

COMMAND OF THE 1<sup>st</sup> BIRAČ  
INFANTRY BRIGADE

Strictly conf. no. 14-770-1/93

30.10.1993

Report on the Occasion of the Marking  
of the Day of the Establishment of the DK /Drina Corps/

1. The date of the unit's establishment and the composition by strength /of the units/  
encompassed by the brigade

Birač PBr /Infantry Brigade/ (today, the 1<sup>st</sup> Birač PBr) was established on 19<sup>th</sup> of May  
1992.

Seven municipalities were in the zone of responsibility of our Brigade at the time, and  
those were:

- Zvornik
- Kalesija
- Šekovići
- Vlasenica
- Milići
- Bratunac, and
- Skelani

At that time, we had the following units in our composition:

- 10 infantry battalions,
- 15 detachments,
- 1 armoured battalion,
- 1 mixed artillery battalion,
- headquarters support units /handwritten:/ and logistics units.

All together, 12.000 fighters along the length of an approximately 205-kilometre-long  
front line.

Our tasks were complex, important and numerous, and the focus was on the following:

- to secure the Pale-Zvornik corridor
- to secure the Boksit mine in Milići
- to liberate the communication via Konjević Polje.

*/Handwritten:/ The Brigade successfully carried out the tasks in question.*

Although the first task was very difficult, we realized it very successfully. Using all available means and forces, the enemy endeavoured to cut off communication and to unite its forces along the line: Tuzla-Kalesija-Cerska-Srebrenica.

At the beginning of the war we had numerous b/d /combat operations/ along the said axis and thereby also a large number of casualties; we would like to single out just a few of them:

- b/d /combat operations/ to liberate Kamenica
- b/d to liberate Kalesija
- b/d for the Vis feature, which we were forced to defend several times in one day
- b/d to reinstate control over the area around the village of Memići

We also successfully realised the second task. We have preserved all the facilities within the Milići mine and occasionally provided ore exploitation. In this area also, our fighters have shown extraordinary courage and military capability.

The situation was sometimes very difficult and so a part of our forces, that were securing the mine, found themselves encircled from 10.06.1992 to 03.12.1992 with all the men and equipment; in coordinated action with other units that had come to their aid and with the wholehearted assistance of the corps commander, our fighters still, however, managed to defend the mine with minor casualties, whose number does not detract from their importance.

We realised the third task only in part as it was impossible to implement it in full without coordinated action with other brigades.

*/Handwritten:/ The following brigades have separated from our Brigade.*

Through the separation of the Zvornik LPBr /Light Infantry Brigade/ from our Brigade in June 1992, the Bratunac Brigade and Skelani Battalion in November 1992,

and the Milići-Vlasenica LPBr on 16<sup>th</sup> January 1993. /as printed/ The territories of the municipalities of Šekovići and Kalesija and part of the territory of the municipality of Kladanj were left in the zone of responsibility of the 1<sup>st</sup> Birač PBr.

## 2. Combat activities which the Brigade participated in

There have been numerous operations on the part of our Brigade from the beginning of the war until today and we could therefore organize them into two groups.

- brigade b/d /combat operations/ from the beginning of the war until 01.11.1992, i.e. until entry into the Drina Corps
- b/d from the time when Drina Corps was formed to date.

*/Handwritten:/ Due to limited time, we will not, at this time, be reflecting on the b/d prior to the forming of the DK /Drina Corps/.*

Firstly, it is necessary to mention the b/d for the liberation of Kalesija, through the control of which we were securing the depth of the defence of the communication Zvornik - Pale via C. Vrh, on which occasion we saved a numerous Serb population of that area. The b/d /combat operations/ in the area of Kalesija were very numerous and so constituted the majority of our Brigade's operations until the day when the Drina Corps was established. The liberation of the village of Memići certainly needs to be mentioned as part of these operations, and the placing of the said village under /our/ control, following the pull out of our forces from Kalesija.

Concurrently with the operations in that area, we were engaged in active combat in the area of Kamenica, given the fact that it was on the route used by the enemy to transport their forces from Srebrenica to Tuzla and /?back/.

The liberation of the town of Vlasenica on 21.04.1992 saw the start of the b/d /combat operations/ from that area and so, in May 1992, we reached the line: Drum – Kula – Jaroblje, this from Piskavica via Alihodžić, Urići and Mesići.

In June '92 we went further on: Džemat, Begići, Kuljančići, so that on 02.06.1992, having started from Gradina and going via Hrastovac – Pijuk and Jasikovice, we reached the Grobić-Potajnik line. Constant enemy assaults only served to speed up the

shift of our forces forward. By 4<sup>th</sup> July our forces were already along the line: the village/s of Bećirevići – Rogosija - Jasikovice – Potajnik.

Through decisive defence, the enemy defends against penetration into the heart of Cerska but, on 20.10.1992 we, nevertheless, take over Grobić and establish the line: Potajnik – Grobić – village of Metaljka, with the Nišava gap, and the disposition remains as such until the attack at Cerska on 23.02.1992.

In the Milići area, emphasis should certainly be placed on defending the bauxite mine. Just as an illustration: on 10.06.1992, a portion of our forces guarding the mine found themselves encircled, but through a very well organized action, the mine was unblocked.

A similar situation was repeated on 03.12.1992 when our forces were blocked for three days, but again managed to defend and save the mine.

Concurrently with defending the mine, a numerous Serb population needed to be successfully defended and saved, which is what we did through active combat and by placing: Sebiočina, Gerovi, Zabrdje, B. Polje, Lisina, Kupusna, Rupovo Brdo, under our control.

One must not forget 26.09.1992, when an unprecedented, bestial crime took place in that area: the enemy stormed into Podravanje, torching houses and mutilating about 30 people, not sparing the women, children, the elderly, or frail.

The area of Skelani, our “youngest” municipality at that time, saw a battalion develop out of the TO /Territorial Defence/ Staff and a 120-strong company, and our line of defence stretch from the village of Jezero, and onwards from the village/s of Kusići-Gradina-Ćosići-Bujakovići, though Utrževac up to D. Žlepac. The immediate proximity of Osmani, an enemy stronghold, caused numerous combat operations, and one should certainly mention an enemy attack on Brežane on 30.06.1992, and the attack on Krnići on 05.05.1992 when 15 of our fighters were killed together with 14 civilians.

The immediate proximity of Srebrenica caused countless ~~b/d /combat operations/~~ and victims in the Bratunac area. Great efforts were invested to defend the Sase mine, as well as the whole territory of the Municipality of Bratunac.

- The combat operations conducted prior to the establishment of the Drina Corps, i.e. the success of the operations was an introduction, a step towards the enemy's definite collapse, and towards the execution of the tasks placed before the brigade.

On 06.11.1992, the enemy attacked our forces in the Kamenica area. Our forces were pushed back from Kozjak, where they had been located until then. Two of our fighters were killed, while 9 were missing and it was not until much later that their bodies would be found in mass graves at the Glodjansko Brdo hill.

At the end of November (30.11) 1992, our units: the Assault Detachment and Reconnaissance Sabotage Platoon were deployed along the Rogatica-Višegrad axis, to support the VRS units there. They successfully completed their part of the task.

Yet another fierce attack of the enemy's forces on the bauxite mine /took place/ on 03.12.1992, which has already been mentioned. We managed to unblock the mine after a three-day blockade, and we had one dead and five fighters seriously wounded.

*/Handwritten:/ We will go in the chronological order of the events.*

B/d /combat operations/ on 10 January on the line: Kameno Brdo – K 734 /elevation/ ~~b/d~~ which had preceded and were necessary for seizing Ilijino Brdo. 5 fighters from the makeup of our Brigade were killed.

On 08.02.1993 we dispatched our Reconnaissance Company as assistance for the Milići-Vlasenica LPBr /Light Infantry Brigade/ for combat at the Ilijino Brdo hill. Our unit did not suffer any losses, and most importantly, Ilijino Brdo, tt /trig point/ 601, has been under VRS control since that day.

On 11.02.1993, while executing our part of the task of advancing towards Cerska, we achieved a considerable success in the Kamenica area: we regained the Lemino Brdo facility, which we had lost on 06.11.'92.

The beginning of March this year was very difficult for our Brigade:

- On 02.03.1993, our forces broke the resistance in the enemy stronghold of Gobelji village, and the village has been under our control since that day.
- That same day, the enemy switches to an all-out attack along the whole line of our defence. As many as 220 shells of various calibre fell on the village of Pelemiši alone. The heaviest infantry attack took place in Potrk (Bišina) area where five of our fighters were killed, while three were wounded. Still, there was no withdrawal and there was no shift of the line.
- On 03.03.1993, another enemy stronghold was broken. Namely, we took control of the Paljevine feature, following exhaustive preparations and b/ds /combat operations/. Arriving in the area of the village of Velići, and linking up our forces with those of what is by now the Milići-Vlasenica LPBr /Light Infantry Brigade/, we carried out our part of the task towards ultimately breaking through into Cerska.
- Next day (04.03) already, a platoon from our 4<sup>th</sup> Pb /Infantry Battalion/ stormed into the Gradina stronghold, and inflicted significant losses on the enemy, both in manpower and in MTS /materiel and technical equipment/.
- The date 16 April 1993 will remain written in the history of this area as one of the most difficult days of the war. In the early morning hours, the enemy launched a combined, artillery and infantry attack from the direction of Kladanj against our line of defence in the areas of the villages of Trnovo and Pelemiši. After a several-hour-long battle, repelling the enemy attack under a barrage of enemy gunfire, the losses were as never before: 14 dead and 17 wounded. With maximum effort, in the Trnovo village area, we managed to consolidate and regain the positions we had held up to that point.

18.04.1993 is another of the difficult days: the enemy again launches into an attack against the Pelemiši village-Trnovo line. The local population of Pelemiši, followed by our forces, withdraws under heavy artillery and infantry fire. In the course of the evening, the enemy has torched the village and seized the Bandijerka facility (K. /elevation/ 1060), which is located along a strategically important axis towards Kladanj.

26 April 1993 is remembered as one of those days which are both difficult and cherished.

After eight days of preparations, planning, organizing, we set off to regain what was ours, we launched into retaking Pelemiši and Bandijerka. Although all reports on the

enemy sounded almost disastrous, we would not allow ourselves to waver - and after several hours of combat unprecedented in this area, Pelemiši is ours again. The enemy retreated in panic, fleeing and leaving behind /their/ wounded, dead and MTS. In this battle, everything worked perfectly: from command, communications, cooperation, to logistics support.

July 1993, the situation around Sarajevo is extremely tense, serious. Always willing and able to defend everything that is Serb, hearing the cry of the imprisoned, we set off for Sarajevo on 3<sup>rd</sup> July. We set off towards Bjelašnica, Igman, Trnovo. Our unit successfully carried out a portion of the task as per the "Lukavac '93" plan.

Our Brigade's combat operations are many. We did not mention the enemy's daily provocations and almost daily attempts to infiltrate IDG /reconnaissance sabotage groups/ and DTG /sabotage terrorist groups/.

The Brigade is today trained in conducting all types of combat operations, and it shall successfully defend the territory in which we are carrying out combat operations.

### 3. Liberated Areas

- The Municipality of Šehovići was preserved within its previous municipal boundaries, whereby ~~all the surrounding villages have continued to be inhabited to date.~~ /handwritten:/ /illegible/ Muslim /illegible/ held in /illegible/ and four villages from Kladanj.
- The Municipality of Kalesija lost 4 Serb villages which are left in the depth of the enemy's deployment /area/, and they are: Dubnica, Zolje, Jeginov Lug, and Jajići. /handwritten:/ while we have placed 14 Muslim villages under our control.

1. Memići
2. Bulatovci
3. Staro Selo
4. /illegible/
5. Mahala
6. /illegible/
7. /illegible/
8. /illegible/
9. Odžaci
10. Šeher
11. Like
- 12.
- Drvanice
13. Jelen Brdo
14. Gojčin

/Handwritten; marginalia left:/

- In the territory of the Municipality of Vlasenica, a number of villages were liberated: Piskavice, Alihodžići, Urići, Mesići, Kula, Jaroblje, Džemat, Begići, Kuljančići, the Gradina feature, Hrastovac, Pijuke, Jasikovice, the Grobić feature, Potajnik, Bećirevići, Rogosija, Metalj/?ka/, the Kameno Brdo feature, the extremely important /elevation/ K734 above the village of Hakalaši.
- In the territory of Milići, it is definitely most important to emphasise the defence of the bauxite mine, without forgetting the following villages, features, areas:

- Sebiočina, Gerovi, Zabrdje, B. Polje, Vrsine, Zalisina, Lisina, Kupusna, Rupovo Brdo hill, Vandžići, Dimale...
- Newly created Skelani Municipality area has annexed the following villages to its territory: Velika Daljegosta, Mala Daljegosta, Ljieše, Zabokvica, Gumci, Dobrak, Barakovica, Zgunja, Kadrići, Pajići, Bukovik and Trubari.
  - The territory of the Municipality of Bratunac has been preserved in its entirety; 4<sup>th</sup> Ok br. /Armoured Brigade/ forces were conducting b/d /combat operations/ together with our units.

The liberation of the village of Memići should certainly been put in first place, along with the liberation of the Lemino Brdo feature, village of Maskalići, a part of the villages (of the are of Kamenica), village of Gajići, village of Gobelji, the Paljevine facility, village of Pelemiši and the Bandijerka facility which were lost, then retaken, but all of them were mentioned in the part of the report concerning b/d /combat operations/.

Some areas outside our zone of responsibility were also liberated, namely: the Planina facility, Česna Strana village, Pašci village, Milje village, Deseci village, Trebečaj village... (Bjelašnica-Igman).

Please find attached graph no. 1 and a map of the Brigade's wartime record.

#### 4. Overview of Total Losses

The numerous combat operations resulted in numerous casualties, so that, from the start of the war up to the forming of the Drina Crops, we had:

- Dead.....119
- Wounded.....407
- Seriously wounded.....96
- Lightly wounded.....311

According to various data, lists, overviews, from 01.11.1992 to date, we have had:

- Dead.....79
- Wounded.....107, of which
- Seriously wounded.....15



- Lightly wounded.....92

Therefore, the overall data shows that, from the start of the war to date, we have had:

- Dead.....198  
 - Wounded.....514, of which  
 - Seriously wounded.....111  
 - Lightly wounded.....403

Attached: Graph no. 2

### 5. Officer Levels in the Unit

One of the key problems was also a shortage of officers so, after joining the Drina Corps, we had:

- Officers.....21  
 - Non-commissioned officers.....6  
 - Reserve officers.....117  
 - Reserve non-commissioned officers.....163

After Milići and Vlasenica left our formation, and following the approval of a certain number of work obligations relating to the officer cadre, the situation is as follows:

- Officers.....10  
 - Non-commissioned officers.....0  
 - Reserve officers.....68  
 - Reserve non-commissioned officers.....149

### 6. Issues Affecting Combat Readiness

There are numerous problems in the present situation. Still, we would like to emphasise just a few:

- Large drain of fighters into other brigades (Zvornik, Vlasenica) due to much better conditions.
- Irregular and unequal payment of soldiers. Namely, the economy in Šekovići is barely functioning, therefore, our soldiers are living purely off their soldier salaries.

- Difficulties in logistics support (footwear, clothing, ammunition, food, fuel etc.).
- Failure on the part of the competent /authorities/ to take measures against war profiteers and deserters.
- A large number of officers, soldiers, refugees with unresolved housing issues, and also those whose houses are located on our forward defence line/s.
- Winter is imminent and there is a lack of means and p/g /fuel/ for ensuring clear roads and supply of units. As things stand, all supply routes will be blocked after the first snow.

## 7. The Brigade's Current Combat Positions

Our Brigade currently consists of five infantry battalions, one mixed artillery battalion, headquarter support units, logistics units, with a total of 3244 fighters, covering a zone responsibility around 62 km in length /between/ the village of Memići to the right, inclusive of the village of Hadžići to the left.

The units' combat position along the defence line is as follows:

- |    |   |   |
|----|---|---|
| 1. | 1. Osmaci 1 <sup>st</sup> Pb /Infantry Battalion/ | village of Memići – village of Makalići |
| 2. | 2. Papraća 2 <sup>nd</sup> Pb                     | Bakalov Krš - Ječmište                  |
| 3. | 3. Bišina 3 <sup>rd</sup> Pb                      | Makalići – Zaboј                        |
| 4. | 4. Kaštijelj 4 <sup>th</sup> Pb                   | Zaboј – Bandijerka                      |
| 5. | 5. Trnovo 5 <sup>th</sup> Pb                      | Bandijerka – village of Hadžići         |

COMMANDER

Lieutenant Colonel

Svetozar ANDRIĆ

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Birač 1<sup>st</sup> Infantry Brigade Command