

The Yugoslav Army in 1941

Introduction

In connection with the planning of an upcoming war game, which has as its theme the Hungarian participation in the invasion of Yugoslavia in April 1941, the question of the organization and uniforming of the Yugoslav army arose very naturally. This article will seek to illuminate this intelligence challenge.

Unless otherwise stated, the image material comes from Source 1.



Organisation

The Yugoslav army was of considerable size - the peacekeeping force consisted of 148,000 men, but fully mobilized it was up to 1.4 million men.

The website [Armies! European Land Forces from 1920 to 1950](#) provides detailed information on the army's organization at the outbreak of war, including not least information on which regiments were included in the individual divisions and corps.

The infantry

The infantry included 16 divisions as well as an independent guard division.



The infantry division consisted of: Staff, two to four infantry regiments, one to two artillery regiments or an independent artillery detachment, as well as the necessary combat support and supply units.

Each infantry regiment was about 2,400 men, 168 machine guns and 4 infantry or anti-tank guns.

The regiment consisted of: Staff, three infantry battalions and an anti-tank company. In addition to staff, the infantry battalions included three to four light companies and a machine gun company.

The image comes from Source 2.



The Guards Division consisted of: Staff, a Guards Infantry Regiment, a Guards Cavalry Brigade and an Artillery Regiment.

The cavalry



The cavalry included - in addition to the Guard Cavalry Regiment - 3 cavalry divisions, each consisting of: Staff, two cavalry regiments, a cyclist battalion, a mounted artillery division and engineers.

The cavalry regiment consisted of: Staff, three squadrons and a machine gun squadron.

A cyclist battalion consisted of: Staff and three companies.



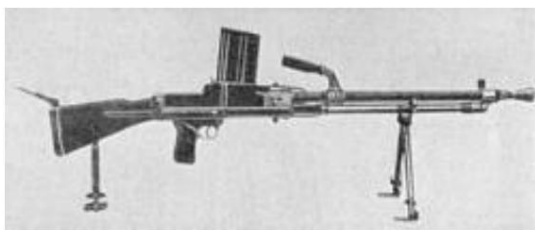
The artillery

The artillery included 32 artillery regiments, divided into 90 divisions with a total of 213 batteries.

The picture shows a 7.65 cm field cannon (Skoda) Model 1928.

Weapon systems

Light machine guns



7.92mm ZB (Prague) Model 1926



8 mm Chauchat Model 1915

Medium heavy machine guns

The infantry battalions' machine gun companies consisted of two platoons of four medium-heavy machine guns.



Blackless

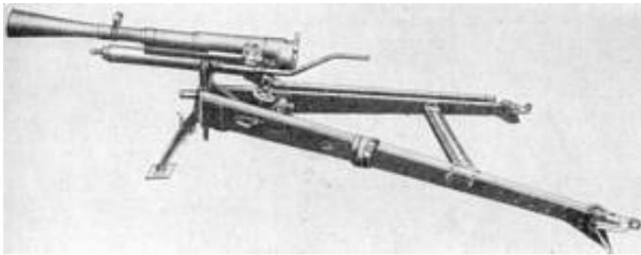


Hotchkiss

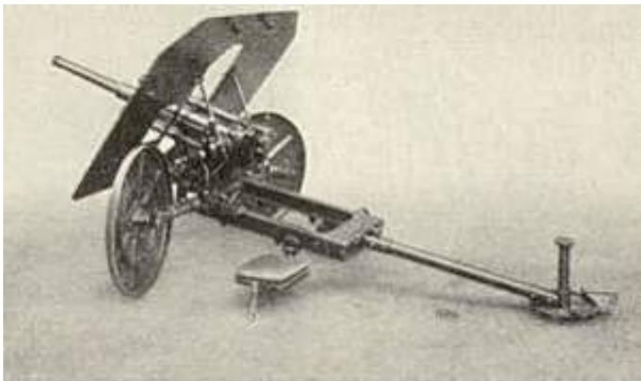


Maxim

Infantry cannon and anti-tank cannon

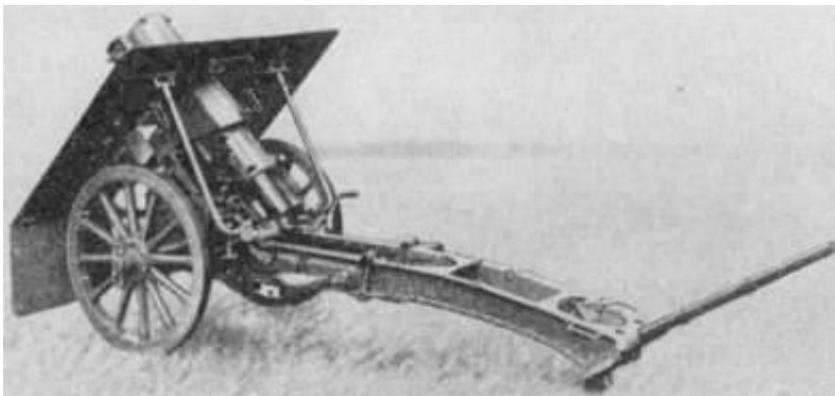


3.7 cm infantry cannon (French) Model 1916.
Firing range: 2.5 km.



3.7 cm anti-tank gun (Skoda).
By instead mounting a replaceable cannon tube - caliber 7 cm - the pamphlet could function as an infantry cannon. The firing range was then 2.5 km.

A gun company included: Staff and 4 pamphlets.



7.5 cm mountain cannon (Skoda) Model 1928.

Artillery

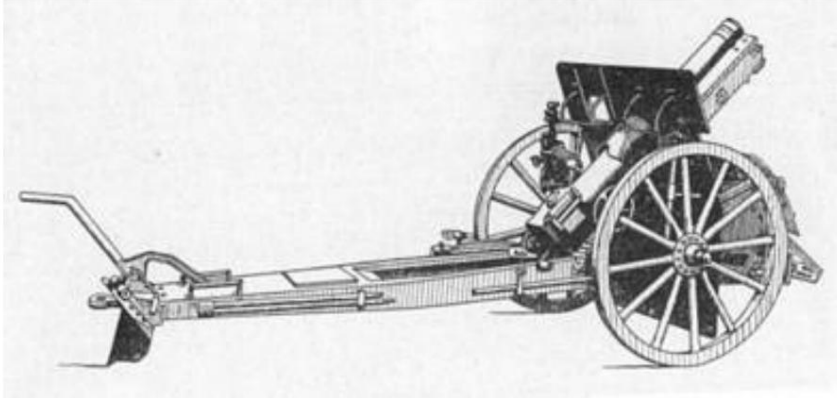
Mountain artillery

The artillery's pamphlets were mainly of Czech manufacture. Most of it dates back to the First World War and was primarily horse-drawn.

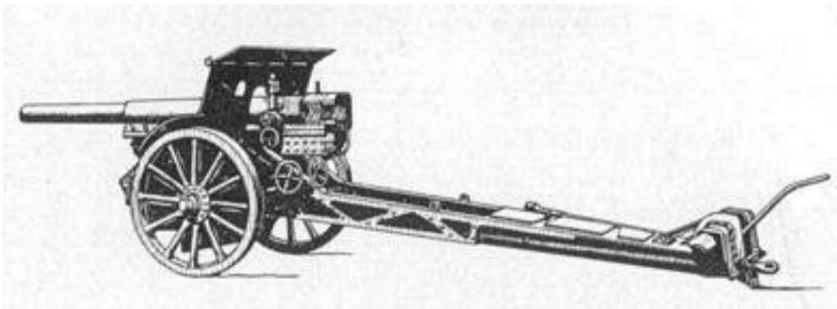
Two of the 16 infantry divisions were designated as mountain divisions. The artillery in this included, among other things, this pamphlet, which could be transported separately on 7 pack horses.

The following other mountain guns were also used: 6.5 cm (French) Model 1906, 7.5 cm (Skoda) Model 1915 and 10.5 cm (Skoda) Model 1916

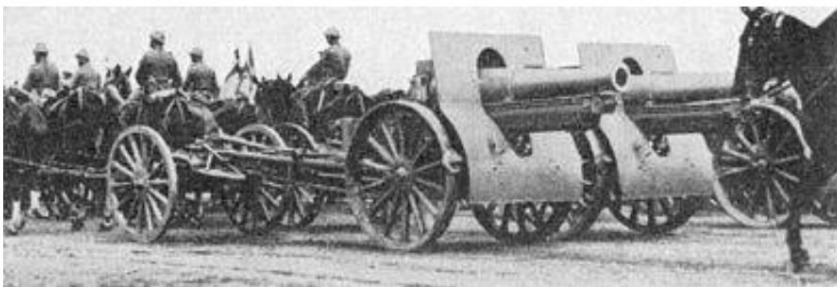
Field Artillery



10 cm felthaubits (Skoda) Model 1914.

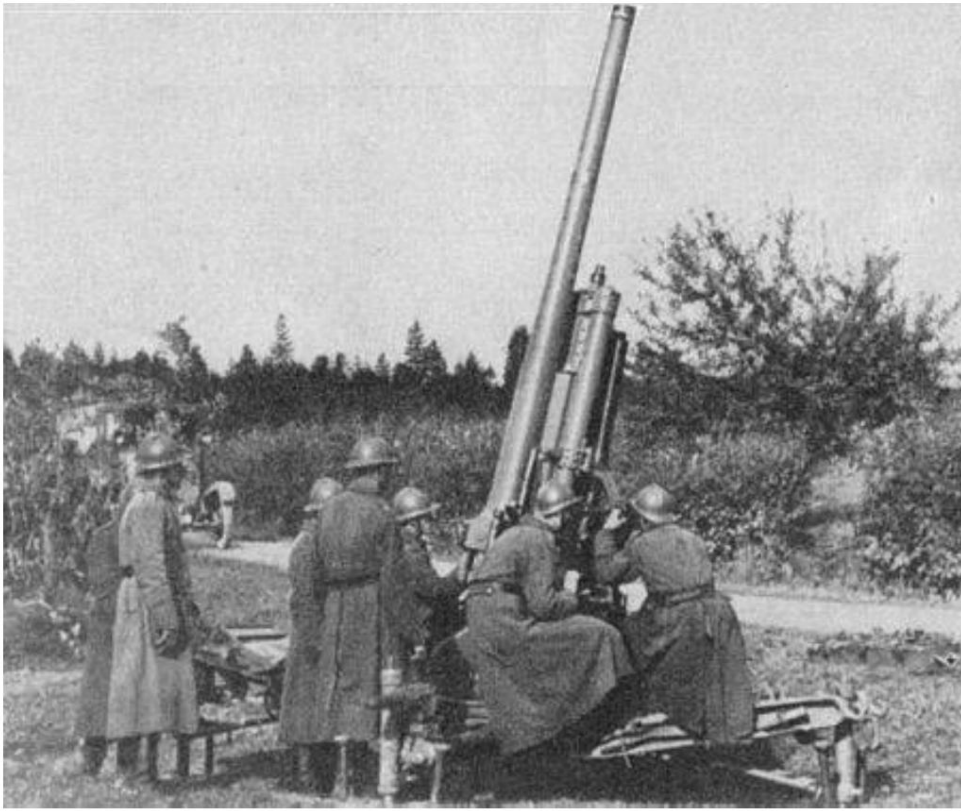


10.5 cm cannon (Skoda) Model 1915/16.



15,5 cm haubits (Schneider) Model 1917.

The corps artillery was either horse-drawn or motorized - the 10.5 cm cannon and the 15.5 cm howitzer were pulled by 8 horses.



7.65 cm anti-aircraft gun (Skoda) Model 1930.

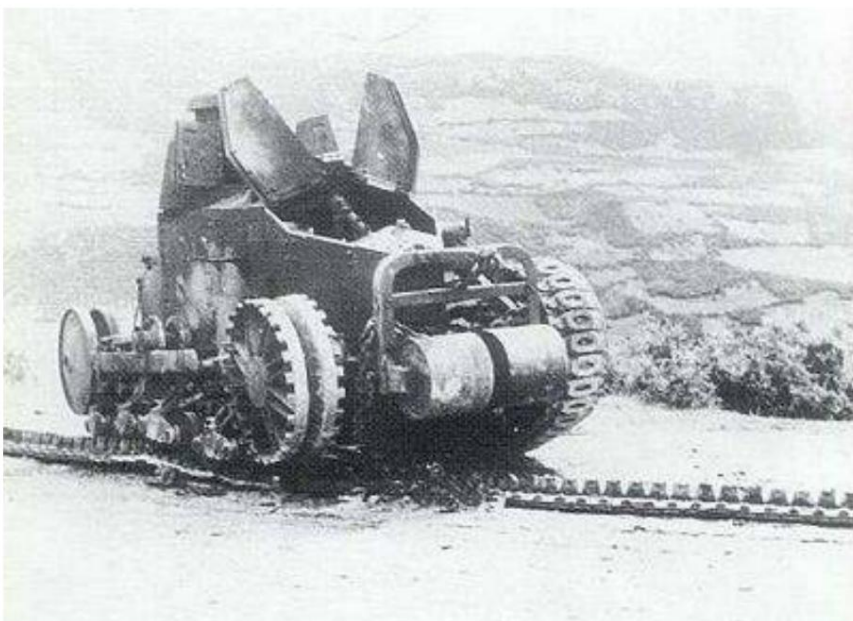
Anti-aircraft artillery

The anti-aircraft artillery also included 4 cm anti-aircraft cannon (Bofors) and two older models from the Skoda Fabrikkerne 8.35 cm Model 1922/24 and 9 cm Model 1912/20.

An anti-aircraft regiment consisted of two divisions of three batteries; in one of the regiments, however, there were only two batteries in the divisions.

Armored units

Two types appear to have been in service with the Yugoslav Army - the Renault FT light tank of French origin, in Model FT-17 and a later Model 28/29 1) [version](#) , as well as a Czech-made Type S "storm gun" -1d.



Renault Model 28/29

It is perhaps not the image that will immediately make one produce some of the 50 or so [2](#) Yugoslavian Renault tanks.

Billedet stammer fra Kilde 4 hvori underteksten lyder: "*The Yugoslav Army fielded a mixed battalion of Renault FT-17 and FT-28/29 - the **1 Bataljon bornih kola** - during the 1941 campaign against the German invaders. This Renault M28/29 appears to have shed a track and suffered an engine breakdown being abandoned to the Germans.*"



S-1d

The Yugoslav Army also purchased 8 Czech "storm cannon" S-1d in 1937, where they were used as training vehicles at the Cavalry School in Zemun. Some became involved in the fighting in 1941; no further details are available.

The storm gun was equipped with either a 3.7 cm or a 4.7 cm gun (sources give different information).

Later, some of the vehicles entered German service, under the designation PzKpfW 32 (j). Source 5 also mentions that the vehicle was part of the Romanian army.

Uniforms



*Captain, Infantry,
1941 1941*



Sergeant Major, Artillery,



Private, Infantry, 1941

The uniform of the newly created Yugoslav army closely followed the Serbian model, which was again a mixture of the Austro-Hungarian and the Tsarist.

At the outbreak of war in 1941, a noticeable lack of standardization made itself felt. Thus, for example, at least three models in steel helmets were used at the same time (French model, with and without the Yugoslav nationality mark on the front, the Czech M.1934 and the German M.1935).

The color of the uniforms was also different. While the officers wore field gray uniforms, non-commissioned officers and crew were dressed in uniforms that varied in color from the light blue Serbian of the First World War to khaki brown.

Weapon colors

The coat of arms were as follows:

Generals - light blue	Cavalry - blue
General staff - red	Engineer troops - violet
Infantry - dark red	Management - green
Artillery - variety	Sanitary troopers - brown

They appeared on personnel and non-commissioned officers on the lapels, on the non-commissioned officers also as edging and coating on the shoulder flaps, on officers on the collar of the uniform jacket and the lapels of the cloaks and as edging, stripes and underlays on shoulder lapels, sleeve cuffs, trouser hems and kepi.



Panzer troops

Yugoslav Army armored units wore steel helmets of the same model as French armored units (although in the oldest version), as well as a double-breasted brown leather jacket.

As far as I can identify, the vehicle is of the S-1d type.

The light machine gun sticking out of the hatch appears to be of the ZB 26 type.

Sources

1. *Pocket book of the armies* by Kurt Passow, JF Lehman Verlag, Munich/Berlin, 1939.
2. *The Armed Forces of World War II - Uniforms, Insignia and Organisation* of Andrew Mollo, Military Press, New York 1987, ISBN 0-517-54478-4.
3. *Army uniforms 1939-45* by Andrew Mollo, Dansk Militærforlag, Hvidovre (no year, but approximately 1980), ISBN 87-87794-00-4.
4. *The Renault FT Light Tank* of Steven J. Zaloga, Osprey Vanguard Nr. 46, Osprey Publishing Ltd., London 1988, ISBN 0-85045-852-8.
5. *A Photo History of Tanks in two World Wars* of George Forty, Blandford Press, Poole/Dorset 1984, ISBN 0-7137-1216-3.

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1) The model designation of the later version of the Renault tank is not clear. Source 4 refers to it as Model 27/28 and Model 28/29 respectively.

2) Source 4 mentions that the Yugoslav army bought 48 in the 1920s. From the website *Tanks!* appears that the Yugoslav army received 8 pcs. from French units stationed in Bulgaria and that subsequently – in the 1930s – another 48 units were bought.

(From: <http://mailer.fsu.edu/~akirk/tanks/yugoslavia/yugoslavia.html>)