

NAVAL WAR COLLEGE  
Newport, R.I.

**OPERATIONAL ANALYSIS:  
GERMAN OPERATION AGAINST YUGOSLAVIA 1941**

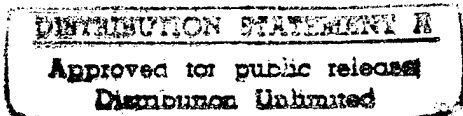

by

Dyer T. Lennox  
Colonel, USMC

A paper submitted to the Faculty of the Naval War College in partial satisfaction of the requirements of the Department of Joint Military Operations.

The contents of this paper reflect my own personal views and are not necessarily endorsed by the Naval War College or the Department of the Navy.

Signature:



19 May 1996

Paper directed by  
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**ABSTRACT of**

**THE OPERATIONAL ANALYSIS:**

**GERMAN OPERATION AGAINST YUGOSLAVIA 1941.**

The German operation in Yugoslavia represents the mastery of Operational Art. While already staged to execute Operation Marita for the conquest of Greece and with the preparations for Barbarossa under way, the German High Command developed a plan for the invasion of Yugoslavia in eight days from 25 March to 3 April 1941. Then, they executed a complex operation into a country whose terrain heavily favored the defender and gained an unconditional surrender in eleven days. This paper attempts to evaluate the source of Germany's tremendous success by analyzing their application of the Principles of War in the hope of developing lessons of value for future practitioners of war.

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## INTRODUCTION

On 6 April 1941, German air and ground forces launched an overwhelming attack on Yugoslavia. This was a hastily conceived attack against a country which heavily favored the defender, and was unsuited for mechanized forces, the hallmark of the German Army. Yet, in twelve days the Germans had defeated the Yugoslav Army and gained the unconditional surrender of the Yugoslav Government.<sup>1</sup> To contribute this quick success only to the poor state of the Yugoslav armed forces is to ignore the German's judicious application of 'Operational Art'.

German success was not a foregone conclusion. The Yugoslav Armed Forces had created the environment for the invasion when they orchestrated a coup d'etat to thwart the Yugoslav government from joining the Tripartite Pact and should have anticipated an attack. They had almost 2,000,000 men available for the defense of their country.<sup>2</sup> Even if these forces were poorly organized, trained and equipped, the easily defensible terrain coupled with the spirit of the defense of the homeland, should have made The Yugoslavs a formidable adversary.

This paper will evaluate the German application of Operational Art during the Yugoslav operation and how it directly contributed to their success. It will focus primarily on the use of the 'Principles of War'. As we know, the principles of war do not provide a recipe for success, but to ignore them invites defeat or at least an unsatisfactory outcome.<sup>3</sup> As in all cases, the use of the principles of war is a trade off. Adherence to one

may require the violation of another. The Yugoslav operation is no different. Many were strictly adhered to while others were not.

### **STRATEGIC SETTING**

April 1941, Europe is reeling from a series of German successes. Hitler is planning the attack on Russia, code named Barbarossa. (See Appendix A) Before he undertakes Barbarossa however, Hitler wants to secure his Balkan flank, eliminate British involvement in Greece and the potential air threat to the Rumanian oil fields. For this, Hitler has planned Marita, a thrust into Greece from Bulgaria with the Twelfth Army Group in conjunction with the Italian assault south from Albania. A critical vulnerability of this operation was the long supply line leading from Germany through Rumania and Bulgaria to interdiction from Yugoslavia.<sup>4</sup>

Hitler had been negotiating with Yugoslavia for months to bring her into the Tripartite Pact. On March 25th, Hitler thought that he had achieved the security he needed for Operation Marita when the Yugoslav Prime Minister signed the Tripartite Pact with Germany. However, the euphoria was short lived. Serb nationalists officers, opposed to a pro-German policy, overthrew the Regency government and in the name of the young king, set up a new government of clearly anti-German character.<sup>5</sup>

Hitler was indignant. He summoned the High Command and declared that the Yugoslav government could not be trusted, that

its unreliability would jeopardize both Marita and Barbarossa. He was resolved to take no risks. "He would destroy the country militarily and as a national unit. No diplomatic inquiries will be made, no ultimatum presented. Yugoslavia was to be pulverized with merciless brutality...in a lightning operation."<sup>6</sup> On the same day he issued his Directive No. 25. (See Appendix A)

### **OPERATION No. 25**

The operation in Yugoslavia took its code name from the directive number that Hitler issued to the German High Command for the invasion of Yugoslavia. It directed a joint ground and air offensive along two axis of advance converging on the capitol, Belgrade. This was later revised by the German High Command, to three axis of advance. (See Appendix B) Coalition support would be obtained from its allies by promising land acquisitions to Italy, Hungary and Bulgaria.<sup>7</sup> The overall command would be by General Maximilian von Weichs of the Second Army, then designated the Second Army Group with the addition of the First Panzer Group from the Twelfth Army and the independent XLI Panzer Corps. (See Appendix D for German Order of Battle)<sup>8</sup>

The operational scheme was a combined arms, multi-axis attack aimed at the operational centers of gravity and coordinated with other operations in the area. The Second Army would attack south from Graz, Austria along the Drava and Sava rivers. The First Panzer Corps would attack north from the vicinity of Sofia by way of Nis. The XLI Panzer Corps would attack west from the vicinity

of Timisoara in Rumania. All forces converging on Belgrade. The intent was to crush the Yugoslav Army quickly, to prevent them from just melting away into the mountains to conduct extensive guerrilla operations later. The Luftwaffe would support the ground offensive and destroy all Yugoslav Air Forces and attack the command and control facilities located in Belgrade. In conjunction with the attacks on Yugoslavia, the Twelfth Army Group would initiate its attack on Greece from southwestern Bulgaria as previously planned.<sup>9</sup>

A key to the success of this operation was the ability to secure the numerous river crossings that the attacking forces would need and to maintain the Danube River open for resupply. To this end the Germans executed limited objective attacks to secure the river crossings in the Second Army's zone while employing engineers along the Danube to preclude sabotage.

#### **PRINCIPLES OF WAR**

Fundamental to operating successfully across the full range of military operations is an understanding and proper application of the principles of war.<sup>10</sup> The mere knowledge of the principles of war will certainly not provide the solution to the problems of war, but it will lend order and guidance to a mind trained to analyze and form conclusions from an objective study of the situation.<sup>11</sup> This is precisely what the Germans did and it led to the Army's success in Yugoslavia.



**Objective.** Direct every military operation toward a clearly defined, decisive, and attainable objective.<sup>12</sup>

Operation No. 25, essentially a branch plan or a supporting plan of Operation Marita, was designed to secure the flank of the German lines of communications through the Balkans to Greece. It included clearly defined, decisive and attainable objectives. The plan started with the ultimate aim of 'the total defeat and annihilation of Yugoslavia as a nation'.<sup>13</sup> The primary objectives chosen to accomplish the aims were the defeat of the Yugoslav Army and the capture of Belgrade, the seat of government. These were identified as the operational centers of gravity and the operational objectives.<sup>14</sup> All subsequent actions were focused on achieving these objectives. River crossing sites, choke points, troop concentrations, and the Yugoslav Air Force were identified as decisive points along the lines of operation to the objectives.

Operation No. 25 also recognized the vulnerability of the coalition army and determined that it was a critical vulnerability that could be exploited to help achieve one of the operational objectives, the defeat of the Army. (See Appendix A) Yugoslavia was a country of many ethnic groups dominated primarily by the Serbian majority. However, the other factions within the Nation, most notably the Croats and Slovenes in the North and East resented the Serb domination and preferred appeasement to the Germans over Serb rule. An indication of how deep these feelings were is evidenced by the treason of one member of the Yugoslav Air Force who flew to Graz, Austria and delivered the list and locations of all air bases in use by the Yugoslav Air Force to the

Germans.<sup>15</sup> Early in the planning, Hitler had chosen to attack the frailty of the coalition and the Nazi intelligence service was employed to exploit this weakness.<sup>16</sup> Hitler also authorized the Army Field generals to accept the surrender of armies as a means to facilitate the desertion of major units.<sup>17</sup>

The Germans recognized that the terrain favored the defender and that terrain, particularly bridges and river crossing sites would be be decisive points along the axis of advance. Therefore, limited objective operations were planned to secure these positions prior to the major assaults.<sup>18</sup>

**Offensive.** Seize, retain, and exploit the initiative.<sup>19</sup>

The Germans seized the offensive on 6 April with a combined air and ground offensive and never yielded the initiative. In five days, German forces advancing along three axis of advance converged on Belgrade, and by the twelfth day had achieved the unconditional surrender of the Yugoslav Government. (See Appendix E) Their aggressiveness and combined arms effort kept the Yugoslav forces off balance and unable to react to the decision cycle created by the Germans. An excellent example of the speed of the German attack and the inability of the Yugoslav Army to react occurred in the vicinity of Morava.

The 11th Panzer Division, effectively supported by strong artillery and Luftwaffe forces, quickly gained ground and broke through the enemy lines on the first day of the attack. The Yugoslav army commander was so greatly impressed

by this initial German success that he ordered his forces to withdraw behind the Morava. This maneuver could not be executed in time because as early as 9 April, the German lead tanks rumbled into Nis and immediately continued their drive toward Belgrade.<sup>20</sup>

Another example of the ground forces gaining and maintaining the initiative occurred with forces of LI Corps. After capturing bridge crossings over the Drava River in tact, the Second Army instructed the LI Corps to hold in place and to consolidate their gains. However, when air reconnaissance reports indicated that the Yugoslav Seventh Army, defending along a narrow front, was withdrawing, the LI Corps was ordered to form flying columns composed of motorized elements and pursue the Yugoslav forces in the direction of Zagreb.<sup>21</sup>

The Luftwaffe also demonstrated their sense of the offense. They initiated an air operation aimed at the decisive point of the Yugoslav Air Force and the operational center of gravity, Belgrade, which was the central command and control facilities of the Yugoslav military establishment. The offensive air operations were a complete success. The Yugoslav Air Force was completely destroyed on the first day. The Luftwaffe gained complete tactical surprise over Belgrade. The first wave destroyed Yugoslav air defenses around the capitol thus allowing successive waves to loiter over the target and inflict maximum damage to the capitol and the command and control facilities. These initial Luftwaffe attacks on Belgrade inflicted more than 17,000

casualties and completely destroyed the military command system. The Yugoslav Army was virtually headless from the outset.<sup>22</sup>

**Mass.** Mass the effects of overwhelming combat power at the decisive place and time.<sup>23</sup>

The Germans achieved the principle of mass both on the ground and in the air. It is estimated that the Germans employed over 1000 modern aircraft against approximately 278 aging and antiquated Yugoslav aircraft. The destruction was so complete on the first day of the operation that the Luftwaffe could concentrate all its power on attacking troop concentrations, command posts, and in direct support of the ground units.<sup>24</sup> In this regard the Luftwaffe provided the principal operational fires, completely isolating the Yugoslav Army from support.

The maneuver units attacked on narrow fronts supported by ample artillery fire and close air support. Although channelized by the terrain, the German attack forces were able to bring overwhelming combat power against the Yugoslav defense forces. And because the defenders were spread very thinly in an attempt to defend everywhere, they were easily defeated at the point of attack. As a result of trying to defend everywhere, they were incapable of defending well anywhere.

**Economy of Force.** Employ all combat power available in the most effective way possible; to allocate minimum essential combat power to secondary efforts.<sup>25</sup>

The Germans used several economy of force measures during

this operation to achieve the requisite mass desired. Divisions and corps were transferred from other areas within the theater to support this operation. For example, the First Panzer Group was taken from the Twelfth Army and Operation Marita to participate in Operation No. 25.<sup>26</sup> Also, units earmarked and en route to staging areas for operation Barbarossa were diverted to the Yugoslav operation which required the delay of Barbarossa. (See Appendix E) Another example of economy of force dealt with the Luftwaffe. Immediately prior to the attack, the Luftwaffe transferred an additional 600 aircraft (fighters, bombers, and close support), to the Balkans for Operation No. 25. These aircraft were taken from other areas of operation in the Mediterranean and European areas to ensure overwhelming superiority.

**Maneuver.** Place the enemy in a position of disadvantage through the flexible application of combat power.<sup>27</sup>

Yugoslav terrain favored the defender and there were limited lines of operation within the country. The terrain was intersticed by multiple large rivers which were formidable obstacles in the spring due to melting snow and rain. However, through the combination of the use of ground and air maneuver, the Germans were able to put the Yugoslav forces at a disadvantage during the initial assaults from which they could not recover.

The use of the Luftwaffe to destroy the Yugoslav Air Force during the opening operations denied air support to the Yugoslav ground forces. It also isolated the border defense forces who were trying to defend everywhere. Meanwhile, the ground forces

conducted coordinated attacks on three separate, widely dispersed axis of attack that prevented the Yugoslav Army from shifting forces to counter them.<sup>28</sup>

The Germans used non-lethal operational fires in the form of psychological operations to attack the internal unity of the Yugoslav Army. Through the use of propaganda the Germans exacerbated the rift between the Croats and the Serbs in the government and the Army. Furthermore, Hitler recognized Croatia as a separate state on 10 April which led to their immediate withdrawal from the government and in many instances, the surrendering en masse of Croatian units in the Yugoslav Army.<sup>29</sup>

**Unity of Command.** For every objective, seek unity of command and unity of effort.<sup>30</sup>

The Germans did not organize the operation under a single operational commander. The Luftwaffe was not subordinate to the overall operational commander, General Weichs, and neither were the Italian or Hungarian forces subject to his operational command. However, unity of effort was established in lieu of unity of command. The Germans relied on close coordination at all levels and the exchange of liaison officers to achieve unity of effort.

The Italian forces provide an excellent example. First the Italian forces were requested and did occupy key positions in Albania to prevent reinforcements to Yugoslav forces and they ceased operations against Greece per the German requests. This coordination was affected at the strategic level by direct contact

between Hitler and Mussolini.<sup>31</sup> Further, the Italian Second Army was to assist the Germans by attacking southeast from the Italian-Yugoslav border. The exchange of liaison officers with Italian Second Army was used to coordinate these efforts.<sup>32</sup> Although, the Italians were not prepared to begin the assault per the German schedule, when they were ready to attack on 11 April, the Germans coordinated their attack with the Italians to facilitate the encirclement of the Yugoslav Seventh Army in the northwest. (See Appendix C)

Even though the Luftwaffe was not subordinate to the ground forces it was tasked as the supporting arm and was required to conduct its operations in close coordination with the ground operations. This coordination included close air support to the maneuver elements and air reconnaissance throughout the operation. There is no indication in these readings where ground forces were lacking for air support.

**Security.** Never permit the enemy to acquire an unexpected advantage.<sup>33</sup>

Security was an important consideration in German planning. There are many examples where planned actions were directed for the purpose of ensuring security of the force and to keep the Yugoslav armed forces at a disadvantage. These examples range from Abwehr undercover operatives to limited objective attacks.

One example of force security also contributed to the principle of surprise. The German logisticians used the normal train schedules and routines as much as possible to disguise the

movement of forces into the Area of Operations.<sup>34</sup> Other examples involved sound military planning which included special emphasis to the employment of air defense units to protect vital marshaling areas and the positioning of Luftwaffe units in echelon so that they could support the operation, but not be at risk to British RAF units stationed on islands in the Aegean.<sup>35</sup>

**Surprise.** Strike the enemy at a time or place or in manner for which he is unprepared.<sup>36</sup>

The Germans were more concerned with security and their ability to maneuver than they were with surprise. This was demonstrated by the multiple limited objective operations planned. They also authorized the prestaging of supplies on barges on the Danube as well as several supporting attacks to secure key river crossing sites prior to the commencement of the attack. Some limited objective attacks in the Second Army zone began as early as 1 April. In fact a couple of local commanders, meeting little or no resistance tried to exploit their gains and had to be drawn back so that that they did not become over extended before the main forces were in place to attack.

Even though the Germans achieved relative surprise both on the ground and in the air, it was more a case of the Yugoslav armed forces misreading available information than any deliberate or thorough attempts by the Germans at achieving surprise. The Germans did make efforts to conceal the marshaling of their forces, by not altering the number of trains in use bordering areas around Yugoslavia and they continued to divert trains for



the transport of coal to Italy to conceal their efforts.<sup>37</sup>

The Yugoslav Army assumed that Germany would attack after the coup. Their mistake was thinking that it would be weeks or months away. This is the main reason that the ground assault caught the Yugoslav forces still in the mobilization phase even though indications were present of an impending attack.

**Simplicity.** Prepare clear, uncomplicated plans and concise orders to ensure thorough understanding.<sup>38</sup>

Simplicity was sacrificed for mass and speed. The orders were direct and clear cut, but in the interest of gaining a quick victory, Hitler and the German High Command used a multi-front attack. The three axis of advance were widely dispersed and unable to be mutually supporting if one bogged down. The idea was to attack with enough force and speed to defeat the Yugoslav Army before they could react and to capture as much of the army as possible to prevent them from mounting a guerrilla campaign to prolong the operation.

Another example of how complex the execution of the plan was dealt with the marshaling of the forces. Divisions and corps had to be brought in from all over the European theater.<sup>39</sup> Units were brought in from France, diverted from their movement to marshaling areas for Barbarossa, and from Germany. The management of the rail schedules alone was very complex and a major feat. It proved to be such a difficult task that some units attack date was delayed until they could be marshaled, while other units went on the offensive almost as soon as they detrained, and others were

never committed because they did not arrive in the marshaling areas in time. The fact that all the forces planned for the operation were not required, precluded these complex marshaling issues from having a more serious affect on the operation.

The use of German Allies provides another example of how complex the plan was. Hitler in an attempt to gain international support at least within the Balkan territories involved Italy, Hungary and Bulgaria. However, these nations' forces were not ready to take the offensive in accordance with the German timetable. Therefore, the German High Command essentially developed branch plans that would involve the Italian and Hungarian forces as they became available. When these forces alerted the Germans that they were prepared to attack, divisions and corps in the area would alter plans to conduct operations in those areas.<sup>40</sup>

### **CONCLUSION**

The quick and thorough success of the German Army in Operation No. 25 was not solely because the Yugoslav Army was poorly trained and equipped. Although these were contributing factors, the main reason for the German victory was their judicious understanding of operational art particularly the principles of war. As is usually the case, the Germans did not adhere to all of the principles in this operation. In fact, as is often demonstrated in history, the adherence to one principle may require the violation of another.

The Germans selected those principles whose compliance were most critical for their success and ensured that they were strictly followed, even compromising others to achieve them. In the Yugoslav operation, the Germans sacrificed simplicity so that they could achieve overwhelming mass and maneuver. This was also the case where they were evidently willing to ensure security at the expense of surprise. Even when the Germans readily violated the principles of war through their organization for combat, leaving the Luftwaffe and the Army as separate but equal commands, they established other procedures to achieve the same results. The lack of unity of command but total unity of effort in this operation is a prime example.

The German victory in Yugoslavia resulted from a keen understanding of the principles of war and the compromises necessary to balance the risks associated with violating these principles.

- 1 . Donald S. Detwiler, ed., World War II German Military Studies(New York and London, 1979), 25
- 2 . Frank C. LittlefieldGermany and Yugoslavia, 1933-1941: the German Conquest of Yugoslavia(New York: Columbia University Press, 1988),103.
- 3 . "They are not, as some think, ingredients which will, if compounded in the right proportions, produce a species of victory cake." Rear Admiral C.R. Brown, USN, "The Principles of War"Proceedings, June 1949, Vol. No. 75, No. 6, 633.
- 4 . Ibid. 6.
- 5 . Detwiler, World War II German Military Studies22.
- 5 . H. R. Trevor-Roper, Hitler's War Directives 1939-1945 London: Sidgwick and Johnson, 60.
- 7 . Italy was to gain the Dalmatian coast, Hungary would get Banat of Termesvar, an area lost to Yugoslavia after the first World War and Bulgaria would get Macedonia which had been disputed between Yugoslavia and BulgariaHitler's War Directives 61.
- 8 . Donald S. Detwiler, ed.World War II German Military Studies41.
- 9 . Ibid., 30.
- 10 . U.S. Army DepartmentOperations Field Manual 100-5 (Washington: 1993), 2-4.
- 11 . C.R Brown, Proceedings June 1949, 623.
- 12 . U.S. Army Department,Operations 2-4.
- 13 . Trevor-Roper, Hitler's War Directives 1939-194560.
- 14 . Ibid., 61.
- 15 . Littlefield, Germany and Yugoslavia, 1933-1941: The German Conquest of Yugoslavia80.
- 16 . Paul Leverkuehn, German Military Intelligence(London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1954), 144.
- 17 . Detwiler, World War II German Military Studies58.
- 18 . Ibid., 55.
- 19 . U.S. Army DepartmentOperations, 2-4.
- 20 . Detwiler, World War II German Military Studies50.
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- 22 . Ibid., 49.
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- 25 . U.S. Army Department, Operations, 2-5.
- 26 . Detwiler, World War II German Military Studies, 41.
- 27 . U.S. Army Department, Operations, 2-5.
- 28 . Littlefield, Germany and Yugoslavia, 1933-1941: The German Conquest of Yugoslavia, 130.
- 29 . Detwiler, World War II German Military Studies, 60.
- 30 . U.S. Army Department, Operations, 2-5.
- 31 . Detwiler, World War II German Military Studies, 22.
- 32 . Ibid., 23.
- 33 . U.S. Army Department, Operations, 2-5.
- 34 . Detwiler, World War II German Military Studies, 43.
- 35 . Ibid., 29.
- 36 . U.S. Army Department, Operations, 2-5.
- 37 . Detwiler, World War II German Military Studies, 43.
- 38 . U.S. Army Department, Operations, 2-5.
- 39 . Detwiler, World War II German Military Studies, 48.
- 40 . Ibid., 60.

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## DIRECTIVE No. 25

Directive No. 25 was Hitler's guidance to the German High Command for the invasion and annihilation of Yugoslavia. It is provided for information and as a reference for the paper.

1. The military revolt in Yugoslavia has changed the political position in the Balkans. Yugoslavia, even if it makes initial professions of loyalty, must be regarded as an enemy and beaten down as quickly as possible.

2. It is my intention to break into Yugoslavia in the general direction of Belgrade and to the south by a concentric operation from the Fiume-Graz area on the one side, and the Sofia area on the other, and to deal an annihilating blow to the Yugoslav forces. Further, the extreme southern region of Yugoslavia will be cut off from the rest of the country and will be occupied as a base from which the German-Italian offensive against Greece can be continued.

The opening of traffic on the Danube as soon as possible and the seizure of the Bor copper mines are important for economic reasons.

Efforts will be made to induce Hungary and Bulgaria to take part in the operations by offering them the prospect of regaining Banat and Macedonia.

Internal tensions in Yugoslavia will be encouraged by giving political assurances to the Croats.

3. I issue the following detailed orders:

(a) As soon as sufficient forces are available and the weather allows, the ground installations of the Yugoslav Air Force and the city of Belgrade will be destroyed from the air by continual day and night attack.

(b) If possible simultaneously, but in no event earlier, undertaking Marita will begin with the temporarily limited objective of occupying the Salonika basin and gaining a foothold on the heights of Edessa. For this purpose, XVIII Army Corps can advance through Yugoslav territory.

Favorable opportunities will be seized to prevent the creation of an organized front between Olympus and the Edessa highlands.

(c) All forces still available in Bulgaria and Rumania will be committed to the attacks which will be carried out from the

Sofia area to the Northwest and from the Kyusten-dil-Gorna Dzhumaya area to the West, with the exception that a force of about one division, with air support, must remain to protect the Rumanian oil fields.

The protection of the Turkish frontier will, for the present be left to the Bulgarians. A German formation consisting if possible of an armored division will stand by in the rear in support.

(d) The thrust from the general direction of Graz towards the Southeast will be made as soon as the necessary forces have been assembled. The Army is free to decide whether Hungarian territory should be crossed in breaching the frontier.

Security measures at the Yugoslav frontier are to be strengthened immediately.

As on the Bulgarian frontier, important objectives can be occupied even before the general offensive, simultaneously with the air attack on Belgrade.

(e) The Air Force will support with two Groups the operation of the 12th Army and of the assault group now being formed in the Graz area, and will time the weight of its attack to coincide with the operations of the Army. The Hungarian ground organization can be used for assembly and in action.

The possibility of bringing X Air Corps into action from the Italian bases will be considered. The protection of convoys to Africa must however continue to be ensured.

Preparations for the occupation of the island of Lemnos will be continued. I reserve the right to give orders for this operation.

Care must be taken to ensure adequate anti-aircraft protection for Graz, Klagenfurt, Villach, and Leoben, and also for Vienna.

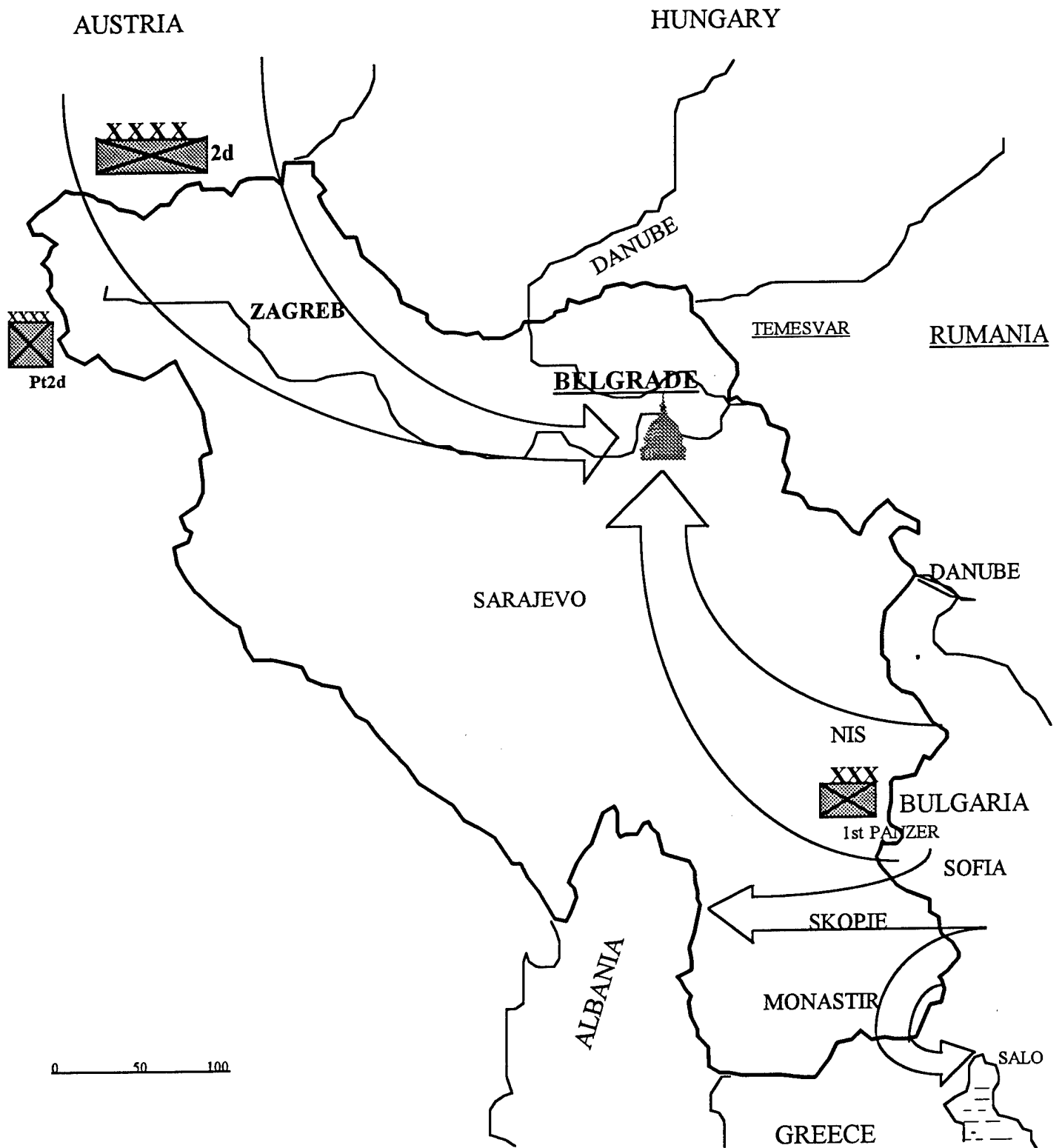
4. Basic agreement with Italy will be reached, for the time being, by the High Command of the Armed Forces. The Army will detail liaison staffs with Italian 2nd Army and with the Hungarians.

The Air Force is authorized to begin immediate discussions with the Italian and Hungarian High Commands in order to delimit the area of air operations of the three powers. The build-up of Hungarian ground installations can begin at once.

5. Commanders-in-Chief will inform me, through the High Command of the Armed Forces, of their plans for the operations, and of related problems.

/s/ Adolf Hitler

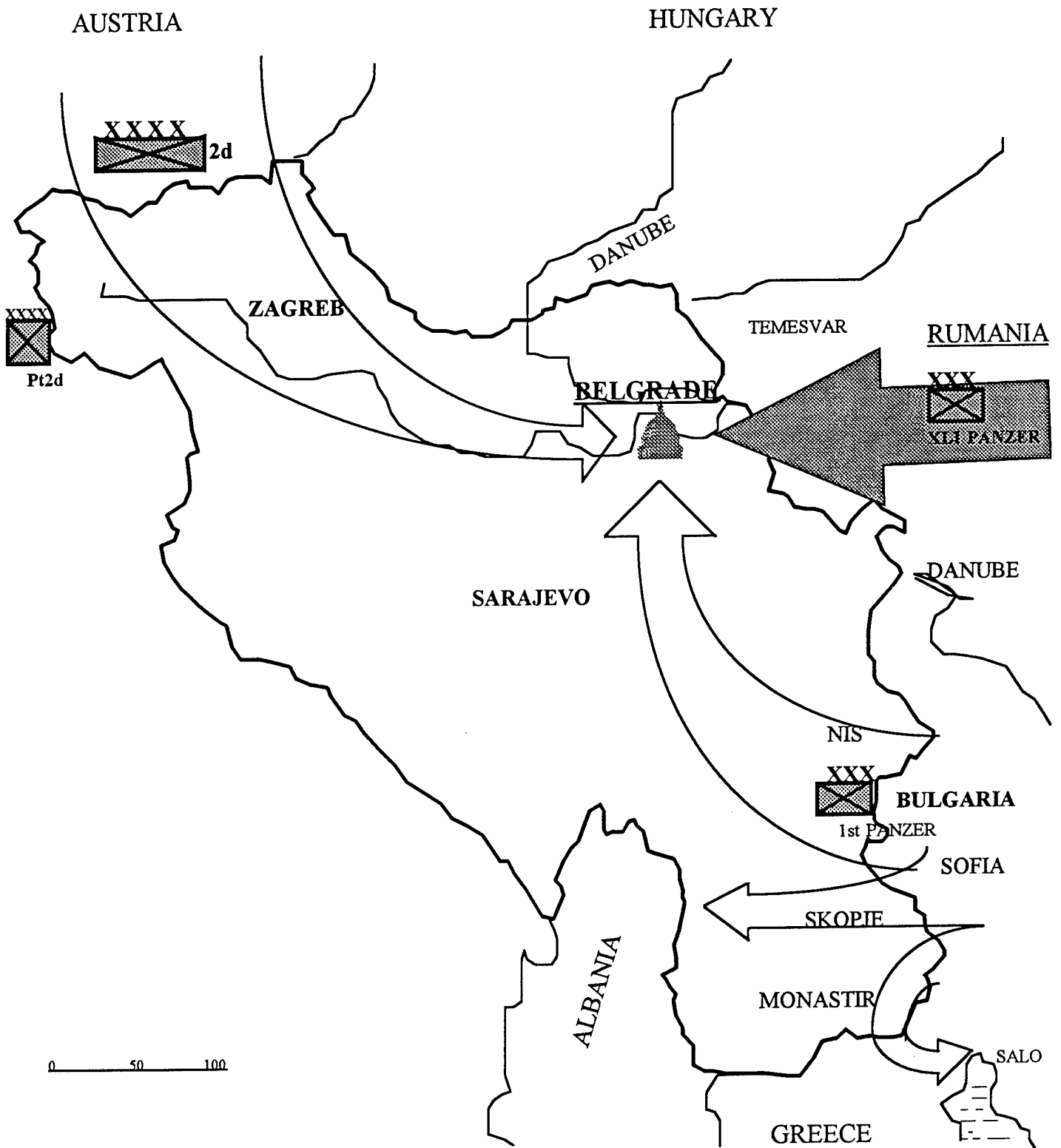
# ORIGINAL GERMAN PLAN



Source: World War II Military Studies

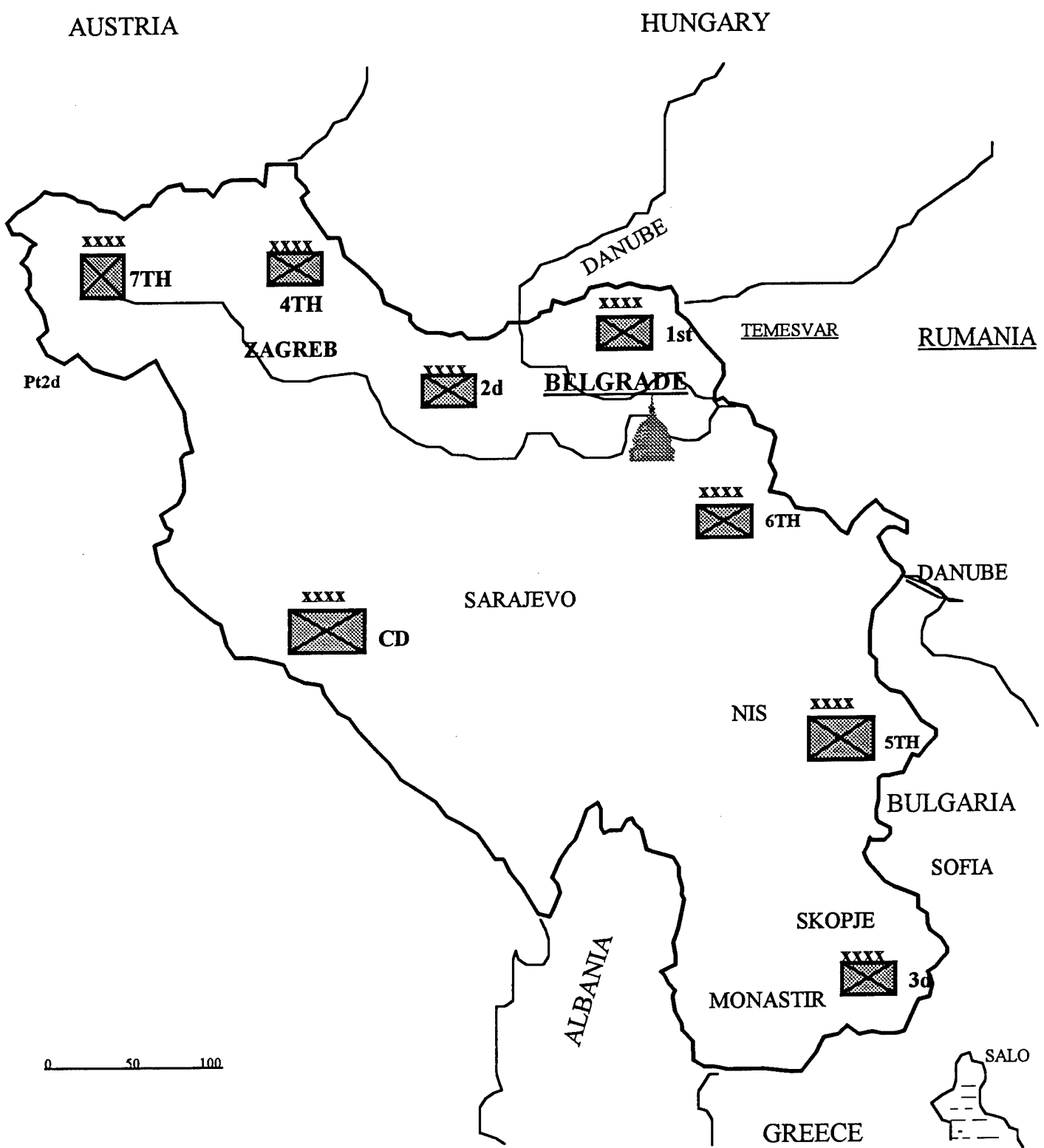


# FINAL GERMAN PLAN



Source: World War II Military Studies

# YUGOSLAV DEFENSE PLAN



CD: Coastal Defense  
Source: World War II German Military Studies

## GERMAN ORDER OF BATTLE

SECOND ARMY	General Maximilian von Weichs
XLIX Mountain Corps	Gen. Ludwig Kuebler
1st Mountain Div.	
538th Frontier Guards Div.	
LI Infantry Corps	Gen. Hans Reinhardt
101st Light Infantry Div.	
132d Infantry Div.	
183d Infantry Div.	
LII Infantry Corps (High Command Reserve)	Gen. Kurt von Briesen
79th Infantry Div.	
125th Infantry Div.	
XLVI Panzer Corps	Gen. Heinrich von Vietinghoff
8th Panzer Div.	
14th Panzer Div.	
16th Motorized Infantry Div.	
FIRST PANZER GROUP	Gen. Ewald von Kliest
XIV Panzer Corps	Gen. Gustav von Wietersheim
5th Panzer Div.	
11th Panzer Div.	
29th Infantry Div.	
4th Mountain Div.	
XI Infantry Corps	Gen. Joachim von Kotzfleisch
60th Motorized Infantry Div.	
XLI Panzer Corps	Gen. Georg-Hans Reinhardt
2d SS Motorized Infantry Div.	
Motorized Inf Regiment (Rein), 'Gross Deutschland'	
Panzer Regiment, 'Hermann Goering'	

### Chronological Table of Events

- 27 Sep. 1940 Germany, Italy, and Japan sign the Tripartite Pact.
- 7 Oct. 1940 German troops enter Rumania.
- 12 Oct. 1940 Hitler postpones invasion of Great Britain until spring 1941.
- 28 Oct. 1940 Italy invades Greece from Albania.
- 4 Nov. 1940 Hitler orders preparations for eventual intervention in Greece.
- 4 Nov. 1940 Royal Air Force begins to operate from Greek airfields.
- 20 Nov. 1940 Hungary adheres to Tripartite Pact.
- 23 Nov. 1940 Rumania joins Tripartite Pact.
- 28 Nov. 1940 Hitler confers with Yugoslav Foreign Minister Cincar-Marcovic and asks Yugoslavia to join Tripartite Pact.
- 5 Dec. 1940 Hitler conference, Army plans for campaigns against Greece and Russia presented.
- 13 Dec. 1940 Directive No. 20 is issued, outlining Operation MARITA, the campaign against Greece.
- 18 Dec. 1940 Directive No. 21 issued, ordering preparations for Operation BARBAROSSA, the campaign against Russia.
- 14 Feb. 1941 Hitler urges YUGOSLAV Premier Cvetkovic to join Tripartite Pact.
- 17 Feb. 1941 Bulgaria and Turkey conclude treaty of friendship.
- 28 Feb. 1941 German troops bridge the Danube.

1 Mar. 1941 Bulgaria joins Tripartite Pact.

2 Mar. 1941 German troops enter Bulgaria.

4 Mar. 1941 Hitler confides with Prince Regent Paul of Yugoslavia.

7 Mar. 1941 British Expeditionary Force begins to land in Greece.

9-16 Mar. 1941 Italian spring offensive in Albania.

18 Mar. 1941 Yugoslav privy council decides to join Tripartite Pact.

25 Mar. 1941 Yugoslavia signs Tripartite Pact.

26-27 Mar. 1941 Yugoslavia *coup d'etat*.

27 Mar. 1941 Directive No. 25 is issued, outlining Operation 25, the campaign against Yugoslavia.

29 Mar. 1941 Conference of German Army commanders responsible for campaign in Balkans.

6 Apr. 1941 German air bombardment of Belgrade

Twelfth Army invades southern Yugoslavia and Greece.

Second Army launches limited-objective attacks against Yugoslavia.

7 Apr. 1941 Operation BARBAROSSA postponed to 22 June.

German troops enter Skoplje.

8 Apr. 1941 First Panzer Group starts drive toward Belgrade.

9-10 Apr. 1941 XLVI Panzer Corps enters the race for Belgrade.

- 10 Apr. 1941 Start of Second Army drive on Zagreb and capture of the city.
- Croatia proclaims itself an independent state.
- XLIX Mountain and LI Infantry Corps cross northwestern Yugoslav border.
- First Panzer Group reaches point forty miles from Yugoslav capital.
- 11 Apr. 1941 XLI Panzer Corps advances to within forty-five miles of Belgrade.
- German mountain troops cross the Vardar.
- 12 Apr. 1941 Fall of Belgrade
- 14 Apr. 1941 Beginning of Yugoslav armistice negotiations.
- 15 Apr. 1941 German troops enter Sarajevo.
- 17 Apr. 1941 Yugoslav representatives sign unconditional surrender.
- 18 Apr. 1941 German armistice with Yugoslavia becomes effective at 1200.