

Aerospace Research Conducted at the Mostar Technical University

Remzo Dedic¹⁾, Zdobyslaw Goraj²⁾

¹⁾Mostar Technical University

²⁾Warsaw University of Technology

Abstract:

Yugoslavian Air Forces (VVKJ) during WW2 possessed essential combat capabilities. During 1940 Britain supplied to Belgrade a significant military aid, to strengthen its forces against the increasing German threat. In early March 1941, the German Luftwaffe forces started arriving in neighbouring Bulgaria. On March 12, 1941, VVKJ units began to deploy to their wartime airfields. On 27 March 1941, the overthrow of the government that had signed the Tripartite Pact in Belgrade two days earlier, by a group of officers led by Dušan Simović, an air force general, brought an end to hopes of a settlement with Germany. On April 6, 1941, *Luftwaffe* units in Bulgaria and Romania attacked Yugoslavia during the Bombing of Belgrade. Equipped with a combination of obsolete equipment and new aircraft still being introduced into service, the VVKJ was forced to defend the country's long borders against multiple attacks from many directions. The dubious loyalty of some military personnel did not help matters. Yugoslav fighter aircraft and anti-aircraft artillery brought down about 90–100 enemy aircraft, but defending forces were unable to make any significant impact on the enemy advance. During the attack of German aircraft on Niš Airport Medoševac on 6 April, fire from the ground shot down the plane of German fighter ace Herbert Ihlefeld. In 1940, Britain attempted to bring Yugoslavia to the Allied side by supplying military aid to the Royal Yugoslav Air Force, including new Hawker Hurricane fighter aircraft. However Germany sold a large number of Messerschmitt Bf 109 fighters to Yugoslavia and in early 1941, and German dismay towards a Balkans campaign convinced Yugoslavia to join the Axis forces. Little wonder then that after a combination of air combat losses, losses on the ground to enemy air attack on bases and the overrunning of airfields by enemy troops that after 11 days the VVKJ almost ceased to exist. It must, however, be noted that between 6 and 17 April 1941 the VVKJ received an additional 8 Hawker Hurricane Is, 6 Dornier Do 17Ks, 4 Bristol Blenheim Is, 2 Ikarus IK 2s, 1 Rogožarski IK-3 and 1 Messerschmitt Bf 109 from the aircraft factories and workshops. In the years after WW2 we observed tremendous development of Yugoslavian Air Forces and it was due to research and maintenance support delivered by research centres (SOKO) and academia. Important role in this process played the Mostar Technical university, too. We are happy to mention here at least a few aeronautical engineers as Behmen Mehmed, Mohamed Voljevica, Ivan Salay and Božo Ćorić.