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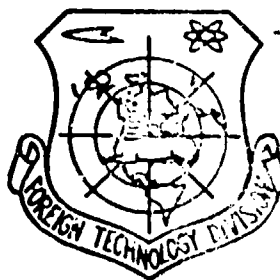


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YOUTH IS THEIR FUTURE

by

Milan Mihajlovic



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YOUTH IS THEIR FUTURE

Milan Mihajlovic

Thirty-Five Years at the Air-Defense Artillery and Missile Training Center

Thirty-five years ago, on October 8, 1945, the first Anti-Aircraft School opened in Zagreb. This date in fact represents the initiation of the training of personnel for this branch of our army and is treated as a holiday at the Air-Defense Artillery and Missile Training Center.

Thirty-five years is a long period of development for any scientific and training institution, even one as important as the Training Center. We have therefore set out along that path of development. How it was when the first post-war personnel attended the school, and how it looks today.

It is interesting to read archives which tell about the beginnings of the creation of our army's anti-aircraft personnel. The school in Zagreb actually included three separate schools: the AAA Military Academy, the Artillery Officers School, and the AA NCO School. The first students and cadets (as they were then called) were officers and enlisted men of the National Liberation Army, and the first instructors were mostly officers of the former Yugoslav Army, who, after returning from captivity, continued on active duty in the army.

Also among the instructors were civilian professors and instructors, who taught general educational subjects.

It was a time when the day was not divided into work time and free time - people worked, studied, organized, planned, and implemented plans twenty-four hours a day. The students did not have academic qualifications or the requisite prior knowledge, but they were rich in wartime experience. They made extreme physical and mental efforts to master the curriculum.

The party and school organization succeeded in motivating cadets, students, officers, and enlisted men to accomplish their mission and overcome difficulties conscientiously and well. A competitive spirit was developed in instruction, discipline, sports, and barracks activities. Soon the first results were seen. The NCO course completed firing, the first of its kind in our country. Major General Branko Obradovic, then commander of artillery, praised the leadership, instructors, and students. It was the first praise in the history of today's Training Center.

Later, too, when the Center moved to Zadar, training continued along with other activities. The laying out of the barracks grounds, athletic fields, parks, and other projects at the present-day Djuro Djakovic Barracks, where the Center is located, involved tens of thousands of hours of voluntary work. During the period before the VI Congress of the Yugoslav Communist Party, in work directed by instructor Milorad Ignatjevic, the cadets and soldiers contributed 130,000 hours of work in clearing away debris in Zadar, laying a pontoon bridge across the harbor, putting out fires in the Velebit Mountains, and other activities. In this period they visited villages, helped with agricultural work, and gave specialized assistance in the form of professional services.

Zadar did not forget this work by the members of the Center. On the occasion of the Center's 25th anniversary the Town Council gave the institution its highest recognition - the Prize of the City of Zadar.

Such was the beginning. After the war the first trained AAA cadres left to join units. These were difficult and heroic times. There are enough people who took part in them, who remember them. These lines have been written for the young people, for those who don't know how it was.

Today

In the past 35 years the Air-Defense Artillery and Missile Training Center has developed into a modern scientific and educational institution which gives personnel up-to-date training for their branch of service. The Air-Defense Artillery and Missile branch has developed technically and applies the latest achievements of science. This has required that the human factor keep pace with the technology, and the Training Center gives almost complete preparation in this respect. The members of the Center have understood that they are directly responsible for the combat readiness of the army units, and they have oriented their efforts in this direction. It was necessary first of all to create a solid teaching staff and material base.

It can be stated with assurance that today these requirements have been met.

The present period in the center's development is characterized by the appearance of a considerable number of talented young instructors and officers with other skills. Practical training has been foremost, with hundreds of tactical drills, practical work on equipment, firings, and exercises which are permeated with the concept of ONO [?], which includes all defense structures, integrating all branches and types, and everything is directed towards defending our skies as successfully as possible against a potential aggressor.

There are three main factors which bear upon the results of the members of the Center. The first is the optimum selection of the officers who are assigned to the branch of service. It consists in checking the knowledge and psychophysical traits of the future officers. The second factor is motivation. There is no school at the Center where

it is not strongly expressed in all cadets and students. Several things contribute to this: the up-to-date equipment, especially missile equipment, is of considerable interest to the young people; the good training system and organization motivates them significantly; nothing is overlooked in the search for motivational measures.

The third factor is the organization of the educational process and the aspiration that the future officers should obtain sufficient knowledge of methods. The indicators and feedback from the units confirm that significant results are achieved in this area.

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The teaching staff closely follows the latest developments in electronics, rocketry, and other sciences, so that there won't be bigger problems with future generations of air defense systems. Thus far the Center has used about twenty innovations as teaching and training aids, with which the instruction is absorbed quickly and easily. Also noticeable is an increase in scientific publishing activity. Eight textbooks, 69 course notes, and many program series have been published, and 38 articles have appeared in military and civilian journals in the field of educational theory and practice. Being trained at the Center today are generations which will give a new stimulus to scientific teaching. Let us mention a few of these people:

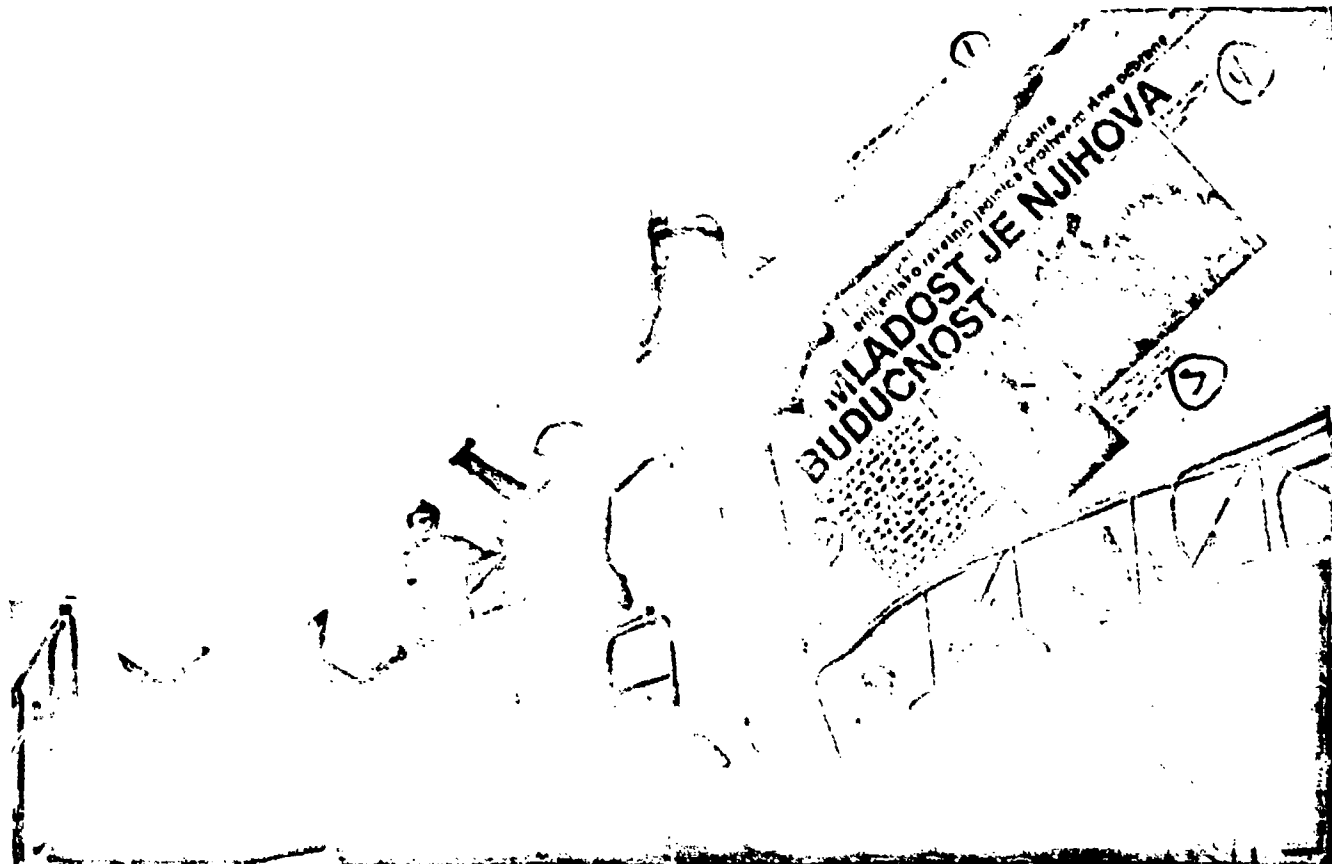
At the Ground Forces Military Academy the top cadet is Jan Marcek, with an average grade of 9.75 in three years of schooling. The heads of the Center expect much from him, because he's shown a talent for science and teaching.

Dragoljub Bogdanovic is a straight-A student at the Military Secondary School. He's now in his fourth year, and was the top cadet in his class the previous three years.

Twenty-seven-year-old Mladen Predovan, an electronics teacher from Zagreb, excels at the Reserve Officers' School. He, too, does

not have a single grade below A. His previous knowledge has complemented and enriched his studies at the Center.

The jubilee celebration is only a moment for pausing. October 9th was already the start of new classes, training sessions, exercises, firing ...



(1) Great attention is given to practical forms of instruction at the Center.

(2) The Air-Defense Artillery and Missile Training Center is achieving a goal proclaimed long ago when comrade Tito said that every officer must be a communist by conviction and by his own decision. Tito's words are being put into practice at Zadar. At the end of training, all cadets at the Ground Forces Military Academy and the Military Secondary School leave for their units carrying red booklets, and the figure at the Reserve Officers' School is over 90%.

(3) Training Center units are not only training organizations, but also are superbly prepared combat units.

(4) Missiles fascinate the young troops.