
Lulić, Zvonimir, Povše, Janko:
***Air Defense of Kvarner, Lika and Istria in
the Homeland War (1991 - 1996) (2016)***

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In 2016, Zvonimir Lulić, war commander of anti-aircraft units, published the book *Air Defense of Kvarner, Lika, and Istria in the Homeland War (1991-1996)* co-authored with Janko Povše. The book was published on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of the Air Defense (PZO) of Kvarner, Lika, and Istria in the Homeland War, has 155 pages, and the sponsors of this monograph are the City of Rijeka, Primorje-Gorski Kotar County, and the Committee for the 25th anniversary of the Air Defense Kvarner, Lika, and Istria in the Homeland War. This monograph is another in a series about the Homeland War, with its uniqueness based on the fact that it touches on some areas not directly affected, such as Rijeka and its surroundings. The Homeland War, as much as it is possible to say that the memories of it are still fresh, still hides the answers to many questions, among which are the painful and media-current ones about the missing veterans. At the same time, there are no words in the literature about the numerous veterans who contributed to the Homeland War. In order to eliminate this shortcoming, at least to a small extent, it is necessary to write monographs such as this one. Even though Rijeka and its surroundings were not directly affected by the Homeland War, many veterans from that area contributed to Lika and other battlefields in the Republic of Croatia, which also deserves the attention of all of us, especially younger generations. Many women also participated in the PZO, also honored in this book. In addition, this monograph goes a step

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further - in its merits, it deals with the technical part of military history, i.e., the equipment of the HV in terms of air defense, on the example of Kvarner, Lika, and Istria, and given that the entire content of the monograph is primarily based, as the authors state, in the memory, notes and recorded materials of individual members of the 101st lap (light artillery regiment) of the PZO and the 203rd trbr (artillery missile brigade) of the PZO, it is methodologically possible to look at it as a primary historical source. The presence of a large number of archival pictorial contributions and maps is another confirmation of the tremendous dedication that the authors invested in creating this monograph.

Looking only at the title, one might ask and what is the significance of air defense? As the authors themselves warn, this is not what “shoots at airplanes” (p. 14), but it is a much more complex system that requires a much more expert explanation. As explained by the authors in the foreword to the book, PZO is one of the factors of combat operations that allows other units to perform tasks efficiently and a higher probability of survival, both in attack and defense, reducing the effect of enemy action from the air. The primary task of the PZO is to protect its own and other units or facilities from the action of enemy helicopters, aircraft, unmanned aerial vehicles, and self-propelled and guided missiles, and it is integrated with ground forces and the navy. According to the method, the PZO operates with barrel and missile weapons, and according to the form of the PZO, there is: (1.) protection of the area (so-called *area defense*), carried out by special, joint PZO units, and (2.) own protection (*point defense*), under the jurisdiction of each individual unit (infantry, armored mechanized) and the ship. Since, in most cases, these forms of action are applied in combination, according to the authors, it is necessary to enable their integration into

a functionally unified PZO system (p. 14). From the deceptive and straightforward first association to the mention of air defense, the deductive definition of this complex concept shows how it leaves room for numerous more researches and classifications, which opens the way for all those interested in military history.

After introductory words and thanks from Vojko Obersnel, Mayor of the City of Rijeka and Zlatko Komadina, County Prefect of Primorje-Gorski Kotar County (pp. 7 and 8), the continuation of the book is accompanied by the following chapters: Introduction (p. 11–12), *Preface* (p. 13–18), *Cross-section of the political and military situation in the Republic of Croatia in 1991 - a review of the situation in the airspace and PZO* (p. 19–22; with subchapters *Political and military situation in the Republic of Croatia - summer and autumn 1991*, p. 19–20; *Most important tasks and challenges I faced in taking over the post of Chief of the General Staff of the Croatian Army* (referring to retired General Anton Tus, whose report was included in the book), p. 20–21; *The main tasks of the HV General Staff in the first days of its establishment*, p. 21–22; *Situation in the airspace of the Republic of Croatia and the PZO*, p. 22, *Air Defense of the City of Rijeka* (p. 23–34; with subchapters *Source of the PZO*, p. 23–25; *Setting up firing positions*, p. 25–28; *Ammunition arrives*, pp. 28–34), *101. lap PZO* (pp. 35–63; with subchapters *The establishment of the 101. lap PZO* p. 35–39; *Constant overflights over Rijeka*, p. 39–41; *Attack on Rijeka*, p. 41–45; *101. lap PZO establishes structure*, p. 45–63), *203. trbr PZO* (p. 64–120; with subchapters *1. trd* (artillery and missile division) *PZO - Rijeka*, p. 80–101; *2. trd Air Defense - Gospić*, p. 102–116; *3 trd PZO - Pula*, p. 117–120), *466. dtrb* (home defense artillery and missile battalion) *PZO - Rijeka* (p. 121), *war booty at Udbina airbase* (p. 122), *PZO armed systems and equipment of the 101. Air Defense lap and 203. trbr Air Defense* (p. 123–134; with subsections *Self-propelled*

systems, p. 125–126; *Traction weapon systems*, p. 127–129; *Stationary weapon systems*, p. 130–132; *Light portable missile systems*, p. 133–134), *Data sources* (p. 137), *Contributors to the monograph* (p. 137), *Sponsors of publishing the monograph* (p. 139), *Appendices* (pp. 141–155; with subchapters *Appendix 1. - 101st PZO Command*, p. 143–146, *Annex 2 - Command 203rd trbr PZO* p. 147–150, *Annex 3 - Newspaper articles on members of the 101st lap PZO and 203rd trbr PZO during Homeland War*, p. 151–155).

With the necessary historical context at the outset, most of the book is devoted, as expected, to the work of members of the 101st PZO lap and the 203rd PZO trbr. Numerous examples clearly indicate the potential damage that the enemy side could have caused if the PZO had not performed proficiently.. In the last chapter (*Armed systems of air defense and equipment of the 101st lap PZO and 203rd PZO*), before the technical ones (pp. 137–155), the authors indirectly indicate that there is still room for further research and classification of the PZO, and following all that has been stated, I would recommend this book first to anyone interested in the Homeland War and military history. I would recommend the book to all young people, given that their knowledge, based on their own experience and the fact that the Homeland War is poorly covered in school textbooks, is still very scarce.