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**Experiences of VJ's 37th Motorized Brigade**

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[Unattributed article: "Example to Generations"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The National Hero 37th Motorized Brigade. It is sufficient to say Prekaze, Glogovac, Srbica, Likovac, Lausa, Gornje Obrinje and Donje Obrinje, and the Cicavica, Kosmac, and Drenica mountains, renowned for atrocities, to realize that the 37th Motorized Brigade had one of the most difficult and most responsible tasks in the battles in Kosovo. They finished it more than successfully, as only national heroes can.

Peaceful negotiations are the preoccupation of high politicians, but the way of real professional soldiers is to evaluate the situation in the field and in the immediate environment. Not leaving anything to chance and not enthused by staged peace initiatives of the Rambouillet type, the heroes of the 37th Motorized Brigade, led by the already legendary Colonel Ljubisa Dikovic, evaluated the situation accurately and, far before the outbreak of aggression against our fatherland, made the decisions that would quickly be shown as fateful.

In addition to commander Dikovic, the team "mosaic" that developed and created the ideas about how to oppose the enemy also consisted of Lieutenant Colonels Borivoje Orovic, Rastislav Simijonovic, and Zoran Bojkovic. Of course, the Uzice Corps Command, headed by its commander, Major General Grujica Davidovic, offered unselfish assistance to the Raska Brigade's striking fist. Carrying out combat tasks in a situation that changed from day to day with the personnel available before the reserve organization was involved, and with inadequate material capacities, was not the least bit easy. However, as commander Dikovic says, the formula for success or failure was created right at that planning phase.

**Test of Patriotism**

Everything started far earlier in the brigade of heroes from Raska. They intensively prepared their forces and equipment to defend the fatherland. Nobody got carried away; they simply knew that the situation must be followed and anticipated on a daily basis. Therefore, designated portions of the unit were long in combat readiness. Their months of presence on the broad expanses of Pester foretold that the unit was completely ready for the Kosovo test. As the commander likes to say, the "first semester" of patriotism for the fatherland started back at the beginning of March. At that time, Albanian terrorist forces controlled the majority of the territory and communications, threatened the integrity of the country and all the agencies of government

in Kosovo, and carried out terror against all non-Albanian inhabitants. In that situation, one of the brigade's exemplary tasks was to justify its transfer to the territories of Kosmet [Kosovo and Metohija], specifically to the Kosovska Mitrovica region. That was not at all easy, considering the limitations on movement due to the agreement with the OSCE [Organization of Security and Cooperation in Europe] then in effect. It was valid to come to Kosovo to help the Serbian people. There was no other way out. That was the beginning of the heroic actions of the 37th Brigade from Raska.

Only they know the ways (which will surely enter the history of tactical maneuvers and will serve as a precedent for writing new rules and instructions for waging war) in which, in only three days, the brigade's complete active organization, separated into combat groups, joined and was placed under the command of the Pristina Corps and its commander, Lieutenant Colonel General Vladimir Lazarevic. Upon coming to Kosovo, the organization did not stop its training. On the contrary, their training intensified as never before, and their appearance at that time was a sign to the Albanian terrorists and their foreign tutors for still fiercer kidnapping, looting, and robbery. Therefore it often happened that, an hour after conducting its regular training, the unit entered into warfare conditions and combat actions. From day to day, the situation became more complicated and intense. According to our interlocutors, it was necessary to carry out the deblocking of roadways and important communications and to establish control over the territory. They started by breaking up the strong Albanian terrorist bases on the Cicavica and Zmice mountains and in the villages of Galica, Prelevac, Poljance, Prekaze, Turicevac, Brocna, and Vocnjak. Skilled officers led all the actions, which decisively influenced their success in numerous battles so that not a single soldier from the unit of heroes left the battlefield, let alone Kosovo.

#### Overture for Heroic Acts

While they were creating the conditions in Kosovo for bringing the complete unit into combat actions, their colleagues in Raska were preparing intensively for mobilization since, in the middle of March, NATO was already openly threatening. Everything was done under the most complex conditions. There were few men, the core of the brigade was in Kosovo, a state of war was declared in the country, and NATO started its crazed bombing. But the response from reservists exceeded 100 percent. Upon the declaration of a state of war, more than 60 percent of the reservists reported to their military unit without waiting to be called up. In a period of only a few hours, the future heroes from Raska, Kraljevo, and Vrnjacka Banja--the pride of commander Dikovic--assembled under full military equipment. There, at the very beginning, was the overture for their later heroic acts. Specifically, under forced march under the cover of night, with all measures of air defense, the complete reserve organization reached Kosovo the following morning and joined its army brigade. Thousands of soldiers arrived undiscernibly in the wider region of Kosovska Mitrovica. It was one of the first enigmas for the enemy. Filled in now according to military formation, in cooperation with the other units, the brigade accepted three focal tasks: protecting men and materiel from actions from the air, destroying remaining Albanian terrorist forces, and organizing defense from the aggression of NATO forces from the ground. The tasks were complex but, as commander Dikovic says, they were to the measure of a national hero. Thus said, one thinks above all of Drenica, the source of all Albanian evil and secessionism. It is enough to say Prekaze, Glogovac, Srbica, Likovac, Lausa, Gornje Obrinje, and Donje Obrinje, and the mountains renowned for atrocities--Cicavica, Kosmac, and Drenica--to realize that the 37th Motorized Brigade had one of the most difficult and most responsible tasks in the battles in Kosovo. It performed its task more than successfully, as

only national heroes can. Not only were they the striking fist of the Pristina Corps, but also the chief support to the other brigades for which they provided conditions for successful combat actions. Simply, their bravery, heroism, and enthusiasm were also the flanks for great acts in other units.

Although the 37th Brigade has the adjective "motorized" in its name, the main bearer of all tasks was the infantry--of course, with the support of tanks and artillery. It could not have been otherwise.

Life for Freedom

The soldier's boot had to pass everywhere to destroy the Albanian terrorist forces and to control the territory. In those merciless battles, the heroes of the 37th Brigade did not regret even their own lives. The First Battalion, the pride of the whole brigade--which (as Colonel Dikovic says) "from movement" shattered and destroyed the strongest terrorist bases in one of the battles near the village of Istok Mahala--was left without its celebrated commander, **Captain First Class Dragan Mitrovic**. Alongside him also died Captain First Class Boro Adzenovic, who always showed with his personal **example** what an assistant commander for information and morale should be. Always ahead of his soldiers, Captain Mitrovic led his brave lads then as well. The death of the commander did not cause hesitation. In Captain Mitrovic's place in battle stood his deputy, **Captain Aleksandar Markovic**, and the village was taken a few hours later. Shoulder to shoulder with them, First Battalion's cluster of heroes also included Captain First Class Borivoje Novakovic--wounded in battles near the villages of Dobrostan and Banjica, Captains Bratislav Mihajlovic and Milan Barlov, and Captain Dragan Jasic, who was killed near the village of Banjica.

**The Second Battalion, under the command of Captain Dejan Randjelovic, broke up strong bases of the Albanian terrorist forces in the regions of the villages of Likovac, Gornje Obrinje, and Donje Obrinje, where hand-to-hand battles were waged. In those battles, a hero was born in the figure of Sergeant Kosta Kartalovic who infiltrated a terrorist nest with his platoon and one tank, took control of that stronghold, and thereby resolved the combat task assigned to the whole battalion. In addition to the Medal for Bravery earned in a bloody battle, Sergeant Kartalovic now wears the rank of Junior Lieutenant on his shoulder. The Third Battalion was involved in cleaning up the most difficult terrain in the Cicavica and Drenica mountains, under the leadership of Major Drazenko Miric and Lieutenant Zoran Gavrilovic, who died heroically, leading his troops in an attack on an Albanian base. Of course, all the brigade's undoubtedly heroic feats would have been unimaginable without the howitzer battalion, commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Vladimir Pudja, of whom all in the brigade claim that, when even a head could not be raised in Kosovo because of the aggressor's bombing, his howitzers roared like St. Elijah the Thunderer and protected the infantry's successful penetration. The real heroes also included the tank drivers from Captain First Class Goran Jovanovic's armored battalion, which not only entered with its steel monsters into such enemy strongholds as Likosan, Likovac, Rezala, and Bradic, but also succeeded in hiding from the NATO airplanes so well that only one tank was lost in military actions on the territory of Kosovo and Metohija.**

Finally, the commander of the 37th Motorized Brigade stated, "Under exceptionally difficult and complicated conditions such as are not remembered in the history of warfare, only this people and its army could receive such tasks and resolve them in this way. Only the descendants of King Lazar, Obilic, Karadjordjevic, Misic, Stepa, Vukotic, and Sava Kovacevic, with the genetic code of warriors. As always, when bloody battles are waged for the fatherland, the officers went ahead. The unit proved and showed how to defend the fatherland and provided an **example** to

future generations, without regretting even their lives in that battle. The brigade's lasting tasks in the days of peace are caring for the families of our fallen hero comrades and good preparation for the coming tasks. If it is necessary, if the people and the fatherland call on us again--and that is expected of us heroes--I am certain that in a few hours we shall again be where it is necessary."

[box, p. 9]

That Is How To Defend Serbian Dignity and Military Honor

After awarding the National Hero Medal to the commander of the 37th Motorized Brigade, Colonel Ljubisa Dikovic, at the celebration of Yugoslav Army Day in Raska on 16 June, the special representative of Supreme Commander Slobodan Milosevic and Third Army commander, Colonel General Nebojsa Pavkovic, stated:

"The heroes of the 37th Motorized Brigade have returned to our city. They are our sons, brothers, husbands, friends. You have greeted them as ordinary men, but you did not know that every one of them is a hero in himself. In front of the whole world public, they showed how to defend the fatherland, how to defend Serbian dignity, and how to defend military honor. They were there where it was most difficult and felt the strikes from the air space as well as the treacherous attacks of the Albanian terrorist forces, which they withstood heroically, and now part of the unit is before us. What is there to say to you who know everything? You were there, you showed who you are, and you can raise your heads with pride to say how you became heroes... Thank you in the name of the fatherland, to which you gave everything that you could. And, with deepest piety, we shall always remember our fallen hero comrades."

[box, p. 10]

Pristina Corps Commander, Lieutenant Colonel General Vladimir Lazarevic: "Only the Descendants of Cer, Kolubara, and Kadinjaca Heroes Could Do It"

"Heroes of our fatherland. Honor and pride that the unit, which wrote new pages of history these days, is being decorated with the National Hero Medal. Medals are awarded to heroes after heroic acts. Acts that will remain in the history of our peoples have evoked the wonder of the whole freedom-loving world. You were like our celebrated ancestors from the rich treasury of our free past and have remained upright, dignified, braced, and determined at any price to defend the honor and pride of our fatherland. You heroes from Cacavica, Drenica, and all the other lines of defense returned the confidence, remembrance, and conscience of freedom-loving humanity and remained proud, upright, and dignified before the blackest forces of darkness that humanity has met in its history. You did not hesitate for a single moment. You knew that justice would triumph. You knew that you would give your lives, but for the salvation of true freedom, democracy, and justice. And not only in our country, but in all of Europe. That could be done only by the descendants of Lazar, Karadjorge, Sindjelic, the descendants of the heroes from Cer, Macva Kamen, Kolubara, Kadinjaca, and the other sacred places."

[box, p. 10]

37th Motorized Brigade Commander, Colonel Ljubisa Dikovic

How could a boy whose veins flowed with the blood of heroic Salonika Front veterans be other than brave and strong? At the beginning of the war in 1941, Grandfather Dragan Dikovic--a proud and honorable Serbian household head, Salonika Front warrior, Karadjordje Medal recipient--was deported by the Germans from the village of Zbojstica, near Uzice, to Norway, where they shot him the same year. As a mischievous little boy, Ljubisa only listened to tales of his grandfather Dikovic and his feats in the First World War. He had someone from whom to listen. His maternal grandfather, Arandjel Radosavljevic, his grandfather Dragan's best friend

and fellow soldier, told Ljubisa how the two of them once waged war to more quickly defeat the Germans.

The whole village was bothered by Ljubisa's mischief then. Were it not for Grandfather Arandjel, who was the untouchable authority in Zbojstica, young Ljubisa would have been spanked. In moments of defense, Grandfather Arandjel often knew to say, "Don't anyone raise a hand to the little one, that one will be minister of the army and navy!" Wishing to continue the tradition of his grandfathers, in 1975 Ljubisa went to the infantry military secondary school in Sarajevo. Barely waiting to see his grandson in uniform, Grandfather Arandjel died the same year.

Military schools and special promotions followed. After finishing KOV [Ground Forces] Military Academy, General Staff School followed. Excellent grades were expected in the Dikovic family. His first special promotion to the rank of major in 1994 found him at the duty of Border Battalion commander in Bajina Basta, defending the fatherland from attacks by Muslim extremists from Skelani, Srebrenica, and Bratunac. His second special promotion, to the rank of colonel, found him again at the barricades of the fatherland in Kosovo, in the command position in Glogovac. The commander of the 37th Motorized Brigade, which received the National Hero Medal, Colonel Ljubisa Dikovic says that he is happiest that everyone in his unit, from the highest officer to the soldiers, received the highest fatherland decoration. He added that he intended his services for heroic acts on behalf of his family--wife Milica, son Nemanja, and daughter Bojana--without whose support and sacrifice he would not have succeeded.

[Description of Source: Vojska: Military weekly published by the Federal Ministry of Defense; is strongly supportive of the Milosevic regime and Serbian nationalism]

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