

'Slava' ceremony for the 'Gvozdeni Puk' Second Infantry Division, 1930



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- Object:** 'Slava' ceremony for the 'Gvozdeni Puk' Second Infantry Division, 1930
- Description:** View of a military ceremony in a large courtyard surrounded by barracks. Soldiers are lined up in the right half of the yard in approximately ten rows, headed by officers, all standing to attention. Three religious leaders are positioned in front of them, each standing behind a table covered with a white cloth, and two with other utensils. The one nearest to the camera is an Islamic imam. He is holding a book in both hands and seems to be reading aloud. To his left, a Roman Catholic priest is waiting solemnly, his hands folded in front of him. The table before him features, among a few smaller items, two candles on tall candlesticks. At some distance on the opposite side of the yard, two bearded Orthodox priests stand very close to their table, which bears a richly decorated slava candle, a large item (probably the 'slava' cake) and a head covering. A second head covering is deposited on the ground under the table. The scene is being watched by various spectators, mostly officers, while a small group of women and children can also be discerned in the background. The yard is richly decorated for the occasion with garlands and colourful kelim rugs.
- Comment:** The 'Knez Mihailo' Second Infantry Division of the Royal Serbian Army lost half of its fighters during the wars of 1912 to 1918. After its reformation as part of the Royal Yugoslav Army, it was given the honorary name 'Gvozdeni puk' (steel division) for its bravery and sacrifice during the Great War. The division's commemoration day slava continued to be held on 19 April, the anniversary of the withdrawal of Ottoman

forces in 1868, celebrated as 'Predaja gradova' (surrender of the fortresses). On this day, the Ottoman garrisons left the then Principedom of Serbia for good, symbolically handing over the keys of all fortresses on its territory to Serbian Prince Mihailo Obrenović, after whom the division was named. Serbia remained under formal Ottoman suzerainty until 1878 and was elevated to a kingdom in 1882. — The photograph was published in the newspaper Vreme on 26 April 1930, a day after the ceremony took place that year. It had been postponed for a few days due to Easter, with Holy Saturday falling on 19 April 1930. — The original glass plate is partially damaged.

Date:	1930-04-25
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Creator:	Grdijan, Svetozar (probably)
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