

Commanding cadre of the Royal Yugoslav Army in the April War in 1941

One of the important factors in the research of the Royal Yugoslav Army is the study of its commanding cadre during the April War. This issue hasn't been paid special attention, and so far we don't have much knowledge about the Yugoslav commanders, and we even don't know who was in command of some units. So, the goal of this research is to find out who are the officers who commanded Yugoslav units in this war (members of HQ's, divisional and regimental commanders, etc.), their education, service and their engagement in the April War.

This research requires a longer time commitment, and it's very complex. First, we do not have many firsthand sources at our disposal (list of officer's war schedules, documents of units during the military operations), which would be the easiest way to reconstruct the commanding structure. So, in order to achieve our goal, we have to apply different methods. We must rely on the statements and memoirs of the members of the Royal Yugoslav Army about their engagement in the April War in 1941, which are, in most cases, stored in the Military Archives in Belgrade. They can be divided into three groups: the ones which were given in 1941/42. by the Croatian officers who joined the armed forces of the Independent State of Croatia, statements of the officers who withdrew to the Middle East, and statements given after the World War Two. However, we have to be very careful in the approach to these documents. They are all given in the different historical and ideological circumstances, and also, for some documents, there is time distance between the event and the time when that statement was given.

Also, as an addition to these materials, many recollections about the April War could be found in the later publications in the Yugoslavia and emigration. However, these memoirs must be also treated with cautious and compared with other documents, in order to come to true facts.