

**Review at the closed Facebook group 'Aviation Enthusiast Book Club'
by Todd Shugart, published on 18 August 2019**

BOOK REVIEW

Title: Flashpoint Russia (Russia's Air Power: Capabilities and Structure)

Publisher: Harpia Publishing

Author: Piotr Butowski

ISBN: 978-0-9973092-7-0

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There have been many books over the years about Russian military aviation subjects. However, very few of them have looked at the structure and organisation of Russia's current aviation forces. This fourth and last volume in a series looking at Russian military aviation is unique in the amount of research presented and once again the easy to read format. Piotr Bukowski knows this subject well and this series is the benchmark that all publications on modern Russian military aviation should be measured against.

The first and second volumes looked at the specifications and capabilities of all the aircraft flown by Russia. The third volume looked at Russian air launched weapons. And this last volume describes the chain of command, the organisations down to regiment level and even the current air army, division, and regimental commanders of these units! The locations of the units are also shown on well laid out maps and charts along with the summary of each unit. Even the units assigned to Federal National Guard Service and the Federal Security Service have sections devoted to them. Piotr begins the book by describing the fundamental changes within the structure of the Russian Air Force and how spending has risen up from 2011 until 2015 and then declined after that due to the failing Russian economy. But during this time Russia has modernised much of the airplanes and the technology associated with it. When combined with their recent experience in Syria and Crimea, the Russian Air Force and Russian Naval Air Force units are much more capable and much more experienced than they had been in previous decades. This and the historical background provided on each of the units shows the level of analysis that the author uses to present the reader with the full story and not just a line by line listing of the various units.

What sets the Harpia series apart is the analysis presented and the comprehensive research that is presented in their usual glossy and professional format. This volume while about the Russian Air Order of Battle is also lavishly illustrated with recent colour photos of many of the units and equipment used by Russia today. The captions are informative, and credit is duly noted where applicable. The easy to read format continues in this series and its soft back binding allows easier portability. Affordability is also another key attribute that is evident once again. This four-volume set should be in every NATO Air HQ's Intelligence section as the go to guide for analysis and simulation when building scenarios for exercises and real world contingency planning. I highly recommend this book to all with an interest in modern Russian military aviation matters and to all agencies involved with the analysis of the Russian military aviation structure.