical outfitting of troops, are examined. Particular attention is paid to the preparation and accumulation of mobilisation reserves of the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic, the establishment of procedures for troop recruitment, conscription training, military and analytical cadre training, the formation of an officer corps, and the improvement of living and service conditions for military personnel.

The optimal management systems, organisation of supply across all military branches, enhancement of combat and conscription training, ensuring the highest level of mobilisation readiness of reserves under constant military threat conditions, as well

as mechanisms for conducting joint exercises, providing methodological assistance, and securing mobilisation resources in cooperation with the Armed Forces of the Republic of Armenia, are studied.

In the conclusion, the research results are summarised, practical recommendations and theoretical questions are consolidated, and the applied significance of the findings is elucidated.

By conducting a comprehensive analysis of the fifteen-year history of the Armed Forces of Artsakh, Mher Harutyunyan has laid the foundation for the development and approval of program initiatives for the further evolution of the Defence Army based on the studied models. Key issues of military construction, factors influencing it, legislative support for army development, and the strengthening of ties between the army and society are examined.

The historian has provided a substantive analysis of specific approaches dictated by the strategic changes in the dynamics of the armed conflict, including the necessity of training command personnel. The monograph presents valuable proposals concerning the improvement of the theory of armed struggle, considering the peculiarities of potential theatres of war, the composition and structure of opposing forces, and the specificity of the tasks set before them.

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