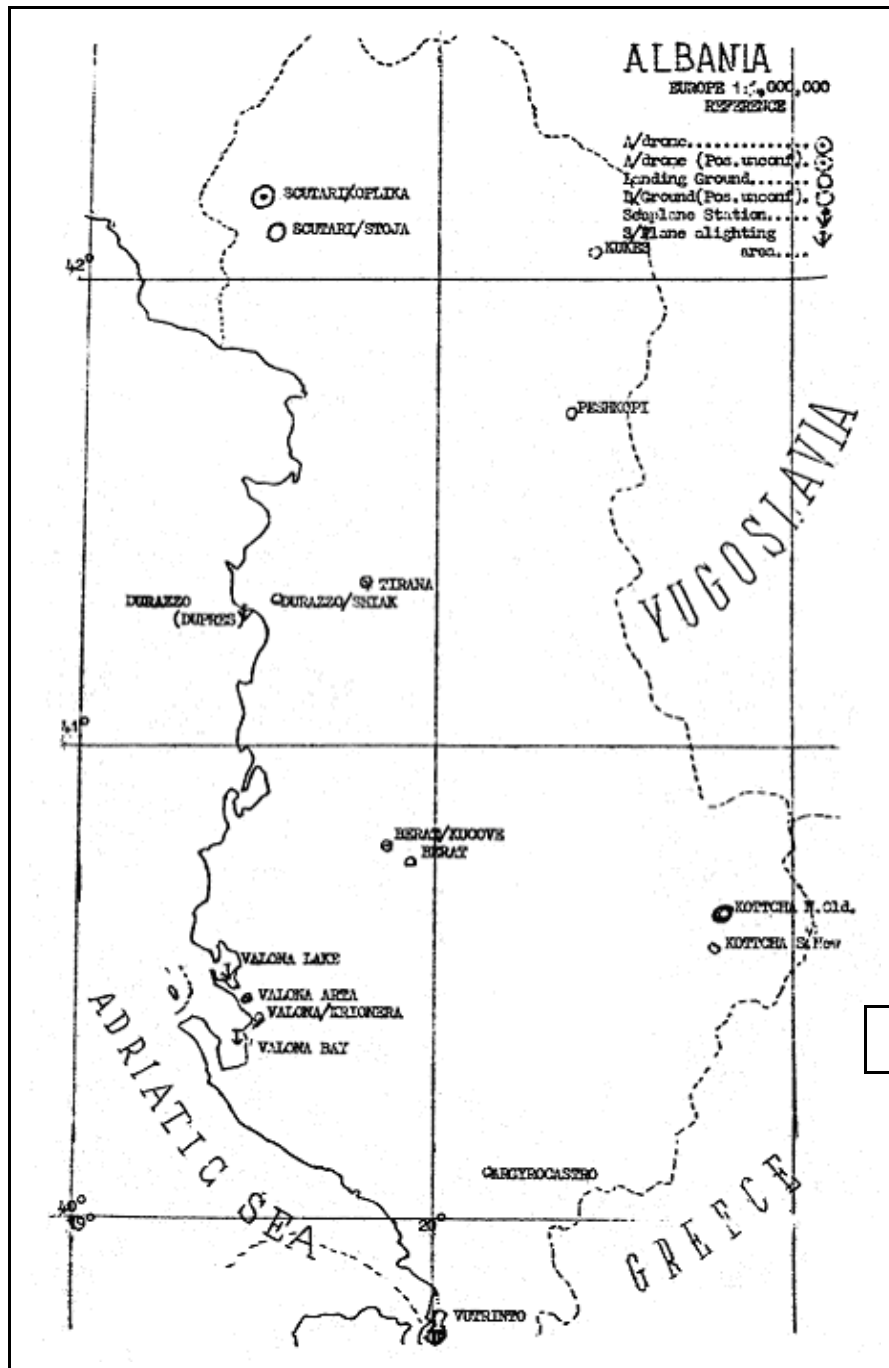


Luftwaffe Airfields 1935-45 Albania

By Henry L. deZeng IV



Albania

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Airfields

Albania

Introduction

Conventions

1. For the purpose of this reference work, "Albania" generally means the territory belonging to the country on 1 September 1939, the date World War II began.
2. All spellings are as they appear in wartime German documents with the addition of alternate spellings where known. It should be noted that the Germans retained most of the Italian place name spellings for the larger cities and towns in Albania as well as the airfields, e.g., Argirocastro (Gjirokastër), Durazzo (Durrës), Scutari (Shkodër), Tirana (Tiranë), Valona (Vlorë), etc.
3. See the General Introduction for matters concerning other conventions such as format, limitations of data, abbreviations, glossary, sources, etc.

Preface

Aviation in Albania began in 1914 when the government tried to purchase 3 aircraft at the outbreak of World War I, but the order was canceled due to the lack of funds. There was no further military aviation activity by the Albanian government until after World War II. On the other hand, commercial air services in Albania were started in 1924 by Adria-Lloyd, a German firm, but these were taken over and monopolized by the Italian Ala Littoria airline a few years later. Tirana and Valona were the only airports as such until the mid-1930's, although several secondary landing grounds were also used during the summer months. The Italian military began building a few additional landing grounds and improving the existing airfields in late 1939 and early 1940 in preparation for Mussolini's offensive designs in the Balkans, particularly Greece. The attack on Greece opened on 28 October 1940 and ended unsuccessfully the following April after the Greeks had retaken Italy's initial gains. From then to Italy's capitulation on 8 September 1943, very little was done by the Italian occupation authorities to develop Albania's handful of airfields and this held true during the German occupation of the country from September 1943 to October 1944. A 15

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November 1943 list of active German airfields in Albania identifies just 5 - Devoli, Valona, Tirana, Shijak and Skutari - with just Devoli, Skutari and Tirana in use.

Airfields Listed

A total of 21 airfields, landing grounds, satellite fields, emergency landing grounds, seaplane stations and seaplane anchorages are listed below.

Argirocastro (ALB) (a.k.a. Argyrokastron, Gjirokastër, Gjirokaster) (40 05 14 N - 20 09 10 E)

General: landing ground in S Albania 2 km NE of the town on the E bank of the Dhrino River. History: built by the Italians 1939-40 and used by Italian fighters and tactical reconnaissance aircraft, but only for relatively short stays due to the limited facilities. No record found of any Luftwaffe units being based here. Surface and Dimensions: rough dirt and grass surface that was easily flooded and measured approx. 1190 x 640 meters (1300 x 700 yards). Infrastructure: reported to have had limited barrack and admin space.

Remarks:

Oct 40: listed as one of the 6 airfields in Albania completed or still under construction.

Dec 40: evacuated by the Italians and in Greek hands by Jan 41.

2 Jul 44: still active and serviceable according to German documents, although rarely if ever used.

Operational Units:

Italian ((Regia Aeronautica): HQ 72^o Gruppo Autonomo OA (Oct-Dec 40); HQ 150^o Gruppo Autonomo CT (Oct-Nov 40); 365^a Squadriglia CT (Oct-Nov 40).

Luftwaffe: none identified.

[Sources: AFHRA A5264 - 792 (Jul 43) and A5259 p.536 (30 Sep 43); chronologies; BA-MA; NARA; PRO/NA; web site ww2.dk]

Arrigi (ALB): see Shijak.

Arta: (ALB): see Valona.

Berat (ALB) (a.k.a. Berati, Antipatria) (c. 40 44 35 N - 19 56 00 E)

General: alternate landing ground (Landeplatz) in C Albania 70 km SSE of Tirana (Tiranë) and 4.5 km N of Berat and E of the Berat-Durazzo road. Not to be confused with Devoli airfield 10.5 km to the NNW of Berat. There was an oil field and storage tanks at Berat, and Heckmann refining facilities began operating in May 1944. History: used by the Italians 1940-43. No evidence found of any Luftwaffe units being based at this landing strip. Surface and Dimensions: had a poor, rough surface measuring approx. 1005 x 505 meters (1100 x 550 yards). Infrastructure: there were a few huts at the NW and SE corners and along the W boundary.

Remarks:

Oct 40: Berat listed as one of the 6 airfields in Albania completed or still under construction.

17 Oct 44: Berat area evacuated by the Germans.

Operational Units:

Italian ((Regia Aeronautica): 395^a Squadriglia CT (Oct 40); part of 154^o Gruppo Autonomo CT (Oct 40 - Jan 41).

Luftwaffe: none identified.

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[Sources: AFHRA A5264 p.792 (Jul 43); chronologies; BA-MA; NARA; PRO/NA; web site ww2.dk]

Borgo Costanzo Ciano (ALB): see Devoli.

Corizza/North (ALB) (a.k.a. Korçë, Koritsa, Coritza) (40 38 30 N – 20 47 25 E)

General: landing ground in SE Albania 115 km SE Tirana and located 2.5 km NNE of this city. History: referred to as the "old" Corizza airfield so probably existed prior to 1940.

Surface and Dimensions: grass surface measuring approx. 730 x 640 meters (800 x 700 yards). Fuel and Ammunition: no information found. Infrastructure: had 1 small hangar on the SE boundary and a group of huts near the hangar.

Remarks:

Oct 40:

Corizza listed as one of the 6 airfields in Albania completed or still under construction.

Nov 40: town and airfields captured by the Greeks o/a 21 Nov 40.

15 Sep 43: no aircraft were seen to be present on the landing ground.

Operational Units:

Italian (Regia Aeronautica): 25^a Squadriglia OA (Oct-Nov 40); 393^a Squadriglia CT (Oct-Nov 40); 394^a Squadriglia CT (Oct-Nov 40); 70^o Gruppo OA (May 41 – Aug 43).

Luftwaffe: none identified.

Station Commands: Flugplatzkdo. A 8/I (Jan 44 - ?).

Station Units (on various dates – not complete): none identified.

[Sources: AFHRA A6264 p.793 (19 Jun 43) and A5259 p.539 (15 Sep 43); chronologies; BA-MA; NARA; PRO/NA; web site ww2.dk]

Corizza/South (ALB) (a.k.a. Korçë, Koritsa, Coritza) (40 35 50 N – 20 45 50 E)

General: landing ground in SE Albania 115 km SE Tirana and located 3 km SSW of the town. History: first mentioned in 1940. Probably used as an emergency landing ground.

Surface and Dimensions: rough dirt, weed and grass surface measuring approx. 1100 x 1005 meters (1200 x 1100 yards). Fuel and Ammunition: no information found.

Infrastructure: none seen or reported.

Remarks:

15 Sep 43: no aircraft were seen to be present on the landing ground, but a large number of military vehicles were seen to be parked on the landing area and along the E boundary.

Operational Units: none identified.

Station Commands: none identified.

Station Units (on various dates – not complete): none identified.

[Sources: AFHRA A5264 p.793 (19 Jun 43) and A5259 p.539 (15 Sep 43); chronologies; BA-MA; NARA; PRO/NA; web site ww2.dk]

Debar (ALB) (a.k.a. Peshkopi, Kastriot, Diber) (41 42 15 N – 20 22 20 E)

General: landing ground in NE Albania 63 km NE of Tirana and 5.25 km WNW of Peshkopi, the nearest large town. History: established and used by Ala Littoria airlines in the 1930's.

No record found of Italian or German military use. Surface and Dimensions: flat and dry stretch along the S bank of the Drin River, but covered in deep snow during the winter.

Infrastructure: a hangar and 1 or 2 other small buildings may have existed in the late 1930's.

[Sources: AFHRA A5264 p.794 (Jul 43); chronologies; BA-MA; NARA; PRO/NA; web site ww2.dk]

Delvine (ALB) (a.k.a. Delvinë) (c. 39 56 N – 20 05 E)

General: landing ground in SW Albania c. 77.5 km SE of Valona and possibly 2 km SW of Delvinë. History: laid out and used by single-engine reconnaissance during the invasion of Greece by Italy in late October 1940 to the end of the fighting in April 1941. No record found of Luftwaffe use.

Surface and Dimensions: no information found. Infrastructure: none.

Remarks:

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Oct 40: described as a short airstrip suitable only for small tactical reconnaissance aircraft. [Sources: chronologies; BA-MA; NARA; PRO/NA; web site ww2.dk]

Devoli (ALB) (a.k.a. Kucove, Kuçovë, Borgo Costanzo Ciano) (40 43 40N – 19 53 15 E)

General: airfield in C Albania 63 km SSE of Tirana (Tiranë), 10.5 km NNW of Berat and adjacent to the present day villages of Perondi and Kuçovë.

History: Italian air base 1940-43. Devoli is the name of a stream that flows past the airfield and then southeasterly through Berat. After securing Italian consent, the Lw. began developing the airfield beginning 16 Aug 43.

Dimensions: approx. 1510 x 1465 meters (1650 x 1600 yards).

Surface and Runways: good grass surface. By June 1943 Devoli had a 1100 meter (1200 yard) prepared runway aligned NW/SE. The runway was not paved, but the materials used in its construction are not known. A perimeter road or track encircled the airfield and a paved taxiway ran along the SW boundary and connected to the runway at both ends.

Fuel and Ammunition: both available.

Infrastructure: no mention of hangars or permanent buildings found. Numerous huts along the NW and NE boundaries were believed to be used for workshops and accommodations.

Dispersal: there were parking places for aircraft along the NW and SW sides of the landing area.

Defenses: airfield protected by a single Flak battery.

Remarks:

Oct 40: Devoli described as an existing and very rudimentary grass landing ground or airstrip without infrastructure.

1943-44: strafed and bombed 3 or 4 times a month from Oct 43, usually without significant damage to aircraft or infrastructure.

5 Nov 43: air attack – 1 x Bf 109 destroyed and 10 more damaged; slight damage to the workshop and several casualties (German sources).

12 Nov 43: bombed – 1 x Ju 87 D-1 from IV./SG 151 destroyed on the ground.

14 Nov 43: Devoli occupied by 19 reconnaissance Bf 109s and 10 Ju 87 Stukas. (German report)

29 Dec 43: airfield strafed by 5 P-38 Lightnings – no damage reported. (German report)

8 Jan 44: 6 fighters attacked the airfield – light damage to the runway.

31 Jan 44: airfield strafed – little damage.

2 Apr 44: airfield strafed – 1 Bf 109 destroyed on the runway while landing.

23 Jul 44: airfield strafed by P-51 Mustangs during 15th AAF raid on the Berat oil facilities by 42 B-24 Liberators.

16 Sep 44: evacuated by the Luftwaffe but the airfield Flak battery was ordered to remain behind to help defend the oil facilities in Berat.

Operational Units:

Italian (Regia Aeronautica): 5^o Gruppo OA (Jan 41); 24^o Gruppo CT (Oct 40 – Jan 41); 43^o Gruppo BT (Jan-Sep 43); 154^o Gruppo CT (Oct 40 - May 41); 160^o Gruppo CT (Oct 40 – 1941).

Luftwaffe: Stab/NAGr. 12 (Oct-Nov 43); 1./NAGr. 12 (Nov 43 – Sep 44); 2./NAGr. 12 (Oct-Nov 43); elements of IV./SG 151 (Nov 43); detachments from III. and IV./JG 27 (Dec 43 – Jan 44).

Station Commands: Fl.H.Kdtr. E 70/XI (Aug 43 – Mar 44); Fl.H.Kdtr. E(v) 218/XVII (Apr-Sep 44).

Station Units (on various dates – not complete): parts of III./Feldwerftverband 60 (Sep 43 -); I./Flak-Rgt. 8 (Sep-Nov 43); part of gem.Flak-Abt. 544 (Sep 43 – Sep 44); Stab and one battery of le.Flak-Abt. 885 (Sep 43 – Mar 44); part of Lw.-Bau-Btl. 21/III (Sep 43 – 1944); Flieger-Geräteausgabestelle (mot) (c.Feb-Mar 44); Trsp.Kol. d.Lw. 66/IV (Dec 43 – Feb 44); Trsp.Kol. d.Lw. 124/IV (Dec 43 -); Trsp.Kol. d.Lw. 151/IV (Feb-Aug 44); Trsp.Kol.

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d.Lw. 152/IV (Feb-Aug 44); Trsp.Kol. d.Lw. 35/VI (1943 – Feb 44); Ldssch.Zug d.Lw. 13/XI (Mar 44 - ?).

[Sources: AFHRA A5259 p.537 (15 Sep 43), A5264 p.792 (24 Jun 43) and p.1133 (17 Aug 44); chronologies; BA-MA; NARA; PRO/NA; web site ww2.dk]

Drenova (ALB) (a.k.a. Drenovë, Korçë) (c. 40 35 N – 20 47 E)

General: landing ground in SE Albania c. 4.5 km S of Korçë (Koritza) near the village of Drenovë. History: used by the Italian Air Force from at least 1940. The Luftwaffe took it over in Oct/Nov 43 and began building a second airstrip for fighters 4.5 km NW of Korçë, but this was never completed or used. No further information has been found.

Remarks:

Oct 40: Drenova described as an existing and very rudimentary grass landing ground or airstrip without infrastructure.

15-18 Jan 44: reinforcements being brought in to protect Drenova/North - suitable as an emergency strip for Bf 109s.

Operational Units:

Italian (Regia Aeronautica): 160° Gruppo Autonomo (Oct 40).

Luftwaffe: none identified.

Station Commands: Fl.Pl.Kdo. A 8/I (c. Nov 43 – Mar 44); Flugplatzkdo. Drenova of Fl.H.Kdtr. E(v) 218/XVII Devoli (Apr-Sep 44).

Station Units (on various dates – not complete): Ldssch.Zug d.Lw. 119/XVII (c.Dec 43 – Aug 44).

[Sources: chronologies; BA-MA; NARA; PRO/NA; web site ww2.dk]

Durazzo (See) (ALB) (a.k.a. Durrës) (41 18 30 N – 19 27 20 E)

General: seaplane station on the coast of C Albania 30.5 km W of Tirana and 1 km SE of Durrës city center. History: used by Italian seaplanes during the war and the Germans intended to do the same after Italy surrendered on 8 Sep 43, but plans changed and no record found of any Luftwaffe units being based here. Anchorage: sheltered with ample room for take-offs and landings. Seaplanes were moored in the SE corner of the harbor between the wooden pier and the breakwater. Infrastructure: no information found.

Remarks:

Oct 43 – Oct 44: Durazzo port and the Flak and radar positions around it were the only targets in Albania that were attacked consistently by Allied aircraft based in Italy.

Station Commands: Fl.Pl.Kdo. C 138/XI (See) (Jan-Feb 44).

Station Units (on various dates in the vicinity of Durazzo, its port and the seaplane station – not complete): elements of I./Flak-Rgt. 9 (Sep-Dec 43); part of I./Flak-Rgt. 8 (Dec 43 – Aug 44?); 4./gem.Flak-Abt. 475 (Jan 44); part of Ie.Flak-Abt. 885(v)?

[Sources: AFHRA A5264 p.793 (Jul 43) and p.1133 (Aug 1944); chronologies; BA-MA; NARA; PRO/NA; web site ww2.dk]

Durazzo-Shiak (ALB): see Shijak.

Elbasan (ALB) (41 07 N – 20 05 E)

General: landing ground in C Albania in the vicinity of this town. History: early origins unknown. Used by the Luftwaffe, mainly as a supply hub due to its central location in Albania, at least until Feb 44. No further information found.

Station Commands: Platzkdo. of Shijak (Fl.H.Kdtr. E 71/XI (1943-44).

Station Units (on various dates – not complete): Flak-Trsp.Bttr. 41/III (Apr 44); Flieger-Geräteausgabestelle (mot) 103/VII (Dec 43 – Jan 44); Flieger-Geräteausgabestelle (mot) 101/XI (Dec 43 – Jan 44); Trsp.Kol. d.Lw. 126/IV (Sep 43); Trsp.Kol. d.Lw. 33/VI (Jan 44); Trsp.Kol. d.Lw. 116/VI (Jan 44).

[Sources: chronologies; BA-MA; NARA; PRO/NA; web site ww2.dk]

Fier (ALB) (c. 40 43 N – 19 33 E)

General: landing ground in SW Albania 32 km W of Berat and 30 km NNE of Valona (Vlorë). Exact location not determined. History: laid out by the Italians in March 1941. Never

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used by the Luftwaffe. Surface and Dimensions: rough farmland of unknown dimensions.
Infrastructure: none reported.

Remarks:

23 Mar 41: strafed by RAF fighters – claimed 3 Italian a/c destroyed on the ground.

[Sources: chronologies; BA-MA; NARA; PRO/NA; web site ww2.dk]

Gjirokaster (ALB): see Argirocastro.

Kastriot (ALB): see Debar.

Koplika (ALB): see Scutari.

Korçë (ALB): see Drenova.

Koritsa (ALB): see Corizza.

Krionero (ALB): see Valona.

Kukes (ALB) (a.k.a. Kukus, Kukës) (42 02 12 N – 20 25 25 E)

General: landing ground in north-central Albania 94 km NNE of Tirana and c. 4.25 km S of the village of Kukes. History: laid out after 1939 by the Italians and available as an emergency landing ground during the war years. Luftwaffe aircraft used it occasionally during anti-Partisan operations in that area but no units were based here. Surface and Dimensions: level, dry soil measuring approx. 1190 x 550 meters (1300 x 600 yards). Covered in deep snow during the winter. Infrastructure: had 1 small hangar at the NW corner.

[Sources: AFHRA A5259 p.540 (1 Oct 43); chronologies; BA-MA; NARA; PRO/NA; web site ww2.dk]

Kuçovë (ALB): see Devoli.

Peqini (ALB) (a.k.a. Peqin, Pekini) (c. 41 03 N – 19 44 E)

General: landing ground in C Albania c. 32 km SSW of Tirana. History: briefly used by Italian tactical reconnaissance aircraft in spring 1941. No record found of any use by the Luftwaffe.

Operational Units:

Italian (Regia Aeronautica): 68° Gruppo OA (Apr 41).

Luftwaffe: none identified.

[Sources: chronologies; BA-MA; NARA; PRO/NA; web site ww2.dk]

Peshkopi (ALB): see Debar.

Podgradec (ALB) (c. 40 54 N – 20 39 E)

General: landing ground in eastern Albania on the S shore of Lake Ohrid. The exact location has not been determined. History: although used occasionally by Italian aircraft, no record has been found of Luftwaffe use. Inactivated during the German occupation of Albania and probably returned to cultivation. Surface and Dimensions: no information found. Infrastructure: none.

Remarks:

Oct 40: described as a short airstrip suitable only for small tactical reconnaissance aircraft.

[Sources: chronologies; BA-MA; NARA; PRO/NA; web site ww2.dk]

Preza (ALB) (c. 41 24 N – 19 32 E)

General: an emergency landing ground laid out in the flat farmland c. 12-13 km NE of Durazzo. No further information found.

[Source: Luftwaffe airfields map for 2 July 1944]

Scutari (ALB) (a.k.a. Scutari-Stoja, Skutari, Shkodër, Shtoj i Vjetër, Koplika) (42 06 45 N – 19 33 10 E)

General: airfield in Albania 87 km NNW of Tirana (Tiranë) and 6.25 km NE of Scutari town center.

History: Italian air base laid out in 1940 and further developed thereafter. In addition to being in continuous use by Italian operational units from fall 1940 to Jul/Aug 43, aircraft

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were sent here from other bases for maintenance and repair work. After securing Italian consent, the Luftwaffe began developing the airfield beginning 16 Aug 43. Evacuated and relegated to caretaker status in March-April 1944 as part of the German decision to pull back from the Adriatic coastal belt.

Dimensions: approx. 1510 x 1370 meters (1650 x 1500 yards). The original landing area had been extended to the E and SE by mid-1943.

Surface and Runways: good quality grass and farmland surface with a prepared airstrip of hard gravel.

Fuel and Ammunition: fuel was stored and available.

Infrastructure: had 2 medium hangars and 1 small hangar on the W boundary. In early Sep 43 there was a large organized military encampment of barrack-type huts and tents surrounding the landing area but especially at the SE corner.

Dispersal: there were no organized aircraft dispersals.

Defenses: no information found.

Remarks:

Oct 40: Scutari described as an existing and very rudimentary grass landing ground or airstrip without infrastructure.

6 Sep 43: visible on the airfield - 22 Ca. 313s, 5 Ca. 310s, 6 Cr. 42s.

17 Oct 43: visible on the airfield - 5 fighters, 10 bombers and 3 unidentified a/c, all believed to be Italian.

17 Mar 44: photo reconnaissance film showed the entire landing area obstructed by undetonated demolition mines, no aircraft visible and no signs of activity.

18 Apr 44: airfield shot up by Allied fighter-bombers but no damage reported.

20 May 44: airfield shot up by Allied fighter-bombers but no damage reported.

19 Jul 44: Scutari airfield ordered destroyed by O.B. Südost.

Operational Units:

Italian (Regia Aeronautica): 5^o Gruppo OA (May 41); 39^o Gruppo BT (Oct 40 – Feb 41); 40^o Gruppo BT (Oct 40 – Feb 41); 61^o Gruppo OA (Mar-Jul 43); 68^o Gruppo OA (Jan 42); 73^o Gruppo OA (Jul-Aug 43); 104^o Gruppo BT (Nov 40 – Apr 41); 69^a Squadriglia BT (? – Sep 43).

Luftwaffe: none identified.

Station Commands: Fl.PI.Kdo. A 5/XI (Aug 43 – Mar 44); Flugplatzkdo. Scutari of Fl.H.Kdtr. E(v) 217/XVII Podgorica (Apr-Jul 44); Fl.PI.Kdo. C 136/XI (See) (May 44 – fall 44).

Station Units (on various dates – not complete): one Zug of Flugh.Betr.Kp. (Qu) (Dec 43); one battery of le.Flak-Abt. 885 (Sep 43 – Mar 44); part of Lw.-Bau-Btl. 21/III (Dec 43); Nachschub-Kp. d.Lw. 16/XVII (Dec 43 – Apr 44); Flieger-Geräteausgabestelle (mot) 102/VII (Dec 43 – Mar 44).

[Sources: AFHRA A5264 p.794 (26 Jun 43) and A5259 p.541 (6 Sep 43 updated to 17 Mar 44); chronologies; BA-MA; NARA; PRO/NA; web site ww2.dk]

Shijak (ALB) (a.k.a. Tiranë-Shijak, Durazzo-Shiak, Shiak, Shjac, Sejak, Arrigi) (41 19 50 N – 19 33 10 E)

General: airfield in west-central Albania c. 22.5 km W of Tirana city center, 9.25 km E of Durazzo city center and 1.5 km SW of Shijak town center.

History: staked out in the late 1930's, briefly used by single-engine Italian aircraft in 1940, shut down for expansion and construction and not reopened until April/May 1943.

Dimensions: approx. 1600 x 1600 meters (1750 x 1750 yards) with an irregular or circular shape.

Surface and Runways: artificially drained grass surface. Had a N/S runway measuring approx. 1005 x 75 meters (1100 x 80 yards), but no information on the nature of the runway – paved or unpaved. A taxiway connected the N end of the runway with the E boundary.

Fuel and Ammunition: both available and believed stored at the SE corner.

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Infrastructure: had 4 hangars at the NE and SE corners. A number of huts were grouped at the NE and NW corners, these probably used for workshops and accommodations.

Dispersal: there were 4 – Northwest, West, North and East – and at least several of these had aircraft shelters.

Defenses: protected by 2 heavy and 2 light Flak positions, all within 1.5 km of the landing area.

Remarks:

Apr 39: described as a small marshy airstrip.

Oct 40: "Shjac" described as a very rudimentary grass landing ground or airstrip without infrastructure. Listed as one of the 6 airfields in Albania completed or still under construction.

29 May 43: Italian bombers and fighters were visible on the airfield.

16 Aug 43: after securing Italian consent, the Lw. began developing the airfield.

Sep 43 – 1944: the majority of the activity at Shijak was concerned with the restoration or salvage of Italian aircraft captured by the Germans in Albania, Montenegro and South Dalmatia, especially B.R. 20s and Caproni bombers.

17 Oct 43: visible on the airfield at Shijak - 12 fighters, 3 small biplanes, 5 transports, 1 unidentified a/c and 14 Italian bombers.

1 Nov 43: landing area seen to have been plowed up but the runway strip was still serviceable.

Nov 43: prepared for demolition with undetonated mines observed on the take-off and landing strip.

15 Nov 43: Allied *Sunset* appreciation states that Shijak was being abandoned with only a small custodial detachment to remain there.

Dec 43: units gradually departed and the airfield thereafter was used mainly by aircraft in transit.

10 Dec 43: Lw.-Kdo. Südost reported 11 x BR 20 bombers at Shijak were ready to be picked up and ferried elsewhere.

25 Apr 44: Shijak airfield and its Flak positions strafed – no damage reported.

21 May 44: fighter-bomber attack damaged 1 hangar, 10 motor vehicles and killed 3.

Operational Units:

Italian (Regia Aeronautica): 42^o Gruppo BT (May-Sep 43); 43^o Gruppo BT (May 43); 73^o Gruppo OA (Aug-Sep 43); 120^a Squadriglia OA (Jun, Oct 40); 363^a Squadriglia CT (Oct 40).
Luftwaffe: none identified.

Station Commands: Fl.H.Kdtr. E 71/XI (Aug 43 – Mar 44).

Station Units (on various dates – not complete): See under Tirana for a few units that were undoubtedly stationed at Shijak. It has not been possible to determine which of the two airfields these units were based at.

[Sources: AFHRA A5259 A5259 p.543 (13 Nov 43) and A5264 p.793 (29 May 43) and p.1133 (1943-44); chronologies; BA-MA; NARA; PRO/NA; web site ww2.dk]

Stoja (ALB): see Scutari.

Tirana (ALB) (a.k.a. Tirana-Lapraka, Tiranë-Laprakë) (c. 41 19 55 N – 19 47 45 E)

General: airfield in west-central Albania c. 2.25 km WNW of Tirana city center and just S of the main road running from Tirana to Durazzo.

History: a small airfield on the western outskirts of Tiranë that was originally built in the early 1920's and then greatly improved in 1939 by the Italians. In addition to operational units, the Italian Air Force had an instrument flight school here. It was used by Luftwaffe transports, especially from August to November 1943, and a few small liaison aircraft were maintained here, but no Luftwaffe air units are known to have been based at Tirana-Lapraka.

Dimensions: approx. 1190 x 915 meters (1300 x 1000 yards).

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Surface and Runways: all-weather natural surface (grass, presumably). Reportedly had a concrete runway but details are lacking.

Fuel and Ammunition: both available.

Infrastructure: had 3 or 4 hangars plus separate workshop buildings on the NE side of the airfield. Barracks were also available.

Dispersal: no organized dispersal facilities observed or reported in June 1943.

Defenses: there were 3 heavy Flak positions between 2.5 and 3.5 km from the airfield and 16 anti-aircraft machine gun emplacements surrounding the perimeter of the airfield.

Remarks:

1924: commercial air service to Tirana began.

1931: Tirana airport hosted a large air display involving numerous aircraft of the Italian Air Force.

Oct 40: Tirana listed as one of the 6 airfields in Albania completed or still under construction.

13 Oct 43: Tirana and the airfield nearby (Tirana-Lapraka) hit by 20 Allied medium bombers (actually 36 x B-25 Mitchells escorted by 24 x P-38 Lightnings) – 3 German and 16 captured Italian a/c destroyed, 9 German and 8 Italian a/c damaged by fragmentation bombs, 25 Germans killed and 65 wounded (German report). The Allies claimed 14 aircraft destroyed and 5 damaged of the 34 present on the airfield, workshops damaged and fires started in the barracks and other buildings.

18 Oct 43: 2 to 5 Ju 87s arrived at Tirana airfield to support anti-Partisan operations.

23 Oct 43: low-level attack by P-38 Lightnings – 1 x Ju 52 from Flieger-Kp./Ln.-Rgt. Südost destroyed on the ground (German report). The Lightnings claimed 2 destroyed and 5 damaged.

24 Oct 43: Tirana airfield bombed by 36 B-25 Mitchells from 12th AAF – 1 x Ju 52 from I./TG 4 and 1 x Ju 52 from II./TG 4 destroyed on the ground; landing area cratered and rendered unserviceable, 6 KIA and 2 WIA. (German report). 12th AAF claimed 12 a/c destroyed on the ground and 4 more damaged.

31 Oct 43: Tirana airfield dive-bombed by 16 P-38 Lightnings and strafed by 16 more – claimed several parked aircraft were set ablaze and fires started in buildings.

Nov 43: construction work at Tirana airfield which had recently commenced on a dispersal area to the SE of the airfield was seen to be abandoned. The airfield was prepared for demolition and there was little or no activity.

22 Apr 44: Tirana airfield strafed and 2 Luftwaffe aircraft damaged.

21 May 44: Tirana airfield strafed – 1 hangar and 10 motor vehicles damaged, 2 Germans and 1 Russian POW killed.

27 Oct 44: the last German staff and rear area personnel departed Tirana.

Operational Units:

Italian (Regia Aeronautica): HQ Aeronautica dell'Albania (1940 – Sep 43); 22^o Gruppo CT (Mar-Aug 41); 24^o Gruppo CT (Oct 40, Mar-Jun 41); 39^o Gruppo BT (Jun-Oct 40, Jun 41 – Jan 42); 40^o Gruppo BT (Jun 41 – Sep 43); 42^o Gruppo BT (Feb-May 43); 43^o Gruppo BT (Jan 43); 65^o Gruppo OA (Apr-Jun 41); 70^o Gruppo OA (Mar-May 41); 101^o Gruppo BaT (Apr-May 41); 104^o Gruppo BT (Nov 40); 105^o Gruppo BT (Oct 40 – Jan 41); 160^o Gruppo CT (Jun-Oct 40); 120^a Squadriglia OA (Jun-Oct 40); 375^a Squadriglia CT (c. Feb-Dec 41); 376^a Squadriglia Assalto (c. May – Sep 43); 392^a Squadriglia CT (c. Mar-Sep 43); 611^a Squadriglia T (Jun 40 – 1943?).

Luftwaffe: 1./NAGr. 12 (Oct 43); detachment from IV./JG 27 (Dec 43 – Jan 44).

Station Commands: operated by personnel from Stab/Koflug 1/IV (Tirana) (Sep 43 – Mar 44); Flugplatzkdo. Tirana of Fl.H.Kdtr. E(v) 218/XVII Devoli (Apr-Sep 44).

Station Units (on various dates – not complete): Stab/Fliegerführer Albanien (Sep 43 – Aug 44); Koflug 1/IV (Aug – Dec 43); Koflug 7/VI (Dec 43 – Aug 44); one Zug of III/Feldwerftverband 60 (Aug 43 – Feb 44); 124. Flugh.Betr.Kp. (Qu) (one Zug) (Dec 43 – 1944); Stab/Flak-Rgt. 40 (Sep 43 – Jan/Feb 44); part of I./Flak-Rgt. 9 (Sep-Dec 43); part

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of le.Flak-Abt. 885(v) (Oct 43); elements of Flak-Instandsetzungs-Abt. 2/XVII (Dec 43); 9. (Funkh.)/Ln.-Rgt. Südost (c.Jan-Sep 44); elements of 11.(Flus.)/Ln.-Rgt. Südost (Jan 44 - ?); 3./Ln.-RV-Abt. (mot) z.b.V. 3 (c.Jan-Sep 44); Stab, 1., 2./Flugmelde-Mess-Abt. z.b.V. 13 (Oct 43 -); elements of Flugmelde-Funk-Kp. z.b.V. 28 (Jan 44); elements of Ln.-Verbindungs-Kp. z.b.V. 5 (Dec 43); Ln.-Verbindungs-Kp. z.b.V. 6 (Dec 43 - Aug 44); Ln.-Kp. (mot) z.b.V. 6 (Oct 43, Jan 44); Flugsicherungszentrale z.b.V. Adria (Jan 44); Lw.-Feldbauamt Tirana (Jan 44); part of Lw.-Bau-Btl. 21/III (Dec 43, Feb 44); Nachschub-Kp. d.Lw. 11/XI (Dec 43 - Aug 44); Flug-Betr.St.Kol. 504/XIII (Jan 44); Trsp.Kol. d.Lw. 124/IV (Oct 44); Trsp.Kol. d.Lw. 125/IV (1943 - May 44); Trsp.Kol. d.Lw. 127/IV (c. Sep 43 - Feb 44); Trsp.Kol.d.Lw. 33/VI (1943 - Feb 44); Trsp.Kol.d.Lw. 35/VI (1943 - Feb 44); Trsp.Kol. d.Lw. 103/VI (1943 - Mar 44); Trsp.Kol. d.Lw. 152/VI (Feb-Aug 44); elements of Kfz.Instandsetzungs-Kp. (mot) d.Lw. 1/XVII (Dec 43); Ldssch.Zug d.Lw. 9/III (May 44 - ?); Ldssch.Zug d.Lw. 305/VI (May 44 - ?); Ldssch.Zug d.Lw. 399/VI (May-Oct 44); Ldssch.Zug d.Lw. 108/XIII (Jul 44 - ?); elements of Lw.-Berge-Kp. z.b.V. 32 (Nov 43); Strafvollstreckungszug Südost z.b.V. 5 (Jul-Aug 44).

[Sources: AFHRA A5264 p.795 (26 Jun 43); chronologies; BA-MA; NARA; PRO/NA; web site ww2.dk]

Valona (ALB) (a.k.a. Valona-Arta, Vlorë-Nartë) (40 28 30 N - 19 28 20 E)

General: airfield on the coast of S Albania 100 km SSW Tirana, 3 km SSE of Arta (Nartë) and 1.5 km NW of Valona city center.

History: built in the 1930's and then greatly enlarged and improved by the Italian during 1939-40. It was Italy's principal airfield during the attack on Greece and was home to fighters responsible for protecting the key port of Valona. Taken over by the Luftwaffe in Sep 43 but abandoned two months later in November (see under Remarks, below).

Dimensions: approx. 1400 x 1080 meters (1530 x 1180 yards) with a rectangular shape.

Surface and Runways: grass and weed surface. A concrete runway 1280 meters (1400 yards) in length was aligned NNW/SSE. A perimeter road ran along the E boundary and connected to both ends of the runway.

Fuel and Ammunition: refueling points were reportedly at both ends of the runway. Bulk fuel and ammunition storage existed in the vicinity of the airfield.

Infrastructure: had 3 hangars with paved aprons along the E boundary along with airfield admin and stores buildings.

Dispersal: aircraft parked off the SE and NE ends of the landing area and there were also aircraft shelters along the perimeter road that paralleled the E boundary.

Defenses:

Satellites and Decoys:

Valona-Krionero (40 26 00 N - 19 29 40 E), a satellite of Valona-Arta with a rough airstrip of weeds, grass and sand that was considered in good condition. Located on the shore of the bay 3.5 km SSE of Valona city center. The short strip measured approx. 510 x 135 meters (560 x 150 yards) and had 1 hangar on the SW corner with several small buildings on the E boundary. It was still active and being maintained in Jun 43.

Remarks:

Apr 39: Valona airstrip inspected but found to be unsuitable for operations by more than a handful of military a/c.

Oct 40: Valona listed as one of the 6 airfields in Albania completed or still under construction.

27 Feb 41: bombed by RAF Blenheims - landing area cratered and airfield buildings hit.

May 43: leveling and drainage work was seen to be in progress.

7 Aug 43: the Northeast dispersal area was being extended and taxi tracks were being constructed.

15 Oct 43: orders issued by Lw.-Kdo. Südost to remove all Flak units from Valona.

13 Nov43: due to daily attacks by Allied aircraft bases in Italy, the airfield was rendered unusable by the Luftwaffe and the last station personnel departed. The landing area was

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first plowed and then demolition mines were detonated leaving 9 large craters, these presumably in the runway.

Operational Units:

Italian (Regia Aeronautica): HQ 38° Stormo BT (Oct 40); 39° Gruppo BT (Oct 40); 40° Gruppo BT (Oct 40); 72° Gruppo OA (Oct 40 – Aug 42); 150° Gruppo CT (Oct 40 – 1941); 43^a Squadriglia OA (Oct 40); 364^a Squadriglia CT (Oct 40); 120^a Squadriglia OA (Dec 40); 371^a Squadriglia CT (Mar 41); 61° Gruppo OA (May 42 – Feb 43); 70° Gruppo OA (Aug-Sep 43);

Luftwaffe: none identified.

Station Commands: Fl.PI.Kdo. A 8/I (c. Aug-Nov 43).

Station Units (on various dates): part of schw.Flak-Abt. 545(v) (Sep-Oct 43); I./Flak-Rgt. 8 (Sep-Nov 43); one battery of le.Flak-Abt. 885 (Sep 43 – Mar 44).

[Sources: AFHRA A5259 p.543 (13 Nov 43) and A5264 p.795 (9 Jun 43) and p.1133 (Aug 43); chronologies; BA-MA; NARA; PRO/NA; web site ww2.dk]

Valona (See) (ALB) (40 25 45 N – 19 29 30 E)

General: seaplane anchorage c. 5 km S of Valona city center at the S end of Valona-Krionero satellite strip. History: no information found but probably in existence before the war. Anchorage: the bay afforded ample room for take-offs and landings. Infrastructure: a jetty with a small crane was located at the hangar at the SW corner of Valona-Krionero satellite strip.

[Sources: AFHRA A5264 p.795 (18 Jun 43); chronologies; BA-MA; NARA; PRO/NA; web site ww2.dk]

Vlorë (ALB): see Valona.