

received by telephone or telegraph and even the written ones if he doubts their credibility.

In the afternoon four Dorniers of 210.E attacked Germans on the Kriva Palanka – Stracin road. Aircraft piloted by *nv II k* Radosav Nestorović was subjected to heavy anti-aircraft fire and landed at Samodreža with numerous shrapnel and bullet holes. Elsewhere, much further north, whilst returning from an attack on ammunition factory in Kruševac, crews of *I/LG 1* reported seeing single Do 17 with Yugoslav markings at an airstrip and claimed it destroyed with board weapons, shortly after 16.30. What they really attacked cannot be determined, but definitely no Do 17Ka was even near their path.

Till the end of the day all operational aircraft of 208.E moved to Plemetina and of 210.E to Samodreža, while 209.E remained at Stubol as did Đonlić' detachment at Uroševac. In the afternoon brand-new 3368 arrived from DFA to Samodreža and strengthened 210.E. Altogether 3.BP pilots accomplished more than 30 combat sorties without any loss on the opening day of hostilities. However, devastating attacks on Petrovac and airfields at Kosovo Polje left only 23 aircraft operational. Despite those losses, morale of the crews was exceptionally high, never short of volunteers. Doing at least one sortie was considered a matter of highest honor.

As the night fell *maj* Fanelđ assigned tasks to his subordinates. Prime targets were advancing columns on the road Kriva Palanka – Stracin – Kumanovo for 208.E and 210.E and Ihtiman airfield in Bulgaria for 209.E. Before the daybreak five aircraft of 208.E lead by *kap I k* Mijušković went into action. At about five o'clock they came upon a large group of stationary enemy vehicles at a pasture, obviously resting. Flying in line, Dorniers unloaded their deadly cargo from altitude of 200 meters with great effect; this is considered to be the most successful mission of the *eskadrila* during the war. Several Bf



Another view of unlucky 3333. For delivery flight from Germany in spring 1939 this aircraft carried temporary civilian registration D-AXWI. The only other registrations known to authors were D-AUZA for 3304 and D-AVEP for 3305. Plane was stripped-off all paint by Hungarians and received new camouflage, probably made of mixture of Italian and German colors: RLM 02 gray and Italian red-brown and dark green on upper sides, and RLM 65 or RLM 76 on underside.

(László Jávör via Milan Micevski)

110's of *II./ZG 26* tried to engage the lead Dornier just after the bombardment but it escaped into clouds. Some of the planes were damaged, but all successfully reached auxiliary field at Peć. There they joined the sole remaining operational aircraft of the *eskadrila* that has just brought two mechanics and *eskadrila* chief armorer from Plemetina. Four aircraft of 210.E attacked targets in same area under intense anti-aircraft fire. Three landed at Peć and one, piloted by *nv III k* Franc Meglič at Samodreža. Earlier, at 5.00 *kap I k* Vojislav Grujić ordered two crews to take 3366 (delivered from DFA on 4 April) and 3368 from Samodreža to Peć where they could be prepared for com-

Hungarian troops and locals observe 3333 after it force-landed 3 kilometers north of Nagysomkút (today Șomcuta Mare in Romania) in the afternoon of 10 April 1941. Two red circles on the fuselage indicate it was personal aircraft of 210.E commander, *kap I k* Vojislav Grujić. (György Punka via Milan Micevski)

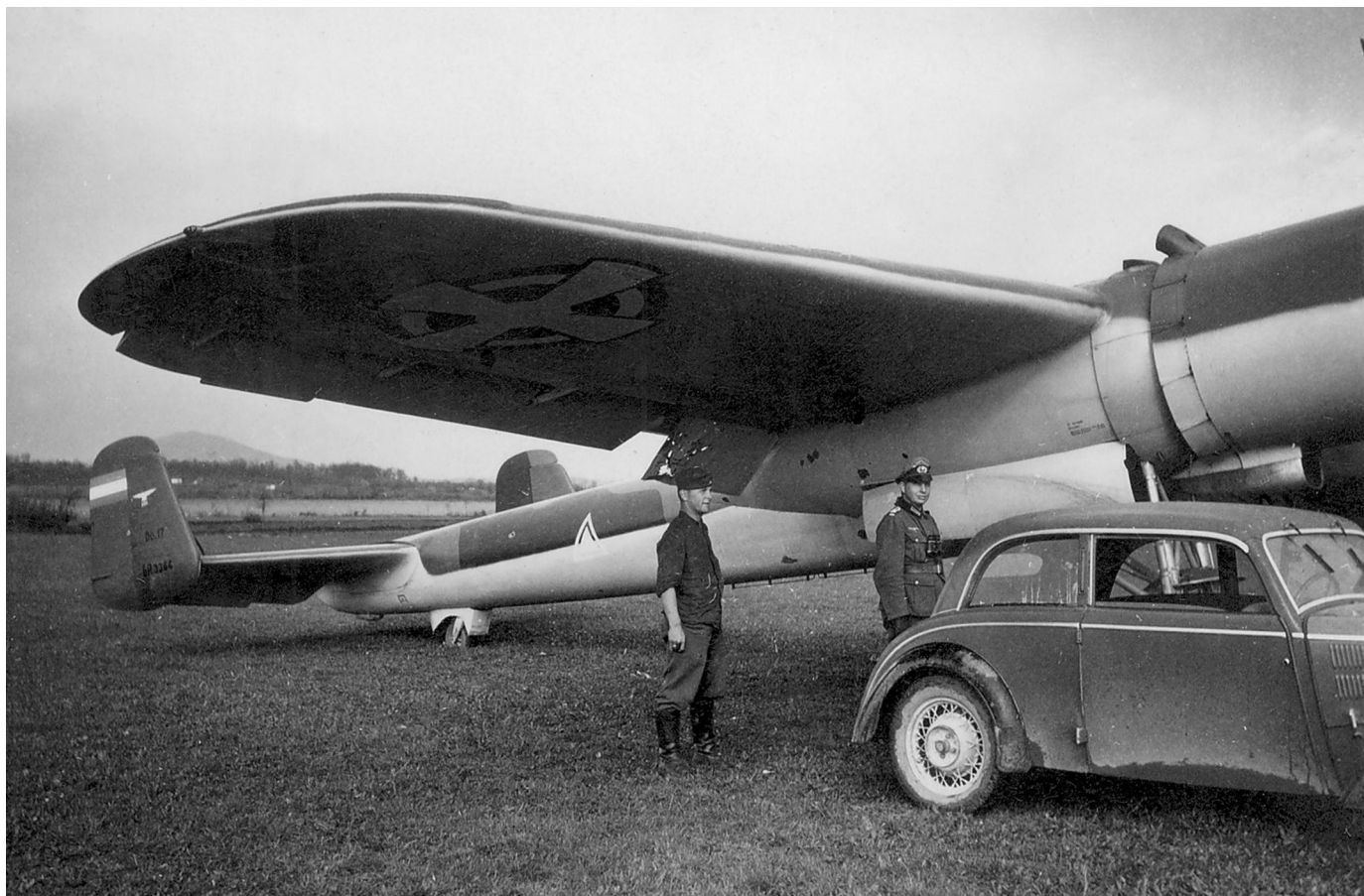




Pitiful view of remnants of Do 17Ka-3 3366 and its unlucky crew members near the village of Căndesti.  
(Dénes Bernád)



Rumanian officers and local civilians in front of politely arranged graves of Yugoslav airmen in Căndesti village.  
In 1975 they were exhumated and reburied at Military Cemetery in Timisoara.  
(Dénes Bernád)



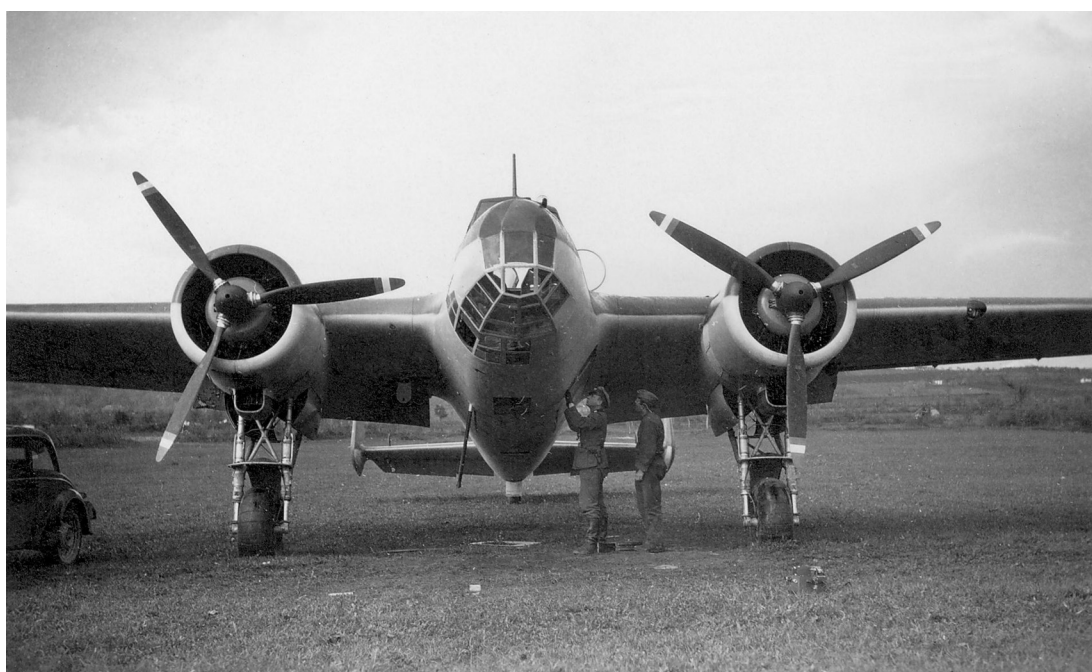
German officers take a close look at booty 3364 at Preljina. Of notice is the outlined white triangle on the fuselage, a marking of 206.E commander *kap II k* Mihajlo Đonlić. It was applied either on 6 April after the demise of 3347 (which seems quite unrealistic) or a few days earlier in case Đonlić decided to take newer craft – and the last one to be delivered to his unit – for his personal mount.

(Dinko Predoević)

bat duty (they lacked gasoline gauges and some other equipment) and until further orders subjugate to 208.E.

In the meantime two 209.E planes lead by *kap I k* Dušan Milojević took-off from Stubol and the third one – which

aborted soon thereafter due to faulty bomb release mechanism – from Laplje Selo in direction of Ihtiman auxiliary airfield. Since the airfield appeared to be deserted, secondary target, Radomir rail station was attacked and left in thick smoke.



A glance into the interior through the open hatch. Damage caused by flak over Gornja Sabanta in the afternoon of 12 April 1941 is evident.

(Dinko Predoević)

As they left the target, two Ju 87's were seen flying at approximately the same height but in the opposite direction, probably returning from a mission over Yugoslavia. As one of the Stukas tried to sneak from behind of the lead Dornier it was fired upon by *nar* Mihajlo Stojanović (RO). It was last seen diving in flames and claimed destroyed, although no corresponding loss can be found in German sources. The pair landed at Laplje Selo auxiliary airfield. Remaining 209.E aircraft have been dispersed there early in the morning and would return to Stubol in the evening. During the afternoon five aircraft of 208.E and 3366 of 210.E, several from 209.E, and three of 210.E attacked German troops between Stracin and Kumanovo and landed at Plemetina (208.E), Stubol (209.E) and Obilić (210.E). Some time later, the sole remaining 208.E aircraft at Peć flew over to Plemetina. On *kap I k* Grujić orders single 210.E aircraft at Samodreža flew over to Brazda auxiliary airfield near Kosovska Mitrovica to check if it was suitable for operations. It barely managed to land and quickly went to Obilić, where 3368 rejoined 210.E during the afternoon, flying through heavy storm.

Earlier on, three surviving Dorniers of 63.BG flew over to Peć and subjugated to 208.E, forming an autonomous detachment. As there was shortage of bombs at Peć, they returned to rearm at Uroševac where some limited stocks have been provided. Strengthened by 3314 which just arrived from Petrovac, detachment attacked bridge over Pčinja river near Stracin at 17.30 with limited success: bridge was missed but some hits among the enemy vehicles were noted. In gauntlet of anti-aircraft fire, plane of *nvtč I k* Stanko Kovačević got more than 40 hits into the left wing and that of *kap II k* Đonlić had a part of the right-wing underside plating and rudder rolled-off. Moderate result was certainly caused by the fact that some if not all aircraft took-off with half of their bomb bays empty due to lack of bombs. At the same time thousands of tons of am-

munition and spare parts were stored near Uroševac and later fell into German hands intact! In the evening *nvtč I k* Kovačević flew over to Plemetina and joined 208.E.

Balance of the day was quite satisfactory for the fighting men of 3.BP. In course of at least 26 combat sorties not a single aircraft was lost while good results have been achieved. Tactic of permanent changing of auxiliary fields proved very successful, and oddly enough 3.BP was the sole VVKJ unit to deploy it. Lack of aircraft and constant change of bases brought further logistic problems but crews managed to cope with it. On the ground there was nothing but bad news for the Yugoslav Army. Irrepressible German push through Macedonia left no chance of consolidation to disintegrating Yugoslav 3. Armija. Štip fell at midday, Skoplje in the afternoon, but most important, in the evening 1.Pz.Div. reached Đeneral Janković, the entrance to Kačanik gorge, and threatened to close the retreat route to Greece.

On 8 April 1.Pz.Div. continued its drive through Macedonia and captured Tetovo but more important pushed further to Kačanik and Preševo. 1.Inf.Div. seized Prilep and its breach reached Krivolak. Further north 11.Pz.Div. opened a new front from Bulgaria, captured Pirot and advanced in direction of Niš. As the break-through into Kačanik gorge cut the 3. Armija in two, VVKJ HQ sent whatever remained of its bomber and fighter forces in the south into the trouble spot in a desperate effort to stop German advance.

At 4.50, in bad weather, seven machines of 208.E, lead by *maj* Dragomir Žikić, went after a column of tanks and armored cars in vicinity of Đeneral Janković rail station. Mission was accomplished with good results, although flak gunners damaged several aircraft, hardest hit being that of *nvtč I k* Stanko Kovačević which crash-landed on return to Peć (in all probability aircraft was either 3334 or 3335). Plane piloted by *nv II k* Alojz Skvarča returned with numerous bullet

Do 17Ka-3 3363 of 209.E photographed at Paramythia on 14 April 1941. Long engine nacelles, distinctive marking of the third batch of aircraft produced at DFA are clearly recognizeable. (Ronald Dudman via Ian Carter)





Curious British soldiers examine 3363 at Paramythia, 14 April 1941.

(Ronald Dudman via Ian Carter)

holes and the one flown by *kap II k* Dimitrije Naumović was slightly damaged.

Shortly after 5.00 in space of several minutes two sections of three aircraft of 209.E went into action. They hit a column in a gorge entrance from a height of 150 meters with excellent results. Following them were two three-plane sections of 210.E, lead by *kap I k* Vojislav Grujić. First trio took-off at 5.15 but this time the defenders were ready. Shortly after dropping the bombs from altitude of 700 meters, pair of II./ZG 26 Bf 110's attacked. Dorniers closed the formation and returned fire, but the aircraft on the right piloted by *nar* Josip Telar was shot down. Flaming Dornier fell near Lipljan, next to the road Priština – Uroševac, taking the lives of *nar* Životije Kojadinović and *nar* Dušan Mihailović, only the pilot managed to bail out. He landed, injured, in front of *Wehrmacht* soldiers which took him to nearby field hospital. Remaining aircraft landed at Peć. Next assault was carried out by two sections of 209.E which encountered strong flak as described by *nv III k* Ivan Orešković, mechanic-gunner in Dornier piloted by *por* Desimir Smiljković:

“As the observer bombarded I strafed the column and watched direct hits by bombs which is a proof of precise and exact flight path. All eight bombs were dropped from height of some 150 meters. Enemy opened strong machinegun fire and on that occasion our aircraft was severely damaged: rudder controls were not responding, left fuel tank was pierced and landing ailerons (flaps) were not working. With the help of engines and ailerons pilot managed to return to starting point at Stubol.”

3313 flown by *nvtč III k* Petar Simović got into serious trouble as well: it was hit into the tail and set ablaze, but Simović managed to land at Stubol, where the plane was abandoned. Simović took a watch from it as a souvenir, preserved by his family to this day. Three aircraft of 209.E were quickly rearmed and sent back to Kačanik gorge and accomplished the

raid with good results. They evaded some German fighters and two returned to Stubol while the third, piloted by *kap II k* Petar Todorović, went to Samodreža, after escaping from Messerschmitts and seeing that Stubol was under attack.

Early in the morning *kap II k* Mihajlo Đonlić took his detachment to Peć, after Uroševac was attacked the previous afternoon and thus considered unsafe for further stay. Thus in the morning no less than thirteen Dorniers were collected at Peć. It was planned to attack the Kačanik gorge round-the-clock till the evening and then retreat to Kraljevo and Gorobilje auxiliary field near Užička Požega in the evening as the airfields in Kosovo were in danger of being overrun. However, already at 9.00 orders were changed, demanding immediate retreat to airfields in Serbia. Among the airmen at Peć was navigator-observer *rez por* Mihajlo Vemić of 208.E:

“At about ten o'clock *eskadrila* gathered at Peć airfield. And then suddenly an enemy airplane was observed flying above the airfield. *Kapetan* Mijušković immediately issued orders for move. In a few minutes *eskadrila* took a course for Užička Požega. As we were at height between Mokra and Suva Planina en route to Novi Pazar, we saw a whole squadron of enemy fighters to the east and above of us going in direction of Peć. As we haven't been observed, because of distance and clouds, with appropriate maneuver we managed to move away undetected.”

Messerschmitts proceeded to Peć where they destroyed 3303 of 208.E and an aircraft of 210.E, and damaged a few more, including 3334. Strangely, *VIII.Flg.K.* reported that its fighters strafed Peć airfield and destroyed just a single Do 17. By the end of the day two remaining aircraft of 210.E at Peć flew away to Gorobilje as well.

Back at Stubol 209.E aircraft were preparing to leave on armed recce in area Štip – Veles – Skoplje – Kumanovo – Bujanovac and continue to Preljina near Čačak when they were struck by Staffeln of II./ZG 26 Bf 110's. Three Dorniers



Unknown airman of 211.Sqn RAF and kap I k Dušan Milojević (on the left) pose in front of 3363 at Paramythia, 14 April 1941. Milojević later joined RAF and in 1942 switched to USAAF. He held a rank of Major when killed on 19 December 1943. His B 24J-10-CO 42-73089 "21" of Yugoslav Detachment within 376.BG crashed in Dolomites after being shot down by Ju 88C of I./ZG 76 whilst returning from a raid to Augsburg; ten-man crew, including ex-3.BP airmen Capt Dušan Mucić and Sergeant Petar Išić, remains missing to this day.

(Ronald Dudman via Ian Carter)

were destroyed, including 3310, and 3344 and already disabled 3313 damaged. German pilots fairly estimated success of their attack, claiming the destruction of 5 Do 17's on the ground at Stubol and Uroševac during the day. Remaining 209.E aircraft, one at Stubol and another at Samodreža, flew to Kraljevo and Gorobilje in the afternoon, other airmen proceeded with trucks to Kraljevo and arrived the following day.

During the night orders arrived from VVKJ HQ, demanding continuous actions on the road Kačanik – Uroševac - Prizren. It was not to be. Already the previous afternoon winter returned to Yugoslavia, heavy rain and snow preventing almost any flying but not the German advance. New front was opened in Slovenia, Germans entered Maribor while the Italians cleared their border area, Niš fell in the east and Bitolj in the south. Somewhere in the south, among other material, Germans found more than a hundred brand new IAM K-14NO engines; these were en route to 3.BP after the license production of 40 Do 17Ka-3 was dropped in favor of Jumo 211 powered Do 215.

At 10.00 of 9 April, in awful weather, maj Žikić lead two remaining aircraft of Đonlić' detachment, 3346 and 3364, from Peć for Gorobilje. Due to heavy rain Žikić landed at Preljina and nar Esad Halilbegović at Kraljevo. During the night VVKJ HQ discharged puk Nikola Obuljen and puk Zdenko Gorjup and placed units of 3.VMB under command of 4.VMB. However, as HQ didn't know where the staff of 3.VMB and 3.BP was, this orders were fulfilled on 11 April.

By the 10<sup>th</sup> Yugoslav Kingdom was tearing apart. In Serbia, attempt of organized resistance near Jagodina was quickly dealt by Panzers, to the southwest 1.Pz.Div. overrun Prokuplje and approached Priština. In the north, Germans entered Zagreb, where to their astonishment and disbelief, Croat population organized jubilant welcome in their honor! That same day under German tutorship *Nezavisna Država Hrvatska* (Independent State of Croatia – NDH) was pro-



Destroyed Do 17Ka-3, from the last block produced at DFA, is examined by Italian airmen at Paramythia.

(Giancarlo Garelli)

claimed and all Croat soldiers called by its newly-proclaimed head of state Ante Pavelić to cease fire and join its armed forces immediately. In Hercegovina, Croats lead by *Ustaša's* – members of *Ustaša-Hrvatski revolucionarni pokret* (Ustasha-Croat Revolutionary Movement; a terrorist organization formed by Croat radicals aimed at creation of independent Croat State) started clashing Yugoslav troops and took control of Mostar. Broken chain of command, desertions, defeatism, absence of clear orders and reliable information only established good climate for rumor to spread, further fastening the inevitable end.

The only part of Yugoslav forces still functioning to some extent at operational level was VVKJ. In the morning, 3346 and 3364 continued their journey for Gorobilje. 209.E convoy came to Preljina only to find 81.BG and ppor Ratimir Manojlović with por Desimir Smiljković, which came there two days earlier with a hack Bü 131 after their planes were destroyed at Stubol. Coming from Čačak, puk Nikola Obuljen and his deputy puk Sergej Šebaljin arrived claiming German arrival is imminent as Čačak and Kraljevo have fallen. They proceeded to Užička Požega and continued with spreading the rumor until taken into custody on personal orders of div den Mihajlo Stajić. Not knowing what they have done, puk Vukčević intervened on the following day and saved them from certain execution, although the charges remained and they were to face court marshal.

Late in the morning, as the weather improved a bit two planes from Đonlić' detachment flew from Kraljevo to Gorobilje. There, out of nowhere and to surprise of all, puk Gorjup appeared stating Čačak has fallen and ordered that all aircraft should leave for Sarajevo immediately and if this cannot be done, they are to be burned. Then he left. Distance to Čačak was mere 20 kilometers, but in reality German troops were some 120 kilometers away from Čačak, in Morava valley! Majority of 3.BP men left in hurry whilst Branko Fanel and several crews stayed behind, indeed in the ensuing chaos some of those supposed to stay behind, left as well. This meant there were not enough crews for the remaining aircraft even if the weather cleared! Some however, already decided to fly away whatever the cost.

The previous evening bitter debate was conducted at Hotel "Evropa" by men of 3.BP and 67.BG of 7.BP, equipped with Savoia Marchetti SM.79-i, as to what to do and where to go. Those that wanted to leave the country agreed that it would be too risky to go to Greece in German- or Italian-built aircraft and although more distant, Soviet Union seemed a better choice. Three crews decided to give it a try and make for Soviet Union, despite appalling weather. Aircraft 3366 crashed in storm near Căndesti village in Dâmbovită county, Rumania, nine men aboard were killed. Seven of them have positively been identified: *ppor* Milenko Tošić (P), radio-operator (RO) *nar* Stojan Pulević, *nar* Vojislav Rajčević (RO) and civilian mechanic Krsto Inić of 208.E, and *nar I k* Milenko Grujović (RO), *ppor* Božidar Radivojević (NO) and civilian mechanic Božidar Đurašević of 210.E. In all probability the remaining two were *nar* Petko Milojević (P) of 210.E and *nar* Čedomir Ratković (MG) of 208.E, although the names of *ppor* Milan Đarović, infantry *puk* Božidar Satlević and an unknown airman have been carved on the gravestone erected in Timisoara after the reburial in the seventies. Furthermore, some sources mention *ppor* Lazar Radenović as being among the dead. This aircraft should have been piloted by *nvtč III k* Petar Simović – Stojan Pulević was his cousin and they had an uncle, old communist and participant of October Revolution, in Moscow. Simović went to the airfield staff to get the weather forecast, but as he stayed longer than planned, his place was taken by Milenko Tošić.

Second plane, 3333, flown by *nvtč III k* Ivan Pavelić of 208.E force-landed at 15.30 between Kővárhosszúfalu and Nagysomkut villages in Hungary, its crew thinking they reached Soviet Union after seeing a tractor in the field! Pavelić, *por* Zlatko Kudrna (NO), *nar* Ljubomir Đorđević (RO) and mechanics *nv II k* Nikola Bačić, *nar* Branko Tasić, *nar* Jakov Rosandić and *nv III k* Josip Bolanča were captured and their plane seized. Since being of Croat nationality, Pavelić, Kudrna, Bačić, Rosandić and Bolanča were released during May 1941 under condition to join newly formed Croat air arms.

The third aircraft, 3326, was taken by deputy CO of 205.E, *kap I k* Momčilo Petrović, one of the few managing to break through encirclement in Macedonia and reach Kosovo, and two unknown airmen and flown in direction of Mostar, intending to fly to Soviet Union once the weather improves. They landed at Ortiješ airfield in the midst of Croat rebellion and their aircraft was soon disabled by Ustasha-orientated ground crews. On the following day, as Yugoslav Army retook the control of Mostar, *kap I k* Petrović boarded the SM.79-i piloted by his classmate, commander of 214.E *kap I k* Jefta Bošnjak, bound for Soviet Union. In awful weather aircraft crashed into Zarožje hill, in Nikolići hamlet, near Rogačica, and all nine airmen aboard were killed. Subsequent fate of Petrović's Dornier crewmates remains unknown, but it seems that at least one of them boarded SM.79-i of 81.BG, piloted by *nvtč IV k* Miodrag Đorđević, which was shot down in error by Yugoslav anti-



VVKJ airmen working on 3363 at Heliopolis, late April 1941.  
(Muzej ratnog vazduhoplovstva)

aircraft artillery on 11 April and crashed at Igman mountain whilst en route to Greece; six men aboard were killed.

When *puk* Petar Vukčević, CO of 4.VMB landed at Gorobilje in the afternoon to take command of the 3.BP he was outraged at what he found, or actually what he failed to find. He immediately informed HQ about the conduct of *puk* Gorjup and called the army command of the city of Višegrad ordering it to immediately turn back personnel of 3.BP! They returned the following morning but low clouds, snow and rain made flying impossible for the whole of 11 April. On the same day *puk* Zdenko Gorjup was officially discharged and arrested, joining *puk* Obuljen and *puk* Šebaljin in custody, only to be released two days later. Command of 3.BP was assigned to newly promoted *ppuk* Dragomir Žikić, who practically lead the unit since the outbreak of the war. By now the distinction between *eskadrila*'s faded away, both men and aircraft being shared within the unit. In the afternoon *kap I k* Živojin Lazić – freed from prison by *puk* Vukčević – and *ppor* Božidar Mladenović volunteered to take a report into the HQ of *Drinska divizija* (Drina Division) situated near Bojnik. They took-off from Gorobilje at 16.00 in Bü 131 in awful weather and after it became impossible to continue, force-landed in Budilovina village, near Brus. Lazić continued on foot to deliver the report while Mladenović joined retreating Yugoslav troops en route to Sarajevo.

Elsewhere, dozens of cities were rolled-over, Logatec, Celje, Ptuj in Slovenia, Krapina, Karlovac and Osijek in Croatia, Pančevo, Zemun and Kosovska Mitrovica in Serbia, to name but a few, while German and Italian troops linked up in Debar and Struga on the Albanian border. Hungary decided to enter the fray as well and its Army crossed the frontier between Danube and Tisa rivers.

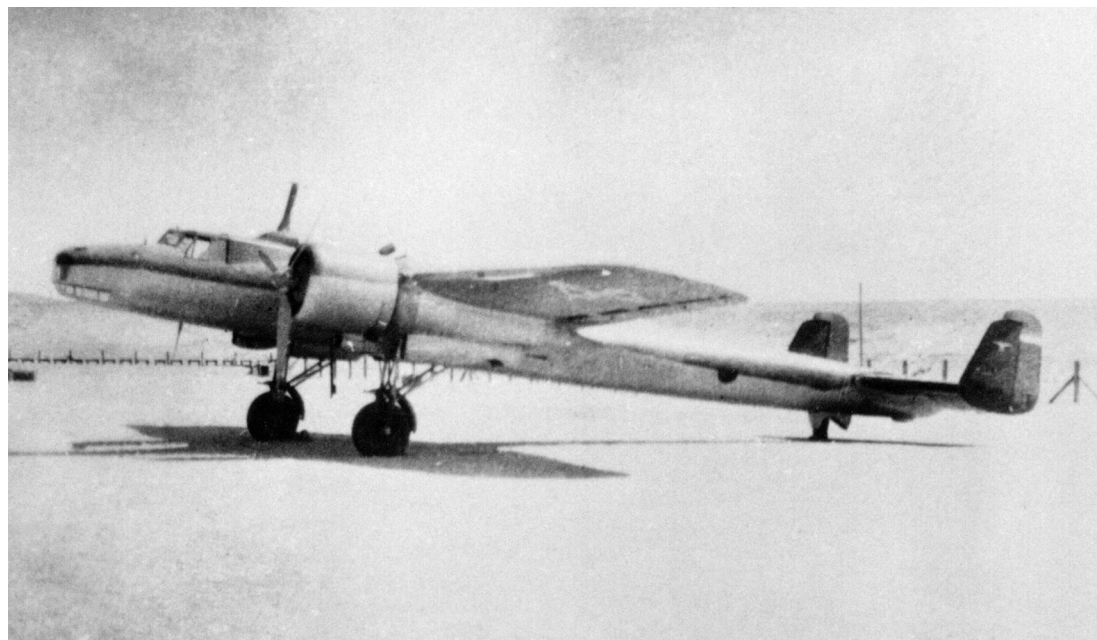
On 12 April all surplus personnel began moving towards Sarajevo, reaching it two days later. For the remaining forces, the order of the day was bombardment of the Čuprija – Jagodina – Kragujevac road and destruction of strategically important bridge over Morava river near Čuprija, which fell intact into German hands. First in the air were three planes lead by *kap II k* Mihajlo Đonlić. They attacked the bridge but missed, closest being the hit on the bridge guardhouse.

At Kraljevo, *ppuk* Leonid Bajdak, commander of 5.LP and highest-ranking officer present, tried to organize transfer of three Dorniers to Gorobilje but had only one qualified pilot at hand, *kap II k* Petar Todorović. Near Užička Požega, Bajdak caught 209.E echelon moving from Preljina to Gorobilje and asked for volunteers, *ppor* Ratomir Manojlović and *nar* Aleksandar Miljković took on the task. At Kraljevo, three 5.LP pilots volunteered for observer posts, among them *kap I k* Velimir Veličković:



3363 and obscured 3348 behind it shortly after arriving to Heliopolis on 19 April 1941. Two VVKJ SM 79's are also visible. At the beginning of May *div đen* Dušan Simović decided to present all VVKJ aircraft which reached Middle East to RAF. This decision proved to be an exceptionally damaging mistake, as Yugoslav airmen didn't get any aircraft from the RAF and thus couldn't have any flying practice for over a year. This reflected badly on their morale and discipline. (Len Cooper via Ian Carter)

Do 17Ka-3 3348 with distinctive red circle of 210.E shortly upon arrival in Egypt.  
(Red Kite)



“Since these two brand-new Do 17’s (3365 and 3369 – a.c.) have already been loaded with 100 kilo bombs, they took-off on the mission first. We, *kapetan* Todorović and me, had difficulty with starting the engines – I don’t exclude the possibility of sabotage by factory civil workers – and took-off little later. By then these two planes were already returning from a mission, going in direction of Užička Požega to land there (they actually returned to Kraljevo – a.c.). We flew very low, at some 300 meters. As we exited Velika Morava valley, in direction of Čuprija, I spotted German mechanized column all along the Čuprija – Jagodina road. Then I ordered the pilot to make a turn, so I could begin bombardment of the whole column from tail (Jagodina) to head (Čuprija). Pilot Todorović carried out the order immediately.

As soon as the enemy saw us, they stopped at once. German officers probably – convinced that our Do 17 carried 100 kg bombs as well the previous two (they carried a load of 84 Stanković 12 kg bombs - a.c.), since there was no visible external difference between our three planes – ordered desertion of vehicles and dispersion in fields beside the road. That was just an ideal target for us! Now the bombardment was completely safe, because all German soldiers were actually unarmed, and that is proven by the fact that we hadn’t got a single shot into our plane during the bombardment.

Lying on my stomach above the bomb sight and to the right of the pilot (Todorović was sitting slightly above me) I easily noticed that the pilot didn’t have a favorable view of the target below us. Therefore he couldn’t cut the road by zigzagging and thus allow me to release the bombs in groups of 2 to 4. That was the reason I had to grab the stick and steer it in a zigzag lane. At that time the pilot steered with pedals and held the stick. Simultaneously I turned the handle with my right hand and released the bombs. Such ‘Niš double command’ (both Veličković and Todorović were native of Niš – a.c.) functioned perfectly in a jiffy till the last bomb, we bombarded the Germans from Stalać almost to Jagodina.”

Todorović landed at Gorobilje, where 3365 and 3369 arrived after refueling at Kraljevo. In the meantime, three Dorniers took-off from Gorobilje, followed shortly by four others, and

targeted the same area. After the attack and after evading some Bf 109E’s first section continued to Rajlovac airfield near Sarajevo from where they moved to nearby Butmir shortly after. Second section fulfilled the task without much difficulties. Last mission of the day was flown by four planes in cloudy weather shortly after 16.00. Three attacked Germans near the village of Gornja Sabanta, 3364 piloted by *por* Desimir Smiljković got both reservoirs and right engine hit by strong machinegun fire and rapidly lost fuel. Smiljković barely reached Preljina, from where he and his crew were taken by a car to Gorobilje; aircraft which actually belonged to Đonlić’s detachment was found by German troops two days later. Late at a take-off, *ppor* Ratomir Manojlović continued on his own, and saw a whole *Staffel* of Bf 109E’s over Morava bridge. Two fighters chased him but he escaped and attacked German armored vehicles near Kragujevac with good results.

On the ground, German troops encountered only sporadic resistance, their advance speed depended solely on the ability of its logistic to follow. Ruined Belgrade fell in the afternoon without a fight. At a meeting with his commanders at 21.00 *puk* Vukčević ordered six-plane formation to attack enemy units on the Rekovac – Gornja Sabanta – Kragujevac – Topola – Arandelovac road and proceed to Butmir in early morning of 13 April, at same time reproaching *maj* Branko Fanedl, a Croat, for failing to take active part in combat so far.

At around 4.30 two sections of three Dorniers took-off from Gorobilje in direction of Kragujevac, followed closely by a single aircraft of Mihajlo Đonlić. Needless to say leading them was Branko Fanedl. Shortly before reaching Kragujevac he and *nar* Ivan Babogredac broke to the left, while the rest of the formation continued on course. Few minutes later they noticed a column on the road Jagodina – Čuprija and attacked. They were met by deadly flak and lead plane was shot down (there are suggestions that it might have been brought down by explosion of its own bombs), crashing between Ribnica and Bukovica villages near Jagodina. Fanedl’s adjutant, *por* Evgenije Radanov remembered that fateful day:

“The evening before *major* Fanedl approached and told me that we’ll go on a combat mission. As I was preparing

to leave the Staff for airfield in the morning, *kapetan* Nikolaj Teofilov approached me. He came to our Staff the day before from *Pilotska škola* (1.PŠ – a.c.) in Rajlovac and became deputy CO of our *Grupa* (he was one of a dozen pilots sent by VVKJ HQ from Rajlovac to take Dorniers left at Gorobilje after they were abandoned on 10 April – a.c.) I though he wanted to wish me luck, but unexpectedly he asked me ‘Sir adjutant, I have a plea’. I got confused a little and quickly tried to think what could it be and replied that if I can I will surely fill it out. He continued ‘Please allow me to take your place and go with sir Fanedl’. I was stunned and surprised. I told him that it wasn’t in my power and that sir Fanedl should be asked but Teofilov interrupted me and added ‘Don’t worry, sir Fanedl will certainly allow it, we are old friends, buddies from the same Military academy class, that’s why I want to fly with him’. I must admit that I felt quite angry as he took my place, I considered going on a mission a matter of highest honor, but I tried not to show it and wished them farewell.

One hour later two planes returned (actually only the plane piloted by *nar* Ivan Babogredac and damaged by flak – a.c.). Crews reported that they made low-level attack on a motorized column on the road Paraćin – Čuprija. Germans replied with strong anti-aircraft fire and hit sir Fanedl’s plane. Still, he managed to keep it in the air and it seemed he was trying to force-land. And then, when at height of less than 200 meters crew started to bail out. Fanedl bailed out so clumsy that the tail decapitated him. Poor man, his head was never found. Sir Teofilov bailed out also but fell on earth before his parachute could be deployed. Gunner-mechanic, a Slovene, can’t remember his name (*nar* Franjo Ribič – a.c.) crashed with the aircraft. They were buried at village cemetery in Ribnica.

At the end of 1941 wife of kapetan Teofilov arranged reburial of his remains at Orthodox cemetery in my hometown, Pančevo. I heard about it and joined the modest procession,

but since on a run from Germans didn’t mention I knew him and tried to stay unnoticed. His wife erected a monument and soon moved. Knowing there was no one else to look after his grave I cared about it ever since, in a strange way considering it as my own.”

Branko Fanedl was one of 27 VVKJ airmen who were remembered exactly 60 years later and decorated by president of Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. It was the first time since 1945 that any VVKJ member received such honor. Remaining planes were dispersed by heavy flak over Kragujevac, the one piloted by *nvtč IV k* Maksimilijan Plečko receiving numerous hits, and other flown by *nv III k* Žika Stanković lost a starboard engine. Only two crews accomplished the mission, remaining two released their bombs into some woods near Sarajevo, but eventually reached Butmir successfully. Oddly, Yugoslav troops reported being bombed by three of their own Dorniers near Sokolac on this occasion! Aircraft of *kap II k* Đonlić was also damaged but nevertheless reached Butmir. Three broken Dorniers were left at Gorobilje and were subsequently captured.

As the April War entered its final phase, what remained of Yugoslav Army withdrew in disorder to Bosnia and Montenegro without clear idea what to do next. Same applied for high government and military officials, but as the circle shrank, they had a trump in a hand unattainable to the rest of population. Plans for their evacuation were in full swing and remaining VVKJ aircraft, including those of 3.BP, were to play a major part. Early in the morning of 14 April *kap I k* Dušan Milojević took-off from Butmir to Kapino Polje auxiliary airfield, located near Nikšić, and from there continued to Paramythia. He was carrying Greek liaison officer who had to establish contact with Greek and British authorities and announce arrival of the plane with King Petar II. After the SM.79-i carrying the King arrived, he returned to Kapino Polje, bringing the bad news that no RAF aircraft are available for the evacuation. In the



Do 17Ka-3 3362 of 210.E found by Italians at Kapino Polje. VVKJ deputy CO (appointed by *brig đen* Mirković on 13 April 1941) *puk* Petar Vukčević was supposed to be evacuated with this aircraft, but this was foiled by unknown mechanics that deliberately switched its magnetos. Ca.310bis, Ca.311 and three Fizir FP-2 trainers are visible behind. (Muzej ratnog vazduhoplovstva)

meantime remaining seven Dorniers flew to Kapino Polje, only to move over to Grab near Trebinje shortly thereafter. In the afternoon representatives of Yugoslav General Staff came into the command of *Panzergruppe Kleist* to negotiate surrender.

At 9.00 on 15 April *kap I k* Milojević flew again to Greece, this time taking *Sqn/Ldr* Thomas Mappleback, his wife and *puk* Dušan Radović as passengers to Agrinion. Mappleback was going to arrange details for safe arrival of further Yugoslav aircraft, while Radović tried in vain to persuade Britons to send transport planes to Nikšić and help in evacuation; his appeal found no positive answer. As *kap I k* Milojević returned to Kapino Polje he came face to face with *brig den* Mirković – who just heard a rumor that the *Gestapo* was searching for him. Milojević quickly demonstrated what he thought of general, as remembered by his adjutant *ppuk* Andra Pavlović:

“*Đeneral* Mirković immediately ordered *kapetan* Dušan Milojević, who just returned with his Do 17 from Greece, to transfer us to Greece, as the Germans were looking for us. General boarded the plane at once and I followed him, but then *kapetan* Milojević said we cannot take-off since one of the engines has a defect. We got out of the aircraft and waited for repair to be done by mechanic *narednik* Ivan Orešković. As this engine defect seemed suspicious to me, I asked Orešković (who in 1939 – 1940 was a mechanic of my aircraft in Skoplje) what is wrong with the engine, and he replied in confidence (not to be heard by *đeneral* Mirković) that the engine is all right but *kapetan* Milojević does not want to evacuate general for some pre-war personal reasons.”

Mirković anyway managed to escape in another aircraft but his adjutant fell into German captivity a few days later. Shortly after midday seven Dorniers jumped over from Grab to Kapino Polje and collected a group of fighter pilots in order to take them to Paramythia and then return as soon as possible to pick up next group of passengers. As they were prepared

for sortie one became inoperable for bizarre reasons. When it became obvious that there are not enough places in departing aircraft since they were reserved for various officials and wealthy civilians, few of the “more malicious” mechanics decided that some of the “gentleman with silk socks” should stay and share their destiny. They switched the magnetos on 3362 and grounded it efficiently. Despite the efforts, reason for aircraft malfunction was established only after the capitulation by mechanics of *Reggia Aeronautica*! Ironically, exactly the Dorniers were selected by Borivoje Mirković for transfer of ordinary airmen to Greece.

Remaining six planes arrived to Paramythia at about 16.00, their timing couldn't be worse. As soon as they landed they were approached by *F/Lt* William P. Griffin, *211.Sqn RAF* Medical Officer, who stayed behind to advise Yugoslav crews that they are to proceed to Agrinion at once, as Paramythia has been evacuated and possibility of the air raid was very high. Less than ten minutes have lapsed when Macchi C.200 fighters of *22° Gruppo Autonomo* (Autonomous Group – GA) attacked. Italians claimed six bombers and a single fighter destroyed and further ten bombers damaged and their estimate was fairly accurate. Caught in the open, five Dorniers were destroyed and 3348 slightly damaged, rest of the claims related to abandoned British and Greek aircraft. 3348 was repaired by the following morning and *kap II k* Petar Todorović took with it a group of *VVKJ* airmen to Agrinion. Due to dense clouds he returned only in the afternoon, by then the remaining men were already evacuated to Eleusis aboard Wellingtons of *37.Sqn RAF* (on the following day they boarded “Port Halifax” in Piraeus, where they met many known faces from *63.BG*). Todorović took aboard *F/Lt* Joseph F. Fraser of *112.Sqn RAF*, who just force-landed at Paramythia with Mk.II Gladiator *N5768* and set it alight to prevent it from falling into enemy hands, and returned to Agrinion.



Another view of 3362 of 210.E at Kapino Polje. (Muzej ratnog vazduhoplovstva)

Back at Kapino Polje *por* Desimir Smiljković of 209.E took a hike aboard one of three Caproni Ca.310bis of 603.TE en route to Greece. The first plane got through, but the other two were intercepted by C.200's of 371<sup>a</sup> *Squadriglia* (Squadron – *Squa*) 150° GA and shot down over Albanian coast, between cape Gjuhëzës and Saseno. None of some fifteen occupants, Smiljković among them, survived. *Sottotenente* (Pilot Officer) E. Omicini and *Maresciallo* (Sergeant) P. Romagnoli claimed a “Blenheim” shot down and another probable.

In the early morning of 17 April Dušan Milojević took 3363, the last operational Dornier in Yugoslavia, to Agrinion, with three passengers and five chests filled with gold. From Agrinion, in formation with Todorović he continued to Eulexis airfield near Athens. Yugoslav Army surrendered at 21.00 on 17 April, capitulation took effect as of 12.00 on the following day. Ironically, the swiftness of Yugoslav defeat has been expected by all German military planners except for Adolf Hitler, who had high appreciation of Serbian Army for its heroism and toughness in the Great War. However, the Yugoslav Army of 1941 was not the Serbian Army of 1914.

On 19 April *kap I k* Dušan Milojević and *nar III k* Ivan Orešković, carrying *Sqn/Ldr* Mappleback, his wife and the gold trunks, and *kap II k* Petar Todorović and *nar* Ivan Ilić flew from Eleusis, via Xania and Burg-El-Arab, to He-liopolis in Egypt, making the final sorties of the 3.BP and ending its short but valiant war path. Altogether 279 members of

VVKJ and PV reached Middle East, more than sixty of them from 3.BP.

By all means 3.BP was by far the most successful VVKJ bomber unit of the war. Despite losing two thirds of its strength on the first day of hostilities, it managed to regroup and fight back until the end. Compared to other units it suffered relatively light losses in action, especially in contrast to Blenheim crews sent to suicidal attacks on targets in Austria, Hungary and Rumania. There are several reasons for that. Air defenses of VIII.Fliegerkorps in Bulgaria lacked the size and organization of Luftflotte 4 and at the same time were engaged both over Yugoslavia and Greece. Combination of rough terrain and poor weather went on hand of Dornier crews as well, proving very suitable for fast and sudden low-level hit-and-run attacks and considerably helped defensive tactics – on numerous occasions they easily avoided pursuing fighters. Another factor adding to success was that targets were located in areas well known to the crews. Most of all, Do 17Ka was in use for more than three years and it enabled airmen of 3.BP to master it to a level inaccessible to Blenheim and Savoia Marchetti crews.

#### In other units

Apart from 3.BP, sole other VVKJ unit to have operated Do 17Ka was *Vazduhoplovna škola bombardovanja* (Avia-



VŠB Do 17Ka-2 destroyed by Italian fighters on 13 April at Jasenica airfield. A Bü 131D-2 Jungmann of 3.PŠ thrown by a bomb blast into the trees is visible in the distance.

(SMA via Giancarlo Garelli)



Another view of the destroyed VŠB aircraft at Jasenica.

(Achille Vigna via Milan Micevski)

tion bomber school – VŠB), commanded by *puk* Nikola Mikec. Based at Jasenica near Mostar, it received two Do 17Ka's from 3.BP some ten days before the outbreak of war. As first Italian bombs fell on airfield on 6 April unit became completely desorganized as the commander and his aides fled to surrounding hills. Unit's single Blenheim was flown away to operational unit, namely 1.BP, but no effort was made for similar move of Dorniers. By the time of Ustasha-led rebellion on 10 April, VŠB was practically non-existent and its aircraft abandoned. Yugoslav Army restored order in Mostar on the following day, but by then both Dorniers were deliberately damaged. On 12 April *maj* Ranko Rašković, CO of 67.BG, lead a group of airmen and mechanics from Nikšić to Mostar, in order to capacitate as many aircraft as possible for evacuation to Kapino Polje, and from there to Greece. Among them was pilot *por* Miljko Vračarić:

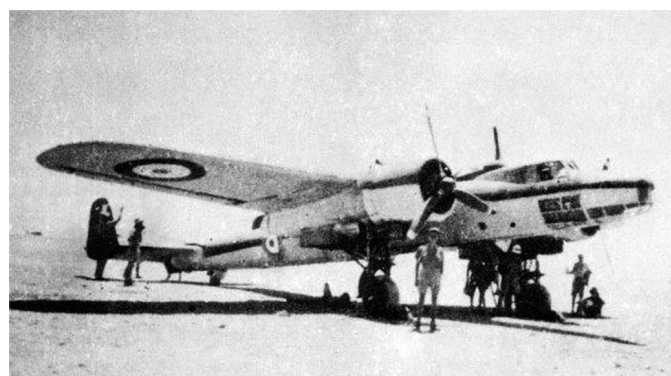
"I was ordered by *eskadrila* commander (*kap II k* Sergije Frantov, CO of 261.E – a.c.) to go with *major* Ranko Rašković and some other pilots from 81. *vazduhoplovna grupa* and 7. *vazduhoplovni puk* to Mostar during the afternoon. We had to take-over some craft of 7. *vazduhoplovni puk*, there were seven or eight of them, and one from 81. *vazduhoplovna grupa*, all of a SM.79 type, single Do 17 from 3. *vazduhoplovni puk* and a pair of Do 17's from *Vazduhoplovna škola bombardovanja*. All of them were abandoned at airfields in the Mostar valley.

We arrived in Mostar at about nine o'clock on 13 April and found these aircraft without crews, some with smashed instruments, others with crashed radio sets, some with punctured tires, and some with pierced parachutes. Major Rašković ordered that these aircraft have to be brought to least-necessary correctness to be flown over to Nikšić. During that work we were attacked by Italian and German (sic) bombers and fighters and these aircraft were flamed to the last."

Highly successful strafing conducted by 363<sup>a</sup> *Squa* 150 GA C.200's left VŠB Dorniers and about two dozens of

other aircraft in ashes. Severely damaged, 3326 was captured by Italians at Ortiješ three days later.

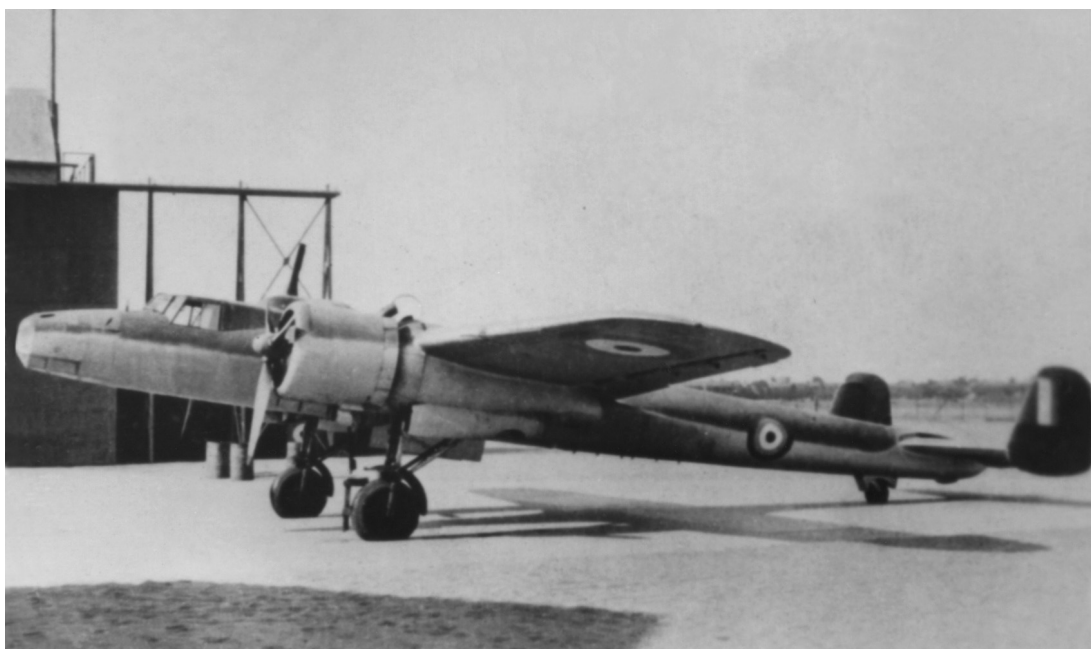
Worth mentioning is the effort of the DFA test pilot *kap I k* Đorđe Jankovski and his unknown crew. On 8 April they took-off in 3318 and single-handedly attacked German troops in area of Niš, evading pair of pursuing Bf 109E's. On return to Kraljevo they refueled, rearmed and took-off in the afternoon, destination Kačanik gorge. They were met by exceptionally strong flak and small-arms fire, but released full load of 12 kg bombs on the enemy. Jankovski was wounded into the leg and his aircraft riddled, but he managed to bring it back. On landing one of the undercarriage legs collapsed because of numerous shrapnel hits and plane stopped with one wingtip leaning on the ground. Russian immigrant Jankovski changed his name from Jurij to Đorđe after comming to Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes in early twenties. In summer of 1941, together with Zdenko Gorjup, he was accepted into *Luftwaffe* and joined *Kette der Generalluftzeugmeister* at Zemun. During the following autumn he flew 96 sorties in ex-VVKJ Breguet 19 against insurgents in Serbia, under new name – Georg. In 1942 he



RAF airmen next to Do 17Ka-3 AX706 of 102.M.U. at Ismailia, summer 1941.

(Muzej ratnog vazduhoplovstva)

In full RAF markings AX707, ex-VVKJ 3348, at Heliopolis. Unfortunately, its service career in RAF was short-lived. Both aircraft taken by the RAF held the old Yugoslav camouflage but received RAF roundels on six positions, four on the wings and two on the fuselage, as well as British tri-color on the tail. In all probability, Yugoslav serials on the rudder have been removed and the new ones haven't been applied.  
(Red Kite)



joined Croat Air Arms, now named Juraj. He was killed on 6 September 1944 when his Ca.311M crashed near Banja Luka due to sabotage.

### Aftermath

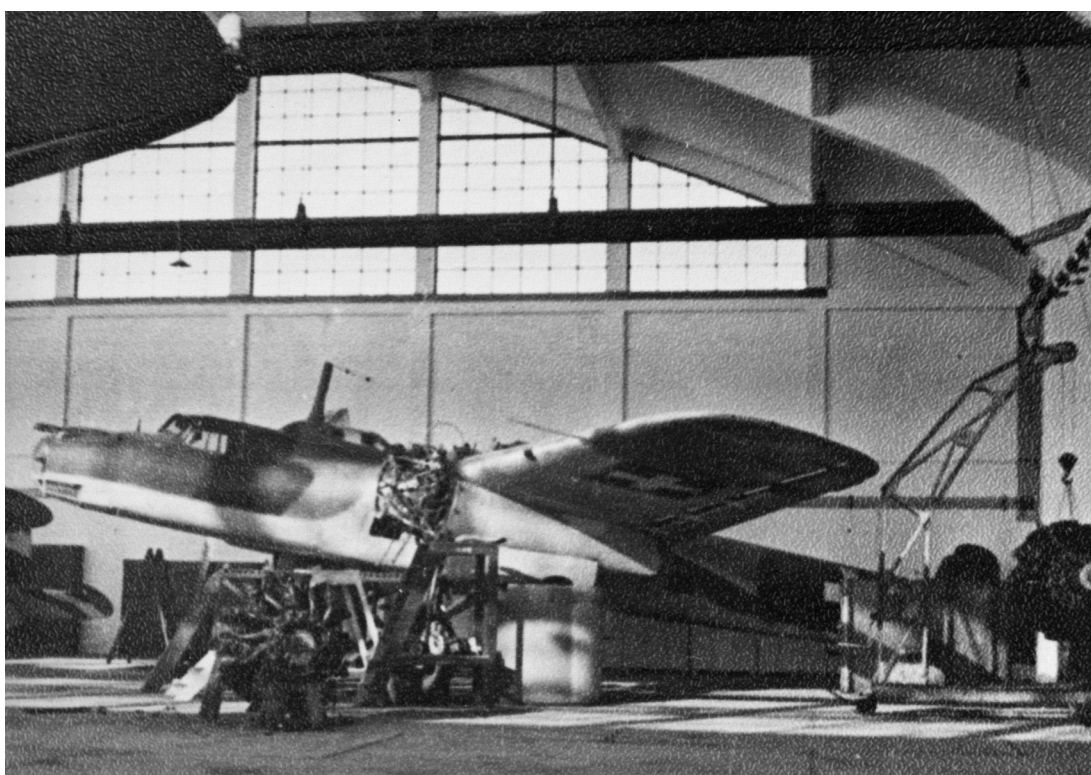
No less than 23 VVKJ Dorniers survived the April campaign. Two aircraft which reached Egypt were put on charge of RAF Middle East on 2 May 1941 and received new markings and serials, 3348 becoming AX707 and 3363 the AX706. Both were assigned to 102.Maintenance Unit. RAF showed no real interest for their use and soon grounded them

at Ismailia airfield. The pair was disabled in German air raid on 27 August 1941 and subsequently struck off charge on 12 September.

Slightly damaged 3333 was repaired and modified by Magyar Királyi Honvéd Légierő (Royal Hungarian Army Air Force – MKHL) technicians, receiving new armament in form of four Hungarian-made 8 mm GKM machineguns, two of which were fixed for forward firing in altered nose section, and two reconnaissance cameras with 200 mm lenses. It was coded J101 and remained in service till 1944.

As for Italian booties, 3362 was taken to 1° Centro Sperimentale in Guidonia where it was thoughtfully and extensively tested until the capitulation of Italy in September 1943.

MKHL J101 of 1. Önálló távfelderítő osztály (Tactical Reconnaissance Group), ex-VVKJ 3333, with modified nose containing four Hungarian-built 8 mm GKM machineguns is undergoing engine maintenance at Ferihegy airfield in late 1942. Initially used for long range reconnaissance, it remained in service until 1944.  
(Muzej ratnog vazduhoplovstva)





Inquisitive German soldiers take a close look at slightly damaged Do 17Ka-3 of 206.E at Petrovac. The aircraft serial was either 3343 or 3350.  
(Jan van der Heuvel)



Germans mingle around two Dorniers from the first DFA block captured at Petrovac, the one in front belonged to 207.E. Although from same block planes have a different camouflage pattern.  
(Jan van der Heuvel)



German soldier stands in the cabin of Do 17Ka-1 3319. The aircraft is lying on its tail, the tail-wheel being probably dismantled by VVKJ mechanics to be used on another aircraft.  
(Jan van der Heuvel)



Jubilant Wehrmacht soldier sits on the nose of 3364 at the end of April 1941. Deteriorating condition of the craft is already noticeable.  
(Jan van der Heuvel)



Do 17Ka-1 3319 and an DFA-built machine, either 3343 or 3350 of 207.E captured by German troops at Petrovac.

(Jan van der Heuvel)

3326 seem to have been in too bad a shape, it was left in Mostar never to be mentioned again.

German troops collected no fewer than 18 Dorniers. The one found at isolated Uroševac escaped the attention of

units collecting the booty material and disappeared in the winds of war. 3305, 3319, 3343 and 3350 found at Petrovac and 3339 and 3341 at Skoplje (Germans estimated their condition as 3<sup>rd</sup> class), all previously belonging to 63.BG, were ceded to



Close-up of the 3319 nose.

(Peter Petrick via  
Dénes Bernád)

The photographer mis-judged the position of his companion, nevertheless he nicely caught the front of this captured Do 17Ka-1, in all probability the 3313 – the close examination of the terrain suggests this photo was taken at Stubol. Noticeable is the open gun hatch, absence of the Browning FN machinegun and the non-standard glazing of the nose cone.  
(Jan van der Heuvel)



*Vazdušnite na Negovo Veličestvo Vojski* (Royal Bulgarian Air Force – *VnNVV*). 3323 (3<sup>rd</sup> Class), 3308 and 3314 (one 3<sup>rd</sup> and another 4<sup>th</sup> class) were captured at Gorobilje. 3318, 3370, 3371

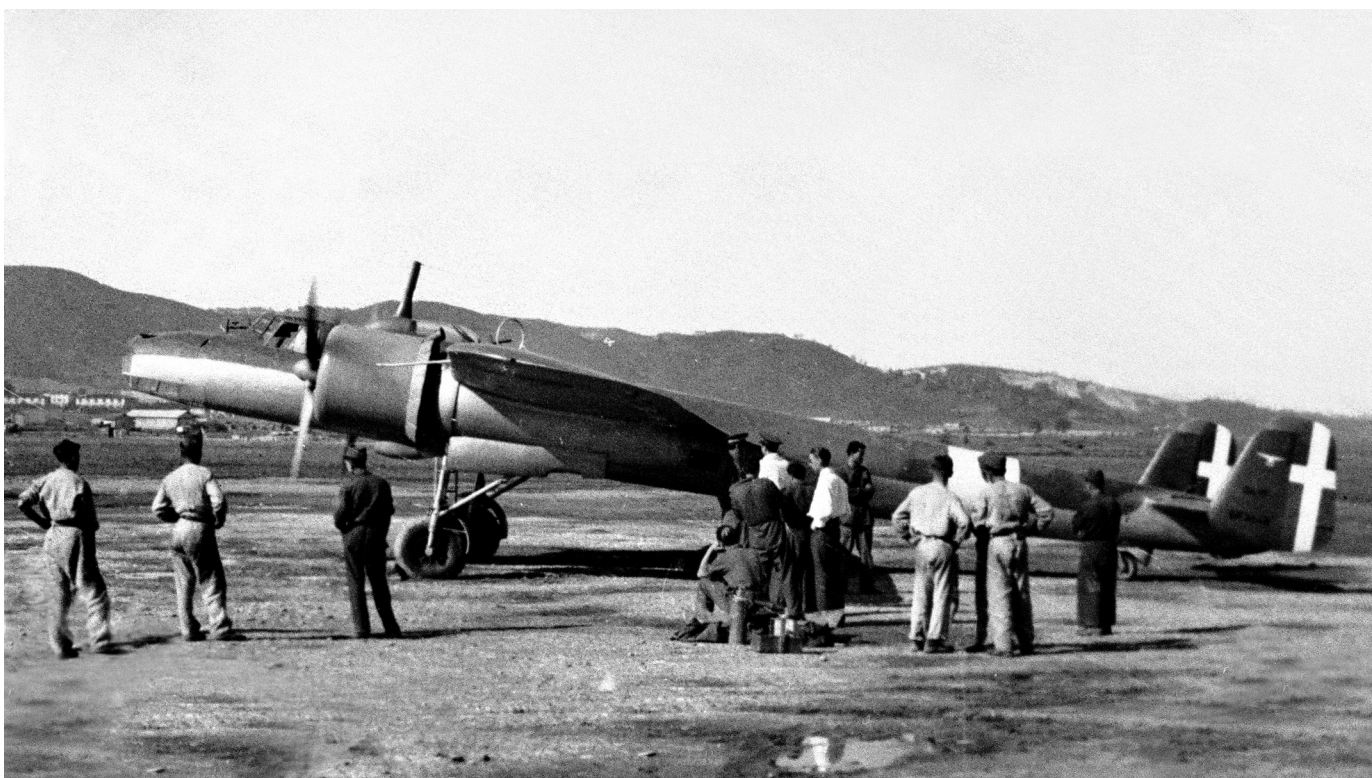
and 3372 (all 3<sup>rd</sup> class) were found at DFA, 3364 (3<sup>rd</sup> Class) at Preljina, 3313 and 3344 (both 4<sup>th</sup> class) at Stubol, and 3334 (4<sup>th</sup> class) at Peć. These aircraft eventually ended up in Croatia.



Do 17Ka-3 3362 in front of Ala Littoria hangar at Tirana airport. Behind it is an Meridionali Ro 37.  
(Luigi Gorena via Giancarlo Garelo)



Another view of 3362 at Tirana. Partially visible is Caproni "Borea" I-NTRA.  
(Luigi Gorena via Giancarlo Garelo)



Ready for transfer flight to Guidonia, 3362 at Tirana. Italians left the old camouflage and inscriptions on the tail and applied *Reggia Aeronautica* insignia on four positions on wings, yellow engine cowlings, huge white band around the fuselage and white crosses on the rudder.  
(Giancarlo Garelo)

## Chapter 2

# Luftwaffe Dorniers over Yugoslavia

### Bombs on Belgrade

During the air battles of 1940 Do 17Z, the final bomber version of Do 17 in *Luftwaffe* service, proved to be obsolete and the weakest of the three *Luftwaffe* first-line medium bomber types. By the time of invasion of Yugoslavia, two out of four *Kampfgeschwadern* operating the plane the previous autumn have switched to Ju 88. The remaining two were also in process of transitioning to either Do 217 or Ju 88. Still, *I./KG 2*, *6./KG 2*, *III./KG 2*, with *10.(Ergänzung)/KG 2* “*Holzhammer*”

and *III./KG 3* “*Blitz*” with over 110 Do 17Z’s were collected at airfields around Vienna and subordinated to *Luftflotte 4* at the beginning of April 1941.

At dawn of 6 April armada of 234 bombers (some accounts put this figure at 261), including 102 Do 17Z’s, each armed with 18 SC 50 (50 kg fragmentation bombs) and 2 AB 36 clusters (containing 36 1 kg incendiary bombs), and over 120 fighters assembled over Balaton Lake and took a direct course to Belgrade. First wave appeared over the city at 6.51 local time (*Luftwaffe* units participating in the *Balkanfeldzug* used the



6.LP photographer, *nar* Kosta Denić (third from left) accompanied by Luftwaffe representative (in white suit) and two Yugoslav officers in front of Do 17V-7 W.Nr.657 D-AQYK and German pavilion on the occasion of the “First International Aviation Exhibition”.  
(Milan Micevski)



Unknown gentleman in front of obviously the favorite snapshot position at the exhibition. Aircraft was overall painted in RLM 63 light gray, with gloss black engine nacelles and spinners.

(Šime Oštrić coll.)

Eastern European time which was one hour ahead of the Yugoslav local time) and last of the Germans retreated some forty minutes later. They were confronted by the best VVKJ could present in defense of its capital: airborne were 30 Bf 109E-3a and 5 IK-3 fighters of 6.LP, and 6 Hurricanes and a pair of Messerschmitts of 2.LP.

Interestingly enough this wouldn't be the first time Yugoslav pilots encountered enemy Do 17's in combat. Indeed a VVKJ reservist and volunteer of *l'Aviacion Militar de la Republica Española* (Spanish Republican Air Force) *1ère Escadrille/Grupo 26*, Serbian Boško Petrović (under the pseudonym Fernandes Garcia) was among the first fighter pilots ever to do so. In the morning of 6 July 1937 he and his commander, Russian *kap* Ivan T. Yeremenko, flying robust Polikarpov I 15 Chatos, jointly claimed a Do 17 of *Legion Kondor' 4.VB/88* near Brunette, although this claim cannot be verified on German side.



Peaceful scene of pupils and their teacher in front of Do 17V-7 W.Nr.657 D-AQYK. Just three years later, fairgrounds were turned into notorious concentration camp in which tens of thousands of innocent Yugoslav citizens, most of them Jews and Serbs, have perished.

(Šime Oštrić coll.)

Petrović lost his life only four days later, seconds after claiming his seventh kill.

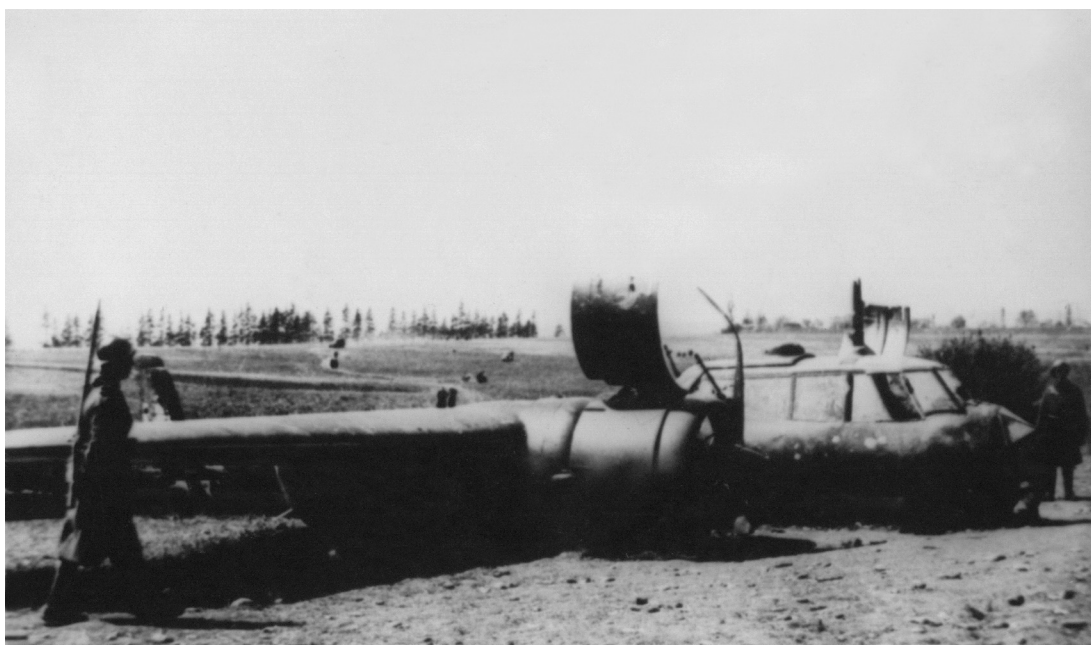
Several 6.LP pilots filled claims for Do 17's but their recognition proved to be quite inaccurate. In most cases their adversaries were Bf 110's of *I./ZG 26*, five of which they shot down and damaged a sixth. However, at least two pilots attacked Dorniers. Heading a six-plane formation in his personal Bf 109E-3a *L-52* was *kap I k* Milutin Grozdanović, CO of *142.E*. He was the first to make contact with the enemy and claimed one in the first pass. Oddly he recognized it as a He 111 although his wingmen saw him attack formation of twin tailed aircraft, one of which was seen to drop out of formation trailing smoke! He made several more passes before diving back to Krušedol and obviously, at least in the end, exchanged fire with *2./KG 2*. At about the same time *ppor* Otmar Lajh of *103.E* attacked from distance rear of a Do 17Z formation. He



Two Do 17Z's of KG 2 and Ju 87B of II./StG 77 at Zwölfaxing. Plane in front is of Z-5 sub-type, the one in the background wears the fuselage code U5+LA, identifying it with Geschwaderstab.

(Authors)

Mysterious Do 17Z guarded by Yugoslav soldiers. Clear weather and plain terrain indicate that this photo could have been taken only on 6 April 1941 somewhere in Vojvodina. The only Do 17Z confirmed in German documents as being lost in action on 6 April, *5K+DS W.Nr.2563*, crashed violently near Kać village so this must be another craft. In all probability it was the plane which reputedly came down near Beška village during the first attack on Belgrade. (Aleksandar Ognjević)



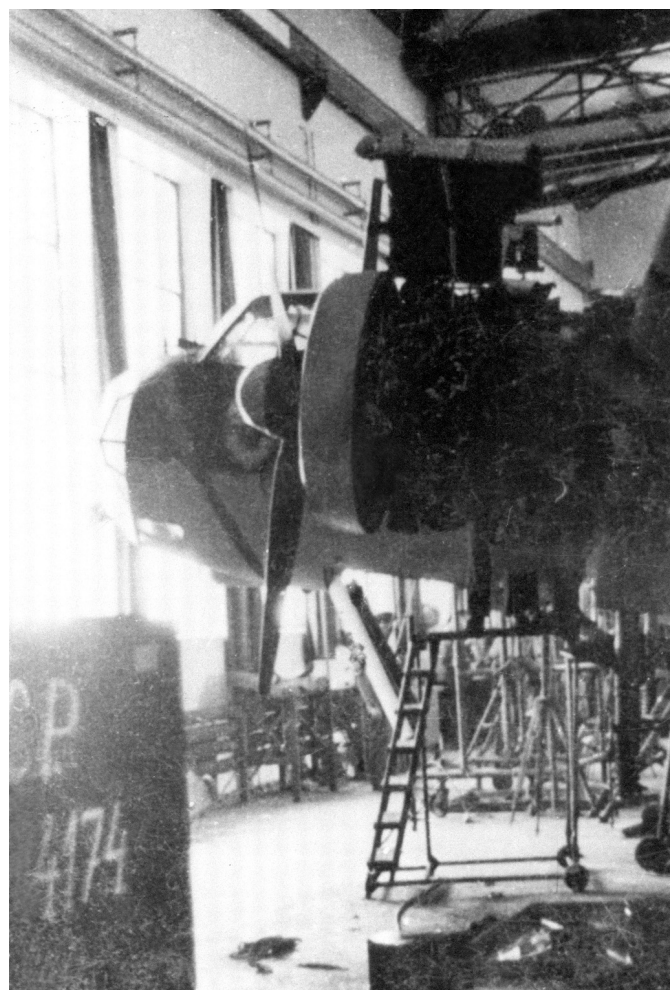
saw the plane to the right trailing smoke from one engine and leaving the formation. He considered this to be “the beginning of the end of that plane”. Both Grozdanović and Lajh returned to Krušedol auxiliary airfield without any difficulties. *Lt Heinrich Meyer* was piloting one of *2./KG 2* aircraft:

“There, what is it? Countless tracers are coming from behind between my machine and my wingmen. Those could be only enemy fighters. Steel helmet on and on the rear MG’s. That lad could have come only from behind.

I don’t see him any more. My mechanic is firing now as well. He screams ‘Enemy Me 109’. It is breaking to the left and below, going away, attacking again. The wingman on the right goes immediately lower, so that all machines have a free field of fire (likely the plane attacked by Lajh – a.c.). But the enemy fighter is cautious. Already at a hundred meters distance he turns the Me 109 away. A single burst could be placed over his whole length. He is attacking again from the same course. But the firing distance is almost too great for us. During another attack he is finally coming to less than fifty meters, breaks away and shows again his whole surface. This will be his end. A whole burst hits him. At first with a white trail he is going almost vertically down and was not seen any more (probably Grozdanović – a.c.). Again a claim for my *Kette* (three plane section of *Staffel* – a.c.), now the 5<sup>th</sup> claim of *2.Staffel*. Both left and right plane of my *Kette* came home with 20 bullet holes each.”

German records state that all aircraft of *KG 2* and *III./KG 3* returned to their bases from this mission, however there is a photo of crash-landed Do 17Z being guarded by Yugoslav soldiers! Lack of distinctive *KG 2* nose band suggests it probably belonged to *III./KG 3* and it is likely the plane which reputedly crashed near Beška village. 82 Do 17Z’s remained operational after the morning attack, and some four and a half hours later took-off for renewed assault on Belgrade. Between 15.30 and 15.50 fourteen Bf 109E-3a of *32.LG*, lead by *6.LP CO ppuk Božidar Kostić*, took in to the sky from Krušedol. First to engage the enemy, a tail-end-Charlie Dornier flying on the right of the last vic, was the commander, in borrowed *L-52*:

“I am diving from a bit higher altitude, from behind of the enemy and from the shortest distance fire from all weapons. During this act enemy gunner failed to notice me at all! I imme-



Do 17Z undergoing maintenance at Zwölfaxing in time of *Balkanfeldzug*. Red nose band identifies this plane as one belonging to *6./KG 2*. (Authors)

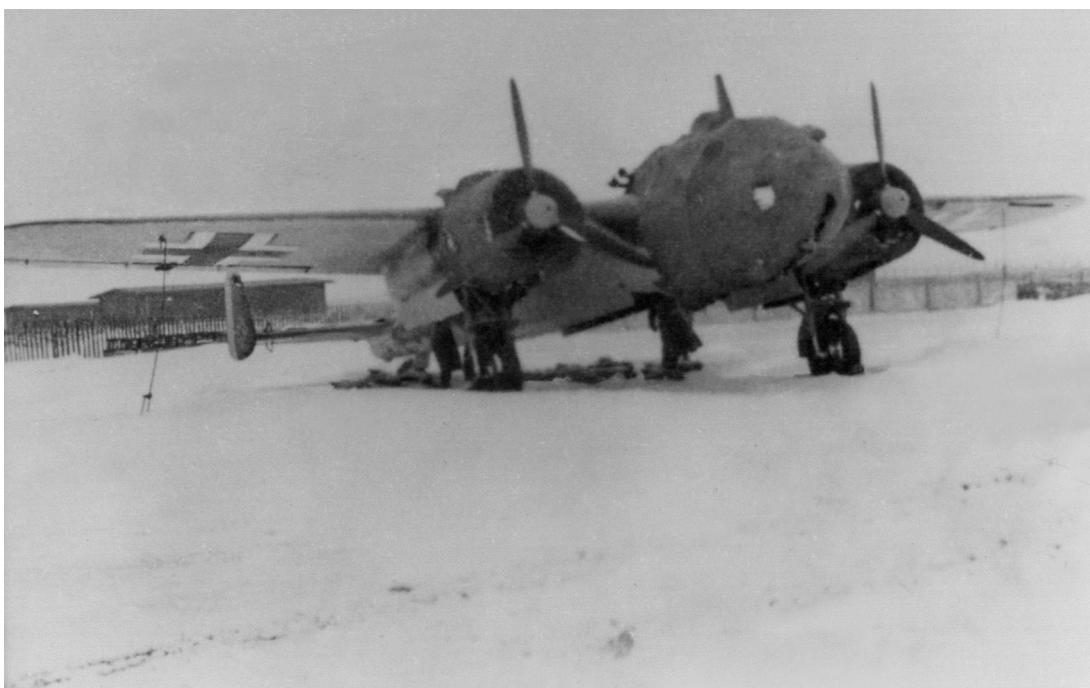


Do 17Z of III./KG 3 at Münchendorf airfield in Austria, April 1941. Noteworthy is the freshly applied yellow paint on the engine cowling. Go 145 behind probably belonged to Flugzeugführerschule A/B 62.  
(Authors)

diately observed the German bomber being enveloped (by the strikes – a.c.). Plane rapidly fell behind, reared and lost height, flying irregularly towards the ground... He is hit, and good too!”

Same aircraft, Do 17Z-3 5K+DS W.Nr.2563 of 8./KG 3, was attacked shortly thereafter by *ppor* Otmar Lajh. He noticed large part, probably stripping, falling away, but then came under fire from rear gunners and escorts of II./JG 77, tracers zooming all around. His plane was damaged but he managed to dive away and escape. In the meantime Božidar Kostić chased the German formation that has reached Belgrade and watched in despair the destruction of the city. He caught up with the Germans as they were leaving:

“When the head of bomber formation reached the height of Marinkova Bara – enemy made a left turn and rushed to the north over Pančevo marsh. Our opportunity is to attack again above Jabuka village. Again it appeared most favorable to attack the last man on the right. They fly compactly, I will certainly come under fire from neighboring bombers. It doesn’t matter! I am approaching closer and closer, I want a sure action, we don’t have the incendiary ammo like the enemy... My blood boils from hatred and anger... Now I am very close. The fuselage of enemy plane portrays nicely in my gun sight. Not yet! I want to reduce the combat distance. All of a sudden the enemy plane starts to climb. The aim of this maneuver is imme-



The weather didn’t affect only the operations of Yugoslav Dorniers during the April War. The scene of KG 2 Do 17Z at Zwölfaxing on 11 April 1941 resembles much more the conditions met by this unit later that year on the Eastern Front.  
(Authors)



SC 50 bombs underneath an Do 17Z of KG 2. Noteworthy is the absence of unit code *U5* on the fuselage.

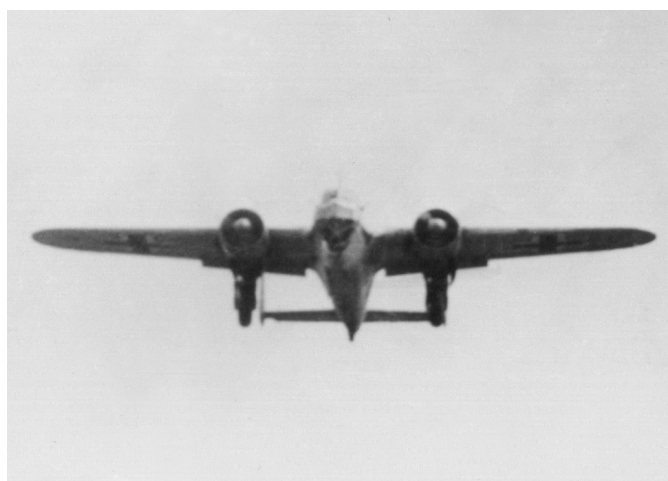
(Authors)

diately clear: he wants to ease the action of his gunner. I can't allow this and position my plane below enemy's tail and fire contemporary... All the weapons are firing, and tracers clearly mark that the fuselage of the Heinkel (sic) is well grasped... At the same moment I noticed not only that the enemy gunner is watchful and acting but from the left I see tracers heading towards my Messerschmitt... At this time I felt a touch in my left hand. There is no surprise. Enemy felt the danger, he increases the speed. The attacked aircraft lags behind and loses height, but continues to fly."

The attacked aircraft was Do 17Z-3 *W.Nr.*2575 of 8./KG 3. It returned to base with moderate damage and wounded radio-operator *Uffz* Georg Härtel; he was taken to *Luftwaffe* hospital in Wiener Neustadt for further treatment. Kostić broke-off to the right, his plane hit several times into the propeller blades, twice into engine cowling and once into the canopy rib. Whilst flying in direction of Indija village, he was informed about a lone enemy plane flying at 3000 meters over eastern slope of Fruška Gora mountain. It was the *5K+DS W.Nr.*2563 again. In the meantime, as it struggled behind formation it was also attacked by *por* Đorđe Kešeljević of *142.E*, but he failed to bring it down, noticing only one man to bail out. As Kostić approached he saw it fly strangely, almost out of control. He fired a burst and landed at Krušedol. Next to attack was *ppor* Jovan Kapešić of *103.E*, followed by Otmar Lajh, who was establishing the condition of his plane after escaping from German Bf 109E's:

"I noticed my engine responding irregularly. At altitude of some 2000 meters I took the course for Krušedol and during the approach I saw a lone Do 17 in the air and two of our

Messerschmitts, ready to attack. When they saw me, they broke off from the target, but I radioed in that it's me, the 'Hawk' (call sign of *32.LG* – a.c.) and told them to turn back. I attacked the Dornier, which started to behave very strange after my attack. It flew in spiral, diving in the first half of it and climbing in the second. Shortly thereafter I heard the radio message from the ground, more exactly from the airfield: 'Hello Hawk, be careful not to collide, the crew has bailed out, the plane is flying on its own'. I was at the end with my ammunition and fuel, and left that plane to its destiny. I landed, and technical personnel welcomed me with a huge laugh. I didn't get what was so funny



***Balkanfeldzug*: Do 17Z of KG 2 returning to Zwölfaxing from a mission over Yugoslavia.**

(Authors)



As the weather cleared on 12 April 1941, KG 2 Dorniers continued with operations at full scale: ground crews mount SC 50 bombs into the bomb racks.

(Authors)

and when they told me that my cheeks were black as that of the chimney sweep, I realized I've been hit into the oil tank, the reason for rough engine. I am convinced that I was hit during the attack on the formation, when it blistered around me."

"In the evening, as our working day was over, and we were not trained for the night flying, nor there was any need for it since the enemy attacked only during the day (Belgrade was actually subjected to continuous night raids from 23.00 till the early morning – a.c.), I wanted to see the flyers which bailed out. They were placed in the classroom of the Krušedol elementary school. Both lied on blankets on spread hay (both

*ppuk* Kostić and *ppor* Kešeljević explicitly stated that only one man, a gunner, bailed out from Do 17; the other captive was crewman from another craft – a.c.). As I entered, they were told that I am the one who shot them down. An '*Unteroffizier*' started to cry and plead me not to beat him. Since I learned German in school, I asked him how did he come to such an assumption? He told me that they know well that we are crude and unmerciful, bloodthirsty, warriors. I told him that nobody is going to beat him and, seeing him on a brink of a nervous breakdown, gave 10 *dinars* to our soldier and sent him to village for brandy. He brought a full flask, so both of them calmed. They were taken to the army HQ for interrogation next morning. I have no knowledge what happened to them afterwards."

*5K+DS* crashed near Kać village. *Uffz* Hans Werner Neuwirth (P), *Gefr* Kurt Reschke (NO) and *Uffz* Herbert Alfred Schlitter (RO) were killed, only *Uffz* Walter Brathuhn (MG) managed to bail out and was one of airmen confronted by Otmar Lajh. He was freed by German troops about a week later only to be killed near Zhitomir in Soviet Union on 25 October 1941. *Oblt* Hans Wolff of 6./KG 2 witnessed this combat from another side:

"Take-off at 15.25. Attack on barracks in Belgrade. This time the defense is rather stronger. From Novi Sad strong but badly aimed flak. Continuous fighter attacks by the enemy Me 109 on our vic. However it is noticeable that they are beginners, they don't come closer than 150 meters. There were some six attackers, that constantly burdened us till the target. Our vic flames an Me 109 (probably Otmar Lajh – a.c.). Target is already heavily on fire. Attack altitude some 4500 meters. As we passed Belgrade I could see the following:

Single fighter dived at *I./KG 2* flying in front of us. Just as he opened the attack, he cartwhelled downward, strangely without the 'trail'. Pilot jumps out, but his parachute fails to open. A long white trail flutters into the depth. I watch the plane, turning down like a withered leaf, until it crashed. One



Zwölfaxing, 12 April 1941: Do 17Z ready for one of the last combat sorties of *I./KG 2* over Yugoslavia. The very next day unit moved to Skoplje, once a home base of *3.BP*.

(Authors)



Luftwaffe mechanics check the BMW Bramo 323P engine during the Balkan Campaign.

(Muzej ratnog vazduhoplovstva)

plane of *III./KG 3* – being out of formation – fell vertically after an attack by three enemy fighters.”

The unlucky Yugoslav aviator was *por* Dobrica Novaković of *103.E*, who fell to his death near Pančevo, after ripping-off the parachute canopy on tail surfaces of his *L-35*.

The 6 April was probably the hardest day Belgrade ever lived through. City was subjected to five concentrated attacks by a force of more than 500 bombers. Impudent bombing and dreadful sight of burning city were so disturbing that even many of the hardened *Luftwaffe* pilots felt outraged by such indiscriminate and to them unintelligible bombing. 2271 dead – almost exclusively civilians – were found in the ruins in months to follow, more than a hundred remained missing and as many as 12000 were wounded. Out of 19641 buildings in the city, 682 were completely destroyed, 1601 heavily and 6829 slightly damaged.

On 7 April *Luftflotte 4* switched the area of operations for the Dorniers to the north of Sava river, all the way from Maribor in Slovenia, over Zagreb to Belgrade, main targets being road and rail communications. At around 8.45 (7.45 Yugoslav time) *I./KG 2* took-off to attack auxiliary airfield Staro Topolje near Đakovo, where some 20 Breguet XIX and Potez 25 biplanes of *3.vazduhoplovna izviđačka grupa* (aviation reconnaissance group) were placed. German crews claimed destruction of several Avia B.H.33 (sic) fighters on the ground and damage to the others, while several of the attackers were damaged by flak, most seriously the *Do 17Z-2 U5+BL W.Nr.3305* of



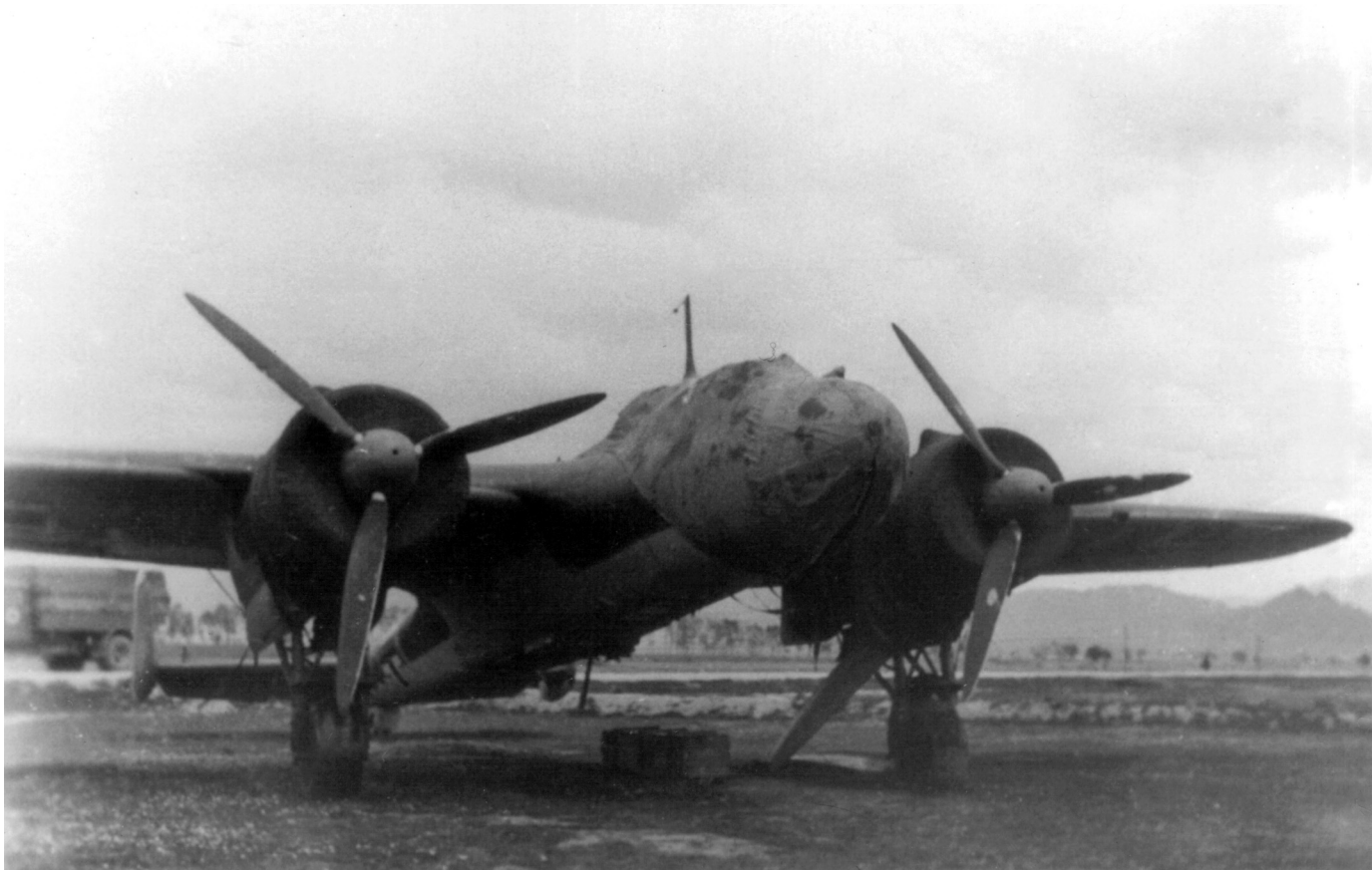
Colorful *Do 17Z* of *I./KG 2* sporting a white band, name “*Trudchen*” and unit emblem under the cockpit.

(Authors)

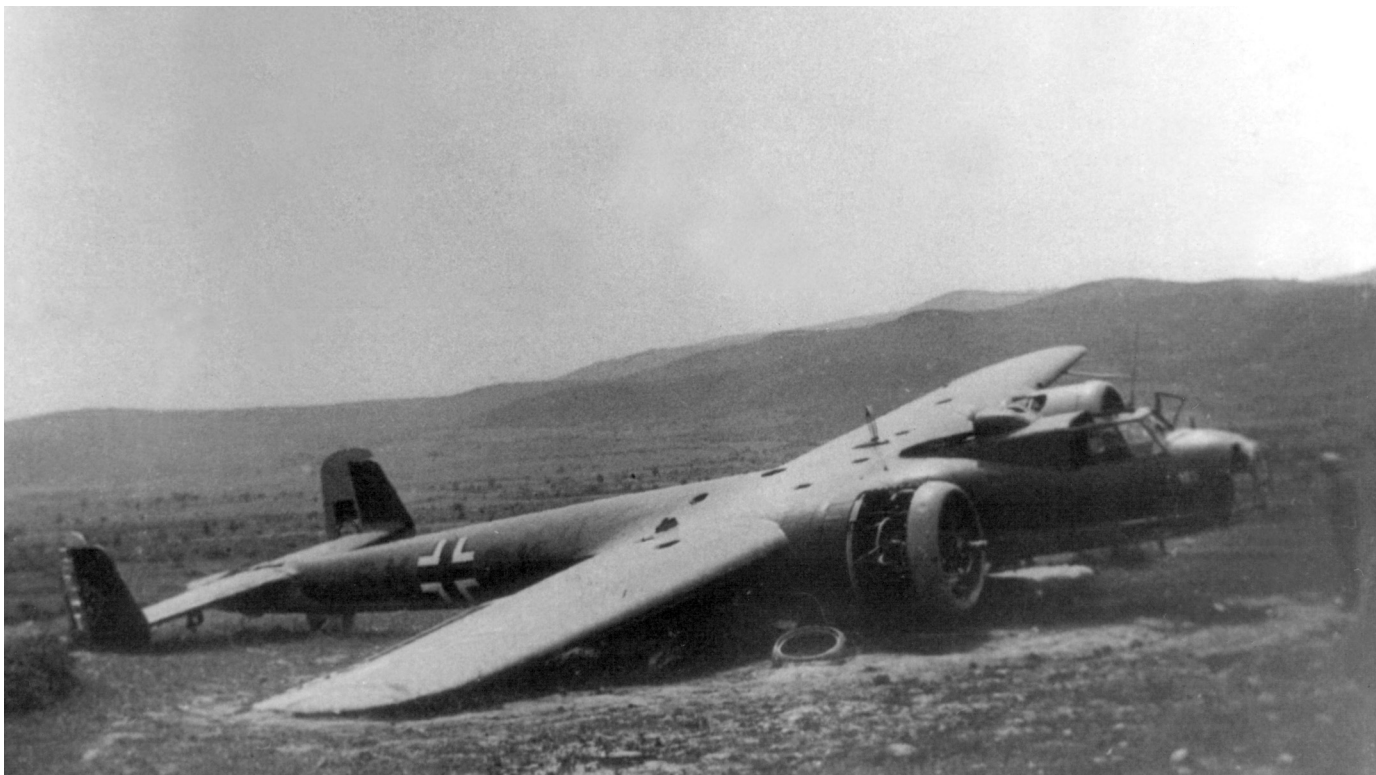
*3./KG 2*: *Oblt* Karl Konrad (NO) and *Fw* Günter Krakow (RO) were wounded, *Ofw* Heinz Gerlach (P) and *Ofw* Lamma (MG) escaped injuries and the aircraft landed at Zwölfaxing at 11.38.

*III./KG 2* got into the air at 9.15 local time, its main objective to disrupt railway communications and hunt out the freight trains between Slavonski Brod and Zagreb. During a low level flight near a small station close to Lipovljani village, 8 kilometers northwest of Novska, *Do 17Z-2 U5+HR W.Nr.1146* hit a telegraph pole, tore-off the left wing, rolled to port and crashed into a farm house some 200 meters away. Commander of *III./KG 2*, *Maj* Friedrich Dreyer (NO) and his crew, *Lt* Franz Mayerhofer (P), *Ofw* Friedrich Schmidt (NO) and *Uffz* Richard Zachert (RO) died instantly. Several planes of *6./KG 2* went after the rail traffic between Slavonski Brod and Vinkovci, at least one of them, in which *Oblt* Wolf Dietrich Riediger was a navigator-observer, got slightly damaged by ground fire. During that day *1. and 2. baterija* (battery) of the *302. Protivavionski divizion* (anti-aircraft battalion – *PA divizion*) in defense of Vinkovci claimed to have shot down two twin-engine bombers.

In days that followed operations were hindered by bad weather and were considerably reduced. On 9 April *Oblt* Ulrich Sonnemann (P), *Uffz* Hans Wimmer (NO), *Gefr* Karl Westmar (RO), and *Gefr* Heinz Waldruff (MG) of *9./KG 2* had to abandon *Do 17Z-2 U5+BT W.Nr.1190* when its surfaces iced and became uncontrollable in area of Rovine, near Bosanski Aleksandrovac. Sonnemann and Waldruff were injured, but the



Do 17P of 2.(F.)/11 during the Balkan campaign.  
(Ognjan Petrović)



Damaged Do 17P-1 6M+GK of 2.(F.)/11 seen at Larissa, Greece, at the end of April 1941. Position of the aircraft suggests take-off or landing accident. It was probably W.Nr.3582 which crashed due to mechanical malfunction on 17 April. It has yellow campaign markings, except the fuselage band.  
(Ognjan Petrović)



Two Do 17P-1 of unknown ferry unit at Borovo airfield near Vukovar, second half of April 1941. *Stammkennzeichen* (radio codes) *VB+K6* indicates that those were the replacement craft en route to a combat unit. Both *2.(F.)/11* and *Stab/StG 2* suffered heavy losses over Balkans in that period. (Csaba Bercse)



Airmen of *MKHL III. Közelfelderítő század* (Tactical Reconnaissance Squadron) pose in front of Do 17P-1 at Borovo. (Csaba Bercse)

whole crew returned to their unit few days later. As it became obvious that Yugoslavia was doomed, part of Luftflotte 4 moved further south to take part in operations over Greece. So the Do 17Z units moved to Skoplje on 13 April, routing via Bucharest, where they were loaded with SC 50 and SD 50 bombs – in short supply by *StG 2 Stukas* – already operating from Skoplje. During the first leg of the journey Do 17Z-2 *W.Nr.3286 of 10./KG 2* crash-landed at Kecskemet in Hungary due to engine trouble, the unknown pilot and radio-operator, *Lt Kunsch* (NO), *Ofw Alwin Kuhlmann* (MG) and member of ground personnel *Uffz Schulze* escaping unhurt. After staying overnight in Skoplje, Dorniers moved to Plovdiv airfield in Bulgaria, ending their commitment in Yugoslavia.

### Recce over Balkan

For the support of operations in the Balkans *Luftwaffe* employed six long range reconnaissance Staffeln, three of which operated the Do 17P-1. First to arrive – to Kecskemet airfield in Hungary during February 1941 – was *1./Fernaufklärungsgruppe 11 (1.(F)/11)*. Operating a mix of dozen Do 17P's and Ju 88's, unit regularly operated over northern Yugoslav borders, occasionally crossing over into Yugoslav airspace. At the beginning of April *4.(F)/11*, equipped similarly as *1.(F)/11*, came to Zeltweg and then to Graz in Austria. Interestingly enough this unit moved to Borongaj airfield near Zagreb few weeks after the occupation and stayed there till June.

Based at Filipovci near Sofia, *2.(F)/11* was the only outfit to operate solely Do 17P-1 over Yugoslavia and Greece. On the first day of action it lost two of its aircraft on unknown locations. *Lt Hans Wolfen* (P), *Oblt Heinrich Prüfer* (NO) and *Uffz Ewald Dubbert* (RO) went missing with Do 17P-1 *W.Nr.4070*. The crew of the second plane, Do 17P-1 *W.Nr.3554*, *Lt Oskar Genrich* (P), *Lt Hans Engelhardt* (NO) and *Uffz Hans Mönkemeier* (RO) were briefly captured only to be liberated by advancing *Wehrmacht*. It seems almost certain that one of these planes was lost over Yugoslavia and another over Greece. *652.PA* division, commanded by *maj Đorđe Lukić*, shot down a twin-engine reconnaissance aircraft in early morning, at about 5.30. It crashed northeast of Kragujevac and the crew was captured. Later during the day, *Elleniki Vassiliki* (Royal Hellenic Air Force) *24.Mira* (Squadron) pilots *Archisminias (Flight Sergeant)* Eleftherios Smirniotopoulos, flying a Bloch MB.151, and *Hiposminagos (Pilot Officer)* Panagiotis Oikonomopolos, flying a PZL P.24G, attacked German recce aircraft over Struma river estuary and both claimed it destroyed. Aircraft crashed near Evros in Thrace province, close to Turkish border. Captured crew stated to have been brought down by a Hurricane (obviously Smirniotopoulos), while the Greek interrogation officer identified the wrecked aircraft as Do 17. Two days later navigator-observer *Fw Rudi Maschke* in one of *2.(F)/11* Do 17P-1 returned wounded from a sortie over Yugoslavia, probably hit by anti-aircraft fire.

Based at Belica-Nord, Bulgaria, *Stab/Stukageschwader 2* had six Do 17P-1 which were used to reconnoiter both for targets and bombing effects, occasionally participating in the bombing and strafing as well. On 10 April *Lt Gotthard Kluger*, (P), *Lt Schenkel* (NO) and *Fw Hans Rode* (MG) were wounded

by ground fire near Skoplje, in all probability in one of Dorniers. On the following day Do 17P-1 *T6+FA W.Nr.4041* went missing at an unknown location and under unknown circumstances; *Oblt Gerhard Krieger* (P), *Uffz Hans Leonhardt* (NO) and *Uffz Gerhard Kunert* (RO) subsequently returned to their unit.

### Action over "Bandengebiet"

After the capitulation of Yugoslavia, vast bulk of German forces left the area. Security was left over to secondary *Wehrmacht* and *Feldgendarmarie* units and local quisling forces. However, the fragile peace wasn't to last. Serious trouble first erupted in various parts of Croat puppet state. As soon as the new order was established, massive terror campaign against the Serbs, which made more than a third of new country's population, has begun. In atmosphere of horror, local Serbs quickly realized that the armed struggle was the only way of survival and already on 3 June 1941 first clashes with Ustasha forces in Hercegovina erupted. In less than three months the flames of the uprising blazed throughout the country, changing it into dreadful and gruesome battleground.

In Serbia, already on 13 May, group of officers of the defeated Royal Yugoslav Army lead by *puk* Dragoljub Mihajlović formed *Jugoslovenska Vojska u Otadžbini* (Yugoslav Army in Fatherland – *JVuO*) – they would be much better known as the Chetniks – and started preparations for massive uprising. In the meantime Yugoslav communists, lead by Josip Broz Tito, were quite passive, obviously consistent to 1939 Molotov – Ribentrop agreement. However, as soon as the Soviet Union was assaulted, the directive urging armed struggle was received from Comintern. In weeks and months to follow numerous partisan units of *Narodnooslobodilački pokret* (People's Liberation Movement – *NOP*) were formed and, especially in Croatia and Bosnia, many self-organized local armed groups, without political affiliations or strategic goals other than to fight for their lives, were infiltrated and drawn under the red banner.

At the beginning of July, as the situation in Serbia and Croatia worsened dramatically, *W.B.Südost* asked *Oberkommando der Wehrmacht* (Wehrmacht High Command) to arrange a relocation of some flying school to Serbia, capable of providing air support "with primitive means in case of need". Indeed *Flugzeugführerschule A/B 123* was already at Borongaj and *Blindflugschule 5* on its way to Zemun – both units would actively engage the insurgents for more than two years – but on 30 July *Kampfgruppe Doench*, named so after its commander *Oberstlt.i.G. Fritz Doench*, came to Zemun as well. This ad-hoc unit was drawn up from experienced crews and aircraft from two Austrian-based schools: *Sturzkampfpiegerschule 2* from Graz supplied 11 Ju 87's for the *Stukastaffel* and *FFS C 8* from Wiener Neustadt 13 Do 17's for the *Bomberstaffel*. Unit moved to Borongaj on 2 August, two days later it made a full-strength demonstration flight over Bosnia and on the 5<sup>th</sup> struck rebel positions near Bosanski Petrovac with several Stukas. Nevertheless, the unit was disbanded on 6 August "due to lack of suitable targets". Dorniers returned to mother unit, but the Ju 87's returned to Zemun and under designation *Stukastaffel Semlin* carried out more than a thousand sorties before returning to Graz on 7 November 1941.

Do 17Z with overpainted fuselage code, probably belonging to *Flugbereitschaft Kommando Serbien*, and Go 145 of *Flugzeugführerschule A/B123* seen at Borongaj in January 1943.

(Marko Jeras)



Next appearance of Dorniers in Yugoslavia was recorded on 15 September when two Do 17P-1, in all probability belonging to *Lehrkommando Fliegerbildehschule Hildesheim* arrived at Zemun, in response to rapidly deteriorating situation in Serbia. They were immediately subordinated to *General und Befehlshaber im Serbien* (Commanding General in Serbia) Paul Bader and designated *Aufklärungskette Zieschang*. Unit's prime task was to reconnoiter the areas controlled by rebels and provide the support for the forthcoming German offensive. Both planes were intensively used, flying several sorties a day, not only filming but also bombarding and strafing areas of unrest. Fast and high-flying Dorniers were almost immune to anti-aircraft fire of poorly armed and inexperienced insurgents, the single incident worth mentioning occurred in the afternoon of 27 November when a 20 mm flak grenade struck the left engine of one Dornier east of Gornji Milanovac, crew landing at Zemun without difficulties.

Massive uprising that started in summer 1941 in Serbia proved to be premature and naive adventure with disastrous consequences for the insurgent movement, but more so for the population which found itself in the crossfire of several armed groups: Germans, pro-Axis *Srpska državna straža* (Serbian State Guard) of *arm den* Milan Nedić and *Srpski dobrovoljački korpus* (Serbian Voluntary Corps) of *puk* Dimitrije Ljotić, Partisans, Chetniks, and local armed gangs taking no orders from anyone. In the ensued chaos Germans conducted a policy of "burned land" and introduced brutal and effective retaliation system – hundred hostages shot for each German soldier killed and fifty for wounded – which lead to massive executions of tens of thousands of civilians. By December 1941 major insurgent movements, those of Tito and Mihajlović, found themselves on a brink of abyss and went into defensive. Till then their relation was more or less correct, on many occasions they jointly attacked Axis positions, but despair of the moment only helped the animosity to grow. Feeling greater danger from each

other than the occupiers, they became extremely hostile. After the fall of so-called "Republic of Užice" – a partisan enclave in western Serbia – Partisans lost the ground and support in central Serbia and crossed into Bosnia, a land almost invented for guerilla warfare. They returned to Serbia in strength only when Red Army came onto its borders in autumn 1944.

On other side Mihajlović, whose forces kept control of large rural areas of Serbia, Montenegro and eastern Bosnia decided to concentrate on gaining strength and wait for the fortunes of war to change. Lack of any coherent political consistence, loose organization and structure of his movement - providing local commanders with almost unrestricted independence, as well as his coquetting – and occasionally much more – with Milan Nedić, Germans and especially Italians, lead to a highly controversial and to this day disputed relation between *JVuO* and the Axis. Some units continuously fought the Axis on smaller scale and kept good terms with local Partisans well into 1944. Others either avoided any confrontation or openly collaborated with the occupiers in fighting the Partisans and oppressing their countrymen. To further complicate the situation, numerous groups of armed men in Axis service throughout Serbia, Bosnia, Croatia and even Slovenia called themselves Chetniks, although having no bond with *JVuO* whatsoever.

With the collapse of serious resistance in Serbia the need for *Aufklärungskette Zieschang* ceased and it returned to Reich on 15 December 1941. Some five months lapsed before another Do 17 would be mentioned in reports from Yugoslavia. *Flugbereitschaft Kommando Serbien* (*Fl.ber.Kdo.Serbien*) was the first *Luftwaffe* unit permanently stationed in occupied country. Formed at the beginning of May 1941 in Zemun, its main purpose were courier, reconnaissance and transport flights in the area, a duty carried out by variety of aircraft, which from May 1942 included a pair of Do 17's of unknown subtype.