

Tactical Structure in World War II

Yugoslavia

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24 January 2022

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GENERAL

The development of Yugoslav strategic doctrine is the story of a succession of desperate responses to a steadily increasing range of threats. Finally, the threats were such that an impoverished and fragmented Yugoslavia had no response at all.

Through the mid-1930s Yugoslavia faced a wide range of relatively low-level threats. The nation's Balkan neighbors, although coveting some of its territory and minority populations, were not themselves sufficiently strong to cause major concern. Austria to the north was generally peaceable and only a small border was shared with the more powerful Italian fascist regime. In 1938, however, Germany annexed Austria, and in response General Simovic, Chief of the Armed Forces General Staff, drew up Operational Plan S. Assuming a German-Italian attack from Italian, German, and Hungarian territory, it called for the construction of a series of border fortifications along the frontiers with these three nations.

This plan was made obsolete by the 1939 Italian conquest of Albania, which opened a long and vulnerable border to an unfriendly neighbor. In response, General Simovic's successor, General Kotic, drew up plan R-40. This envisioned a speedy reduction of the Italian enclave of Zara, a defensive holding action along the Albanian border, and a slow fighting withdrawal from the northern front. This plan, too, quickly became obsolete as German troops took up positions in Romania and Bulgaria showed signs of joining the Axis to satisfy long-standing claims against Yugoslav and Greek territories.

Now all but surrounded by hostile regimes a new plan was drawn up, the Operational Plan R-41. This called for a joint effort with Yugoslavia's only remaining ally, Greece. Under the provisions of this directive, a Yugoslav-Greek offensive was to drive the Italians out of Albania, while the two nations were to fight a holding action along the Bulgarian frontiers. The rest of Yugoslavia was to be defended in depth, with the first line being the string of border fortifications ordered under Operational Plan S. Unfortunately, these works were only about 40% complete at the time of the invasion and included only light weapon positions and hasty obstacles.

The defense at the first line was to provide time to blow the bridges and mobilize the rest of the army to occupy the second defense line. This line ran along the Drava, Danube, and Nisava Rivers and was to be held for at least three weeks, during which the mobilization of the Army was to be completed. Finally, the main defense line ran through the Bosnian and West Serbian highlands behind the Sava and Morava Rivers.

Implementing this, the Yugoslavs formed their army into three army groups (the equivalent of Western armies) and nine armies (equivalent to corps). The 1st Army Group faced the Italian and Austrian borders and consisted of the VII Army (2 divisions, facing Austria) and the IV Army (3 divisions, facing Italy), along with one cavalry division. The 2nd Army Group faced the Hungarian and Romanian borders and was made up of the II Army (3 divisions) and the I Army (1 infantry & 1 cavalry division). Finally, the 3rd Army Group was responsible for the southern Romanian, Bulgarian, Greek, and Albanian borders with the VI Army (2 infantry & 1 cavalry division), V Army (4 divisions), III Army (4 divisions), and the III Territorial Army (3 divisions), plus one division in Army Group reserve. In addition, the independent Coastal Army controlled 1 division and a further 4 divisions came under GHQ control as a strategic reserve.

All these borders except for that with Greece were hostile. There was clearly no way Yugoslavia could defend these frontiers with the forces available. This was especially true given the archaic nature of much of the Army's organization and equipment.

In the late 1930s Yugoslavia had begun a belated effort to modernize the Army. All available resources were put into this effort, but it was still a case of too little, too late. Nevertheless, between 1 September 1939 and 27 March 1941 the Army received the following equipment:

From Czechoslovakia: 1,000 ZB 7.9mm machine guns, 347 ZB 15mm machine guns, 120 M36 and M37 75mm AA guns, 108 M28 80mm AA guns, 150 Skoda 37mm M38 AT guns, 212 Skoda 47mm AT guns;

From Italy: 120 Breda 20mm AA guns;

From Spain: 48 Breda 47mm AT guns;

From Germany: 200 Steyr light trucks, 1,000 bicycles;

From Hungary: 40 motors for pontoons;

From France: 54 Renault R.35 tanks;

From the USA: 1,000 Chevrolet 2½-ton trucks.

This was a massive rearmament program given the extremely limited financial resources the Yugoslav government had to work with. Had these been added to a more contemporary army the result would have been impressive. Unfortunately, Belgrade was attempting to make up for decades of neglect in a two-year procurement program.

As an example, before these weapons were delivered the Yugoslav infantry divisions did not have a single anti-tank weapon of any description. The decision to add an anti-tank company of twelve guns to each of the 28 divisions, still an abysmally low ratio of AT weapons to troops, created a requirement for 336 anti-tank guns which immediately swallowed up all but 18% of the AT guns purchased.

The problem that finally caused the rapid downfall of the Yugoslav Army in April 1941, however, was not military at all. A relatively new state, Yugoslavia combined about a dozen distinct ethnic groups, all of whom were deeply suspicious of the others. It was perhaps inevitable that one of the groups would seek almost complete dominance, if only out of defensive reflex. Between the wars the Serbs essentially took over the government and paid little attention to the aspirations of the other groups. Many of the ethnic groups, being quite small, seemed to take this almost in stride, but the other major division, the Croats, boiled with resentment.

When the Axis forces crossed the Yugoslav borders not only did many of the non-Serbian units not resist, some actually aided turned against their officers and aided the foreigners by holding bridges and attacking Serb-dominated headquarters units.

The lack of reliability of part of the Army must have been known to the high command. Increasing German pressure on the Yugoslav government forced it to essentially capitulate without a fight in the early spring of 1941. It was felt that there was simply no way to hold out against the combined Axis forces. On 27 March, however, General

Simovic led a coup in the name of the young King Peter II and abrogated the humiliating agreements forced on Yugoslavia. The next day the General issued general mobilization orders that would bring the strength of the Army to 1,200,000 men in the field units, plus a further 500,000 men in the reserve and border units. On 6 April the Germans savagely bombed Belgrade and crossed the border in strength, together with their Hungarian and Italian allies.

From the Northwest the Italians launched their Second Army (5 infantry divisions) and Sixth Army (3 celere, 2 armored, 2 motorized, and 3 autotransportable divisions); and from Albania the XXVI Corps (3 infantry, 1 alpine, 1 armored divisions). The Germans launched their Second Army (5 infantry, 1 mountain, 1 motorized, 1 panzer divisions) from the North; and the Twelfth Army (5 infantry, 3 mountain, 3 motorized, and 5 panzer divisions) from the Northeast and East. Heavy resistance was the exception rather than the rule and by 13 April the Germans were in Belgrade. The Yugoslav Army, as a coherent fighting force, had lasted about five days.

Army Group	Army	Division/Odred	Regiments	Battalions
First	Fourth	27th "Savska" Division	35, 53, 104 Inf; 27 Art	
		40th "Slavonska" Division	42, 43, 89, 108 Inf; 40 Art	
		42nd "Murska" Division	36, 105, 126 Inf; 42 Art, 341 Res	
		"Ormoski" Odred	39 Inf; 6, 8 Cav	1 b/c
		Army Troops	81 Cav; 81 Art	4 AA
	Seventh	32nd "Triglavska" Division	37, (39*), 40, (110*) Inf; 32 Art	
		38th "Dravska" Division	45, 112, 128 Inf; 38 Art, 6 Border	
		"Triglavski" Alpine Odred	1 Alpine	4 Mtn Art
		"Risnjacki" Alpine Odred	2 Alpine	5 Mtn Art
		"Licki" Odred	44 Inf	I/17 Art
		Army Troops	71 Art	7 AA
		1st Cavalry Division	2, (6*), (8*) Cav	1 Horse Art
			110 Inf	
	First	7th "Potiska" Division	25(-), 34, (51*) Inf; 7 Art (-)	
		3rd Cavalry Division	3, 51, 66 Cav	3 Mot, 3 m/c, 3 Horse Art
		"Sencanski" Odred	56 Cav; 15 Border, 314 Res	II/25 Art
		"Somborski" Odred	51 Inf	two bns/51 Art
		"Zabalski" Odred	7 Inf	I/7 Art
		Army Troops	56 Art	1 AA
		Second	10th "Bosanska" Division	10, 27, 60 Inf; 10 Art, 316 Res
			17th "Vrbaska" Division	33, 89, 90 Inf; 17 Art(-)
			30th "Osjecka" Division	17, 41, 64 Inf; 30 Art
			Army Troops	76 Cav; 76 Art
Third	Third	13th "Hercegovacka" Division	29, 32, (85*) Inf; 13 Art(-)	
		15th "Zetska" Division	38, 61, 87 Inf; 15 Art	
		25th "Vardarska" Division	21, 46, 47, 50 Inf; 25 Art(-)	
		31st "Kosovska" Division	30, 31, 56 Inf; 31 Art	
		"Konski" Odred	48 Inf	II/22 Art
		Army Troops	66 Art	3 AA
	Third	5th "Sumadijska" Division	19, 59, 72 Inf; 5 Art	
		Territorial	20th "Bregalnica" Division	23, 28, (49*) Inf; 20 Art(-)
			46th "Moravska" Division	(1*), 22, (62*), 92 Inf; 46 Art
		"Strumicki" Odred	49 Inf	II/20 Art
		Army Troops	114 Art	1 Tank
	Fifth	8th "Krajinska" Division	9, 74, 76 Inf; 8 Art	
		9th "Timocka" Division	(14*), 20, 75 Inf; 9 Art(-)	
		34th "Toplicka" Division	3, 12, 16 Inf; 34 Art	
		50th "Drinska" Division	5, 63, 65 Inf; 50 Art	
		2nd Cavalry Division	1, 7 Cav	2 b/c, 2 m/c, 2 Horse Art
		"Vlasinski" Odred	1, 62 Inf; 61 Cav; 61 Army Art (-)	
		"Kalinski" Ordred	14 Inf	II/9 Art
		Army Troops	113 Art	5 AA
	Sixth	3rd "Dunavska" Division	(8*), 18, 57 Inf; 3 Art	
		49th "Sremska" Division	2, (7*), 70 Inf; 49 Art(-)	
		"Banatska" Odred	8 Inf; 4 Cav; 314 Res	I/49 Art
		"Savski" Odred	301, 316 Res	101, 102 Hvy Art
		"Branicevski" Odred		I/74 Inf; I/9 Art
		"Pozarevacki" Odred		minor units
		"Smederevski" Odred		minor units
		Cavalry Brigade	5, 71 Cav	
		Army Troops		6 AA
GHQ Direct	Coastal	12th "Jadranska" Division	11, 54, 83 Inf; 12 Art, 319 Res	
		"Caplinska" Odred	85 Inf (-)	I/13 Art
		"Trabinski" Odred		I/85 Inf
		Kotor Fortress	151, 152 Inf; "Kotor" Art	
		Sibenik Fortress	147 Inf	"Sibenik" Art
		Army Troops		8 AA
	GHQ	1st "Cerska" Division	6, 15, 66 Inf; 1 Art	
	Reserve	22nd "Ibarska" Division	4, 24, 58 Inf; 22 Art(-)	
		33rd "Licka" Division	17, (44*), 91, 106 Inf; 33 Art	
		44th "Unska" Division	26, 55, 121 Inf; 44 Art	
		47th "Dinarska" Division	13, 84, 119 Inf; 47 Art	
		GHQ Troops	111, 112 Mdm Art	2 Tank; 9, 10 AA
			(22*), (37*), (47*), (48*) Inf	fifteen ind Art Bns
			1, 2 Gds Inf	

*organic unit detached for service elsewhere (usually to form an odred)

Order of Battle, 1 April 1941

INFANTRY

During the 1930s the Yugoslav infantry was making the transition from the earlier square organization to a more modern triangular form. The First World War pattern of four infantry regiments, each with four infantry battalions, per division was being gradually phased out, so that by the time of the 1936 reorganization the composition of an infantry division had been standardized as three infantry regiments, although the configuration remained square at levels below the division.

The basic infantry unit was the squad, four of which were found in each rifle platoon. The heavy squad consisted of a sergeant squad leader, two corporal team leaders, and eight privates. One of the corporals controlled the light machine gun with its two-man crew and such other riflemen as were assigned by the squad leader, while the other controlled the remaining riflemen. In addition, one of the riflemen in each squad had an attachment for launching grenades from his rifle and he could be assigned to either team or kept with the squad leader. The heavy squad carried 900 rounds of light MG ammunition with it in 20-round clips and 15-round cardboard boxes, with the gunner carrying 8 clips and 2 boxes and the assistant gunner 13 clips and 6 boxes, with the remaining 24 boxes spread among the squad members.

The light squad was a much simpler organization, consisting of a corporal and eleven riflemen privates, one of whom had a grenade launcher attachment. In stark contrast to the rest of the Yugoslav Army, which was rather lavish in its manpower scales to compensate for the lack of modern equipment, the platoon headquarters consisted solely of the platoon leader, a first or second lieutenant. Presumably, troops were detailed from the rifle squads to serve as runners and messengers, for there was no other way for the platoon leader to retain control of his platoon with its four squads. The lack of a platoon sergeant to assist the platoon leader probably also limited the platoon's flexibility.

The rifle company consisted of four of these rifle platoons plus a headquarters squad, a combat trains, and a baggage trains. The HQ held optical signaling personnel with flashboards and flags, medical personnel, and attendants or servants for officers. The combat trains provided the immediate support for the company and included 13 pack horses, six of which were used for the light machine guns, carrying resupply ammunition and equipment when the weapons were in use and the guns themselves when on the march, while the other seven horses carried the field kitchen, water and kitchen equipment. The baggage trains carried the field files of the company and some general equipment.

BATTALION HEADQUARTERS

Battalion Commander: 1 LTC (P) w/ riding horse

Headquarters Section:

2 OFF: 1 CPT adjutant (P) w/ riding horse, 1 LT medical (P) w/ riding horse

1 NCO: 1 CPL signaller (R) w/ riding horse

9 PVT: 6 attendants (1 P, 5 R)(1 w/ riding horse), 3 clerks (no wpns)

Combat Trains Detachment:

2 NCO: 1 SFC trains leader (P), 1 SGT pay sergeant (P)

5 PVT: 2 runners (no wpns), 2 cooks (no wpns), 1 animal leader (no wpn)

2 pack horses

Baggage Trains Detachment:

1 NCO: SGT trains leader (P)

1 PVT: animal leader (no wpn)

2 pack horses

THREE RIFLE COMPANIES, EACH

Company Commander: 1 CPT (P) w/ riding horse

Headquarters Squad

1 NCO: SFC first sergeant (P)

11 PVT: 2 signallers (R), 3 attendants (R), 4 stretcher-bearers (P), 2 medics (P)

Four Rifle Platoons, each

1 OFF: LT platoon leader (P)

Three Heavy Squads, each

3 NCO: 1 SGT squad leader (R), 1 CPL rifle team leader (R), 1 CPL MG team leader (P)

7 PVT: 2 MG crew (1 R, 1 P), 1 rifle grenadier (R), 5 riflemen (R)

One Light Squad

1 NCO: CPL squad leader (R)

11 PVT: 1 rifle grenadier (R), 10 riflemen (R)

Combat Trains Detachment

2 NCO: 1 SSG trains leader (P), 1 SGT pay sergeant (P)

18 PVT: 5 runners (no wpns), 1 clerk (no wpn), 2 cooks (no wpns), 10 animal leaders (no wpns)

13 pack horses

Baggage Trains Detachment:

2 PVT: animal leaders (no wpns)

3 pack horses

MACHINE GUN COMPANY

Company Commander: 1 CPT (P) w/ riding horse

Headquarters Squad

6 NCO: 1 SSG first sergeant (P), 2 CPL reserve MG gunners (P), 1 CPL reserve LMG gunner (C), 2 range-finders (C)

25 PVT: 1 armorer (no wpn), 1 blacksmith (no wpn), 4 reserve MG crew (R), 2 reserve LMG crew (no wpns), 3 animal leaders (C), 4 reserve animal leaders (C), 4 attendants (R), 3 stretcher-bearers (no wpns), 1 medic (P), 1 veterinary medic (no wpn), 1 clerk (no wpn)

Two Water-Cooled Machine Gun Platoons, each

1 OFF: LT platoon leader (P)

Two Machine Gun Sections, each

5 NCO: 1 SSG section leader (P), 2 SGT team leaders (C), 2 CPL gunners (P)

16 PVT: 10 gun crew (6 C, 4 P), 6 animal leaders (R)

6 pack horses

One Air-Cooled Machine Gun Platoon

1 OFF: LT platoon leader (P)

three Machine Gun Sections, each

3 NCO: 1 SGT section leader (P), 2 CPL gunners (P)

10 PVT: 7 gun crew (C), 3 animal leaders (C)

3 pack horses

Combat Trains Detachment

2 NCO: 1 SSG trains leader (P), 1 SGT pay sergeant (P)

11 PVT: 4 runners (no wpns), 1 clerk (no wpn), 2 cooks (no wpns), 4 animal leaders (no wpns)

7 pack horses

Baggage Trains Detachment

2 PVT: animal leaders (no wpns)

3 pack horses

Infantry Battalion, 1936-41

The Infantry Battalion

Fire support for the battalion was provided by a machine gun company consisting of two platoons equipped with water-cooled M.7/12 Schwarzlose weapons and one platoon with air-cooled Hotchkiss weapons, both reliable if somewhat heavy and bulky guns. A water-cooled platoon was commanded by a lieutenant and consisted of two sections. Each of these sections was made up of a staff sergeant and two gun squads, each of which consisted of a sergeant squad leader, a corporal gunner, five gun crew, and three handlers with pack horses. The air-cooled platoon eliminated the section level of command and consisted of three squads, each of which manned two guns. Each squad had three horses which carried the squad's two machine guns and a total of 1800 rounds of ammunition per gun. The machine gun company also included a company HQ squad and trains elements. The HQ squad provided two men with optical range-finders for ranging duties as well as nine reserve gun crew personnel and the usual administrative support. The HQ section also included three horses carrying reserve stocks of ammunition for the water-cooled MGs, bringing total company stocks up to 4,000 rounds per gun (75% ball, 10% AP, and 15% tracer). The combat trains provided seven pack horses, one of which carried reserve equipment and the remaining six field kitchen equipment, while the baggage trains was similar to that in the rifle company.

The battalion headquarters was a very small and austere formation providing some support for the battalion commander and his adjutant. There were no other officers in the HQ, except a medical officer, nor any enlisted staff NCOs. Thus, the battalion must have had a very limited planning capability, with most of the responsibility falling on the shoulders of the regimental HQ. However, since the regiment had four battalions instead of the more usual three to worry about, it seems unlikely that it was done well at any level.

The Infantry Regiment

The infantry regiment consisted of four battalions plus a regimental heavy weapons company, a technical (signal/pioneer) company, a company-sized medical detachment, and combat and baggage trains elements. Leadership of the regiment was exercised from a command section supported by a staff section. The former consisted of the regiment commander (a colonel), three captains (an adjutant, a signals/intelligence officer, and an assistant adjutant), and four staff sergeants (a guidon-bearer, a signaller, and two clerks) with attendants. The staff section was headed by the regiment executive officer, a lieutenant colonel, and included pay, intendance, medical, veterinary and legal officers.

The regimental heavy weapons company provided close fire support for the unit with a 37mm infantry gun platoon, an 81mm mortar platoon and an old mortar platoon. The infantry gun platoon was equipped with obsolete 37mm M1916 weapons of French manufacture and First World War vintage. The gun squad for one of these weapons consisted of a sergeant squad leader, a corporal gunner, five gun crew and three animal handlers with pack horses that carried the gun and 128 rounds of ammunition. A staff sergeant commanded a section of two such squads and the platoon had two sections plus a trains element, this latter consisting of a sergeant commander, a corporal for range-finding and FDC duties, two corporals as reserve gunners, and ten privates made up of two aides, 6 reserve gun crew and 2 reserve animal handlers.

The 81mm mortar platoon was equipped with modern French Brandt weapons which partially supplanted the WW I models previously used by the infantry. The basic squad was made up of a sergeant, a gunner corporal and eleven privates, including five animal handlers for the pack animals. These horses carried the mortar and its accouterments plus 60 rounds of ammunition in 3-round boxes. Ten percent of these were heavy bombs, while the remainder were the longer-ranged normal shells. A staff sergeant commanded a section of two squads, and the platoon consisted of two sections plus a trains element, this latter being identical to that of the infantry gun platoon.

It had been hoped to completely replace the ancient 75mm M16 and M17 and 90mm M17 mortars that had been the sole infantry support mortars with the 81mm Brandts, but this had not proven possible and a platoon of two weapons was retained in each regimental heavy weapons company. The mortar squad size in this platoon varied with the type of weapon to account for the number of pack horses needed to carry each but always included a sergeant squad leader, a corporal gunner, and five privates as gun crew.

A squad equipped with 75mm M.17 weapons needed four pack horses with handlers to carry the mortar and 54 rounds of ammunition, while a 75mm M.16-equipped squad needed six for the mortar and 36 rounds, and a 90mm-equipped squad seven horses for the mortar and 36 rounds. The platoon consisted of two squads, a platoon leader (lieutenant), and HQ/trains elements of a staff sergeant, an FDC corporal, a reserve gunner corporal, and five privates (an aide and four reserve personnel).

	Officers	Sergeants	Corporals	Privates	Pistols	Carbines	Rifles	Light Machine Guns	Air-Cooled Medium MGs	Water-Cooled Medium MGs	75mm Mortars	81mm Mortars	37mm Infantry Guns	Motor Vehicles	Horses	Wagons & Carts	Bicycles
Regiment Headquarters																	
Command Group	4	4	0	11	5	11	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	11	0	2
Staff Section	6	7	1	11	7	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	0	0
Band	0	1	0	28	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Post Office	2	0	0	4	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
trains elements	0	4	0	34	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	22	11	0
Four Infantry Battalions, each																	
Battalion Headquarters	3	3	1	14	4	1	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	7	0	0
Three Rifle Companies, each																	
Company Headquarters	1	1	0	11	8	0	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
Four Rifle Platoons, each	1	3	7	35	7	0	39	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
trains elements	0	2	0	20	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	16	0	0
Machine Gun Company																	
Company Headquarters	1	1	5	25	5	10	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	0
Two Water-Cooled MG Platoons, each	1	6	4	32	13	28	0	0	0	4	0	0	0	0	12	0	0
Air-Cooled MG Platoon	1	3	6	30	10	30	0	0	6	0	0	0	0	0	9	0	0
trains elements	0	2	0	13	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	10	0	0
Heavy Weapons Company																	
Company Headquarters	1	1	1	8	3	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
Infantry Gun Platoon	1	7	9	42	18	41	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	12	0	0
81mm Mortar Platoon	1	7	7	56	22	49	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	0	20	0	0
Old Mortar Platoon*	1	3	4	29	11	26	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	12	0	0
trains elements	0	2	0	13	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	10	0	0
Technical Company																	
Company Headquarters	1	1	0	3	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
Pioneer Platoon	1	9	7	84	3	0	98	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
Signal Platoon	1	8	12	87	18	90	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	19	0	0
trains elements	0	2	0	11	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	9	0	0
Medical Detachment	**	**	**	**	31	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	56	45	0
Combat Trains	1	41	0	125	8	0	47	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	215	40	0
Baggage Trains	3	23	1	84	5	0	32	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	112	56	0

* figures are for platoon with 75mm M.16 mortar. Platoons with 75mm M.17 were four men smaller and those with 90mm M.17 were two men larger.

** total 229 men. Breakdown by rank not available.

Infantry Regiment, 1936-1941

Engineer and signal support for the regiment was provided by the technical company. The pioneer platoon was a large formation divided into two sections, each commanded by a staff sergeant. The basis of the platoon was seven identical pioneer squads, each consisting of a sergeant, a corporal and twelve privates. Four of these squads were formed under one section leader for direct support of the four infantry battalions, while the other three were under the other

section leader for general support of the regiment. Although possessed of a large pool of manpower, the pioneer platoon had practically no specialized equipment nor pack horses to carry any. The platoon thus acted more as a labor pool with limited specialized training than as a trained engineer unit in the Western sense.

The signal platoon was also large and similarly organized, divided into a headquarters squad, a regimental section, and a battalion-support section. The HQ squad consisted of the platoon leader, a corporal squad leader, a repairman, a handler with a pack horse for spare equipment, and a 7-man team with twelve messenger dogs. The regimental section was composed of a staff sergeant with a radio squad, a telephone squad, and a line squad. The function of this section was to establish a regimental signal post and assign signal personnel as necessary to adjacent or forward units (except the organic battalions) to ensure proper liaison. The 17-man radio squad consisted of four 4-man radio teams, each with a pack horse. The 23-man telephone squad consisted of a HQ team, including three pack horses to carry equipment; two telephone teams (each of 5 men with a switchboard, 2-3 telephones, and 2-3 km of wire); and two 3-man optical teams, each with an optical signal device and two sets of signal flags. The 11-man line squad had two pack horses and was responsible for running telephone wire between the telephone installations.

The battalion support section consisted of a staff sergeant and one signal squad for each of the four battalions consisting of a corporal and ten privates (3 telephonists, 2 optical signallers, 3 linesmen, and 2 animal handlers).

The regimental combat trains in the field supervised the combat trains of all subordinate units, including those of the rifle companies, but its main organic elements were the four 25-man battalion support platoons and one 38-man regimental support platoon. A battalion-support platoon had 23 pack horses and six 2-horse wagons carrying 7.9mm ammunition and hand and rifle grenades. The regiment-support platoon provided 37 pack horses (including 4 for 37mm, 8 for 81mm, 3 for old mortar ammo, and 14 for mines) and ten 2-horse wagons (2 for 37mm and 81mm ammo, 1 for old mortar ammo, 2 for pioneer equipment, 4 for mines, 1 for grenades).

The pack or baggage trains elements at the company level through the regiment were kept to an absolute minimum, usually only 3 pack horses per company, and instead, the main assets were concentrated in a regimental baggage trains which supervised the company-level detachments and had two 36-man transport platoons of its own for the bulk of the regiment's baggage. Each of these

platoons had 25 two-horse wagons, four of which served the regimental HQ, the technical company and the regimental heavy weapons company, four were allotted to each battalion, and five the combat and baggage trains themselves. A special organization was mandated for regiments operating in the mountains, but this affected only the regimental trains, which lost all but 44 of their wagons and carts, these being replaced by 415 pack horses. This change also served to increase regimental strength by 255 men.

The Yugoslav infantry regiment of 1941 was simply not up to the standards of contemporary warfare. Its large size, both in absolute manpower terms and in its configuration with four line battalions, made it unwieldy and its reliance on telephones for the regiment/battalion signal link and optical signallers for the battalion/company link, increased its resemblance to a prehistoric dinosaur, large, slow and unresponsive. Had the regiment the thick hide and formidable weapons of these beasts, there might yet have been hope for the Yugoslav Army in April 1941, but in fact the regiment, although capable of taking considerable losses, was only very lightly armed. The battalion commander had no indirect or HE-throwing weapons at his disposal except grenades in the rifle squads, and under most circumstances, he could not expect any help in this area from the regimental assets.

In fact, the only effective area weapons possessed by the regiment were found in the single four-gun 81mm mortar platoon, the range of which was far too short to effectively support a three- or four-battalion front from a central location. This absence of high-trajectory weapons is all the more remarkable when one considers the reliance placed by the Yugoslavs on their mountainous terrain as an ally. It was this factor that also led them to neglect the development or procurement of anti-tank weapons. A limited quantity of mines for this purpose could be supplied by the division, but a distribution of division anti-tank assets allotted only a single anti-tank platoon to each regiment, woefully insufficient because the regiment had absolutely no anti-tank weapons of its own.

Three such infantry regiments plus combat support and service support units made up the infantry division. All these elements gave the division a total strength of 27,000 men with 11,200 horses in the normal configuration and 28,500 men and 13,200 horses when configured for mountain employment.

The Division Base

For close support of the line infantry each division included a machine gun company (in 19 divisions) or battalion (in 9 divisions). The machine gun company had a strength of 203 men and was divided into a 37-man HQ section,

three 43-man platoons, a combat trains, and a baggage trains. Each of the line platoons was identical to the water-cooled platoon of the battalion MG company. The machine gun battalion used four 2-platoon companies for a total strength of 570 men with 161 horses and 112 carts.

Such anti-tank support as was available at the division level was found in the anti-tank company, which was usually split up into its component three platoons for support of the line regiments. These had been formed recently, facilitated by the purchase in 1940 of 150 37mm M.38 and 212 47mm Skoda AT guns. Coincident with the AT gun purchase the Army also purchased 15mm AA machine guns and 20mm AA guns, permitting the formation of divisional AA companies.

The division's heavy fire support was found in its artillery regiment. This was a rather weak formation, especially considering the size of the supported unit, consisting of one battalion each of mountain guns and light field howitzers, and two battalions of field guns.

The most common mountain gun in the Yugoslav inventory was the old Austro-Hungarian 75mm M.15, representing some 53% of the holdings of this type of weapon. The somewhat more modern Skoda 75mm M1928 accounted for another 22% and the 65mm French a further 16%, with the rest being a miscellany of minor types. A mountain battery had a strength of 3 officers and 91 enlisted and was provided with 11 riding horses and 36 pack horses.

The bulk of the field guns (some 68%) held by Yugoslavia were Skoda 76.5mm models, with the rest being French 75mm guns. Most of the Skoda guns were the old M.05/08 models but some were the more modern M28 version. A field gun battery had a strength of 3 officers and 99 enlisted, with 15 riding horses, 59 draft horses, 12 ammunition wagons, and 3 supply wagons.

The field howitzer battalions were equipped with 100mm Skoda M14 and M16 weapons. A field howitzer battery was identical in organization to a field gun battery.

The final divisional combat unit was the reconnaissance battalion, which consisted of two mounted squadrons, a bicycle rifle company and a small machine gun platoon. These used the same organization as the subordinate units of the cavalry regiments.

Division Headquarters
 Signal Company
 Reconnaissance Battalion
 Battalion Headquarters (84)
 Two Mounted Squadrons, each (197) [8 LMG]
 Bicycle Rifle Company (167) [6 LMG]
 Machine Gun Platoon [2 MG]
 Three Infantry Regiments, each (4,448)
 Regiment HQ & Trains (395)
 Technical (Signal/Pioneer) Company (227)
 Heavy Weapons Company (193) [4 37mm Inf G, 4 81mm Mort, 2 75/90mm Mort]
 Four Infantry Battalions, each (851)
 Battalion Headquarters (21)
 Three Rifle Companies, each (219) [12 LMG]
 Machine Gun Company (173) [14 MG]
 Artillery Regiment
 Regiment Headquarters
 Mountain Artillery Battalion
 Battalion Headquarters
 Three Mountain Batteries, each (94) [4 65/75mm Mtn Guns]
 Two Field Gun Battalions, each
 Battalion Headquarters
 Three Field Batteries, each (102) [4 75/80mm Guns]
 Field Howitzer Battalion
 Battalion Headquarters
 Three Field Batteries, each (102) [4 100mm How]
 Anti-Tank Company [12 37/47mm AT]
 Machine Gun Company or Battalion [12 or 24 MG]
 Anti-Aircraft Company [6 15/20mm AA]
 Pioneer Battalion
 Battalion Headquarters
 Three Pioneer Companies
 Complementary (Training/Field Replacement) Regiment
 Regiment Headquarters
 Three Infantry Battalions
 Artillery Battery
 service & support troops
 Chemical Company
 Medical Company

Totals

27,000 men & 11,200 horses in normal configuration
 28,500 men & 13,200 horses in mountain configuration

11,920 rifles & carbines	12 mountain guns (65-75mm)
	24 field guns (75-80mm)
440 light machine guns	12 field howitzers (100mm)
90 air-cooled medium machine guns	
146 water-cooled medium machine guns	12 anti-tank guns (37/47mm)
15 37mm infantry guns	6 light anti-aircraft guns (15/20mm)
12 81mm mortars	
6 old 75/90mm mortars	

INFANTRY DIVISION, 1941

With its strength of 28,000 men, the infantry division was an unwieldy and clumsy formation, completely unsuited to a war of maneuver. Indeed, its lack of firepower rendered it barely suited to any kind of warfare. In response to its ungainly nature, however, the Army resorted to the formation of ad-hoc groupings of units outside the divisional structure.

Odreds

These were denominated "Odreds" and were roughly equivalent to brigades in concept. By the time of the invasion, sixteen of these had been formed by taking units from the regular infantry divisions and the GHQ reserve and assigning them to these formations. The most common strength of an Odred was an infantry regiment and an artillery battalion, along with a proportional allotment of service troops. In some cases, however, odreds could reach divisional size by taking elements from several divisions. In such a case an intermediate level of command, the Odsek, would be formed. An example of such an organization can be found in the Ormoski Odred, which was one of the larger odreds formed. It was made up of the Desni Odsek (a cavalry regiment and an artillery battalion), the Levi Odsek (an infantry regiment and two batteries), and a reserve force of a cavalry regiment and a bicycle battalion.

In the process of forming these ad-hoc battle groups seven infantry divisions lost a regiment each and two divisions lost two regiments apiece, although in the latter cases, a regiment from GHQ reserve was assigned to return them to at least a binary configuration. Thus, nine of the 28 Yugoslav divisions were two-regiment formations at the time of the invasion. While this may have reduced the unwieldiness of the divisions it did so partly at the expense of flexibility, converting them from triangular to binary formations. It would probably have been better to have removed infantry battalions from the over-large regiments instead, but this would have created command and control problems for the small odred HQs.

Alpine Troops

Not all odreds were these temporary formations. Two permanent alpine Odreds were on the peacetime order of battle as well. Two alpine infantry regiments (not to be confused with the mountain variant of the regular infantry regiments) had been formed in 1931 by the conversion of normal infantry regiments. Plans through most of the 1930s were not clearly defined and the goal was alternately stated to be two alpine brigades each of two regiments or one alpine division of three regiments. Whatever the goal, only the two alpine regiments were ever formed.

The alpine regimental HQs were essentially administrative units. This was partly due to the independent nature of the fighting that was expected of the battalions and partly to the presence of an odred HQ above the regiment that commanded no other maneuver units.

The alpine regiment consisted of a headquarters, a reconnaissance platoon, a mortar platoon, and a technical company supporting three alpine infantry battalions. The technical company was a pioneer/signal unit, and in the latter role used four Type SP3A radios. The reconnaissance platoon was recruited from skilled mountaineers. The trench mortar platoons were apparently still using 90mm weapons in 1939 but may have been reequipped with 81mm Brandt weapons by 1941. The alpine infantry battalions were apparently similar to the field infantry battalions.

The two alpine odreds each consisted of one alpine infantry regiment, a mountain artillery battalion, and supporting services. On mobilization, a few changes were made to the organization described above. The alpine infantry regiment HQ was absorbed by the odred HQ and service support and some combat support elements redistributed. Each of the alpine infantry battalions now consisted of four rifle companies, a machine gun company, a mortar battery, a technical company, and medical and supporting troops. The odred consisted of three alpine infantry battalions, a mountain artillery battalion (75mm gun), a reconnaissance company, engineer company, chemical company, signal company, transport battalion, service group, and complementary battalion. These gave the alpine odred a total strength of 13,490 men and an armament of 175 light MGs, 60 medium MGs, 39 mortars and 12 mountain guns.

The notable feature of this organization, of course, was the extremely high manpower strength in relation to the unit's tactical size. This was the result not only of the inclusion of the complementary (training and field replacement) battalion, which probably accounted for about 1200-1500 men, but also of the large supply and service elements necessary at all levels (at least in Yugoslav eyes) to insure independence of action for the odred in the mountainous and poorly developed sections of Yugoslavia.

Other Infantry

In addition to the regular and alpine infantry, there were several other varieties of line troops available. There was a separate reserve army that raised 48 regional reserve infantry regiments and 26 independent battalions.

These used the same TO&E as the active infantry regiments but in a different mix. The reserve regiment was made up of four battalions (each of four rifle companies), a machine gun company, a mortar platoon, a signal platoon, a pioneer platoon and trains elements. The independent reserve battalion was made up of four rifle companies, a machine gun platoon, and a pioneer platoon. The reserve army also raised 50 independent rifle companies and 37 independent rifle platoons. The reserve regiments were distinguished from the regular infantry regiments not only by nominal designation but also by being numbered in the 300-series. The reserve army also formed seven independent artillery batteries with weapons ranging in size from 70mm to 210mm.

Also included in the Army's order of battle were one machine gun battalion (identical to the divisional MG battalions) and three fortress infantry regiments. The latter formed the line elements for the Kotor Fortress (2 regiments) and Sibenik Fortress (1 regiment). The organization of these units is not known but probably did not differ greatly from the normal infantry regiment.

In addition to these forces, the Border Command controlled eighteen Border Regiments and an equal number of independent Border Battalions. These presumably used similar TO&Es to those of the regular infantry.

MOBILE TROOPS

The Cavalry Regiment

At the time of the outbreak of the war, the Yugoslav cavalry branch operated seventeen cavalry regiments, twenty-eight cavalry battalions, and two bicycle battalions. Eight of the cavalry regiments were subordinate to two cavalry divisions, two were included in the Royal Guard, and the remaining seven were assigned as reconnaissance units to the seven armies (corps-size commands). The cavalry battalions were assigned one per division as reconnaissance units and the bicycle battalions were incorporated into the cavalry divisions.

The most powerful and balanced of these forces were the army-level cavalry regiments, each of which consisted of four mounted squadrons, a machine gun squadron, a bicycle company, a technical squadron, a mounted battery, and HQ and trains elements, for a total of almost 1,600 men.

The basic maneuver unit was the mounted rifle platoon, which consisted of the platoon leader (a lieutenant), a sergeant assistant, three rifle squads (each a sergeant, a corporal, and six privates, all with carbines) and two light MG squads (each a sergeant, two corporals and four privates, with five carbines and two pistols). Each man in the platoon had a riding horse and in addition, each light MG squad had a pack horse to carry the squad's light machine gun and ammunition.

The mounted squadron had four such platoons plus HQ and trains elements. The HQ elements included two blacksmiths, an optical signaller, 4 telephonists, 3 medics, and 2 veterinary assistants. The trains provided three wagons, one each for blacksmith equipment, rations and a field kitchen.

The machine gun squadron was built around its three MG platoons. Under the original 1936 TO&E the MG platoon had consisted of a HQ and two squads, but this was increased to three squads in early 1941. A squad consisted of a sergeant, a corporal and seven privates with three pistols and six carbines. All were mounted on riding horses and the squad also had three pack horses that carried a 7.9mm M.7/12 Schwarzlose water-cooled machine gun and ammunition. The platoon HQ included two more pack horses with parts and tools for the MGs. The MG squadron HQ & trains were similar to those of the mounted rifle squadrons. The squadron carried a total of 36,000 rounds of ammunition for the Schwarzlose MGs, all of it with the squads.

The bicycle company was a strange hybrid unit consisting of three mixed platoons. Each of these platoons consisted of a four-man HQ, two 12-man rifle sections and a 17-man machine gun section. A rifle section was made up of a sergeant, a corporal, and ten privates, all armed with carbines and riding

	Officers	Sergeants	Corporals	Privates	Pistols	Carbines	Light Machine Guns	Medium Machine Guns	75mm Field Guns	Motorcycles	Trucks	Horses	Wagons & Carts	Bicycles
Regiment Headquarters														
Command Group	3	4	0	4	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	9	0	0
Staff Group	4	5	0	10	5	6	0	0	0	0	0	11	0	0
Medical Section	1	1	2	23	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	14	7	0
trains elements	0	3	0	24	3	4	0	0	0	0	0	21	10	0
Four Rifle Squadrons, each														
Squadron HQ	1	1	0	20	3	9	0	0	0	0	0	25	0	0
Four Rifle Platoons, each	1	6	7	26	5	35	2	0	0	0	0	42	0	0
trains elements	0	2	0	13	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	11	4	0
Machine Gun Squadron														
Squadron HQ	1	1	2	33	4	22	0	0	0	0	0	44	0	0
Three MG Platoons, each	1	3	4	25	10	23	0	3	0	0	0	44	0	0
trains elements	0	2	0	12	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	9	4	0
Bicycle Company														
Company HQ	1	1	3	11	7	9	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	13
Three Bicycle Platoons, each	1	3	4	37	12	33	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	45
trains elements	0	1	1	14	2	2	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	10
Technical Squadron														
Squadron HQ	1	1	0	14	2	11	0	0	0	2	0	10	0	2
Pioneer Platoon	1	2	2	24	1	28	0	0	0	0	0	29	0	0
Signal Platoon	1	3	4	22	1	25	0	0	0	0	0	33	2	0
trains elements	0	2	0	7	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	2	0
Mounted Battery														
Battery HQ	1	3	5	9	4	6	0	0	0	0	0	20	0	0
Two Gun Platoons, each	1	2	4	26	2	4	0	0	2	0	0	22	2	0
Ammo & MG Section	0	2	2	9	3	3	0	2	0	0	0	20	3	0
Service Platoon	1	4	5	52	8	0	0	0	0	0	0	61	9	0
Baggage Trains	0	0	1	3	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	7	3	0
Regimental Combat Trains	1	3	9	32	4	9	0	0	0	0	0	64	16	0
Regimental BaggageTrains														
Trains HQ	1	3	1	19	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	12	4	0
Two Transport Platoons, each	0	1	9	27	1	9	0	0	0	0	0	64	27	0

Army (Corps) Cavalry Regiment, 1941

bicycles. A machine gun section was made up of a sergeant, two corporals, and

fourteen privates with 11 pistols and six carbines, all on bicycles and carrying between them two air-cooled medium MGs and 2,375 rounds per gun. The company trains provided a 2-ton truck for 16,800 rounds of MG ammunition, and a 1.5-ton truck for rations and kitchen gear. The company HQ included a 5-man pioneer team, a 3-man telephone team, and three motorcycle dispatch riders.

The mounted battery was built around two gun platoons and a MG/ammo section. A gun platoon consisted of a platoon leader and two firing sections, each of a sergeant, two corporals and 13 privates armed with two pistols and four carbines. All the personnel of the section were allotted riding horses except six of the privates who rode on the complex arrangement of twelve draft horses, a caisson and a 75mm M.12 Schnieder field gun. The MG/ammo section operated two 6-horse ammunition wagons and one 2-horse wagon with two 7.9mm Schwarzlose machine guns. The battery HQ included a recon squad of a sergeant and four corporals, a liaison corporal for regimental HQ duties, an aiming circle team of a sergeant and a private, and a 6-man telephone team. The battery carried a total of 800 rounds of 75mm ammunition, along with 4,000 rounds of MG ammunition. The mounted battery operated primarily in the direct-fire role in support of the mounted squadrons, although the presence of the 2-man aiming circle team and the telephonists did give it a moderate indirect fire capability if enough time was allowed to run land lines.

The technical squadron provided a pioneer platoon and a signal platoon to support the regiment's efforts. The pioneer platoon simply consisted of a lieutenant and two 14-man sections, all on horseback and without any specialized tools or equipment. The signal platoon had a 7-man radio squad with a 2-horse radio wagon, and a 21-man signal section that consisted of a 6-man optical signal squad, two 3-man telephone squads, and a 6-man wire-laying squad.

The regiment was completed by a combat trains with ammunition wagons and a baggage trains for baggage, equipment and rations.

For all its size and apparent balance the army-level cavalry regiment was seriously flawed. Particularly noteworthy was the abysmal level of communication in a reconnaissance unit. There was only one radio in the regiment, that in a horse-drawn wagon for communications between the regiment HQ and the army HQ. These regiments were geared towards a more leisurely pace of warfare than that which was about to befall them. The regiment also lacked any anti-tank weapons at all except to the extent that the 75mm guns of the mounted batteries could be used against tanks. Surprisingly, the regiment

also lacked any indirect fire weapons except for the somewhat notional capabilities of the mounted battery.

The Cavalry Divisions

Through the 1930s the cavalry branch maintained two divisions, each built around two cavalry brigades (each of two regiments), a bicycle infantry battalion and an artillery battalion. In 1939 the decision was made to form a third cavalry division, this time a mixed mechanized/horse unit. To expedite this the two existing cavalry divisions each gave up a mounted regiment and a brigade HQ, leaving them with a 3-regiment brigade, a bicycle battalion and an artillery battalion apiece.

The regiments organic to the cavalry divisions were similar to those of the independent army-level cavalry regiments, but lacked the bicycle company and mounted battery. The same squadron-level TO&Es were used except that the baggage trains was reduced by nine men and six wagons. They suffered from the same defects as the independent cavalry regiments.

The bicycle battalion consisted of a 56-man HQ, three rifle companies and a machine gun company. The bicycle rifle company differed somewhat from that in the cavalry regiment. In this application, the company was made up of three rifle platoons and a machine gun platoon. The rifle platoons consisted of a HQ and three rifle squads, while the machine gun platoon consisted of three sections each with two air-cooled MGs. There were no light MGs, so the heavy weapons armament of the company consisted of six medium MGs, as in the bicycle company of the cavalry regiment, but this time the heavy weapons were more centralized. The 136-man machine gun company was made up of three platoons, each with three water-cooled MGs. Here again, bicycles were the main means of transport.

With its 27 air-cooled and 9 water-cooled medium machine guns, the bicycle battalion was well provided with automatic weapons for defensive and economy of force missions within the cavalry division, but it lacked the HE and AT weapons necessary to make the machine guns effective.

The divisional artillery battalion consisted of three batteries, each identical to those found in the army-level cavalry regiment. Thus, these were also apparently primarily direct-fire weapons and of limited usefulness as a division base of fire.

Division Headquarters
Signal Squadron
Two Cavalry Brigades, each
 Brigade Headquarters
 Two Cavalry Regiments, each (1,208)
 Regiment Headquarters (81)
 Technical Squadron (84)
 Four Rifle Squadrons, each (197) [8 LMG]
 Machine Gun Squadron (119) [6 MG]
 Trains (136)
Bicycle Battalion (816)
 Battalion Headquarters (56)
 Three Bicycle Rifle Companies, each (208) [6 MG]
 Machine Gun Company (136) [9 MG]
Horse Artillery Battalion
 Battalion Headquarters
 Three Horse Artillery Batteries, each (163) [2 MG, 4 75mm Guns]
 Anti-Tank Battery [4 37/47mm AT]
Pioneer (Bridging) Squadron
Complementary Battalion
Division Services

Division Totals

8,500	men	130	light machine guns
8,000	horses	60	medium machine guns
867	bicycles	2	37mm infantry guns
		4	37mm/47mm anti-tank guns
		12	75mm field guns

Note: Reorganization of 1940/41:

One cavalry brigade HQ deleted

One cavalry regiment deleted

Three remaining cavalry regiments grouped under one brigade HQ

Machine gun squadron strength increased to 150 men with 9 medium machine guns

CAVALRY DIVISION. 1939

Essentially, the cavalry division represented three army-level cavalry regiments grouped together, but with the bicycle companies and artillery batteries

centralized under separate battalion HQs. It was not a particularly effective unit. Tactically, the switch to a more triangular organization for the division undoubtedly would have conferred greater flexibility, but the lack of modern equipment (AT guns for operations in flat terrain, mortars for broken terrain) rendered this advantage somewhat problematic.

The reason for the reorganization of the two original cavalry divisions was a desire to create a third, horse/mechanized, cavalry division. The first organizational plan for the division was drawn up in 1940 and gave the division a motorized brigade, a cavalry brigade, and an artillery regiment. The motorized brigade was to consist of an armored car regiment and a motorized infantry regiment, while the cavalry brigade was to consist of 2-3 cavalry regiments and a cyclist battalion. The artillery regiment was to have a motorized artillery battalion, a horse artillery battalion, an AT battalion, and an AA battalion.

This plan, however, proved far too ambitious for Yugoslavia's limited industrial capacity and foreign exchange holdings. In light of this, modest reductions were made in the proposed organization, so that the division would look as follows:

- Cavalry Brigade
 - 2-3 Cavalry regiments, each
 - 3 Rifle Squadrons
 - Machine Gun Squadron (12 MG)
 - Heavy Weapons Squadron (4 20mm AA, 4 37mm AT, 4 81mm Mort)
- Bicycle Battalion
 - 2 Rifle Companies
 - Machine Gun Company
 - Heavy Weapons Company
- Mechanized Brigade
 - Light Armored Regiment
 - Armored Car Squadron (18 Arm Cars)
 - Motorcycle Squadron
 - Machine Gun Squadron
 - Heavy Weapons Squadron
 - Motorized Infantry Battalion
 - 3 Rifle Companies
 - Machine Gun Company
 - Heavy Weapons Company
 - Tank Battalion
 - 3 Tank Companies, each (12 light tanks)
- Artillery Regiment
 - Motorized Battalion
 - 2 field howitzer batteries
 - 1 mountain gun battery
 - Horse Battalion
 - 2 field gun batteries
- Anti-Tank Battery (8-12 37/47mm AT)
- Division Services

The reduction in the mechanized brigade from two regiments to three battalions was to serve the dual purpose of enhancing tactical flexibility and reducing road space. The deletion of the anti-aircraft battalion seems to have been in recognition of the inability of the Yugoslavs to acquire more than a small fraction of the AA weapons needed to defend their country. It was apparently felt that static or slow-moving targets needed protection more than a unit that could use its mobility to mitigate the effects of enemy air superiority.

The tank battalion was to have been trained and equipped by the Soviet Union, presumably to be armed with the light fast BT-type tanks that were capable of accompanying cavalry, and the battalion organization shows a marked deviation from the French model previously used, particularly in the maintenance company, which lacked the large reserve tank platoon characteristic of French tank battalions.

As events transpired, the 3rd Cavalry Division was incomplete at the time of the German invasion, lacking most of its motorized elements. In April 1941 the Division consisted of the following elements: 3rd, 51st and 66th Cavalry Regiments; 3rd Motorized Infantry Battalion, 3rd Motorcycle Battalion, and the 3rd Horse Artillery Battalion; along with division service troops.

In addition, it is possible that the bicycle battalion was also formed for the division, but it does not appear to have served with the division in combat. The state of equipment of the motorized battalion and the motorcycle battalion is uncertain, but it is unlikely that they were fully equipped with vehicles and heavy weapons.

Armor

At the outbreak of the Second World War in September of 1939 the *Oklopne Jedinice* (armored branch) of the Yugoslav Army consisted solely of one battalion and one company of tanks. The tank battalion was equipped with 23 gun-armed and 10 MG-armed Renault FT tanks, with three more unarmored FT radio tanks for command and control purposes. The separate company consisted of 8 T-32 (Skoda Š-I-d) tankettes with 37mm guns delivered in 1937.

Under pressure from the Germans and mindful of the lessons of the Polish campaign of 1939, the Army attempted to modernize the mobile force during 1940 and 1941. Fifty Renault R-35 tanks were purchased from France, and these arrived in May of 1940. They were organized to form the 2nd Tank

Battalion with the following organization:

Battalion HQ (14): 2 light trucks, 2 field cars, 1 m/c

Three Tank Companies, each (70):

HQ: 1 tank, 1 car, 1 truck, 3 field cars, 2 m/c

4 Platoons, each: 3 tanks

Maintenance Company (100): 11 tanks, 1 car, 4 trucks, 2 m/c

Reserve tank platoon

Signal Platoon

Repair Shop platoon

The battalion, having been equipped and trained by the French, followed very closely the French organizational pattern, with all the disadvantages that accrued. In particular, the tanks had no radios and a speed that limited them to infantry support roles.

None of the tank units had any appreciable effect on the April 1941 campaign.

ARTILLERY

The field army included a sizeable artillery contingent consisting of 41 regiments and 24 separate battalions of conventional artillery, 2 anti-tank battalions, 8 mortar battalions, 10 anti-aircraft battalions, and 2 searchlight battalions.

Of the 41 regiments, 28 were divisional field artillery regiments, 1 belonged to the Royal Guard, 7 were assigned to the field armies, and 5 were held in GHQ reserve. The regiments assigned to the field armies were medium artillery units, each consisting of two battalions of 105mm M.36 Skoda or Schneider field guns and two battalions of 150mm Skoda howitzers.

The five GHQ regiments (numbered 111-115) each consisted of three battalions, each of 2-3 batteries. The 111th and 112th each had one battalion of Schneider 120mm L/28 guns (12 guns per battalion) and two battalions of 150mm howitzers. The 113th Regiment had three homogeneous battalions, each with six 150mm heavy guns and two 220mm heavy mortars. The 114th Regiment had one battalion of 105mm Skoda guns (12 guns) and two of siege mortars (one with 4 220mm and one with 4 305mm). The armament of the 115th Regiment is not known.

Of the 24 independent artillery battalions, three were assigned to the cavalry divisions, two to the mountain odreds, one was assigned to Sibenik fortress, and the remaining 18 were held in GHQ reserve. Each of these was equipped with twelve light field howitzers, 100mm Skoda models in about half the units, and 105mm howitzers in the rest.

Little is known of the mortar battalions. Four of them (numbered 51-54) were light mortar units composed of three companies equipped with 58mm mortars of unknown manufacture. The other four battalions (numbered 1-4) were heavy mortar units each of three batteries with 170mm or 220mm mortars.

Of the ten AA battalions in the field army, eight were assigned to army HQs at one per army and the other two were held in GHQ reserve. Each of these consisted of three AA gun batteries, a machine gun battery, a searchlight battery and a battalion HQ. Due to the

purchases of the late 1930s it proved possible to equip the battalions with the fairly modern Skoda 76.5mm M36 (80 guns) or 75mm M37 (40 guns) anti-aircraft gun. They further took delivery of 100 Breda 20mm AA guns from Italy and 477 15mm guns from ZB.

These battalions were motorized units with a total of twelve 75mm or 76.5mm AA guns, 16 light (15mm or 20mm) AA guns in the MG company, 12 M7/12 AA machine guns in the three gun batteries, and searchlights. Also formed were eleven independent light AA companies, each with 16 15/20mm light AA guns, six going to the field armies and five to the general reserve. In addition, there were 28 independent light AA platoons, each with six 15/20mm AA guns organic to the infantry divisions.

In addition, the Territorial Air Defense Command had 32 M28A 80mm guns, 100 M5/28 80mm guns, 328 M5/32 76.5mm guns, a small number of old Skoda 83.5mm and 90mm guns, and 2,000 Schwarzlose 8mm machine guns at its command. These were employed by horse-drawn or fixed-site units used to protect installations, airfields, cities, etc. A battalion typically consisted of a small HQ, three AA gun batteries, and an AAMG battery.

The M28 battery was a large unit of 291 men that relied on horses for transport. The basic unit was the 19-man section, which was provided with two riding horses and fourteen draft horses, six of which towed an ammunition wagon and the remainder the M28 gun. Two of these sections plus a 4-man HQ made up the platoon. The battery was made up of a HQ, a machine gun & ammunition section, and trains elements. The 25-man MG/ammo section had two 6-horse wagons for delivering ammunition and two 2-horse wagons each carrying two M7/12 Schwarzlose water-cooled MGs on AA mounts. The battery HQ was built primarily around the 39-man fire direction section which was provided with two 6-horse wagons to carry their predictors and height-finders. The HQ also included a 6-man NCO reconnaissance party and a 23-man telephone section. The trains elements included eighteen 2-horse ammunition wagons as well as twelve wagons for equipment, rations and baggage.

The machine gun battery consisted of a 10-man HQ and a variable number (usually three) of 49-man platoons, each with six 7.9mm

machine guns, or 15/20mm platoons. The battalion HQ was a small unit of 46 men, including an 18-man telephone section.

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