

8. BOMBER REGIMENT (8.BP)

8.BP – C/O puk Stanko Diklić

C/O assistant *maj* Pavao Sić, *Adjutant k1k* Miloš Glišić, Regiment adjutant's representative *k1k* Vićentije Milanović "Vića".

68.VG – C/O *maj* Lazar Donović "Laza"
215.E C/O *k1k* Vladimir Jovičić, 216.E C/O *k1k* Sergije Vojinov, 12.AČ C/O *k1k* Svetozar Lolić.

69.VG – C/O *maj* Dobrosav Tešić "Boca"
217.E C/O *k1k* Matija Petrović, 218.E C/O *k1k* Vladimir Ferenčina, 1.AČ C/O *k1k* Rudolf Kobal "Rudi".

The regiment was armed with 22 Bristol Blenheim bombers, one Caproni Ca-310 and one two-engine Ca-310bis, one Fizir Fp-2 plane, and two Buckers 131 used for liaison. The unit also included four Breguet XIX Jupiter planes used for various purposes. In the morning of 6 April, one Blenheim Mk.I from *Škola za bombardovanje*, piloted by *nar* Mate Vrančić, flew from Mostar and joined 8.BP, which increased the number of Blenheims in the regiment to the total of 23 Blenheims:

"On the first day of war an order came from Belgrade to transfer operational Blenheim plane to Topola. Mechanic and I were given assignment that evening to fly to To-



C/O 8.BP, pilot-observer puk Stanko Diklić (MVB coll)

pola. Early in the morning of 7 April I piloted that plane and transferred it to brigade C/O Jakov Đorđević. The flight lasted around one hour. I heard there that some crews didn't return from the mission that day. I came back from Topola to Mostar on 8 April in the afternoon."

On 13 March 1941, 8.BP was relocated from Zagreb airfield to the war airfield. The regiment was now in Rovine airfield, near Nova Topola village, north from Banja Luka. Blenheims from 68.VG were deployed along the airfield's western rim, hidden under the trees and camouflaged with bushes, while 69.VG was deployed similarly on the eastern rim of the airfield. The regiment staff was accommodated partly on the airport and partly in private houses in a nearby village. Also, 4.Lovački puk (4.LP) was situated in the vicinity, some 4-5 kilometers to the south, on the airport near Bosanski Aleksandrovac. Apart from its regular assignments, 4.LP was intended to provide fighters' support to 8.BP bombers. These two flying units composed 2.Vazduhoplovna brigada (2.VB). The brigade was commanded by pukovnik Jakov Đorđević "Ješa" while his adjutant was *k1k* Luka Kandić. The brigade HQ also incorporated 704.E for liaison.

According to R-41 war plan, the task of the regiment was to act against the enemy airports, concentrated troops and railway and road communications in bordering area of neighboring Austria and western Hungary (westward from the Danube River). As the war required, the operation zone was extended to the territory of Hungary on the eastern side of the Danube.

Radio stations were provided for all planes in the regiment; they were at the airport waiting to be installed. The reasons were unknown why the most of those had never been mounted on Blenheims. When enemy operations started, approximately one plane per group had radio station. The weaponry of 69.VG included modified Blenheim 3505, the armament of which was modified in Ikarus factory. A Teleoptik SP-40 hydraulic turret of domestic production with one Bredda – SAFAT MC.12,17 machine gun, 12.7 mm caliber, mounted on its back position, while its fuselage was equipped with additional M.30 Darn machine gun, 7.7 mm caliber, which required then three-member Blenheim crew to expand by another machine gunner. Furthermore, additional M.38 FN Browning machine gun, 7.9 mm caliber was mounted on modified front starboard cabin windshield, which was to be used, in case of battle, by observer or by pilot when it was fixed. This aircraft was piloted by C/O of 69.VG *maj* Dobrosav Tešić.

After the military coup that took place on 27 March, 8.BP with its nationally multifarious composition that was located in the territory of Croatian Banovina didn't lack positive morale or combatant spirit. Not until the war operations started did this national variety and very geographic position of the unit, show its full expression. Namely, 2.VB, which included 8.BP on Croatian territory, was directly linked to 2.Centar veze in Zagreb. It was the link that would be fatal for 8.BP.



Personnel of 69.VG/8.BP at Borovo airport on 27 March 1941 on the day of the coup.
Fifth from the left sits C/O 69.VG maj Dobrosav "Boca" Tešić (*Robert Čopec coll*)



Personnel of 218.E/69.VG/8.BP, also on 27 March 1941. Fourth from the left sits C/O 218.E k1k Vladimir Ferenčina.
With his ten confirmed and six unconfirmed victories he became ace of the Croatian Air Force at the Eastern Front (*Šime Oštrić coll*)

Namely, on 3 April 1941, *k1k* Vladimir Kren deserted from Borongaj airport in Zagreb to *Klagenfurt*, then in Germany, on Potez Po25 airplane. On that occasion he brought with him data on war deployment of Yugoslav aviation flying units, airports, lists of mobilization locations, commands, units and facilities in the territory of Dravska and Croatian Banovinas, as well as data for aviation radio link code. He gave it all to Germans, which is why Air Force HQ changed its code in the night between 5 and 6 April 1941. However, subordinate troops were not informed about it on time, partly because units left for war airports, and partly because of sabotage of the Fifth Colony in Yugoslav aviation.

k1k Kren was in close relations with airmen of Croatian nationality, and with flying staff from *8.BP*, inter alia with *218.E* C/O captain Vladimir Ferenčina, who later on became highly ordained member of *ZNDH*. A person who witnessed the said events was regiment's training officer and representative of ailing adjutant from *8.BP*, *k1k* Vićentije "Vića" Milanović:

"That day, on 4 April 1941 in the afternoon, C/O of air force base (*IVVB*, major Stanko Balanč, a.c.) from Zagreb informed by phone *8.BP* C/O that air force first class captain Vladimir Kren, a Croat, took off from Zagreb airport on Potez and didn't return. There was a possibility that he escaped. Before his take-off, captain Kren wrote a letter and gave it to a civil mechanic sent to our airfield that day to run some inspections on planes. The C/O of *IVVB* asked Regiment C/O (*puk* Stanko Diklić, a.c.) to check immediately whether this mechanic arrived to the airfield, if he brought the letter and for whom it was written.

Search for the said repairman-mechanic, who had already arrived, started immediately. He admitted that he brought one letter from captain Kren and gave it to addressee – the air force first class captain Ferenčina Vladimir. Captain Ferenčina was called to report in the regiment's HQ, and, when asked about the letter, he admitted that he had received it. In terms of the letter's content, he said it was ridiculous and that he was puzzled that the letter was addressed to him as he had nothing to do with it. When he read the letter, he tore it and threw it by the plane where he stood.

Even though it was already dark, the letter torn into pieces was found with help of flashlights and brought to the regiment's HQ, where pieces were put together and letter was read. The content of the letter was as follows:

"Upon the order of the leader of our people (Ante Pavelić, a.c.), I'm leaving for *Klagenfurt* airport (Austria). You, Matija (*218.E* C/O, a.c.), Đura (*nar* Đura Pihler, technician from *8.BP*, a.c.), and several other airmen from other regiments, I cannot remember their names – COME RIGHT AFTER ME..." Signed by - Kren.

Investigation of this case started immediately. Captain Ferenčina denied every connection to it, while captain Petrović Matija (also Croat) was officially absent from the airfield and when he returned in the morning of 6 April, the war already started and every further investigation was terminated!! As for other individuals mentioned in the let-

ter, who were not from our regiment, their command was informed for further proceeding."

In spite of the situation where the said members of the unit would at least face the investigation by Court-martial with highly predictable consequences, they remained on *8.BP* war schedule, and "participated" in war operations as if nothing had happened!!!

In the dawn of 6 April, *8.BP* was informed about the breaking out of the war by regiment's mechanic who listened to the radio station, one of the rare ones, which was mounted on one of Caproni planes that served for training of pilots for multi-engine airplanes. Other Caproni flew to Belgrade early that morning with Minister Branko Čubrilović with his family on it.

Although there were concrete orders for regiment's activities defined by *R-41* war plan, C/O of *2.VB* *puk* Jakov "Ješa" Đorđević didn't follow them, but he waited for *KV* confirmation to implement those. That approach resulted in passive action of *8.BP*, both on the first day of war and in the future. To make it worse, all through the war *puk* Đorđević remained passive, maintaining contact and reporting from operating area of brigade he commanded. The only *VB* with which *KV* command had almost no link was the very brigade commanded by *puk* Đorđević. One should bear in mind that he was required to send reports for *KV* needs via liaison that led exactly through already mentioned liaison center in Zagreb... Certainly, the question remains why the brigade C/O *puk* Đorđević made no attempt to find out



Pilot *k1k* Vladimir Kren (*MVB* coll)



From the left, *nar* Karlo Murko, C/O 68.VG *maj* Lazar Donović and unknown airman stand in front of a new Blenheim from 8.BP Borongaj airport, summer 1940 (*Vojaški muzej Slovenske vojske coll, archive of Gustav Ajdič via Marko Ličina & Tomaž Perme*)

what was happening with liaison between brigade he commanded and KV!? After all, he had 704.E for liaison in brigade's HQ at his disposal. The question remains why didn't he use it?

When he found out that Germany attacked the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, brigade C/O maintained passive status waiting further development of the situation, even though there were clear orders to act in case of war! Not before noon on 6 April did C/O of 8.BP *puk* Stanko Diklić, upon the order of brigade C/O Jakov Đorđević, issue the following order:

"Execute offensive reconnaissance of Austrian territory with two 8.BP's bombers and two Hurricanes from 4.LP as their escort. Bombers are to be from 68.VG and 69.VG each. Two Hurricanes from 4.LP are to be designated by 4.LP's C/O *potpukovnik* Radosav Đorđević as fighters' escort."

Bombers' crews were designated, as well as fighters' escort. One crew from 216.E took off from 68.VG: pilot *nar* Karlo Murko, observer *por* Ivan Pandža, gunner *nar* Radenko Malešević. Another crew from 217.E took off from 69.VG: pilot *k2k* Đorđe Putica, observer *por* Ivan Salević and unknown gunner.

K1k Janko Dobnikar from 108.E/34.VG/4.LP was in the escort of 216.E Blenheim, while it is unknown who flew as escort to 217.E crew. The order specified that railway facility in Graz was to be attacked from 2500 meters altitude in the direction of Maribor. *Por* Murko was the first to take off:

"It's 14.40, I'm entering the plane. Observer and mechanic are waiting for me on their positions. The aircraft is ready. Four bombs, 100 kilos each, are placed in the fuselage, which can be thrown at given target unfamiliar to me. We have no data on the target, and no knowledge whatsoever on developments in Graz. Although, in terms of tactics, we are totally unprepared for action, I'm absolutely calm. The day is nice, and I have Hurricane from nearby fighters regiment as my escort. I'm taking off..

I have been ordered to take the course towards Maribor and to fly over it on 2500 meters altitude. There I have to take the course towards Graz and throw bombs when above target. Following the railroad is the best way to ap-



A fine detail from the cockpit of Blenheim from 8.BP with *nar* Karlo Murko at commands. Borongaj, summer 1940 (*Author coll*)



Mechanics from the workshop of 8.BP in front of Blenheim. Borongaj airport, Zagreb 1940
(Tihomir Likso coll via Miloš Milosavljević)

proach the target. What a school-like and transparent orders! As if command didn't grow for military tactics! The set altitude was ideal for all types of light and heavy flak...

Above Aleksandrovac I see Hurricane designated as escort. I keep the course of 360 degrees and quickly climb. I'm on 2000 meters above town Čazma and that's when I'm making decision! I won't be flying towards Maribor, since the attack from the direction of south would be apparent and it would reveal our intentions. I have to think about safety. Since I am alone, with no radio link with fighter, not even interphone link with gunner protecting my tail who could give me important advice, I have no one to rely on but myself. Even though there are tons of modern radio equipment lying somewhere in our base, we are here without it. So absurd!

The only defense from enemy fighters and flak will be low flying altitude. I decided to fly above Yugoslav territory as long as possible and I took the course towards Murska Sobota. There I started lowering, as I have to cross the border on tree-tops height to buy time and make it harder for observation stations to spot me.

I fly only 700 meters high above Goričko. I can't see our escort anywhere. I continue my abrupt dive. I'm making a sudden left turn and lowering my plane above the valley of the Raab River, the bank of which will protect me almost until I reach the target.

I'm flying just above the tree tops, while tree crowns disappear below my feet, and on the left side and somewhat

higher, a road lies full of military columns. All of this must be somewhat puzzling to my observer, but I'm at peace as no danger threatens me for now.

I'm watching the sky. It's clear. On the left I see the road crowded with tanks. There is a railroad below me, above which I swish 380km an hour.

Suburb... Cargo train station is in front of me.

I rise to 300 meters and give sign to my observer. In a few seconds he will eject the bombs.

Now! ...

The first bomb fell between cars, the second one on the network of railroad switches – grand crater appeared... the third bomb destroyed two-storey transport railway storage... leaving all this behind I suddenly climb in sharp turn above smoke bomb explosions. The fourth bomb flew away above the storage roof, the explosion of which I didn't see as I was climbing and turning.

I'm beside myself from delight. I made it! I bombed the Third Reich! That's for Belgrade! ...

I turn towards south – towards Maribor. I lower the plane just above the rooftops. I fly over roads with civilians waving to greet me. What an irony! They mixed Yugoslav cockade on the wings with German cross...

While flying along the road I'm coming across the column of military vehicles. I shoot from a wing machinegun. I cut through a slight turn and shoot another short burst on the road."

“We are flying over Leibniz and then, on the lower left side, I see a long meadow with white and red markings. Is that an airfield?”

I’m making a slight turn and look once again. Yes, there, among the trees, I see poorly camouflaged Ju87, Stukas. Enemy! They spotted me as well. Once again I lower the plane almost to the ground and in direction of Maribor. I’m home...”

“Low-level flight maneuver saved my head as two Bf109s covertly took off and tried to catch us from the direction of north. I disappeared in front of their eyes...”

When I landed to the base I found my tail hit by a machinegun bullet. Then my gunner told me that we were followed from Graz to Maribor by fighters but that they lost us over Maribor. What a luck we had...”

It is interesting that noncommissioned officer Murko put himself in the center stage without mentioning the observer, who was, according to the VVKJ structure, a C/O on the plane in charge of everything that was happening or should happen before, during and after the combat assignment was received. Also, not in one of his official or unofficial reports did *nar* Murko mention names of other members of the crew he flew with! Every alteration of the received task could be made only with the approval of his superior C/O, in this case his observer, and in no other way! Therefore, skillfulness in the said attack and deviation from the task could without doubt be assigned to airplane C/O *por* Ivan Pandža, whose orders *nar* Murko had to execute without questions asked.



217.E/69.VG, observer *por* Ivan Salević “Šilja” (Author coll)

A report of Austrian authorities stated the following:

“At 16.02, one plane, on its way to the main railway station, attacked car factory Weizer Waggonfabrik. Yet it missed the target and tossed three bombs (90 kilos each) to Asperngasse. It was too late for a thirteen year old girl Maria Schrotter, who was in the vicinity where the bomb exploded, to be saved. She died shortly after she was taken to Graz hospital. She was the first victim of air attack in the Second World War in Austria.

Also, material damage was relatively high. Workshops of the Granit construction company were destroyed in 25 meters radius and alight, roof space on shunting was damaged, stable roof of 138.*Gebirgsjägerregimentes* destroyed in 100 meters range. Around 400 residents in 22-24 Eggenberger Street had to be evacuated.”

Right after the mission was carried out, the crew submitted report to C/Os of 2.VB and 8.BP. Location of the airport was regularly marked on the map, together with plan of German forces’ movement towards the bordering area. Also, they insisted for the entire regiment to be sent at once to bomb the airfield with chances of achieving great success. They received no answer. Right after Murko/Pandža/Malešević crew took off, another crew Putica/Salević/unknown gunner followed. There is no actual statement by Yugoslav side but it is certain that they bombed target in Graz and returned together with Hurricane escort without any problems. However, the attack was recorded in Austrian documents:



215.E/68.VG, observer *por* Ivan Pandža (MVB coll)

“Almost simultaneously, the second Yugoslav plane flew over the main railway station from the east, where transporters of troops and food supplies waited to be dispatched. The plane tossed three bombs near the Trade association (Kaufmänninche Großeinkaufsgenossenschaft). Once again consequences were grand. One part of the great storage hall burned in a short period of time (approximately 60 cars with supplies, a.c.), while 124 inhabitants living in close vicinity had to be transferred to a shelter center in Mariengasse.”

In fact, enemy observing service registered the four planes, while their flight was also registered by Hungarian observing service which reported that three planes approached Budapest's defense area in 18.01, and alert ended not before 18.40 hours. That was the first alert for Hungarian capitol, and ever since, all alerts were counted until 1945, i.e. until the end of the war. According to the official statements, citizens living in Budapest and Graz were rather unprepared for the first alert and only then preparations of public shelters and other efforts related to air attack hazard began. Defense of Hungarian capitol, with Fiat CR.42 fighters, took off but they found no one. Official reports of Austrian authorities, Police (*Polizei*) and Air Police (*Luftpolizei*), recorded the following:

“The first attack on Graz was executed by Yugoslav Bristol Blenheim planes and two Hurricanes as their escort from Rovine near Banja Luka, which flew over Untersteinmark at low altitude and were fired at by AA defense from Grazer Feld, but shortly after they reached Graz.

While flying back, Yugoslav planes flew over Air Force base Thalerhof, from where they were chased by fighters, which caused minor damage to one of the attackers. Still, German fighters had no success in catching up the planes that flew away.”

Also, the official reports of Austrian authorities recorded the attack of the third Blenheim against Graz. However, Yugoslav records have no information whatsoever regarding that attack to this day, nor is there a slightest trail of it. From the objects mentioned in the said report, the street still exists as well as District hospital which is now University hospital.

“The third plane flew over Ries (from the north, a.c.), ejected one bomb near the District hospital (Gau-Krankenhaus) and hit a building in 10 Födranspergweg Street. Three residents endured heavy injuries. Since the plane flew on low height, one part of it fell on the house when the bomb exploded.”

The report also states that members of *10. Panzer-division* based in Graz, around 500 of them, were also very lucky since four 90 kilos aircraft bombs fell among them and didn't explode. The only possible explanation was that it was the mysterious Blenheim from the attack on Ries, and that the number of bombs ejected was inaccurate. With this ended the *8. BP's* actions on 6 April 1941.

Already in the evening of 6 April new orders came to act against the enemy in accordance to *R-41* plan. The orders referred to already mentioned targets in Austrian bor-



VVKJ HQ, observer ppuk Andrija Pavlović (MVB coll)



215.E/68.VG, pilot nar Dragiša Baralić (MVB coll)



8.BP Blenheim on Borongaj, early March 1941 (*Josip Novak coll*)

dering area, that were supposed to be operated against all day on 6 April, and not only with individual bombers. To be more precise, targets of 8.BP's operations were shifted to activities directed against airports on Hungarian territory from where Luftwaffe carried out operations towards KJ and its capitol Belgrade. Precisely with this selective (non) forwarding of KV orders, the liaison center in Zagreb directly influenced operations of 8.BP.

So, it remains recorded in non-published work of *ppuk* Andrija Pavlović that when after countless telephone calls he reached liaison center in Zagreb and ordered to be urgently connected with 2.VB's HQ, telephone operator rudely answered: "Call tomorrow!!!" Then he hung up.

The order was submitted to C/O of 8.BP *ppuk* Stanko Diklić, who was to convey it to C/Os of 68 and 69 groups for 7 April 1941. It ordered the attack of targets in Austrian bordering area, in sense of hindrance of German movements and communications towards KJ, with focus on railway traffic, shunting and accompanying infrastructure.

Necessary preparations of airplanes and men were made during the night, as it was noted that the attack was to be carried out under protective veil of night, that is, unit's bombers would take off by night and attack the target in the very dawn, and since that kind of approach would be implemented, they would have no fighters from 4.LP as escort. Most of aircrew from 8.BP had no training in flying without outer visibility, i.e. using instruments. However, no one among the airmen mentioned it during the evening briefing ran by both groups' C/Os. Also, no one mentioned why radio equipment was not installed in Blenheims even though it was received long time ago, and it was essential for normal functioning of one bomber unit. Apart from all that, moral of the crews was on remarkable level! Comprehensive preparations for the next day's mission were made during the night. Mechanics and gunsmiths were awake all night preparing bombers for mission ordered for 7 April 1941.

The order issued by KV on 6 April 1941 around 21.00 hours, designated the following targets for the attack: *Feldbach, Villach, Fürstenfeld, Pinkafeld, Gleichenberg* and *Wildon*, all conforming and in line with R-41 war plan, with

remark that it was a mission for that day and not for 7 April. Preparations of crews lasted until around 22.30 hours.

68.VG's crews for attack on *Feldbach*, 215.E with three Blenheims:

C/O 215.E Pilot *k1k* Vladimir Jovičić, observer *por* Mirko Jovanović, *nar* Marko Tošković.

Pilot *nar* Dragiša Baralić, observer *por* Ivan Miklavac, gunner *nar* Velimir Grdović.

Pilot *nar* Viktor Grdović, observer *por* Dragomir Pavlović, gunner *nar* Milisav Raković.

The section took off and made formation, but during the flight, due to darkness and very unfavorable weather conditions, Baralić/Miklavac/Grdović crew went its separate way. They all flew more or less following the set direction and relying exclusively on compass and watch. C/O of 215.E and section leader captain Jovičić found what he thought was target and executed attack, while wingman number two followed. Then he took the return course and went back to the airport from which they took off. Even though they agreed on signals with AA defense for that day, they received fire while flying over Zagreb, luckily imprecise one. On the other hand, crew Baralić/Miklavac/Grdović, first wingman from 215.E section engaged alone in fight against the entire Reich.

According to statement of reserve observer *por* Ivan Miklavac:

"It's 7 April 1941. We all woke up at 3.00 in the morning. There were sounds of water in the dark backyard. The well pump was quickly filling the buckets with water for refreshment. A bus drove us from the village to the airfield in pitch darkness carefully following the blackout regulations. At the airfield *k1k* Vladimir Jovičić repeated the mission, refreshed all agreements and we all started to dress for the flight. We didn't get any meteorological report. At 4.00 in the morning we were ordered: On positions! Start the engines! A quick salute to the CO. His last words were: The time has come, either to strike as warriors or to die! We all went different ways into the night, each in the direction of his aircraft.

The mechanic with his soldiers was already there. The formation was starting their engines, the noise was tremendous. I checked my aircraft, walking around it with a flashlight. I was stunned. The lower wing surface had multiple bayonet made holes. So, sabotage... I didn't notice any other damage, so I didn't report it. I thought that I could do it after the mission. I also checked the four bombs and unscrewed the igniter half a turn each. I presumed we would have to fly low. When I entered the cockpit I found out that somebody broke the clock in the aircraft. I didn't have the time to find out who did it so I borrowed a wrist watch from the first man who walked by. The crew included a pilot, mechanic/gunner, and bombardier/navigator/aircraft leader (me). We didn't have any radio operator because we didn't have the radios installed yet. One by one all of our 28 (sic) aircraft

3525 damaged by AA fire above Wiener Neustadt airport in Austria. The crew Baralić/Miklavc/Grdović had to land to Austrian territory due to disruption of main fuel supply inlet. Markt Allhau, April 1941 (*Leopold Banny coll*)



took off in pitch dark. Only a small signal light blinked the take-off command in one minute intervals. I counted the take-offs... five... six... seven... we were number nine. But where is my pilot? I am waiting. He should have been here minutes ago. Mechanic leans out of the cockpit and asks the closest soldier if he saw him. Nothing... number eight is already rolling... I order the mechanic to close the cabin, we will fly alone. I check both engines again, everything is OK. Then I hear knocking on the cabin. The pilot boards the plane in the nick of time. The cabin is closed again. I am looking for the light signal. Here it is! Let's go.

An unpleasant feeling of humidity surrounds us at 700m. I quickly notice the first meteorological informa-

tion-clouds. I order the pilot to climb, because we are flying above 600m high mountains, and my map is telling me we are flying towards even higher mountains. My pencil marks already flown path of our Blenheim. The pilot asks me where we are. I answer him: Varaždin is to the right. Our altitude is 1500m. It will dawn soon, and I think we are flying in upper cloud levels so I order to climb to 1700m. The success is obvious as we broke the clouds. I am scanning the sky to spot the others who took off before us. Far below us I spot a white dot, it's a plane. We are quickly catching him, I recognize him. He is one of ours! We are closing in, I want to see the C/O, but the airplane signals us the sign.



3525 forced landed near Markt Allhau village in Austria, 7 April 1941. Damage of Blenheim nose is evident. It was dismantled later on and transported to an unknown direction (*Leopold Banny coll*)

Watch it! It waggled its wings, made a U-turn and flew back from where it came from. When it disappeared I started to wonder. Did they receive the command for return? Was it the weather? Without the radio receiver I didn't get the answer to any of those questions. Soon after we crossed the border, my mechanic shook my shoulder and screamed. There were two fighters in dogfight above us, one of them was ours. In a moment we lost them from our sight."

"We reached our target, far below us, in the valley surrounded by hills. We couldn't see it. It was hidden by the cloud base. Our recon wouldn't do us much good. I calculated, another 6 minutes before we made the U-turn. We started to sink in the clouds. We were waiting for the results of our cloud breaking. If I miscalculated... we dove to only 400m. Then we broke through. First we saw something dark brown, then fields, than houses. We flew at 300m above the road. Raindrops were banging on the windshield and obscuring my sight. I noticed some dark transport vehicles driving south. We were going that way too. Feldbach had to be somewhere on the right side. I was looking for the railway. I set the bombsight, triggers, electric button. We passed over the road again, and still didn't see the railway. Then a bright line flashed a river and bridge bonding both sides with a road. I showed the bridge to the pilot. We flew over the river and made a turn.

Another glance at the bombsight, I pressed the button, the plane climbed a little and made the turn. The old bridge was gone and only a couple of beams were left. 100m ahead two transport cars stopped, they wouldn't get over the

bridge! Then the valley closed in, and then opened up again. Look there is the Feldbach station, we fly over the station at 200m, no traffic, no defense, and they even removed the station name. I press the button and the second bomb detaches from the aircraft. After the turn, we notice a full hit on the tracks at railway crossing. After a while my mechanic shouts: "Airplane!"; and shows me a little dot on the right. When we close in to 300m I recognize the shape, the yellow band, the black cross...no doubt, Stuka!!! Machinegun! I shout to the mechanic who is already in the machinegun turret. We close in to 30m and they spot us. In that moment our machine gun sings it's song, three salvos 50 bullets each and the Stuka rolls over and disappears in the clouds. "

"The first victory... We won't be taken easily. We fly over a 900m high hill, then we spot barracks, lots of them, then a warehouse, then a railway and more barracks. I drop the third bomb on this establishment. Later I found out that I bombed the wings assembly plant in Wiener Neustadt.

... When I was ready to order the plane back I saw a main road leading to Vienna. I dropped my last bomb there.

... Then my mechanic shouts: - Enemy fighters!

I turn around. Yes, four fighters on our tail. I order the pilot to climb into the clouds, a turn right, then after a minute a turn left to previous direction. I quickly calculate the heading from Vienna to Maribor. We turn our trusty Blenheim in that direction. Then we literally fall out of a cloud and we see the Wiener Neustadt airfield full of aircraft!! The temptation was just too big so we made a low pass, our machineguns spiting death. Then the flak came... But the worst



Most probably Pécs airport in Hungary, April 1941. Two Bf109 in the front and reconnaissance aircraft Henschel Hs126 on the right. Yellow surfaces on aircraft typical for Balkan campaign are clearly visible (*Jan vd Heuvel coll*)

was yet to come, we had to fly over 900m high hill, we were flying at 300m. We have to make additional circle to gain height over the airfield. The flak was ready for us. We took multiple hits and escaped in the clouds. It is getting lighter, I suddenly hear the engines coughing and spiting, I check the gasoline level...30 liters ...the pilot immediately cuts down the throttle to save gas. What now? We had 400 liters seven minutes ago. The fuel tanks must be hit. The pilot and mechanic ask me:

- Shall we jump?
- No! Steer 30° to the left!

I choose to crash land because our Yugoslavian made Blenheims didn't have the emergency hatch (sic), our C/O had a simple explanation: No jumping. These machines cost 5 million dinars each. We gave up hope to reach Yugoslav soil. Only 400m left we broke the cloud base and started looking for a place to land. There on the left below that hill. The crash land is possible only there. We will plug our nose in, but we have no choice, pilot pulls out the flaps, and I the gears. We are flying at 230km/h speed. The wheels absorb a strong blow, full throttle, the earth bounces. I am not strapped in so I grab for my harness at the last second, a nose blow, the cabin crashes, and I am thrown out of the seat...over.

I don't know how long we just laid there, not unconscious but we just laid there. We crawled from our positions and checked if everybody was all right. We climbed on the wing and petted our giant Blenheim No.25 (3525, a.c.) who saved our lives with its destruction."

Most probably owing to navigation error caused by harsh weather conditions, the mentioned crew "skipped" given target *Fürstenfeld* and operated against other locations. Straight ahead in the direction of Blenheim's flight, and behind *Fürstenfeld*, there lied *Bruck am den Mure*. They destroyed a bridge there and bombed railroad knot. Following the railway, as Miklavc remembers, they appeared in Bečko Novo Mesto where they hit one building in W.N.F airplane company complex with another bomb, and then, while moving further to the north, they used fourth bomb to hit the road with several vehicles and one armored vehicle or tank on the very entrance to *Bruck am der Leite* village located only 25km by air from Slovak border!

As *por* Miklavc recollected, they saw *Aspern* airport near *Wien* and then, flying at low altitude, they flew over *Neusiedler See* and took the course towards Yugoslavia. Then fighters from the mentioned airport appeared which they tried to avoid flying windingly through the clouds, where once again they lost orientation and reappeared above *Wiener Neustadt* and airport therein, even though they adopted return course toward *Maribor* and toward base. They couldn't resist such a target so they executed a sortie only with machineguns, but in doing so, they trapped themselves in a valley surrounded by almost 1000m high peaks, so they had to make additional round to gain height, which is when they were hit by German AA guns, forcing them to land later on close to *Markt Allhau* village.

After verbal conflict with local farmers armed with hunting rifles, aviators who had personal weapons on them surrendered but not before German military patrol arrived. Miklavc remembers that German officer who admitted them treated them rather well and that he ordered food and beverage for the captives. That significantly changed when they arrived in POW camp.

For a short period of time, Blenheim that forced landed served as an attraction to villagers, German aviators who visited it on several occasions, as well as local members of *Hitlerjugend*. It was dismantled not long after and transferred to a railway station by trucks, from where it was sent off in unknown direction.

According to Austrian reporting, on that 8 April 1941, OKW (*Oberkommando Wehrmacht*) issued euphoric statement:

"The day before, one combat plane Bristol Blenheim type, was forced to land in eastern Styria."

68.VG's crews for attack on *Villach*, 215.E with two Blenheims:

Pilot *nar* Dušan Savić, observer *k2k* Božidar Arsović "Boža", unknown gunner

Pilot *nar* Dušan Čavić, observer *ppor* Mihailo Petrović, unknown gunner

The section also "found" target and bombed it. They successfully returned to the base with no further details on the action. They were also subjected to Yugoslav AA fire above Zagreb, but with no damage caused to either airplane or crew.



Remains of C/O 68.VG *maj* Lazar Donović's Blenheim shot down by German fighters from JG54 near Hungarian village Uj Szent Isztvan while returning from the mission. There is a decapitated body of an unknown crew member in the front. 7 April 1941 (*Šime Oštrić coll*)

68.VG's crews for the attack on *Fürstenfeld*, 216.E with three Blenheims:

Pilot C/O 216.E *k1k* Sergije Vojinov, observer *por* Petar Kukić, gunner *nar* Ilija Mraković

Pilot *nar* Karlo Murko, observer *por* Ivan Pandža, gunner *nar* Radenko Malešević

Pilot *nvtč* Mihajlo Jović, observer *por* Josip "Bino" Božić, unknown gunner

Captain Vojinov, C/O of 216.E, also managed to locate what he thought was set target and he led his section to the attack. It appeared as if no one was entirely sure what they were bombing in the dark and unfavorable weather conditions, not even *nar* Karlo Murko as *k1k* Vojinov's first wingman:

"Light was shining through the clouds below us and leader dove downwards. We, wingmen, were on his tail. There was something darker beneath the clouds but we could identify contours of the village on the ground...

... I follow captain Vojinov whose plane is obviously positioning to attack. Bomb bays are opened... I'm opening mine. We fly above the road and see railroad in front of us. Bombs are falling from the first plane. My observer ejects them as well. We are right above some building we cannot identify.

We are on our way back. We fly just above the clouds that could hide us easily in case enemy fighters appear. Deep in our territory we dive through a layer of clouds in order to get better orientation, and on 500 meters height we see

the ground. In that moment, explosions from anti-aircraft fire appear all around us. Our AA guns, defense of Zagreb, fires at us! Above Maksimir church I'm making a sharp turn to the left and fly ahead towards the Sava River. Completely worn out, we landed one by one to the base."

68.VG's crews for the attack on *Pinkafeld*, 216.E with two Blenheims:

Pilot C/O 12.AČ *k1k* Svetozar Lolić, unknown observer, gunner *nar* Mališić

Pilot *por* Radomir Lazarević, observer *por* Andrija Pozder, gunner *nar* Ilija Mićković

Section is formed upon the take-off but, in spite of all their efforts, observers in both Blenheims were unsuccessful in locating designated target. Unwilling to throw the bombs randomly above the territory inhabited with civil population they headed their way back to airfield they took off from. The observer casted bombs away to damp and uninhabited Lonjsko Polje, which was used as bombing polygon before the war, while the leader landed with bombs in spite of the risk. Section leader and C/O of 12.AČ/8.BP *k1k* Svetozar Lolić wrote in his official statement:

"It was drizzling on 7 April 1941 at 5.30 when we took off, and clouds were at 150m height. When I crossed the Sava River the weather started to worsen, fog was covering the ground and I flew between the layer of cloud and fog. Twenty minutes later, while following my course, I entered



Burning wreck of Blenheim of Vojinov/Kukić/Mraković crew. Srpski Krstur village, 7 April 1941 (Author coll)

even worse weather, so I had to make my way through the clouds which I broke at 1500m altitude. I was flying on that height for 5-10 minutes when I saw the ground once again, so I dove very low thinking that I could make my way to the target. I didn't succeed in it since I entered fog and clouds when I was right above the ground. As I knew I would crash at some hill if I continue flying this way I started breaking clouds again. I found my way through them at 2000 m height. When I saw even worse weather ahead of me, I decided to return to the airfield since I already spent over one hour in the air and it would take me only forty-five minutes of flying to reach my target. So, I was flying back on the same altitude and one hour later I saw the ground. I started approaching to it and saw that I was above the railway station near Garešnica village, from where I took the shortest way back and two and a half hours later I returned to the airfield from which I departed to the mission. I lost my wingman the first time I broke the clouds."

69.VG's crew for the attack to *Gleichenberg* target, 217.E with three Blenheims:

Pilot C/O 217.E *k1k* Matija Petrović, observer *por* Ivan Salević, unknown gunner

Two other crews are unknown.

69.VG's crews for the attack on *Wildon*, 217.E with two Blenheims:

Pilot *k2k* Boža Lazarević, observer *por* Ratomir Anđelković, unknown gunner

The second crew unknown.

69.VG's crews for the attack on *Wildon* target, 218.E with three Blenheims:

Pilot C/O 218.E *k1k* Vladimir Ferencina, observer unknown, unknown gunner

Pilot *por* Svetozar Velikić, observer *por* Milutin Petrović, gunner *nar* Draguljub Černe

Pilot *nar* Vladimir Ferant, observer *k2k* Rudolf Kobal, gunner *nar* Ivan Čubrilović

In spite of all their efforts, none of eight crews from 69.VG managed to find the target. They returned to the base dropping the bombs on Lonjsko Polje which was one of the heavily bombed "targets" that day. There are no concrete statements or accounts for this group or at least they are unknown, since most of the group members died that day above targets in Hungary or joined aviation of newly proclaimed Croatian state later on. On the other hand, airplanes from 68.VG operated as they possibly could in rather complex conditions for executing received task. Official Hungarian and Austrian reports affirmed that. Many locations were bombed both inside the operation zone of 215.E and 216.E and out of it, including even targets in Hungarian bordering area with Austria! A railway composition was also attacked while moving near *Alsószőlő* in Hungary, and locomotive and composition were damaged by nearby explosions. Bomber operated once from sweeping flight but it was mistaken by Hungarians for SM.79. Railroad in *Szentgotthárd*, *Körmend*,



C/O 68.VG, pilot-observer, *maj* Lazar Donović "Laza"
killed on 7 April 1941 (MVB coll)



215.E/68.VG, pilot *por* Radomir Lazarević
killed on 7 April 1941 (MVB coll)

as well as identical target in *Kelebia* were also bombed, all on Hungarian territory. According to Hungarians, two compositions with locomotives were destroyed, and great material damage was made on passengers' station, while one child died and one woman was wounded. The last action is to be considered with reservations since it took place far away from designated targets, yet it is not excluded that some of strayed crews operated there as well.

Austrian side registered total of eleven penetrations of Yugoslav planes in Styria airspace. Apart from the said locations, Yugoslav forces operated in *Weinburg bei Sibing* in South Styria, *Deutschlandsberg* and *Weiz*.

Assessment on the activities of Kingdom of Yugoslavia's Air Force, with special focus on bomber actions in Austria, was given by C/O of German Fourth Air Force fleet, *general lojtnant* Alexander LÖHR, on trial in Belgrade in 1947:

"...Attacks of Yugoslav aviation on Graz, Bruk am den Mure, Bruk am der Leite and Mistelbach by groups containing two to three two-engine bombers hindered our actions greatly even though damage and losses were minor."

Order to attack targets in Hungary was issued in the evening of 6 April, around 21.00 hours. However, due to sabotage of the *2. Centar veze* in Zagreb, it was not delivered before 7 April around 10.00 in the morning. The order didn't include fighters' escort, given that the attack was to be carried out, according to the first order, under the veil of night i.e. in the very dawn. Since captain Kren, who deserted, already gave *VVKJ*'s codes to Germans, they were al-

most certainly informed on planned attacks and targets. The result was in the form of detrimental losses of *8.BP* above Hungarian territory.

In line with *KV* order, targets to be bombed were airports in Hungary, located in *Szeged* and *Pécs*, from where German aviation actively attacked targets in *KJ*.

Even though they were warned, both groups' C/Os, majors Donović and Tešić, insisted to lead their groups to the mission. No persuasion helped in keeping at least one of them on the airfield. The following forces of *8.BP*, from *68.VG* and *69.VG*, by *escadrilles*, were engaged in action:

68.VG's crews for the attack on *Szeged*, *215.E* with two Blenheims:

Pilot C/O *68.VG* *maj* Lazar Donović, observer *por* Ivan Pandža, gunner *nar* Dragutin Veselko

Pilot *por* Radomir Lazarević, observer *por* Andrija Pozder, gunner *nar* Ilija Mičković

216.E with two Blenheims:

Pilot C/O *216.E* *k1k* Sergije Vojinov, observer *por* Petar Kukić, gunner *nar* Ilija Mraković

Pilot *nar* Karlo Murko, observer *por* Josip "Bino" Božić, gunner *nar* Radenko Malešević

These four Blenheims composed first two *68.VG* sections in the attack and they executed sortie on airport and railway shunting in *Szeged*. According to the official Hungarian report, bombers attacked *Szeged* from low flight at 11.11 local time, flying just above the tree tops of *Witch's Island*.



215.E/68.VG, observer *por* Andrija Pozder
killed on 7 April 1941 (*MVB coll*)



218.E/69.VG, rt-gunner *nar* Dragoljub Černe
killed on 7 April (*MVB coll*)



Remains of Lazarević/Pozder/Mićković's Blenheim displayed at the square in Szeged, 1941 (*Georgy Punka coll*)



The same Blenheim from the different angle. Massive crash-inflicted damage is visible. Szeged, April 1941
(*MVB coll*)



Defensive armament of the same Blenheim displayed at the Szeged square. It is unusual that, apart from FN Browning machinegun, there are two Sent-Etien Darn 7.7mm, while Blenheim was typically equipped with only one machinegun (*MVB coll*)

The defense was ready, waiting for the attackers. Apart from Hungarian and German AA guns, German fighters operated as well. Pursued by German fighters, crews of the first section Donović/Pandža/Veselko and wingmen Lazarević/Pozder/Mićković separated after they ejected bombs on airport. The first crew was taken down by Bf109 fighters from *JG.54* near

Szeged above *Uj Szent Isztvan* village. There were no survivors. They have been buried on a local Orthodox cemetery.

The second crew tried to escape by flying along the Tisa River flow, but fighters caught up with them above *Dala* village. *Por* Lazarević tried to jump out of Blenheim while at low altitude but, aware of unfortunate situation, he



218.E/69.VG, pilot *nar* Vladimir Ferant most probably died on 13 April in Budapest Military Hospital (*MVB coll*)



218.E/69.VG, rt-gunner *nar* Čubrilović Ivan killed on 7 April 1941 (*MVB coll*)

opened his parachute when he was half way out of the upper hatch of the cabin. The parachute opened and drew the pilot out of the plane, but it simultaneously got caught into the Blenheim's tail which pulled the pilot downwards with the plane into the Tisa River.

Remains of this plane were recovered from Tisa and displayed on the central square in *Szeged*. Tisa expelled the body of *por* Lazarević exactly three months later near *Srpski Krstur* in Yugoslavia, which remained registered in local documents. He was buried on local Orthodox cemetery. The following was registered on 7 July 1941 in records on deceased on page 150, number 24:

“Municipality of *Srpski Krstur*, under number 1801/941, announces that on 7 July 1941 in 16.00, a corpse remains of deceased air force lieutenant of Yugoslav army Lazarević Radomir was found on the bank of the Tisa River in a place called *Bajir*. He most certainly died in an aerial combat led on 7 April 1941. The identity was determined with help of documents found on the deceased. He was around thirty years old...”

Observer *por* *Andrija Pozder* and gunner *nar* *Ilija Mićković* were buried at the cemetery in *Szeged*.

The second section that included *Vojinov/Kukić/Mraković* and wingman *Murko/Božić/Malešević* carried out successful attack on shunting in *Szeged*. This section didn't separate after the attack and it tried to reach its base in sweeping flight. However, they didn't manage to evade persistent German fighters from *JG.54*.

Under fighters' attack, both crews managed to reach three-border point connecting *Yugoslavia – Hungary – Romania* near *Srpski Krstur*. The gunner of the first crew *nar* *Ilija Mraković* managed to hit one of *Bf109s* from *5.JG/54* which, since it was damaged, separated and forced landed two kilometers from *Srpski Krstur* on Hungarian territory with uninjured pilot. Immediately after, the Blenheim was shot and it burst into flames. From approximately 200 meters altitude *C/O* of *216.E k1k* *Sergije Vojinov* tried to jump out but his parachute didn't open and he was, almost in parallel with the plane, falling to the ground.

Eyewitness of the event was a local from *Srpski Krstur*, *Georg Kisz*:

“We witnessed a very brief aerial combat that occurred, in which one Yugoslav plane was immediately shot down near *Srpski Krstur* village in *Banat*, while the second plane managed to fly away towards *Romania* in a sweeping flight.

...from that crashed plane that was immediately surrounded, and ten to fifteen German fighters flew above it, shooting bursts of fire on the Yugoslav plane from the above from around tens of meters distance. When the Yugoslav plane was all in flames, one airman jumped out of the burning plane, but due to a very small height, his parachute didn't open and he crumbled and died on the bank of *Tisa* near *Srpski Krstur*.

... I visited that place with my friends in the afternoon, where I saw shattered parts of the plane and some parts of airman's body.”



Remains of *nar* *Vladimir Ferant's* Blenheim “black 1” from *218.E/69.VG* in hangar on *Pécs* airport
(*Csaba Besce* coll)



Remains of *maj* Dobrosav Tešić's Blenheim in one of hangars on Pécs airport. April, 1941 (*Milan Micevski coll*)



C/O 69VG *maj* Dobrosav Tešić's Blenheim shot down by German fighters in Siklós/Pécs, Hungary. 7 April 1941
(*via DénesBernád*)

The trail remained in official documents in Srpski Krstur. The following was registered on 8 April 1941, in records on deceased on page 149, number 14:

“Gendarmerie station in Srpski Krstur under number 1550/941 announces that on 7 April 1941 in 11.30 in a yard of Srpski Krstur municipality, Jančićeva Greda, a deceased, half-burned, mutilated corps of aviation officer captain Sergej L. Vojinov was found. He was around thirty-five year old, average height – bulky, well built. His corpse was half-burned. He died when he fell with his airplane after the aerial combat. The identity was established with help of his personal document that was found.”

The following was registered on 8 April 1941, in records on deceased on page 149, number 15:

“Gendarmerie station in Srpski Krstur under number 1550/941 announced that on 7 April 1941 in 11.30 in a yard of Srpski Krstur municipality, Jančićeva Greda, deceased, mutilated – burned corps of aviator lieutenant Kukić Petar was found. He was around twenty-six year old, average height – bulky, well built, brown hair. He died when his plane crashed during the aerial combat. The identity was determined with help of his officer’s cap inside of which the name of the deceased – por Kukić Petar, observer, was written by hand in ink.”

The following was registered on 8 April 1941, in records on deceased on page 149, number 16:

“Gendarmerie station in Srpski Krstur under number 1550/941 announced that on 7 April 1941 in 11.30 in a yard of Srpski Krstur municipality, Jančićeva Greda, a body was

found of an unknown Yugoslav aviator. He was very tall, well built, burnt and mutilated beyond recognition. In a burnt valet under the body a little paper was found that contained writing: *narednik Ilija M.....* (Ilija Mraković, a.c.). He died when his plane crashed during the aerial combat.”

All three aviators were buried on a local Orthodox cemetery.

As *nar* Murko, from wingman’s crew Murko/Božić/Malešević, remembers:

“We are on 300m height and still in dive. A leader in front of us waves with his wings which is a sign to take side-way position on 200m distance and to be ready for attack. There is Szeged ahead of us, and two of us are going straight to the railway crossing. Then I spotted the first pair above the village turning left exactly above the airfield which was apparently full of German planes.

I act and fly in line with leader’s guidance. His plane ejected bombs ... and my observer did the same ... and then, Messerschmits appeared out of nowhere, trying to shoot me down.

Hits drummed against my wing, the last of which hit the engine. There is no fire, but the very idea on what could have happened freezes blood in my veins. Then a bang! Unexpectedly we received well directed burst of fire in cockpit, and windshield in front of us broke into pieces. The front part of the cabin was almost entirely gone. The air was vigorously entering the cabin but I managed to keep control and shoot a long burst on enemy fighter that for a moment



215.E/68.VG, rt-gunner *nar* Ilija Mičković
killed on 7 April 1941 (MVB coll)



216.E/68.VG, rt-gunner *nar* Ilija Mraković
killed on 7 April 1941 (MVB coll)

appeared in front of me. I was hit once again, somewhere in my tail, so my plane sturdily wavered. Then I dove towards the ground. I'm lowering down at full speed. For a second I thought about my leader. I saw him in the blink of a moment, on less than 400m height, with two Bf109s behind him, trying to shoot him down with incessant fire. One second later, a smoke started to gush from Blenheim which revolved over its wing and plunged towards the ground.

When I managed to strengthen the plane just above the cultivated field, I saw a large fire ball far behind my tail. I flew full speed ahead above the very ground and towards Romania. With that maneuver I got rid of my enemy... After several minutes of flying, I made a slight right turn towards south and then, across Novi Sad, headed home."

With serious problems and severely damaged Blenheim, with no flaps, rear wheel and with numerous hits, the crew managed to land successfully to their base.

215.E with two Blenheims:

Pilot *C/O 215.E k1k* Vladimir Jovičić, observer *por* Mirko Jovanović, gunner *nar* Marko Tošković

Pilot *nar* Dušan Čavić, observer *ppor* Mihailo Petrović, gunner unknown

The accounts of many sources state that *C/O* of *215.E/68.VG k1k* Vladimir Jovičić departed for Hungary not before 14.00 hours with desire to avenge his comrades in arms who died in the first attack, which is not the truth.

The attack of his section, four Blenheims strong, which he personally led was recorded by Hungarian authorities to have taken place in exactly 12.45 hours.

In recollection of *rez por* observer Ivan Miklavac, his comrade in arms and member of escadrille he commanded, Jovičić was remembered to be a man and soldier who respected maxim: "It's better to be a lion for a day, than a sheep all your life..."

Although exposed to heavy AA artillery and incessant attacks by German fighters, they managed to leave target area after their leader and *C/O* captain Jovičić was shot down. Pilot *nar* Dušan Čavić witnessed tough combat:

"A nightmare defense, fighters and artillery waited for us when we approached the target. I'm certain that bombers that executed attack before us made them assume highest state of alert. *C/O* led us at low altitude so we received fire right before ejecting bombs at target. Two German fighters were approaching us from the front and from higher altitude just before we attacked. My observer casted bombs away at the target right after our leader.

The *C/O* made sharp right turn, where I noticed that his gunner fired at the enemy. I followed him in sharp turn, as he told me before the take-off that I had to be his shadow and follow whatever he was doing. In the moment when he straightened the plane, above one big farm, he lowered his plane to the height of only twenty meters. I followed to the same height, while my observer shouted: OVER, OVER, RUN...!



215.E/68.VG, rt-gunner *nar* Dragutin Veselko killed on 7 April 1941 (*MVB coll*)



216.E/68.VG, *nar* Karlo Murko (*Arhiv Gustava Ajdiča, Vojaški muzej Slovenske vojske coll via Marko Ličina i Tomaž Perme*)



Bf109 of the German ace Hptm Arnold Lignitz, C/O 2./JG54 on Pécs airfield, after engine failure while unsuccessfully attempting to intercept Yugoslav Blenheims from 69.VG/8.BP. (Csaba Besce coll)



Hptm Lignitz's "Messer" with which only a day earlier he shot down Milićević/Glišović/Đukić's Blenheim 3528 from 11.SGDI, from Romanian airfield Arad as his twentieth victory. In Hungary, he was lucky to survive engine failure that caused 70% damage on his Bf109 E-4. (Csaba Besce coll)



COMITE INTERNATIONAL DE LA CROIX-ROUGE
GENÈVE
AGENCE CENTRALE DES PRISONNIERS DE GUERRE

DÉCÈS - TODESFALL

Nom et prénom: Tešić Dobrosav
 Nom and forename: Tešić Dobrosav

Date et lieu de naissance: 20. Dec. 1906 Goraga Bukovica
 Date and place of birth: 20. Dec. 1906 Goraga Bukovica

Age et date du décès: 7. April 1941 Siklós
 Age and date of death: 7. April 1941 Siklós

Etat (civil, rép. nat. ou civ.) et No de matricule (profession figurant sur la plaque d'identité): B. Filigrappement Zagreb
 Status (civil, rep. nat. or civ.) and No of matriculation (profession appearing on the identity plaque): B. Filigrappement Zagreb

Adresse de la famille: Mrs Tešić Dobrosav, Zagreb
 Address of the family: Mrs Tešić Dobrosav, Zagreb

Est-il guéri et est-il prêt à retourner? /
 Was he cured and is he ready to return? /

Devis de la mort: Mit einem Blenheim Bristol Nr. 3505
 Testamentary: Mit einem Blenheim Bristol Nr. 3505

Lieu de sépulture: Gemeindefriedhof
 Place of burial: Gemeindefriedhof

Le cercueil est-il marqué et inscrit de manière appropriée pour la famille?
 Was the coffin suitably marked and inscribed for the family?
Mit dem Grab mit beschrifteter Kreuztafel und Platte in gelber aus der Familie selbsthand gezeichnet

Il y a-t-il des objets de souvenir à envoyer?
 Are there any objects of remembrance to be sent?
Weiße Tapetenrolle Mitten des Stuhles

Remarque spéciale sur l'état de santé, sur les soins de médecine de la guerre?
 Special remark on the state of health, on the war medical care?
Wurde ebenfalls der Familie durch das Kommando der Wehrmacht mit dem Verbleibenden zugestellt

Y a-t-il une ou des familles créancières ou autres à prévenir, au décès, au cas où elles ne seraient pas avisées par les autorités locales?
 Are there one or more creditor or other families to be warned, at death, in case they are not notified by the local authorities?
Keine der Familie von dem Ableben des Soldaten noch nicht unterrichtet worden ist, könnten aber ein Geldgeber, ein Arzt, oder eine Krankenkasse sein, die sich während der Krankheit oder in den letzten Augenblicken ihrer Verurteilung befinden, einen kurzen Bericht zu schreiben lassen, damit die Angehörigen über ihren letzten Stand und den Begräbnisort Kenntnis geben werden können

Notes: (autre et signature de l'autorité compétente):
 Notes, stamp and signature of the competent authority:
Geneva, Schweiz und Österreich der neutralen Rote Kreuz

Signature et adresse de Jean Steiner, Directeur et Secrétaire général de Genève
 Signature and address of Jean Steiner, Director and Secretary General of Geneva



Geneva Red Cross death certificate received by major Dobrosav Tešić's wife. It contains a registration number of VVKJ Blenheim 3505 shot down near Siklós, Pécs, 7 April 1941 (MVB coll)

Then I noticed C/O's plane burning in such a way that only its nose, wing ends and part of the fuselage with tail surfaces could be seen. It hit the ground at full speed and exploded. Fighters were turning on our left and above us so C/O's plane was most probably hit by AA artillery.

I continued my winding sweeping flight at full speed until we escaped from German fighters. Completely exhausted, I landed on the airport of fighter's regiment that was located near our airfield."

The entire crew of captain Jovičić was buried in Szeged. 215.E with two Blenheims:

Pilot *nar* Rudolf Dunjko, observer unknown, gunner unknown. Second crew unknown

When completed the attack, crew managed to leave the target area. Although heavily damaged by the enemy AA guns, they headed their way towards Yugoslavia. They managed to reach airport Jugovićevo in Novi Sad, but there, on their way to the airport, they were expected by the nervous Yugoslav AA defense in Sajlovo. Even though they were on their way to land, with their landing gear extracted and visible Royal Yugoslav markings, they managed to land only in their third attempt through cross barrage fire of Sajlovo battery. Blenheim was repaired in the afternoon and evening time, so the crew was ready to fly and join their unit.

Pilot *nar* Viktor Grdović, observer *rez ppor* Dragomir Pavlović, gunner *nar* Milisav Raković



C/O 69.VG, pilot-observer, *maj* Dobrosav Tešić "Boca" killed on 7 April 1941 (MVB coll)

After bombing the target, wingman made right turn and separated from the leader. He tried to leave AA artillery and German fighters' operation zone. However, according to Hungarian sources, he was caught up by Bf110E fighters from 2.ZG/26, near Szöreg village in the vicinity of Szeged, which shoot him down. No one survived.

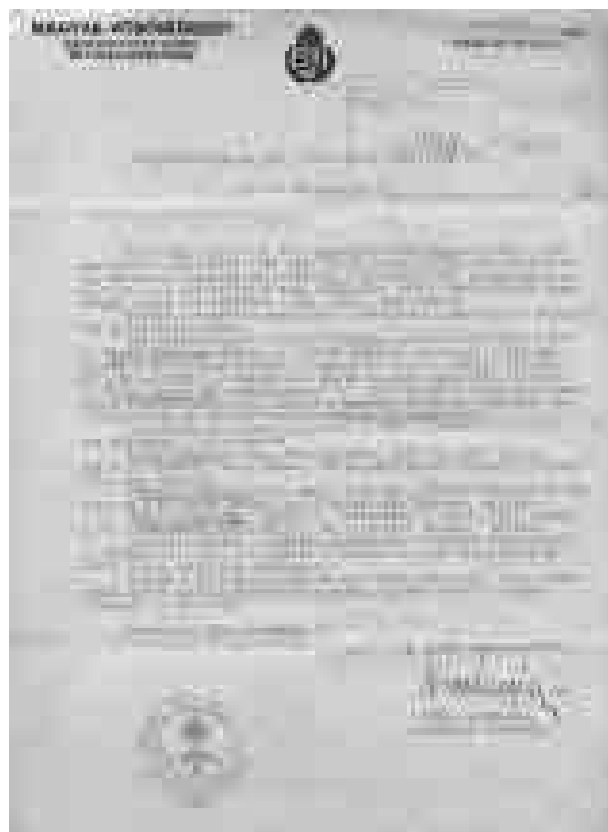
This loss was not registered in Yugoslav records but it was registered in Hungarian documents. The crew was buried in Szeged at unknown location.

Going through reports on scores of the enemy AA and fighters, it is difficult to determine who is responsible for shooting down Blenheim from 68.VG/8.BP. Unconfirmed data indicate that Hungarian AA artillery, armed with Swedish Bofors 40mm guns almost certainly shot down airplane of C/O of 215.E *k1k* Vladimir Jovičić, and that it caused damage to a number of other actors in the attack.

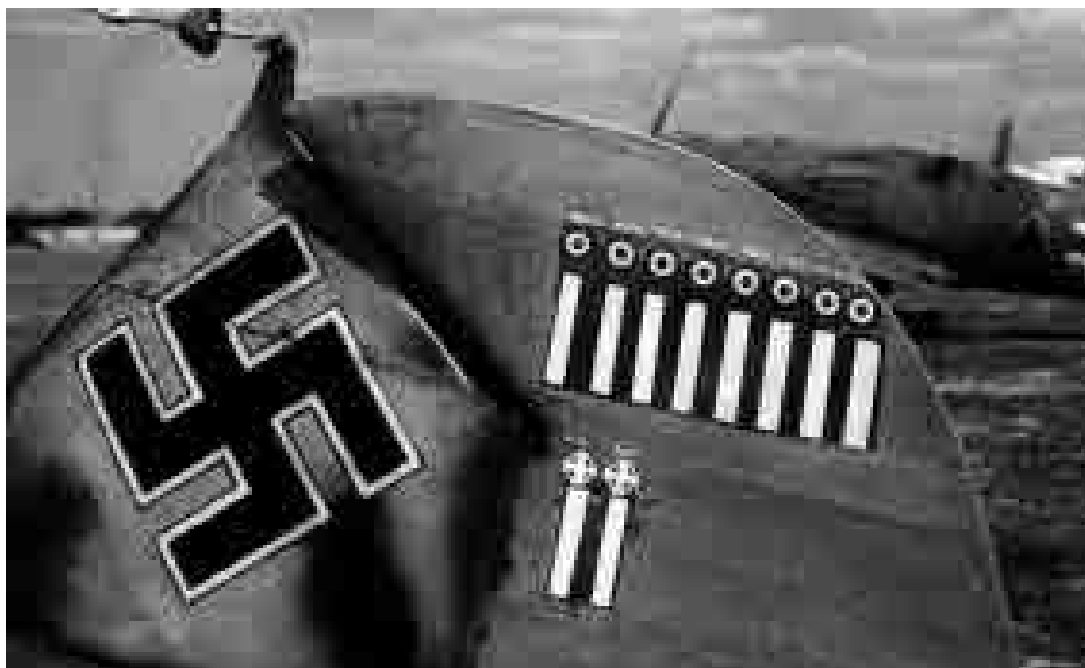
Four crews from 69.VG were involved in attacking target Pécs. Two Blenheims from 218.E:

pilot C/O 69.VG *maj* Dobrosav Tešić, observer *por* Milutin Petrović, gunner *nar* Dragoljub Černe, second gunner *ppor* Dragutin Karner

The first section, comprised of two Blenheims and led by 69.VG's C/O *maj* Tešić on 3505, executed attack on airport. They didn't throw all the bombs but, according to Hungarian data, only six of those, as they probably planned to attack nearby railway station in Siklós as well.



Document of the Hungarian Red Cross on the death of Tešić/Petrović/Černe/Karner crew from 218.E/69.VG (via Dénes Bernád)



Tail unit of BF109 of German ace, C/O of 5.JG/54 Grünhertz, Oblt Hubert Müterich, showing two victories over VVKJ Blenheims. Hungary, April 1941. (MVB coll)

Jozsef MECSEKI witnessed the attack:

“Soon after sirens voiced, one Yugoslav bomber entered Siklós airspace, preparing to bomb the railway station. In that moment one German fighter plane appeared and in a few seconds it shot Yugoslav bomber down. The plane exploded and crashed in flames on the farm near the road leading to Nagyharsány, close to the railway guard post No.9.

The minute this plane crashed, another one appeared, also pursued by German fighters. Tossing the bombs, he started to run away, as he probably wanted to reach the city. Two bombs that he dropped fell on the house in 12 Batthyány Street, which collapsed. The third one fell in baker József SZEIBL's yard but it didn't explode. Fighters shot this plane down as well, in the vicinity of Siklós (crew Ferant/Kobal/Čubrilović, a.c.).



C/O I.AČ. 69.VG/218.E. Observer, k1k Rudolf Kobal “Rudi” (MVB coll)



8.BP adjutant's representative, pilot k1k Vićentije Milanović “Vića” (MVB coll)



Disfigured body of C/O 215.E *k1k* Jovičić on a corn field near Szeged.
(Jovičić family coll)

Of two crews, only the crew from the first plane was successfully identified. The plane belonged to Zagreb aviation regiment and the crew included: Tešić Dobrosav, major born in 1906, Petrović Milutin, lieutenant born in 1916 and Černe Dragoljub non-commissioned officer born in 1919. Identity of the fourth pilot was impossible to establish (potporučnik Dragutin Karner, a.c.). Their bodies were buried on cemetery in Siklós in the presence on numerous locals.”

Ppor Karner’s death was not registered in Yugoslav records. He was most probably a member of reserve composition from 4.LP, who was willing to fight and paid for it with his life. There is a statement of *k1k* Svetozar Lolić, who returned to his “office” in nearby village house in the eve of 8 April around 18.00 hours, which confirms that:

“...there I found wives with children of our fellow officers and non-commissioned officers who didn’t return from the mission. Those were wives of: captain Jovičić, reserve lieutenant Miklavec, sergeant Baralić and two other women, whose names I presently cannot remember, with two children. One of them was a wife of a sergeant (second lieutenant, a.c.) from 4.LP, who also died.”

The crew that flew as *maj* Dobrosav Tešić’s wingman included:

Pilot *nar* Vladimir Ferant, observer *k1k* Rudolf Kobal, gunner *nar* Ivan Čubrilović

According to Hungarian reports, Yugoslav bombers executed first attack in 10.20 with two airplanes, and the second one in 10.30 hours with another two planes. The eyewitness of the attack was then a ten years old boy Lázsló FEKETE from Pécs:

“A whining sound of airplane woke us up that morning. One by one, German Messerschmits landed on airport, followed by three Junkers Ju52, which came as fulfillment to fighters that stood in a long line on the other side of the airport, where the street of Endresz György was located. Pilots let us take a look at the planes. Suddenly, a hurl of engine voiced, different one from that of German planes. Black dots separated from planes and we were already running. The bombing initiated. With one eye I saw a pillar of smoke rising. Bombs found nothing. A few minutes later



Remains of Blenheim of C/O 215.E/68.VG *k1k* Vladimir Jovičić in Szeged periphery, 7 April 1941 (Csaba Besce coll)

fighters were airborne and, as far as I know, they shot down both planes.

Actually, they shot down one plane in Rózsaf village area and second one nearer. There were three individuals in the plane that crashed in Rózsaf village yard, which included Kobal Rudolf, 32 years old, married, I class aviation captain and Čubrilović D. Ivica, II class captain who died (*nar* Čubrilović Đ. Ivan, a.c.), while they transferred the third pilot with grave injuries to a hospital in Pécs (*nar* Vladimir Ferant, a.c.). After the treatment in this hospital, his condition improved in such an extent that he was transferred to the Central military hospital for plastic surgery in Buda-



C/O 215.E/68.VG, pilot *k1k* Vladimir Jovičić
killed on 7 April 1941 (Author coll)



Remains of Blenheim of *k1k* Vladimir Jovičić in one of hangars on Szeged airport. April, 1941 (*Milan Micevski coll*)

pest. I am not familiar with what happened to him later on.”

The pilot, *nar* Vladimir Ferant, most probably died on 13 April in the Central military hospital in Budapest from severe burns. He was probably buried there.

Nar Čubrilović and *k1k* Kobal were buried at cemetery in *Rózsaf* on 9 April. Burial ceremony was held by priest Lajos BOCSOR.

German defense from *JG.54* reported multiple victories regarding Yugoslav bombers. *C/O* of *5.JG/54* *Oblt* Hubert MÜTERICH reported that he shot down two Blenheims and it was his ninth and tenth victory. Second lieutenant *Oblt* Josef PÖHS reported one Blenheim as his eighth victo-



Remains of a member of “forgotten” VVKJ crew from *215.E/68.VG*, Grdović-Pavlović-Raković. Szeged Police photo document. Szöreg, 7 April 1941 (*Šime Oštrić coll*)

ry. *Oblt* Wolfgang SPÄTHE from *2.ZG/26* also reported his first victory (*215.E/68.VG* crew, Grdović-Pavlović-Raković, a.c.). Two unnamed pilots did the same, i.e. each of them reported one victory over Blenheims, at least one of which shall not be recognized later on.

Attempt of *Hptm* Arnold LIEGNITZ, captain of *2./JG54*, to take part in the fight should also be mentioned. He took off with insufficiently warmed up engine. The minute he separated from the ground the engine stalled so he had to force land in the end of the very airfield on which occasion he severely damaged his plane, the damage was around 70%.

It is worth mentioning that all Yugoslav aviators, who died above Hungary, were buried with military honors and with church service with people present.

217.E with two Blenheims:

Pilot *k2k* Boža Lazarević, observer *por* Slobodan Gerić, gunner unknown

Pilot *por* Svetozar Velikić, observer *por* Ratimir Anđelković, gunner unknown

Ten minutes later, around 10.30 hours local time, the second section was approaching the target but was disrupted by defense of numerous fighters which closed the approaching route. In recollections of *por* Slobodan Gerić, it was clear to them right away that they won't leave that place alive if they try to penetrate defense, and that it was time to run for their lives. Bombs were ejected randomly. Both planes assumed lowest height possible and at full speed with

Szeged airport, base of ZG26.
Hungary, March/April 1941
(NMI coll)



defense fire of their gunners they headed their way towards the Yugoslav territory. German fighters pursued them for a while and then, most probably as their fuel was low, they gave up. Both Blenheims had numerous hits but they avoided being shot down. *K2k* Boža Lazarević landed on *4.LP's* nearby airport, while *por* Svetozar Velikić landed directly on

8.BP's airfield.

In the night between 7 and 8 April, *108. Infantry regiment* mutinied, and in the morning the mutiny was joined by *40. Reserve regiment* and parts of *42. Infantry regiment*, all from *Slavonska Division* with majority of Croat soldiers. They gathered near Bjelovar and command over rebels was



215.E/68.VG, observer *por* Jovanović Mirko
killed on 7 April 1941 (MVB coll)



215.E/68.VG, pilot *nar* Viktor T. Grdović
killed on 7 April 1941 (AVII coll)

given to air force captain of Croat nationality, Ivan Mrak. 4th Army HQ was partly dislocated from Bjelovar and the remaining staff was captured by Ustašas and rebels. When he heard about the mutiny, C/O of 1. Grupa armija, army general Milorad Petrović, proposed to the Supreme Command to use bomber aviation i.e. 8.BP against rebels. Civil authorities joined this mutiny as well. When he was informed about imprisonment of officers and soldiers in Bjelovar, C/O of the 4th Army, army general Petar Nedeljković, called mayor of Bjelovar by phone and warned him that the city would be bombed in case prisoners were not freed immediately. The city was not bombed but the treatment of prisoners, which threatened to escalate, somewhat regulated. Officers were sent to Zagreb while others were kept in prison and two days later handed over to Germans.

On 8 April the regiment received order to contact C/O of *Jadranska Division*, general Jovo Kukavčić for cooperation purposes in the attack against Zadar. The contact was instantly established. Liaison pilot *nar* Karlo Murko on Bücker 131 was delegated but joint action never took place, neither that day or in the future, as division never succeeded in approaching Zadar. The regiment took no action that day. Around 13.00 hours regiment's airfield was attacked by the enemy fighters, one Blenheim was inflamed, one soldier heavily injured.

Late in the evening on 8 April a group of airmen arrived to airfield by truck, from reserve with several non-commissioned officers and a group of volunteers from

Borongaj airport near Zagreb, as a kind of fulfillment for 8.BP. The volunteers were callow guys under twenty years old that had just learnt the basic pilot techniques on training aircraft and finished "all" twentyish hours of training on those. Notwithstanding their admirable gesture, they were completely useless as flying cadre for Blenheims. Zlatko Rendulić was among them. After the war he became prominent test pilot and later on air force general who recalled in his autobiography the night on that 8 April 1941:

"They unloaded us near officers' canteen on airport and woke up chefs who were asleep. I was astounded when I saw that first class dinner was served to us with white bread, and then with stewed fruit, all on clean white table cloths. I couldn't stop wondering why we are suddenly so valuable, when up to that time we ate from a "cauldron".

... Soon after I found out that right before our arrival a group of two-engine Bristol Blenheim bombers took off without fighters' protection to bomb airports in Hungary, near Pécs and Szeged. In spite of their low flight they were attacked by German Messerschmitt 109 fighters, plus they encountered flak in airport area. That was how nine Blenheims crashed (sic). And that was true reason why we received such a good supper. "We ate dead men dinner", one colleague noticed."

On 9 April an order was received (directed to all bomber regiments, a.c.) to bomb enemy columns advancing from Kriva Palanka. As the regiment was previously ordered to



215.E/68.VG, rt-gunner, *nar* Raković V. Milisav
killed on 7 april 1941 (AVII coll)



218.E/69.VG, observer *por* Milutin Petrović
killed on 7 April 1941 (MVB coll)



Powerful armament of Hungarian AA defense. Swedish 40mm caliber Bofors.
VVKJ Blenheim crews from *8.BP* remembered those by their powerful performance (*Csaba Besce coll*)



Photo from the inspection made by Hungarian police in Szeged suburb, Szöreg, 7 April 1941
Forgotten crew Grdović-Pavlović-Raković from *215.E/68.VG* (*Šime Oštrić coll*)



Blenheim from *8.BP* burned down by its own crews on 11 April 1941 on Topola airfield near Bosanski Aleksandrovac. It is worth mentioning that only servicable Blenheims were burned down, while from unknown reasons they avoided defective ones that could be repaired (*Author coll*)



Blenheim “black 2” from *217.E/69.VG* with crew Petrović/Salević/unknown gunner that landed on Croatian territory near Zagreb due to alleged malfunction of fuel meters (*Jan vd Heuvel coll*)



Regiment's (8.BP) liaison aircraft, Bü131, No.911, damaged and captured at Topola airfield by Germans that pose on a war trophy (*Boris Ciglić coll*)

cooperate in the attack on Zadar and as they were expecting a call to execute that task, they didn't follow new order. The airfield was bombed twice that day by German Do-17 from unit 9./KG 2 with inflammable and high explosive bombs, but except from one damaged plane, there were no other losses. In spite of two attacks carried out, the airport was preserved owing to a fake airfield that was constructed on a meadow not far from the real airfield, where two damaged Breguets were placed, including one heavily damaged Blenheim on which the enemy poured all its charge in two raids.

In the night of 10 April 1941 an order was received according to which the regiment was to bomb bridge on the Morava River near Čuprija, and then to land on airfield Preljina near Čačak. Captain Matija Petrović was designated to complete this mission with the remaining combined escadrille but due to sabotage the mission didn't take place. This event was witnessed by *k1k* Vićentije Milanović:

“At dawn when engines were started for departure



Burnt 8.BP Blenheim and demolished regiment's liaison aircraft Bü131 on the southern part of Topola airfield (*Dénes Bernád coll*)

to the mission, unidentified object in front of one plane exploded. The news was immediately spread that bomb thrown by the enemy the day before exploded and that the entire airfield was showered with such bombs, including inflammable bombs and inflammable leaves which posed great danger for planes' take-off. Captain Petrović immediately used this version (most probably created by him personally). He came to regiment's HQ to inform C/O that owing to the mentioned circumstances crews didn't want to take off, especially not before the dawn when the airfield should be inspected. Upon visiting the scene and conducting investigation, it was determined that bomb igniter exploded. It was purposefully placed in front of the plane in order to explode during removal of branches that masked the plane. The soldier who removed camouflaging material died on the spot. Plane crews never refused flying orders like captain Petrović reported, on contrary, the crews were ready to take off and were just waiting for order. In the



Regiment's Ca310bis 3251, used for training of pilots in flying on multiengine aircraft. Within 8.BP, Rovine airfield, April 1941 (*Siniša Pogačić coll*)



Tons of destroyed equipment and planes from Topola airfield. Parts of wings, engines and fuselage of Blenheims from 8.BP are clearly visible.
Topola airfield, April/May 1941 (*Boris Ciglić coll*)



The same pile of deserted and damaged equipment from 8.BP's Topola airfield. In the front there are diesel aggregates, "Boxer" caterpillar for plane extraction, Blenheim parts, and turned over burnt Praga vehicle (*Siniša Pogačić coll*)



Severely damaged Blenheim from 8.BP ready for destruction before withdrawal of unit from Rovine airfield. Apart from German soldiers posing on a war trophy, there is a fuel barrel below the airplane that was not caught by fire from an unknown reason (*Boris Ciglić coll*)

meantime, a fog that encompassed the airfield was so thick that visibility decreased to less than few steps. Furthermore, there were no data weather the fog was only above the very ground or on high altitude as well.

Later on, when the fog slightly rose (around 10.00 hours) it was already late to bomb the planned target, so another order was given to carry out flight over to Bijeljina airfield. Due to the fog, the airplanes were sent of one by one, with great pause in between their take-offs.

When the fourth plane took off, the first one already returned reporting that Bijeljina airfields was attacked by enemy, inflamed and still under attack, so no further take-offs took place. Regarding the planes that already took off, instead of flying to Bijeljina, captain Matija Petrović immediately turned to Zagreb and there he joined newly formed Croatian air force. Another plane, piloted by captain Putica Đorđe, a Serb, our class mate, followed this example. During its flight over Bosanski Aleksandrovac the third plane was seriously damaged by our (better yet, already Croatian at that moment) AA artillery. It was forced to return to the airfield where it landed without the landing gear, since installations were ripped apart. Three planes were lost that morning. Two crews joined Croats. In the afternoon, our enemy bombed the airfield on several occasions, destroying all planes except for one (nine Ju87 planes from 4./Stg77, a.c.).

Blenheim that forced landed on the airfield executed attack on railway station Sisak hitting on that occasion rail-

road as well. The attack was carried out by the following crew: pilot *nar* Dušan Savić, observer *k2k* Božidar “Boža” Arsović, unknown gunner. Damage was later on repaired by mechanics led by local nationalists - Frankovci.

“Croatian soldiers that abandoned their units somewhere in Bosnia and that were returning to their homes were passing in groups by the airfield all day long. In the evening that day Croatian officers, non-commissioned officers and soldiers left regiment as well (although there were several exceptions among officers and non-commissioned officers, including captain Ferenčina, who didn’t leave the regiment until capitulation, however, some noncommissioned officers, Croats, followed us even in captivity). I have to say that Croats in our regiment acted correctly and each of them reported to his immediate senior and handed over his weapon before leaving the unit.”

Division general Ratko Raketnić arrived in Topola vilage that evening where regiment’s HQ was located, all by himself. He told to the regiment’s staff that his division (Slavonska, a.c.) that was at the front ahead of us entirely dissolved when Croats left, so that there were no forces or resistance over the Sava River whatsoever.

On 11 April the regiment’s residuals, only Serbian officers, non-commissioned officers and soldiers, since the regiment was filled with Croat soldiers who abandoned us, undertook retrieval by land towards Sarajevo over Travnik and Kiseljak. The rest of the material as well as damaged

planes were set to flames before their leave. Together with *8.BP*, *4.LP* and *2.VB HQ* also left. The regiment remained in Travnik that night.

Retrieval from Travnik to Sarajevo was executed during the day on 12 April. As Vića Milanović remembers:

“One cunning event that helped us is worth mentioning here. In Vitez village, located between Travnik and Kiseljak, Croats attacked retrieving columns with rifles and machine guns. When he found out about that, C/O of *2.VB* (pukovnik Jaša Đorđević, a.c.) sent delegation to that village with message that air force column was about to transit the village, and if that column was to be attacked, he would order destruction of the village by bombing (even though in that moment we didn't have a single plane). The plan was sheer success, and not only that we were not attacked by fire but not a single “boo” was heard during our transit.

The regiment spent the night in Raskršće village in front of Sarajevo. On 13 April there was no move or operations whatsoever. The next day regiment held its position. In line with the order of Air force C/O the entire man power form *8.BP* and *4.LP* was about to be recomposed into two detachments for closing the route from Kiseljak and Mostar to Sarajevo, since the King and the Government were supposed to go through Sarajevo, and there were no organized infantry troops in the entire Sarajevo region to

execute this order. The men carried out this duty diligently and readily. Armed only with rifles against the expected enemy tanks, the men endured twenty-six hours on wasteland in quickly improvised shelters, ready to sacrifice for their King, when they didn't succeed in preserving their sky. I was designated to be C/O of detachment formed to close the road Mostar – Raskršće - Sarajevo, and that was my last duty in my Homeland.

On 15 April, as the King and the Government went through Sarajevo, the men were withdrawn from their position into a bivouac near Raskršće village. That day in the afternoon, German armored units, joined by multifarious parts of our troops and even refugees all the way from Belgrade, commenced entering Sarajevo from Kiseljak direction. The enemy entered Sarajevo. The country capitulated. On the very day the remaining soldiers and non-commissioned officers were deployed to provinces they lived in and by trucks they made an attempt to transfer to Serbia and their region. Some of them made it and I received this news while I was in prison. The officers left to Sarajevo, where they were captured and most of them were taken to captivity.

Instead of planes, that were promised to wait for us in Sarajevo, and which were allegedly shipped from America, Germans packed us on trains on 22 April 1941, and took us to Germany as prisoners of war.”



Aircraft captured by Germans at Topola airfield near Bosanski Aleksandrovac. Apart from Bü131, Breguet XIX, Ikarus Ik2, Aero A35, there are also two Blenheims from *8.BP* on the northern part of the airfield (*Simiša Pogačić coll*)