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2/2020

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**HIGH ROYAL DECREE NO. 3663
THROUGH WHICH "ROMÂNIA MILITARĂ"
BECOMES THE OFFICIAL JOURNAL
OF THE GREAT GENERAL STAFF**



"Art. I – The official journal named "România Militară" is founded at the Great General Staff, starting 1 January 1898, in which all officers within the Armed Forces will find military studies, which interest their training.

Through the agency of this journal, all officers, belonging to all branches, who are in active duty, will be able to publish their personal papers and the ones that interest the Armed Forces".

*Carol – King of Romania
Issued in București on 8 December 1897*



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A LEGACY SINCE 1864

The Romanian Armed Forces road to modernity started in 1859, once the United Principalities General Staff Corps, currently the Defence Staff, was established.

Soon after it, in 1864, a group of nine captains, graduates of the first series of the Officer Cadet School in Bucharest, took the initiative to develop a "military science, art and history journal" named "România Militară/Military Romania".

The initiators of the publication – **G. Slăniceanu** (Captain, Chief of the Engineer Battalion), **A. Gramont** (Staff Captain), **G. Borănescu** (Engineer Captain), **G. Angheliescu** (Staff Captain), **A. Angheliescu** (Artillery Captain), **E. Arion** (Artillery Captain), **E. Boteanu** (Staff Captain), **E. Pencovici** (Staff Captain) and **C. Barozzi** (Engineer Captain) –, educated not only in Romania but also abroad, were inspired by the necessity to develop a substantial theoretical activity in the Romanian Army too.

The journal manifesto¹, included in the first issue, which appeared on 15 February 1864, contained innovative ideas and approaches that were meant to:

– contribute to the organisation of our military system the Legislative Chamber is about to decide upon soon;

– assemble and examine the Country old military institutions that had made for the glory of Romania for several centuries and ensured our existence;

– explore, in the absence of any military study, all the aspects related to the Army training, the most solid basis of the armed forces;

– get the Romanian Troops well-informed about the military events in the world;

– join efforts to work concertedly and whole-heartedly to develop and strengthen the edifice that is meant to ensure the future of our country”².

“România Militară” was an independent publication, under the aegis of the War Ministry, and it ceased to appear in 1866 as there were no sufficient funds and subscribers. The publication was resumed in 1891, about a quarter of a century later, also as the result of the initiative of a group of officers in the Great General Staff who intended to “reproduce the serious studies on the organisation, strategy and art of commanding troops under any circumstances”³. Shortly after it, by the Royal Decree no. 3663 issued on 8 December 1897, “România Militară” became the “Great General Staff official publication”.



¹ Din trecutul României Militare cu prilejul aniversării a 75 de ani de la apariția ei în viața armatei. 1864-1939, București, 1939, p. 31.

² Ibidem, p. 32.

³ România Militară, no. 1, 1981, p. 6.

English version by Diana Cristiana LUPU.



C. Barozzi
(Engineer Captain)



E. Pencovici
(Staff Captain)



E. Boteanu
(Staff Captain)



G. Borănescu
(Engineer Captain)



G. Angheliescu
(Staff Captain)



G. Slăniceanu
(Captain, Chief of the Engineer Battalion)



E. Arion
(Artillery Captain)



A. Angheliescu
(Artillery Captain)





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of military science, published in the previous year



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Award*



*"Marshal
Alexandru Averescu"
Award*

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THE ROMANIAN ARMED FORCES – HISTORICAL STUDIES

Colonel (r.) Prof. Petre OTU, PhD



English version by Iulia SINGER.

No. 2/2020

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Romanian military historiography became a discipline in the middle of the 19th century, in the context of the renewal of the country's military forces and the struggle for national unity. This was not by accident, because the generation of the 1848 Revolution and the Union saw the armed forces as an instrument of national revival. Nicolae Bălcescu, the founder of this discipline, was very clear on that: "The country of Romanians, if it ever regains the position it once held among the peoples of Europe, will owe it more to the regeneration of its old military institutions". The messianic, optimistic vision of the great historian signified, first of all, a call to gaining more in-depth knowledge of Romanian military traditions, which would rapidly result in the strengthening of the military body.

In the absence of specialised institutions, which were established later, respectively at the beginning of the 20th century, this very complex task fell especially to military publications. From this point of view, the "România Militară" journal, whose first issue was published, as it is known, on 15 February 1864, did a groundbreaking work. The initiators of the publication, young military personnel from the first graduates of the military school, founded by Prince Barbu Știrbei, some of them with studies abroad, were convinced of the need for an intense theoretical activity in the military field. In fact, the journal was defined as being specialised in "military science, art and history". The stated objective of the editorial staff was to "gather and research the old military institutions of the country, which had been the glory of Romania for so many centuries...".

In its 155 years of existence, the "România Militară" journal and its successor today, "Gândirea Militară Românească", have greatly honoured

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EDITORIAL



the objective of researching the Romanian military history. Whoever reads the publication, from the beginning until today, can see the variety of topics of military history, going from the old era to the one that is usually called the “immediate” or the “recent” one. It should also be highlighted that the topics regarding universal history have not been overlooked, which shows that the journal has promoted a fundamental principle of historical analysis, namely that it is only by being integrated into universality that the true dimensions of national history, including its military dimension, can be understood.

Starting from these general ideas regarding the role and place of military history in the editorial profile of the “Gândirea Militară Românească” journal, I welcome the initiative of the Editorial Team to publish a special issue that features episodes from the history of the Romanian armed forces. This special issue includes part of the scientific papers delivered within the Military History Section of the International Conference: “Security and Defence between History, Theory and Public Policies” (6-7 November 2019), organised by the Defence Staff in the context of the 160th anniversary of this essential structure for the profile of the Romanian military body and 155th anniversary of the “Gândirea Militară Românească” journal.

The topics from the special issue are various, ranging from the organisation of the General Headquarters and the Great General Staff during the Romanian armed forces campaign from 1918-1919 to the portraits of military leaders who are less known to the general public, such as Brigadier General Gheorghe Dabija, General Ioan Dumitrache, General Alexandru Ioanițiu, General Aviator Alexandru Sabini. The articles that make up the journal thus provide the reader with interesting details regarding the tradition and history of the Romanian armed forces in the first half of the last century, highlighting the level of military leadership of that period.

The main idea stemming from these articles is that, in their evolution, the Romanian armed forces underwent different organisational and training stages, with an obvious tendency to diversify the specialties and types of military branches. The Romanian armed forces were not, nor are they currently, a rigid, static system, but they developed in relation both to the general evolution of the country from a certain historical moment, and to the dynamics of weapon systems and the reality of the battlefield generated by the permanent technological revolution.

To conclude, I invite you to read and discover relevant pieces of information and understanding on a topic of real scientific interest for all those interested in the national military past! Last but not least, I would like to congratulate both the authors, for their notable work and contributions, and the editorial staff of the “Gândirea Militară Românească” journal, for such an initiative, which is a sign of consistency and determination in materialising an objective assumed ever since the first issue of this publication.





STRATEGIC-LEVEL COMMAND STRUCTURES IN THE CAMPAIGN FOR THE DEFENCE OF THE GREAT UNIFICATION

Professor Ion GIURCĂ, PhD
Hyperion University, Bucharest

The campaign of the Romanian Armed Forces in the 1918-1919 period was the last of the National Reunification War, conducted in the post-First World War geopolitical and geostrategic context, having as main objective to defend the Great Unification from 1918. It was a campaign conducted, in certain situations and at different times, in collaboration and cooperation with command structures and troops belonging to the armed forces of the Allied and Associated Powers engaged against the Russian, Ukrainian and Hungarian Bolshevik military forces.

The Great General Headquarters and the Great General Staff, as structures responsible for designing, organising, planning and managing the military operations, had organisations and attributions tailored to meet the specific requirements, carrying out their duties depending on the situation: the attacks of the Russian and the Ukrainian Bolshevik gangs at the Dniester, the need for military cooperation with Poland, the control of the territory of Transylvania, the withdrawal of the Hungarian Bolshevik army from the Apuseni Mountains and the Tisza, the occupation of Budapest and of a largest part of Hungary.

In most cases, the decision-makers within the Great General Headquarters complied with the decisions of the Allied Supreme Council in Paris and collaborated with the allied command structures located in Belgrade and Bucharest.

Keywords: armed forces, Bolshevism, campaign, cooperation, decision.



INTRODUCTION

The analysis of the importance of the political and military events of 1919, when it was 60 years since the establishment of the Romanian Armed Forces General Staff, as well as of the centennial of the glorious campaign ended with the occupation of Budapest, has to take into account the content of the aim of Romania's entry into the world conflagration, formulated in the campaign plan developed by the Great General Staff, also known as "Z Hypothesis": "The aim of the war that we will wage is the accomplishment of our national ideal, that is to say the national reunification"¹.

1919 is the year when, despite all the political and military restrictions imposed by the representatives of the states that constituted the Supreme Council of the Paris Peace Conference, the Romanian Armed Forces achieved brilliant success not only at the Dniester (in Bessarabia and Bukovina) as well as in Pocutia, but also in Transylvania and Hungary, thus having under control and administration, in mid-August, a territory that was larger than 350,000 km².

The success of the Romanian Armed Forces campaign in 1919 was the result of the combined efforts of the political and military decision-makers as well as of the structures that conceived, planned and managed the operations and battles at the strategic and tactical level. Among them, the Great General Headquarters, the Great General Staff and the Troops Command in Transylvania played an incontestably important role, acknowledged at that time, in the interwar period, and in the past three decades, highlighted in different recent papers and studies.

The organisation, planning and management of the military operations within what was called *the big and the small strategy* at the time was the result of the activity of the personnel from the three

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¹ Great General Staff, *România în războiul mondial 1916-1919, Documente-Anexe*, vol. I, *Monitorul Oficial și Imprimeriile Statului*, Imprimeria Națională, București, 1934, p. 111.



structures, remobilised, reorganised and established in the geopolitical and geostrategic context created in Europe during November and December 1918.

THE ROMANIAN ARMED FORCES MOBILISATION

The decisive moment regarding the international situation in the autumn of 1918 was the victory of the allies on the western front, so that, after a series of tense discussions between the delegates from the USA, the United Kingdom and France, related to the conditions of capitulation to be imposed on Germany, on 29 October/11 November, in the forest of Compiègne, the armistice was signed, thus marking the conclusion of the First World War, whereby, as far as Romania was concerned, Germany was forced to renounce the provisions of the Treaty of Bucharest signed on 24 April/7 May 1918. Against the background of the geopolitical and geostrategic developments in Europe, well known in Iași, the Romanian political and military decision-makers acted timely and in line with Romania's interests: in Paris, Victor Antonescu had a series of discussions with the French Prime Minister Georges Clemenceau, finalised and materialised in the order sent by the French Government to General Henri M. Berthelot to prepare *"the military mission destined to determine the re-entry of Romania into the war alongside the Entente powers"*²; in Iași, General Constantin Cristescu, correctly predicting the evolution of the military situation, ordered, on 28 September/3 October 1918, preparatory measures for the implementation of the armed forces mobilisation plan, namely *"the deployed troops should come back to their units until 1/14 October"*³; on 26 October/8 November 1918, King Ferdinand I decided to start the necessary activities for the re-entry of Romania into the war, and the next day, Field Marshal August von Mackensen was presented with an ultimatum so that the troops belonging to the Central Powers had to leave the territory of Romania within 24 hours.

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² Apud Brigadier General Dr Vasile Apostol, Lieutenant Colonel Dr Ion Giurcă, Lieutenant Colonel Dr Mircea D. Chiriac, Colonel (r.) BEng Corneliu Baltă, *Comandamentele strategice române în acțiune (1859-1947)*, Editura Tipo-Light, București, 2000, p. 94.

³ National Military Archives of Romania – Arhivele Militare Naționale Române (AMNR), *Collection Microfilme*, roll PII 1.530, c. 64-65.

On that day, simultaneously with the continuation of the surveillance and the defence of the Dniester line in Bessarabia by the units of the 5th Army Corps, the 8th Infantry Division *"stepped on the ground of the Great Stefan Voivode to protect the lives, possessions and liberties of the inhabitants, regardless of their nationality and faith, against the criminal gangs that started to destroy your beautiful country"*⁴. Even on the day on which, in Compiègne, it was signed the armistice between the Allied and Associated Powers, the Romanian troops entered Cernăuți so that they could ensure, in the following period, the freedom of action for the National Council in Bukovina⁵. King Ferdinand I decision that the Romanian armed forces had to enter into the war against the enemy troops that occupied the Romanian territory got materialised in the *"High Decree no. 3179"* on 27 October/9 November 1918, which entered into force on 28 October/10 November and had a historical importance for Romania's destiny, being decisive for Romania to be admitted to the Paris Peace Conference. The armed forces mobilisation also included the establishment, again, of the Great General Headquarters, led, in compliance with the *"High Decree no. 3185"* on 29 October/11 November 1918, by General Constantin Prezan, who was appointed Chief of the Armed Forces General Staff. The structure of the General Staff was conceived and established so that it could meet the predictable operational requirements. There were some differences compared to the organisation established in December 1917, which I consider relevant for the comparative analysis. As for the establishment in November 1918, there were 9 generals, 163 officers and 12 civilian personnel in the General Staff. The order of battle highlighted a beneficial aspect, namely the decrease in the number of reserve officers, especially in the bureaus and services that had an important role in the organisation, planning and conduct of military actions or in providing the necessary logistic support. The 20 reserve officers within the General Staff participated in the activity of the bureaus and services that needed experts in aviation,



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⁴ AMNR, *Collection Marele Stat Major (M.St.M.)*, Secția Studii istorice, file no. 835, p. 13.

⁵ For details, see Ion Giurcă, *Generalul Iacob Zadik – loc și rol în realizarea și apărarea unirii Bucovinei cu Țara*, in *Înfăptuirea și apărarea României Mari*, Editura Mad Linotype, Buzău, 2017; *Armata română în Bucovina la sfârșitul anului 1918*, in *Centenarul Unirii Bucovinei cu România*, Editura ALPHA MDN, Buzău, 2018.



In November 1918, and especially in the following period, the situation became increasingly complex, the armed forces actions being conducted, with different intensity, on three fronts: in Bessarabia – on the Dniester; in Bukovina and then in Pocutia; in Transylvania and then in Hungary. It was a great area for the ongoing actions, which generated complex problems related to manoeuvring the forces and assets, providing the resources, and managing the units and large units.

air station, justice, and quartermaster department. Mention should be made that, within Section 1 Operations, there was only one reserve officer, and within the Intelligence Bureau, there were two reserve officers, so that the conditions for an enhanced activity within the bureaus and sections were met. Brigadier Generals Ioan Ghinescu and Nicolae Alevra were appointed Deputy Chiefs of the General Staff, both of them being experienced in the activity of that command structure at strategic level.

The element of absolute novelty was the chief position of Section 1 Operations filled by Lieutenant Colonel Ioan Sichitiu, who had been noted due to the activity carried out in the cabinet of General Constantin Prezan during 1917. The appointment was somehow surprising, because Lieutenant Colonel Ion Antonescu had practically run this section between December 1916 and April 1918. I consider as beneficial and correct the idea of establishing Section II Intelligence, having a well-planned structure, with officers who had acquired sufficient experience in their activity, even if it was not at the level of the armed forces operational requirements. The organisation of the General Staff in November 1918 highlighted the return within this structure of the General Command of Cantonments, in a flexible organisation, certainly more efficient and better connected to the operational requirements.

Compared to January 1917, the number of officers in the General Staff decreased by 17 officers, which did not have negative effects as far as the accomplishment of the given tasks was concerned. However, I underline the fact that, in 1916, the Great General Headquarters led the military operations on two fronts. Moreover, from October 1916 to September 1917, its activity was focused on conducting the actions on only one front. In November 1918, and especially in the following period, the situation became increasingly complex, the armed forces actions being conducted, with different intensity, on three fronts: in Bessarabia – on the Dniester; in Bukovina and then in Pocutia; in Transylvania and then in Hungary. It was a great area for the ongoing actions, which generated complex problems related to manoeuvring the forces and assets, providing the resources, and managing the units and large units. The troops in Bessarabia and Bukovina, and later in Pocutia, were led by the 4th and 5th Army Corps commands, directly

subordinated to the Great General Headquarters. To command the forces earmarked for acting in Transylvania, initially the 7th Infantry Division and the 2nd Hunter Division, then the 6th Infantry Divisions, the 2nd Hunter Division and the 2nd Cavalry Division, it was established and installed, on 11/24 December 1918, in Sibiu, where there was also the Governing Council headquarters, the Command of the Troops in Transylvania, thus being provided a solution in compliance with the operational requirements in that part of the country, which proved viable in the 1918-1919 campaign. The establishment of a structure similar to the Command in Iași, to lead the troops in Bessarabia, Bukovina and Pocutia, as it was suggested, since February 1918, by Colonel Toma Dumitrescu, the Chief of Staff of the 5th Army Corps at that time, would have been, maybe, beneficial and effective for the simplification of the overall management of the Romanian armed forces operations and battles during that period. It was possible for the establishment of the command structures in the two theatres of operations of the Romanian troops to have been generated not only by the small number of staff officers but also by the fact that the two army corps commands, deployed in Iași and Chișinău, could successfully resolve the operational situations.

THE GREAT GENERAL HEADQUARTERS AND THE GREAT GENERAL STAFF – COOPERATION AND PROMPTITUDE

The relocation of the Great General Headquarters from Iași to Bucharest, in the building of the Military Circle⁶, in November 1918, executed in compliance with the provisions of the “Circular Order 904” on 16/29 November 1918, was a political and military necessity. The presence of that structure in Bucharest as well as the relocation of the Royal House, the Government and the Parliament in the official Capital of the country had a political significance, especially considering that the entry ceremony of the political and military leaders was held on the day when, in Alba-Iulia, it was organised the Great General Assembly. King Ferdinand I, Queen Maria and those comprising

⁶ AMNR, Collection Microfilme, roll PII 1.2577, c. 534-537.



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Among the sections in the structure of the Great General Staff, it is worth mentioning "Section I B – Mobilisation, Private Industries, Requisitions", and especially the component "Private Industries", established out of the necessity of an inventory of the facilities remained in the territory occupied by the troops of the Central Powers as well as in Bessarabia, Bukovina and Transylvania, in order to continue the war production that was so necessary considering the great deficits the armed forces had to face.

the official retinue were accompanied by General Henri M. Berthelot, and, alongside the Romanian troops, there were the Allied troops. The presence of the command structure at the strategic level in Bucharest provided the advantage of a direct and effective cooperation between the King, the Royal Military House and the General Staff, as well as with the representatives of the states that were later part of the Inter-Allied Military Commission of Control, having their place and role in imposing and adopting certain decisions of the Romanian Great General Headquarters.

Returning to the numerical composition of the General Staff, we consider that the reduction in the personnel of that structure was directly linked to another situation that was created in an apparently unnatural way. Unlike the 1916-1918 period, when the Great General Headquarters was established and operational, after the mobilisation of November 1918, it was not established the Great General Staff – the sedentary part, but a complex organisation of the Great General Staff. By the organisation established in November 1918, the Great General Staff order of battle provided 54 positions (2 generals, 32 officers, 6 non-commissioned officers, 7 sergeants and corporals, 7 civilians), which were filled by active duty military personnel (one position was filled by a non-commissioned officer in reserve), many of them working, in previous periods, for the General Staff, the Great General Staff – the sedentary part, or for the army or division staffs.

Among the sections in the structure of the Great General Staff, it is worth mentioning "Section I B – Mobilisation, Private Industries, Requisitions", and especially the component "Private Industries", established out of the necessity of an inventory of the facilities remained in the territory occupied by the troops of the Central Powers as well as in Bessarabia, Bukovina and Transylvania, in order to continue the war production that was so necessary considering the great deficits the armed forces had to face. Moreover, within Section II A it was established "Bureau 3 Historical", where four officers and a civilian were appointed⁷, to conduct the difficult activity of gathering documents and writing the history of the Romanian armed forces campaigns.

⁷ AMNR, *Collection Marele Cartier General (MCG)*, file no. 1041, p. 272.



The activity of the Great General Staff was conducted having the mentioned organisation, in good conditions, taking into account a relative stability of the officers. The decisive aspect of the Great General Staff good activity was the preservation as chief of the structure of Army Corps General Constantin Cristescu who was very experienced in fulfilling the duties that were specific to such a position. The Great General Staff operated having the mentioned structure up to the spring of 1919, while the Great General Headquarters preserved the organisation established in November 1918 up to 20 March 1920, when it was demobilised. The activity of the two structures, despite some resentments of General Constantin Cristescu at General Constantin Prezan, was characterised by a good cooperation, the Great General Staff timely meeting the Great General Headquarters requirements in terms of providing resources.

Overall, the activity of the two structures in 1918 and 1919 got materialised in solving some complex problems such as: the gradual mobilisation of units and large units, as resources were provided, the development of operations projects for the actions in Bukovina, Bessarabia and Transylvania; the conduct of military operations in accordance with the situations created and the provisions of the government that was permanently in contact with the delegation at the Paris Peace Conference, the Inter-Allied Military Commission in Versailles and the Army of the Orient Command; the analysis of the military evolution in Romania's area of interest, the development of syntheses and suggestions for the government to undertake diplomatic efforts or to agree on expected military actions; the preservation of military and social order throughout the territory; the reinstatement of the military bodies in Dobruja, Muntenia and Oltenia; the introduction of the military administration regime in the Hungarian territory occupied by the Romanian troops; the gradual withdrawal from the territory of Hungary in compliance with the government decisions and the developed plans; the change in the structure of the Great General Staff in line with the new armed forces organisation, and the complex tasks, considering: the new territory of the country, the threats to the security of the country and the needs for immediate

The decisive aspect of the Great General Staff good activity was the preservation as chief of the structure of Army Corps General Constantin Cristescu who was very experienced in fulfilling the duties that were specific to such a position.



and prospective defence. The signing of the peace treaties with the states that had been members in the Central Powers alliance and the relaxation of the situation at the border with the Soviet Russia created the conditions for the transition of the Romanian armed forces to the peace establishment.

THE GREAT GENERAL STAFF FUNCTIONALITY

Included in the Government led by Ion I.C. Brătianu (29 November/ 12 December 1918 – 27 September 1919), General Arthur Văitoianu was aware of the fact that, in a short period of time, the Romanian armed forces and especially the command structures, needed an organisation that met the realities in the aftermath of the First World War. The first world conflagration generated new military services and branches, concepts, ways and procedures to organise and command the military structures in peacetime and at war. It was the reason why the Ministry of War developed the legal framework that was necessary for its organisation, considering that: *“Following the evolution of the various services within the Ministry of War in line with the armed forces current necessities, the former law for the ministry organisation has to be supplemented and partially modified. It is a need for some new services to be established, as well as for the reorganisation of the sections and bureaus in line with the new responsibilities”*⁸. Following the report of the Minister of War presented to King Ferdinand I, on 18 April 1919, the sovereign of Romania signed the *“Decree-Law to update and supplement the current law on the organisation of the Ministry of War”*, stipulating the services and directorates established not only for the armed forces but also for certain services and branches. Within the *“General services for the needs of the armed forces”*, it was also established the *“General Staff Service”*, alongside the geographical, personnel, control, accounting and pensions, litigation, quartermaster, central establishments and remount services. The effort made by the Minister of War in order to transform the structure he was leading also included *“Report no. 1929”*, in which he submitted a request to King Ferdinand I to approve *“some changes in the regulation of the law of organisation of the Ministry of War, establishing the number of sections*

⁸ *Monitorul Oficial*, no. 9 on 27 April 1919, p. 431.

and bureaus for different services and directorates, as well as each of them special responsibilities”⁹. The mentioned report also included *Table no. 2*, presenting the organisation of the Great General Staff. The position of Chief of Staff could be filled by an Army Corps or Division General, appointed by the King following the proposal of the Minister of War. Compared to the previous organisational structure, the level of the organisation was higher, as the bureaus were transformed, in most cases, into sections.

“Division I, Personnel and Army Preparation for War” could be led by a general or colonel, who also served as deputy chief of staff. Viewed and analysed in all its complexity and diversity, Division I had as main responsibility the structures planning for peace and war as well as the force generation for the units and the large units that were established or supplemented following mobilisation. *“Adjutant Section”*, with the personnel and chancellery bureaus, had responsibilities related to the troops inventory in terms of education and staff appointment for all echelons. Within it, *“Bureau II Personnel”* had as main responsibilities: the inventory of the personnel within the Great General Staff, the control of the staff officers and of the graduates of the Superior War School, who could be called up to fill staff positions at different echelons; the planning and monitoring of the probation fulfilment by the staff officers; the inventory of the order of battle of the commands staff service, in peacetime and at war; the inventory of the officers sent to study abroad and of the Superior War School personnel; the preparation and development of the papers necessary for the Staff Consultative Committee¹⁰. The Chancellery was in charge of receiving, distributing and sending the correspondence, of orders of the day records, as well as of keeping the collections of laws and of the *Monitorul Oficial (Official Gazette)* and *Monitorul Oastei (Armed Forces Gazette)* publications.

“Section I, Recruitment, Organisation, War Materials” was led by a staff officer, having the rank of colonel or lieutenant colonel. The personnel that filled the positions within *“Bureau 1 Recruitment”* had responsibilities related to the development of the papers

⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 435.

¹⁰ AMNR, *Collection M.St.M.*, file no. 1041, p. 281.



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“Section 2, Mobilisation – Requisitions” was in charge of generating forces in the event of war, by general or partial mobilisation. It consisted of three bureaus – armed forces mobilisation, immediate mobilisation and requisitions –, having clear, well-defined responsibilities, in compliance with the understanding of the planning and execution of the three important activities in the transition from the peace to war establishment.

in the following areas: recruitment, repartition of annual contingents, conscription, transfer of the troops from a military specialty to another; development and hierarchical transmission of the orders and instructions related to recruitment in compliance with laws and regulations. *“Bureau Organisation”* was in charge of all the problems and aspects related to: the armed forces organisation; the inventory of troops in peacetime; the order of battle and deployment of units in peacetime; the budget planning and execution in peacetime; the development of statistical situations regarding the personnel, in terms of contingents, military ranks, positions for officers and non-commissioned officers. *“Bureau War Materials”* was in charge of complex tasks related to: the equipment and assets that were necessary for all the services, branches, military schools and training centres, in peacetime and at war; the reserve to supplement the equipment and assets following mobilisation; the military installations and facilities that were necessary to meet the requirements in peacetime and at war.

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“Section 3, Training, Regulations and History”, had responsibilities mainly for the activities in peacetime. It had a complex organisation, compared to the previously mentioned sections¹¹. *“Bureau 1”* was in charge of the organisational aspects regarding: corps education

¹¹ *Ibidem*, p. 283.



“Division II”, having four sections, represented the “operational” component of the Great General Staff, the operations, intelligence, transportation, communications and cantonment sections having clear and concrete responsibilities directly related to the use of armed forces in war. “Section 4 Operations” had a complex structure and tasks related to planning the military actions for war, in different variants and hypotheses.

and training, in specialised schools and training centres (annual programmes, training concentrations, reserve officers training, manoeuvre, inspections); education within the Superior War School; staff study and training trips; publications and papers in the armed forces; acquisition of necessary foreign military journals; library; conferences and studies in which the officers within the Great General Staff participated. The activity of the sub-bureaus within the *“Bureau Regulations”* was formulated clearly and simply – development of regulations for the three basic branches within the land troops as well as for the special troops and services. *“Bureau 3 Historical”* was in charge of complex tasks such as: gathering, classifying and coordinating the historical operational data and documents from all the large units in the armed forces; developing the historical inventory of the 1916-1919 campaign; developing the monographies and collecting the lessons learned from the campaign in terms of organisation, training and command; monitoring particular studies having a historical character; studying the Romanian army previous campaigns; historical monuments, prisoners treatment and related activities; developing and keeping the historical archive. The mentioned bureau was a new structure within the Great General Staff, having complex tasks that entailed executing broad activities, which required numerous personnel having appropriate education and experience.

“Division II”, having four sections, represented the *“operational”* component of the Great General Staff, the operations, intelligence, transportation, communications and cantonment sections having clear and concrete responsibilities directly related to the use of armed forces in war. *“Section 4 Operations”* had a complex structure and tasks related to planning the military actions for war, in different variants and hypotheses¹². *“Bureau 1 Operations”* was considered the basic structure in the Great General Staff, its sub-bureaus having clear responsibilities for peacetime situation: war operations, hypotheses, concentration plans, service to cover the borders of the country; organisation of gathering areas, reconnaissance and studies on the ground and in bureaus relative to the mentioned areas; plans for the defence of the country, system of fortifications; royal manoeuvres,

¹² *Ibidem*, p. 284.



One of the complex structures, which was closely connected to the geopolitical and geostrategic realities of 1919 as well as to the ones predicted in the short term, was "Section 5 Intelligence", having bureaus and sub-bureaus in its organisation, most of them having responsibilities and tasks according to certain geographical areas.

studying the measures to preserve order in the future, for different hypotheses; functioning of the subsistence system for different hypotheses. "Bureau 2 Navy" was a structure exclusively destined to plan the joint operations of the land troops and the Danube Flotilla and the Sea Flotilla, to defend the Romanian littoral of the Black Sea, to study the areas of gathering and debarkation related to the fleet operations, to plan and prepare joint manoeuvres. "Bureau 3 Cypher" was the specialised structure of the Operations Section, responsible for tasks related to: crypted correspondence; crypted dictionaries; instructions for using crypted correspondence methods; study of the crypted methods used by other armed forces.

One of the complex structures, which was closely connected to the geopolitical and geostrategic realities of 1919 as well as to the ones predicted in the short term, was "Section 5 Intelligence", having bureaus and sub-bureaus in its organisation, most of them having responsibilities and tasks according to certain geographical areas. "Bureau 1" had as main task to study the Balkan (Bulgarian, Turkish, Serbian, Greek), Hungarian, Czechoslovakian, Polish, Ukrainian, Russian, German and Austrian armed forces; to edit and print the periodical information bulletin; to develop the brochures and studies regarding other armed forces as well as preparatory papers related to the information flows. The structure of "Bureau Direct Intelligence" and the component sub-bureaus responsibilities highlight some aspects that are worth mentioning. It is visible the specialisation of sub-bureaus in studying the possible friend and foe armies, a situation arising from the realities of 1919, when the fate of the defeated countries was uncertain, in Soviet Russia and Hungary, dominated by Bolshevik ideas, the situation not being clear as far as the post-war attitude towards Romania was concerned. "Bureau 2, Intelligence and Counterintelligence" was in charge of: collecting information, through agents, from neighbouring and near countries; collecting information related to western armed forces. A sub-bureau was exclusively in charge of counter-intelligence and counter-espionage activities, monitoring the spy agents working for other armed forces; combating espionage in peacetime, studying the measures to counter espionage in war time; propaganda services, media and private correspondence censorship.



Romania's position as a country crossed by the Danube and a Black Sea littoral country required special attention to be paid to water transportation, therefore the bureau established for that purpose had to know the situation and to exercise control over the means of water transport belonging to the state and to natural persons, to plan their use for transportation and operations.

The First World War demonstrated the military action expansion in space, in land, air and maritime environment, the troops movement being determined by winning victory or being defeated. It is the reason why "Section 6 Transportation" experienced such a development in terms of structure¹³. Each of the four bureaus and sub-bureaus had clear responsibilities, considering the complexity of the situation in terms of transport infrastructure, generated by the accomplishment of Greater Romania.

"Bureau 1 Movement, Exploitation, Transportation" was in charge of: developing the schedule and train tables as well as the plans of transportation for mobilisation and concentration considering different hypotheses; ensuring the liaison with the CFR general directorate, related to the personnel and equipment that were necessary for transportation, embarkation and disembarkation; ensuring the movement, mobilisation and concentration of the military personnel from railway commands and railway stations. "Bureau 2" had to conduct an intense activity in terms of documentation, statistics, and even operations, for which it was about to develop or update the album containing the plans of railway stations and the files with the installations in railway stations, the railways map, as well as to execute reconnaissance missions for embarkation; to establish and plan the destruction works necessary for war, to assess the situation of railway material inventory, locomotive and wagons that were available any moment. "Bureau Private Railways" was established considering that, at that time, there was an important network of railways owned by natural and legal persons in Romania. Such a situation required their study and use for operations, including provisions to upgrade them to be used for military purposes, to ensure the railway material, the operating personnel, as well as to establish security or destruction measures in case of force majeure. Romania's position as a country crossed by the Danube and a Black Sea littoral country required special attention to be paid to water transportation, therefore the bureau established for that purpose had to know the situation and to exercise control over the means of water transport belonging to the state

¹³ *Ibidem*, pp. 285-286.



The positions in the Great General Staff were partially filled on 15 June, when the "Ministry of War Order of Battle" was published in Monitorul Oficial (Official Gazette). Following a High Decree-Law to update the Law of the Ministry of War Organisation, through the "Order of the Day no. 51" on 14 May 1919, it was established the Great General Staff Order of Battle, Army Corps General Constantin Cristescu being re-appointed as Chief of Staff.

and to natural persons, to plan their use for transportation and operations.

Last but not least, "Section 7 Communications and Cantonments" was a heterogenous structure, having two bureaus with different responsibilities. "Bureau 1 Communications" was in charge of organising and managing the situation of wired and wireless telegraphy, optical telegraphy and telephony, and their use for the war; organising the issues related to the mobilisation of the telegraphy-postal services, the personnel belonging to the post and telegraph general directorate, as well as to the development of the instructions necessary for communications. Simultaneously with monitoring the aspects of novelty in the field in other armed forces, within the section it was also studied and analysed the way in which the air-station, aviation, roads and bridges were used for military operations. "Bureau 2 Cantonments" was mainly in charge of establishing the cantonment formations and their operations related to war; studying the cantonment regulations and cantonment instructions; developing cantonment maps of Romania and neighbouring countries. The structure within the Great General Staff, established at the end of April, was completed up to the summer of 1919, when generals, officers, non-commissioned officers, civilian personnel and troops were appointed to the sections and bureaus.

THE GREAT GENERAL STAFF ORDER OF BATTLE

The positions in the Great General Staff were partially filled on 15 June, when the "Ministry of War Order of Battle" was published in *Monitorul Oficial (Official Gazette)*. Following a High Decree-Law to update the Law of the Ministry of War Organisation, through the "Order of the Day no. 51" on 14 May 1919, it was established the Great General Staff Order of Battle, Army Corps General Constantin Cristescu being re-appointed as Chief of Staff. In the mentioned document it was presented the Division I, with the personnel and subordinate structures, including the Superior War School. The other positions were filled as follows: 2 brigadier generals or colonels, deputy chiefs of staff; 8 colonels or lieutenant colonels, chiefs of sections; 13 majors or lieutenant colonels, chiefs of bureaus; one lieutenant colonel (N), chief of bureau; one major, chief of office; 15 majors, chiefs or deputy

chiefs of bureaus; 36 captains, chiefs or deputy chiefs of bureaus; 2 administrators, lieutenants, chief registering clerks. The 79 officers, alongside non-commissioned officers and civilian personnel, to whom the Great General Staff Troops Squadron was added, had to solve the complex tasks in the armed forces in a difficult period, when a part of the military body was mobilised and engaged in operations, battles or order keeping missions in Hungary, Bessarabia and Bukovina, and another part was deployed or re-deployed on the territory under the jurisdiction of the Romanian state, considering that the integration of the territories united with the country was in an incipient phase.

The order of battle of Division II was not mentioned in any order issued in the spring of 1919, which was natural, considering all the positions in the structure were filled on 1/13 November 1918, when the Great General Headquarters was remobilised.

From the spring of 1919 up to the demobilisation of the Romanian Great General Headquarters, on 31 March 1920, the Great General Staff had only Division I available, which made the political and military decision-makers assign the structure the main task of: "coordinating the action to liberate Transylvania, the offensive in Budapest and then the preliminary activities for the Peace Treaty of Trianon"¹⁴. The structure of the Great General Staff in the spring of 1919 had some aspects of novelty compared to the period that was previous to the First World War, which was natural, considering the geopolitical and geostrategic characteristics of the time. However, mention should be made that the new organisation was one of transition, having a somehow temporary character. The structure meant to function in peacetime had to work in the context in which the armed forces were in a state of war, when the force generation and the various resources necessary for the mobilised troops as well as for the peace establishment fell under the sections and bureaus within Division I.

The Great General Headquarters demobilisation was conducted in compliance with the provisions of the "High Decree no. 1162" on 18 March 1920 and the "Great General Staff Instructions relative to the Armed Forces Demobilisation". For that purpose, on behalf

¹⁴ *Ibidem*, f. 289.



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The Great General Headquarters demobilisation was conducted in compliance with the provisions of the "High Decree no. 1162" on 18 March 1920 and the "Great General Staff Instructions relative to the Armed Forces Demobilisation". For that purpose, on behalf of the chief of that structure, General Henri Cihoski, as Deputy Chief of the General Staff, issued the "Order of the Day no. 10" on 25 March 1920, stipulating the way in which activities had to be executed.

of the chief of that structure, General Henri Cihoski, as Deputy Chief of the General Staff, issued the "Order of the Day no. 10" on 25 March 1920, stipulating the way in which activities had to be executed¹⁵: the staff sections and bureaus belonging to the Great General Headquarters had to merge with those of the Great General Staff; the services belonging to the Great General Headquarters had to merge with the similar directorates within the Ministry of War; the personnel issues had to fall under the Ministry of War, the entire archive being transferred there; the archive of the other sections, staff bureaus and services had to be transferred to the similar structures within the Great General Staff and the Ministry of War; the personnel had to be distributed to the sections, bureaus and services within the Great General Staff and the Ministry of War; the combatant reserve officers had to be demobilised until 31 March 1920, and the other officers in compliance with the Great General Staff instructions. "Order of the Day no. 10" practically marked the cessation of the activity at war of a command structure of the armed forces, which was operational up to the moment it was considered that the international situation allowed for it to happen as the external threats to the country disappeared, the possible arising problems being responded by the peace establishment.

CONCLUSIONS

In the context of the geopolitical and geostrategic developments in 1920 as well as of the rules that became customary in the Romanian armed forces, on 1 November 1920 it was established the complete order of battle of the Great General Staff, which also stipulated the appointment of the personnel in Division II as well as of the military attaches in some of the capitals in the world.

Therefore, the autumn of 1920 marked the Great General Staff fully organisation in compliance with the normative framework in the spring of 1919 and the beginning of specific activities conducted in peacetime, although some mobilised divisions continued to act in Bessarabia.

¹⁵ AMNR, *Collection MCG*, file no. 2261, pp. 32-33.

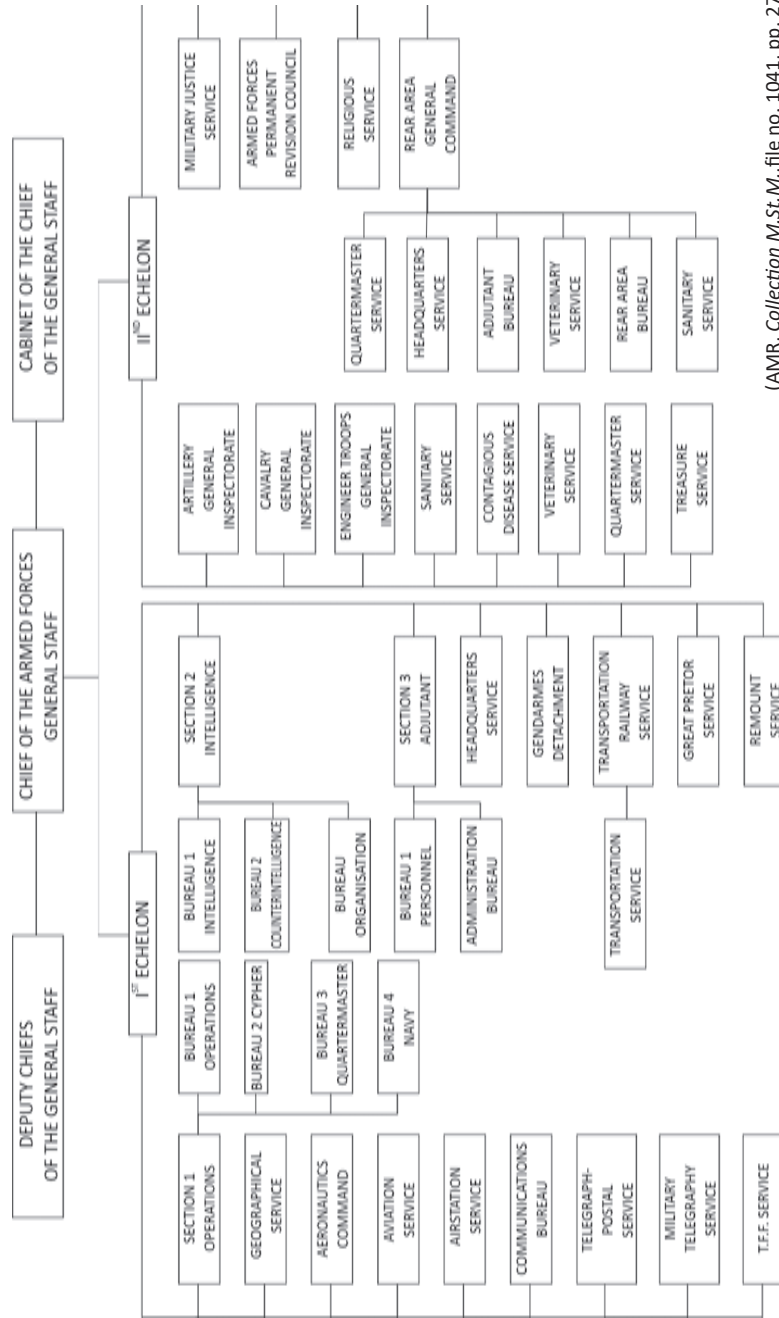
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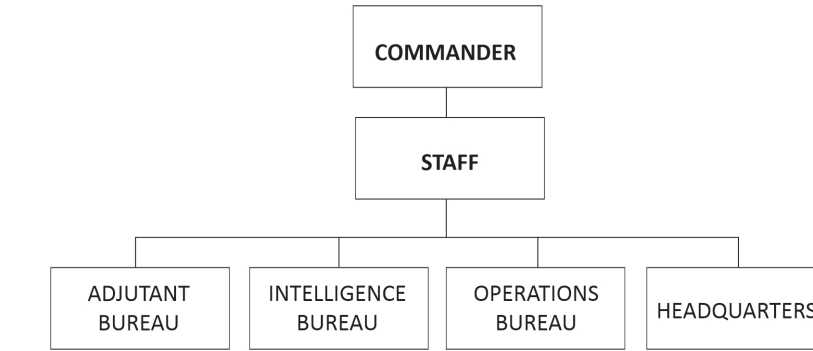


THE GENERAL STAFF ORGANISATION DURING THE ARMED FORCES REMOBILISATION IN THE AUTUMN OF 1918



(AMR, Collection M.St.M., file no. 1041, pp. 275-280)

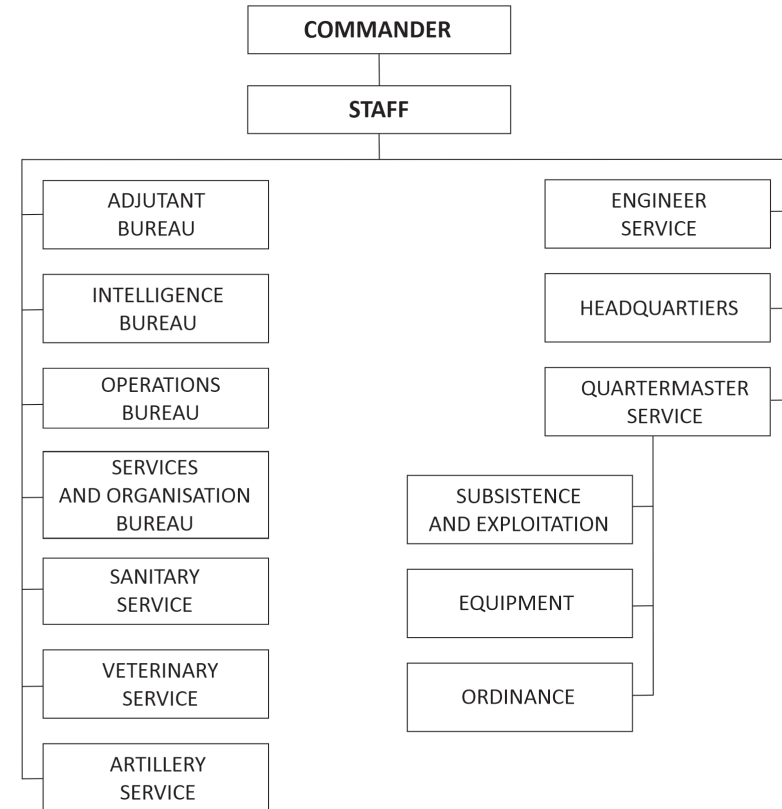
ORGANISATION OF COMMAND OF TROOPS IN TRANSYLVANIA ON 11/24 DECEMBER 1918



(AMNR, Collection Microfilme, roll P II 12166, c. 406)



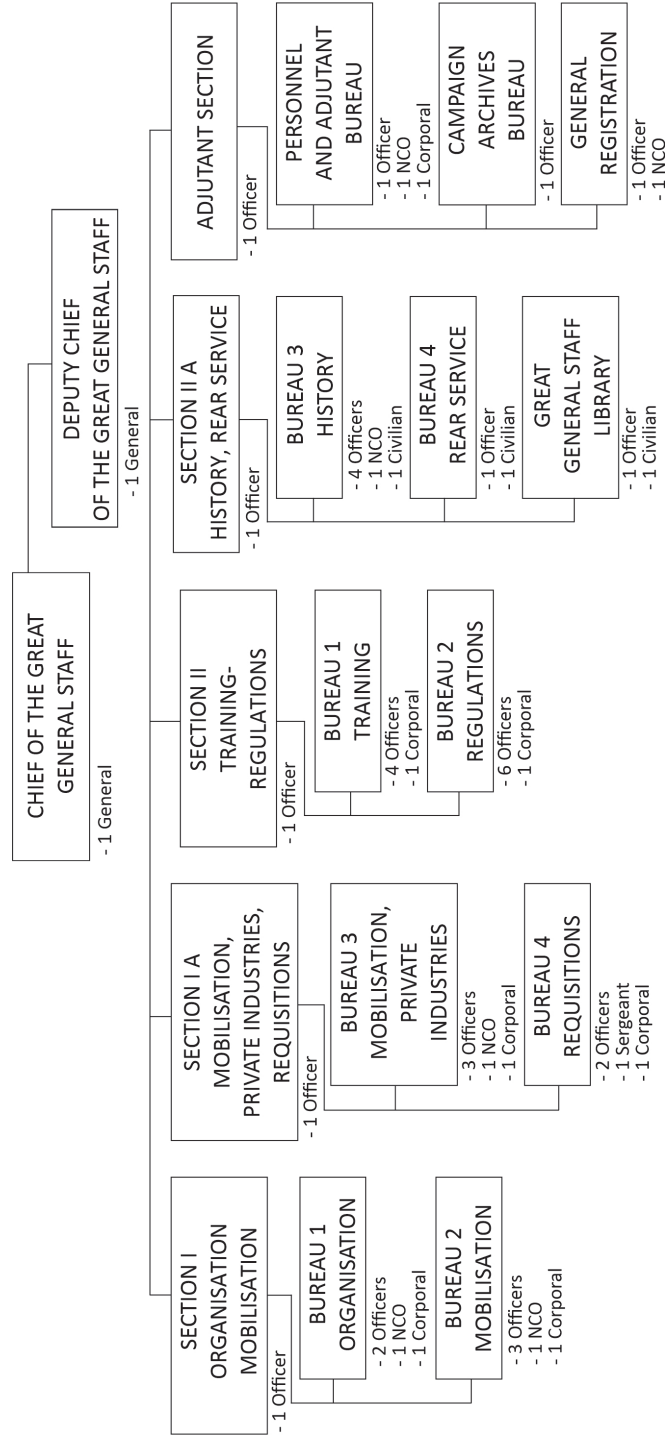
ORGANISATION OF COMMAND OF TROOPS IN TRANSYLVANIA ON 1 APRIL 1919



(AMNR, Collection Microfilme, roll P II 1.2166, c. 407)

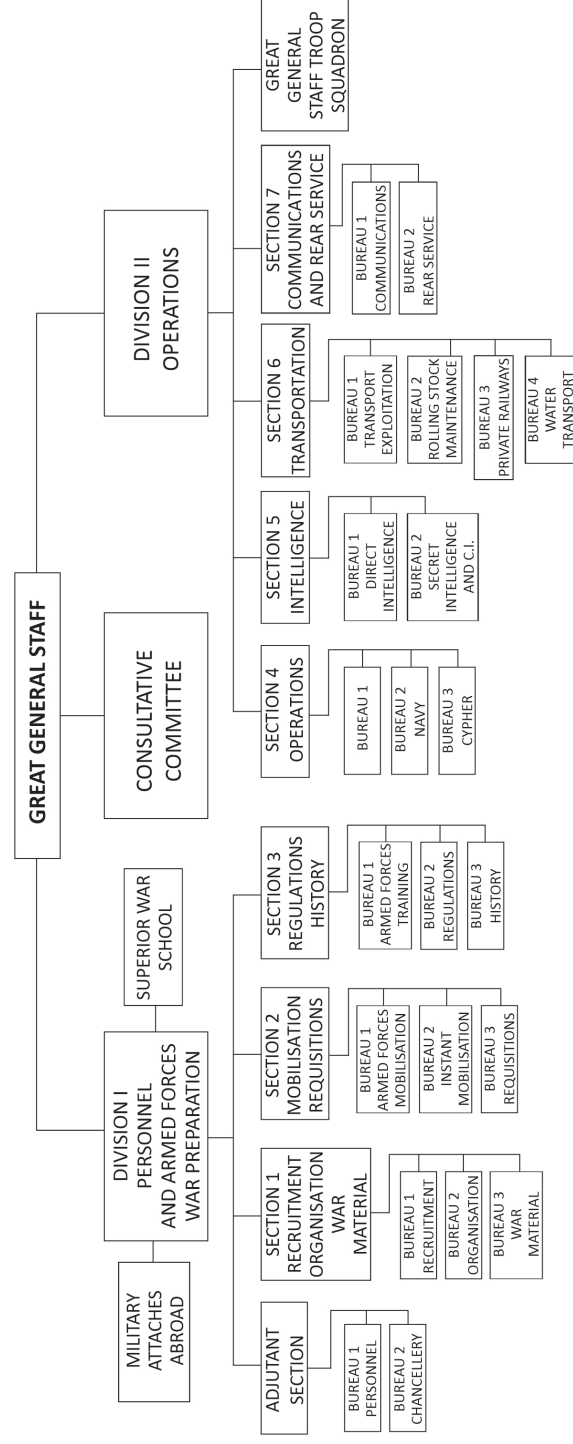


THE GREAT GENERAL STAFF ORGANISATION IN NOVEMBER 1918



30 (AMR, Collection M.C.G., file no. 1041, pp. 271-272)

GREAT GENERAL STAFF ORGANISATION IN MAY 1919



(AMR, Collection M.St.M., file no. 1041, pp. 287-289)





THE SITUATION OF THE ARMY AT ROMANIA'S RE-ENTRY INTO WAR ON 28 OCTOBER/10 NOVEMBER 1918

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The situation of the Romanian army on the eve of the second mobilisation resulted from the carrying out of the demobilisation imposed by the Peace Treaty of Bucharest signed on 24 April/7 May 1918. In other words, when mobilisation was declared, the operational status of all the higher commands, general services and military establishments of the Romanian army was the one corresponding to the last budget drawn up in peacetime, that is, from 1916. All these commands, services and establishments depended on the Ministry of War, in terms of both management and administration.

Keywords: First World War, re-entry into war, the situation of the Romanian army, the second mobilisation, carrying out of mobilisation.



THE GENERAL SITUATION OF THE ROMANIAN ARMY IN OCTOBER 1918

In detail, this situation of the army at Romania's re-entry into war was as follows:

1) *The order of battle.* At the decreeing of the 2nd mobilisation, the Romanian Army had all the superior commands, general services and military establishments, as "they were provided in the last budget in peacetime" (1916). All these commands, services and establishments depended on the Ministry of War, in terms of both management and administration. The large combat, tactical and strategic units of the army were 15 infantry divisions (1-15), grouped into 5 army corps (1-5) and 2 cavalry divisions (1-2). In addition to these large units, it also had special branches and troops, organised in special commands that depended directly on the Ministry of War, such as: heavy artillery, aeronautics, communication troops, border guards, gendarmes and naval forces¹.

2) *Deployment.* In the political and military situation in which Romania was at that time, when Muntenia, Oltenia and Dobrogea were still occupied by German-Austrian-Bulgarian troops, the whole army was deployed in the free territory of Moldova and in Basarabia. In Moldova, there were the commands, troops and services of the Army Corps 1 to 4. Army Corps 3 and 4 (only the part from Division 6 and Division 13) stayed in their normal peacetime deployment, and Army Corps 1, 2 and 3 (Division 5 and part of Division 6 and Division 13), whose usual peacetime deployment was in Muntenia and Oltenia, were temporary part of the units of Army Corps 4 and Army Corps 3. In Basarabia, there were the Army Corps 5 (Divisions 9, 10 and 15), which had the normal peace deployment in Dobrogea and in the eastern part of Muntenia, and Divisions 1 and 2 Cavalry².

¹ Romanian Military Archives/Arhivele Militare Române (AMR), *Great General Staff* Collection, file 131, p. 90.

² *Ibid*, p. 91.

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3) *Organic structure.* The Army Corps consisted of: 3 Infantry Divisions and 1 Cavalry Brigade of 2 regiments. The organic structure of the divisions was different, from the point of view of the component infantry units, namely: Divisions 1-10 consisted of 2 infantry brigades, each brigade with 2 regiments (Regiments 1-40); in addition, each of these divisions had a battalion of mountain infantry (1-10 Mountain Infantry); Divisions 11-15 consisted of 4 infantry brigades, each brigade having 2 regiments (Regiments 41-80). The rest was the same for all divisions, with 1 artillery brigade composed of 1 regiment field guns and 1 howitzer regiment; 1 battalion of engineers.

❖ *Infantry.* Regiments 1-40 each had 3 battalions. The battalion consisted of 4 infantry companies, of which 1 training and 3 personnel and 1 machine gun company (4 pieces); battalions of regiments from Divisions 9 and 10 were composed of the same number of companies, except that 3 infantry companies had the war strength, and the 4th company was of personnel. Regiments 41-80 consisted of a single battalion, with 3 infantry companies, with a small number of troops and a machine-gun company (4 pieces). The Mountain Infantry battalions were each made up of 4 rifle companies and one machine gun company (8 pieces)³.

❖ *Artillery.* Field artillery regiments consisted of 3 divisions, each division having 3 batteries, of which 1 for training and 2 of personnel; a total of 9 batteries. The howitzer regiments consisted of 2 divisions, each division having 1 training battery and 1 personnel battery; in addition, a mortar trench battery; a total of 5 batteries. Artillery and howitzer regiments from Divisions 9 and 10 had the batteries with the war personnel. The mountain artillery regiments consisted of 2 divisions, each division having 2 personnel batteries and a training battery; a total of 6 batteries. The heavy artillery regiments consisted of 3 divisions, 2 of them having 3 batteries (1 training and 2 personnel), and the 3rd of 2 batteries (1 training and 1 personnel); a total of 8 batteries.

❖ *Cavalry. Cavalry Division.* Divisions 1 and 2 Cavalry consisted each of 3 brigades of 2 regiments, 6 regiments in total; in addition, 1 cavalry artillery division, 3 batteries each and 1 cyclists company. The Roșiori

³ *Ibid*, p. 92.

Regiments (1-11) and Călărași Regiment 3, which were part of the Divisions 1 and 2 Cavalry, consisted of 4 squadrons and one machine-gun group each, with 2/3 of the war strength. The Călărași Regiments and the Royal Escort Regiment, which were included in the organic structure of the Călărași brigades of the Army Corps, were each made up of 4 squadrons and 1 machine-gun group (4 pieces), apart from the Regiment 10 Călărași, which consisted of 2 divisions, both with reinforced strength and assigned to Divisions 9 and 10 in Basarabia⁴.

❖ *Special troops.* The divisional engineer battalions were each made up of 3 engineers companies, 1 telegraph company, 1 bridge company and 1 warehouse company; Battalion 2 Engineers had, in addition, 1 warehouse of tools. The fortress engineers' battalion consisted of 3 engineers companies, 2 staff companies and 1 warehouse company. The railway regiment consisted of 8 railway companies and 1 warehouse company. The pontoon regiment consisted of 2 battalions and a warehouse company. The river battalion had 2 training companies and 2 staff ones, and the river battalion had 3 training and 2 staff companies. The Specialty Battalion consisted of: 1 wireless telephone company, 1 projecting company, 1 technical company and 1 warehouse company. The car traction corps had: 1 company car drivers; 1 company driving trucks; 2 technical companies; 1 group of armored light trucks; 1 motorcycle company; 1 warehouse company; 1 warehouse of materials and gasoline.

❖ *Aeronautics.* a) The aviation corps had: 1 command; 1 deposit company; 3 aviation groups (1, 2, 3); 1 group training – schools (4); general aviation reserve (workshops and central warehouse). The aviation group consisted of 4 squadrons (2 reconnaissance; 1 fighter; 1 technique), each with 8 aircraft; in total 24 aircraft (except the technical squadron). b) The air station corps had 25 balloons⁵.

❖ *Border guards.* The Border Corps had 3 regiments (1, 2, 3). The Border Guards Regiment consisted of 3 guard battalions (Regiment 3 Border Guards had only 2 battalions) and 1 training battalion.

❖ *Rural gendarmes.* The corps of rural gendarmes consisted of 3 brigades of 2 regiments each. The regiments structure varied between 4 companies (Regiment 5) and 11 companies (Regiment 2).

⁴ *Ibid*, p. 93.

⁵ *Ibid*, p. 94.



The Călărași Regiments and the Royal Escort Regiment, which were included in the organic structure of the Călărași brigades of the Army Corps, were each made up of 4 squadrons and 1 machine-gun group (4 pieces), apart from the Regiment 10 Călărași, which consisted of 2 divisions, both with reinforced strength and assigned to Divisions 9 and 10 in Basarabia.



At the demobilisation of the army, according to the Peace Treaty in Bucharest (art. 4), Divisions 9 and 10 Infantry and Divisions 1 and 2 Cavalry, which were in Basarabia, had the strength reinforced (2/3 of the war personnel), and Divisions 11-15 had an even smaller number, which represented only 1/3 of the number of Divisions 1-8, because the regiments of these divisions had only one battalion.

The pedestrian gendarmes. The pedestrian gendarmes battalion consisted of 2 companies (1 in Iași and another in Bucharest) and 1 warehouse section.

❖ *The military navy* had: the Navy Command; the Danube Division; Sea Division; general warehouses; Navy Arsenal. The Danube Division had the monitors: “Alexandru Lahovary”, “Mihail Kogălniceanu”, “I.C. Brătianu” and “Lascăr Catargiu”. The Sea Division had only the “Elisabeta” cruiser.

4. *The strength.* At the demobilisation of the army, according to the Peace Treaty in Bucharest (art. 4), Divisions 9 and 10 Infantry and Divisions 1 and 2 Cavalry, which were in Basarabia, had the strength reinforced (2/3 of the war personnel), and Divisions 1-8 had the reduced peacetime strength; finally, Divisions 11-15 had an even smaller number, which represented only 1/3 of the number of Divisions 1-8, because the regiments of these divisions had only one battalion. From this situation, which is not different from the one the Romanian army had around the 2nd mobilisation, it follows that:

- the total actual number of the Romanian army was 163, 240 people;
- the combat strength of the whole army was: 180 battalions; 260 batteries; 98 squares⁶.

5. *The state of army preparation for war*

❖ *Training.* The number of troops was very small, due to the numerous assignments and deployments required by the guarding of depots of all kinds, agricultural works, cultivation of vegetable gardens, gathering of forages, a large number of animals in care, because of the demobilisation of the army. Thus, troops training was almost entirely suspended, except for specialists training, which was also quite diminished. The officers’ training was also reduced; however, the army sought to complete the training of officers that returned from captivity. Normal training in the troop corps was planned to start on 1 November 1918, when agricultural works were completed.

❖ *Armament and ammunition.* According to the Focșani convention, from 1 March 1918, the artillery material of Divisions 11, 12, 13 was passed into the occupied territory; and in keeping with the Bucharest Treaty (art. 5) we were forced to send into the occupied territory “guns, machine guns, handguns, ammunition depots

⁶ *Ibid*, p. 95.

and carriages”, which became available through the elimination of the units and the personnel stipulated in the same treaty. With all these difficulties, the General Staff made all the efforts and managed to provide the necessary weapons and ammunition for possible mobilisation. Thus, the commission set up at the General Staff to plan the armament and ammunition to be sent into the occupied territory, according to Art.5 of the Bucharest Treaty and the convention concluded in Bucharest, on 15/28 August 1918, managed to send there weapons, machine guns, rifles and firearms that were old and not in service. Under these conditions, on the eve of the 2nd mobilisation, the Romanian army had a sufficient amount of armament and ammunition remaining in the free territory of Moldova, namely: 160 field batteries (75 Md. 1904, 75 French and 76.2 Russian) and 65 howitzers (105-150 gauge). This number of batteries was able to meet the needs of 18 divisions, considering the normal artillery supply of a division, 9 field cannon batteries and 3-4 howitzer batteries; 31 heavy batteries (120, 150 and 155 guns and 120 howitzers); 100 trench mortars of 58 m/m; 15 mountain batteries; machine guns (max. 6.5, St. Etienne and Hotsckiss of 8 m/m, English of 7.7 and Russian of 7.62), machine guns (Gladiator of 8 m/m and English of 7.7) and handguns were also sufficient for arming 18 divisions, with an average supply of 8 machine guns for a battalion and 6 machine guns for a company⁷.

The remaining ammunition in Moldova ensured: 7-10 days of fire, for weapons and machine guns; 4-7 days of fire, for machine guns; 5 1/2 days of fire for grenades; 9 days of fire, for field cannon; 10-14 days of fire, for field howitzers; 5-15 days of fire, for heavy artillery.

The quantity of available ammunition, although sufficient for beginning possible operations, nevertheless limited the duration of the probable operations, because we had neither the means nor the facilities necessary for their manufacture in the country, nor the possibility to obtain them from the allies, from whom we were completely isolated at that time. However, on the other hand, Romania, given the situation it was in, could mobilise only a maximum of 10 divisions. It followed that the Romanian army had sufficient armament and an average ammunition quantity of 15-20 days of fire, which fully justified the renewal of arms in these circumstances⁸.

⁷ *Ibid*, p. 96.

⁸ *Ibid*, p. 97.



On the eve of the 2nd mobilisation, the Romanian army had a sufficient amount of armament and ammunition remaining in the free territory of Moldova, namely: 160 field batteries (75 Md. 1904, 75 French and 76.2 Russian) and 65 howitzers (105-150 gauge).



The quantities of subsistence found on the troops and in the warehouses of the Ministry of War were far from the supply needs of the army, in case of any mobilisation. In the country, however, there were supplies that could feed the army for at least a month; and their gathering in warehouses required 10-15 days.

❖ *Subsistences and equipment.* The economic state in which Moldova was after the Peace Treaty from Bucharest was signed created a very difficult situation in terms of meeting the food and clothing needs of the army. Industrial facilities were quite reduced and their production capacity was limited; and the resources of the territory were drained by the war and the overpopulation of Moldova. The Ministry of War and its supply bodies were not able to make available the equipment and subsistence necessary for the army that was under arms, to create deposits and reserves for mobilisation, because in this situation the supply of the army and the civilian population was made by the Ministry of Industry and the Supply Department, established at the Presidency of the Council of Ministers. The need to ensure the existence of the civilian population meant that part of the War Ministry's subsistence deposits, as well as part of the army's reserve feed, was passed on to the Supply Department, which distributed them to the civilian population. Under these circumstances, even the troops under arms were deprived of food and clothing⁹.

Subsistence. The quantities of subsistence found on the troops and in the warehouses of the Ministry of War were far from the supply needs of the army, in case of any mobilisation. In the country, however, there were supplies that could feed the army for at least a month; and their gathering in warehouses required 10-15 days.

❖ *Equipment.* The equipment available was quite insufficient, compared to the planned staff to mobilise (200,000 people). Among the main items were missing: 50% coats, 60% jackets, 40% pants, 15% boots (existing footwear was degraded), 10% shirts, 25% drawers.

❖ *The sanitary and pharmaceutical service.* Since the demobilisation of the army, most of the troops remained without doctors, because of the 149 corps troops, only 77 had military doctors, and the rest used civilian doctors. The inferior sanitary personnel were also insufficient for the peace strength, because during the campaign the people from the last 2 contingents, necessary for the health specialty, had not been assigned to the sanitary companies. The sanitary formations of the campaign had been completely abolished, with the demobilisation of the army, according to the Peace

⁹ *Ibid*, p. 98.

Treaty in Bucharest. The sanitary material had been collected from the troops, which had no place to keep it; but the classification of this material had not yet ended at the date of the 2nd mobilisation and because of this the endowment with sanitary material of the different formations encountered difficulties. The amount of existing sanitary material was plentiful, although part of the campaign sanitary material had been sent at different peace formations (hospitals, sanitariums). Part of the sanitary material such as: bags, tents, trolleys, canvas, towels, stoves was in the same state of degradation in which it remained at the demobilisation, their repair could not be carried out due to lack of funds, material and workshops¹⁰.

❖ *Veterinary service.* At the demobilisation of the army, besides the active military veterinary doctors, there were still a number of 70 reserve veterinarians, temporarily called into service, so at the 2nd mobilisation, the army still needed a number of 40 veterinarians. The training of horse nurses and horsemen was completed by the special school, which worked after the demobilisation of the army. Surgical and horsemanship material, as well as the vaccine required for mobilisation, were also completed.

❖ *Horse Service.* The number of army horses was very small because, besides the number of horses sent in Muntenia with the artillery equipment, the command of the German Army of Occupation forced us to sell another 3,557 horses, the best ones. Filling the number by import from Argentina could not be achieved until the second mobilisation. At this time, the infantry regiments, the howitzer and heavy artillery regiments had a number of horses that outweighed the budgetary effective; the field artillery and the cavalry regiments (they had about 100 horses by squadron) had also deficits in horses compared to the budgetary effective. In Moldova and Basarabia, however, there were the necessary means for completing the mobilisation effective of units and services belonging to the mobilisable divisions of Army Corps 3, 4 and 5. At the demobilisation of the army, a large number of horses remained, but they were extremely weak, due to the shortages in the winter of 1917/1918. For their care, the troop had neither people nor feed. The scab that had become chronic and their terrible physiological state had made

¹⁰ *Ibid*, p. 99.



At the demobilisation of the army, besides the active military veterinary doctors, there were still a number of 70 reserve veterinarians, temporarily called into service, so at the 2nd mobilisation, the army still needed a number of 40 veterinarians.



The measures taken by the government and the General Post Department to carry out the terms of the Bucharest Peace Treaty paralysed all the measures taken by the General Staff for the purpose of preparing the communications for war. For this reason, at the mobilisation, establishing and manning military offices were a difficult task, due to the lack of personnel, which had been evacuated to Bucharest.

them unusable. In order to be saved, they had been distributed free to the inhabitants, keeping only the strictly necessary ones at the units. But due to the lack of food in the summer of 1918 and because of the poor condition they were in at that time, many of the horses died and others were slaughtered at the slaughterhouse. So, in general, there was a lack of horses¹¹.

❖ *Communications.* When the army was demobilised, the entire telegraph-postal service was passed to the General Post, Telegraph and Telephone Department and the personnel and material had been evacuated to Bucharest, under German occupation, without the knowledge and advice of the General Staff. Direct telegraphic and telephone connections between General Staff and commands, the military telegraph-telephone offices from Iași, Vaslui, Bârlad, Tecuci, Galați, Bacău and Botoșani, as well as those of the Basarabia commandments had been abolished by the government. The wireless telephone service that had 4 goniometric positions (Iași, Chișinău, Bolgrad and Bălți) had also passed in September to the General Post, Telegraph and Telephone Department so that the specialities battalion remained without staff and personnel and unable to train new staff. There were also 4 pigeon stations, in Botoșani, Chișinău, Bălți and Bolgrad. Therefore, the measures taken by the government and the General Post Department to carry out the terms of the Bucharest Peace Treaty paralysed all the measures taken by the General Staff for the purpose of preparing the communications for war. For this reason, at the mobilisation, establishing and manning military offices were a difficult task, due to the lack of personnel, which had been evacuated to Bucharest; the repair of the lines destroyed by the German troops in retreat and the inclement weather was incomplete, due to the lack of material, which had also been evacuated to București¹².

❖ *Transport.* At the time mobilisation was declared, there were 817 locomotives in Moldova, of which only 163 were operational and about 14,000 wagons. Due to the small number of locomotives in operation, the possibilities for rail transport were rather limited. Repair of the damaged material could not be performed due to lack of raw materials, workshops and spare parts. The fuel situation was also precarious. The fuel reserve, proposed by the General Staff,

¹¹ *Ibid*, p. 100.

¹² *Ibid*, p. 101.



which had allocated for this purpose 4 battalions of workers, for the cutting of wood in different forests, had not been fully achieved, because although in the forests there were 90,000 m.c. (4,500 wagons) cut wood, the transport to the stations was not organised and the crisis persisted. In October 1918, the General Department of Railways obtained from the German Occupation Command 90 wagons of fuel daily, brought from the occupied territory. Under these conditions, at that time, the fuel supplies were only for 5-6 days and only for 8-9 liners daily.

THE CARRYING OUT OF MOBILISATION

1) The measures taken for the army to enter the war

The High Decree regarding the mobilisation of the army was given by King Ferdinand on 27 October 1918 in Iași and stated: "Art. I. All the commands, army corps and services of the army are at war. The first day of mobilisation: 28 October 1918. Art. II. The war troops will be supplemented with people from the reinforcement, reserve and militias contingents, up to the 1894 contingent included".

In order to implement the High Decree, the General Staff gave the same order to all commands that the mobilisation would be executed according to the instructions given by the General Staff in July 1918. However, the rush with which the mobilisation had to be carried out, in order to help the Danube allied army in the operations of the Danube crossing, as well as the technical difficulties, caused the mobilisation directives to be changed even from the beginning. Thus, on the very first day of mobilisation – 28 October 1918 – the General Staff changed the first stipulations of these instructions, stipulating in the order that it stated that "the people from reinforcement contingents will be called, i.e. the 1916-1912 contingent included, from Moldova. For the call of the reserve and militias contingents, orders will follow".

Regarding the call of the reserve officers, the General Staff also decided on 28 October 1918 that "out of the inferior reserve officers only the youngest second lieutenants and lieutenants will be kept mobilised, needed to man the staff resulting from the table with personnel under arms and contingents 1916-1912"¹³.

¹³ *Ibid*, p. 102.

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Also on the first day of mobilisation, the General Headquarters specified the number of units to be mobilised and the number of personnel as follows: a) No longer mobilising: army headquarters; heavy artillery divisions; the units in group II¹⁴. Therefore, the following structures were to mobilise: Divisions 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 13, 14, 1 mountain infantry and 2 mountain infantry; 1 cavalry and 2 cavalry; army corps commands; mountain divisions; the air defence division; wireless telegraph stations; aeronautical groups; pontoon companies; sections of cars, ambulances, trucks; detachments of pedestrians and rural gendarmes. The border guard regiments were mobilised but without the establishment of the Border Division¹⁵.

b) The strenght

I. Troops. The infantry had to mobilise the contingents 1912-1916 only for the infantry and mountain infantry regiments, which entered in the structure of the divisions mentioned above. For infantry companies, the number of 100-120 people was established and for the machine-gun companies the number of 126 people. Company 4 from the battalion was dissolved, with its staff being completed the other companies in the battalion. The marching units were no longer organised.

The cavalry mobilised the regiments of cavalry and Regiment 3 Cavalry which entered in the structure of the 2 cavalry divisions, as well as a squadron of the regiments: 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10 Cavalry, intended to form the divisional cavalry of the mobilised divisions. For both the cavalry divisions and the divisional cavalry, the number of about 100 people was fixed for a squadron. In order to complete the numbers, the 1915 and 1914 contingents were mobilised¹⁶.

Artillery. The artillery and howitzer regiments of the mobilised divisions called the 1908-1915 included contingents. The battery was still with 4 guns and 6 caissons. Mountain artillery and air defence mobilised the same contingents.

¹⁴ The instructions given by the General Staff on 1 July regarding the mobilisation of the army stipulated that it would be done in 2 large groups: Group I, comprising units and services, which given their normal deployment would mobilise in a relatively short time, namely: Divisions 6, 7, 8, 13, 14, which had the majority of reservists in Moldova; Divisions 9, 10 and 12 Cavalry, which were in Basarabia and had reinforced effectives; Divisions 1, 2 Mountain Infantry and Border Guards, which consisted of mountain infantry battalions (which actually had larger numbers than the infantry regiments) and border guards regiments (which almost had the mobilisation strength). Group II comprised the rest of the large units, army corps and services that were part of the army, whose reservists were in the occupied territory.

¹⁵ AMR, *Great General Staff* Collection, file 131, p. 103.

¹⁶ *Ibid*, p. 104.

Pioneer troops and communications. Battalions 6, 7, 8, 13 and 14 Engineers each mobilised: a company of engineers, a section of light bridges and 2 sections of telegraphy. Battalion 9 and 10 Engineers mobilised: one engineer company, one section of light bridges and one telegraph section. For the engineers and communications troops, the contingents 1915-1912 included were mobilised.

The aeronautics had to mobilise the 1915-1914 contingents and the rural gendarmes were to mobilise the 1912-1915 contingents.

II. Services

a) Ammunition columns

Each division mobilised a single column of ammunition, consisting of 3 semi-columns, one of them artillery, the second howitzer and the third infantry. The ammunition columns of Divisions 1 and 2 Mountain Infantry were mobilised by the artillery and howitzer regiments of Divisions 8 and 7 respectively. The people needed for the ammunition columns of Divisions 9 and 10 are given by the artillery and howitzer regiments of Divisions 8 and respectively 13.

b) Divisional ambulances

For each division, an ambulance unit was mobilised with a stretcher unit. The ambulance sections of Divisions 1 and 2 Mountain Infantry were mobilised by the Company 4 Sanitary. For the divisional ambulance units, the 1912-1915 contingents included were mobilised.

c) The divisional subsistence columns were each made up of: 1 column staff; 2 subsistence sections, mobilised by the train division of the Army Corps; 1 operating group, with cattle herd, formed by the care of the subsistence companies of the army corps. To complete the subsistence columns, the Divisions 3, 4 and 5 Train mobilised the people from 1912-1915 included contingents.

d) The divisional campaign bakeries were organised as follows: 1 staff bakery; 5 sections each with 2 ovens. To complete the effective, the subsistence companies 3, 4 and 5 mobilise people from the 1915-1912 included contingent.

Sedentary parties

Each mobilised troop corps must also form a sedentary part, consisting of the company (in the infantry), the squadron (in the cavalry) and the section (in the artillery) of storage. The commander of the warehouse unit was also the commander of the sedentary part.



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Each mobilised troop corps must also form a sedentary part, consisting of the company (in the infantry), the squadron (in the cavalry) and the section (in the artillery) of storage. The commander of the warehouse unit was also the commander of the sedentary part.



The rest of the people, left from the active parts, over the effective established above, were to be used for the guarding of the various deposits and the management of the army corps. For the organisation of the sedentary parts commands, an order was to be given later¹⁷.

Horses. Meeting the needs of horses in units and services had to be done as follows: from the horses owned by the units, being kept by the inhabitants, only 2/3 of the number of those in a village, namely the best horses, had to be brought to the army corps; the remaining 1/3 were left in the preservation of the inhabitants. For the artillery regiments in the Bacău and Roman garrison, no more than 2,000 horses were brought from Basarabia, which had been provided in the instructions given for completing the necessary horses for the units in Group I. On 2/15 November, the General Staff, considering that, in this situation, the mobilised divisions no longer needed the complete divisional services, decided the following: 1) Ammunition columns were no longer organised. The divisions would therefore have available only the ammunition on the army corps and consequently the people belonging to these formations were discharged. 2) The ambulance sections no longer used the carriages and vans. They would only have the necessary personnel for hospitalisation and 2 sanitary trucks. The number of an ambulance unit organised on this basis was: 8 officers, 97 troops, 8 animals and 4 vehicles. 3) The subsistence columns were no longer organised but instead a division of 2-5 trucks was available for each division. 4) The campaign bakery mobilised only 6 ovens. The subsistence company provided the specialised personnel (bakers) and the respective train division provided the conductors. The train division also made available to each of the campaign bakeries 50 waggons full of horses or oxen. The number of campaign bakers was: 2 officers, 149 troops, 243 animals and 64 waggons¹⁸.

Mobilised units

From the total number of 15 infantry divisions and 2 cavalry divisions available to the Romanian army in peacetime, Romania could mobilise only: 5 divisions (6, 7, 8, 13 and 14) that were deployed in peacetime in the free territory of Moldova; 2 divisions (9 and 10) which, although had their peacetime deployment in the occupied

¹⁷ *Ibid*, p. 105.

¹⁸ *Ibid*, p. 106.

territory, nevertheless had reinforced troops, at the date of the mobilisation decree; 2 divisions of mountain infantry that were established at the mobilisation; 2 cavalry divisions. That is, a total of 9 infantry divisions and 2 cavalry divisions were mobilised, making more than half of the entire army's staff. Out of these large mobilised units, 2 infantry divisions (9 and 10) and the 2 cavalry divisions were located and immobilised in Basarabia, due to the political and military situation of this Romanian territory, therefore they were not available for operations in Transilvania or in the occupied territory. Also, Division 8, which operated in Bucovina. Therefore, only 6 infantry divisions (6, 7, 13, 14, 1 Mountain Infantry and 2 Mountain Infantry) were available for western operations¹⁹.

3) The way the mobilisation was carried out. The mobilisation of the large units proceeded as follows: the mobilisation of Division 6 was made with some difficulties and was delayed due to the fact that at the decreeing of mobilisation a part of the territory of this division, namely the one corresponding to the units with headquarters in Focșani, was occupied by the German troops. The delay was also caused by the fact that, at that time, all the units of Division 6, with the planned staff, were ordered to enter the occupied territory to ensure the order and to take control of the deposits left by the enemy. Operations to complete the established mobilisation personnel continued until the beginning of December 1918, when Division 6 received an order to be transported to Transilvania²⁰.

Division 7, having all the elements for mobilisation in the free territory, was able to mobilise in good conditions. With all the bad weather, the people responded to the call, so that at the dates prescribed by the mobilisation instructions, the troops and services of this division, except for the artillery, were ready to be formed, with the full number of people, horses and vehicles. However, due to the lack of horses, the artillery could not mobilise all the determined units, so that not all the batteries could be ready by the time when the division started operations in Transilvania. The division could mobilise, in the beginning, only 2 batteries from Regiment 4 Artillery, and the rest was completed later. With regard to artillery, Division 7 encountered the same difficulty as Division 6.

¹⁹ *Ibid*, p. 107.

²⁰ *Ibid*, p. 108.



The mobilisation of Division 6 was made with some difficulties and was delayed due to the fact that at the decreeing of mobilisation a part of the territory of this division, namely the one corresponding to the units with headquarters in Focșani, was occupied by the German troops.



When the mobilisation was declared, the situation of the units of Division 8 was as follows: Regiments 13 and 25 Infantry were in the garrisons of residence; Regiments 29 and 37 Infantry were in Bucovina, on the march to Cernăuți.

At the decreeing of mobilisation, divisions 9 and 10 were located in Basarabia and occupied sectors on the Nistru River. They had reinforced troops, approximately 10,000 troops in each division, which met the actual conditions set for the 2nd mobilisation.

When the mobilisation was declared, the situation of the units of Division 8 was as follows: Regiments 13 and 25 Infantry were in the garrisons of residence; Regiments 29 and 37 Infantry were in Bucovina, on the march to Cernăuți.

Regiment 12 Artillery and 17 Howitzers, each had a battery in Bucovina, organised by the entire available staff of the regiment, and the rest remained in the garrisons of residence, due to the lack of horses and harnesses. The army corps had in the garrisons of residence the assistant of the chief of staff with small personnel, which was insufficient to prepare and complete the mobilisation works. The command of the division was in the process of moving from Burdujeni to Cernăuți, far from the mobilisation residences of the subordinate units, which had to communicate their mobilisation orders and instructions and at the same time involved in the management of the operations in Bucovina. For these reasons, the mobilisation of Division 8 was made under difficult conditions²¹.

At the decreeing of mobilisation, divisions 9 and 10 were located in Basarabia and occupied sectors on the Nistru River. They had reinforced troops, approximately 10,000 troops in each division, which met the actual conditions set for the 2nd mobilisation.

The mobilisation of Division 13 and 14 could not be effectively executed because they had the majority of the mobilisation personnel in the contingents in the reserve element, so that the completion of the personnel became impossible only from the complementary contingents determined to be called. In addition to the insufficient number of troops, the following obstacles were added to mobilise these divisions: Division 13 had in the occupied territory 1/2 of the infantry regiments (Regiment 47/72 and Regiment 48/49) and the artillery regiments (23 Artillery and 28/3 Howitzers); the units of Division 14 had to organise and satisfy all the guard services of the penitentiaries throughout the territory of the Army Corps 4. Regarding the military and political situation, created by the conclusion of the general armistice, in day 4 of mobilisation, the General Staff decided that the regiments of these divisions that were to meet on the 8th day of mobilisation, remain in place in their garrisons and continue mobilisation. In fact, however, these divisions not taking part in the operations were no longer mobilised²².

²¹ *Ibid*, p. 109.

²² *Ibid*, p. 110.

Division 1 and 2 Mountain Infantry

These divisions were created at mobilisation, by transforming the Mountain Infantry battalions which entered in the organic composition of the infantry divisions at peace into regiments and grouping these regiments into the divisions of mountain infantry as follows: Division 1 Mountain Infantry consists of Regiment 1, 5, 4 and 6 Mountain Infantry, coming from the transformation of the battalions of mountain infantry with the same number, which belonged to Divisions 1, 2, 7 and 4 respectively; Division 2 Mountain Infantry consists of Regiments 2, 3, 9 and 10 Mountain Infantry, which came from the transformation of the battalions of mountain infantry with the same number, which belonged to Divisions 3, 5, 9 and 10 respectively. The completion of the mobilisation forces planned for the regiments of the mountain infantry divisions is made from the resources and with the help of the infantry divisions to which the respective battalions of mountain infantry had belonged organically. This procedure was determined, on the one hand, by the situation of the territory of the country largely occupied by the enemy troops, and on the other hand by the rush with which the mobilisation was to be carried out. The artillery of the hunting divisions was formed by putting together elements from the existing infantry divisions, namely: The Division 1 Mountain Infantry, which was the first to enter Transilvania, had only 1 battery from Regiment 11 Artillery.; and during the operations in Transilvania it was assigned a battery from Regiment 12 Artillery, Regiment 17 Howitzers and Regiment 1 Mountain Artillery; Division 2 Mountain Infantry, which later entered Transilvania, initially had 1 battery from Regiment 4 Artillery, Regiment 24 Artillery, Regiment 8 Howitzers and Regiment 2 Mountain Artillery²³.

At the mobilisation, the Divisions 1 and 2 Cavalry were located in Basarabia and had reinforced troops, approximately 3,000 troops for each division. The completion of the number of people was difficult because some of the demobilised people were in the occupied territory, especially those of the Division 2 Cavalry. But the greatest difficulties came from the lack of horses and their state of weakness, which made them largely unusable.

²³ *Ibid*, p. 111.



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At the mobilisation, the Divisions 1 and 2 Cavalry were located in Basarabia and had reinforced troops, approximately 3,000 troops for each division.



4) Difficulties and weaknesses encountered

The duration of the mobilisation far exceeded the time prescribed by the mobilisation instructions, both because of the weather, since winter had already begun, the transport difficulties, but mainly because of the lack of materials. In particular, they lacked the equipment, the means for subsistence as well as the horses necessary for artillery and cavalry. The lack of horses was so great that the divisions could not meet their needs regarding horses, at the beginning of the mobilisation, except for only one or at most 2 batteries of each artillery or howitzer regiment. Regarding the transports, at the decreeing of mobilisation the railways were able to execute all the transports, also maintaining civil trains in circulation. As soon as the occupied territory became free, the transport crisis began to feel more and more accentuated, on the one hand, due to the lack of locomotives and materials, the lack of fuel, and on the other hand due to the damages done by the enemy in the occupied territory²⁴.

Despite all these material difficulties, the morale of the population both in the free territory and in the occupied territory, which now was freed, after almost 2 years of terror, changed for the better; the population responded immediately to the second call²⁵.

The 2nd mobilisation of the Romanian Army, as a whole, cannot be considered as a mobilisation itself because of the political and military situation. It was made only partially, both in the number of large units and as strength. Indeed, if by the time the 2nd mobilisation was decreed, both the military and the political situation required the re-entry of Romania into the war and therefore the mobilisation of all its forces, then after the conclusion of the general armistice, a general mobilisation itself was no longer justified and that is why the Romanian General Headquarters only proceeded to a reorganisation of the large units and to operations to increase and complete the number of personnel, in relation to the more or less threatening situation of the neighbours. This increase in personnel was required by imperative operational needs, namely: 1) Guaranteeing the Nistru border, against any action by Russian Bolshevik troops or bands. This was all the more important now after the end of the general armistice, when the Austro-German occupation troops in Ukraine withdrew into their homeland;

²⁴ *Ibid*, p. 112.

²⁵ *Ibid*, p. 113.

2) Occupying and enforcing order in Dobrogea where Bulgarian gangs terrorised the Romanian authorities and population; 3) Protecting the Romanian population in Transylvania against the crimes and robberies of the Hungarian regular and irregular armies as well as stopping the Hungarian provocations. In these conditions, the 2nd mobilisation – its preparation and declaration – can be considered as a mobilisation only in the initial phase, and the phase that follows after the conclusion of the general armistice should only be considered as an operation to increase the number of personnel²⁶.

This increase in personnel continued as long as the operational needs of Transylvania and Hungary required it until the achievement of our national and territorial aspirations.

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THE CONCEPTION OF THE ARMED FORCES GENERAL STAFF REGARDING THE DEFENCE OF DOBROGEA AT THE BEGINNING OF THE 20TH CENTURY

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At the beginning of the twentieth century, the Romanian General Staff was busy constructing Romania's defence doctrine. They were focused on the most probable situations, in which Romania would be forced to defend itself.

The officers of the General Staff used reports from the military attachés in Petersburg and Sofia and identified that Dobrogea was targeted by two potential aggressors – Russia and Bulgaria.

This is why the planners made detailed drafts to those defence plans, focusing on the different defence lines from the Danube Delta to the Black Sea Coast, in the case of a Russian aggression. For southern Dobrogea, a delicate area after the signing of Peace of Bucharest in 1913, when Romania received the counties of Durostor and Caliacra (or Quadrilateral, as it appears on Romanian military maps), new alignments were viewed as essential for the defence of the area against the Bulgarians.

Keywords: World War I, Romanian Army, military doctrine, military attachés, defence line.



THE FIRST MILITARY MEASURES TAKEN BY THE GENERAL STAFF OF THE ROMANIAN ARMY FOR THE DEFENCE OF DOBROGEA AT THE BEGINNING OF THE 20TH CENTURY

From the study of the specialised literature, it can be concluded that the *doctrine consists in deducing a certain number of principles, corroborated with the development on the map or on the field of a significant number of concrete cases and, thereafter, by making these principles enter into the blood of everybody. Thus, all officers will work in the same way, because they will be guided by the same principles*¹. By extension, the military doctrine was appreciated as a *science, erudition, learning [...] principle, conduct rule*², actually being *the life of an army, its moral force*³.

Studies during 1878-1913 have shown that, from a military point of view, Dobrogea, without Silistra and its fortified positions, represented a burden for the defensive system of modern Romania which needed engineering works and concentrations of forces that would have weakened the defence excentered to multi-area concept⁴. Still, even in these conditions, the General Staff of the Romanian Army was conceiving the organisation of the defence of the country's territorial integrity in a unitary system in which Dobrogea played the role of a strategic outpost that would be tested within a large-scale military confrontation, the military potential of the army and the Romanian state⁵.

Before the First World War, in the conception of the General Staff of the Romanian Army, South Dobrogea was considered as a possible

¹ *Revista Armatei*, year XII, October, 1895, p. 782.

² *Revista Infanteriei*, year XVIII, July-August 1914, p. 56.

³ *România Militară*, year XIII, December 1896, p. 355.

⁴ Locotenent-colonel Ioan Munteanu, *Cadrilaterul – istoria unei controverse*, in "Anuarul de studii de politică de apărare și istorie militară", Editura Pro Transilvania, București, 1997, p. 185.

⁵ Romanian Military Archives/Arhivele Militare Române (AMR), *Microfilms* Collection, P.II 1922, c. 418.

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area of concentration of the Bulgarian army and as an alignment of departure to its offensive in case of an aggression on the land between the Danube and the Black Sea⁶.

The defence of Dobrogea was conceived by the Romanian General Staff, by arranging in covering the border, besides the existing Great Units, the guards, infantry and cavalry troops, with missions of surveillance and reconnaissance. A first defence position, with relatively insular character, included the fortified alignments Turtucaia, Silistra and Bazargic, located in space at appreciable distances, measuring in a straight line 113 km, along the front. The second position passed on the alignment located towards the central part of the South Dobrogea plateau towards Canlia (immediately in the North-West of the Bugeac lake) and Mangalia, while the third position followed the alignment Rasova, Cobadin, Topraisar. Finally, the second position included *the bridgehead* from Cernavoda, then it continued on Medgidia-Agigea alignment.

At the beginning of the 20th century, in the opinion of some military researchers, such as Colonel Marin Ionescu-Dobrogeanu, the defence of Dobrogea, at least in front of an attack that would have come from the South or from the sea, had major deficiencies. Therefore, a good connoisseur of the realities in the field, the famous military historian proposed a more economical and effective border guard system. Field organisation at the end of the 20th century, with regard to the defence of the Southern border of Dobrogea, was assigned to eight permanent and non-permanent infantry companies unevenly spread over a distance of 131 km. These were positioned at certain pickets that scrutinised the border line irregularly, the distances between them being quite large, without means of connection. Moreover, the rugged landscape in the area was an appropriate factor that further limited the effectiveness of the defence. Thus, a permanent battalion was placed at Ostrov, with three deployed companies in this locality, and one in Asarlîc, at no less than 69 km distance from the border. If the border guard in the immediate neighbourhood of the above-mentioned city up to picket 14 was rarely carried out by the soldiers of the three companies recalled, from picket 28 to Asarlîc, the disposition

⁶ Romanian National Archives/Arhivele Naționale Române (ANR), *Royal Family* Collection, vol. I, file no. 2/1913, ff. 2-12.

was insured by the 4th Company of the battalion. Intercalary, the pickets 22-28 were insured by another company of the 34th Infantry Regiment.

Summing up this sector, it turns out the 68,4 km were occupied by five companies, the biggest problem being that, apart from those of the 34th Infantry Regiment, the rest were non-permanent, the soldiers being mostly conscripted from the neighbouring villages, the majority being of Bulgarian ethnicity. The supply was poor, the valleys crossing the border were fallen, then, towards Danube, forcing the means of transport to make large detours. At the East of Asarlîc, towards Mangalia, the guard was carried out by other three companies, including the one from the seaside city. Again, a company of 34th Infantry Regiment interlaced with a company from the border during pickets 29-40, i.e. on a 37 km stretch. In Mangalia, the guard service was carried out by a permanent company which provided five pickets, from 41 to 45, covering a distance of 27 km to the sea⁷.

As Colonel Ionescu-Dobrogeanu noticed in his study, the disadvantages of this system were the difficulties arisen in communication and supply among pickets that were due to adverse relief, the border being furrowed by valleys without arranged roads, this causing difficulties in changing people within the troop. It was also noted that, behind this picket line, there was no other establishment or concentration of forces to meet an enemy group or a small group that would have succeeded to pass by one of the border surveillance points. In this regard, it proposed a radial system for the deployment of the troops near the border, from which to reach easier to any point of surveillance on the Southern border, given that the two companies of the 34th Infantry Regiment should have been brought to Cuzgun and Engehez for training.

Also here should have been located the concentration centres for the two battalions in the composition of which the other companies deployed on the border entered. They would have surveyed the border divided almost equally, from Cuzgun on a radius of 67 km and from Engehez to the Black Sea on a radius of 64 km. The battalion from Cuzgun should have sent a company to Ostrov, deployed on a distance of 14 km, another to Cuiugiuk guarding the border on 12 km, the third at Parachioi on a length of another 19 km, the last having the sector of action also inside, at Asarlîc, having allocated 15 km of border.

⁷ Marin Ionescu Dobrogeanu, *Dobrogea în pragul veacului al XX-lea*, Atelierele Grafice "I.V. Socecu", București, 1904, p. 913.



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The second battalion, from Enghez, had a company at Bairam-Dede to supervise an area of 16 km, the second at Caraormer on 21 km of border, the third at Sarighiol having to guard the border on 21 km, which the company deployed at Mangalia being assigned with the remaining 10 km to the seaside. Compared to the settlement in the field, a company was not assigned with more than 18 km compared to 36, as it was at that time. Moreover, thanks to the radial concentration system, the connection between the companies would have been achieved easier. In addition, the two centres could constitute a second line of defence behind the border.

It was also proposed the creation of a telephone line connecting the pickets and, in the future, it was necessary to conceive a plan to connect these points from the border with a modern and practical road.

The importance of morphological formations present in Dobrogea, the fortress character impregnated by the province bordered by the Danube River were elements to be taken into account when conducting a strategic analysis of the importance of territory in question.

DOCTRINAL AND PRACTICAL PREPARATIONS FOR THE DEFENCE OF THE DANUBE LINE IN FRONT OF AN ATTACK FROM THE NORTH

In the opening of the analysis of the defence system and tactical plans of positioning and action in Dobrogea, depending on the attacks that could have come from the North, South and from the seaside, Colonel Marin Ionescu-Dobrogeanu performed an interesting metaphorical-anthropological resemblance of Dobrogea, describing it as a *trunk on which the body of our whole Country is resting*⁸. From the observations on the Russian-Turkish wars that took place in the 19th century, following the analysis of manoeuvres carried out by the great military formations of the two empires on the territory of Dobrogea, the author draws the general lines from which the value of this land arises when designing a strategic plan of operation in the Carpathian-Danubian-Pontic area. The importance of morphological formations present in Dobrogea, the fortress character impregnated by the province bordered by the Danube River were elements to be taken into account when conducting a strategic analysis of the importance of territory in question.

As it can be seen from the same plastic comparison afore mentioned, *...the defence line Focșani-Nămoloasa-Galați is like a steel*

⁸ *Ibid*, p. 915.

*belt with which Major Schumann endowed our Country, this belt being useless, as long as we do not seek to keep the pillar trunk, Dobrogea, untouched...*⁹. The tendency of the countries to transform the Black Sea into a Russian lake in their march to Constantinople gave the Trans-Danubian province an increased importance in the wars they had against the Turks and their allies until 1877.

Because of this, the Russians crossed the Danube with the bulk of the troops in Dobrogea, not in Muntenia or Oltenia. Indeed, the 1854-1855 war was planned to take place in Dobrogea, where the Tsar's army had concentrated its bulk of troops and, most certainly, it would have happened if cholera had not intervened. The Russians direction of attack, in order to stop the important Romanian ally in a potential war with the Western Europe, would have been the elimination of Focșani-Nămoloasa line by a rear attack from Hârșova, but this would have not been possible without crossing the Danube from Gura Prutului to the Black Sea. Another observation of the illustrious Romanian strategist and historian was that, once arrived in Dobrogea, at the Danube mouths, the Russians would have cancelled the European Commission of Danube, so that, in these conditions, the defence of this province became a mission that was not only Romania's task, but the task of the entire Europe¹⁰.

At the end of the 19th and early 20th centuries, Danube was the border of Dobrogea with Russia, on a length of 29,5 km, from Gura Prutului to Ceatal-Ismael. From here, the border followed the course of Chilia horn and the mouth Stari-Stambul to the Black Sea. Indeed, due to the width of the river up to 1,500 meters, on the first segment mentioned, it represented a serious obstacle that could hardly be overcome without careful engineering preparations. Moreover, the nature of Dobrogea shore is rocky, and behind the shores, the land, on a wide area, is marshy, leaving no firm ground to approach the riverbed¹¹. In front of the passage that Russians would have tried at Reni there were the marshy lands of Cotul Pisica, an area with many large lakes. An attempt on Bugeacul hill would have been hampered by the heights on the Romanian shore, which are ideal points for positioning heavy artillery batteries. In front of the most possible crossing of Danube

⁹ *Ibid*.

¹⁰ *Ibid*, p. 916.

¹¹ *Ibid*, p. 917.



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at Cartal and Teraponti, there was the important position of Isaccea, but here the river has a width of 1,000-1,250 m. From the heights between Isaccea and Rachel, the Russian troops would have been greeted by a rain of shells and bullets from the Romanian positions placed in this sector¹².

In this regard, Colonel Marin Ionescu-Dobrogeanu proposed to focus the attention of the military forces on the fortification in this point of the position from Eski-Kale. Another observation to be taken into account, made following the Russian campaign in Dobrogea in 1828, was the careful supervision of Russian population in the Delta.

Downstream of Isaccea, the river shores were not favourable to a mass crossing. The promontory on which the old city Tulcea was located, destroyed in 1828, was constituted in an ideal position for placing some Romanian powerful coastal artillery batteries to greet the Russian fleet that would attempt to go across the Danube. Lakes and marshes from the opposite shore made it even more difficult for the enemy. In order to defend the river against the enemy ships, at Ceatal it was proposed the building of a mine dam.

Although it was unlikely, an enemy landing on the territory of Dobrogea through the mouth of Sfântu-Gheorghe was taken into consideration. In this regard, for the swap of the troops, the road making the connection between Mahmudia and Acaclău had to be protected and maintained. If the Russians were able to cross the Danube, the Romanian front being moved behind the river, the Romanian strategists considered that the main attack direction of the bulk of enemy troops would have been Babadag city, the old Turkish fortress-capital, while four batteries located on the heights around the city would have focused on the North road and Toprak-Kiopu bridge. However, the main objectives of Russians in Dobrogea would have been the two crossing points to the positions behind the line Focșani-Nămoloasa, namely Hârșova and Cernavodă¹³.

ROMANIAN PLANS FOR THE DEFENCE OF THE DANUBE LINE BETWEEN OSTROV AND AZACLĂU POINTS

If the Russians had succeeded to force the line of Danube, after the fall of Babadag city, the enemy troops would have concentrated on Hârșova and Cernavodă, leaving Constanța city on the left flank.

¹² *Ibid*, p. 919.

¹³ *Ibid*, p. 921.

Due to the fact that the river makes a right turn in Brăila-Galați area, the left shore dominates the right shore. Moreover, because of the marshy terrain around Măcin, a passage of troops through this sector would have been very difficult. In the North, upstream, there is Hârșova fortress, an important passing point very used in the previous centuries. In order to prevent the arrival of the Russian fleet to support the ground troops which were already on Dobrogea land, it was proposed the positioning of a coastal battery on the hills around Brăila, as well as a torpedo dam at Azalcău.

The crossing point of the river there was recognised as favourable in both ways even since the wars in the 18th and 19th centuries, Marshal Helmut von Moltke the Elder appreciating, in this regard, that *Hârșova was a stable bridgehead against the Turks*¹⁴.

In the 1806-1812 campaign, the Russians established at Vadul Oii, near Hârșova, a bridge at the end of which they built fortifications and other engineering works for defence. This fact attracted from the Turks the decision to strengthen the position of Hârșova fortress with separate works outside the wall that surrounded the fort. That's the reason why, the same great German strategist and military leader appreciated that Hârșova was a strong fortress *that could not resist against an attack from Dobrogea, here being able to oppose a vigorous resistance*¹⁵.

Taking into consideration the composition of the land, namely the branches of Ciobanu hill that descended towards the fortress, reaching to Băroiul brook at the height of 84 m, there was the possibility to build some similar, additional works, meant to increase the defense ability of the fort against an attack coming from East and South-East. The engineering works would have continued with the construction of a bridge on Vadul Oii or through Gâsca Mare islet to refuel the troops that formed the defensive system of Hârșova¹⁶.

In these conditions, the position of Cernavodă would no longer be the object of the Romanian defensive in the case of an attack executed from North or East. Once Hârșova had fallen, the Focșani-Nămoloasa-Galați line, the main target of the Russian troops, would have been easy to reach.

¹⁴ Marechal Helmut von Moltke, *Campagnes des Russes dans la Turquie d'Europe en 1828 et 1829*, Paris, 1854, I-er volume, p. 76.

¹⁵ *Ibid*.

¹⁶ Marin Ionescu-Dobrogeanu, *op. cit.*, p. 922.



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MEASURES TAKEN BY THE ROMANIAN AUTHORITIES FOR THE DEFENCE OF THE MARITIME COAST

Colonel Marin Ionescu-Dobrogeanu also considered that, due to low bathymetric quota, the only ports that could be used by the warships would be Sulina and Constanța. But still, due to its position, but also to the lake that could have sheltered smaller boats, in the defense plans of the coast of the Romanian Navy could also have entered the position of Mangalia from the South of Dobrogea. But this was impossible, in the case of an attack executed from the sea by the Russian naval forces. Sulina, protected by the provisions of the European Commission of Danube, could have guaranteed the free passage of the Russian ships which, as recalled above, would hit the fortifications around Tulcea. In discussion remained the defense of Constanța city, which was an objective of first importance, both strategic and tactical one, on the Romanian coast of the Black Sea.

Sulina, protected by the provisions of the European Commission of Danube, could have guaranteed the free passage of the Russian ships which, as recalled above, would hit the fortifications around Tulcea.

Following the works that were executed since the beginning of the 20th century, the capacities of the port basin being extended to approx. 1.5 km towards the sea, the vulnerability of the city and the port increased in front of an offshore attack. The general appreciations were that the city could not resist more than a few hours against of a powerful attack of a cruising and destroying fleet, a 2/3 of its perimeter being discovered. Thus, in order to increase the defence capacity, the author of the study proposed the building of a coast battery formed of heavy cannons located in the area of Carol hotel and Vii point, the city's higher promoters.

It is worth mentioning that at this point of the discussion appears for the first, in fact, the only time, the proposal to build, after a Danish and French model, a defense line offshore, at more than 2,5 km from the coast, formed by a dam measuring 1,377 m, where the depth of the water would not be greater than 20 m, with a shape of a line broken at 140°, provided in the centre with a strong fort, flanked on the sides by two other secondary forts, to form a system with the mentioned coastal batteries¹⁷. Moreover, for the internal defence of the port, on the heights near the Military Hospital, according to the proposals of General Henri Alexis Brialmont¹⁸, it would have been indicated

¹⁷ *Ibid*, pp. 922-923.

¹⁸ General Henri Alexis Brialmont, *Progreses de la defences des etats*, Bruxelles, 1898, pp. 189-190.

to build a fort after the model of Spithead fortresses from the defensive of Portsmouth port or Constadt for Petersburg¹⁹.

THE ROMANIAN DOCTRINE FOR THE DEFENCE OF DOBROGEA AGAINST AN ATTACK CARRIED OUT FROM THE SOUTH

In the first decades after Dobrogea returned to Romania, no serious study to debate the Romanian defense at the South border of the province between Danube and Black Sea was carried out²⁰. This represented a lack in the Romanian defence system, all the more since the border line, the way it was traced, was very difficult to cross.

Between the main points where troops stationed, namely Arab-Tabia, Asarlâc, Cafalchioi and Mangalia, there were several tens of kilometres away, and the valleys crossed the border, and were pretty steep and abrupt, making the communication less efficient in case of a Bulgarian attack.

According to another study at the end of 19th century, signed by young Lieutenant Athanasie Napoleon, under the guidance of military geographer Lieutenant-Colonel Iannescu, namely *Dobrogea și Gurile Dunării*, published in Bucharest in 1896²¹, even a second line of defence of the above-mentioned border *would have been pretty difficult*, stretching over more than 100 km, between Rasova-Cocargea-Cobadin-Musurat. Also, this crossed the Diordumgi-Orman valley and, according to Colonel Ionescu-Dobrogeanu, the execution of such a defence line would have been a serious strategic mistake, on the same above mentioned considerations. He also considered that the angle of the border in the Asarlâc point was not favourable to the Romanian defensive, the region included in the triangle Asarlâc-Cuzgun-Ostrov being redundant from this point of view.

Of course, the direction of movement of the Bulgarian troops would not have been along this road for the same considerations.

Eliminating the hypothesis of a puerile tactical approach to attack the target²² directly, and moreover leaving the right flank



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¹⁹ Marin Ionescu-Dobrogeanu, *op. cit.*, p. 923.

²⁰ *Ibid*.

²¹ Locotenent Ath. Napoleon, *Dobrogea și Gurile Dunării*, București, Tipografiile "I.V. Socecu", 1896, pp. 69-70.

²² It is about the position of Cernavodă, which, once conquered, would have allowed the insulation of Constanța and a large part of Dobrogea from Romania, as well as the advance of the enemy troops towards the capital.



The Black Sea coast, between Balcic and Chilia Veche, was assigned to the Sea Division to which, in addition to its own forces, some units of the ground troops were also subordinated (rangers, sedentary parts of some regiments, gendarmes, territorial troops etc.).

of the Bulgarian army uncovered, the best hypothesis to consider in this case would have been an enemy offensive from Hagi-Oglu-Bazargic direction, that crosses the border in the less rugged area, in the Bairamdede-Cobadin-Medgidia area, facilitating avant-garde actions on the right flank that also threatened the position of Constanța port.

In this case, the Romanian defense should have relied on the landforms. Taking also into account that the Bulgarians could have placed some detachments in the difficult zone of the western part of the province, namely at Asarlâc, the target to defend, respectively the position of Cernavodă, would have been threatened from two directions, coming from South and East. Therefore, the centre of the Romanian defense should not be positioned as close to the target as the Danube River. According to the Romanian author mentioned so far²³, this had to be in front of Carasu valley, benefiting from the natural obstacles represented by Urluia and Borungea valleys, somewhere in the Enigea area, from where the Romanian troops could counterattack towards South to Chioseler, to cope with the bulk of the Bulgarian troops that were moving forward to Bairamdede-Cobadin. The Cuzgun could easily be defended due to the heights in the area, the Southern detachments not posing a threat.

If this first defence line was lost, the new defensive system had the city of Medgidia on the Peștera-Ikingi-Dere alignment in the centre, from where it could extend to the sea, using the traces of the Roman earth wave, known as *Valul lui Traian (Traian's Wave)*, to Murfatlar city.

The Black Sea coast, between Balcic and Chilia Veche, was assigned to the Sea Division to which, in addition to its own forces, some units of the ground troops were also subordinated (rangers, sedentary parts of some regiments, gendarmes, territorial troops etc.)²⁴.

²³ Marin Ionescu-Dobrogeanu, *op. cit.*, p. 924.

²⁴ On 26 February 1896, the *Law for the organisation of the War Fleet* was approved, published in the *Official Gazette* no. 279 on 13 March 1896, according to which the Sea Division and the Danube Division, which were newly established great units, were subordinated to the War Fleet Command. In the initial composition of the Sea Division entered the Crew Depot with the School of Officers, the School of Torpedoes (Mobile Defence), the Defence of Maritime Ports, "Elisabeta" cruiser, the "Mircea" school-ship, "Grivița" gunboat, "Sborul" and "Năluca" torpedoes. See Anton Bejan (coord.), *Dicționar enciclopedic de marină*, Editura Societății Scriitorilor Militari, București, 2006, p. 173 and Olimpiu-Manuel Glodarencu, Andreea Atanasiu-Croitoru, Tanța Mândilă, Ion Rișnoveanu, Florin Stan, Andrei Vochițu, *Istoria Statului Major al Forțelor Navale. 1860-2010. Monografie*, Centrul Tehnic-Editorial al Armatei, București, p. 56.

In 1903, when, for the first time, a training march was carried out on Prut and then on the Danube, to Turnu Severin²⁵, one of the objectives was to seriously bring into discussion, followed by debates, war issues necessary for the coordination of ideological aspects and establishment of an official naval doctrine.

It is worth mentioning that the military theorists understood the historical character of the principles of a doctrine that *must be kept updated in order to be the true expression of current military science, because it is not a religious dogma, which is unchanged and must be applied ad-literam in all parts and always*²⁶.

ROMANIAN NAVAL DOCTRINE AT THE END OF THE 19TH AND THE BEGINNING OF THE 20TH CENTURIES

The ideal naval doctrinal framework was able to truly fall into place by a legal support²⁷. Thus, starting with May 1879 until the end of the 19th century, *The Police Regulation of the Danube ports and shores of Romania, the Regulation of the personnel of the navigation and ports service, the Law for the organisation of the Fleet and the Service of ports*, with the *Special regulation* of this law, appeared. Also, as in any beginning, new related institutions were set up²⁸.

Nevertheless, General Constantin Hârjeu criticised, in 1907, the fact that the General Staff *could not build up an [official n.n.] doctrine, either in the form of regulations or in the form of instructional methods, nor to give a better orientation to the organisation of the army*²⁹.

Related to the maritime domain, in Romania, the term *doctrine* was perceived as a system of fundamental principles with which the naval forces carried out their missions³⁰. In this context, the War Navy, generally, had to provide effective support for the protection

²⁵ AMR, 2568 Collection, file 345, *Memoriu rezumativ asupra pregătirii de război, ipotezelor de război, și principiilor de doctrină între anii 1900-1916*, f. 139.

²⁶ *Revista infanteriei*, year XXX, March 1913, p. 275.

²⁷ Colonel G. Iannescu, *Studii de organizațiune militară. Armata română. Ce a fost, ce este, ce ar putea să fie*, București, 1906, pp. 416, 418; see *Istoria militară a poporului român*, vol. V, București, Editura Militară, pp. 305-306.

²⁸ Dr. Carmen Atanasiu, *Problema suveranității României la Dunăre și "Navigația Fluvială Română" (1919-1945)*, București, Executată la S.C. "Nelmaco" S.R.L., 2003, pp. 39-40.

²⁹ General C.N. Hârjeu, *Rostul cuvintelor: Disciplină, Doctrină, Inițiativă*, București, 1907, p. 162.

³⁰ Ion Ionescu, *Primele elemente și principii ale doctrinei navale românești (1878-1916)*, in *Anuarul Muzeului Marinei Române*, vol. VIII/2005, Editura Compania Națională Administrația Porturilor Maritime, Constanța, 2005, p. 154.



Related to the maritime domain, in Romania, the term *doctrine* was perceived as a system of fundamental principles with which the naval forces carried out their missions.



Naturally, the naval doctrines should have appeared where there were expansionist interests, big fleets, diversity of ships and naval tradition, but the great Maritime Powers did not feel, in the pre-modern era, the need of excessive conceptual theorising, regarding their interests and the consolidation of defence capacity of national or economic spaces in the immediate vicinity or overseas territories.

and defence of territorial integrity. The doctrine was the one that determined the most efficient ways of practising the use of naval forces under the existing conditions³¹.

Naturally, the naval doctrines should have appeared where there were expansionist interests, big fleets, diversity of ships and naval tradition, but the great Maritime Powers did not feel, in the pre-modern era, the need of excessive conceptual theorising, regarding their interests and the consolidation of defence capacity of national or economic spaces in the immediate vicinity or overseas territories, because they were acting discretely based on the law of force, not having to justify in front of any organism, much less off the planetary ocean.

The necessary regulations, when they appeared, were made by the great powers through conventions and treaties, more or less transparent in which, usually, the little ones were not even taken into consideration, without the chance to become a legal part, subject of law of those respective regulatory acts³².

The need to find the best way of action for asserting interests on the water, as state reasons, by ordering ideas *according to time and circumstances for their smart employment*³³, was felt by the small countries, later named secondary naval powers, dependent on protectors and allies.

With the evolution of thinking, in general, and the evolution of legal thinking, in particular, law enforcement became a consequence of the new relations between the states.

Almost in parallel, the naval doctrines became closed systems of thinking and, as a consequence of education, especially the one practiced in the Higher War Schools, which became, in time, centres of development of science and doctrine, of spreading the general military culture³⁴ in an historical stage that coincided with the last three decades of the 19th century.

In Romania, as a result of the experience gained following the sharp Independence War, opinions, ideas and concepts appeared regarding the actions of fighting on the water.

³¹ Traian Atanasiu (coord.), *Puterea maritimă și diplomația navală*, Editura Militară, București, 1998, p. 59.

³² Ion Ionescu, *op. cit.*, p. 155.

³³ *România militară*, year XXX, March 1913, p. 275.

³⁴ Locotenent-colonel Ioan Popovici, *Organizarea armatei române*, Roman, 1900, pp. 116-119.



At governmental level, following the debates and pertinent analyses, imposed by the fundamental idea of keeping the hard-won statehood, the first naval modernisation program of the Navy appeared in 1881.

Thus, the 1877-1878 moment really represented a turning point in the Romanian thinking, military and naval-wise, because:

- there was no longer any military or diplomatic tool to intervene in Romania's favour, by the disappearance of the suzerainty of the protective power, at least theoretically;
- independence required the creation of new entities and state political-military organisms with forces and specific means, the resizing of the existing ones and which, in their entirety, had to become functional and systemic;
- the situation changed with the appearance of a coastline of approx. 240 km whose defence task fell, in the first place, under the responsibility of the Romanian naval forces;
- the access to the free sea created a new perspective and led, somehow, to rethinking the concept on the new maritime-fluvial dimension of Romania's defence.

Thus, concerns for the formation of naval doctrinal principles increased, with some positive results³⁵.

For starters, naturally, the main naval doctrinal idea proved to be insufficiently developed, here and there confusing, tending to simplistically adopt some foreign solutions. In time, the approach manner changed, the problem being treated and concluded gradually, adapted to meet the requirements of a Romanian conception demanded by the specific national needs of defence on the sea and river, facts that occurred, more significantly, starting with the last decade of the 19th century.

As a result of these realities, at governmental level, following the debates and pertinent analyses, imposed by the fundamental idea of keeping the hard-won statehood, the first naval modernisation program of the Navy appeared in 1881³⁶. Then the first theoretical models were created, depending on the situations that had to be solved based on the diversity of conceptions, but also on the unity

³⁵ *Istoria gândirii militare românești*, Editura Militară, București, 1974, p. 193.

³⁶ Ion Ionescu, *Politica navală a României între anii 1919 și 1941*, Editura Companiei Naționale Administrația Porturilor Maritime Constanța, 2002, p. 64.



Taking into consideration both the geographic configuration of the Western area of the Black Sea, and the Danube River with its mouths and delta, these important water areas, in the conditions of an armed conflict, would have been transformed into theaters of operations, reason for which the actions of the Romanian naval forces against some presumed enemies or adversaries would naturally have been oriented towards East and South.

of views in their application³⁷, so that all elements work in the same direction³⁸, of coexistence with the war issues³⁹.

The insufficient number of ships necessary for the organisation of a military fleet, the inexistence of a commercial, maritime and fluvial fleet, the lack of long-distance navigation traditions, during 1860 and 1890, were essential impediments to the development of the maritime-fluvial component of the Romanian economy and, implicitly, the poor stimulation of the higher development of naval thinking.

In these conditions, it is more difficult from the documents in the archive or from the specialised literature of the period 1878-1914 to establish a Romanian doctrinal navy framework because the action manner and the actions, by themselves, of Flotilla and, from 1898, of the Military navy, did not rely on an articulated, *ab initio*, specific and essential idea but, usually, on the needs demanded by the moment. In a careful analysis, only a few elements and relative principles, sometimes minimal, of Romanian naval doctrine can be exemplified⁴⁰.

Taking into consideration both the geographic configuration of the Western area⁴¹ of the Black Sea, and the Danube River with its mouths and delta, these important water areas, in the conditions of an armed conflict, would have been transformed into theaters of operations, reason for which the actions of the Romanian naval forces against some presumed enemies or adversaries would naturally have been oriented towards East and South.

In the event of a war to the East, it would have been with the Russian Empire. Our flotilla should have played, equally, both the defensive and the offensive versions.

Compared to the potential adversary, it was inferior in forces and means and, in this case, Romania should have not focused on direct

³⁷ Capitaine de vaisseau Gabriel Darrieus, *La guerre sur mer La doctrine*, Augustin Challamel Editeur, Paris, 1907, pp. 358-361.

³⁸ *Revista armatei*, year XIII, September 1895, p. 642.

³⁹ Ion Ionescu, *Primele elemente și principii...*, p. 156. In this respect, the military decision-makers from Bucharest concluded that *Romania's Central European position, the fact that it obtain a Black Sea coastline exit only in 1878, the inability to become an economic, military or colonial power, the hesitant-selective politics for choosing the right moments to favourable allies are some of the causes that did not allow our country to gain the mentality of winner, but, history has shown that such attitudes have proven to be at hand solutions, compatible, as a rule, with the geopolitical situation, the structure of Romanian mentality, the type of country, demography and historical heritage.*

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 158.

⁴¹ From Gura Musura to Vama Veche. After 1913, to Ecrene, the southernmost point of the Quadrilateral.



In the event of a war towards the south, with Bulgaria, the Military Navy, probably in the middle of the action of ground forces, operating against a weaker enemy, had to adopt a more offensive attitude.

commitment, being put in the position to give up in extreme situations to defending the Gurile Dunării, its delta, the coast and the ports, forcing it to a passive defence under the protection of mine dams and coast batteries on the flank of the fortified line Focșani-Nămoloasa-Galați. In other words, the Romanian Navy could accept the commitment of its forces only in cooperation with the ground forces, in the subsidiary being able to observe that there was a tactical error by keeping, in reserve, the cruiser "*Elisabeta*"⁴², considered the most powerful force, with the support of which to carry out the withdrawal of ships that were defending Cotul Pisicii⁴³, if they were rejected.

In this idea, from a tactical point of view, the use of a river flotilla, on the flank of ground forces, that would have relied on the Danube to prevent the return of this flank satisfied one of the first needs of such an army through the best use that could be granted to the Romanian Flotilla as a distinct naval force.

An easy cover should also be taken into account, towards the southern front, against a neighbour whose attitude was not specified, nor the possibility of intervention, on one front or the other, by the connection of an internal river line, because these meant nothing else but meeting an elementary strategic principle⁴⁴.

In the event of a war towards the south, with Bulgaria, the Military Navy, probably in the middle of the action of ground forces, operating against a weaker enemy, had to adopt a more offensive attitude. Therefore, strategists and tacticians claimed that, in practice, the principles and elements of the Romanian naval doctrine could be applied if it was considered as valid the fact that at the seaside, where with the help of *Elisabeta* cruiser and the two armed auxiliary cruisers,

⁴² The light cruiser *Elisabeta*, which bore, symbolically, according to the tradition of the time, the name of the sovereign of the country, was built in 1888 at *Armstrong* shipyards in Newcastle, entering the active service of the War Fleet on 15th of November of the same year. It had a displacement of 1,320 t, the length of 72 m, the width of 10.25 m and the total height of 6.68 m. The average speed of 18.1 Nd was provided by two machines with simple coal expansion with a maximum power of 4700 hp. The firepower of the ship was provided by six 150 mm Krupp cannons arranged sideways, four Nordenfeld guns with rapid fire, two Hotchkiss 37 mm cannons, two 11.43 mm machine guns and four 381 mm Whitehead bullet tubes. See also Anton Bejan (coord.), *op. cit.*, p. 195 and Ion Ionescu, Georgeta Borandă, Marian Moșneagu, *Noi contribuții la istoria Marinei Militare române*, Editura Muntenia & Leda, Constanța, 2001, p. 160.

⁴³ Strategic point, through its configuration; the place where the Danube passes from Muntenia to Dobrogea.

⁴⁴ A.M.R., 2568 Collection, 345 file, *Memorii rezumativ asupra programelor de război, ipotezelor de război și principiilor de doctrină între anii 1900 -1916*, p. 146.



the lines of communication could have been under control, and at the Danube, where by distributing the groups of ships, on sectors, it was anticipated the crossing of the waterway and preventing the enemy to use it.

In applying this offensive principle, a tactical organisational error was made in placing a mine dam before the bridge of Cernavodă and the concentration of all means of defence of this main target in its immediate vicinity; it is easy to understand why the easiest variation in the game of forces could get the enemy close to the bridge, before the defender recovered or received help. The basic defence of the bridge had to be made at the border, and a defence against diversions was necessary around it.

Regarding the applicability of the naval problem of the time, from a critical point of view, it can be said that it was exaggerated in the appraisal of the means and it was not recognised that a river flotilla could not master (a term used in the mobilization works) the Danube when the enemy would have had under control one of the shores, and the groups of ships distributed on the sectors of the watercourse could only hamper the use of the waterway, without being allowed full control.

A great lesson resulted, namely that the divisions of ships on segments of responsibilities established the principle of Danube sectoral organisation, which proved to be very useful in the river war⁴⁵, a form which is still used even today.

At the beginning of the 20th century, great attention was given to the idea of resistance at the strategic point Cotul Pisicii, under the protection of dams and coastal batteries, in the possibility of abandoning the Delta's defence. Neither the establishment of a Danube fleet would not have brought any change in the naval doctrine, regarding the conduct of the war on the river in an armed conflict towards East, because the implementation of this idea would imply too much dependence upon the actions of land forces whose doctrine did not include Military Navy action, which could have been others, after the establishment of the Danube Squadron. It can be assumed that this state of affairs represented an asynchrony due to incomplete reasoning, by not studying the realities enough.

⁴⁵ *Ibid*, p. 147.

After the Second Balkan War, in 1913, our relations with the Russian Empire made a relative and short relaxation possible taking into account the interests of both states regarding the perspective policy of alliances. For this reason, the possibilities of a war with this neighbour were not studied anymore. If up to this date *Hypothesis A* represented the variant of a conflict with the East, in 1914, *Hypothesis A* referred to the south front, and no other hypothesis could be seen in the mobilisation preparations of the Military Navy.

Some other major conclusions could be drawn from the military action in 1913, which allow the coagulation of the naval doctrine regarding the conduct of hostilities on the water.

Thus, this war has proven the importance and necessity of increase of the number of commercial, transport ships, which greatly facilitated the mobilisation movements, the concentration of forces and the passage of the river. It also revealed the beneficial role regarding the usefulness of the flat boat bridges (of ships, as they were called at the time)⁴⁶.

In practice, as a general rule, it was clear that the flat boat bridges could only be built in the points where the land and naval forces owned the control of the river communication line, which involved, permanently, the mastering of both shores of that communication.

Thus, it was examined the possibility of building such bridges in points located in the Middle Danube, even if Romania had not controlled communication lines, up to those points. In such case, the materials necessary for the construction of communication bridges had to be concentrated, before the declaration of war, in districts close to these points, that had to meet certain safety conditions and which, in the same time, demanded the deployment of a part from Danube Squadron to guard the water, with all the inconveniences resulted from the fact that the squadron fraction remained unavailable for use on other battle fronts.

Also, it appeared as very necessary to build a special ship for the transport of cavalry and artillery, which were completely absent. Immediately after the Second Balkan War, this was an unresolved fact for multiple reasons.

⁴⁶ *Ibid*, p. 167.



The Second Balkan War has proven the importance and necessity of increase of the number of commercial, transport ships, which greatly facilitated the mobilisation movements, the concentration of forces and the passage of the river.



It was considered mandatory to organise a position of resistance, on the river, with mined field, with coastal batteries and light artillery, in order to defend that field, with ships able to capitalise on the contribution of some extra-mobile batteries, torpedo preparation and launch stations and of the current mines, which could represent the most suitable defence when a flotilla or a lower river fleet had to resist against a similar, but higher, force.

The actions of the Austro-German fleet during the War of Integration, 1916-1918, confirm this principle and, if it tried to have an offensive attitude, no doubt it would have had so many losses⁴⁷ that a more solid balance would have been established between both naval forces.

The dynamics of a river fleet in offensive missions involved, in the first two decades of the 20th century, two phases: artillery actions in stationary (at anchor), rendered with barrage fires, through indirect firing over long distances and close actions executed with the moving ships, by using direct firings (direct shooting)⁴⁸.

There is the possibility of the enemy to use light ships to oppose the ships from defensive and the destruction of the mined field, a manoeuvre that would have resulted in big sacrifices from the attacker. This variant, however, required the existence of a fleet consisting of light ships that were prepared for this kind of attack.

It was insisted on the rapid adaptation of the human factor to the concrete situations in the theatre of operations, by moving from defensive to offensive. The coastal batteries fixed on the concrete sites, located on the shore that would have handled the troops of both belligerent parts, remained exposed to the human and material losses, either to the slightest changes of the front, which is why mobile artillery was chosen. Instead, the artillery on the opposite shore had the possibility of withdrawal, but also of firing until the last moment, and it was considered necessary to be installed in solid works, because the quota of the emplacement was low and uncovered.

It was accredited with the idea that a well-organised minefield, even if the land front had fallen, was capable of providing sufficient opportunities for ships and allied naval material to take relative shelter in this field.

⁴⁷ *Ibid*, p. 168.

⁴⁸ Ion Ionescu, *Primele elemente și principii...*, p. 159.

Complementarily, the need for a remote information and surveillance service, by small patrol ships, without major military value and observation posts, on the friendly shore, was considered important and should never be neglected during the period of preparation and political tightening, prior to the war.

Isolated stations for the preparation and launching of torpedoes and current mines, which were not part of a defensive organisation, could be set up and used under conditions of non-discovery by the enemy, any other situation making them vulnerable.

It was envisaged that a river flotilla that would operate to the support of the flank of some ground forces should always be provided with a fleet of transport ships⁴⁹ to be able to board, but also to withdraw, the land troops which would eventually have been pushed to the Danube or would have been cut. From the practice of conducting the war on the water it was proven that an organisation of a bridgehead similar to that of Turtucaia, which was a disaster, had to have an easy bridge of pontoons for the safe withdrawal.

The installation of a mine dam on the Danube intended for a longer stay in the water was considered very difficult and, that is precisely why this problem remained unsolved, in the first place, for technical reasons⁵⁰. The proposal of visible dams, with mines with reduced buoyancy, supported by floats, was not considered practical by most specialists for the simple reason that they were easily destroyed by remote shooting. More efficient was the combination of mines with negative buoyancy sustained with elements from the stockade. The most operative system was the installation of dams by mines, concurrently with the objective that had to be protected, provided the fast anchoring of each mine and the dismantling of the dam, without danger.

CONCLUSIONS

The period of neutrality, 21 July/3 August 1914-14/27 August 1916, prior to the participation in World War I, stimulated the preparation of the Romanian naval forces. This stage, for about two years, did not change the ideal naval doctrinal framework and led, at the same time, to the development of its content, constituting, for the most part,

⁴⁹ AMR, 2568 Collection, file 345, p. 169.

⁵⁰ At the time, no type of mine, no matter how special, could remain active for a long time.



From the practice of conducting the war on the water it was proven that an organisation of a bridgehead similar to that of Turtucaia, which was a disaster, had to have an easy bridge of pontoons for the safe withdrawal.



The existence of naval doctrinal elements and principles, coagulated over decades, made it possible to deploy forces and means, on the hypothesis (variant) of the enemy in the south, prepared for a long time, still in peacetime, through countless training exercises with troops.

the foundation and reason of the principles of strategy and tactics that would have applied, no doubt.

It should be specified that the existence of naval doctrinal elements and principles, coagulated over decades, made it possible to deploy forces and means, on the hypothesis (variant) of the enemy in the south, prepared for a long time, still in peacetime, through countless training exercises with troops. If there had not been a unitary conception, the strategic and tactical principles would have been hastily applied, demanded in a hurry and imposed by the current situations in the river operations theatre.

It can be appreciated that the Romanian naval forces, supplemented with various floating material, requisitioned from the state's commercial or private companies, had to act independently, with independent missions and actions, but complementary to the land forces, within the national defence system.

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PAGES FROM THE ROMANIAN MILITARY THINKING. THE POLITICAL-STRATEGIC VISION ON (NORTHERN) DOBROGEA: 1878-1913

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Starting from the complexity of the defence and national security field, this article, based on Romanian, Western, Bulgarian and Turkish historiographical contributions, supplemented with military documents from the archives, deals with the problem of defence of the right bank Danube territory obtained after the Berlin Congress (1878), until the incorporation of Southern Dobrogea (Quadrilateral) in 1913. This article briefly shows the initial Romanian views on the inclusion of Dobrogea, then the measures enforced by the authorities at two levels, namely the political-diplomatic and military one, and the ethnopolitical one respectively, including economic, social and cultural aspects. The conclusion is that the military measures taken led to limited achievements, mainly due to some objective reasons, but this situation was counterbalanced by suitable political-diplomatic combinations and options and especially by the remarkable result of the work aiming to enhance, modernise and colonise the territory. A decisive stage in this respect was that of 1890-1895.

Keywords: borders, internal vulnerabilities, external threats, projects, actions, evolutions.



For specialists in the field today, it is almost a truism to say that the problem of the national security and defence sciences involves only political, diplomatic, military and intelligence (or counterintelligence) aspects. It has a much wider and more complex scope. The various realities and the economic, social, cultural, collective-mental and axiological developments represent potential vulnerabilities or strengths of the national defence and security system¹.

Regarding the historical Dobrogea, its generally accepted geographical limits are represented by the branched course of the Lower Danube (with Balta Ialomița and the Big Island of Brăila) to the west, the Black Sea to the east, the Lom-Provadija river line to the south and, respectively, the Danube Delta to the north². Some authors, however, exclude the southern forest area (Deliorman) from the whole of the Dobrogea lands³ while a local toponymic tradition identifies the province, exclusively with the central steppe area, excluding both the Southern Deliorman and the so-called “Northern Deliorman” (the hills of Tulcea)⁴.

After the Russian-Romanian-Turkish war of 1877-1878, the territory of historical Dobrogea inhabited by a very diverse ethnolinguistic and religious population was divided between independent Romania (the northern, including the Danube Delta, and central areas) and autonomous Bulgaria (the southern part). After this date, in the Romanian media, the word “Dobrogea” began to designate, in particular, that trans-Danube territory that became part of Romania in 1878. The situation has been perpetuating so far, except for the period 1913-1940, when Southern Dobrogea (Quadrilateral) was part

After the Russian-Romanian-Turkish war of 1877-1878, the territory of historical Dobrogea inhabited by a very diverse ethnolinguistic and religious population was divided between independent Romania (the northern, including the Danube Delta, and central areas) and autonomous Bulgaria (the southern part). After this date, in the Romanian media, the word “Dobrogea” began to designate, in particular, that trans-Danube territory that became part of Romania in 1878.

¹ See, for instance, the study of George Ene, *Eminescu, securitatea și siguranța națională a României*, Editura Eikon, Cluj-Napoca, 2014, *passim*.

² Joseph V. Poppov, *La Dobroudja et les relations bulgare-roumaines*, Liège, 1935, p. 13; Constantin Brătescu, *Morfologia Cadrilaterului*, Cernăuți, 1938, pp. 1-2.

³ A. Ichirkoff, *Géographié physique de la Dobroudja*, in *La Dobroudja* edité par l'Union de savants, artists et ecrivains bulgares, Sofia, 1918, pp. 2-3.

⁴ Lt.col. Ioan Munteanu, *Cadrilaterul, istoria unei controverse (1878-1919)*, in “Anuarul Institutului pentru Studii Politice de Apărare și Istorie Militară”, București, 1997, p. 181.



In principle, an increase in the surface area and population of a state represents a potential progress factor, but for a complete evaluation other factors (geographical position, natural resources, communication means, level of development, possibilities and system of integration of the obtained territory) must be taken into account.

of the Romanian state. In contrast, in the Bulgarian media, the term “Dobruđža” is used with its maximum historical meaning, sometimes specifying the distinction between Northern Dobrogea (belonging to Romania) and Southern Dobrogea (belonging to Bulgaria).

We intend, in this study, to draw/shape the main coordinates of the Romanian political-strategic conception of defence and integration of the territory on the right side of the Danube added after the Berlin Congress (1878) until 1913, when, through the Bucharest Treaty, Romania got the Southern Dobrogea (Quadrilateral) from Bulgaria. More specifically, we will show the initial Romanian opinions (1878) on the possibility of, then on the actual inclusion of Dobrogea, as well as, in particular, the measures taken by the Romanian state and its institutions regarding this province, both at the political-military and the ethnopolitical level.

In principle, an increase in the surface area and population of a state represents a potential progress factor, but for a complete evaluation other factors (geographical position, natural resources, communication means, level of development, possibilities and system of integration of the obtained territory) must be taken into account⁵.

In the light of such a conception, but also for other reasons of principle and political opportunity, at the beginning of 1878, the Romanian decision-makers (King Carol I, Ion C. Brătianu Government, the Assembly of Deputies and the Senate) categorically rejected the idea of the territorial exchange proposed by Russia (South Basarabia for Dobrogea and Ludogorje, up to the Ruscink-Varna line), without completely excluding the possibility of obtaining territories beyond the Danube⁶.

On the general background of rejecting the Russian claims, there were also voices of some Romanian politicians and publicists, who saw Dobrogea as “a poisoned fruit” offered by the Russian Empire to small Romania, or even as a Bulgarian territory⁷. In the memo addressed

⁵ Constantin Iordan, *România și relațiile internaționale în sud-estul european (1919-1924). Probleme ale păcii, securității și cooperării*, Editura ALL, București, 1999, p. 12.

⁶ Nichita Adăniloiaie, *România independentă în Istoria românilor* (academic treatise), vol. VII, T1; *Constituirea României moderne (1821-1878)* 2nd edition revised and added, coord.: acad. Dan Berindei, Editura Enciclopedică, București, 2015, pp. 749-750.

⁷ See Antonina Kuzmanova, *Le caractère bulgare de la Dobrodja vu par les Roumains. Propagande et mise en comideration des réalités (1878-1944)*, in “*Etudes balkaniques*”, 29, nr. 31, 1993, pp. 3-5.



by the Romanian government to the European cabinets, in February 1878, it was requested that South Basarabia remained part of Romania and that the Danube Delta was given to Romania, in order to provide more economic development possibilities for the Romanian state and to ensure freedom of navigation on the Danube for European states. The idea of adding Dobrogea to Romania was rejected with geostrategic and geoeconomic arguments (isolation of this province from the Romanian territories on the left of the Danube and the consequences of this fact for the future development of the country)⁸.

Facing the categoric Romanian refusal, considered offensive, Czarist Russia decided to cut the territory of the compensatory offer for southern Basarabia. Thus, through the Treaty of San Stefano (19 February/ 3 March 1878), the northern border of Bulgaria was settled in the vicinity of the strategic line Cernavodă-Constanța, passing through Rasova⁹, and Russia reserved the right to maintain the connection with its troops from Bulgaria (also) through the Romanian territory¹⁰. However, in an attempt to protect the susceptibility of Western powers, Russian Chancellor A.M. Gorceakov said: “*The Romanian Dobrogea will separate the Russian Empire from the Bulgarian state*”¹¹. However, the partition invoked by Gorceakov was a thin and rather permeable one. In addition, the offer from San Stefano gave Romania a narrow part of the coastline, necessary for the development of a large port.

The initial offer, the one from January 1878, was viewed by Romania with circumspection because of the difficulty of integrating a large territory (over 25,000 km²), with a majority Muslim-Turkish-Tartar population and a significant share of Bulgarian ethnicities. On 27 March/8 April 1878, about 200 representatives of Muslims, Greeks, Armenians and Jews from Dobrogea, led by the Turkish mufti and the Greek archimandrite, signed a document requesting

⁸ Sorin Liviu Damean, *România și Congresul de Pace de la Berlin (1878)*, Editura Mica Valahie, București, 2011, pp. 55-56.

⁹ Stajko Trifonov, *Dobrudžanskijat vāpros (1878-1944)*, in *Novi očerci po bāllgarskata istorija (1878-1948)*, coord.: Marija Radeva n.p., Sofia, n.y., p. 191.

¹⁰ *Istoria politicii externe românești în date* (will be quoted as *I.P.E.R.D.*), coord.: Ion Calafeteanu, Editura Enciclopedică, București, 2003, p. 180.

¹¹ Constantin Iordan, *Dobrogea (1878-1940) în istoriografia bulgară post-comunistă*, Editura Academiei Române, București, 2013, p. 24.



An advantageous solution for the Romanian state, in 1878, could have been the establishment of the border on the Rusciuk-Varna line, but only under the conditions of a population exchange involving the Romanian ethnic groups from the Vidin area and the Dobrogea Bulgarians.

that Romania should receive the entire Dobrogea and the Varna port city, with its hinterland¹².

An advantageous solution for the Romanian state, in 1878, could have been the establishment of the border on the Rusciuk-Varna line, but only under the conditions of a population exchange involving the Romanian ethnic groups from the Vidin area and the Dobrogea Bulgarians¹³.

Russian diplomacy failed to temper the apprehensions of the Great Western Powers, so the provisions of the Treaty of San Stefano were substantially revised, following the Berlin Congress. By the Treaty concluded in the German capital, the re-annexation of Southern Basarabia to Russia (Art. 45) was approved, and Romania obtained the Serpent Island, the Danube Delta and the northern and central parts of Dobrogea, up to a line between Silistra and Mangalia, whose delimitation "on the ground" was the task of an international commission (Art. 46)¹⁴.

British Balkanologist William Miller estimated half a century after the events that the land border established in Berlin had been "unsatisfactory for both sides", because "it gave strong fortresses to Bulgaria, with which it dominated Dobrogea, and to Romania it gave its actual possession"¹⁵.

The head of the Romanian government, Ion C. Brătianu, showed that his country was an outpost of Western civilisation in the proximity of Russian despotism and post-Ottoman barbarism: "When we were given Dobrogea, Europe gave it to us out of a European interest, because they believed we were not only a brave nation, but also one of the most civilising nations in the East"¹⁶. Discovering the geopolitical and geostrategic reasons for the decision of the European Areopagus, Captain Marin Ionescu Dobrogianu (1866-1938), wrote, a quarter of a century after the events: "If Russia occupies Dobrogea, the European

¹² Alexandru P. Arbore, *Noi informații asupra Dobrogei*, in „Analele Dobrogei”, XI, Cernăuți, 1930, pp. 88-89.

¹³ George Ungureanu, *Problema Cadrilaterului în contextul relațiilor româno-bulgare (1919-1940)*, Editura Istros Publishing House, Brăila, 2009, p. 39.

¹⁴ I.P.E.R.D..., p. 181.

¹⁵ William Miller, *The Ottoman Empire and its Successors (1801-1927)*, Cambridge, 1927, p. 400.

¹⁶ Apud Valentin Ciorbea (coord.), *Dobrogea (1878-2008). Orizonturi deschise prin mandat european*, Editura EX PONTO, Constanța. 2008, p. 17.

*Danube Commission becomes a cosmopolitan island, in the middle of a Russian sea*¹⁷.

The first Romanian military detachments entered the Trans-Danube province on 14 November 1878, when a proclamation of Carol I was issued to the locals, and the Romanian administration was installed starting 23 November, the last Russian troops leaving the area in April 1879¹⁸. The Serpent Island actually came under Romanian military control on 12 April 1879¹⁹. The "on the ground" delimitation of the Romanian-Bulgarian border was made with difficulty and tension, the incident from Arab Tabia (today Ostrov, Constanța county), from January 1879, between the Romanian and Russian military, being very famous; finally, the Romanians were very affected by the fact that Silistra and the fortified points Medgidie-Tabia and Ordo-Tabia, in its proximity, remained in Bulgaria²⁰.

The territory of Dobrogea obtained by Romania in 1878, amounting to about 15,600 km², was strategically dominated by the Cernavodă-Constanța and Valea Carasu lines, having, according to the 1880 census, a population of 147,247 inhabitants, of which 44,354 (16,448 + 27,906) were Turks-Tartars (11.2% + 19.0% = 30.2%), 40,449 Romanians (27.5%), 29,440 Bulgarians (19.9%), 9,683 Lipovans and 8,348 Russians (6.5% + 5.6% = 12.1%), 6,481 Greeks (4.5%), 3,147 Jews (2.1%), 3,030 Germans (2.0%) etc.²¹. Except for Bulgarian historians, foreign (western) historiography considers that the territory obtained by Romania in 1878 was an exceptional ethnic mosaic, with a relative majority of Turks-Tartars, followed by Romanians and Bulgarians²².

However, the various ethnicities were spread far and wide: Bulgarians were more numerous in Tulcea county (N), where the majority of Russians and Lipovans lived and Turks-Tartars were predominant in Constanța county (57%), and the Romanian ethnics

¹⁷ Marin Ionescu Dobrogianu, *Dobrogea în pragul veacului al XX-lea. Geografia matematică, fizică, politică, economică și militară*, Atelierele grafice Socec, București, 1904, p. 916.

¹⁸ Adrian Rădulescu, Ion Bitoleanu, *Istoria Dobrogei*, second edition, Editura EX PONTO, Constanța, 1998, pp. 349-351.

¹⁹ M. Ionescu Dobrogianu, *op. cit.*, p. 305.

²⁰ Daniela Busă, *Modificări politice și teritoriale în sud estul Europei (1878-1914)*, Editura Paideia, București, 2003, pp. 48-57.

²¹ Robert Stănciugel, Liliانا Monica Bălașa, *Dobrogea între secolele VII-XIX. Evoluția istorică*, Editura D.C. Promotions, București, 2005, p. 203.

²² G. Ungureanu, *op. cit.*, p. 38.



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lived mainly in the proximity of the Danube and its ponds, arms and mouths²³.

It is not irrelevant that the population density in the area was low, under 10 inhabitants per km², while on the rest of the Romanian territory it had reached the level of 34 inhabitants per km² two decades before²⁴, which was a favourable premise for the future work of colonisation.

From November 1878 until March 1880, Dobrogea was under the regulatory regime. On 9 March 1880, the *Law on the organisation of Dobrogea* was promulgated, drafted by Mihail Kogălniceanu and magistrate Remus Opreanu, the Prefect of Constanța²⁵. According to this act, Dobrogea did not yet have representation in the Parliament of București (it was to acquire it in 1909), the communal councils elected the county councils of Constanța and Tulcea, and they submitted to the ruler (since 1881, the king), an annual report also including their desires²⁶.

For the young Romanian unitary state, immediately after the War of Independence, Russia had imposed itself as the greatest danger to its sovereignty and territorial integrity, which resulted in the secret accession to the Triple Alliance (18/30 October 1883), and subsequently, the creation of the fortified line Focșani-Nămoloasa-Galați, with the direct participation of German Major M. Schumann (1888-1893). As for Dobrogea, more direct Romanian fears were related to small Bulgaria, dissatisfied with the territorial clauses of the Berlin Treaty. When voting the Turnovo Constitution (1879), delegates of the Bulgarians from Northern Dobrogea also took part, and *“the statement that Dobrogea is a Bulgarian territory inhabited first of all by the Bulgarians, taken away from Bulgaria and given to Romania, in exchange of Basarabia, is invariably included in the school textbooks and Bulgarian reference papers after 1878”*²⁷.

²³ R. Stănciugel, L.M. Bălașa, *op. cit.*, p. 203.

²⁴ Keith Hitchins, *România (1866-1947)*, third edition, translation by George G. Potra and Delia Răzdolescu, Editura Humanitas, București, 2004, p. 163.

²⁵ A. Rădulescu, I. Bitoleanu, *op. cit.*, p. 353.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 354.

²⁷ Blagovest Njagulov, *Les images de l'autre chez les Bulgares et les Romaines (1878-1944)*, in *“Etudes balkaniques”*, 31, nr. 2/1995, p. 5.



The Romanian-Bulgarian territorial rivalry evolved within the wider framework of the political-diplomatic and military relations at the European level. While Romania roughly gravitated on the orbit of the Central Powers, Bulgaria alternated between Russophile and Russophobe cabinets. As a result, the Romanian-Bulgarian relations reached their cordiality peak under the rule of Russophobe liberal leader Stefan Stambulov (1887-1894), known for these words: *“If Romanian Dobrogea had not existed, it should have been invented, to separate Bulgaria from Russia”*²⁸. At the opposite pole, we can mention the aggressive Bulgarian actions at the border, in August 1885, encouraged by Russia²⁹, as well as the Russian-Bulgarian secret conventions of 1902 and 1909, which confirmed Russia’s promise to support the Bulgarian territorial ambitions in Northern Dobrogea, if Romania were to fight against the Great Power from the East, in a general conflict, a known commitment in București³⁰. Moreover, according to military historians Momčil Ionov and Stančo Stančev, Bulgarian military experts considered at the beginning of the 20th century that Dobrogea would be the main battle theatre, in case of a Romanian-Bulgarian war³¹.

We will further address the political-diplomatic and military actions taken by Romania to defend the threats coming from Dobrogea, including the idea of annexing the Southern Dobrogea to the Romanian state.

The main politico-diplomatic instrument for the defence of pre-war Romania, including Dobrogea, was the secret alliance with Germany, Austria-Hungary and Italy, signed on 18/30 October 1883 and renewed successively in 1888, 1892, 1902 and 1913³². However, the act concerned only Russia and the eventuality of an unprovoked aggression on its part. Romania’s attempts to include a clause regarding Bulgarian

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²⁸ *Apud* Hristofor Hespăciev, *Aminirile unui fost diplomat bulgar în România (1905-1910)*, translated by Daniel Cain, Editura Fundația PRO, București, 2003, p. 42.

²⁹ Daniela Bușă, *op. cit.*, pp. 56-60.

³⁰ Gheorghe Zbucă, *România și războaiele balcanice (1912-1913). Pagini de istorie sud-est europeană*, Editura Albatros, 1999, p. 70.

³¹ *Apud* Gavriil Preda, *Relații militare româno-bulgare la sfârșitul secolului al XIX-lea și începutul secolului al XX-lea*, in *Români și bulgari. Provocările unei vecinătăți*, coord.: Fl. Anghel, Mariana Cojoc, Magdalena Tiță, Editura Cartea Universitară, București, 2007, p. 122.

³² *I.P.E.R.D.*, pp. 191, 208.



were not successful³³. However, the possibility of a Russian-Bulgarian conjugated act was at least theoretically counteracted. Mentioning such an eventuality, M. Ionescu Dobrogeanu wrote, in 1904: *“We would be overwhelmed by forces and circumstances. But in this case, the problem is complicated: we have allied armies on our side...”*³⁴.

In October 1884, the meeting in Rusciuk, between King Carol I and Prince Alexander of Battenberg, determined the military situation at the Romanian-Bulgarian border for the next several months³⁵. We cannot say the same about the high-level official visits of 1897, 1902 and 1909, which were less fruitful and could not remove the general atmosphere of mutual suspicion³⁶.

It is also worth mentioning that the interests of 13 states were represented in the Romanian Dobrogea, at consular, vice-consular or commercial agency level: Great Britain, Austro-Hungary, Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, The Netherlands, Russia, Spain, Sweden and the Ottoman Empire³⁷.

Due to the varied ethnic composition of the Dobrogea population, a potential danger for the Romanian administration was represented by the local irredentist organisations and actions, in this case, the Bulgarian ones. Some irredentist leaders, once discovered by the authorities, left (voluntarily or forced) the province, among them the father of the poet Panait Cerna (1881-1913); the remaining ones turned mainly to the political left (the Socialists, the Peasant Party), anticipating a trend that would manifest itself fully in the inter-war Quadrilateral. The local Romanian-language press repeatedly drew attention to the prosperous material situation of the Bulgarian communities, which allowed them to finance subversive activities, camouflaged in cultural activities³⁸. In principle, the minority schools were free, only the teaching of the Romanian language being compulsory³⁹.

³³ Petre Otu, *Bulgaria în planurile de campanie ale armatei române în anii 1912-1916*, in *Români și bulgari...*, op. cit., pp. 151-152.

³⁴ M. Ionescu Dobrogeanu, op. cit., p. 924.

³⁵ D. Bușă, op. cit., p. 58.

³⁶ G. Ungureanu, op. cit., pp. 201-206.

³⁷ A. Rădulescu, I. Bitoleanu, op. cit., p. 372.

³⁸ Mădălina Lasca, *Imaginea comunităților bulgare din Dobrogea în presa de limbă română de la sfârșitul secolului XIX*, in *Români și bulgari...*, pp. 89-104.

³⁹ A. Rădulescu, I. Bitoleanu, op. cit., p. 355.



The suspicions that were hovering over the ethnic Bulgarians from Tulcea county caused prefect Ioan Nenițescu, known especially as a Romanian nationalist poet, to resort to a series of punitive and restrictive measures, in 1898: the abolition of Bulgarian “communities”, schools and cultural houses, expulsion of teachers from Bulgaria and limited study of the mother tongue to one hour per week⁴⁰.

Much more loyal to the Romanian state, even if it was a more passive loyalty, were the Dobrogea Muslims, a fact understood and appreciated by the rulers; In 1880, the great vizier Said Pasa expressed to the plenipotentiary minister in Constantinople, Dimitrie Brătianu, the gratitude for the attitude of the authorities and the Romanian population towards the Muslims in Dobrogea⁴¹.

At the military level, we note, first of all, the placement of the 5th Army Corps in the area, namely the establishment of the Romanian military navy (1883), with 1898 as a reference year, when the Danube Division and the Sea Division were created. Around the First World War, the Danube Division included three groups, namely: the Danube Squadron (4 monitors and 8 stars), the Galați-Tulcea-Sulina area Defence Group with 4 checkpoints, 3 torpedoes – “Năluca” type, 3 boats – “Rândunica”, “Ștefan cel Mare”, “Alexandru cel Bun” type, as well as artillery battery and, respectively, the Cernavodă-Fetești defence group, 4 canons and 4 “Vedea” type boats. The Sea Division included the cruiser “Elisabeta”, the “Mircea” brig and the navy schools. The total crew number was 2,562, of which 147 were officers and assimilated, 98 masters and civil craftsmen. However, a whole host of shortcomings overshadowed these achievements. The cruiser “Elisabeta”, considered, at the time of its launch (1888), the most powerful warship in the Black Sea, was used up before the outbreak of “the Great War”, the light torpedoes were not very stable during bad weather, and the “Mircea” brig had a reduced combat ability⁴².

If the Bulgarian fleet was weak, the Russian fleet represented a very dangerous potential opponent, an attack of which could, in the opinion of Marin Ionescu Dobrogeanu, most likely target

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⁴⁰ Ioan N. Roman, *Iredenta bulgară în Dobrogea*, in “Analele Dobrogei”, XVI, Cernăuți, 1935, pp. 5-6.

⁴¹ A. Rădulescu, I. Bitoleanu, op. cit., p. 360.

⁴² *Ibid*, pp. 403-404.



In the "Report on the concentration of the army in hypothesis A" (war against Russia), elaborated in December 1909 by Colonel Ioan Popovici, the 5th Army Corps had the mission to supervise the Cernavodă Bridge; the optimal concentration zone of the Romanian troops was located in the northeast of Walachia and the south of Moldavia on the right side of the Prut, so that, among others, to be close to Basarabia, Transilvania and Dobrogea.

the Constanța-Cernavodă line, and not Mangalia, defended by the homonymous and eccentric lake (positioned collaterally) towards the enemy's objectives. In order to diminish the vulnerability of Constanța in the face of a Russian maritime attack, M. Ionescu Dobrogianu proposed, in 1904, following the Danish model of the fortified island in front of Copenhagen, the installation of a coastal battery and the establishment of a defence pier, the fortification on land being considered useless⁴³. In fact, Constanța's vulnerability to the Russian fleet would be revealed in the following year, in the context of the famous episode of the cruiser Potemkin⁴⁴.

In the event of a Russian attack from the north, the same M. Ionescu Dobrogianu recommended the fortification of the Eski-Kalé part, considered more exposed, the surveillance of the Russian-speaking Lipovan population from the Delta, the installation of a torpedo battery on the Tulcea promontory and a torpedo dam at Ceatal, then the successive resistance to Babadag (on a short term), later to Hârșova, where it was recommended to build a bridge over the Danube (it would only be accomplished in 1966-1970). Once Hârșova and Isaccea were lost, resistance in the Cernavodă area became useless⁴⁵.

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In case of a Bulgarian ground attack on the Romanian Dobrogea, Captain M. Ionescu Dobrogianu wrote, in 1904, about the difficulty to find an optimal line of defence. As the most likely target of the Bulgarian attack was the Cernavodă bridge, the mentioned officer recommended organising two successive lines of defence, both located south of the Carasu Valley, namely the line delimited by the Urluia and Borungea valleys, with the centre at Enigea, respectively the line

⁴³ M. Ionescu Dobrogianu, *op. cit.*, p. 922.

⁴⁴ A. Rădulescu, I. Bitoleanu, *op. cit.*, p. 404.

⁴⁵ M. Ionescu Dobrogianu, *op. cit.*, pp. 919-921.

⁴⁶ Romanian National Military Archives – Military Archive Centre Pitești (RMNA – CADP), Great General Staff (GGS) Collection – Section 3 Operations, file 29/1909, rows 1-9.

of the Peștera and Ikingi-Deré, with the centre at Medgidia⁴⁷. Moreover, in the autumn 1916 campaign, the Romanian troops were withdrawn from Dobrogea, after losing the Constanța-Cernavodă strategic line⁴⁸. In a nationalistic brochure, published in 1919, Colonel Ion Antonescu observed that the disembarkation of enemy troops at Zimnicea, in November 1916, was carried out only after the Cernavodă-Constanța line had been reached in Dobrogea⁴⁹.

Even today, the possibilities of fortification of the Dobrogea area are significantly influenced by the climate of the province. Thus, the torrential character of the rainfall, generally reduced in frequency, may trigger floods and landslides, with direct effects on the land, logistic transports or troops manoeuvre⁵⁰.

Going back to the Romanian-Bulgarian rivalries from more than a century ago in Dobrogea, we mention that during the period of great tension of 1900-1902 (after Professor Ștefan Mihăileanu's assassination)⁵¹, the Romanian Great General Staff permanently received information about the movements of Bulgarian and Russian warships at the Black Sea⁵². In fact, in 1900, the construction of the bridgehead from Cernavodă was initiated, an operation that lasted until 1912, with the purpose of facilitating the operations of the Romanian army in Dobrogea and in the eastern sector of the Romanian Plain. The Russian government strongly protested against these actions, considered contrary to the provisions of Article 52 of the Berlin Treaty, but maintained a silent attitude towards similar actions by Bulgaria⁵³. In 1903, General Constantin Christescu (1866-1923) drafted hypothesis C, in the eventuality of a Bulgarian attack on Romanian territory⁵⁴.

At the beginning of the 20th century, the Directorate General of State Security identified many Bulgarian officers crossing the border

⁴⁷ M. Ionescu Dobrogianu, *op. cit.*, p. 924.

⁴⁸ A. Rădulescu, I. Bitoleanu, *op. cit.*, p. 386.

⁴⁹ Ion Antonescu, *Românii – originea, trecutul, sacrificiile și drepturile lor*, edited by Valeriu Florin Dobrinescu, Editura Moldova, Iași, 1991, p. 75.

⁵⁰ Valentin Dragomirescu, *Dobrogea: o analiză geografico-militară*, Editura Universității Naționale de Apărare "Carol I", București, 2015, pp. 29-31.

⁵¹ *I.P.E.R.D.*, pp. 200-201.

⁵² G. Preda, *op. cit.*, p. 117.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, pp. 113-115.

⁵⁴ P. Otu, *op. cit.*, p. 152 (Details in RMNA – CADP, GGS Collection – Section III Operations, file 10, passim).



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on the pretext of buying necessary materials for the Bulgarian army (hay, firewood etc.) and trying to establish ties with Bulgarian ethnic groups in Romania and spy on military objects⁵⁵. Also, the Romanian secret services had information on the training of Bulgarian gangs by the officers from the neighbouring country, in order to carry out espionage missions, including for the benefit of the Russian army⁵⁶.

Analysing the possibility of a war with Bulgaria, the Romanian decision-makers in this matter concluded that the Romanian state should not have the initiative for opening hostilities, but had to be prepared for offensive operations, the optimal solution of counteracting a Bulgarian attack in Dobrogea being the concentration of shock forces in Oltenia (Western Walachia), to threaten Sofia, the Dobrogea war-theatre playing a secondary role⁵⁷.

In 1908, the "Report on the concentration of the Romanian army in hypothesis C" (war against Bulgaria) was drawn up. The army of the neighbouring state was considered superior in terms of infantry and artillery, but inferior in terms of cavalry. After reviewing a series of drawbacks of the concentration of the Romanian troops in Dobrogea, the author of the memo concludes that: "the line of operation of the Romanian army through Dobrogea puts the Bulgarians in such good conditions that, after all, victory can become theirs". Even in the event of a rejection of the Bulgarian troops and a future pursuit, they had possibilities of strengthening on their own territory⁵⁸. Starting from the reality of the Bulgarian political-territorial ambitions in the southeastern Europe, amplified after gaining full independence, in October 1908, Romanian Colonel Ioan Popovici drew up a homonymous version of hypothesis C, in 1910. According to Colonel Ioan Popovici, for the Romanian state and its army, the war could only be offensive, in order not to allow Bulgaria to gain the upper hand. After mentioning "the too big difficulties that are foreseen in reaching an effective result, adopting the offensive through Dobrogea", he formulated the solution of an attack (march) towards Sofia, starting from the Danube Plain⁵⁹.

⁵⁵ G. Preda, *op. cit.*, p. 125.

⁵⁶ *Ibid*, p. 126.

⁵⁷ P. Otu, *op. cit.*, p. 153.

⁵⁸ RMNA – CADP, GGS Collection – Section III Operations, file 23/1908, rows 20-36.

⁵⁹ *Ibid*, file no. crt. 28/1910, rows 1-8.



In the context of preparations for the coalition war against the Ottoman Empire (the first Balkan war), Serbia and Bulgaria concluded a military convention in the spring of 1912 that also stipulated a (defensive) war against Romania. In such a situation, Dobrogea was considered as the possible theatre of military operations, as was the Middle Danube or the Serbian territory⁶⁰.

On the eve of Romania's intervention in the Second Balkan War, on 17 June 1913, General Alexandru Averescu finalised a "Memorandum regarding the guidance of the Romanian army's operations in case of intervention in the Serbian-Bulgarian conflict". The future Romanian Marshal appreciated that "the line of operations that presents the most advantages for advancing the main forces is the cluster that starts from the Danube, in front of Bechet-Corabia-Turnu Măgurele points"⁶¹. In fact, in the short summer 1913 campaign, Romania's main operations army concentrated on the left bank of the Danube, under the leadership of Crown Prince Ferdinand, later crossing the river, on the Bulgarian territory, while the Romanian Dobrogea represented the starting point for the Dobrogea Corps offensive, under the command of General Ioan Culcer⁶².

As the possibility of a substantial territorial expansion of Bulgaria on the part of the Ottoman Empire, especially in Macedonia, became increasingly clear in the Romanian political, diplomatic and military circles, the idea of a proper territorial compensation of the Romanian state appeared. The northeastern areas of the Bulgarian state, up to the Silistra-Varna or even Rusciuk-Varna lines, were considered as a strategic cover of the territory obtained in 1878; what the promoters of these ideas underestimated or ignored was the extent of the changes in Southern Dobrogea, after 1878, to the benefit of the ethnic Bulgarians (and to the disadvantage of the Muslims), both in terms of demographics and, above all, of economic-social relations. The Romanian plans to push south of the land border with Bulgaria, in case of the collapse of the Ottoman rule in the Balkans, were unsuccessfully communicated in Vienna and Berlin, in January 1901

⁶⁰ D. Bușă, *op. cit.*, p. 246.

⁶¹ D. Preda, E. Ardeleanu, Al. Oșca, *op. cit.*, p. 67.

⁶² P. Otu, *op. cit.*, p. 160.

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At the time of annexing (northern and central) Dobrogea under the Romanian state jurisdiction, the agriculture of this province was burdened, on the one hand, by the Ottoman inheritance in the field of financial law, and on the other hand, by the restricted share of the cultivated land in relation to the uncultivated ones (ponds, marshes etc.).

by P.P. Carp⁶³, then by Ion I.C. Brătianu; in September 1909⁶⁴, but also in Sofia, in 1902, by King Carol I himself⁶⁵.

The territorial expansion of the Romanian state to the south of Dobrogea was to take place under the conditions of the second Balkan war, in the summer of 1913. The territory acquired then, called *Quadrilateral*, due to its almost quadrangle form, *Southern Dobrogea*, or *New Dobrogea* (in opposition to *Old Dobrogea*, which is part of Romania since 1878), did not prove to be a true strategic cover of the Cernavodă-Constanța line, neither during the years of the First World War nor during the two interwar decades⁶⁶. In addition, the administration of the Quadrilateral posed many and difficult problems to the Romanian administration, some of them also affecting the international relations level⁶⁷.

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An essential feature of the Ottoman land tenure system was the placing of the most extensive arable land in the *Mirie* category, i.e. not in the full ownership of the cultivators, but only in their hereditary use, revocable in case of repeated non-cultivation of the land entrusted by the state, personified by the sultan. The Laws on Dobrogea issued by the Romanian authorities in 1880 and 1882 stipulated the transformation of the *Mirie* type properties into full private properties, in exchange for the payment of staggering amounts over 15 years. The Law of 1884 stipulated the rescheduling of the respective amounts for 20 years, in parallel with the alternative possibility of assigning a third of the *Mirie* surfaces, in exchange for the recognition of the full property right over

⁶³ I.P.E.R.D., p. 201.

⁶⁴ K. Hitchins, *op. cit.*, pp. 154-155.

⁶⁵ Gh. A. Dabija, *Amintirile unui atașat militar român în Bulgaria (1910-1913)*, Tipografia "Universul", București, 1936, p. 163; H. Hesapciiev, *op. cit.*, pp. 17-18.

⁶⁶ G. Ungureanu, *op. cit.*, pp. 67-75.

⁶⁷ *Ibid*, *passim*.



the rest for the owners⁶⁸. As a result of the confiscations of "thirds" and other legal measures, the Romanian state acquired a total of 165,142 hectares (127,843 in Constanța county and 37,309 in Tulcea county), representing about 1/9 of the Romanian Dobrogea area. Of this total, 60,552 hectares remained state property, and the rest (almost 2/3) was distributed to the native population or to the colonists brought to the area⁶⁹.

Much more than from confiscations, the Romanian state increased its Dobrogea land reserve following the works of enhancement of the territory (remedies, desiccations, divisions, deserts etc.). Thus, between 1884 and 1905, the cultivated area of the Romanian Dobrogea increased from 240,000 hectares to over 800,000 hectares⁷⁰. The works in question also contributed to the improvement of the hygienic-sanitary state, the ponds and marshes representing a favourable environment for a wide range of bio-pathogens⁷¹.

The cumulative result of the constructive and coercive-state measures, applied by the Romanian authorities in Dobrogea, in the land domain, constituted a solid basis for the redistribution of property, through sale-purchase. Until 1908, the Romanian state sold a total of 400,452 hectares of Dobrogea arable land, of which about 2/3 (260,163 ha.) to Romanian ethnic groups (colonists or natives), and 140,379 to Romanian citizens of other ethnicities⁷². Meanwhile, in 1903, a law of ownership for those who fought in the War of Independence (1877-1878) was issued, according to which they were granted 2000 m² of home fireplace, plus lots of 8 hectares, in exchange for amounts payable in 60 years annuities; in addition, they benefited from a five-year tax exemption and aid for building houses and purchasing cattle and agricultural tools, as well as fruit trees and nozzles from state nurseries⁷³.

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⁶⁸ Ioan N. Roman, *Proprietatea imobiliară rurală în Dobrogea*, in vol. *Dobrogea – 50 de ani de viață românească (1878-1928)*, manager: C-tin Brătescu, secretary: I. Georgescu, Cultura Națională, București, 1928, pp. 285-286.

⁶⁹ Toma Ionescu, *Asupra proprietăților și colonizărilor în Dobrogea*, in *Dobrogea – 50 de ani...*, p. 278.

⁷⁰ Gheorghe Iacob, *Repere ale evoluției economice*, in *Istoria românilor* (academic treatise), tome VII, T2; *De la Independență la Marea Unire (1878-1918)*, coord.: acad. Gh. Platon, Editura Enciclopedică, București, 2003, p. 167.

⁷¹ M. Ionescu Dobrogianu, *op. cit.*, p. 204.

⁷² Marin Vlădescu-Olt, *Constituția Dobrogei*, Tipografia "Doru P. Cucu", București, 1908, pp. 131-132.

⁷³ A. Rădulescu, I. Bitoleanu, *op. cit.*, pp. 358, 370.



An important stage for the connection of Dobrogea with the rest of the Romanian territory is represented by the years 1890-1895, when we note the establishment of the Romanian River Navigation (1890), then of the Romanian Maritime Service (1895), almost simultaneously with the inauguration of the Cernavodă bridge.

However, the yield of the plant crop was low, compared to the rest of the country, a fact that can be explained either by the smaller proportion of the plows (24 to 100 hectares, compared to 36 in Moldavia and Walachia⁷⁴), or by the dependence on the very fluctuating climatic conditions⁷⁵.

A well-represented branch of activity in the pre-war Romanian Dobrogea was animal breeding. Thus, at the beginning of the last century, the province sheltered the eighth part of Romania's sheep and goats flocks; the number of sheep per capita of Dobrogea (3) was higher than any country in Europe (Greece – 2.5, Bulgaria – 2, Serbia – 1.5 etc.). In 1904, in Constanța and Tulcea counties, a horse was registered to 2.7 respectively 3 inhabitants, a large horn to 1.38, respectively 2.44 inhabitants, a small horn to 3.7, respectively 1.2 inhabitants, a pig to 6, respectively 5.8 inhabitants⁷⁶.

Due to the specific conditions and measures taken by the central and local authorities, Dobrogea was not affected by the peasant movements that shook the Old Kingdom of Romania between 1888 and 1907.

If the industrialisation itself made little progress in Dobrogea from 1878-1913, not the same can be said about communications and commerce. An important stage for the connection of Dobrogea with the rest of the Romanian territory is represented by the years 1890-1895, when we note the establishment of the Romanian River Navigation (1890), then of the Romanian Maritime Service (1895), almost simultaneously with the inauguration of the Cernavodă bridge⁷⁷. In fact, the building of the Bucharest-Fetești railway line and a trans-Danube bridge had been stipulated in a law adopted in June 1882, and three years later, the construction of the bridge over the Danube and the reconstruction of Constanța port were declared works of public utility, following a few years of failed auctions⁷⁸.

In 1887, the Ministry of Public Works gave up the idea of a tender, setting up a special service, under the guidance of engineer Anghel Saligny (b. 1854-d. 1925), who, assisted by other Romanian engineers,

⁷⁴ M. Ionescu Dobrogianu, *op. cit.*, p. 935.

⁷⁵ A. Rădulescu, I. Bitoleanu, *op. cit.*, p. 371.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 796.

⁷⁷ Gh. Iacob, *Repere ale evoluției economice...*, p. 120.

⁷⁸ M. Ionescu Dobrogianu, *op. cit.*, p. 676.



In 1899, the direct railway line Berlin-Constanța was inaugurated, and six years later the Constanța-Istanbul submarine cable was used, the metropolis of Northern Dobrogea becoming a nodal point between Central Europe and the Near East.

drew up a project, finalised and accepted in the year 1889, when the actual works began⁷⁹. After six years, Dobrogea was linked to Walachia, in the Fetești-Cernavodă area, by the longest bridge complex in Europe and the second in the world⁸⁰. Between Cernavodă and Constanța, a railway line had been built, is the Ottoman period (1857-1862), by a British company⁸¹. Tulcea County, not connected to the rest of Dobrogea (and the country) by rail, would have a slower development than Constanța⁸². Dobrogea road network was represented, in 1900, by two national roads (Constanța-Babadag-Tulcea and Tulcea-Ghecet), 41 neighbourhood roads and 9 communal roads⁸³.

After the repurchase from the British company "Danube and Black Sea Railway and Küstenge Harbor Company Ltd." (the same one that built the Constanța-Cernavodă railway), the modernisation of the port of Constanța started on 16 October 1896, being entrusted to the French company Hallier, and after its bankruptcy (1899), to the engineer Anghel Saligny⁸⁴.

Also in 1899, the direct railway line Berlin-Constanța was inaugurated, and six years later the Constanța-Istanbul⁸⁵ submarine cable was used, the metropolis of Northern Dobrogea becoming a nodal point between Central Europe and the Near East. On 27 September 1909, in the presence of the royal family and the members of the government, the celebrations of the inauguration of the port of Constanța took place, occasion on which, symbolically, the ship "Iași" was loaded with cereals for export, from the first warehouse-silo built by A. Saligny, who was also present at the event⁸⁶.

Between 1889 and 1913, the volume of trade practised in the port of Constanța increased from 89,400 tones to 1.5 million tones, representing one-third of the total export of Romania since then, including 85% of the quantity of oil exported. Currently, through the port of Constanța pass about 15 million tons annually⁸⁷. Going back

⁷⁹ A Rădulescu, I. Bitoleanu, *op. cit.*, p. 367.

⁸⁰ V. Dragomirescu, *op. cit.*, p. 192.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, p. 168.

⁸² A. Rădulescu, I. Bitoleanu, *op. cit.*, p. 369.

⁸³ M. Ionescu Dobrogianu, *op. cit.*, p. 684.

⁸⁴ V. Dragomirescu, *op. cit.*, p. 169.

⁸⁵ A. Rădulescu, I. Bitoleanu, *op. cit.*, pp. 402-403.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 403.

⁸⁷ V. Dragomirescu, *op. cit.*, p. 39.



to the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, we also mention that during this period, about 90% of the volume of Romanian foreign trade was carried out with the western states (including Austro-Hungary), 8% with the Balkan states (including the Ottoman Empire) and only 2% with the Russian Empire⁸⁸.

A third of a century after joining Romania, Dobrogea became the most urbanised province, among the four of the Old Romanian Kingdom, with a share of the city population of 25%, compared with less than 10% in Oltenia (Western Wallachia), 18% in Moldova and about 22 % in Muntenia (Eastern Wallachia), thanks to the Capital (country average: 18.4%)⁸⁹.

The actions of the Romanian authorities to make the most of the Dobrogea territory and to state some agricultural lands, in conjunction with the development of communication routes, created a solid basis for the colonisation process of the province between the Danube and the Sea. Not unimportant is the fact that, after the use of the Cernavodă Bridge, the colonisation experienced a significant acceleration⁹⁰. In turn, the colonisation considerably transformed the ethno-demographic structure of the province between the Danube and the Sea. Thus, in 1913, *Old Dobrogea* had a total population of 384,420 inhabitants (over 2.5 times more than in 1880), of which 209,571 in Constanța county and 170,859 in Tulcea county⁹¹. The Romanian ethnic groups made up the absolute majority of the population (216,425 inhabitants, 56.9%), their share being slightly higher in Constanța county compared to Tulcea (61.6%, compared to 51.1%). The second place was the Bulgarian ethnic group, 51,149 (13.4%), followed by the Turks-Tartars (41,442 inhabitants or 10.9%). The Russians and the Lipovans, 35,849, represented 9.4% of the population, and the 9,999 Greeks made up 2.6% of the total population⁹².

Of the more than 200,000 Romanians from *Old Dobrogea*, recorded in 1913, only a quarter (24.2%) were *dicieni* (Romanians who were there in 1878 or their descendants), while 39.5% were *cojani* (from the plains

⁸⁸ G. Preda, *op. cit.*, pp. 115-116.

⁸⁹ Veličko Georgiev, Stajko Trifonov (editors), *Istoriya na Bălgarite (1878-1944) v dokumenti*, Tom I, 1878-1912, Prosveta, Sofia, 1996, p. 561.

⁹⁰ M. Ionescu Dobrogianu, *op. cit.*, p. 931.

⁹¹ A. Rădulescu, I. Bitoleanu, *op. cit.*, p. 360.

⁹² *Ibid.*

of Walachia, 21.8% were *mocani* (coming from Transylvania and Banat, under Hungarian domination), 8% were Moldovans from the right bank of the Prut, and 5.6% were Romanians from Basarabia⁹³. One should notice as well the significant increase of Romanians in Tulcea county, between 1908 and 1913, from about 40% (62,204 out of 154,147)⁹⁴ to 51⁹⁵. An area with a significant share of the non-Romanian population remains the Danube Delta, where Prefect Ioan Nenițescu had tried, at the end of the 19th century, to initiate a colonising action⁹⁶. The share of Romanian ethnicities had increased not only demographically, but also socially-economically, being relevant in this regard the fact that Dobrogea was the only province of the Old Kingdom since 1912 where they were better represented in the urban environment than in the rural one (80.45%, compared to 48.2%)⁹⁷.

As we have seen, the Bulgarians registered a decrease of one-third of the demographic share (from 19.9 to 13.4 percent), but, in absolute numbers, their number saw a significant increase, from about 30,000 to over 51,000, representing an increase of 70% over 33 years (1880-1913). According to some Romanian sources, this increase was due to the Bulgarian immigrants from Southern Basarabia, caused by the revocation by the Czarist authorities of the privileges granted at the beginning of the 19th century to the Bulgarian colonists⁹⁸.

The share of Bulgarian ethnicities in the rural economic and social life of the province remained, after all indications, higher than the demographic itself. A statistics from 1906, put into circulation by Vasile M. Kogălniceanu and used by Bulgarian propagandist Ivan St. Penakov, in the interwar years, recorded, on the territory of Tulcea county, a total of 9,742 Romanian agricultural households, totalling 97,000 hectares (on average, about 10 hectares per household), respectively 5,794 Bulgarian agricultural households,

⁹³ Constantin Iordache, *Rumînskata Kalifornija: integriraneto na Severna Dobrudža v Rumînjia (1878-1913)*, in *"Istoričeski Pregled"*, 57, nr. 3-4/2001, p. 63.

⁹⁴ Romulus Seișanu, *Dobrogea, Gurile Dunării și Insula Șerpilor*, Tipografia "Universul", București, 1928, p. 193.

⁹⁵ See *supra*, notice 97.

⁹⁶ M. Ionescu Dobrogianu, *op. cit.*, pp. 268-269.

⁹⁷ Răzvan Limona, *Populația Dobrogei în perioada interbelică, Semănătorul*, online publishing, August 2009, Tulcea, p. 26, the text is available at tulcealibrary.com, retrieved on 29.08.2019.

⁹⁸ Central National Historical Archives of Romania, *Presidency of the Council of Ministers Collection*, file no. 131/1939, rows 31-32.



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When it became part of the modern Romanian national state (1878), the northern and central Dobrogea territory was considered by the Romanians as an area of maximum vulnerability, for multiple reasons (Trans-Danube position, ethno-demographic composition, precarious economic situation, etc.). The main fears were related to the affinities and connivances between Russia and Bulgaria.

totalling 85,504 hectares (on average, about 15 ha per household)⁹⁹. The deputy of Macedonian-Romanian origin, Achile Pinetta showed, in the parliamentary sitting of 8 April 1922, without being contradicted by auditors or other speakers, that the Bulgarian ethnic groups from Northern Dobrogea had succeeded in taking advantage of the opportunities offered by the stipulations of the Romanian land regime, having documents of property and sufficient financial reserves not only for the payment of fees for the transformation of *Mirie* properties into full private property, but also for the acquisition of land¹⁰⁰.

Despite the good relations with the Romanian authorities on the political and cultural level, the situation of the Turkish Tartars experienced a significant economic and social degradation. Their number, in absolute numbers, remains the same, but the demographic percentage share drops almost three times, between 1880 and 1913, from 31% to 11%, while the arable area held was reduced to no more than one-sixth; several socio-cultural factors contributed to this dramatic involution: lack of an Ottoman tradition of written acts, language barrier, Islamic conservatism, but also certain attitudes and behaviours of Romanian officials¹⁰¹. The precariousness of the living conditions of the Dobrogea Muslims also made its mark on the degree of literacy (very low, although the two counties occupied, in 1912, the 2nd and the 3rd places among all the 32 counties of the Old Romanian Kingdom, in this chapter)¹⁰², “as and hygiene-sanitary condition”, their homes being considered “true outbreaks of infection”¹⁰³.

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When it became part of the modern Romanian national state (1878), the northern and central Dobrogea territory was considered by the Romanians as an area of maximum vulnerability, for multiple reasons (Trans-Danube position, ethno-demographic composition,

⁹⁹ Apud Ivan St. Penakov, *L'entente bulgaro-roumaine. Premisses*, Editura T.F. Tchipeff, Sofia, 1939, pp. 20-21.

¹⁰⁰ “Monitorul Oficial – Dezbaterile Adunării Deputaților”, no. 20 of 30 April 1922, sitting of 8 April 1922, in *Sesiunea ordinară 1921-1922*, Imprimeria națională, București, 1922, p. 347.

¹⁰¹ M. Ülküsal, *Dobruça ve Türkler*, Turkish Institute for Culture and Researches, Ankara, 1966, pp. 24-44.

¹⁰² A. Rădulescu, I. Bitoleanu, *op. cit.*, p 394.

¹⁰³ M. Ionescu Dobrogianu, *op. cit.*, p. 61.



precarious economic situation, etc.). The main fears were related to the affinities and connivances between Russia and Bulgaria. In order to safeguard and strengthen its sovereignty in Dobrogea, the Romanian state has taken a series of measures, both at the political and military level, and at the ethnopolitical level (i.e. economic, social, cultural ones, etc.). The actual military measures (the establishment of the Danube Division and the Great Division), the deployment in the area of the 5th Army Corps, the building of the bridgehead from Cernavodă, etc.), affected by a whole series of difficulties and objective deficiencies, offered limited results, but Romania's security options and European pre-war balance made up for this disadvantage. A remarkable success was the measures of the second category (the enhancement of the territory, the development of the communication routes and the port of Constanța, the colonisation etc.), in their essence, of constructive-integrative type and only occasionally of coercive type. These led to the full integration of Dobrogea into the Romanian national-state edifice, a process that will prove irreversible, in the context of affirming the principle of national self-determination and under the conditions of the Romanian foreign policy option since August 1916.

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1ST GERMAN INFANTRY REGIMENT WITHIN THE ARMY OF THE MOLDAVIAN DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC (1917-1918)

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The increasing effort for affirming national identity was one of the consequences for the disintegration of the Russian Empire, in 1917. Basarabia, abruptly taken away from Moldova about a century before, was suddenly finding its own place, due to the total separation from Russia. Consequently, on 27 October 1917, Basarabia proclaimed its autonomy. At the same time, the Country Counsel (Sfatul Țării) was established, as a legislative body.

In 1917, Southern Basarabia was engulfed in a disastrous situation, caused by the numerous acts of vandalism and disorganisation triggered by the Sovietisation of the region. In order to stabilise and calm the situation in the area, German colonists, allying themselves with the Moldavians in their fight against Tsarism, formed detachments, patrolling the towns.

Even though its history was brief, the 1st German Infantry Regiment within the Army of the Moldavian Democratic Republic played its part in enforcing order, guarding goods and, last but not least, fighting anarchy.

Keywords: Country Counsel, Moldavian-German units, national emancipation, German colonists, regular army.

1st German Infantry Regiment within the Army of the Moldavian Democratic Republic
(1917-1918)

INTRODUCTION

The Union Act of 27 March (9 April) 1918 voted by the Country Counsel (Sfatul Țării) was the expression of the will of the native population to end Russian occupation. The struggle for national emancipation of Moldavians was regarded with sympathy and supported by representatives of other nations, among which one of the most important where the ethnic Germans of Basarabia. After the annexation of Basarabia, in 1812, their number increased steadily from 6,412 people in 1826 to 9,000 in 1846 and from 35,501 people in 1861 to 93,422 people in 1940¹. The census data regarding the population of the Russian Empire in 1897 attested to the existence of 58,106 ethnic Germans in Basarabia, which represented 3.5% of the total population of the region².

Beginning with the 8th decade of the 19th century, the Germans, as well as other nationalities, were subjected to a massive process of Russification, their mother tongue being excluded from the curricula of German settlers' schools³. Because of this fact, German colonists became the natural allies of Moldavians in their struggle against Tsarism, which gained momentum with the Russian revolution of February 1917. The national interests of the Germans were represented in the Country Council by two deputies – Philipp Almendinger and Robert von Loesch.

MOLDAVIAN-GERMAN UNITS ORGANISATION AND COMMAND

The political situation in the region, which was already very tense, became much worse with the formation of the Country Counsel on 21 November 1917, which undertook the leadership of the region.

¹ E. Ploșnița, *Coloniștii germani în Basarabia*, in *Akados. Revista de știință, inovare, cultură și artă*, no. 1 (20), 2011, Chișinău, p. 128.

² L. Prisac, *Învățământul minorităților naționale prin prisma comunității armene de la Basarabia țaristă la Basarabia românească*, in *Țara Bârsei. Revista de cultură*, Brașov, 2014, p. 437.

³ E. Ploșnița, *op. cit.*, p. 128.



The struggle for national emancipation of Moldavians was regarded with sympathy and supported by representatives of other nations, among which one of the most important where the ethnic Germans of Basarabia.



The Bolshevik Government in Petrograd decided to Sovietise the region by an armed coup with the help of the red guards and the Bolshevik units of the Russian Army. For this, they needed to destabilise the social-political situation through specially trained emissaries sent from Petrograd to Basarabia. Due to their activity, the entire territory between the Dniester and Prut rivers was engulfed in a huge wave of anarchy, murders and robberies. The wave of terror did not avoid Southern Basarabia. To end this state of affairs, the German colonists spontaneously organised themselves in small detachments to patrol its towns and fight the villains. This initiative was supported by the leadership of the Country Council, which assigned Robert von Loesch, member of the Country Council and its Military Council, with the drafting of the regulation on the organisation, augmentation and command of the Moldavian-German units of the Moldavian Republic, being appointed as Commissar of these units. The regulation stipulated the creation of special military units of the Germans from Basarabia, subordinated to the General Directorate for Military and Maritime Affairs, with the purpose of maintaining order, guarding material goods and fight with anarchy.

Moldavian-German troops were to be filled exclusively only by the Germans – local settlers, except for the officers, who could be replaced by ethnic Germans from other regions of Russia.

Another point of this regulation stipulated that Moldavian-German troops were to be filled exclusively only by the Germans – local settlers, except for the officers, who could be replaced by ethnic Germans from other regions of Russia. Simultaneously, it was stipulated that all Moldavian-German units would form a great military unit with the size of a brigade, the brigade commander enjoying similar rights to a division commander⁴.

Beginning with 11 December 1917, the organisation of German units within the regular army of the Republic of Moldova took a practical turn. On this day, an ad was published in the newspaper “Vocea Basarabiei” (*Voice of Basarabia*), in which the public was informed that “in Chișinău, based on the Country Council’s decision, the process of building the Basarabian Germans’ units (battalions) began, consisting of mobile detachments equipped with machine gun buses

⁴ Arhiva Națională a Republicii Moldova/National Archives of the Republic of Moldova (NARM), 1725 Collection, inv. 3, f. 165, pp. 19-19 verso.

to fight anarchy and pogroms. The Chancellery of units was in Volkenberg’s home on Aleksandrovskaia Street, cornering Hospitals Street”⁵. At the same time, Major General Baron Alexander von Heyking was made commander of the Moldavian-German units⁶. The plans of the German leaders stipulated the establishment of a cavalry detachment of 300 troops, 2 artillery regiments and an artillery battery for which they demanded, from the Russian 6th Army depots, 300 horses completely equipped, weapons for 300 horsemen, 30,000 cartridges, 6 field guns of 76.2 mm with 300 bombshells, 32 machine guns with 256 battle guns, 3,000 rifles with 100,000 cartridges for them, engineering for 2 regiments and equipment for 50,000 troops⁷.



Volkenberg’s House, the chancellery of the German units on the Aleksandrovskaia street on the corner of Spitalelor Street (Ștefan cel Mare Boulevard on the corner with T. Ciorbă Street)

The first from the number of units planned for training was the 1st Moldavian-German Infantry Regiment. The process of setting up the regiment was rather tedious. Not even the date of the regiment’s creation is clear. We know that at the joint meeting of the ethnic Germans of Akkerman and the German National Committee on 24 January 1918 under the chairmanship of Commissioner von Loesch,

⁵ NARM, 1725 Collection, inv. 3, d. 26, pp. 8-8 verso.

⁶ *Ibid*, p. 1.

⁷ *Ibid*, p. 44 verso.



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the decision was made to form the 1st German Infantry Regiment located in the city of Chișinău⁸. But on 27 December 1917 Robert von Loesch addressed the Military Directorate with the request to assign Lieutenant Colonel Sergei Grunberg as a Regiment Commander⁹. The organising chart of the unit was drawn up shortly, which included the unit command, an infantry battalion composed of 4 companies and an assurance company¹⁰. Towards the beginning of 1918, the regiment had 10 officers, 1 civilian employee, 44 soldiers and 30 horses¹¹. All attempts to increase the number of the staff with German population from southern Basarabia did not succeed, the number of soldiers remaining constant over the entire existence of the unit, which was abolished in March 1918. The small number of troops allowed the unit to be fully stationed at the Balș Orphanage in Chișinău together with other structures of the Moldavian army¹².

All attempts to increase the number of the staff with German population from southern Basarabia did not succeed, the number of soldiers remaining constant over the entire existence of the unit, which was abolished in March 1918.



The Balș Orphanage Building on 2 Lăpușneanu Street, headquarters of the Moldavian-German Infantry Regiment

Among the officers of the regiment we can list the following: Lieutenant Colonel Serghei Grünberg – Commander of the Regiment, Lieutenant Colonel Alexander Lange – Deputy Domestic (Logistics)

⁸ *Ibid*, f. 15, p. 59.

⁹ *Ibid*, f. 26, p. 31.

¹⁰ *Ibid*, f. 14, p. 42 verso.

¹¹ *Ibid*, p. 3 verso.

¹² *Ibid*, f. 15, p. 51.

Commander, Captain Peter August Schlichenmaer – Battalion Commander, Flagship Michael Wilhelm Steinert – 1st Company Commander, Flagship Wilhelm Ivan Zweigardt – 2nd Company Commander, Flagship Vsevolod Richard von Prüssing – 3rd Company Commander, Flagship Nicolai Ivan Beloborodov – Regiment Treasurer, Flagship Adolf Grossberg – 4th Company Commander, Lieutenant Major Ciastek – Assurance Company Commander¹³. Given that, as of 7 (20) February 2018, Lieutenant Colonel Sergei Grünberg, Regiment Commander, did not present to duty, he was dismissed from his position and replaced with Lieutenant Colonel Alexander Lange¹⁴. Starting March 1918, it began the process of abolishing the regiment due to lack of staff and high maintenance costs that rose to 37,000 roubles per month¹⁵.

The second unit was the *Cavalry Division* in the capital of the German colonies – Tarutino. The commander of the division was Major von Miller, who, starting with 24 January 1918, initiated the process of registering the staff in his unit, which, according to the organisational chart, would be of 65 people¹⁶. To complete this division, it received from the 1st Moldovan-German Infantry Regiment a truck, a machine gun, 50 rifles, 3 boxes of ammunition, 1 kitchenette, 5 carriages, 10 horses and 50 pieces of complete equipment¹⁷. In order to help the unit commander to complete the division, Flagship Vsevolod Richard von Prüssing was sent, who carried out a propaganda and agitation activity among the German colonists¹⁸. However, it seems that the results of the agitation were not very successful, because starting March, the leaders of the German movement in the Moldavian Republic switched to another form of military organisation.

As a result of the failure of creating regular units, it was decided the formation of paramilitary units of militia character, designed to maintain order in the German localities. For this, the southern Basarabia lands were divided into 8 districts, the population of which necessarily represented 8 militia detachments. The 1st Pedestrian Detachment

¹³ *Ibid*, p. 1.

¹⁴ *Ibid*, d. 26, p. 133.

¹⁵ *Ibid*, p. 38.

¹⁶ *Ibid*, p. 68.

¹⁷ *Ibid*, p. 96 verso.

¹⁸ *Ibid*, p. 98.



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included in its area the localities of Chișinău and Bender (Tighina) regions. In the area of the 2nd Pedestrian Detachment entered all the colonies from the Cahul county. The strength of the 3rd Pedestrian Detachment was made up of the Germans of Malojaroslawetz, Tarutino and Krasna, the 4th Pedestrian Detachment of the population of Klöstitz, the 5th Pedestrian Detachment of the population of Arzis, Paris and Teplitz districts; the 6th Pedestrian Detachment – Sarata, Kulevitz, Plahteev districts; the 7th Pedestrian Detachment – Postal, Division, Bairamcea, Turlaca and the 8th Pedestrian Detachment of the localities in the Nadejda, Talmaza districts and other neighbourhoods¹⁹.

By 19 March 1918, in each detachment, there were assigned as military trainers officers of the former 1st German Infantry Regiment under the general command of Lieutenant Colonel Lange. In the 1st Detachment, headquartered in Emmental, Lieutenant Steinart was assigned as trainer, Flagship Zweigardt in the 2nd Detachment, Flagship Miller in the 3rd Detachment, based in Malojaroslawetz, Flagship Grossberg in the 4th Detachment, Flagship Bachman in the 6th Detachment, based in Sarata, Flagship von Prüssing in the 7th Detachment. The 5th and 8th Detachments had no trainers due to the lack of officers. At Tarutino, the existing division was transformed into a detachment of mounted militia under the command of Captain von Miller, to which Lieutenant Kist and Flagship Beloborodov were added. The existence of these detachments, as well as of the German regular units was short-lived, being abolished after the Union's act.

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The existence of the German units in the regular army of the Moldavian Democratic Republic is a short but important episode in the joint struggle of Basarabian and ethnic Germans for national emancipation against Russian chauvinism and communist ideology. *The 1st Moldavian-German Infantry Regiment* was an example of abnegation and solidarity shown by the two allies in their effort against the Russian rule.

¹⁹ *Ibid*, p. 136 verso.

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3. E. Ploșnița, *Coloniștii germani în Basarabia*, in *Akados, Revista de știință, inovare, cultură și artă*, Chișinău, nr. 1 (20), 2011.





ROMANIAN NAVY OFFICERS SENT TO STUDY ABROAD (1925-1928)

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Despite the fact that the Navy School was established in Constanța, in 1920, the Romanian Navy considered necessary to send several young officers to study at the Naval Academies in the West. This practice was implemented in the 19th century and many famous officers, some of them even Navy Commanders, graduated from Naval Academies in the West. The present study focuses on a group of young officers educated and trained in Italy and France, starting in the mid '20s. Studying their reports sent to the Navy Inspectorate in Bucharest, interesting lessons are emphasised, which were implemented when they came back to the country. From concepts, through naval tactics, to complex exercises, each officer belonging to the group could acquire certain skills, depending on the specifics of the Navies of the countries they studied in. Once they returned to the Romanian Navy, the officers could promote the acquired information, which had important effects on the Romanian naval thinking during the interwar period.

Keywords: Navy, interwar period, Naval Academy, naval tactics, naval doctrine.



INTRODUCTION

At the beginning of the 20th century, it was considered that the most effective way to maintain contact with the Western naval achievements was to send young officers to study abroad. In the *Report no. 13719* on 28 March 1923, the Chief of the Naval Technical Inspectorate, Rear Admiral Niculescu-Rizea, requested the Council of Ministers to approve to send Romanian naval officers to study abroad. The report showed that the naval attaches of the mentioned foreign countries provided information and relations about the availability of their own governments to receive Romanian naval officers in the academies of Italy, France or Britain, namely in Livorno, Brest or Keyham.

The French authorities proved to be the most open to discussions and they quickly agreed to this proposal, but there were other suggestions to the leadership of the Navy, concerning the British Admiralty¹. The British party was ready to receive, each year, three naval officers having the rank of second lieutenant, at the Royal Naval Engineering College in Keyham. The cost for the classes was 200 pounds for each officer and Bucharest was also required to cover the accommodation and meal expenses.

At the same time the Italian Naval Ministry chose to accept, in turn, three Romanian officers, with 4 high school classes to study in Italy. Two of them were to attend the three-year programme at the Naval Academy in Livorno. The third one would benefit from a practice programme aboard Italian warship. The classes were free and Romania would pay for the necessary materials and equipment.

Of all these proposals the most advantageous one was, of course, the Italian one, more so because the programme was three-year long, a period considered “*indispensable for the formation of good mechanics for the modern Navy*”² by the Naval Technical Inspectorate.

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¹ The National Military Archives of Romania, *Microfilm* Collection, roll II 2.2758, file 150, c. 233.

² *Ibidem*, c. 234.



INTELLIGENCE MISSIONS IN FRANCE AND ITALY

Not only young officers would benefit from these programmes of foreign study. One of the most important missions was organised at the end of 1924, when the Commander of the Black Sea Division, at the time Read Admiral Vasile Scodrea, and Lieutenant Commander Gheorghe Koslinski were sent in a mission to gather information in Italy and France. The aim was to collect intelligence about the naval shipyards in those countries, especially concerning the new submarine projects being built there. The Romanian Navy wanted to know the exact characteristics of the new submarine in construction in the West in order to better adapt its own constructions, since none of its current projects were deemed adequate to suit its needs. Of course, taking advantage of this occasion, the Navy got some precious data since the French and Italian authorities were quite open hoping to get favours with a possible client in the East³.

In Italy the officers were warmly received and they were given all the info they asked, going so far as being allowed to visit the Arsenal of Spezia. The Naval Ministry in Rome even offered some vacancies for Romanian Navy officers to study at the Naval Academy. In Spezia they could inspect the “Ansaldo” Shipyards, the battleship “Cavour” and the destroyer “Falco”. The Romanian officers were also given some data on the new submarines the Italian Navy was building. The impression they took home was that the Italian armament industry had progressed significantly, including the naval one, producing quality ships⁴.

In Paris the Romanian officers were well received. Moreover, they were invited to Cherbourg to inspect the submarine “Requin”, the newest one in service for the French Navy. The ship had been launched only five months before the Romanian visit and was part

³ The National Military Archives of Romania, *Inspectoratul General al Marinei* Collection, file 28/1924, p. 196.

⁴ In reality, the Italian fleet, though growing since the Fascists took power, was lagging behind its main rival, France. That is why the Italians were focusing on submarine construction, since they were cheaper and easier to build. According to Brian R. Sullivan, *A Fleet in Being: The Rise and Fall of Italian Sea Power 1861-1943*, in *The International History Review*, vol. 10, no. 1, 1988, p. 116.

of the naval programmes of 1922 and 1923. It was an oceanic patrol boat for the Atlantic. Weighing 947 tons, it was armed with 3 guns (1x100 mm, 2x88 AA) and 10x550 mm tubes⁵.

The official talks were focused on the Russian Admiral Wranghel Fleet and the danger it posed for Romania if it were ever returned to the Bolsheviks. That was a very present threat, since in 1924 there were many incidents at the Romanian-Soviet border in Bessarabia. The arguments of Rear Admiral Scodrea were well aimed. He showed that the return of such a significant force in the Black Sea area, according to the conventions of that time, would allow the crossing of any equal-size naval force in the Black Sea. This was clearly in the disadvantage of France, which did not have the naval power to send a fleet there, but could have been an opportunity for Britain, a much larger naval power⁶.

Another Romanian naval officer who also visited the two mentioned countries in 1924 was Commander Petre Bărbuneanu, the Commander of the Naval School in Constanța. Although his mission was to observe the workings of the Naval Academies in France and Italy, he was keen on collecting intelligence for the inspectorate. The quest remained; Romanian needed to create a submarine fleet and some information could be gathered from the French and Italian constructors. Italy was in the process of launching submarines of three types.

The first one, of 1,800 tons, was an oceanic boat and clearly not suited for Romania. Of real interest was the 800 tons “Mameli” class, of which Italy launched four units (“Pier Capponi”, “Giovanni da Precida”, “Goffredo Mameli” and “Tito Speri”), armed with 6x530 mm tubes and 1x102 mm gun. This type would reach 17 nods on the surface and 9 underwater⁷ and was deemed suited for the Romanian Navy by Commander Bărbuneanu.

⁵ Henri Le Masson, *Navies of the Second World War: The French Navy*, vol. 1, Macdonald&Co., London, 1969, p. 145.

⁶ The National Military Archives of Romania, *Inspectoratul General al Marinei* Collection, file 28/1924, p. 197.

⁷ Bruno Weyer, *Taschenbuch der Kriegsflotten 1928*, J.F. Lehmanns Verlag, Munchen, 1928, p. 82.



The official talks were focused on the Russian Admiral Wranghel Fleet and the danger it posed for Romania if it were ever returned to the Bolsheviks. That was a very present threat, since in 1924 there were many incidents at the Romanian-Soviet border in Bessarabia.



In France, at Brest, the officer took advantage of the naval exercises of the submarine flotilla there in order to inspect the “Gorgone” class submarine, “Hermione”, built before the war, in 1917. Displacing 500 tons and armed with 8x450 mm tubes and 1x75 naval gun, this boat was very similar to the “Laubeuf”, class, meaning its tanks were inside⁸. At Brest Bărbuneanu was presented the latest achievement of the French Navy in submarine construction, the “Marsouin”, only a few months from its launch. The boat was of the “Requin” class.

Both information and study voyages had a significant impact on the Romanian Navy’s own programmes. In the mid ’20s the Navy was in full process of servicing new type of ships like submarines and minelayers.

Despite it, in the long term the most benefits were for the young naval officers sent to study abroad because they could get accustomed with the developments in the West and they managed to implement most of them just in time before the Second World War. The study focuses on one of those officers, Horia Macellariu. He studied in France and Italy, following the negotiations with these countries, which were finalized with the acceptance of a limited number of Romanian officers in the respective Naval Academies. Italy chose to receive two Second Lieutenants at the Naval Engineer School of Genova for two years and one Lieutenant for torpedo training at the Livorno Naval Academy for one year. In France Romania could send a Lieutenant to study at the Naval Warfare School in Paris for one year⁹.

HORIA MACELLARIU AND THE RELEVANCE OF HIS REPORTS

The Lieutenant in question was Horia Macellariu, who went to study at the Naval Warfare School in Paris in 1927-1928. As the other officers he had to report regularly to the Naval Inspectorate in Bucharest. Studying his reports, we can observe the kind of strategic and tactical exercises he had to complete in France and the way they could be implemented in the service of the Romanian Navy.

⁸ Jean Labayle Couhat, *French Warships of World War I*, Ian Allan Ltd., London, 1974, p. 154.

⁹ The National Military Archives of Romania, *Inspectoratul General al Marinei* Collection, file 204/1924, p. 112.

In an analysis of the naval actions in the North Sea during the First World War, Lieutenant Măcellariu studied the objectives and methods used by the German Imperial Navy to ensure its access to the High Seas¹⁰. The naval operations on the Belgian coast were of interest for the Romanian officer because they could be compared with those undertaken by the Romanian Navy in the same period of time. He was focused on two types of operations. On the one hand, the blockade of the Belgian ports of Zeebrugge and Ostende by the Royal Navy. The ports were occupied by the Germans since the start of the war. On the other hand, he looked at the bombing of the Belgian coastline positions by the Allied ships in the later parts of the war.

In the first category, “with maritime objectives”¹¹, the future Commander of the Romanian Navy during the Second World War, Horia Macellariu, included the blockade of the two Belgian harbours by the Royal Navy. The Germans were using these ports as staging grounds for supply ships for their High Seas Fleet, but also as bases for their submarines and hydroplanes, which were threatening the South coast of England. That was actually the reason why the Royal Navy wanted to cut the threat at its roots and annihilate the submarines in their protective bases. We see here a first parallel with the situation of 1939-1945, when the annihilation of the German submarine bases was one of the main objectives. This took many forms in the Second World War, but the aim was always the same: the neutralisation of threat posed by those ships for British communication and supply lines. The basic principle the British planned to employ was one of “strategic speed”, which meant they had to destroy the submarines before they could do any damage. It required their destruction or at least blocking their bases of operations.

As in the case of the Second World War, the Germans protected their submarines with powerful concrete structures so the only viable solution was to block the harbour. It was not an easy task because

¹⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 764.

¹¹ *Ibidem*.



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the German coastal defence was equally formidable: over 200 guns, of 150-300 mm calibre, spread out on the coast. The dike at the entrance of the Port of Zeebrugge had torpedo tubes for protections, a stockade made of barges and torpedo nets.

The British plan was to use their monitors and airplanes to bomb the area for a couple of days, so that the defenders could be kept in the dark concerning the real date of attack. Moreover, they set up a diversionary attack on the dike, all the while their focus being on the harbours of Ostende and Zeebrugge, by blocking the canals there¹².

These operations were an important success for the Royal Navy both “materially and psychologically”, because the ports had to be closed for a long period of time. In the case of the enemy morale, the fact that the British were capable of mounting such a serious attack, with over 100 ships, severely damaged the morale of the German defenders¹³.

The success of these raids was owed mainly to the efficient coordination of different services of the Armed Forces. The element of surprise was also a contributing factor. We should also acknowledge the fact that the British Admiralty took a calculated risk with this operation. An important factor was represented by the excellent communications between the ships, the British could this way keep in touch with both the attacking forces, one for each harbour. Another lesson that the Romanian officer was able to use from this attack was the great importance of the coordination between the Land Forces and the Navy, because the Army’s artillery could also act as another distraction for the enemy¹⁴.

Lieutenant Macellariu noticed that, in general, the training of the men involved in this kind of high-risk operation was crucial. “Well drilled, prepared and motivated men”¹⁵ were an important factor, because they had better morale and they believed in the success

¹² *Ibidem*, p. 766.

¹³ *Ibidem*.

¹⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 767.

¹⁵ *Ibidem*.

of the operation: “Each man knew what he could expect from the attack and still had hopes of coming back alive, because he knew that every measure was taken to ensure his rescue with fast boats, for example. It is not good to go to war with men that know they are not coming back”¹⁶.

Another interesting perspective, which was very useful in the case of a naval war in the Black Sea area, was the cooperation with the Air Force. In his report to the Navy General Inspectorate, Macellariu argued that “one could see the significant influence in future naval operations”¹⁷.

In respect to the landing operations, which were quite useful as seen in the Black Sea area between 1941 and 1944, the British raids on the Belgian coasts showed some interesting conclusions. First of all, one would have to use different types of ships, with monitors (or battleships), armed with heavy artillery that could soften up the enemy coastal defences. Then destroyers would have to come into play, followed up by torpedo boats. Here the Romanian officers noted correctly that those small boats could act as a defence screen for the big gun ships while they were pounding the enemy batteries on shore. It proved to be a correct assessment in the Second World War, examples in this regard being the Soviet Black Sea Fleet landings in Crimea, in the winter of 1941-1942.

Another interesting conclusion of Lieutenant Macellariu in France was about the different elements forming the coastal defence force. Although the Germans had significant assets on the ground, both in men and materials, including a great number of artillery pieces, without good, reliable intelligence, they were exposed to the Allied attack. As it happened in 1944, in Normandy, which was a couple of hundred miles to the south of the Belgium coast, the air and naval superiority of the invading force prevented any patrols from alerting the Germans of the impending attack¹⁸.

¹⁶ *Ibidem*.

¹⁷ *Ibidem*.

¹⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 768.



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We can clearly see that the British ships were quite exposed to many perils and their accuracy suffered as a consequence, all the while being in range of the enemy coastal guns. More so, the smaller ships were also used to bomb the enemy positions and had to go back to defend their bigger counterparts.

In respect to the support that the Navy's big guns could offer to the Army, Lieutenant Macellariu noticed that in the First World War, the naval operations on the Belgium coast could be categorized into two parts: those in the first years of war and then those in 1918. In the beginning the Allies made good use of their naval superiority in the Channel to bring in warships of different tonnages, especially light destroyers and even gunboats to attack the German coast. The enemy reacted with the fortification of its coast and the installation of coastal artillery. The Admiralty used bigger ships which proved to be dangerous for the battleships, cruisers and destroyers. If we add to this the danger of torpedo attacks from the enemy submarines, we can clearly see that the British ships were quite exposed to many perils and their accuracy suffered as a consequence, all the while being in range of the enemy coastal guns. More so, the smaller ships were also used to bomb the enemy positions and had to go back to defend their bigger counterparts¹⁹.

CONCLUSIONS

All of the mentioned considerations made the development of a new type of warships – the maritime monitor inevitable. Armed with heavy artillery, this ship could tackle the German batteries and because it had a low draught, it could get quite close to the coast to increase its accuracy. Furthermore, it had torpedo tanks, partially filled with water, so that it was almost impervious to torpedo attacks.

These ships were used to bomb the German coastal positions in the second phase of the operations, in 1918. The attacks yielded better results than those of 1915-1916. Lieutenant Macellariu observed that those raids caused "serious concern" for the defenders. The main conclusion of his study was that the age of "squadron ships", all-rounders, that could fulfil all range of missions was over. They were replaced by specialised warships, and, very soon by aircraft²⁰.

¹⁹ *Ibidem*.

²⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 769.

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FOREIGN INTELLIGENCE COLLABORATION DURING KING CAROL II DICTATORSHIP (1938-1940)

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In February 1938, King Carol II imposed his political will and turned from a mediator into an important actor. When the royal dictatorship was established, the political parties were banned, the military took over the leadership of counties and town halls and the structures of force were given increased powers. At the same time, Romania began to be isolated externally, because of both certain scenarios of the revisionist states and the conciliation policy adopted by England and France. Against this background, the Romanian intelligence services launched actions of exploration and information exchange with traditional partners (England and France), and with Germany, with multiple purposes. From the English and the French, help was needed to counter revisionism, while from the Germans we required cooperation regarding the Soviet space, all with the purpose of maintaining Romania's integrity. The results, not always favourable, were analysed and presented to political-military decision-makers, those who had to make the final decisions.

Keywords: Romania, Carol II, Special Intelligence Service, collaboration, USSR, Germany.



At the December 1937 elections, no party won 40% of the votes, so they could form a one-party government. Although it organised the elections, the National Liberal Party/PNL obtained 36%, followed by the National Peasant Party/PNȚ with 20% and the “Everything for the Fatherland” Party (the political group of the Legionary Movement) with 15%. On 28 December 1937, the King appointed Octavian Goga as Prime Minister, the leader of the Christian National Party, which ranked fourth in elections with 9.15% and dissolved the legislative bodies on 18 January 1938. At the same date, new parliamentary elections were announced, which were supposed to take place in early March 1938. The dissatisfaction of certain internal and external circles with the right-wing government programme, the intention of getting closer to Italy and Germany in terms of foreign policy and the electoral deal concluded by Octavian Goga with the Legionary Movement led to the King's decision to change the regime. It seems that the governments in London and Paris explicitly called for the removal of the Goga-Cuza cabinet and the appointment of a government meant to “establish the dictatorship”¹. Therefore, on 10 February 1938, the King expressed to the Prime Minister the desire to establish a national union government and Octavian Goga resigned. On the same night, 10/11 February 1938, a government was formed under the presidency of Patriarch Miron Cristea. The first measures were the appointment of military prefects, decreeing the state of siege and censorship at national level² and the cancellation of the March 1938 elections, which ended the period of constitutional monarchy and opened the path towards the personal regime of King Carol II³.

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¹ Șerban Milcoveanu, *Vârf de lance. Secolul XX. Depoziții de martor al epocii și relatări de participant la evenimente*, INST, 2006, p. 217.

² For more details on the censorship measures of that time, see Ioan Lăcustă, *Cenzura veghează 1937-939*, Editura Curtea Veche, București, 2007.

³ For more details on Romania's evolution in this period, see: Al. Gh. Savu, *Dictatura regală*, Editura Politică, București, 1970; Florea Nedelcu, *Viața politică din România în preajma instaurării dictaturii regale*, Editura Dacia, Cluj-Napoca, 1973; Florea Nedelcu, *De la Restaurație la dictatura regală. Din viața politică a României 1930-1938*, Editura Cartea Românească, București, 1981; Ioan Scurtu, *Istoria României în anii 1918-1940. Evoluția regimului politic de la democrație la dictatură*, Editura Didactică și Pedagogică, București, 1996, pp. 161-188.



The new cabinet led by Patriarch Miron Cristea was “an eclectic government”, composed of centre-right people, animated by a spirit of duty and a touch of political opportunism, which had the mission to restore and maintain order in the country. That is why, the first measures taken were in this direction: the declaration of the state of siege, the establishment of censorship, the appointment of senior officers as prefects, a new law for the repression of offenses against public peace etc.

The new cabinet led by Patriarch Miron Cristea was “an eclectic government”⁴, composed of centre-right people, animated by a spirit of duty and a touch of political opportunism, which had the mission to restore and maintain order in the country. That is why, the first measures taken were in this direction: the declaration of the state of siege, the establishment of censorship, the appointment of senior officers as prefects, a new law for the repression of offenses against public peace etc. On 20 February 1938, a new Constitution was drafted, four days later being submitted to public opinion “for good science and purpose”⁵, and on 27 February 1938, it was promulgated. On this occasion, the new Prime Minister delivered a speech that was seen by contemporaries as “a broad indictment for political parties”⁶. The new Constitution revealed that the king became “an active political factor”⁷, which exercised the legislative power through the National Representation (the deputies being elected for 6 years, and the senators for 9) and the executive power through the government. Nationally, the recrudescence of right-wing extremist actions increased, and the King shifted between harsh repression and attempts to bring the legionary movement closer⁸.

From the administrative point of view, on 14 August 1938, a new law was promulgated, in which a new structure emerged – the Land, 10 in the whole country, governed by royal residents. On 12 October 1938, guilds of civil servants, craftsmen and workers were created (instead of the trade unions), and on 16 December 1938, the National Renaissance Front⁹ was established, the only legally accepted party. On 22 June 1940, the Front of the National Renaissance was transformed into the Party of the Nation, a “single and totalitarian party”¹⁰

⁴ Ioan Scurtu, Gheorghe Buzatu, *Istoria românilor în secolul XX*, Editura Paideia, București, 1999, p. 343.

⁵ Ioan Scurtu, Gheorghe Buzatu, *op. cit.*, p. 344. The Constitution was published in *Monitorul Oficial* no. 48/27 February 1938.

⁶ *Ibid*, p. 345.

⁷ Ioan Scurtu, *Istoria României...*, *op. cit.*, p. 162.

⁸ For more details on the evolution of the Legionary Movement in that period, see: Ioan Scurtu (coord.), *Ideologie și formațiuni de dreapta în România*, vol. V (1938-1940), INST, București, 2006.

⁹ For more details on the organisation and functioning of the National Revival Party, see: Ioan Scurtu, Gheorghe Buzatu, *op. cit.*, pp. 343-364; Petre Țurlea, *Partidul unui rege: Frontul Renașterii Naționale*, Editura Enciclopedică, București, 2006.

¹⁰ Ioan Scurtu, *Istoria României...*, *op. cit.*, p. 176.

and the same day the Law-Decree for the defence of the unique and totalitarian public order of the Romanian state came into force.

The third government led by Miron Cristea was formed on 1 February 1939, but the Patriarch was ill, which prevented him from taking the oath. In less than three weeks, on 21 February 1939, he went to France for medical treatment to improve his condition. The age, the medical conditions, the turmoil of the political life and, perhaps, the stress of the function contributed to his death, on 6 March 1939, at 23.35 hours, in the city of Cannes.

The new Prime Minister became Armand Călinescu, a former member of the PNȚ leadership, who switched sides to embrace the King's position in the action of installing a strong-handed government. He had been Minister of the Interior and Deputy Prime Minister, so his appointment was not a surprise on the political scene. The only drawback was its anglophile policy, which was in opposition to European realities. The harsh measures against the legionary movement (or the Iron Guard) and the inflexibility in foreign policy culminated with his assassination on 21 September 1939 by a legionary band. For one week (21-28 September 1939) General Gheorghe Argeșanu was Prime Minister, in charge of leading the repression of the legionary movement, followed by Constantin Argetoianu, also very close to the King (28 September – 23 November 1939) and Gheorghe Tătărescu (24 November 1939 – 4 July 1940). The change of orientation in the foreign policy forced again the change of the Prime Minister, so that the position was entrusted to Ion Gigurtu, an industrialist known for his pro German views. This appointment could not save Romania from the territorial losses of the summer of 1940, so the King was forced to resort to one of the people who opposed him and who he had sent to the Bistrița monastery: General Ion Antonescu. On 4 September 1940, the General was appointed Prime Minister, the following day receiving “full powers for the leadership of the Romanian state”¹¹, which inaugurated the entry of Romania into a new political constellation.

King Carol II wanted power, he obtained it, but he did not rise to the level of rhetoric and times, despite all the attempted formulas of government. The dissolution of the constitutional political system, the sinuous path in the relations with the legionary movement and the lack

¹¹ The appointment and responsibilities of the Prime Minister were published in the *Official Gazette (Monitorul Oficial)* no. 205/5 September 1940, part I.



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The interests of the Romanian state were the maintenance of territorial integrity, respectively the consolidation of national independence and sovereignty. In this respect, the state leadership had to identify the external threats and limit the internal vulnerabilities.

of procurement of the Romanian armed forces can be blamed entirely on him. The interests of the Romanian state were the maintenance of territorial integrity, respectively the consolidation of national independence and sovereignty. In this respect, the state leadership had to identify the external threats and limit the internal vulnerabilities. After 10 years of rule, King Carol was unable to maintain territorial integrity nor to develop the capabilities of the Romanian state to the extent of being able to withstand external threats¹².

Between 1938 and 1940, revisionism reached its peak¹³, and Romania was one of the victims of this policy initiated by Hungary and Germany. Externally, the rise of the revisionist political currents did not find strong opposition from France and England, which applied a conciliation policy. In March 1938, Austria was annexed to the Third Reich, without any opposition from the democratic states. A few months later, in September 1938, the Munich Conference (29-30 September 1938), attended by the Prime Ministers of Great Britain, France, Italy and Germany, decided to dismantle Czechoslovakia in the hope of maintaining peace in Europe. Anticipating the danger posed by Romania, King Carol II paid a visit to London¹⁴ (15-18 November 1938) and Paris (19-21 November 1938) to receive the most effective political, economic and military support. On his return, he went to Berlin and discussed with Chancellor Adolf Hitler (24 November 1938) the evolution of bilateral and, in particular, economic relations. The latter were initiated at the level of specialists, on 12 February 1939 and were concluded on 23 February 1939¹⁵, with the signing of an economic treaty. The much-needed Anglo-French support was achieved only by certain guarantees for territorial integrity, offered at the same time to Romania and Greece (13 April 1939).

The European political balance was broken by the conclusion of the treaty between Germany and the USSR (23 August 1939), known

¹² For more details on this, see Mihail E. Ionescu, *Carol al II-lea și securitatea națională*, in "Dosarele Istoriei", nr. 5/2000, pp. 50-53.

¹³ For more details on border changes at that time, see Aurică Simion, *Agresiunile naziste din Europa în anii 1938-1939*, Editura Eminescu, București, 1983.

¹⁴ For more details on the position of the Great Britain regarding Romania, see: David Britton Funderburk, *Politica Marii Britanii față de România (1938-1940)*, Editura Științifică și Enciclopedică, București, 1983.

¹⁵ For more details on this treaty, see A. Niri, *Istoricul unui tratat înrobitor (Tratatul economic româno-german din martie 1939)*, Editura Științifică, București, 1965.

as the Ribbentrop-Molotov pact¹⁶, by which the two states divided their spheres of influence between the Baltic and the Black Sea. The first transposition of the secret plan into practice was the attack against Poland on 1 September 1939, which resulted in an Anglo-French declaration of war issued to Berlin (3 September 1939), but without practical consequences. On 17 September 1939, Soviet troops entered Poland and, shortly, the two powers divided their areas of interest, according to the previously established details. Immediately after the attack on Poland, on 6 September 1939, the Crown Council proclaimed Romania's neutrality, and in the following period, the Romanian diplomacy tried to create a Neutral Bloc, to delimit the territorial aggressions and to create a defence system. Events on the continental political scene imposed a new economic agreement with Germany (4 April 1940) and an oil pact with Belgium, the Netherlands and France. Subsequently, the government discussed the reorientation of foreign policy to Germany, given its expansion on the continent and, in particular, the interest for Romanian petroleum products.

During the analysed period, the external intelligence collaboration was the responsibility of the Secret Intelligence Service (SSI), which took place at both the traditional, Anglo-French level and the German one, mainly through the exchange of data on the USSR. In 1938, the SSI notified the Abwehr about Soviet attempts to penetrate the 3rd Reich's intelligence services, providing actual intelligence in this regard. Major Constantin Ionescu-Micandru, the head of the Eastern Front of the External Intelligence Section of the SSI, was sent to Berlin by his superior, Mihail Moruzov, in June and October-November 1939, on which occasions a connection system was developed and the contact persons of the two institutions were established. Between 22 and 24 June 1939, the Romanian intelligence officer proposed to the German party a "concrete"¹⁷ collaboration for collecting data on the USSR. The German side replied affirmatively,

¹⁶ For more details, see Emilian Bold, Ilie Seftiu, *Pactul Ribbentrop – Molotov*, Institutul European, Iași, 1998; Alexandru Moșanu, Ion Buga (coord.), *Anexarea Basarabiei în anul 1940 de către Uniunea Sovietică – o consecință directă a pactului Molotov-Ribbentrop*, Chișinău, 2002; Ioan C. Popa, *Fața nevăzută a agresorului. Pactul Ribbentrop – Molotov și urmările lui pentru România*, Editura Semne, București, 2017.

¹⁷ Cristian Troncotă, *Mihail Moruzov și Serviciul Secret de Informații al Armatei Române*, Editura INI, București, 1996, p. 93.



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The European political balance was broken by the conclusion of the treaty between Germany and the USSR (23 August 1939), known as the Ribbentrop-Molotov pact, by which the two states divided their spheres of influence between the Baltic and the Black Sea



mentioning that it did not have “specialised elements”¹⁸ on this level, but it could contribute financially. Ionescu-Micandru declined financial support and initialled the bilateral agreement. During the second meeting, the Romanian major discussed with his counterpart, the head of the Eastern Front, Major Pruck, who wrote to him, on 30 October 1939, “we have become friends with the devil”¹⁹, an allusion to the recent pact concluded between Berlin and Moscow, with negative and predictable consequences since then. The following day, the SSI representative was received by Admiral Wilhelm Canaris²⁰ and gave him «*The Analysis of the Romanian Armed Forces Intelligence Service for the Head of the German Armed Forces Intelligence Service*»²¹, meant to strengthen the collaboration between the two institutions. The head of the Abwehr appointed Dr Wagner as the official representative in Bucharest, with duties on the oil area and counter espionage on the Danube. He was in the Romanian capital on 8-12 November 1939, on this occasion being received by the head of the SSI, Mihail Moruzov. Also, in November 1939, Major Pruck arrived in Bucharest and provided us with a list of identified Soviet agents active in Romania.

Some explosions in refineries and some train loaded with petroleum products crashes caught the attention of Abwehr, which saw them as acts of sabotage. As a result, on 10 December 1939, Admiral Canaris and Lieutenant-Colonel Bentivegni, the head of the Offensive Counterintelligence Section, came to Bucharest, where for two days developed the counter sabotage and counter espionage measures. Ionescu-Micandru went to the capital of Germany on 18 December 1939, and the topics of the talks were how to secure the Prahova Valley and the Danube.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 95.

²⁰ Admiral Wilhelm Franz Canaris (1 January 1887, Aplerbeck – 9 May 1945, Flossenburg) a naval officer in World War I, in which he commanded a submarine and acted informationally in Spain. He continued his career after 1918 in the army intelligence service, and on 1 January 1935, he was appointed head of Abwehr, which he led until 1944. Following the attack on Hitler (20 July 1944), his involvement was proved, a fact for which he was investigated, arrested, tried and sentenced to death. For more details about his life and activity, in André Brissaud, *Canaris. Le «petit amiral» prince de l'espionnage allemand (1887-1945)*, Librairie Academique Perrin, Paris, 1970; Jaroslav Kokoška, *Amiralul Canaris* (translated by Teodora Alexandru-Dobrițoiu), Editura Militară, București, 1970; Richard Bassett, *Spionul-șef al lui Hitler. Misterul Wilhelm Canaris*, Editura RAO, București, 2008.

²¹ The document was edited in Cristian Troncotă, *Mihail Moruzov...*, op. cit., pp. 298-304.

At the beginning of March 1940, Mihail Moruzov went personally to Berlin, where he met his counterpart, Admiral Wilhelm Canaris, and General Wilhelm Keitel²², the Chief of the General Staff. One of the practical applications of the bilateral talks was the strengthening of the security measures of the Danube ports. Captain von Weiss conducted an inspection in the port cities of Turnu-Severin and Orșova (22-24 March 1940) and found that the guard “is not enough”²³, the area of the oil tanks had to be strengthened and patrol vessels had to be equipped with rescue equipment.

The Abwehr liaison officer in Bucharest, Dr Wagner, met with Moruzov (3 May 1940) and asked how Romania would react in the event of a French-British attack in the oil area. Admiral Canaris returned to Bucharest (28-30 May 1940) and, on this occasion, an exchange of information about the Red Army took place.

The Germans correctly analysed Moruzov’s intelligence power, as well as his influence on the King, so, in early September 1940, when King Carol II was forced to abdicate, they found a formula to oust the head of the SSI. He was invited to a trilateral conference, in Venice, exactly when the events that led to General Antonescu’s call to power and abdication of King Carol II were taking place in Romania. Although he was offered a delay in returning to the country, Moruzov, perhaps too confident in his power and influence, chose to return. He was arrested, taken to the Capital Police Prefecture and then to the Jilava prison, where he was assassinated on 26/27 November 1940. The Chief of the Abwehr arrived on 7 September 1940 in Bucharest, and the next day he was received by the new Prime Minister, on which occasion the coordinates of intelligence collaboration were established. Admiral Canaris could have demanded both Moruzov’s release and his silencing, especially after discovering actual data, in the archive of the French intelligence service, that he was working on more levels.

Collaboration with traditional allies was maintained through the exchange of information and reciprocal inquiries on continental

²² Fieldmarshal Wilhelm Keitel (22 September 1882, Helmsherde – 16 October 1946, Nuremberg) artillery officer, participated in World War I, led various departments in the Ministry of War (1935-1937) and the High Command of the Wehrmacht/OKW (1938-1945). On 8 May 1945, he signed the surrender of Germany before the United Nations, and the International Military Tribunal in Nuremberg judged and sentenced him to death (1946).

²³ Central Historical National Archives (ANIC), *Presidency of the Council of Ministries – Special Intelligence Service Collection (PCM-SSI)*, file 22/1940, p. 50.



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In London (31 March – 3 April 1940), Moruzov had the opportunity to see the disinterest and the coldness with which Romania was treated, both from a military point of view, by the refusal to export arms, but also economically, by the lack of interest regarding investments/acquisitions in/ from Romania.

geopolitical relations. For a fairer picture, Moruzov sent in a European tour Lieutenant-Colonel Gheorghe N. Petrescu, former military attaché in Rome, head of the 2 Counterintelligence Office of the 2nd Intelligence Section of the Great General Staff and assigned as tactical attaché with the SSI. During the period 3-18 March 1939, he visited Poland, Czechoslovakia, Germany, England and France, where he discussed with representatives of the intelligence services, but also with military and political factors²⁴. A second tour took place only in France and England (27 March – 6 April 1939)²⁵, where he tried to find out about the way the political circles saw Romania and to purchase armaments. After his visit to Germany and a short break in Bucharest, Moruzov visited his counterparts in France and England, to test the possibilities of supporting Romania. The head of the Intelligence Office of the French General Staff acknowledged that he had a small staff and that the best intelligence he had on Germany was from the SSI. In London (31 March – 3 April 1940), Moruzov had the opportunity to see the disinterest and the coldness with which Romania was treated, both from a military point of view, by the refusal to export arms, but also economically, by the lack of interest regarding investments/acquisitions in/from Romania. However, according to Moruzov, the British proved to be “*much more realistic*”²⁶ than the French in analysing the geopolitical future of Europe.

Mihail Moruzov proved himself a player with strategic thinking, but the events outweighed the possibilities of action and reaction. He tried to use all means to obtain useful data for the country, possibly anticipating, played correctly in relation to his partners, but did not consider the possibility that they would make such a flagrant mistake against him. Perhaps too full of himself, he overcame his possibilities and neglected the preservation instinct, so he chose to return to the country at a totally unfavourable time for his career and, above all, his life. Ultimately, after 16 years at the helm of SSI, he did not imagine that those whom he protected during difficult times, led by Horia Sima, would choose the simplest option to silence him: his assassination.

²⁴ The report on the tour and the results obtained by Lieutenant-Colonel Gheorghe N. Petrescu was published in Cristian Troncotă, *Mihail Moruzov...*, op. cit., pp. 263-269.

²⁵ More details on the visits in the two countries in *Ibid*, pp. 270-277.

²⁶ *Ibid*, p. 103.

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GHEORGHE DABIJA – SOLDIER, DIPLOMAT AND WRITER –

Gabriel-George PĂTRAȘCU, PhD

National Military Archives of Romania, Bucharest

Gheorghe Dabija became known in the Romanian military journalism through his studies and works of military pedagogy, where he approached various aspects of the training and education of the troops. Within the period 1910-1913 he was a military attaché in Sofia and Belgrade. He participated in the Reunification War 1916-1919, commanding different military structures, a fact that enabled him, after the finalization of the military operations, to dedicate himself to the military history, drafting an exceptional monography dedicated to the battle actions developed within the period 1916-1918.

Keywords: Brigadier General Gheorghe Dabija, First World War, Romanian military writer, military attaché.



MILITARY ACTIVITY

Gheorghe Dabija was born on 20 September 1872 in Iași, being the son of Alexandru and Natalia, and he died in Bucharest, in 1957. Born within one year after the marriage of his parents, he received a higher, thorough education, in the spirit of the responsibility towards life, devotion to the ancestors and supreme respect due to the country¹. On 16 July 1891, he was enrolled at the Officer Training School, which he graduated on 16 July 1893 with the military rank of Second Lieutenant. His military ranks were as follows: Second Lieutenant (16 July 1893), Lieutenant 08 April 1896), Captain (28 November 1902), Major (10 May 1910), Lieutenant Colonel (1 April 1916) and Brigadier General (1 September 1917).

In 1893, he graduated the Officer Training School with the military rank of Second Lieutenant and on 16 July he was assigned to the 4th Hunter Battalion. He remained in that elite unit until 08 April 1896, when he was transferred to the 13th Regiment “Ștefan cel Mare”, a unit where he received the rank of Lieutenant. After one stage in this regiment, he returned to the 4th Hunter Battalion, from where, on 1 November 1902 he entered, only for a few days, in the structure of the 2nd Regiment “Vâlcea”. On 28 November 1902, he was transferred to the 31st Regiment “Calafat”, and on that date he was advanced to the rank of Captain.

It must be mentioned the fact that the transfers took place only in documents because, in reality, within the period 18 September 1901 – 1 October 1903, Lieutenant, and since 1902, Captain Gheorghe Dabija was “attached for service in the Austro-Hungarian army”.

On 1 April 1904, he returned, only for one year, to 4th Hunter Battalion, and on 1 April 1905 he was transferred to the 3rd Division which was quartered in Târgoviște. He activated in that large unit

¹ Delia Bălăican, *Generalul G. A. Dabija – un reprezentant de marcă al generației sale*, in the Scientific Annals of “Alexandru Ioan Cuza” University, Iași, History, LXI (2015), Editura Universității “Alexandru Ioan Cuza”, Iași, 2015, p. 395.



On 1 April 1916, with only a few months before Romania entered the war together with the powers of the Triple Entente, through the High Decree No. 1024 on 17 March 1916, Lieutenant Colonel Gheorghe Dabija was appointed at the command of the 6th Regiment "Mihai Viteazul", being advanced to the rank of Colonel on 10 May 1916, through the High Decree No. 1863 on 3 May.

for one year and on 1 April 1906, through the High Decree No. 1516/1906, he entered in the structure of the Firing Training School.

The series of the work-related transfers continued one year later when, on 1 April 1907, through the High Decree No. 1789/1907, he was transferred to the 14th Regiment "Roman". In his journey through the units he activated in he was appreciated by his commanders, a reason why, on 22 October 1907, through the High Decree No. 3527/1907, he was detached to the Great General Staff. After a one-year stage, on 25 October 1908, through the High Decree No. 2907/1908, he returned to the 14th Regiment "Roman", where he filled various staff positions.

On 1 October 1909, through the High Decree No. 2769, he was once again detached to the Great General Staff where, on 10 May 1910, through the High Decree No. 1775/1910, he was advanced to the rank of Major, a very special moment in the military career of the future General.

The activity of Major Gheorghe Dabija in the command structures of the Romanian Armed Forces continued also in the following years. Therefore, on 1 October 1913, through the High Decree No. 5860 on 7 November 1913, he was transferred to the 1st Infantry Department within the Ministry of War where he fulfilled various general staff positions with attributions in the reorganisation and coordination of the Infantry branch, under the conditions in which the Romanian general staff began to outline conclusions from the campaign developed on the territory of Bulgaria in July 1913².

The date of 1 April 1914 represented one of the most important moments in the military career of the future General. Therefore, through the High Decree No. 1148 on 18 March, Major Gheorghe Dabija was advanced to the rank of Lieutenant Colonel receiving, at the same time, the command of the 2nd Hunter Battalion "Regina Elisabeta".

On 1 April 1916, with only a few months before Romania entered the war together with the powers of the Triple Entente,

² Professor Dr Valeriu Avram, Lucian Drăghici, Gabriel-George Pătrașcu, Dr Ion Rîșnoveanu, *Războiul de Întregire (1916-1919) Comandanți Militari Români*, Editura Centrului Tehnic Editorial al Armatei, București, 2016, p. 48.

through the High Decree No. 1024 on 17 March 1916, Lieutenant Colonel Gheorghe Dabija was appointed at the command of the 6th Regiment "Mihai Viteazul", being advanced to the rank of Colonel on 10 May 1916, through the High Decree No. 1863 on 03 May.

On 17/27 August 1916, this unit was subordinated, from a hierarchic point of view, to the 8th Infantry Brigade, under the command of Brigadier General Gheorghe Mărdărescu, the 4th Infantry Brigade, under the command of Brigadier General Gheorghe Burghelea, 2nd Army Corps, under the command of Divisional General Dumitru Cotescu and, not lastly, the 2nd Romanian Army, under the command of Divisional General Alexandru Averescu.

Since the first day of war, the 6th Regiment "Mihai Viteazul" participated actively in the Romanian offensive north of the Southern Carpathians, managing, within a short period of time, to liberate Brasov.

The activity from the first part of the war, more precisely the period 14 August 1916 – 01 February 1917, is presented in a statement by Colonel Gheorghe Dabija, as follows: "Within the period 14 August 1916 – 01 February 1917, with the rank of Colonel as Deputy Chief of Staff for the 3rd Army and the 2nd Army; Chiefs: General Staff Chief – General G. Mărdărescu; Commander of the 3rd Army: General M. Aslan; Commanders of the 2nd Army: General Gr. Crăiniceanu and General A. Averescu".

During the campaign in 1917, more precisely during the battle from Mărăști (9/22 July – 24 July/01 August), Colonel Gheorghe Dabija held the command of the 16th Infantry Brigade, subordinated to the 8th Infantry Division, under the command of Brigadier General Ioan Pătrașcu, 2nd Army Corps, under the command of Divisional General Artur Văitoianu, the superior echelon being represented by the 2nd Army, under the command of Army Corps General Alexandru Averescu, as it results from the above-mentioned statement: "Within the period 01 February 1917 – 01 September 1917, with the rank of Colonel, I held the command of the 16th Infantry Brigade. On 01 September 1917, I was advanced to the rank of General. Within the period 01 September 1917 – 08 February 1918 – General, Commander of 16th Infantry Brigade. Chiefs: Divisional Commander: General I. Pătrașcu; Corps Commander: General Artur Văitoianu".



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During the campaign in 1917, more precisely during the battle from Mărăști (9/22 July – 24 July/01 August), Colonel Gheorghe Dabija held the command of the 16th Infantry Brigade, subordinated to the 8th Infantry Division, under the command of Brigadier General Ioan Pătrașcu, 2nd Army Corps, under the command of Divisional General Artur Văitoianu, the superior echelon being represented by the 2nd Army, under the command of Army Corps General Alexandru Averescu.



After the signing of the Peace Treaty from Bucharest, between Romania and the Central Powers, on 24 April/07 May 1918, and also after the demobilisation of a part of the Army, Brigadier General Gheorghe Dabija held the command of the 6th Infantry Division, the 18th Infantry Brigade or the 2nd Hunter Division, large units which participated in the campaign from Transylvania and Hungary against the Soviet power instituted by Béla Kuhn.

From this statement, it results the fact that, on 01 September 1917, Colonel Gheorghe Dabija was advanced to the rank of Brigadier General, in compliance to the High Decree No. 1405 on 01 December 1917.

The year 1918 represented another important reference point for Brigadier General Gheorghe Dabija, to whom it was assigned the command of the 6th Infantry Division. Therefore, *“Within the period 08 February- 01 June 1918 – Commander of the 6th Division. Chiefs: Corps Commander (meaning 3rd Army Corps): General I. Pătrașcu. Within the period 01 June 1918 – 12 November 1918 – Commander of the 18th Infantry Brigade. Chiefs: Divisional Commander: General Alex Atanasiu; Corps Commander: General I. Pătrașcu. Within the period 12 November 1918 – Commander of the 2nd Hunter Division. Chiefs: within the period 12 November 1918 – 14 April 1919, Divisional General Moșoiu Traian. From 14 April – Divisional General Mărdărescu Gheorghe, Commander of the Troops in Transylvania”*.

From the above-mentioned statement, it clearly results the fact that, also after the signing of the Peace Treaty from Bucharest, between Romania and the Central Powers, on 24 April/07 May 1918, and also after the demobilisation of a part of the Army, Brigadier General Gheorghe Dabija held the command of the 6th Infantry Division, the 18th Infantry Brigade or the 2nd Hunter Division, large units which participated in the campaign from Transylvania and Hungary against the Soviet power instituted by Béla Kuhn³.

In the conditions of the demobilisation of the army in the spring of 1920, on 01 July 1920, he resigned and he was removed from active duty according to the High Decree No. 2899 on 10 July 1920, therefore ending a brilliant career in which Brigadier General Gheorghe Dabija proved his military and command qualities, and also his bravery and heroism, until the finalisation of the actions in Hungary and the decree of demobilisation.

Along his military career, Gheorghe Dabija enjoyed the appreciation of his direct commanders, a fact that proves once again the human and military quality of the officer. In the Qualifying Sheet for 1916 (within the period 15 August 1916 – 15 February 1917), Brigadier General Gheorghe Mărdărescu, the Chief of Staff of the 2nd Army,

³ *Ibidem*, p. 49.

stated: *“Colonel Dabija Gheorghe acted as Deputy Chief of Staff of the 2nd and 3rd Armies, until 15 February 1917. Intelligent, well-prepared, with a formidable labour capacity and very thorough in his work, he was a precious collaborator of mine. Colonel Dabija is not only a good staff officer, but he also has a deep insight of Infantry, which makes him and excellent Division Commander. I was very much satisfied with his services – both at the office and also outside it – and he was an example of duty fulfilment for the officers from the Armed Forces Headquarters”*.

In 1917, Brigadier General Ioan Pătrașcu, Commander of the 8th Infantry Division, characterised Brigadier General Gheorghe Dabija, in a eulogistic manner, as follows: *“General Dabija was advanced in November. Beginning with that month until now, he continued to command the 16th Brigade in the same good conditions. In that period, he controlled the organisation of his sector in good conditions”*.

One of the most beautiful characterisations in his military career was offered by the Divisional General Traian Moșoiu, the Commander of the troops from Transylvania, who, on 01 April 1919, stated: *“He controls the 2nd Hunter Division. Even if the Division was set up at the moment of the mobilisation, General Dabija, through his hard work and special skills, managed, through restricted means, to organise the unit in the best conditions. In the occupation area, assigned to the Division, it was re-established and maintained the order, in a strong manner, and on the Zam – Baia de Cris line, the troops of the Division performed their duty in a great manner. General Dabija had successfully handled the improvement of the unit training, setting up a training centre, organised in excellent conditions, leading to very good results. Considering the fact that we are in the situation of very important military operations, I reserve the right to characterize him after the finalisation of these operations. I propose him for the awarding of the Order “Steaua României” (Romanian Star) with swords to the rank of Commander with a cordon of “Virtutea Militară” (Military Virtue), for his merits in the occupation of Transylvania”⁴*.

⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 50.



General Dabija had successfully handled the improvement of the unit training, setting up a training centre, organised in excellent conditions, leading to very good results.



DIPLOMATIC ACTIVITY

Bulgaria was the third state where Romania decided to send a military attaché, after Germany and Austria-Hungary. The first military attaché accredited at Sofia was Captain Nicolae Petală, in 1904, followed by the Captain Gheorghe Dabija, at that moment, the Chief of Cabinet of the Minister of War. Through the quality of his reports, based on the analysis of the information from open sources, the military attaché in Sofia had the possibility to directly influence the policy of the Romanian authorities. His activity was strictly monitored by the Bulgarian Intelligence Service. Sensitive to any information that could affect his statute of military attaché, Gheorghe Dabija rejected any accusations of espionage brought against him⁵.

Irrespective of the nature of his sources, Gheorghe Dabija was the only Romanian military diplomat able to find out, through his own efforts, information about the negotiations between the Balkan states for the establishment of the Balkan League. On 14 April 1912, he presented to King Carol I, the text of the alliance treaty between Bulgaria and Serbia and its secret appendix, both signed at the end of February. Major Gheorghe Dabija developed his activity as military attaché in Sofia, starting on 10 May 1910 until 1913, when he was sent to Belgrade, also as military attaché, fulfilling this position until 1914.

About the military diplomat mission, Gheorghe Dabija stated as follows: *“I loved my country and everything I did as a military attaché, I did only to its superior interest, according to the instructions received from the Ministry of War, the Great General Staff and, especially, His Highness King Carol I, who honoured me with his trust. My conscience was and remained also today, after 35 years (1910-1945) completely calm and at peace”*⁶.

SCIENTIFIC ACTIVITY

Brigadier General Gheorghe Dabija valued through writing his professional experiences, from the training stage in Austria-Hungary, within the period 1901-1903, until the activity of military diplomat in Bulgaria and Serbia, within the period 1910-1913, or through the

⁵ Delia Bălăican, *op. cit.*, p. 401.

⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 402.

effective participation on the battle field during the Reunification War (1916-1919). The military writings marked his life, offering him a maximum freedom of expression, but also causing him the worst prejudices, representing the head of claims of the communist courts, Gheorghe Dabija being imprisoned in Jilava and Văcărești penitentiaries, within the period 08 August 1952 – 18 January 1955.

The books and articles having military thematic, written by general Dabija, came to the fore through the direct reference to the practical aspect of the training of the troops, through concision and the comparative study of the works regarding the instruction of the large armies of the world and universal history, through the understanding capacity of the human resorts which determined the military or political decisions, affecting the future of a country⁷. The specialists within the Romanian Academy Library identified five categories of works of Gheorghe Dabija:

- **Books and articles of history and military diplomacy:**

- a. Books regarding the Balkan Wars: *“Războiul bulgaro-turc din anul 1912-1913”*, a book that received from King Carol I the medal *“Bene Merenti”* 1st class, of gold, in 1914, and the Romanian Academy awarded him the Prize *“Adamache”*, based on the report of Nicolae Iorga. The first book about Southern Dobruja, *“Cadrilaterul Bulgar/Bulgarian Quadrilateral”*, which appeared with only a few weeks before the entry of Romania in the Second Balkan War⁸.
- b. The topic – First World War – *“Armata Română în Războiul Mondial (1916-1918)”*, written in four volumes, within the period 1928-1937, his most valuable book, a reference work in the bibliography of the First World War⁹. The work *Armata română în războiul mondial 1916 – 1918* has a great documentary value. It contains a rich factual material – starting from the orders of the Great General Headquarters, operative orders of the armies and divisions, to phone calls between the officers from the armed forces staffs – enabling the analysis and understanding of the complex mechanism of the organisation

⁷ *Ibidem*, pp. 396-397.

⁸ *Ibidem*.

⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 398.





Gheorge Dabija had critical appreciations regarding the operation plan of the Romanian command. The "Z" Hypothesis, because of its less manoeuvre character. The author considered that a strong blow performed together with the Russian Army in Bucovina would have been more indicated, and that would have returned the defence of the enemy from the Transylvanian Plateau and Galicia.

and command of the military actions of the different echelons, the existing relations between commands and commanders, the used methods and procedures, the manner in which the units and the large units of the Romanian Army fulfilled their battle missions. This work presents fewer aspects with respect to theoretical, strategical and tactical appreciations, regarding the development of the military actions¹⁰. The work contains both a detailed description, based on archive documents, of the military operations and a severe analysis of the deficiencies and errors resulting in the Romanian troops being defeated in the battlefield¹¹.

The author, a direct participant in those events, adopted a critical tone, the value judgements regarding certain commanders being very severe. Therefore, Gheorge Dabija had critical appreciations regarding the operation plan of the Romanian command. The "Z" Hypothesis, because of its less manoeuvre character. The author considered that a strong blow performed together with the Russian Army in Bucovina would have been more indicated, and that would have returned the defence of the enemy from the Transylvanian Plateau and Galicia. Also, the author, in consensus with the opinion of General, future Marshall Alexandru Averescu, minimalised the role and importance of the battle from Mărășești, which was not considered by them to be a proper operation, according to the canons of the military art. On the contrary, the battle from Mărăști was a model of organisation and execution, having a particular success. In that case, Gheorge Dabija was unfair and biased, his appreciations being subjective, resulting from his admiration towards Alexandru Averescu and antipathy against General Constantin Prezan¹².

The foreword of the work was signed by Marshall Alexandru Averescu, former commander of the author, who stated: *"General Dabija, with the pen in his hand, was the officer who participated in the war and his thinking manner reflected*

¹⁰ *** *Istoria Gândirii Militare Românești*, Editura Militară, București, 1974, p. 252.

¹¹ Professor Dr Valeriu Avram, *op.cit.*, p. 50.

¹² Dr Petre Otu (coordinator), *Personalități ale Gândirii Militare Românești*, Editura Academiei de Înalte Studii Militare, București, 1997, pp. 138-139.



*in his writings was different from the thinking manner during the war only through the fading caused by the passage of time, meaning the period of time from the operations and their description. Therefore, in the valuable work of General Dabija, additionally to the material gathered with an exemplary diligence, we could also find the interpretation of the various events occurred before his eyes or around him, observed in the light of the cruel reality, with the undefeated dreams of the officer willing to serve his country"*¹³.

- c. Military Chronicles of the Second World War appeared in the newspaper "Curentul" (25 June 1943 – 23 August 1944).
- **Military writings about the instruction of the Infantry troops.** 11 works are part of this category, some of them being re-edited, the most appreciated one being *"Instrucția practică a companiei de infanterie"* (1904), to which we may add the articles edited in *"Revista Infanteriei"* and *"Revista Armatei"*.
 - **Works based on which it was set up and operated the National Staff School** [Superior War School – n.n.]. The most conclusive example is represented by *"Regulamentul de manevră de luptă al infanteriei"* (1910), based on which the Romanian Armed Forces were upgraded to the standards of the modern armies of the world.
 - **The motivational writings** through which he directly pleaded the unfading principles and values, like: truth, dignity, patriotism. We can mention here the work: *"Dresaj sau educațiune?"* and the articles from *"Revista Infanteriei"*: *"Patriotismul nostru, Tactica aplicată – marș, staționare, luptă"*, to which we may add his memoirs.
 - **The memoirs** represented by the innovative work, *"Amintiri din cariera militară (1893-1920)"*, *"Oameni, tipuri, obiceiuri, năravuri"* and *"Sisteme de altădată"* (1945), in the patrimony of the Library of the Romanian Academy. The about 700 pages help us to discover the contemporary period of the author, the personality and career of General Gheorghe Dabija.

¹³ General G. A. Dabija, *Armata Română în Războiul Mondial (1916 – 1918)*, 1st Volume, Editura IG. HERTZ, București, 1937, pp. 10-11.



The volume published in 1936 is added to this work – “*Amintirile unui atașat militar român în Bulgaria 1910-1913*”¹⁴.

The analysis performed by the author regarding the German-Polish War in September 1939 is also useful. Presenting the mutations of the military organisation and technique, Gheorghe Dabija considers that the total war, materialised by the German army in the case of Poland, was envisaged in all countries and it shall form the army conflict in the future¹⁵.

CONCLUSIONS

Brigadier General in reserve, Gheorghe Dabija is one of the most important Romanian military thinkers. He had the chance of a career that can hardly be equalled or outperformed even in the present days. He was a career soldier and he commanded military structures up to division level, participating with them in battle actions. He pursued a career in the military diplomacy field, as a military attaché and he excelled in the military journalism field. Unfortunately for the Romanian historiography, the work dedicated to the participation in the campaign from 1919, when he was at the command of the 2nd Hunter Division, and participated in the battles against the Hungarian army, was not published. Through his entire theoretical activity, Brigadier General Gheorghe Dabija, was an original thinker, who refused to follow the easy way of taking-over certain ideas and solutions, already prepared, seeking to promote modern methods and modalities of instruction and of analysis of the military phenomenon¹⁶.

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¹⁴ Delia Bălăican, *op. cit.*, p. 398.

¹⁵ Dr. Petre Otu (coordinator), *op. cit.*, p. 139.

¹⁶ *ibidem*, p. 142.

4. Delia Bălăican, *Generalul G.A. Dabija – un reprezentant de marcă al generației sale*, in *Scientific Annals of “Alexandru Ioan Cuza” University, Iasi*.
5. Generalul G.A. Dabija, *Armata Română în Războiul Mondial (1916- 1918)*, vol. I-IV, Editura I.G. Hertz, București, 1937.
6. Dr Petre Otu (coordinator), *Personalități ale gândirii militare românești*, Editura Academiei de Înalte Studii Militare, București, 1997.



Presenting the mutations of the military organisation and technique, Gheorghe Dabija considers that the total war, materialised by the German army in the case of Poland, was envisaged in all countries and it shall form the army conflict in the future.



GENERAL IOAN DUMITRACHE, PORTRAIT OF A LEGEND COMMANDER OF THE 2ND MOUNTAIN DIVISION – “DIVIZIA DE CREMENE”

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The activity and the memoirs of General Ion Dumitrache are undoubtedly important, if not capital, for knowing our history and especially the history of the Second World War. It is notorious that Mountain Troops represented the only elite troops of the Romanian Infantry during the entire Eastern Campaign. In today's jargon a kind of “green berets”. The best known of them was the 2nd Mountain Division.

The courage of the fighters under the command of General Dumitrache made the 2nd Mountain Division to acquire on the front a well-deserved renown, in sync with the determination demonstrated by the troops of that great unit: “Divizia de Cremene”. Historian Alesandru Dușu noted in his most recent volume that “General Dumitrache led large units of the Romanian Army that reached the easternmost point in the Second World War. The Romanian troops under his command fought in the Caucasus Mountains, the 2nd Romanian Mountain Division reaching close to Grozny, the capital of Chechnya!”

Keywords. Second World War, General Ioan Dumitrache, 2nd Mountain Division, Crimea Division, Grozny, Chechnya.



INTRODUCTION. BIOGRAPHY. MILITARY EDUCATION AND TRAINING

The future general was born on 25 August 1889¹, the same year as his future comrade-in-arms, General Leonard Mociulschi², in Slobozia - Ciorăști, as the only child of Gheorghe and Ioana Dumitrache. “The undersigned Dumitrache Ion was born on 25 August 1889 in Ciorăști, R. Sărat County, son of Gheorghe and Ioana (dead). I attended the primary school in the village of Ciorăști, the gymnasium in Râmnicu Sărat and the high school “Alexandru Ioan Cuza” in Focșani”, as confessed in an autobiography before the Securitatea³.

He attended the gymnasium in Râmnicu-Sărat and the high school in Focșani.

In 1909 he was admitted to the Military School of Infantry Officers in Bucharest, which he graduated on 15 June 1911, with good results, being advanced to the rank of Second Lieutenant. The young officer

¹ Valeriu Anghel, Alexandru Deșliu, *Vocație și destin. 600 fișe-portret pentru un tablou spiritual-istoric al județului Vrancea*, Editura Terra, Focșani, 2000, p. 115.

² Leonard Mociulschi (1889 - 1979). He participated in the Campaign of Romania in the Balkan War (1913), but also in the First World War, noting in the battles of Oituz and Soveja, for which he was decorated by both King Ferdinand and General Berthelot. In the Second World War, Colonel Mociulschi was noted as Deputy Commander of the 1st Mountain Joint Brigade forcing the Dniester, for which he was decorated with the “Mihai Viteazul” Order, 3rd class, in the rank of Knight (High Decree No. 2,886/17 October 1941). Promoted to the rank of Brigadier General (1942), he was appointed Deputy Commander of the 4th Mountain Troops Division, a unit noted in the Sevastopol area offensive. In the same year, he was promoted to the command of the 3rd Mountain Division, which led to heavy fighting with the Soviets in the Taman-Caucasus area (until August 1943 when it was withdrawn in Crimea for restoration). Brigadier General Mociulschi was decorated with the Order “Mihai Viteazul” - 2nd class (Royal Decree no. 382/19 February 1944). After 23 August 1944, General Mociulschi was appointed at the command of the “Crișuri” Group, participating in the liberation of Western Transylvania. Its division participated in the liberation of Hungary, reaching as far as Slovakia. The victories from the Javorina massifs brought to the Division General, Leonard Mociulschi, the “Mihai Viteazul” 3rd class Order, with swords. The end of the war found him at the command of the Mountain Corps. When the Communists came to power, he was arrested and imprisoned without trial (1948 - 1964). It was rehabilitated at the intervention of the President of France, Charles de Gaulle, in 1966 (Gheorghe Suman, *Vânători de Munte in Enciclopedia Armatei României*, Editura Centrului Tehnic-Editorial al Armatei, București, 2009, pp. 184-188; Eugen Stănescu, Iulia Stănescu, Gavriil Preda, *Cavalerii ai ordinului “Mihai Viteazul”*, Editura UNIVERSAL CARTFIL, Ploiești, 1996, pp. 342, 344, 459).

³ Archive of the National Council for Security Studies (ACNSAS), *Criminal Collection*, P 076544, Vol. 1.



From the autumn of 1931, Lieutenant-Colonel Ioan Dumitrache worked in the General Staff of the Territorial Inspectorate of Bucharest. The special qualities of Lieutenant Colonel Ioan Dumitrache were confirmed by the characterisations made by his superiors.

began his military career on 1 July 1911 in the 38th “*Neagoe Basarab*” Infantry Regiment of Braila. For three years he ambitiously trained the recruits he commanded in the Second Balkan War (17/30 June – 17/30 July 1913)⁴.

He was advanced to the rank of Lieutenant in 1914, and between 1914 and 1916 he was trained in infantry and military and professional specialization⁵. He participated in the First World War from August 1916. He was noted in the battles from Mărășești – Răzoare (August 1917), being wounded, decorated and advanced to the rank of captain (1917)⁶. He was admitted to the Superior War School⁷ in 1919 (it was 30 years since the establishment of the prestigious educational institution in the Romanian army), which he graduated on 10 October 1921 with an average of 6.78 and the qualification “*Good*”.

Promoted to the rank of Major (1920), after graduating from the Superior War School, he was assigned as a Chief of Staff in the Command of the 1st Mountain Troops Division in Arad, which included all the troops of mountain hunters.

By the Decree no. 1,674/1 August 1924, the Command of the Mountain Hunters Corps was transformed into the Mountain Hunters Corps, located in Bucharest. Also, the 1st Mountain Troops Sinaia and the 2nd Mountain Troops Bistrita-Năsăud were set up⁸. Advanced to the rank of Lieutenant Colonel, he was promoted, in 1927, Deputy Commander of the 1st Mountain Division. After two years he was appointed Commander of the 2nd Mountain Troops Battalion in Caransebeș. From the autumn of 1931, Lieutenant-Colonel Ioan Dumitrache worked in the General Staff of the Territorial Inspectorate of Bucharest⁹.

The special qualities of Lieutenant Colonel Ioan Dumitrache were confirmed by the characterisations made by his superiors.

⁴ Horia Dumitrescu, Marilena Sima, *General de corp de armată Ion Dumitrache (1889 - 1977). Contribuții, “Cronica Vrancei”* XIX, Vrance Museum, 2014, pp. 369-393

⁵ Constantin Chiper, *General de corp de armată Ion Dumitrache*, in *Veterani în slujba Patriei*, vol. II, under the aegis of the National Association “*Cultul Eroilor*”, Editura BURATINO, Ploiești, 2006, p. 7.

⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 8.

⁷ The Superior War School was established on the basis of Decree no. 2,073/8 August 1889. The duration of the courses was two years. Its activity was interrupted during the First World War, the institution resuming its courses on 1 March 1919 (Florin Răpan, Dorel Bușe, *Învățământul militar*, in *Enciclopedia Armatei Române*, Editura Centrului Tehnic-Editorial al Armatei, București, 2009, p. 994).

⁸ Constantin Chiper, *op. cit.*, p. 8.

⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 9.

We exemplify through the Qualifying Sheet for the period 1 November 1930 – 31 October 1931:

Colonel Savu: “*Lieutenant Colonel Dumitrache Ioan commanded from 1.II.930 to the day X 931 the 11th Mountain Troops Battalion – which was independent.*

Physical aptitudes: As in 1929/30.

Military skills: As in 1929/30.

Capacity: As in 1929/30. With the following additions. Through serious studies he has enriched both his professional and general knowledge.

Military education: As in 1929/30.

Service fulfilment: He performed the service as well. As a Corps Commander with a lot of zeal, very conscientious, with a great deal of self-sacrifice having the most beautiful results.

The battalion commanded by him is well trained, well disciplined and well managed. Lieutenant Colonel Dumitrache led the training and education of the officer corps and of the re-engaged personnel with good results. -

This year the ski patrol took the 3rd prize in the CMV competition.

He continued to remove the shortcomings regarding the troops accommodation, and to take care of the war material with good results. -

Through his care a large hut was built in the mountains for 150 soldiers and officers who would bring great profits for mountain instruction.

For the applications in the garrison, he successfully commanded the Infantry Regiment, with artillery, proving that he knows how to well conduct a detachment on the tactical field.

He has often proved to be a very correct referee. -

The officer leaves the battalion command after 2½ years to continue his specialization as an officer.

Conclusion: very good and reliable front and staff officer, who deserves to be entrusted with the leadership of a group of mountain troops.

Not having the necessary seniority this year, he is not the subject of a proposal”.

Colonel A. Phlepps – Commander of the 1st Mountain Troops Brigade: “*I totally agree with the note given by the group commander.*





At all the inspections I carried out at this Battalion during the training hours I found this officer remarkably in his place as a commander of a separate corps.

Full of zeal and skill, he led instruction and practice with great talent and and kindness, so this battalion took the lead of the Brigade. -

He commanded the battalion in difficult mountainous terrain, during difficult atmospheric conditions, in the most beautiful way taking the most accurate decisions, achieving them with remarkable energy, and being praised by the General Inspector who was present.

Lieutenant Colonel Dumitrache is a very valuable commander and demonstrating rich professional knowledge, being independent and apt to command a regiment (Mountain Troops Group).

He is a superior officer with all the aptitudes for the activity in the mountains, being a remarkable mountaineer, who animated his subordinates in this direction. -

Not having the necessary age, he is not the subject of a proposal”¹⁰.

General Nicola – Commander of the 1st Mountain Troops Division:
“I agree.

Lieutenant Colonel Dumitrache is a mountaineer, a cross-country skier and a peerless instructor. -

He puts soul and passion into training his unit and keeps it always in front of others.

The battalion he commanded excels in outfit, discipline, instruction and shooting.

Lieutenant Colonel Dumitrache personally sets the tone. The first one on the mountain where he built a hut with great sacrifices, first in ski, first in shooting.

His team was awarded in all competitions.

During the Inspection of General Cihosky, he commanded the detachment in the Muntele Mic (South of Caransebeş) at 1,800 altitude. He well appreciates the land and he is perfectly identified with the operations in the mountains. -

He is an excellent mountain officer”.

General Gorsky – Commander of Mountain Troops Corps:

“I maintain without reservation the excellent appreciation given by the hierarchical chiefs.

¹⁰ Military Archives of Mountain Troops (A.M.Vn.), *General Ioan Dumitrache* Collection, p. 2.

A senior officer who stands out through his entire military achievements, as Corps Chief.

He will be advanced following eligibility”.

General Gorsky – Inspector General of the Army:

“I maintain the favourable appreciation given to this valuable senior officer. -”¹¹.

Advanced Colonel in 1935, he commanded with great firmness the 4th Group Mountain Troops from Bistrița-Năsăud. In the civil hierarchy, Patriarch Miron Cristea (Prime Minister of the country between 11 February 1938 – 6 March 1939) appointed him in 1938 - 1939 as the Prefect of Năsăud County.

He was promoted Commander of the 2nd Mountain Joint Brigade in the autumn of 1939.

Prince Nicholas, the son of King Ferdinand and Queen Mary, set up a Group of 15 officers from the best skiers from the 2nd Mountain Troops Brigade, who were making trips to the mountains when time allowed. On 16 January 1940, Colonel Ioan Dumitrache received the following Convocation:

“These 15 will meet this year on 24 January at 10 a.m. in Predeal, Park Garden, from where they will depart to Mount Dihamu.

You are urged not to miss the meeting, for which purpose the hierarchical authority was informed in order to be granted a three-day transfer.

Secretary, Major Emilian Teacă”¹².

On 5 10 May 1941, Colonel Ioan Dumitrache was advanced to the rank of Brigadier General¹³.

From 20 June 1941, the Mountain Corps commanded by Division General Gheorghe Avramescu passed, operatively, under the command of the 11th German Army.

The mountain troops brigades entered the Holy War on 2 July 1941, attacking the main direction of Rădăuți - Cernăuți - Hotin. The city of Cernăuți was liberated on 4 July 1941. Within these actions, the 2nd Joint Mountain Brigade, commanded by General Ioan Dumitrache, was the spearhead. Together with the 8th Cavalry Division, it forced

¹¹ *Ibidem*, p. 2 verso.

¹² A.M.Vn., *General Ioan Dumitrache* Collection, p. 3.

¹³ Constantin Chiper, *op. cit.*, p. 9.



Prince Nicholas, the son of King Ferdinand and Queen Mary, set up a Group of 15 officers from the best skiers from the 2nd Mountain Troops Brigade, who were making trips to the mountains when time allowed.



The human losses suffered, caused the 2nd and 4th Mountain Joint Brigades to be sent to the country (8 November 1941) to complete the numbers, equipment and training in peace garrisons, as well as the applications in the mountains.

Starting on 6 August 1942, the 2nd Mountain Division was permanently subordinated to the German military commanders operating in the Caucasus.

the Prut and liberated the Land of Herta. By 9 July 1941, the entire northern part of Bukovina was liberated.

Arriving at the Dniester, the *General Antonescu Army Group* ceased its existence and the 11th German Army was subordinated to the “Southern” Army Group led by Marshal Gerd von Rundstedt¹⁴, with the mission to advance to the Bug. With great losses, the Bug was crossed, on 21 August 1941. After heavy fighting, the mountain troops crossed the Dnieper on 16 September 1941. The 2nd and 4th Joint Mountain Brigades were disposed on the coast of the Sea of Azov, and the 1st Mountain Joint Brigade was sent to Crimea¹⁵.

By the Royal Decree no. 2,886 on 19 October 1941, Ioan Dumitrache – Brigadier General, Commander of the 2nd Mountain Joint Brigade – was decorated with the “Mihai Viteazul” Order, 3rd class.

The human losses suffered, caused the 2nd and 4th Mountain Joint Brigades to be sent to the country (8 November 1941) to complete the numbers, equipment and training in peace garrisons, as well as the applications in the mountains. The 2nd Mountain Division (the brigades were transformed into divisions on 15 March 1942) left for the front on 6 July 1942, and on 31 July it was in combat disposition in the Rostov area. Starting on 6 August 1942, the 2nd Mountain Division was permanently subordinated to the German military commanders operating in the Caucasus.

THE VICTORY OF NALCHIK

In the battles in the centre of the Caucasus, the Romanian 2nd Mountain Division (Commander: General Ion Dumitrache) was also engaged, which triggered, on the evening of 22 August 1942, the action of forcing the Baksan River, without artillery training. The surprise did not succeed, because, when reaching the river bank,

¹⁴ Gerd von Rundstedt (Aschersleben 1875 - Hanover 1953). German Marshal. Chief of Staff of the Division and Army Corps from 1914 to 1918, he was noted as a remarkable organizer. Seeckt's disciple, apolitical, tried to keep his distance from the Nazi regime. Retired in 1938, he was recalled in 1939, when he led the Southern Army Group in Poland, then operated the Sedan attack and the Dunkirk circle. He resigned in November 1941, before invading Ukraine and Crimea. Recalled on the Western Front (March 1942), he was appointed to the command of Army Group D (November 1943). After June 1944, he was replaced by Marshal Hans Günther von Kluge. He led the Ardennes attack since December 1944. Detained by Americans, he was handed over to the English who released him in 1949 (*Grand Larousse en 10 volumes*, Librairie Larousse, Paris, 1993, Volume 9: rectifiable/Szymonowic, p. 2, 710).

¹⁵ More about the military actions in Crimea in Adrian Pandeia, Eftimie Ardeleanu, *Românii în Crimeea. 1941-1944*, București, 1995.



Between 28 August and 31 August, the fights became dramatic, especially in the high zone with the height of 910, which dominated the whole area and through which the road that crossed the Caucasus from north to south passed. It was on the one side or the other for several times.

the units were received by a fiery fire, of all the categories, resulting in great human losses for the Romanian troops. On the ninth day, the attack on the 2nd Mountain Division broke out across the front. The 4th Mountain Troops Group occupied, with battalions 7 and 15, the villages Malka and Kysburun 2, but the enemy resisted, favoured by the configuration of the land. On the night of 23 to 24 August, the 7th Mountain Troops Battalion managed, by a clever manoeuvre, to reach the southern bank of the river, constituting a bridgehead that was kept, despite all the counterattacks executed by the enemy, especially after 27 August. Between 28 August and 31 August, the fights became dramatic, especially in the high zone with the height of 910, which dominated the whole area and through which the road that crossed the Caucasus from north to south passed. It was on the one side or the other for several times.

The heroism of the Romanian hunters was also shown at the assault of quota 910, where Sergeant Rusu, under the command of Lieutenant Botiș, told, looking over his shoulder as he left it: “Quota 910, dry it God dry it!”. They were those who survived, who collected on the tent sheets the comrades made pieces by the Soviet artillery, loaded them into trucks, then left, for a new battle for life and death. The Commander of the 1st Company, Captain Tiberiu Coloiu, the superior of Lieutenant Botiș Volumiu, fell with the leg cut from the knees by a shrapnel shell. “Take the order and resist!”, he said before being evacuated to the hospital in Piatigorsk, where he died, being buried in the city cemetery¹⁶.

Here is the agenda of General Ion Dumitrache after the conquest of quota 910 by the 7th Mountain Troops Battalion:

2nd Division Mountain

Commander

Order of the Day no. 2

On 2 September 1942

In the operations of forcing the Baksan River (Caucasus) and in the bridgehead beyond it on the heights 910 all the soldiers of the division bravely fought. The 7th Mountain Troops Battalion, in the front, surprised the crossing of the river in the village in front

¹⁶ Cristian Negrea, *Vânătorii de munte în Caucaz*, <http://cristiannegrea.blogspot.ro/2012/08/vanatorii-de-munte-in-caucaz-i.html>, retrieved on 10 September 2019.



On 17 October, the 2nd Mountain Division starts a strong offensive and occupies the entire village of Saiukovo. A day later, General von Kleist comes personally to the heights conquered by the Romanian troops and decorates the soldiers of the Division who have stood out in the battle.

of the quota 910, crushed the enemy's defence of the village and entered the heights stormily; thus facilitating the very rapid development of the bridgehead – decisive for the future battle – being mentioned as such in the orders of the Mackensen Armoured Corps. Despite all the heavy losses, although the commander, the deputy commander and all the company commanders were injured, the battalion penetrated and remained steadfastly 10 (ten) days high on the conquered heights, crushing all furious and continually refreshed attacks by the enemy. Thus, it was the backbone of the entire operation. The brave soldiers and officers of the 7th Mountain Troops Battalion deserve unlimited gratitude and admiration, both Romanian and German.

Lieutenant Colonel Ciubotaru Nicolae, the Battalion Commander, though wounded, was in command and with the brave officers remaining, kept his brave battalion on the heights of glory, where he is and must always remain.

He has also shown that he is brave and puts his life in danger for the battalion and the country.

Honour the 7th Mountain Troops Battalion!

*The Commander of the 2nd Mountain Division,
General I Dumitrache*

On 17 October, the 2nd Mountain Division starts a strong offensive and occupies the entire village of Saiukovo. A day later, General von Kleist comes personally to the heights conquered by the Romanian troops and decorates the soldiers of the Division who have stood out in the battle, declaring: *“The great deed of arms achieved by the Romanian 2nd Mountain Division made possible for the 1st Armoured Army to pass to decisive operations”*¹⁷.

The German plans provided for the liquidation of the enemy from the Nalchik area and the penetration to the East, between the Terek springs, occupying the town of Ordjonikidze, then the conquest of the Grozny oil centre, and finally, an attack on the Caspian Sea to Baku. For the first phase of the battle, two attack hypotheses of the 2nd Mountain Division were considered: Sajukovo-Nalchik and Baksan-Nalchik along the road between the two localities. The attack starts at the beginning of 25 October with a bombardment of the German

¹⁷ Florin Cristescu, *Operațiunile Diviziei 2 Munte în Munții Caucaz*, http://www.historia.ro/exclusiv_web/general/articol/operatiunile-diviziei-2-munte-n-mun-ii-caucaz, retrieved on 10 September 2019.

aviation squadrons, followed by preparatory artillery blows by the mountain hunters' guns. At 8 o'clock a heavy salvo of signal throwers is fired to mark the beginning of the attack. Towards evening there is a strong Soviet counterattack with Katyusha missiles, which shows that the enemy is expecting an attack from the forces north of the river. In this bombardment Lieutenant Oltei is killed with seven soldiers preparing the materials for the passage of the 1st Mountain Pioneers Battalion.

Following heavy losses, the 2nd Mountain Division was ordered to leave the conquered position, with much effort and numerous sacrifices, and to organise a defensive position on the north bank of the river. Finally, the Baksan would be forced again on 25 October, following a strong artillery and aviation training.

Subsequently, the 2nd Mountain Division advanced rapidly towards Nalchik (under the command of the 3rd German Armoured Corps, commanded by Friedrich August Eberhard von Mackensen). The following day, 26 October, the Romanian troops reached the outskirts of the city on the northern edge, where the Soviet troops bravely resisted in concrete barracks and fortified buildings. Following the annihilation of enemy resistance in the cemetery on the outskirts of Nalchik, the 16th Mountain Troops Battalion conquered several blocks inside the heavily fortified city. At the same time, the 7th Mountain Troops Battalion maneuvered the town to the northeast, defeating the resistance from Salushta and Kensha, after which it attacked and conquered the houses on the west side of the city where the enemy resisted strongly.

The fierceness of the fight is described as follows in the division's operations log: *“The action is progressing quite easily throughout the division, except for the city of Nalchik where strong resistance is encountered as the attackers approach the centre. Each house is in a state of defence. Through each window or wall is removed the pipe of a weapon. Large blocks and groups of houses are true centres of resistance. The streets are barricaded with obstacles against infantry and tanks, forcing the penetration of automatic weapons and anti-enemy cannons. At every crossroads or public market, there is a concrete casemate with the possibility of firing in several directions along the streets and with deep communication ditches. In the gardens of houses and parks campaign works complement*



Following heavy losses, the 2nd Mountain Division was ordered to leave the conquered position, with much effort and numerous sacrifices, and to organise a defensive position on the north bank of the river. Finally, the Baksan would be forced again on 25 October, following a strong artillery and aviation training.



German Marshal Ewald von Kleist, the Commander of the 1st Armoured Army appreciated the victory: "The Battle of Nalchik is one of the biggest victories of the Caucasus operations. The 2nd Mountain Division had a heroic behaviour in the battles of Vladicaucaz, when they removed from the circle a German armoured military division".

those of permanent fortification. The heights that dominate the city on the south bank of the Nalchik brook are filled with enemy artillery and mortars¹⁸. The city is surrounded, but the fighting continues the next day. On 28 October 1942, the 3rd German Armoured Corps envisaged the liquidation of all forces in the Nalchik encirclement. The 2nd Mountain Division occupied increasingly solid positions in Nalchik, including in Alexandrovskaya, and narrows the encirclement of the Soviet troops by advancing to Urban. At 7.30 a.m., after a 20-minute artillery training, the Romanian troops received the mission to conquer Nalchik, to cross the Nalchik valley and to occupy the village Casania reaching the Cerek river. Compared to the strong artillery training, the enemy's resistance was getting weaker, the targets were hit hard by both the accompanying artillery and the assault cannons, which entered the buildings and struck the defence artillery. In a raging attack, the 7th, 10th and 16th Mountain Troops Battalions conquered the city and the heights from the southeast.

Defeated and disoriented, the enemy withdrew into the mountains. The city was conquered, but for the sake of victory, the fighting continued in the adjacent areas. Until 30 October 1942, the 2nd Mountain Division occupied the city of Nalchik and the surrounding area (25-28 October 1942). Here is how he addressed his subordinate troops after the defeat at Nalchik: "I ordered you to stay a few days together, front and services, in the city of Nalchik, in front of which you bled and which you conquered with the brave soul of all. I have great joy when I see you passing serious and proud on its streets. From the zeal with which I see you running after your business, I trust that you defend with your soul, at any time, our honour, paid so dearly ..."¹⁹.

German Marshal Ewald von Kleist²⁰, the Commander of the 1st Armoured Army appreciated the victory: "The Battle of Nalchik is one of the biggest victories of the Caucasus operations. The 2nd Mountain

¹⁸ Military Archives – Marele Stat Major Collection - P II- 1224.

¹⁹ According to Colonel (r.) Gh. Suman, *Istoria Brigăzii 2 Vânători de Munte Sarmizegetusa*, Editura Pro-Transilvania, 2003, p. 134.

²⁰ Ewald von Kleist (Braunfels, Hessa, 1881 – Vladimir, 1954). German Marshal. He was, together with Guderian, the creator of the German armoured weapon. Captain of the Hussars at Tannenberg (1914), then served in the General Staff and in the Reichswehr. He led in 1940 the breakdown of the French front in Ardennes, after which he acted in the Balkans, where he conquered Thessaloniki and Athens (April 1941). He fought in Kiev (1941), Stalingrad (1942) and in front of a group of German-Romanian armies. He died in captivity in the URSS (*Grand Larousse in 10 volumes*, Volume 6: *incapacitate/marbrure*, pp. 1, 758).

Division had a heroic behaviour in the battles of Vladicaucaz, when they removed from the circle a German armoured military division"²¹.

Congratulations were sent to General Eberhard von Mackensen – the Commander of the 3rd Armoured Corps and the Commander of the 4th Richtofen Air Fleet. The Battle of Nalchik ended as one of the biggest Romanian victories on the Eastern Front. 3,079 prisoners, a large amount of weaponry and war material were captured²².

In the battles of Baksan and Nalchik, the Romanian 2nd Mountain Division lost 820 soldiers (157 dead, 647 wounded and 16 missing). On 2 November 1942, General Ioan Dumitrache was decorated with the Order of the "Iron Cross", in the rank of Knight (Ritterkreuz des Eisernen Kreuzes), the highest Order of the Third Reich. On the same day, he received the following letter from the mayor of Nalchik:

"Dear Esteemed General,

I allow myself to express my deepest gratitude for the liberation of Nalchik on 28. X. c.

As the conqueror of Nalchik, please, in memory of this great military action, receive a gift from the city museum.

The new City Hall under my leadership will seek to bring the city and its population to well-being.

Mayor of Nalchik

Professor A. N. Dainaco"²³.

In Bucharest, on 10 November 1942, Marshal Ion Antonescu issued the Order of the Day no. 34:

"Following the fierce fighting between 25 October and 3 November, the 2nd Mountain Division, strongly supported by German air force, managed to break the enemy front on the Baksan River.

It then conquered, through close combat, numerous localities, strongly defended by Soviet troops, and entered the fortified city of Nalchik, from the foothills of the Caucasus Mountains, over which it took control by means of heavy street fighting.

Continuing the ordeal of the pursuit to Ordjoni – kidze, the brave soldiers of this Mountain Division crushed the last attempts of resistance of the enemy, throwing his broken and disorganised

²¹ Apud Constantin Chiper, *op. cit.*, p. 11.

²² Jipa Rotaru, Leonida Moise, Vladimir Zodian, Teofil Oroian, *Antonescu - Hitler. Caucazul și Crimeea*, Editura Paideia, București, 1999, p. 56.

²³ A.M.Vn., *General Ioan Dumitrache* Collection, p. 4.





remains in the mountains and capturing thousands of prisoners and a lot of war material.

For the wonderful deeds of arms and the beautiful victory of the mountain hunters in the “Battle of Nalchik”, which will remain in the history of our great achievements, I transmit to General Dumitrache, the officers and soldiers of this glorious Division, the thanks of HIS MAJESTY THE KING and the gratitude of the MOTHERLAND, and I bow with deep respect in front of the heroes who have fallen in battle for the defeat of our enemy forever”²⁴.

Here are the words that General Dumitrache addressed to his soldiers, by order of the day, in those times of turmoil: “Troops of the 2nd Mountain Division and the 10th Infantry Division: my soul is attached to your souls of martyrs of war and especially of these days. For the courage with which you arrived so well at the end of April 1944, in the name of the country you honour, I thank you with gratitude. Yet a bravery of the brave, all together, with your confidence of untroubled shooters, we will surely overcome the hard trials, defeating fate to the end, no matter how difficult it could be ...”²⁵.

THE 2ND MOUNTAIN DIVISION REACHES THE EASTERNMOST POINT OF THE ENTIRE EASTERN CAMPAIGN

The offensive that followed after the conquest of the city of Nalchik is still part of the plans of the German army, the troops of the 2nd Mountain Division occupying positions on the flank of its advance. The operations begin on 2 November, with Romanian troops marching behind German armoured columns to continue the offensive towards Alagir and Ordjonikidze. *The 2nd Mountain Division reaches the easternmost point of the entire Eastern campaign, reaching about 20 kilometres from the Grozny oil centre.* Taking advantage of the fog on 14 and 15 November, the 2nd Mountain Division prepares its defensive system for winter. The enemy launches a first attack on 16 November, when it manages to enter the village of Kora-Ursdon, which it occupies. The 2nd Mountain Mounted Squadron together with the Mounted Reconnaissance Squadron try to occupy the locality, but they are rejected. Enemy reconnaissance also takes place in the other

²⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 5.

²⁵ Colonel (r.) Gh. Suman, *op.cit.*, p. 163.

sectors of the division, but due to dense fog, such patrols are captured. In the days of the great Soviet offensive in Stalingrad, the situation on the front of the 2nd Mountain Division is a quiet one, except for an attack in the area of the 4th Mountain Troops Group given by the 37th Soviet Brigade. On days 20 and 21 only sporadic exchanges of fire are recorded. Starting from mid-November, the Romanian troops are beginning to face the adverse weather, with the presence of snow and frost, the temperatures being permanently below 0 degrees Celsius. In the slight fire exchanges with the enemy it is answered with fewer blows to save ammunition. On 24 November, at the command of the *Digora* Division, decorations are given for officers, sergeants and soldiers who distinguished themselves in the battle of Nalchik²⁶.

At the end of 1942, the German military command, convinced that it could no longer remain in the Caucasus, organized the withdrawal in stages starting from the night of 31 December 1942/1 January 1943. General Auleb, by an Order of January 19, 1943 appreciated: “The 2nd Mountain Division withdrew 200 kilometres through continuous fighting, with a spirit of sacrifice worth noting, facing the greatest difficulties under the command of its heroic and brave commander, General Ion Dumitrache”²⁷.

The withdrawal was made on the route: the Taman - Crimea - Simferopol peninsula, rebuilding the troops for the military campaign of the summer of 1943. Between 13 July 1942 and 15 April 1943, the 2nd Mountain Division lost 11,000 people²⁸. For his achievements, Ioan Dumitrache was advanced to the rank of Division General (1 January 1943) and received the Order “Mihai Viteazul”²⁹, class II

²⁶ Florin Cristescu, *op. cit.*

²⁷ Apud Constantin Chiper, *op. cit.*, p. 11.

²⁸ *Ibidem*.

²⁹ The “Mihai Viteazul” Order was established by the Royal Decree no. 2 968 from 26 September 1916. The initial sign of the Order was composed of a gold-plated cross, enamelled blue, with the centre on the obverse the crowned figure of King Ferdinand I, and on the reverse the year “1916”. Class III and Class II had the cross surmounted by the golden royal crown; in the third class - the crown had a dimension of 20 mm in length, and in the class - II - of 28 mm. The third class had a 40 mm cross and was worn on the left side of the chest; The second class, with the size of the cross of 60 mm, was worn in command and the first class, also of 60 mm, was worn as a brooch on the left side of the chest. The 1941 model had the figure of King Mihai and the year “1941”. The sign for the 1938 model received two crossed swords between the arms of the cross. The ribbon of the Order was of dark red-cherry mill, 37 mm wide, with on each side a 3 mm wide gold wire band. In 1936, the bearers of the Order received a kind of uniform consisting of a cloak and a cap similar to that worn by the great voivode Mihai Viteazul. It was worn by the knights of the Order on all official occasions, when the officers were required to hold the ceremony, as well as to all the national or patriotic celebrations organised by the State (Eugen Stănescu, Iulia Stănescu, Gavriil Preda, *op. cit.*, pp. 7-9).



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Between July and October 1943, the 2nd Mountain Division carried out wear and tear battles with the Soviet army and partisan detachments. General Ioan Dumitrache received, starting on 24 July 1943, a leave of absence in the country for 25 days.

At the end of May 1944, the General Staff reorganised the mountain divisions into operational commands. The 2nd Mountain Division Command was transformed into the 102nd Mountain Command, being deployed, at the end of August 1944, in Deva garrison.

(High Decree no. 353 of 15 February 1943), already having the same Order, class III. The Commander of the Mountain Corps, Army Corps General Gheorghe Avramescu, signed Order no. 1 519/R on 14 May 1943 to *“go to the garrison of Bucharest, being urgently called to the Carpathians, in the interest of service. Departure today 15 May 1943. Travel by plane”*³⁰.

On 5 and 6 June 1943, the 2nd Mountain Division was inspected by Marshal Ion Antonescu. His appreciation paid tribute to the great mountain hunters: *“The 2nd Mountain Division was covered with glory in the Caucasus and deserves the gratitude and admiration of the country, thanks to all the staff led with honour and dignity by General Ioan Dumitrache”*³¹.

Between July and October 1943, the 2nd Mountain Division carried out wear and tear battles with the Soviet army and partisan detachments. General Ioan Dumitrache received, starting on 24 July 1943, a leave of absence in the country for 25 days³². The fame enjoyed by the 2nd Mountain Division can be found in the letter of Marshal Ion Antonescu of 18 November 1943³³:

During the winter of 1943, the Soviet Army decimated the warriors and combat assets of the 2nd Mountain Division. At the insistence of Marshal Ion Antonescu, the German Military Command accepted the withdrawal of troops from Crimea (11 April – 12 May 1944) by sea and by air. The units of the 2nd Mountain Division entered the peace garrisons, receiving areas of responsibility, developing intervention plans to objectives, against social disturbances, against paratroopers and partisans³⁴.

At the end of May 1944, the General Staff reorganised the mountain divisions into operational commands. The 2nd Mountain Division Command was transformed into the 102nd Mountain Command, being deployed, at the end of August 1944, in Deva garrison. From 1 August 1944, Ioan Dumitrache was appointed to the command of the Mountain Corps, which, from 23 August, went to annihilate the German troops in the area of Braşov.

³⁰ A.M.Vn., *General Ioan Dumitrache* Collection, p. 6.
³¹ Apud Constantin Chiper, *op. cit.*, p. 10.
³² A.M.Vn., *General Ioan Dumitrache* Collection, p. 7.
³³ *Ibidem*, p. 8.
³⁴ Constantin Chiper, *op. cit.*, pp. 10-11.



On 31 August the troops of the Mountain Corps went on the offensive in cooperation with the 33rd Soviet Army Corps, the subordinate of which was the 1st Romanian Infantry Division “Tudor Vladimirescu” (established on the Soviet territory, on 2 October 1943, consisting of Romanian prisoners). On 1 September 1944, the Mountain Corps Command led by experienced General Ioan Dumitrache and the 1st Mountain Division, commanded by General Grigore Bălan, were in the border cover disposition, between Întorsura Buzăului and Homorod³⁵.

On 8 September, the city of Sfântu Gheorghe and, on 28 September, the city of Târgu-Mureş were liberated. By 15 October, the Mountain Corps expelled the German and Hungarian forces from the “Intrândul Secuiesc”. The mountain divisions liberated the cities of Sfântu Gheorghe, Baraolt, Târgu-Mureş, Aiud, Gilău, Cluj, Huedin, Beiuş, Vaşcău and Oradea. Starting on 15 October 1944, the 1st Mountain Division, the Mountain Command and the corps units were withdrawn in Braşov and Sinaia, and the 2nd and 3rd Mountain Divisions continued the offensive on the territory of Hungary³⁶. On 24 October 1944, Major General Ioan Dumitrache arrived in Braşov, making himself available to the General Staff. The Mountain Corps and the 1st Mountain Division were withdrawn from the combat disposition, to be disbanded based on the measures adopted by the Allied Soviet Control Commission.

On 22 November 1944, Major General Ioan Dumitrache was decorated by King Mihai (High Decree no. 2254) with the Order “Mihai Viteazul” 3rd class with swords *“for the way in which he distinguished himself in the heavy but successful actions during the period 24 August - 12 October 1944, undertaken in Braşov, Sfântu Gheorghe, Târgu Mureş, Gherla, for the liberation of Transylvania – Continuous in the field, in the middle of the troops, encouraging them, proving, besides personal courage, a firmness of character worthy of all the praise”*³⁷.

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³⁵ Gheorghe Suman, *op. cit.*, p. 186.

³⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 187.

³⁷ A.M.Vn., *General Ioan Dumitrache* Collection, p. 9.



ACCUSATIONS, PERSECUTIONS, PRISON

Unjustly accused by the Soviet Military Command of committing war crimes³⁸, General Ioan Dumitrache was arrested. With Order no. 455 on 26 February 1945, the Military Court of Cassation and Justice, the General Prosecutor's Office ordered: *"In compliance with Order N. R./Cabinet of the Minister/Nr. 7/1945 personally confidentially,*

I have the honour to ask you to order the immediate arrest under guard of that Command, [the Mountain Corps] of Division General Ion Dumitrache.

The officer will only be able to leave the premises only with the written approval of the Minister of War.

The record regarding this guard is attached in copy.

General Prosecutor,

General Magistrate

*C. Păiș*³⁹.

On 7 March 1945, the Moscow Radio station transmitted the Informative Note by which General Dumitrache was accused of ordering, in October 1942, the killing of 600 prisoners, partisans, women and children at Nalchik, as well as of ordering the transport of materials to the country. The false accusations were denied by the testimony of the 127 persons who participated in the trial⁴⁰.

The real reasons for his arrest were: the heroic behaviour of the soldiers of the 2nd Mountain Division in the Caucasus, for which it was nicknamed *"Divizia de Cremene"*, the refusal to continue the fighting on the territory of Hungary and the criticism of the war orders given by the Soviet commanders in *"Intrândul Secuiesc"*⁴¹.

He was rehabilitated on 15 August 1946 and transferred to the command of the Mountain Corps, and on 1 September 1947, he was advanced to the rank of Army Corps General and kept in reserve, having the right to receive a pension⁴². In the fall of 1948, the *Securitatea* resumed the persecutions, the general being called more frequently for interrogations.

³⁸ The Dumitrache *Securitate* File.

³⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 10.

⁴⁰ Constantin Chiper, *op. cit.*, pp. 12-13.

⁴¹ Florian Bichir, *Interogatoriul generalului Ion Dumitrache, comandant al Diviziei 2 Vânători de Munte, "Document"* - Bulletin of the Military Archives, year XIX, no. 3 (73)/2016, pp. 77-85.

⁴² *Ibidem*, p. 13.



On 3 February 1949, Ioan Dumitrache was detained at the disposal of the *Securitate* in Bucharest, being investigated between February 1949 - October 1950⁴³. Without trial and conviction, he was imprisoned in Aiud and Jilava Prisons. The Prosecutor of the Bucharest Court – Instruction Cabinet – War Criminals issued, on 7 October 1950, a Certificate signed by the Chief Prosecutor: *"It is true that General in reserve DUMITRACHE IOAN was left free by us on 6 October 1950 in the matter he was preventively arrested"*⁴⁴.

He settled in Braşov, living retired, forgotten and devoid of material resources, worried about writing his memoirs. The typed text was donated to the Braşov Museum of History and Archaeology.

LETTERS OF APPRECIATION

On the occasion of the celebration of a quarter of a century since the liberation of the country and the Day of the Armed Forces, the General in reserve Ioan Dumitrache received, on 5 March 1970, an exciting and respectful letter from Ştefan Paşcanu, from Târgu Mureş⁴⁵:

"Dear General Dumitrache,

The quarter of a century that passed made us remember and tell the deeds of arms carried out to defend the homeland. In order to be better documented, your precious help was requested, for which we ask you to receive the warmest and most sincere thanks.

We have no words to appreciate the extraordinary content of the file, including the military operations carried out by the brave Mountain Troops under your skill, command and strategy.

Remarkable and true pearls of literature and authentic patriotism are the orders of the day issued by you. after the glorious battles waged in the Mureş area, along the thousand-year-old Ardeal.

We started holding a series of presentations on this topic related to the anniversary of the Liberation of the homeland and the anniversary of our Armed Forces, among which a large meeting you were invited to attend and to make a speech.

Regardless of our will, the great meeting did not take place and we learned that you were kind enough to come to our city.

⁴³ *Ibidem*.

⁴⁴ A.M.Vn., *General Ioan Dumitrache* Collection, p. 11.

⁴⁵ Horia Dumitrescu, Marilena Sima, *Generalul de corp de armată Ioan Dumitrache (1889 - 1977). Contribuții, "Cronica Vrancei"* XIX, Vrancea Museum, 2014, pp. 369-393.



In the evocations related to the 25th anniversary of the Liberation and the anniversary of our Armed Forces, in our exhibitions, we honour and we will always do so the name, the luminous figure of the strategist, of the great patriot, of the man, General Ion Dumitrache.

It is good. The land of the country knows our steps. The word country is encrusted with living flesh. It is our saints who have fallen for it.

It would be true and just that the survivors of the bloody days should pay more attention, with more gratitude, not so much to our person as to the valuable contribution we can bring to the patriotic education of the youth in propagating the love of the ancient soil, in the fight against the forgetfulness of the fierce clashes with the enemy, of the great blood tribute paid for the difficult today and the happier tomorrow of our homeland and our people.

Dear General,

In the evocations related to the 25th anniversary of the Liberation and the anniversary of our Armed Forces, in our exhibitions, we honour and we will always do so the name, the luminous figure of the strategist, of the great patriot, of the man, General Ion Dumitrache.

Returning your precious material, we thank you wholeheartedly for your kindness in making it available to us. It will be the most valuable piece, the most expensive material for our work not always carried out in the best conditions and, in some cases, maybe not understood properly.

Please receive our homage and warmest and sincere wishes for you to be fine and healthy for many years in the future.

Best regards to your Lady

Yours sincerely,

War veteran. Antifascist⁴⁶.

The survivors of the 1916 promotion B active and reserve infantry and administration officers met on Sunday, 28 May 1972, in the former premises of the Military Infantry and Administration School in Bucharest, to celebrate the 55th anniversary since the first officer degree was obtained. The 40 participants sent him a letter, signed by all, expressing their homage to the one who led them in the battle and was a model of their conduct and virtues in life:

“Well respected General,

The survivors of the 1916 Promotion B, active and reserve infantry and administration officers, assembled today in the former Military Infantry and Administration School in Bucharest to celebrate

⁴⁶ *Ibidem*, pp. 12-13.



the 55th anniversary since their promotion to the first officer rank, with the sincere and deepest regret that – because of reasons exceeding our desire and possibilities – we could not have you among us, in this festive and dear to us circumstance, we send you a warm and respectful greeting and assure you of the most pleasant memories of life and our sincere gratitude, for all that you have given us, as a gift, from your mind and soul, for the most perfect and thorough formation of us for life and for the noble and beautiful career of apostolate and sacrifice, which we embraced with affection and fulfilled with honour. -

We all wish you, with all our heart, that fate will continue to reserve many happy returns of your venerable age!⁴⁷.

He died on 6 March 1977, being buried in the Groaveri Cemetery in Braşov. Today, in Braşov, two small neighbouring streets bear the names of generals Dumitrache and Mociulschi, two great personalities of the Romanian Army.

Among those who expressed condolences were Gheorghe Mihail^{48*}. On a business card, General Mihail wrote:

“Army General Gh. Mihail

Former Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces

Former Chief of the Armed Forces Great General Staff

I express sincere condolences for the death of my dear comrade General Dumitrache, a brave general, who helped me in the heavy responsibility I had on 23 August 1944.

Versailles – France

22 March 1977⁴⁹.

⁴⁷ *Ibidem*, pp. 14-15 verso.

⁴⁸ *Gheorghe Mihail (13 March 1887 – 2 February 1982). Second Lieutenant (1907), Major (1917), Brigadier General (1935), Adjutant Division General (1939). Commander of the Special Infantry School (1929 - 1930), Chief of Staff of the General Inspectorate of the Army (1936 - 1937), Chief of the General Staff (August - September 1940, August - September 1944), Inspector General of the Infantry (1944 - 1945) and the Army (1945 - 1947), Undersecretary of State at the Ministry of National Defence in the government of Constantin Argetoianu (28 September - 23 November 1939), Vice-President of the Council of Ministers (4 July - 24 August 1940). He participated in the First World War, being wounded in the Battle of Mărăşeşti. On 23 August 1944 he was appointed Chief of the General Staff. He coordinated the operations to cover the frontiers, to liquidate the German armed forces and to disarm the large units of the Wehrmacht in Romania (23 - 31 August 1944). See C. Căzănişteanu, V. Zodian, A. Pandea, *Comandanţii militari. Dicţionar*, Editura Ştiinţifică şi Enciclopedică, Bucureşti, 1983, p. 220.

⁴⁹ A.M.Vn., *General Ioan Dumitrache Collection*, p. 16.



INSTEAD OF CONCLUSIONS: MOUNTAIN TROOPS DAY – 2 NOVEMBER 1991, BRAȘOV

The celebration of the Mountain Troops Day, on the 75th anniversary since the establishment of the first units⁵⁰, took place at the Military Circle in Brașov, on 2 November 1991.

The program included the Symposium with the theme fighting traditions of the mountain troops of the Romanian army, the premiere presentation of the films *Vânătorii de munte/Mountain Troops* – brief history and *Manevra/Manoeuvre*, the unveiling of the triptych where the Mountain Troops monument was to be located. After the Symposium, during a festive event, there were handed the commemorative plaques, badges and diplomas “75 de ani de la înființarea vânătorilor de munte în armata română”/75 years since the establishment of the Mountain Troops in the Romanian Armed Forces⁵¹.

Invited to these events, Mrs. Aurica Dumitrache received a Diploma awarded to the post-mortem general Colonel Ion Dumitrache for his entire military career⁵²:

General Ioan Dumitrache remains one of the most perennial and illustrative military personalities with whom the Romanian Armed Forces has pervaded History.

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⁵⁰ According to the Order of the Great Headquarters no. 294/3 November 1916, the School of Skiers – established on 30 September 1916 in the barracks of the 4th Regiment Roșiori in Bucharest, with a staff of 1,000 soldiers – was transformed into the Mountain Troops Corps, a fighting unit organized by three battalions, totaling 1,980 soldiers. At the command of this unit was named captain Virgil Bădulescu (Gheorghe Suman, *op. cit.*, p. 179).

⁵¹ A.M.Vn., *General Ioan Dumitrache Collection*, pp. 17-18.

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General Ioan Dumitrache remains one of the most perennial and illustrative military personalities with whom the Romanian Armed Forces has pervaded History.



GENERAL ALEXANDRU IOANIȚIU – FROM THE MILITARY HISTORICAL SERVICE TO THE GENERAL STAFF –

Colonel Liviu CORCIU

Director, National Military Archives of Romania

Young Officer Alexandru Ioanițiu's fate was foreshadowed in exceptional conditions, as it was his entire career during the difficult years of the First World War.

Active participant in the frontline, involved alongside his subunit and regiment in the battles in Dobruja, on the Neajlov and in Mărășești, exceptionally promoted from the rank of lieutenant to that of major in only two years, promoted from battery commander directly to teacher at the School of Artillery and Engineering, and subsequently, within the Historical Service of the General Staff, Professor of Military History and Commander of the Superior War School, to become Chief of the General Staff, to name only some of the landmarks of a "splendid" military career prematurely and tragically ended.

The current article attempts to outline, without the ideological shadow which marked the society back then, the profile of military thinker Alexandru Ioanițiu, his personality asserted through consistent pieces of work and studies in military history and strategy, gravitating around the theory of armed fighting, planning and command of operations within the campaign, reorganisation and equipment of the armed forces, in the context of the major conflict that was foreseen and also of his own experience on the battlefield.

Keywords: military theory, campaign, Great General Staff, Historical Service, conflict.

General Alexandru Ioanițiu
– From the Military Historical Service to the General Staff –



INTRODUCTION

Over the years, the Historical Service of the General Staff has had in its composition many personalities who made or wrote history. One of them was Alexandru Ioanițiu who, during his six years of activity (1921-1927), made a solid contribution to the knowledge and development of military historiography through his theoretical creation as well as through his didactic vocation manifested from his early years of career.

He was a victim of closeness, because of his professional relations, to Ion Antonescu, against whom he did not say anything when the Romanian Armed Forces were ordered to cross over the Prut. That is why not much was written about Alexandru Ioanițiu in the post-war years, thus some accomplishments of an exceptional military career being "forgotten".



In 1929 he was holding a position within the Historical Service subordinated to the Great General Staff and was teaching "National War" at the Superior War School commanded by Ion Antonescu. They met again, by force of circumstances, in 1934, when General Ion Antonescu became the Chief of the Great General Staff and Alexandru Ioanițiu, still in the Great General Staff, was responsible for the *staff officer's course*. His performance during the royal manoeuvres in the autumn of that year, when he filled the

position of chief of Antonescu's staff, was impressive, acknowledged as such even by Antonescu, who depicted him as it follows: "He is an elite character. Superior culture. All his work is clear and very accurate. He will have a marvellous career"¹.

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¹ ***, National Military Archives of Romania (Arhivele Militare Naționale Române – AMNR), Collection *Memorii bătrâni*, letter I, crt. 59, Original memoire of Colonel Alexandru Ioanițiu, p. 81.



This encomiastic feedback, given by a person tight-fisted when it came to approbation and whose intransigence was known by almost everyone amongst the contemporary, makes us take into account the possibility, unrequited² by some authors, that Alexandru Ioanițiu would have enjoyed a honest appreciation on behalf of Ion Antonescu who saw in him an extremely capable young officer and to whom he assigned the command of the 1st Border Guard Artillery Regiment on 1 October 1934.

THE POLITICAL-MILITARY CONTEXT ON 6 SEPTEMBER 1940

In order to better understand the way in which the “closeness” to Antonescu occurred, we need to outline the political-military context concerning Romania at the time when General Ioanițiu was appointed as Chief of the Great General Staff.

On 6 September 1940 there was no more balance in Europe and our security guarantees were torn to pieces: France capitulated in a period of six weeks and England was far and consumed by its own issues, assaulted by uneven aircraft battles whilst, closer, Poland had already been divided between Germany and the Soviet Union.

Ever since 1939, when general mobilisation was decreed, it was clear enough that the armed forces were neither prepared nor equipped enough to fulfil their mission, which was the result of the lack of a coherent policy in that regard, within the time elapsed since the end of the First World War.

The difficult situation of Romania at that moment was generated by the territorial ruptures undergone, not only through the application of the secret Ribbentrop-Molotov Pact, which established the relinquishment of Bessarabia to the Soviet Union, but also through the Second Vienna Award, which established the relinquishment of North-Western Transylvania to Hungary.

Things were not brighter at the south-eastern Romanian border either, considering that, on 31 July 1940, Gigurtu’s Government was informed by the German Ambassador to Bucharest, Wilhelm Fabricius, that Southern Dobruja had to be ceded to Bulgaria.

² Alex Mihai Stoenescu referring to Ion Antonescu, in Alex Mihai Stoenescu, *Armata, mareșalul și evreii*, Editura RAO, București, 2010, p. 660.

Included by force within the order³ Germany created in Southeastern Europe, Romania lost 33% of its territory, approximately 7 million inhabitants, and the entire Romanian society turned hopeless⁴.

The events in the summer of 1940 had dire consequences for the economy, natural resources, and agricultural production, as well as a negative influence upon the country demographics, generating spontaneous protest demonstrations in Romania’s large cities and also in Bucharest.

A suggestive picture of Romanian society in that turmoil was outlined in a letter⁵, dated 28 July 1940, through which the German military attaché for Land Forces in Bucharest, Colonel Karl Richard Wahle, reported to Berlin: “*The lack of continuity is the Romanian Government’s known issue (...) Despite the fact that in two years ten cabinets have come and gone, nothing has changed*”.

Other political and social effects were added to the above-mentioned ones: the Legionary Movement, interested in seizing power, contested, in its turn, the King’s performance, the Constitution was suspended, the Parliament was dissolved, and Carol II abdicated “*transferring the difficult regal tasks*” to his son, Michael, and appointing General Ion Antonescu⁶ as President of the Council of Ministers, with full powers for the ruling of the Romanian state.

Antonescu saw, in the cooperation with Germany, Romania’s security guarantee⁷ and considered the reorganisation of the armed forces as being a priority, therefore one of the first meetings⁸ after seizing power took place at the German Legation in Bucharest, on 7 September 1940 in the afternoon, where he pinpointed his reform programme for the military institution. In relation to it, the deputy military attaché in Bucharest reported: “*Antonescu aims to restructure and to equip with strong-engine mechanised mobile units (...) The defence centre of gravity must be oriented towards east (...) He shall destitute all officers standing in his way*”.

³ ***, AMNR, *Relațiile militare româno-germane 1939-1944. Documente*, Editura Europa Nova, București, 2000, p. 27.

⁴ Florin Constantiniu, *O istorie sinceră a poporului român*, Editura Univers Enciclopedic, București, 2002, p. 359.

⁵ ***, AMNR, *Relațiile militare...*, op. cit., p. 27.

⁶ See https://ro.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ion_Antonescu, retrieved on 12.10.2019.

⁷ *Ibidem*.

⁸ ***, AMNR, *Relațiile ...*, op. cit., p. 32.



Included by force within the order Germany created in Southeastern Europe, Romania lost 33% of its territory, approximately 7 million inhabitants, and the entire Romanian society turned hopeless. The events in the summer of 1940 had dire consequences for the economy, natural resources, and agricultural production, as well as a negative influence upon the country demographics, generating spontaneous protest demonstrations in Romania’s large cities and also in Bucharest.



According to the Decree-Law no. 3 094, several generals suspected "to have been affiliated to the king" were discharged, into the reserve forces, being accused that, as high military commanders, they had acted inadequately in the dramatic circumstances during the summer of 1940.

Two days later, according to the Decree-Law no. 3 094, several generals suspected "to have been affiliated to the king" were discharged, into the reserve forces, being accused that, as high military commanders, they had acted inadequately in the dramatic circumstances during the summer of 1940. "Considering that our Nation has to embrace the example of duty and liability by sanctioning those who were guilty of this deflection", sounded Antonescu's motivation⁹ addressed to the public opinion, whilst the explanation¹⁰ provided for Lieutenant General von Tippelskirch¹¹ referred to the very low morale of the armed forces, which "did not trust the rulers of the state, including the generals who have installed this leadership. Through the changes that we have made, the army morale has been restored. From now on I guarantee for the power and discipline of this army".

At the beginning of September 1940, Romania was relying on a demoralised army, poorly equipped and trained, greatly criticised by the society for relinquishing territories too easily, an army which, according to German officials¹² nobody could ever count on: "Unless we establish and broaden up a profound army reform, there is nothing to be done".

Seen from this perspective, Antonescu's decision, installed in office with the resilient mental equipment of a general who placed discipline in front of his priorities¹³, to appoint as Chief of the Great General Staff a professional, in the person of General Alexandru Ioanițiu, in order to implement, first of all, a moral reform in a demoralised army, becomes perfectly explicable, according to some renowned historians¹⁴.

⁹ He discharged 80 high-rank officers, considered loyal to the former regime or inappropriate, and, soon after it, other 84, accused of "committing serious acts of incapacity, thus demoralising the prestige of the army and the basic commandments of the military service", https://ro.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gheorghe_Arge%C8%99anu, retrieved on 12.10.2019.

¹⁰ ***, AMNR, *Relațiile militare ...*, op. cit., p. 33. Report on 15 September 1940, to the Wehrmacht High Command (OKW), following the meeting between von Tippelskirch and Antonescu.

¹¹ Kurt Oskar Heinrich Ludwig Wilhelm von Tippelskirch (9 October 1891 – 10 May 1957), German Armed Forces General in the Second World War. He commanded the 30th Infantry Division at the beginning of the Operation "Barbarossa". Subsequently, he became the Commander of the Vistula Group, a large German unit established in order to defend Berlin against the Soviet offensive. He surrendered to the US Army on 2 May 1945.

¹² ***, AMNR, *Relațiile militare...*, op. cit., p. 27.

¹³ Dennis Deletant, *Aliatul uitat al lui Hitler. Ion Antonescu și regimul său*, Editura Humanitas, București, 2008, p. 65.

¹⁴ Florin Constantiniu, op.cit., p. 359.

CONTRIBUTION TO THE ARMED FORCES RESTRUCTURING AND REORGANISATION

He made the most of his entire experience, as well as of his organisational talent here by restructuring and reorganising the armed forces. On 15 June 1940, Romania had mobilised, only for the infantry, 35 divisions and 4 mixed brigades comprising infantry and march (training) battalions, without having at least the basic equipment meant for that type of action¹⁵ in the armed forces warehouses.

One of General Alexandru Ioanițiu's main missions was to reorganise the armed forces and to provide the required military equipment as "none of the existing divisions had all the materials provided in the inventory table"¹⁶.

His term of office began under the shadows of tension not only on the western border, where the Hungarian armed forces had entered the Romanian territory of Transylvania, relinquished on 5 September 1940, but also on the eastern border that was constantly violated, the Red Army concentrating material and equipment in order to cross the Prut river bank and setting up campaign airfields¹⁷ in southern Bessarabia. Thus, after only three weeks from appointment, on 25 September 1940, the reorganisation¹⁸ of the armed forces began by disbanding the units, services and territorial formations that were not mentioned in the new mobilisation plan.

The *Armed Forces Reorganisation Project*, which was developed under his coordination, stipulated the principles of the new military organisation. Among them the following can be mentioned: the reduction of the general mobilisation framework that was to be established so that large homogenous units would be created, completely equipped and provided, the acquisition of modern warfare and training assets, the preservation of a weaponry reserve, the enhancement of staff with active duty commissioned and non-commissioned officers.

¹⁵ ***, *Istoria Infanteriei Române*, p. 231, Reserve troops were called up with their own shirts, socks and shoes.

¹⁶ ***, AMNR, *Relațiile militare ...*, op. cit., p. 36.

¹⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 41.

¹⁸ ***, *Istoria Statului Major General Român. Documente 1859-1947*, Editura Militară, București, 1994, pp. 293 and the following.



One of General Alexandru Ioanițiu's main missions was to reorganise the armed forces and to provide the required military equipment as "none of the existing divisions had all the materials provided in the inventory table".



The real situation of the Romanian armed forces in the autumn of 1940, a couple of months prior to the beginning of the war against the Soviet Union, can be also inferred from the request made by Antonescu during the meeting with General von Tippelskirch on 15 September 1940. The sole purpose of the meeting was to clarify in detail the Romanian conception regarding the presence of a German military mission on the Romanian territory, which Antonescu wanted in order to technically and tactically train the Romanian forces.

The same document contains also a description of the condition in which General Alexandru Ioaniþiu found the armed forces when he was appointed: slow divisions, with a lot of infantry (12 battalions), no artillery and no modern warfare assets, hypo services only, based on requisitions, which represented a great mass of horses and poor quality chariots, hardly movable and vulnerable, an inappropriate staffing with commissioned and non-commissioned officers, not only in terms of quality, but also in terms of number, and last but not least, the lack of equipment and material reserves.

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Modern warfare assets, which lack almost completely, were going to be part of the great units' inventory as they were acquired, units belonging to the 3rd and 4th Armies being on the top of the priority list.

Once the armed forces reorganisation plan was implemented, in order to maintain great units' operational capacity and to survive unexpected situations that could appear any moment, infantry divisions were gradually organised in nine battalions, following that in the spring of 1941 to be organised as light infantry divisions, on seven battalions or less. Cavalry, mountain brigades and border guard units were also reorganised following a conception based on defensive missions undertaken on wide fronts, which required especially infantry units.

In order to train the army, *the Romanian-German Mixed Training Centre*¹⁹ was established in Făgăraş to replace the Infantry Training Centre. There, it was established the course in educating and training group, platoon, company and battalion level commanders, where they received proper training, attending a 6-week course, the training ground of infantry ammunition and anti-tank shootings being conducted in Cincu Mare Camp²⁰.

Mention should be made that the Romanian armed forces reorganisation endeavours were seriously impeded even by the Germans, through their attitude towards Romania, being manifested by their lack of trust regarding the intention to attack the Soviet Union, although that fact became increasingly predictable.

This sceptical attitude went on even on 23 May 1941, a month prior to launching the attack, when Hitler requested the German 11th Army Commander, who was about to meet Ion Antonescu, to *“avoid any kind of question regarding Germany's intent to conduct a war against Russia or in the case Germany, given the facts, would attack Russia”*²¹.

The secret about the topic was kept, at least officially, until 18 June 1941, when Hitler informed Antonescu, by mail, about his intent of attacking the Soviet Union, but even at the subsequent meeting Antonescu had with General Eugen von Schobert, the idea of a *“presumable”*²² offensive was in the air.

This German attitude towards the Romanian ally undermined the endeavours of the Great General Staff, implicitly the struggle of General Ioaniþiu, who established the initial battle disposition based on the **defence** against an imminent Soviet aggression, so that on 22 June 1941, when the general offensive started, the Romanian armed forces *“were only to a lower extent prepared to intervene”*²³.

¹⁹ ***, *Istoria Infanteriei Române...*, op. cit., p. 236.

²⁰ See <http://www.cnij.ro/istoric>, retrieved on 12.10.2019.

²¹ Alesandru Duþu, *Între Wehrmacht și Armata Roșie. Relații de comandament românogermane și românogsovietice (1941-1945)*, Editura Enciclopedică, București, 2000, pp. 25 and the following.

²² Alesandru Duþu, op.cit., p. 27.

²³ Andreas Hillgruber, *Hitler, Regele Carol și Mareșalul Antonescu. Relațiile germano-române. 1938-1944*, Editura Humanitas, București, 1994, p. 149.



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The young artillery Lieutenant, Alexandru Ioanițiu, impressed each and every hierarchical superior, regardless of the position or rank. "He has no tenure in order to be proposed for promotion" wrote in his 1915 rating sheet, Colonel Petcuș, his Regiment Commander, "but he has traits that will help him to be exceptionally promoted", and in the same context "the staggering knowledge of this officer is being confirmed in the winter-term papers, as well as in the articles concerning shootings that he has published in the Artillery Magazine".

THE CHARACTERISATIONS OF FORMER COMMANDERS

Exceptional is the term that could define the career and personality of General Alexandru Ioanițiu, the valedictorian of the 1910 promotion of the Military, Artillery, Engineering and Navy School, who managed even back then to impress his superiors: *"he seems to have a very resilient military education"*, were the words used in the characterisation²⁴ of the young officer, *"very intelligent, thinks clearly and calmly. Conceives easily (...) commands authoritatively"*.

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Promoted to the rank of Major on 1 September 1917, after on 1 November 1916, he had been promoted to the rank of Captain, the far too young Major Alexandru Ioanițiu was transferred to the Ministry of War, the Artillery Establishment Directorate, being deployed on 1 April 1918 at the Requisitions Service, in order to manage this service after the demobilisation of the reserve officers. Proving his exceptional qualities, he worked there until 1920, he got familiar with the army's administrative issues and undertook serious endeavours in order to solve the issues regarding the requisitions made by the army during the war.

And even there, his superior qualities and abilities were appreciated by his superiors: *"a living intelligence"*, *"outstanding patience and work capacity"*, *"a remarkable competence"* or *"as days go by, Major Ioanițiu clearly draws his future, which will be nothing more than his encomiastic past"*.

In order not to uselessly insist over this aspect, I would like to mention that, with no exception, since 1918 when he was exceptionally promoted for two years in a row, to the rank of Major that time,

²⁴ ***, AMNR, *Memorii bătrâni*, letter I, crt. 59, Colonel Alexandru Ioanițiu original memoir, p. 07v.

²⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 55.

each year, the hierarchical superiors of the officer, regardless of rank, echelon or field of activity, suggested to the decision-makers that the officer should be promoted ahead of schedule or had encomiastic feedback about him, impressed by his professional performance and given some remarkable accomplishments.

However, he was promoted to the rank of Lieutenant Colonel on 7 July 1927, the reasons why the mentioned proposals did not come to fruition not being included in the purpose of the current article.

THE BEHAVIOUR DURING THE CAMPAIGN

In the Second Balkan War, 2nd Lieutenant Alexandru Ioanițiu was mobilised²⁶ to the logistics of the 3rd Artillery Regiment, although he had insisted to the regiment commander to actively take part in the campaign. The Regiment Commander, Colonel Petcuș, explained his decision in the ranking sheet as a necessity, not as lack of confidence in the young officer's abilities.

During the entire period, from 23 June to 31 August 1931, the 3rd Artillery Regiment Commander characterised him along these lines: *"very intelligent and quick-witted and whole-hearted, he knows the regulations too well and implements them calmly and methodically. I was asked to leave him to the sedentary service, based on the intelligent and ordinate services that were required in order to train and to discipline the deposit battery. He fully paid for the praise of his assignment"*.

The 10th Artillery Brigade Commander, Colonel Manolescu, appreciated the fact that the young officer made repeated requests to the regiment commander in order to be actively involved in the campaign. This attitude, he wrote, *"proves his high military senses and that he has a solid conscience regarding the duty"*.

The traits and noble character features of the young officer were also to be subsequently confirmed in 1916 in the Dobruja campaign, when he impressed again through his courage and expertise in commanding the 6th Battery of the 3rd Artillery Regiment. Therefore, in the battle of Tatlageac (today named 23 August) on October 1916 he: *"remained with his battery into position supporting the infantry*

²⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 9.



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In an area marked by revisionist tensions, generated by the implementation of the Vienna Award, Brigadier General Alexandru Ioanițiu's performance on the country's western border was providential, stirring his commander's enthusiasm: "In the changes triggered upon the operational projects (...) he contributed his enlightened judgement in order to create for the army a plan of action which would allow it to withstand the best it could to its mission on the western border."

withdrawal, with great courage, without taking into account the bullets falling over the battery and killing the horses. He withdrew only when all infantry had already withdrawn, and after he had saved the material which was very closely threatened by the enemy infantry".

The same scenario, seemingly meant to bolster the courage of his comrades and subordinates, demonstrating in front of the enemy the strength of character and self-control, qualities crucial for every commander, occurred again a few months later in the battle for Bucharest.

Colonel Manolescu who was in command of the 3rd Artillery Regiment for a brief period, between 1 November 1916 and 15 January 1917, wrote in the rating sheet of the newly appointed Captain Ioanițiu²⁷: *"In the battles of Neajlov, between 16 and 20 November 1916, he proved real technical expertise in commanding his battery, which had shot with high accuracy and efficiency in the battles of Videle, Cartojani, Balaria and Stâlpu, thus facilitating the advancement of our infantry. In the battles of Epurești, he held the line against the enemy by shooting with his battery long enough so our infantry was able to withdraw safely over the Neajlov. Finally, he managed with his battery to avoid the enemy shooting and surveillance".*

This calm and safe attitude was also subsequently maintained, at the dawn of the second global conflagration. Until 15 June 1940, Brigadier General Alexandru Ioanițiu was the Chief of Staff of the 1st Army, made up of all the forces concentrated on the western border, in circumstances in which the military measures were closely related and similar to those from war²⁸, according to the notes made in the rating sheet by his commander, Army Corps General Gheorghe Florescu.

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²⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 20.

²⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 88.

With his unmatched qualities (...) and with a calm and a sense of reality I had not seen until that moment, he also asserted himself at that time. It is my pleasant duty to state now, at my retirement, that he [is] one of the most outstanding valuable officers of our army and that he deserves and must be promoted as soon as possible to the highest trustworthy and liability command positions".

Mention should be made that the 1st Army, in Sibiu garrison, comprising units belonging to the 6th and 7th Army Corps, was the first one to be mobilised in order to withstand a presumable aggression, determined by the concentration of important Hungarian forces on the western border.

THE DIDACTIC CAREER

His vocation for the didactic career got manifested early, more exactly, in the winter of 1916-1917, when he was with the unit in recovery in Vulturești, Vaslui county, and taught Artillery Tactics and General Tactics in the Officer Candidate Schools established in Iași and Botoșani.

One year later, in 1918, when he was 28 years of age and recently promoted to the rank of major, he was the commander of a student battery within the Artillery and Engineering Training School and taught several artillery classes.

Colonel Bottez, the school Commander of that time wrote about him, somehow premonitory: *"Although he stood very little in school, he brought real services. The solid knowledge that he possesses in all fields, especially the technical ones, makes him a precious element for the school at this moment and in the future."*

Although a very young major, due to the exceptional promotion during the war, he imposed himself to his comrades and subordinates through his knowledge, patience, distinguished education and fair judgement. He is an elite officer, the pride of the officer corps. I am convinced that he will be an excellent chief of corps".

In 1920 he was admitted to the Superior War School, from which he graduated²⁹ as the 8th out of 76 officer-trainees, and after graduation he was appointed to the 8th Historical Section of the Great General

²⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 22.





The didactic career within the two military schools went on, although from 1924 he also started teaching the History of the National War class in the Superior War School. His activity, as usual, highly appreciated by hierarchical superiors: "capable, with perfect military competences and with a select military education. Excellent general staff officer", wrote Colonel Emil Gabrielescu, Chief of the 7th Historical Section of the Great General Staff.

Staff (15 October 1921). He continued to teach Ammunition Course within the Artillery Tactics class in the Engineering Military School, and the Ammunition Course in the Engineering Special School.

His direct superior, Colonel Bârzotescu, Chief of the 8th Historical Section of the Great General Staff characterised him at the end of 1922: "*Sane thought, clear and logic. Good memory. Updated with military matters as well as with the non-professional ones. Irreproachable military education*".

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Colonel Ioanițiu's didactic career also continued during the period when he was fulfilling his mandatory traineeship³¹, commanding the 2nd Mountain Artillery Battalion, between 1927-1929, where he was appreciated as being an "*excellent officer in all respects*".

Returned to the Historical Service, where he was considered "*one of the most precious officers*", he held several conferences in French for different Czechoslovak and French military delegations, but he stood out in the crowd by participating in the military field exercises during the autumn of that year. "*He was the soul who organised the manoeuvres*", was written in his rating sheet³² by General Constandache, Chief of the Historical Service, who was dissatisfied with the fact that, by recognising his multilateral value, the hierarchical superiors would send him to different services and assigned him to certain tasks, where they found him equally necessary. Especially to the organisation of manoeuvres, where he was deployed from August until December 1930, and from October 1931 to the Commandment Course, his performance winning him the title of *The Ideal General Staff Officer*³³.

³⁰ Between 01.04.1920 and 30.01.1928, when it was reorganised as the Great General Staff Historical Service, the structure was named, successively, 6th Historical Section (01.04.1920), 8th Historical Section (01.04.1922), 7th Historical Section (01.10.1927).

³¹ ***, AMNR, *Memorii bătrâni...*, op. cit., p.72.

³² *Ibidem*, p.75v.

³³ *Ibidem*, p. 76.

As a matter of fact, the assignment of other tasks and deployment into different positions based on the requirements of the Great General Staff became so popular concerning Alexandru Ioanițiu, unanimously acknowledged as an elite element, that in his ranking sheet of 1931/1932, General Grigore Constandache, the Chief of the Historical Service, bitterly wrote³⁴: "*In our human selfishness we do not realise that the implemented procedure is exhausting the officer (...) which I appreciate more since being in the current situation also knows to sacrifice enough time and work for the Historical Service. I also consider Lieutenant Colonel Alexandru Ioanițiu belonging to the service and I strongly suggest to be promoted to the rank of Colonel*".

He was not about to remain longer at the Historical Service, since 1932 found him as Chief of Staff of the *Staff Officer Course* within the Great General Staff, being directly subordinate to the Course Director, General Sichițiu, who characterised him as follows: "*The better I know him, the more beautiful and diverse the qualities appreciated by me and, with no exception, by all hierarchical superiors. He undoubtedly possesses the qualities of a great commander*".

On 15 April 1933, Alexandru Ioanițiu was promoted to the rank of Colonel and essentially contributed to organising the royal manoeuvres in the following autumn. Undertaken in Oltenia and Muntenia, on the territory of 11 counties, with the participant forces headquarters in Craiova and Pitesti³⁵, the manoeuvres lasted 12 days and unfolded in two phases, a situation being presented at the end of each.

The mentioned manoeuvres provided the commanders from all echelons with absolute freedom, due to the fact that the *umpire service* intervened only when the decisions and measures disposed by one of the parties were not compatible with the given conception or mission. In the contact area, the opposed forces were halted at a distance of approximately 200 m between them, and the reprising of action was done only when the umpire service would give satisfaction to one of the parties.

On 1 November 1934 Alexandru Ioanițiu took over the command of the newly-founded 1st Border Guard Artillery Regiment, where he demonstrated his administrative and organisational abilities,

³⁴ *Ibidem*.

³⁵ ***, *Istoria Infanteriei Române...*, op. cit., p. 210.



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In 1939 while already being Chief of Staff of the 1st Army, Alexandru Ioanițiu was also the Commander of the Superior War School "with the same special eagerness, energy, skilfulness and intelligence", according to the Chief of the Great General Staff, Adjutant General Florea Țenescu, "managing to have the most beautiful results regarding the teaching staff, as well as the student-officers".

but without quitting his position as teacher at the Superior War School: "from nothing and from the little that I could give him, he managed to organise the dorm rooms for the troops, a stable for the horses, two cannon sheds, a kitchen, a small administrative pavilion, although in the first nine months he had only 3 artillery and 6 infantry officers", wrote Border Guard Corps Commander, General Grozeanu.

After three years of traineeship with the troops, on 1 January 1937, he was again appointed to the Great General Staff as Chief of Defence Coordination Bureau, but actually working as Chief of Operations Bureau until 31 October 1938, when he was appointed Commander of the 3rd Artillery Brigade, headquartered in Bucharest.

On 27 February 1939 he was promoted to the rank of Brigadier General and on 24 March, the same year, he was appointed as Chief of Staff of the 1st Army, which was responsible for securing the country's western border.

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CONTRIBUTION TO MILITARY THEORY AND STRATEGY

Alexandru Ioanițiu studied the most representative military conflicts in the world, being convinced that "the study of war is a rich source of knowledge in all areas of military art and science"³⁸, but especially the First World War, *our war*, as he liked to call it, a war he taught at the Superior War School.

³⁶ *** , AMNR, *Memorii bătrâni...*, op. cit., p. 90.

³⁷ See <https://www.unap.ro/index.php/ro/istoric-unap>, retrieved on 12.10.2019.

³⁸ Lieutenant Colonel Alexandru Ioanițiu, *Războiul României (1916-1918)*, vol. I, Tipografia Geniului, București, 1929, p. 3.



Among his representative works we mention "Războiul României (1916-1918)", comprising two volumes, appeared in 1928-1929, as a synthesis of the period he spent working for the Historical Service of the Great General Staff, where he noticed the need for a specialised paper in order to approach the First World War scientifically and objectively, without any bias or polemical tone.

It is worth outlining the fact that, according to the confessions made by the author in the preface, his work's documentary source for Romanian military operations were exclusively the documents existing in our military archive, aspect which confirms once again the valour of the archival patrimony within our management.

Alexandru Ioanițiu was constantly preoccupied with detailing the commanding action and the staff decisions at different echelons, sources of lessons learned in the field, which could also represent an abundant study material for contemporary generations, unfortunately not included in the university curricula.

Unlike other works with similar characteristics and objectives that had appeared up to that point, "Războiul României (1916-1918)" did not contain critical comments, allowing the reader to do this, and did not approach the the political decision, the author being aware that "the memories of those who contributed to the war preparation and commandment could have played a very significant role for knowing the circumstances within the great political and military decisions that were made".

Alexandru Ioanițiu supported the necessity for creating a specific, national military doctrine during a period when the armed forces, influenced by the achieved results due to the French Military Mission trainers, "had borrowed" their doctrine and military regulations without taking into account the fact that they had been conceived based on the western front combat experience.

"Now, as well as in the past, the doctrine and tactical regulation have been built based on the war experience. After the war, we immediately borrowed the doctrine and French regulations, conceived based on the western front experience.

Or our conditions and means of combat will be completely different. Therefore, it is necessary for not only the doctrine but also the regulations we adopted to be filtered according to the experience acquired on the eastern front and especially on the Romanian front".

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His opinion in that regard, which was not singular in the debates of that time, was part of the post war tendency of societal and military change, amongst other initiatives such as “The Law on the Armed Forces Organisation”, developed in 1923 and adopted on 23 June 1924, to replace the old 1908 law.

Another supporter of the idea was also General Radu R. Rosetti⁴⁰, whose opinion was that the number of 23 divisions, in the 1925 Romanian armed forces, was disproportionate to the capacity of sustaining Romanian economy and society, having a population of 17 million inhabitants, giving France’s example – only 20 divisions⁴¹ for 40 million inhabitants.

Another representative work, “Pentru generațiile de azi și de mâine. Virtuțile neamului în lumina războiului nostru național (For today and tomorrow’s generations. The virtues of the nation in the light of our national war)”⁴², appeared in 1930, was co-authored by Alexandru Ioanițiu and Petre Vasilescu⁴³, the one who demonstrated such virtues, both in opposition towards Antonescu’s policy⁴⁴, who ordered him to be arrested, and in the communist prisons, where he died.

Somehow premonitory for the responsibilities that he would have to face in a matter of only 10 years, Alexandru Ioanițiu wrote: “War will unfold depending on, first of all, the way the material preparations have been made and the way the first operations have been conceived and prepared; secondly, on the skilfulness and knowledge of the commanders, as well as the way the professional training of the fighters

³⁹ ***, *Istoria Infanteriei Române*, op. cit., vol.II, p. 171.

⁴⁰ Radu R. Rosetti, https://ro.wikipedia.org/wiki/Radu_R._Rosetti, retrieved on 12.10.2019.

⁴¹ ***, *Istoria Infanteriei Române*, op. cit., p. 205.

⁴² Lieutenant Colonel Alexandru Ioanițiu and Petre I. Vasilescu from the Great General Staff, *Pentru generațiile de azi și de mâine, Virtuțile Neamului în lumina războiului nostru național*, Tipografia Școlii pregătitoare pentru ofițeri de artilerie, “Regele Carol I”, Timișoara, 1930.

⁴³ See http://www.procesulcomunismului.com/marturii/fonduri/ioanitoiu/morminte3/docs/morminte3p_11.htm, retrieved on 12.10.2019.

⁴⁴ See the article 1942. *Generalul Petre Vasilescu protestează*, in *Document. Buletinul Arhivelor Militare Naționale*, no. 1(19)/2003.

has been conducted; finally, thirdly, on the impulse with which professional knowledge – both the commanders’ and the fighters’ – shall be practised against the enemy, under bullet and shell fire”. (...) this impulse, which is only an effect of the moral force of the fighters, crucial for achieving victory. (...) Moral force relies on cultivating the nation’s military virtues”.

The book is divided in two parts. The first one presents the main chronological milestones of the war, whereas the second contains some pages extracted from the Army Monitor or from the Military Bulletin with examples of military heroism grouped and entitled: “Examples of military endeavours undertaken by the army officers, heroically fallen in the war for the accomplishment of the nation – illustrating the military virtues of the nation”.

Practically, this is what the book contains: a sum of heroic acts, a sum of sacrifice-for-the-country examples, taken from the orders of the day of the Romanian units participating in the First World War, with no distinction between ranks, positions or ethnicity, see the example of Private Bercu Schwartz⁴⁵ from the 8th Light Infantry (Vânători) Regiment, some people that “have practised the military virtues up to the highest degree”, and in the meantime the authors’ moral duty to make their sacrifice for the country as known as possible.

Ultimately, Colonel Alexandru Ioanițiu’s last work to which we will refer here, “Elemente de strategie (Strategy Elements)”⁴⁶, was written together with two-star General Ion Sichițiu, a little prior to his appointment as Chief of the Great General Staff (1937). What they have in common is the fact that both were, in turn, valedictorians of the Artillery School, as well as the fact that they both filled the position of Chief of the Great General Staff.

The book appeared out of necessity, also related to the main preoccupations of Alexandru Ioanițiu, to the most meaningful theoretical approaches, amongst which the support for the necessity to develop a national doctrine, to anticipate the traits of ulterior wars and the importance of the volitional factor in the success of military operations would distinguish.

⁴⁵ Lieutenant Colonel Alexandru Ioanițiu and Petre I. Vasilescu, op. cit., p. 88.

⁴⁶ Division General Ioan Sichițiu, Colonel Alexandru Ioanițiu, *Elemente de strategie*, Atelierele “Cartea Românească”, București, 1936.



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In the foreword, the authors confessed: *“In the field of strategy, the few works that have appeared looked upon war under the specific aspect the operations from the western theatres of war had.*

In this current paper, we seek to fulfil this gap and to analyse the question of leading the war, the strategic manoeuvres and the battle within the modern war between armed nations, paying due attention to the special conditions in which the nations with modest war potential and small armed forces will be summoned to fight, operating on extended fronts and theatres of operations poorly equipped in terms of resources and communications”.

At that time, education in the Superior War School was influenced by the French doctrinarian concept, characterised for a long time by the priority given to defence⁴⁷, at the expense of the manoeuvrable approaches to mobile war.

In 11 chapters, written on 425 pages and supported by 12 sketches of the most important battles in history, new ideas for that period were developed, illustrated by examples from the universal military history and decisions of famous commanders.

Among the most interesting ones, chapter 10 develops the forms of the strategic manoeuvre and speaks about the common use of combat vehicles, in order to crush the enemy resistance and therefore to open a breach which subsequently was to be rapidly exploited.

This procedure, known later as *blitzkrieg*⁴⁸, was not foreign to the Romanian area, the techniques based on mobile operations, used on a large scale by the German armed forces between 1939 and 1941, according to some authors⁴⁹, being tested even in the theatre of operations in Romania during the 1916 campaign.

Only in the curricula of the 1936-1937 academic year, following some directives establishing that the military education should inspire itself from the experience of the mobile war⁵⁰, and why not, as a consequence of the mentioned work, it was introduced in the Superior War School the orientation towards mobile operation with motorised troops and tanks supported by aviation, category that was under development, but strongly impelled by technological progress.

⁴⁷ ***, *Istoria Infanteriei Române...*, op. cit., p. 194.

⁴⁸ Blitzkrieg, <https://ro.wikipedia.org/wiki/Blitzkrieg>, retrieved on 12.10.2019.

⁴⁹ Michael B. Barrett, *Preludiu la Blitzkrieg. Campania austro-germană în România – 1916*, Editura Militară, 2016.

⁵⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 195.

THE TRAGIC DEMISE

On 17 November 1941, after an aerial accident which took place on the Baden airfield (today Kuchurhan, Rozdilniansky region, Odessa district, Ukraine) General Alexandru Ioanițiu died hit by a plane propeller while he was inspecting the front. Mention should be made that Marshal Antonescu was in the special commandment train at Tighina, where it was also the General HQ deployed in order to coordinate the military operations against Odessa.

According to what one can see on the map, the distance between Tighina (nowadays Bender, Republic of Moldova), where the General HQ were, and Baden, the 4th Army command post, is about 50 km, approximately 1hr-1hr½ car drive whilst by plane the distance could be covered in 15-20 minutes.

The decision to choose the plane that day was probably influenced by the fact that it rained heavily, resulting in the overflow of the Dniester river, which destroyed more bridges and did severe damage. To that, a time crisis could be added, a pressure generated by the situation on the front; Odessa could not have been conquered *“on the move”*, the Soviets opposing a serious resistance, whereas the conception dissension regarding the way offensive should be undertaken determined General Ciuperca, the 4th Army Commander, to resign exactly a day earlier the offensive should have been initiated.

On the fateful day, 17 September 1941, after having lunch with Marshal Antonescu accompanied by several Romanian and German Generals, von Korten⁵¹ and Hauffe, as well as Colonel Bassenge⁵², General Ioanițiu left at 15:30 for Baden, joining Marshal Antonescu at the 4th Army HQ.

The tragic incident was described by General Constantin Pantazi⁵³ in his memoirs⁵⁴ written during his detention in prison in Văcărești: *“One morning, the Marshal took off, together with General Ioanițiu,*

⁵¹ The German 4th Air Fleet Chief of Staff.

⁵² Chief of Staff of the German Aeronautical Mission in Romania.

⁵³ Constantin Pantazi, Romanian General and Minister of War, one of the faithful adepts of General Ion Antonescu, https://ro.wikipedia.org/wiki/Constantin_Pantazi, retrieved on 12.10.2019.

⁵⁴ Constantin Pantazi, *Cu Mareșalul până la moarte. Memorii*, Editura Publiferom, București, 1999, p. 140.



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in two Fiesler⁵⁵ airplanes and both landed in Baden, the location of the 4th Army command post which was leading the operations against Odessa. They both disembarked the planes, and Ioanițiu, going towards the Marshal on the shortest route, passed under his plane's propeller, which was completely still. But when he arrived under the propeller, the remaining gases acted as an impetus and the propeller, which started instantaneously to spin violently, hit forcefully in the head Ioanițiu, who fell and deceased after a short amount of time⁵⁶.

Other sources⁵⁶ tell about the instantaneous demise of General Ioanițiu. However, we need to outline as a strange coincidence the fact that, on 12 September 1941, five days prior to the tragic event, General von Schobert⁵⁷, the Commander of the 11th German Army, died in an accident involving the same type of airplane, in Nikolaev, Ukraine, when landing on a Soviet minefield. At his funerals, held on 15 September, alongside Antonescu, participated also General Ioanițiu, he who would die two days later within somehow similar circumstances.



General Ioanițiu (left), Marshal Antonescu (centre) and General Hauffe (right) while inspecting the eastern front. In the framework it can be noticed a part of a Fieseler Fi 156 „Storch” fuselage.

⁵⁵ Fieseler Fi 156 Storch – aircraft meant for air reconnaissance, liaison, and evacuation, (STOL – Short Take Off and Landing), <https://ro.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fieseler>, retrieved on 12.10.2019.

⁵⁶ See Gh. Buzatu, Stela Cheptea, Marusia Cîrstea, editors, *Pace și Război (1940-1944)*, *Jurnalul Mareșalului Ion Antonescu (commentaries, annexes, chronology)*, Casa Editorială Demiurg, Iași, 2008, p. 267.

⁵⁷ See https://ro.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eugen_Ritter_von_Schobert, retrieved on 12.10.2019.

“The sad symbol of work sometimes pushed till sacrifice”⁵⁸, General Ioanițiu was buried on 19 September in Bucharest, in the “Ghencea Military” Cemetery, the media of the time presenting the premature disappearance of one *“of the most valuable and distinguished commanders of the Romanian armed forces”*.

Being promoted post-mortem to the rank of Division General and decorated with the Order “Mihai Viteazul” in the Rank of Knight, but also with the Iron Cross ranks I and II given by Hitler⁵⁹, he left behind 6 children, four boys and two girls, plenty of works published in books and specialised publications and, according to Constantin Pantazi, a great untapped potential: *“Ioanițiu was a man of great and real valour; very intelligent, instructed, calm, with great work capacity. (...) He was destined by Ion Antonescu, in case of his demise or impossibility to continue the mission to succeed into ruling the state. (...) Apart from his superiority and intellectual distinction, he was of a firm character; he was a true man”⁶⁰*.

CONCLUSION

The acknowledgement of General Ioanițiu’s professional value determined Ion Antonescu to appoint him as Chief of the Great General Staff, by “burning” the hierarchical stages and breaking the legal provisions regarding the armed forces organisation. At the moment of appointment, Alexandru Ioanițiu had not commanded divisional level echelons or army corps and he had been “only” Chief of Staff at the army echelon.

He had neither the necessary studies, because he had not graduated the Command Course for large unity commanders, where he had hardly been accepted for 1940-1941, nor the required rank in order to occupy such a position; being proposed for promotion in 1939, the Adjutant Division General Florea Țenescu, the former Chief of the Great General Staff, considered him as “unpromotable”.

⁵⁸ General Iosif Iacobici letter to Marshal Antonescu, in the CNSAS archive, in *România în arhive. Studii și documente*, Editura Mica Valahie, București, 2011.

⁵⁹ Brigadier General Professor Dr Adrian Stroea, Colonel (r.) Marin Ghinoiu, *File din istoria artileriei. Fapte, întâmplări și oameni*, Editura Centrului Tehnic-Editorial al Armatei, București, 2015, p. 307.

⁶⁰ Constantin Pantazi, *op. cit.*, pp. 134 and the following.



However, Antonescu did not hesitate to appoint him as Chief of the Great General Staff in recognition of his value, intelligence, calm and work capacity, practically subordinating all his former hierarchical superiors up to that moment, as many as were left. An extreme gesture, in a conservational institution such as the military, which, alongside the discharge of the generals labelled as “loyal to Carol”, transmitted everyone that, considering the state the army was in back then, there were no half-measures.

General Ioanițiu supported the original military doctrine, likely to be found in nations with a modest war potential and small armies, purpose to which he subordinated his entire creation and pedagogical activity and to which end he invested impressive effort, doubled by a remarkable synthesis capacity. He contributed to the foundation of a school based on the lessons learned from the participation in the First World War, considering that they will remain strictly actual “since our conditions and means of war today will not be too different compared to those from the war of 1916-1918”.

We can neither imagine what would have happened if General Ioanițiu had succeeded Antonescu in commanding the Romanian armed forces and state, according to what Constantin Pantazi said, and nor can we imagine if he had ended in the communist prisons, considering what happened after the war with so many other Romanian generals.

But we can certainly assert that, according to his contribution to the development of military science and art, and to the crystallisation of a doctrine based on the national specific, he was an exceptional man, a man *ahead of his time*.

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GENERAL AVIATOR ALEXANDRU SAHINI – DOCTRINE WRITER OF ROMANIAN MILITARY AERONAUTICS –

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General aviator Alexandru Sahini was a complex personality, unjustly not promoted in the history of Romanian Aviation, but an iconic figure in the history of air force. He took part, at the beginning of his prestigious military career, as an artilleryman, in World War I, was a fighter aviator, commander of Flotilla 1 Bombardment in the campaign to liberate Basarabia and conquer Odessa. Later, he filled important leadership positions in the higher structures of the Romanian Military Aeronautics, in World War II. Aviator General Sahini Alexandru imposed himself as one of the most important doctrine writers, in the inter-war period and during the Second World War, of the fifth branch, in order of appearance, by scientifically, originally and innovatively defining the role, place, missions, procedures of use in combat, and by leading this field in full process of development in the Romanian Armed Forces.

Keywords: aeronautics, aviation, troops training, air branch, air mission, air observer.



BIOGRAPHY AND EDUCATION

Endowed with special courage of assuming responsibility and great sense of honour, remarkable intelligence and sound judgment, General Aviator Alexandru Sahini travelled the tumultuous 20th century with modesty, determination, loyalty, dignity and integrity, having his merits recognised as a professional, exceptional military commander in times of war, as well as a well-known doctrine writer of the Romanian Military Aeronautics.



He was born on 24 July 1897 in Botoşani, from Romanian parents, his childhood being overshadowed by a dramatic family situation. His mother, Elena Sahini, born in Țigău-Galați in 1875, would leave her three children, Alexander being the eldest, at the age of 27. His father, Dumitru Sahini, born in Galați, in 1862, also had an unfortunate fate. Second lieutenant in the engineering branch, specialised in constructions, was retired in 1906, with the rank of lieutenant, for invalidity acquired during the military

service, following a work accident during building barracks. He was left alone with his three young children, led an extremely difficult life as a pensioner and left this world in 1920¹.

He attended the primary school in 1904-1908 in the cities of Bârlad and Galați, the first three classes of the secondary school at the “Vasile Alecsandri” High School in Galați, and the fourth secondary class at the Military High School in Craiova. In the summer of 1915, he graduated from the Military High School in Iași.

¹ Arhivele Militare Române/Romanian Military Archives (AMR), 1116 Collection, no. 15437 – Alexandru Sahini, p. 122.



The very good results obtained in the study subjects, the correct and disciplined behaviour enabled him to attend, starting 1 October 1915, the prestigious School of Artillery, Engineering and Marine Officers in Bucharest, from which he would graduate, given the conditions of the ongoing world war, after only one year, on 1 October 1916, being advanced to the rank of second lieutenant.

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The commander of the student battery noted the activity of the future officer with positive appraisals, which would later characterise his 32-year-old uninterrupted career: *“Very good memory. Very serious judgment. Good education. Hard-working, very willing to work, good comrade”*².

After graduation and promotion, he was assigned as commander of the cannon section at the 3rd Artillery Regiment, participating in the 1916 Campaign in the battles in Dobrogea and Muntenia, and in the Campaign in 1917 in the Battle of Mărășești.

Colonel Lupașcu, commander of the 3rd Artillery Regiment, wrote in the assessment of the officer: *“...in the battles of 1-6 August 1917, he fulfilled his duties skilfully, bravely and devotedly”*, for which he was proposed for promotion to the rank of lieutenant and decoration with the Order *“Crown of Romania with swords in the rank of knight”*. He was promoted to the rank of lieutenant on 1 September 1917 and was decorated with the *“Commemorative Cross 1916-1918 with the Mărășesti ribbon”* and the *“Victoria” Interallied Medal*.

During the armistice period, in January-February 1918, he attended the Training School in Bârlad and in March-April, the Firing School in the same locality.

He participated with his regiment in the campaign in Basarabia, on the Dniester, for ousting the Bolsheviks, *“where he performed his duty plentifully”*³.

Attracted by flying, he requested to pursue a career in aviation, being posted between 1 July and 1 October 1919 to Group 4 Aviation Instruction to attend the School of Air Observers. The qualifying note at the graduation of the school signed by famous Major Aviator

² Ibid, p. 7.

³ Ibid, p. 13.



Andrei Popovici, commander of the heroic 2nd Aeronautic Group Tecuci in the Battle of Mărășești, was eloquent for his further evolution in aviation: *“Healthy, intelligent, educated. One of the good students of the school of observers. He will surely be a good observer. Disciplined, clean and regular attire. Highly-educated. Good comrade, loved by the officers. I propose that he remains in aeronautics”*⁴.

After graduating the School of Observers, he continued his activity in aviation, being assigned to the Chișinău 1 Group Aviation, where he carried out with remarkable results the head of the photo-aerial section and the aerial observer positions. It is worth noting the appreciation of the commander of the 1 Group Aviation, the Romanian pilot with the pilot’s patent no. 1 in Romania, Major Aviator Ștefan Protopopescu: *“Nice, healthy and enduring build. High military education. Distinguished civic education. He performs his service with great consistency. Disciplined, serious, he is loved by comrades. He likes to fly and will become a valuable element in aerial observation”*⁵.

He finished the aviation work and, starting with 10 September 1920, he resumed his activity at the 3rd Artillery Regiment. According to the regulations, between 1921-1923, he attended the courses of the Special School of Artillery in Timișoara, at the end of which he was promoted to the rank of captain.

Until 15 May 1925, when he was posted to the Aeronautics Training Centre, the officer performed the position of battery commander in the 20 Howitzer Regiment with deployment to Chișinău, later to Călărași. The appreciations of his commanders were commendatory during this period also, the officer being noted for excellent training, discipline, responsibility and good comradeship, his departure being felt as a heavy loss for the unit.

He worked in the Aeronautical Training Centre as commander of the reconnaissance squadron, teacher at the infantry and reconnaissance course at the Air Observers School, being appreciated as a good and promising officer.

⁴ Ibid, p. 14.

⁵ Ibid, p. 15.



At the establishment of the Command of the Schools and Aeronautical Training Centres, the officer was assigned to the position of head of the training bureau, becoming “an invaluable help in completing and guiding the works in their beginnings. His distinguished qualities, solid knowledge and his perfect way of performing his service rank Captain Sahini Al. among the eminent military and aeronautical officers”⁶.

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For all his beautiful qualities and fruitful activity that ranked him among the elite officers of the aeronautics, the commander recommended him to attend the Superior War School and the course for senior officers.

EDUCATION AND TRAINING ACTIVITY

Being a staff officer with real military qualities, in addition to the duties of his basic function, he also carried out education and training activities as a teacher at the Preparatory Officer School and the Aeronautical Training Centre, and an aerial missions instructor at the Observatory School, given that he was a perfect air observer and very well prepared for tactical and strategic missions, excelling in air navigation, also trained for night air missions.

On 12 September 1932, the officer graduated from the Preparatory Course for senior officers from Făgăraș, the commission noting the excellent level of specialised technical knowledge, as well as the tactical one for the use of aeronautics in relation to the other branches, which led to the successful passing of the tests.

After completing this course, he continued his activity performing multiple functions within the Aeronautical Training Centre, from that of director of the Directorate of Studies, where he was remarked quite exceptionally, given the scientific value of his works, but also by the methods used and their clarity, director of the School of aerial observers, where by determination, will, competence and extraordinary work power he did impressive things, managing, during two and a half months for this school, to train 30 pilot officers to become air observers and, at the same time, teacher and lecturer at all the schools of the Aeronautical Training Centre, where, due

⁶ Ibid, p. 28.

to his knowledge in different fields, he was confirmed as one of the best teacher in that branch.

For his merits, on 1 January 1934, he was promoted to the rank of Lieutenant Commander, continuing his activity within the Aeronautical Training Centre and performing the duties of commander of the Specialty Group, director of the Directorate of Studies, director of the School of Air Observers, director of the School of Information for Aeronautics, professor in aeronautics management courses, aviation intelligence and reconnaissance missions, general tactics, weapon tactics, where he distinguished himself by the thorough professional training, being considered an officer who honoured his military branch and uplifted his prestige⁷.

Given the demonstrated competence, from 1 July 1936, he was posted to the Cabinet of the State Undersecretary of Air for the position of chief of the Bureau 3 Training and the general activity of the Aeronautics, as well as the assistant of the head of the cabinet. Thanks to his intelligence, professional training, experience gained in the aeronautical field, he dealt with the general problems of the aeronautics with unmatched competence.

During this period, he was appointed by the Undersecretary of the State of the Air and the commander of the Air Forces to take part in the commission for approving, following the flight tests, the tactical use of the triple PZL reconnaissance aircraft and IAR 37, mission that was fulfilled with full competence. At the same time, at the request of Royal Highness Prince Nicolae, he acted as adviser for the tactical use of the assault squadron, with which he took part in the royal manoeuvres of 1936.

He was promoted to the rank of Captain Commander “BY CHOICE”, carrying out, during 1936-1938, positions in the upper echelons of the aeronautics, respectively head of the General Secretariat Service at the Ministry of Air and Navy, director of the Directorate of Studies at the Command of the Schools and Centres of Aeronautical Instruction, second commander at the Aeronautical Instruction Centre.

A valuable and high-energy officer, he carried out additional teacher missions in different disciplines from the courses organised within

⁷ Ibid, pp. 29-38.



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the centre, he led the commissions for the commissioning of the IAR 37 reconnaissance aircraft, IAR 38 surveillance and SET K7 aircraft, was an active presence in the pages of the *Aeronautics Magazine (Revista Aeronauticii)*, worked as a mission instructor at the War School and the Air Observer School, executing 80 hours of flying time⁸.

As of 15 August 1938, the officer was selected, given his moral and professional qualities, to attend the courses of the Italian Air Warfare School, which he graduated from on 5 May 1939. The results obtained, although the officer did not know the Italian language at his departure, increased the country's prestige abroad, and the characterisation and appreciation of the commanders of this school only confirm the excellent appreciation that the officer has enjoyed throughout his military career⁹.



After returning to the country, based on the experience gained abroad, he was concerned with and proposed the implementation of the experience gained in the training of senior aeronautical officers in the Romanian War School.

⁸ *Ibid*, pp. 39-41, 43-44.

⁹ *Ibid*, p. 45.



Being promoted again, Commander Alexandru Sahini was appointed on 01.11.1939 as the commander of the Aeronautical Training Centre, and thanks to his exceptional professional training, inclination for study and, especially, the experience gained during the period in which he activated within this structure, he distinguished himself from the beginning as a great leader.

He continued to serve as the commander of the Aeronautical Training Centre commander, supported his activity with conviction and competence, activated, with remarkable teacher talent, at all the courses and schools that operated within the unit.

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After the Soviet ultimatums at the end of June 1940, given the proven experience in applications and manoeuvres, starting on 29 June, the officer was appointed to the position of chief of staff at Focșani 4th Air-Army Command. Although newly recruited, in the evacuation operations of Basarabia, he immediately oversaw the missions he carried out with energy and authority, watching over the discipline, morale and instruction of the subordinate units¹¹.

After the end of his command, during the period 01.11.1940-01.04.1941, the officer was assigned to the Second Air Region Bacău, in the position of second commander, and starting with 01.04.1941, he was entrusted with the command of Flotilla 1 Bombardment Brașov.

Before entering the war, as a flotilla commander, he worked with great skill, perseverance and devotion for the moral and professional training of the war personnel, ensured the implementation of the plans of operations and mobilisation for preparation for war, he coordinated the procurement of the necessary technique and materials, actions that would materialise in the bright actions of the unit in the aerial actions for Basarabia and the conquest of Odessa¹².

By the Order of the Air Combat Group, annex to the Order of the Air Force Command no. 3032 of 15 May 1941, Flotilla 1 Bombardment moved operatively into combat disposition with the following organisation and deployment:

- command of the flotilla – on the Buzău field;

¹⁰ *Ibid*, p. 46.

¹¹ *Ibid*, p. 46.

¹² *Ibid*, p. 47.



- Group 1 Bombardment Savoia, with Squadrons 71 and 72 Bombardment (detached from Flotilla 2 Bombardment) – on the Pogoanele field;
- Group 4 Bombardment P.Z.L. 37 Los, with Squadrons 76 and 77 Bombardment – on the Buzău field;
- Group 5 Heinkel 111 H3 Bombardment, with Squadrons 78, 79 and 80 Bombardment – on the Zilișteea field;
- Squadron 82 Bombardment Bloch 210, resubordinated to Flotilla 2 Bombardment – on the Sihlele field¹³.

Based on the Operational Directive no. 34 of the chief of the General Staff of the Air Fighting Group (valid from the beginning of the hostilities) of 17 June 1941, of the Order of Operations of the Commander of the Air Fighting Group of 18 June 1941 and of the Telegraphic Order no. 1010 of the General Staff of the Air of 22 June 1941, at 00.00, ordering the commencement of the war missions with the crossing of the border starting at 04.00 hours, Flotilla 1 Bombardment attacked the aviation fields and other important targets in Basarabia¹⁴.

The operational record of the Flotilla 1 Bombardment between 22 June 1941, at the outbreak of the holy war for the liberation of Basarabia, until 16 October 1941, when the last resistance was liquidated in Odessa, was impressive:

- 225 bombing missions executed;
- 2,055 hours and 10 minutes of war flight executed;
- 1,315,816 Kg. of bombs thrown at the enemy;
- 26 enemy planes shot down in the air;
- 82 enemy planes destroyed on the ground;
- performing major damage, aerodromes, railways and stations, columns, agglomeration of troops, artillery positions and attack dispositions, ports and enemy ships, which decisively facilitated the success of the offensive operations of the Romanian Army at the crossing of the Prut and the liberation of Basarabia,

¹³ AMR, 708 Collection, Copy of the Historical Register of the Flotilla 1 Bombardment, file 407, f. 59; 8564 Collection, Copy of the Operational Journal of the Air Fighting Group of the Campaign of 1941, file 803-1, pp. 3-4.

¹⁴ Ibid, 8564 Collection, Copy of the Operational Journal of the Air Combat Group from the Campaign of 1941, file 803-1, pp. 4-14.

the passage of the Dniester and the liberation of Transnistria, as well as the conquest of Odessa¹⁵.

In the Order of the Day no. 25 of 1 November 1941, when the flotilla returned with its units in the Braşov barracks, commander Alexandru Sahini gave high praise to all subordinates, commanders, officers, non-commissioned officers, warrant officers and soldiers of all ranks, who were equally involved in the beautiful balance of the first activity the holy war of the nation, a balance with which Flotilla was to enter the history of the Romanian Aviation and Army, in which the first and most glorious pages were to be inscribed with letters of gold and blood. By this Order of the Day, it was ordered to inscribe the Flotilla 1 Bombardment among the heroes and evoke the glorious names, at all the general assemblies and solemnities of the Flotilla, of the 11 officers, 4 non-commissioned officers, 5 warrant officers and 18 radio sergeants and machine-guns killed and disappeared at the enemy, who contributed to the greatest extent, through the sacrifice of life and blood, offered bravely and generously, to the glory of the Fatherland and unity¹⁶.

At the same time, after reading the order of the day, in an emotional speech, this elite commander presented his belief in the actions taken during this period: *“When I received the flag of Flotilla 1 Bombardment in front of you, I swore on the flag that I will be one with the flotilla that I will bring to glory: God Almighty helped me and you all to fulfil our oath, by completing the glorious activity of preparing, conducting and executing the war operations, which blessed even more and adorned with glory the flag of our Flotilla”*¹⁷.

By the Order of the Day no. 42 of 20 October 1941, the commander of the Air Fighting Group, General Constantin Celăreanu, after evaluating the first air campaign to the east of Prut, finalised with the defeat and the dismantling of the Bolshevik hordes, after being chased away from the land and sky of Basarabia, thanked the commanders, the fleets, the entire personnel and the troops, Flotilla 1 Bombardment being the first mentioned among the component units¹⁸.

¹⁵ Ibid, 708 Collection, Copy of the Flotilla Historical Register 1 Bombardment, file 407, p. 61.

¹⁶ Ibid, pp. 61-62.

¹⁷ Ibid, pp. 63-64.

¹⁸ Ibid, 8564 Collection, Copy of the Operational Journal of the Air Combat Group from the Campaign of 1941, file 803-1, pp. 241-242.



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The qualification sheet for this period prepared by the commander of the Air Force Group emphasised in the highest degree the merits of the flotilla commander in obtaining these exceptional results: *“For these facts, the Flotilla 1 Bombardment was cited by numerous orders of the day of the Army, the Air Force Group and the head of state. Colonel Sahini understood and served to his subordinates the most beautiful example of energy and spirit by bravely facing the missions carried out at the head of his bombing formations, especially in the attacks of 15.VII, 2.VIII, 11.IX on the targets and columns of the enemy. For his bravery and the way he led the fleet, he was decorated by the 4th Army and the Grand Headquarters. I characterise him: very good aviation officer with exceptional merits on the front”*¹⁹.

For all these merits, in addition to the decorations granted, he was proposed to be granted the Order *“Mihai Viteazul”* 3rd class.

PROFESSIONALISM AND COMMITMENT

To benefit from the experience accumulated in the functions performed in the aeronautical education institutions and on the front, as commander of a large air unit, Colonel Alexandru Sahini, during the period 1 December 1941-20 September 1943, was assigned to the position of Head of the 5th Section Instruction from the General Staff of the Air. During this period, he continued to affirm his theoretical and practical ideas regarding the doctrinal issues of the Romanian Aeronautics in the specialised publications, he was concerned with the instruction of the units, especially those destined for the front, by drawing up successive orders of instruction, regulations and provisions resulting from the activity on the front or from the experience of the German aeronautics, organised various schools of training and improvement of the staff to fill the deficiencies.

In the management of aeronautical training, he was always present in units, near his comrades, being particularly concerned with the moral element, the troop education, discipline and order.

On 20 November 1943, he was promoted to the position of commander of the Command of the Schools and Aeronautical Training

¹⁹ *Ibid*, 1116 Collection, no. 15437 – Alexandru Sahini, p. 103.

Centres, a position filled until 20 December 1944, when this command, which managed with high professionalism, responsibility and devotion the excellent preparation aeronautical personnel for times of war, was unfairly abolished²⁰.

In the characterisation for this period, it is noted the superior dedication of the officer to address with realism the problem of the aeronautical military education in conditions of war, aiming from the beginning to achieve the proposed purpose, respectively *“raising the intellectual level of the teachers and students, raising and strengthening their morale, staff discipline: in a word he aimed to put quality first”*²¹.

The documents of planning, organising and conducting education in subordinate schools are significant for innovative thinking, promoted principles and practical solutions to ensure the success of aeronautical units in air operations

Thus, according to the Directives for the operation of the Aeronautical Schools and Centres²², the aeronautical schools and centres were defined as *“training units, specially constituted, framed and equipped in order to form elements of all kinds, necessary for the classification of aeronautical units and formations, in the sense that the elements formed correspond completely to the requirements of the professional functioning of the weapon, in the respective function”*²³.

These had a decisive role in the constitution of the air branch, from a moral point of view, through the air spirit cultivated here, which propagated at the level of the air branch, but also through the professional one, due to the value of the theoretical knowledge and the practical skills acquired during the schooling, then spread to the units and formations of the branch, along with the graduates.

All these features, through the *“products”* resulting from the activity of these educational institutions, determined the qualitative and quantitative value of the air branch or its POWER.

The system of preparation and improvement through the education programs adopted by the Aeronautical Schools and Centres

²⁰ *Ibid*, f. 63.

²¹ *Ibid*, f. 51.

²² AMR, *Command of the Schools and Aeronautics Centres* (hereinafter, C.S.C.Aer.) Collection, Education Department, file no. 198, p. 2. See also Colonel (AF) Jănel Tănase, *Transformations in Military Aviation Education for the Training of Air Force Personnel* (1 April 1912 – 1 August 2003), Editura UNAp *“Carol I”*, București, 2011, p. 152.

²³ *Ibid*.



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The system of preparation and improvement through the education programs adopted by the Aeronautical Schools and Centres required the logical and deductive combination of the theoretical courses with the practical applications on the ground and in the air, without neglecting the military training, after a judicious dosing that had to be carried out in successive stages.

required the logical and deductive combination of the theoretical courses with the practical applications on the ground and in the air, without neglecting the military training, after a judicious dosing that had to be carried out in successive stages: in the beginning the emphasis on military education and training, with the alternation of theoretical courses with practical applications, in the second stage of theoretical courses and practical applications, through alternation with military training, the last stage in preparation consisting mainly of practical applications and the reduction of theoretical courses, military instruction being maintained until the end of schooling²⁴.

Considering this desideratum, the limitations imposed by the possibilities of the Romanian state at war, the main effort of Colonel Sahini and the decision-makers were channelled to the Aviation Schools, the only ones able to ensure the training of the navigating personnel for the war, which, by the nature of the functions performed, represented the fighting element, with increasing losses.

In the turbulent times of war, they were called, having responsibility for the youth selected for the air branch, to ensure its education and training, which would be required, through subsequent activity in units, as the soul and body of this branch, consisting in the moral elites, intellectuals and professionals of the nation.

The special war situation, characterised by the insufficient resources available, required the adoption by the educational institutions of a behaviour that manifested itself at the national level *“to strive to do everything we can with what we have, thinking of our own skills and without expecting anything from anywhere”*²⁵.

In the difficult situation in which they worked, the aeronautical schools and centres assumed a great historical role, these educational institutions being at the forefront of the hope of the Romanian air force and nation²⁶, the value of the concept of aviation education during the war being validated by the exceptional preparation of the personnel assigned to the units on the front and from the defence of the territory.

For all these achievements, Colonel Alexandru Sahini was promoted to Air Force General on 23 March 1944. As commander

²⁴ *Ibid*, p. 26. See also Colonel (AF) Jănel Tănase dr., *op. cit.*, p. 163.

²⁵ *Ibid*, p. 44 and *op. cit.*, pp. 163-164.

²⁶ *Ibid*, p. 55.

being deployed with the subordinate schools inside the country, he led the operations of subordinate units for disarming German troops after 23 August 1944.

On 20 December 1944, Squadron General Alexandru Sahini took over the command of the Aviation Training Centre, a newly established educational institution by unifying all the schools that had previously operated, with sections for officers, non-commissioned officers, specialisation, shooting and bombing²⁷.

For the meritorious results obtained in his activity in time of peace and in the two world wars, the officer was decorated with significant orders and medals, Romanian and foreign ones:

- Commemorative Cross 1916-1918 with Mărășești ribbon – 1918;
- “Victoria” Medal – 1918;
- Crown of Romania, 5th class – 1926;
- Aeronautical Virtue “Golden Cross” class – 1931;
- Aeronautical Medal, 3rd Class – 1935;
- Star of Romania, 5th class – 1935;
- Crown of Romania, 4th class – 1937;
- Star of Romania, 4th class – 1941;
- Crown of Romania, 3rd class – 1941;
- Aeronautical Virtue “Knight” class, with swords – 1941;
- The Iron Cross, 2nd Class – 1941.

Between 1 April and 1 December 1945, he held the position of commander of the 3rd Air Region, and subsequently, until 9 August 1946, director of the Materials Directorate in the State Undersecretary of Air²⁸.

At this stage of his career, he continued to show the same moral and professional qualities. The most significant chief of the Air Staff, General Ermil Gheorghiu, a great personality of the Romanian Military Aeronautics, aviator fighter, air observer in the First World War, commander of the Air Fighting Group in the operation at Stalingrad, 1942-1943: *“General Sahini is zealous and passionate in the assigned tasks; he cares for the morale of the subordinates whose value he respects to the maximum. The reports he makes in order to solve*

²⁷ *Ibid*, 1116 Collection, no. 15437 – Alexandru Sahini, p. 54.

²⁸ *Ibid*, p. 63.



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Colonel Alexandru Sahini was promoted to Air Force General on 23 March 1944. As commander being deployed with the subordinate schools inside the country, he led the operations of subordinate units for disarming German troops after 23 August 1944.



*“General Sahini is zealous and passionate in the assigned tasks; he cares for the morale of the subordinates whose value he respects to the maximum. The reports he makes in order to solve their problems in this regard prove his understanding and courage. He has not been shy about telling the truth; he did it more boldly than any other. He travels to the units, gathers the staff, speaks them out of conviction, supports them. He fulfils his mission with all the responsibility he is capable of. He is a good Romanian and he does everything he can for the good of the institution. I appreciate him: too good a general officer.”*²⁹

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All these assessments seem to be antithetical, and may therefore strengthen them, with the reports identified in the archive documents, in fact the intelligence notes of the new authorities established in Romania regarding the activity and personality of the general:

- 1945: *“General Sahini Alexandru, Commander, 3rd Airline Region – Possesses a great deal of refinement – saboteur of all the problems of renewal and reconstruction on the new democratic bases. Faithful to the reactionary forces he works with in the shadows. Very hostile, he instigates officers against others”*³⁰.
- 1945: *“General Esc. Sahini Alexandru Comander, 3 Aerial Regiment, skilful man who simulates being comfortable with any leadership regime. He is basically a conservative of traditional principles – the hierarchy of ranks, not values. He is completely detested and deeply fraternises with most of the profiteers. He is convinced and declares that it will not remain so – good times will come. He is not for us”*³¹.
- 1946: *“General Av. Sahini S.S.A. – Attended on 10.04.1046 the conference the United States Aviation Technical Organisation held by 2nd Lieutenant (r.) Oroveanu Matei at the Aero Club. He has allegedly submitted a protest memo to the National Peasants’ Party for being left without commission”*³².

²⁹ *Ibid*, p. 54.

³⁰ *Ibid*, p. 126.

³¹ *Ibid*, p. 125.

³² *Ibid*, p. 127. The available framework constituted the institution created at the demobilisation of the Romanian Army after the war. The personnel who could not or should not be included in the new units established after the war, in accordance with the provisions of the Armistice of 12 September 1944 and subsequently, of the Paris Peace Treaty of 10 February 1947, were kept within the available time frame for a year, after which, according to needs, they were either re-assigned or placed in reserve, as was the case with the vast majority of officers who fought in the east.

The General’s correct attitude determined the reaction of the new authorities. On 9 August 1946, he was transferred to the Army Available Staff Corps, and after one year, he was not re-recruited, although he had important ideas about the solutions necessary for the reorganisation of the Aeronautics after the war, being placed in reserve on 9 August 1947.

But what needs to be noticed in a very special way and that ennobles this complex personality of the Romanian Military Aeronautics is his published activity, dedicated to solving stringent doctrinal problems regarding the use in combat, in its entirety or its components, of the air branch. His main approaches were hosted to a large extent in the specialised magazines of the branch, but also in the conceptions, manuals, regulations, orders, provisions founded by General Aviator Alexandru Sahini. Here is a collection of the most important ones, but the complete list is very long:

- *Commander of the Army Corps Aeronautics*³³;
- *Some opinions on the establishment and deployment of the Army Corps Aeronautics*³⁴;
- *Coordination of the Army Corps Aeronautics work*³⁵;
- *Aeronautics – means of intelligence*³⁶;
- *Operation of the Aeronautical Information Bodies*³⁷;
- *Exceptional Intelligence Aviation Missions*³⁸;
- *Air link missions*³⁹;
- *Assault aviation*⁴⁰;
- *Accompanying missions in combat*⁴¹;
- *Tactical conditions and technical characteristics of the Aviation Material*⁴²;
- *Air Policy*⁴³;

³³ *Aeronautica*, Revista Subsecretariatului de Stat al Aerului, Year X, January 1936, pp. 35-40.

³⁴ *Ibid*, February 1936, pp. 36-47.

³⁵ *Ibid*, March 1936, pp. 36-49.

³⁶ *Ibid*, April 1936, pp. 18-23.

³⁷ *Ibid*, May 1936, pp. 42-57.

³⁸ *Ibid*, June 1936, pp. 41-45.

³⁹ *Ibid*, July-August 1936, pp. 79-81.

⁴⁰ *Ibid*, October 1936, pp. 22-33.

⁴¹ *Revista Aeronautice și Marinei*, Year XI, October 1937, pp. 16-35.

⁴² *Ibid*, February 1937, pp. 60-87.

⁴³ *Ibid*, Year XIII, November 1939, pp. 3-23, December 1939, pp. 3-15.



What needs to be noticed in a very special way and that ennobles this complex personality of the Romanian Military Aeronautics is his published activity, dedicated to solving stringent doctrinal problems regarding the use in combat, in its entirety or its components, of the air branch.



- *Warfare lessons for bombardment aviation*⁴⁴;
- *About the Aeronautical Services*⁴⁵;
- *Air navigation protection*⁴⁶;
- *Principles of military air art*⁴⁷;
- *Assault aviation*⁴⁸;
- *Contributions to the Peace Establishment of the Aeronautics*⁴⁹;
- *The problem of aviation personnel*⁵⁰;
- *People's aviation*⁵¹;
- *Air Branch in Military Art*⁵²;
- *Directives for the operation of Schools and Aeronautical Centres*⁵³.

CONCLUSIONS

The exceptional personality of General Aviator Sahini was remarkably surprised and presented synthetically by the commander of the Royal Aeronautics at that time, General Aviator Gheorghe Argeșanu: *“Not concerned about materialistic problems, he is a completely poor general officer, he led a sober and perfectly honest life, managing to rise to a rarely encountered higher moral level”*⁵⁴.

The position of one of the most important doctrine writers of Romanian Aeronautics during the interwar period and the Second World War was reflected with bitterness, but dignity, in the final note of the autobiography drawn up for completing his retired General file, signed on 12 May 1951: *“I currently take part in the social and Party life (he was never a party member) as a peaceful, fair and honest citizen of the Romanian People's Republic, living within the general order and discipline and in compliance with the laws, after the fatigue of a quite difficult career of 32 years of work”*⁵⁵.

⁴⁴ *Ibid*, Year XV, November-December 1941, pp. 1830-1865.

⁴⁵ *Revista Aeronauticii*, Year XVI, July 1942, pp. 766-804.

⁴⁶ *Ibid*, October-November 1942, pp. 1209-1231.

⁴⁷ *Ibid*, Year XVII, April 1943, pp. 381-404.

⁴⁸ *Ibid*, Year XVIII, May 1944, pp. 351-418.

⁴⁹ *Ibid*, Year XIX, September 1945, pp. 41-51.

⁵⁰ *Ibid*, Year XIX, November-December 1945, pp. 14-42.

⁵¹ *Revista Aeronauticii*, Year XX, March 1946, pp. 1-7.

⁵² Library of the Romanian Academy, București, 1943.

⁵³ AMR, C.S.C.Aer. Collection, Education Department, file no. 198, p. 2.

⁵⁴ AMR, 1116 Collection, no. 15437 – Alexandru Sahini, p. 55.

⁵⁵ *Ibid*, p. 124.

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THE EVOLUTION OF THE BORDERS OF ROMANIA IN THE CONTEXT OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF SUSTAINABLE SECURITY IN SOUTH-EAST EUROPE (1853-2018)

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At the Paris Peace Conference (1919-1920), the Allies attached a condition to the acknowledgement of the Unification of Bessarabia with Romania, namely the cession of the Quadrilateral in favour of Bulgaria, as it was also desired by former enemies in the war. However, the diplomacy in Bucharest imposed its point of view. Romania, conducting its foreign policy following the goal of "preserving the borders at the end of the First World War", adopted the approach promoted by France: the preservation of the territorial status quo.

Under the pressure from Nazi Germany, on 7 September 1940, the Treaty of Craiova was signed between Romania and Bulgaria. According to the provisions of the treaty, Romania ceded the southern part of Dobruja (the Quadrilateral), agreeing on population exchange. The regime in power in Romania was installed with the help of the brutal Soviet intervention in the period between 1944 and 1947. The Romanian national-communist deviation was not acknowledged as a real danger to the unity of the Soviet Bloc. The changes initiated in the USSR by Mikhail Gorbachev and the reforms in other states in Eastern Europe were denounced as a "right-wing deviation" as well as a betrayal of the interests of socialism. Following its integration in the North Atlantic Alliance and in the European Union, Romania has a fundamental strategic interest that Dobruja and the Wider Black Sea Region should represent a stable, democratic and prosperous area, closely connected to the European and Euro-Atlantic structures.

Keywords: Dobruja, battlefield, Paris Peace Congress, Quadrilateral, Euro-Atlantic security.



INTRODUCTION

The confrontation between Romanian nationalism and Russian/Soviet expansionism was rooted in the early 19th century, in 1812, when Bessarabia was annexed by the Russian Empire. The development of sustainable security on the eastern border of Europe can be tracked throughout three centuries, having as milestones: the signing of the Treaty of Bucharest (1812) by Turkey and Russia, the annexation of Bessarabia by the Russian Empire; the Congress of Paris (1856), following which the south of Bessarabia and the mouths of the Danube River became part of the Romanian Principalities; the Congress of Berlin (1878), following which Russia took over the south of Bessarabia from Romania; the Paris Peace Conference (1919), recognising the unification of Bessarabia, Bukovina, Transylvania and the historical Dobruja with Romania; the Paris Peace Conference (1947), which strengthened the USSR right over Bessarabia, following the annexation in 1940 and 1944; the Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Assistance in Warsaw; the European Union Association Agreement, document entering into force two years later. Romania presented the official application for EU membership in June 1995, and in December 1999, the European Council decided to begin accession negotiations with Romania, alongside other six states.

BETWEEN BESSARABIA AND QUADRILATERAL – THE NEW POLITICAL-TERRITORIAL CONFIGURATION OF ROMANIA

The Russian-Turkish War of 1877-1878 was the penultimate of the 12 wars waged between the Russian and the Ottoman Empires, secular rivals that fought for domination over the Black Sea, within four centuries, from 1568 to 1914. Following the last war, both empires collapsed and, as a result, the USSR and the Republic of Turkey appeared on the map. Romania entered the war of 1877 alongside Russia. The peace concluded in 1878, at the end of the war, known in Romanian historiography as the Romanian War of Independence,

Romania entered the war of 1877 alongside Russia. The peace concluded in 1878, at the end of the war, known in Romanian historiography as the Romanian War of Independence, through the participation of the Romanian army in the battles in the north of Bulgaria, as an ally of the Tsarist troops, also resulted in the imposition of Romania to surrender Bessarabia to Russia, which offered, in compensation, Dobruja and the Danube Delta.



Through the intervention of the Great Powers, gathered in Berlin on 1/13 June 1878, where Ion C. Brătianu and Mihail Kogălniceanu were present as Romanian delegates, the Treaty of San Stefano was modified, and Romania had to surrender the counties in Bessarabia, being given, in compensation, the Danube Delta with the Snake Island and wider Dobruja, up to Silistra and south of Mangalia.

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General Ignatiev, the Tsar Assistant, before the conclusion of peace, came to Bucharest, on behalf of the Tsar, in an attempt to obtain the retrocession of Southern Bessarabia, Romanian land, in exchange for other compensations. Because Bucharest refused, Russia threatened to disarm the Romanian army. To this situation, Prince Carol replied: *“The Romanian army, which, in Plevna, under the eyes of the Tsar, fought so courageously, could be destroyed, but never disarmed”*. The father of Prince Carol of Romania, Karl Anton de Hohenzollern-Sigmaringen, advised his youngest son to look forward and to realise what a huge profit Constanța, Tulcea and the Danube Delta would mean for the country, if investments in infrastructure are made: *“Stirring up national fanaticism as far as Bessarabia is concerned would be eventually ridiculous. To protest and to surrender is the wisest solution. The unproductive territory of Dobruja does not at all compensate for the loss of Bessarabia; however, Dobruja, together with Constanța, can be received, as the acquisition of this port at the Black Sea will be likely of significant importance for the future of Romania’s trade”*².

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¹ Mihai Eminescu stated that receiving Dobruja within the Romanian borders meant wasting huge public funds uselessly: *“We have already been told about the great wages the patriots are to establish for themselves; there have already appeared in newspapers plans of bridges over the Danube, canals between the Danube and the Black Sea, and there have already been attempts, marked by the fiction and under the pretext of creating an Eldorado, to divert the public opinion in favour of expenses that will be enormous”*. *“Timpul”* newspaper, 5 October 1878. *“When, finally, after 10 years, 15 years, we will have already spent hundreds of millions to make Dobruja productive, the Government of Bulgaria will find a pretext to claim Dobruja again and, ... if it is considered beneficial for Russia too, ... Dobruja will be taken far more easily than Bessarabia is taken today”*. *“Timpul”*, 2 August 1878.

² *Memoriile Regelui Carol I de un martor ocular*, part IV, volume XIII, București, Editura Erc Press, 2016.



On 1 October 1878, Russia took power over Bessarabia while the Romanian authorities withdrew. The Russian-Romanian Commission had the role to put the mentioned provisions into practice. On 14 November 1878, Dobruja’s occupation by Romania began³. On 23 November 1878, the first Romanian administration was installed in Constanța, being led by Prefect Remus Opreanu.

In *“Pressa”* newspaper, year XI, no. 261, on 26 November 1878, it thus appeared the article *“Dobrogea sau România trans-danubiană/Dobruja or Trans-Danube Romania”*, presenting the advantages and disadvantages of losing Bessarabia in favour of Dobruja’s return to motherland. The *“satisfactory bargain”* between Romanians and Russians brought within the borders a territory devastated by war and almost unknown in terms of *“origin, population and area”*. It was the reason why some competent and authorised *“official explorations”* were conducted in Dobruja. Following them, it was found that Romania gained in terms of territory, losing in terms of population density and state institutions: *“It has actually resulted, from the exact topographical data, that there are 9,125 square kilometres in Romanian Bessarabia, 2,812 in the Danube Delta, and 12,180 in Dobruja. However, the value of a territory is not given by its area; therefore, if, actually, Romania is gaining about 4,500 kilometres as forced compensation, the mentioned 4,500 kilometres are unproductive swamps and salty lakes. And it is not all. Bessarabia is a prosperous country; its towns and villages are organised and there are public institutions; there are all the material means that are necessary for a proper administration. Dobruja, on the contrary, is a country devastated by war; there is neither organisation nor the means to establish it there: misery is at its highest level. In Medgidia, where there used to be 800 houses, only 40 remained. Besides, ash everywhere”*⁴.

³ Romanian military authorities received with ceremony in Tulcea, in *“Pressa”*, year XI, 1878 (23 November), no. 258, pp. 1-2. Apud Stoica Lasca, *Mărturii de epocă privind istoria Dobrogei (1878-1947)*, vol. I (1878-1916), Muzeul de Istorie Națională și Arheologie, Constanța, 1999, pp. 87-88; G. B., *Comisiunea Ruso-Română pentru predarea Basarabiei, cu ocaziunea anexării Dobrogei (1878)*, Cele Trei Crișuri, July, August, 1943, <https://www.techirghiol.com/comisiunea-ruso-romana-pentru-predarea-basarabiei-cu-ocaziunea-anexării-dobrogei-1878>, retrieved on 24 September 2019.

⁴ *Dobrogea sau România trans-danubiană*, in *“Pressa”*, year XI, no. 261, on 26 November 1878.



The delineation of the border in Southern Dobruja generated new tensions in the Romanian-Russian relations, the two sides being on the verge of confronting in Arab-Tabia, near Silistra. A large number of Russian troops were quartered in Tulcea, Sulina, Küstenge. It went so far that an order for the Russian commander in Silistra to attack was expected if the Romanian troops refused to withdraw. The conflict was resolved by the Romanian troops withdrawal from the area.

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“Pressa” correspondent transmitted: “However, many dark spots emerge on the horizon [...], on the one hand, Sulina and Chiustenge, which still remain under the Russian military command, and, on the other hand, the problems arisen by the former Russian administration in Tulcea related to surrendering the telegraphs, barracks and other localities necessary for any public administration”⁸. Mention should be made that the Russian troops left Dobruja province only in April 1879. The Prefect in Tulcea, Gh. M. Ghica, sent a telegram to the Ministry of Domestic Affairs reporting the departure of the last Russian troops⁹.

In early 20th century, it was sought to strengthen the large units, considering the missions they were to execute in the battlefields, under the circumstances of forces dispersion that resulted in adopting the measure to organically transfer all the field artillery to the divisions.

Capitalising on the favourable regional context, Bulgaria (independent since 1908), alongside Greece, Serbia and Montenegro, attacked the Ottoman Empire, each gaining large territories previously owned by the Ottomans. Dissatisfied with the received territories, Bulgaria attacked its former allies, triggering the Second Balkan War (1913). That was the moment when Romania intervened, and, following the Peace Treaty in Bucharest, it obtained the southern historical

⁵ The issue of delineating the border of Dobruja was at an impasse. The Russians did not accept that the Romanians could come close to Silistra, and the occupation of Arab-Tabia by the Romanian troops generated discontent in Sankt Petersburg.

⁶ Nicolae Iorga, *Istoria românilor*, vol. X, *Întregitorii*, Tipografia “Datina Românească”, București, 1939, p. 225.

⁷ Florin Constantiniu, *O istorie sinceră a poporului român*, Editura Univers Enciclopedic, București, 1997, p. 246.

⁸ *Intrarea ceremonială a trupelor române în Tulcea*, in “Pressa”, year XI, no. 259, 1878 (24 November), p. 1. Apud Stoica Lascu, *op. cit.*, pp. 89-90.

⁹ Nicolina Ursu, *Începuturile administrației românești în Dobrogea (1878-1880)*, in “Analele Dobrogei”, new series, year V, no. 1, 1999, Constanța, p. 96.

Dobrogea (the Quadrilateral). The region concerned was an important strategic objective for Romania, which was trying to secure the border of Dobruja, especially in the context of Bulgaria’s growing territorial ambitions¹⁰.

Professor Ion N. Angelescu, PhD addressed the issue of the budget during the war and after its conclusion, noting that the economy was fuelled by loans only “and, with each loan, we are far from the possibility of striking a budgetary balance. It should be put an end to this policy, otherwise a sure disaster is looming. This year’s budget will be the last attempt of a financial policy that should end; it will provide the opportunity to become aware of many wounds that need healing as well as of the new perspective of future financial policy”¹¹. In this regard, Ion N. Angelescu presented, before the Deputies Assembly, a General Report regarding the state budget project (1920-1921), requesting the deputies to vote for it, trusting that it was the first step in the consolidation of the Romanian state¹².

The Paris Peace Conference started on 5/18 January 1919, having as main goal to establish the new political-territorial configuration and to solve the complex economic-financial problems resulted following the First World War. There were dissensions between the Allies regarding the attitude that was to be adopted related to the Russian issue. The US President, W. Wilson, and the UK Prime Minister, D. Lloyd George, declared that Russia was the key of the global situation and that was why peace could not be sustainable if its 150 million inhabitants were in a state of chaotic confusion. The Americans as well as the British supported, in a first phase, the integrity of the Austrian-Hungarian Empire and the idea of establishing a Balkan federation.

¹⁰ Having an area of 7,700 km² and a population of 259,957 inhabitants, the Quadrilateral is often considered the cornerstone of Greater Romania. It consisted of two counties, and the Romanian element, amounting to 6,602 people, represented only 2.4% of the population. The majority was formed by Turks and Tatars, amounting to 48%, alongside the Bulgarians, representing 43% of the population in the newly acquired territory. The policy conducted by the authorities in Bucharest related to that territory included an afflux of Macedo-Romanians from the Balkans, especially from Macedonia and Greece, as well as of Romanians from different parts of the country, so that the Romanian element amounted to 14.75% in 1928 and to 29% in 1938 (108,404). Octavian Țicu, *Bătălia diplomatică pentru Basarabia (XIII): Afacerea “Cadrilaterul”*, 27 May 2019, [https://moldova.europalibera.org/a/b%C4%83t%C4%83lia-diplomatic%C4%83-pentru-basarabia-\(xiii\)-afacerea-cadrilaterul-/29965795.html](https://moldova.europalibera.org/a/b%C4%83t%C4%83lia-diplomatic%C4%83-pentru-basarabia-(xiii)-afacerea-cadrilaterul-/29965795.html), retrieved on 24 September 2019.

¹¹ Ion N. Angelescu, *Îndrumări în politica economică și financiară*, București, 1920, p. 18.

¹² *Ibidem*, pp. 8-18.



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The Allies conditioned the recognition of the Unification of Bessarabia with Romania by the cession of the Quadrilateral in favour of Bulgaria. The mentioned attitude was presented in the Commission on Romania telegram of 26 July 1919; the text requested the Secretary of State R. Lansing to present to President W. Wilson the decision of the Romanian Territorial Commission. The author of the telegram was the US diplomat Henry White (1850-1927), one of the signatories of the Treaty of Versailles.

The war ended with the Allies victory, and for Romania it followed a difficult peace conference. Bessarabia, Transylvania and Bukovina got united with the motherland without conditions and “*autonomy*”. The Romanian delegation at the Paris Peace Conference, led by Ionel I.C. Brătianu, requested the *in integrum* compliance with the pact concluded in 1916 between Romania and the Entente powers. Ionel Brătianu did not want to renounce anything related not only to the national, cultural and economic autonomy of the minorities in Romania but also to the Quadrilateral issue, that was required to be surrendered in exchange of the recognition of Bessarabia Unification. He considered the mentioned issues “*incompatible with our national highest interests and with the dignity of our country*”.

The Romanian issues were analysed within the sections related to the Dual Monarchy, the Balkans and Romania. There were 13 reports related to Romania, the commission recommending that “*Greater Romania*” should include the following territories: 1. all Russian Bessarabia, having a predominantly Romanian population; 2. The area of Bukovina populated by Romanians; 3. all Transylvania; 4. about 2/3 of Banat; 5. re-establishment, with a slight difference, of the Romanian-Bulgarian border existing after the Second Balkan War (1913)¹³.

To the regret of the Romanian delegation, the inconsistency of the Allies went even further, taking the form of a fierce confrontation during the meetings of the Supreme Council of 1-2 July 1919, when the issue of the eastern borders of Romania was discussed. The members of the Supreme Council manifested themselves in various forms against the Romanian Government, requesting the evacuation of the Romanian troops from Hungary and the continuation of the preparations for signing the Peace Treaty with Austria and the Minorities Treaty.

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¹³ Octavian Țicu, *Bătălia diplomatică pentru Basarabia (XI): Poziția Marilor Puteri*, 12 May, 2019, [https://moldova.europalibera.org/a/b%C4%83t%C4%83lia-diplomatic%C4%83-pentru-basarabia-\(xi\)-pozi%C8%9Bia-marilor-puteri/29937492.html](https://moldova.europalibera.org/a/b%C4%83t%C4%83lia-diplomatic%C4%83-pentru-basarabia-(xi)-pozi%C8%9Bia-marilor-puteri/29937492.html), retrieved on 24 September 2019.

of the Treaty of Versailles. White waited for President Wilson’s instructions on those two views before the US position was presented to the Supreme Council, agreeing “*that no territory will be taken by the Conference from Russia before it has a government in charge of this issue*”.

The British and Italian delegates accepted the American point of view that the Bulgarian side of Dobrogea should be taken from Romania, but declared that they could not take a territory from a power with which the Allies were not at war. André Tardieu himself, the President of the Commission, declared to the Romanian delegation, as Ion Pelivan showed, that Romania had Bessarabia on the credit side and the signing of the treaty with Austria and a small concession to the Bulgarians in the Quadrilateral on the debit side. The position of the US delegation, but especially that of President Wilson, on the issue of territories in the Russian space changed radically following the Coolidge Memorandum, presented to the American Commission and approved by experts on 7 August 1919.

On 3 March 1920, the Supreme Council submitted to the Romanian Government the “*Decision of the Supreme Council on Bessarabia*”, which showed that there was no reason to delay the settlement of the Bessarabia issue. It was stated that the postponement of the decision by the Supreme Council on the mentioned issue was due to the lack of execution by the Romanian Government of the evacuation of Hungary. However, considering that the evacuation of Romanian troops from Hungary will not be delayed beyond the limit set by the inter-allied mission, the Supreme Council acknowledged the reunification of Bessarabia with Romania. It was to be specified in the legal form of a treaty when the Romanian troops would have evacuated Hungary permanently. The decision in question was also conditioned by the issue of signing a treaty with the Soviet Russia.

The Supreme Council engaged to provide support in the event the Soviet Russia would attack the legitimate borders of Romania, thus Romania having a more solid position during the following negotiations with Moscow¹⁴. At that time, in Romania it was fully acknowledged

¹⁴ Octavian Țicu, *Recunoașterea internațională a Basarabiei (V): Decizia Consiliului Suprem Aliat din 3 martie 1920*, 8 July 2019, [https://moldova.europalibera.org/a/recunoa%C8%99terea-interna%C8%9Bional%C4%83-a-basarabiei-\(v\)-decizia-consiliului-suprem-aliat-din-3-martie-1920/30042706.html](https://moldova.europalibera.org/a/recunoa%C8%99terea-interna%C8%9Bional%C4%83-a-basarabiei-(v)-decizia-consiliului-suprem-aliat-din-3-martie-1920/30042706.html), retrieved on 7 September 2019.



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that idea that Bucharest could not conduct a policy that was different from that of the Great Allies towards the Soviet Russia. It was a gross mistake, having fatal consequences for the Soviet-Romanian relations, which was permanently occurred in the political environment in Romania in the interwar period.

Romania, guided in its foreign policy by the goal of “*preserving the borders existing at the end of the First World War*”, was in line with the policy promoted by France: to preserve the territorial status quo. Thus, on 17 January 1919, Take Ionescu made public his project to establish an alliance between Romania, Czechoslovakia, Greece, Yugoslavia and Poland, in order to preserve the territorial status quo. He brought to the attention of the European powers his plan for a defensive alliance, made up of five states, the reactions received being positive. In the negotiations between the representatives of these states, serious contradictions emerged between Poland and Czechoslovakia as well as between Yugoslavia and Greece, which resulted in the project failure. This idea disturbed Italy, which was, during the mentioned period, in a certain diplomatic strain in relation to France.

CONSEQUENCES OF THE MUNICH CONFERENCE

Romania’s economic situation worsened after the Munich Conference in 1938. The danger of the disintegration of Czechoslovakia and the expansion of Germany led to the collapse of the collective security system: “*The Munich Conference gave a blow to the political balance system established in Central Europe by the Treaty of Versailles. The Little Entente, which stood in the way of German imperialism, collapsed*”¹⁵.

The Munich Conference, far from quenching Germany’s claims, increased its audacity, conditions under which Romania’s interest was to “*have its territorial integrity, political and economic independence respected and preserved*”¹⁶. With regard to the danger of German penetration in the political and economic space of Central and Eastern Europe, Romania was required, in the new political-economic situation, to have a respectable collaboration regarding the economic relations

¹⁵ Gheorghe Tașcă, *România în urma conferinței de la Munchen*, no. 11-12, 1938, Editura Analele Industriei și Comerțului, București, p. 4.

¹⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 16.

in the form of exchanges of products that Germany could buy from our market, such as oil, food and wood, receiving, instead, machines and manufactured products that were needed. As for territorial claims “*from wherever they come, we must respond by a categorical NO*”¹⁷, justifying that the attitude of our country is not and should not be regarded as a bravado or a stubbornness.

The Ministry of the Armed Forces Procurement was established following the Royal Decree no. 3559 on 14 October 1938¹⁸ being in charge of “*providing the armed forces with all the armament and equipment that was necessary for the national defence*”. The mentioned ministry was established in a period when the Romanian government, under the circumstances of the international situation worsening, accelerated the pace of the war production development and of the military preparations¹⁹. The aggravation of the international situation was also experienced by the Minister Victor Slăvescu and by his close friends. During a discussion between Minister Slăvescu and Malaxa, on 3 January 1939, denouncing the King’s defective foreign policy at a time when Germany waved the flag of revenge and sought pretexts to trigger the war, Slăvescu concluded: “*May God let us celebrate the New Year in 1940 under the same normal circumstances as this year!*”²⁰.

The signs of aggression were as obvious as possible and, as we know, they were evident in the summer of 1940, when Romania lost Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina, the Quadrilateral and, for a few years, Transylvania. Mention should be made that one of the difficulties of the position was the person of King Carol II, an authoritarian monarch²¹, who established the royal dictatorship (1938-1940).

¹⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 19.

¹⁸ “*Monitorul Oficial (Official Gazette)*” on 15 October 1938.

¹⁹ The minister had a task entailing great importance and responsibility, as King Carol II warned Victor Slăvescu during the swearing-in ceremony: “*Slăvescu, your task is a difficult one. It requires a lot of energy and dynamism. I trust you that you can fully accomplish it*”. Victor Slăvescu, *Note și însemnări zilnice*, București, 1996, p. 350.

²⁰ Victor Slăvescu, *op. cit.*, p. 335.

²¹ An example in this regard is the remark of King Carol II addressed to N. Petrescu-Comnen, appointed Sub-Secretary at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, who tried to refuse the position: “*Today, when I just intend to declutter the country, depoliticising it, when there are no parliamentarians and no political parties, the role of each and every minister is to do his best in the area of responsibility. Therefore, you only have to deal with your department. I am responsible for the government policy related to the country and the history.*”, cf. Mircea Mușat, Ion Ardeleanu, *România după Marea Unire*, vol. II, part II, November 1933-September 1940, București, p. 813. Therefore, the role of a minister, in the King’s view, was that of a simple performer.



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After the end of the Second World War, a new international social-political order emerged. It was the pressure of the communist ideology, timid at first, then quite brutal and categorical. The coming of communists to power was accompanied by a wave of arrests, to which almost all the elite of the intellectuals of the old society fell victim.

King Carol II often intervened in the policy of armament and combat assets procurement. The interventions were mainly aimed at meeting own material interests, the combat assets performance being less important. We consider here the bonuses offered by foreign companies, especially in terms of bonds packages so that the armament could be bought from them, to the detriment of other equally important companies and even in spite of poor performances. The war found the Romanian armed forces with an extremely wide variety of airplanes, armoured vehicles, artillery and means of transport, a variety that resulted in heavy difficulties in terms of providing spare parts, maintenance and supply with ammunition and other consumable items. Such a situation was found by Victor Slăvescu when he became minister of the armed forces procurement, a situation that had lasted for about eight years²², with the assistance of some decision-makers among the royal camarilla²³. In the eve of his appointment as a minister, within the ministry it was sensed *“a state of laziness and lack of coordination”*²⁴.

After the end of the Second World War, a new international social-political order emerged. It was the pressure of the communist ideology, timid at first, then quite brutal and categorical. The coming of communists to power was accompanied by a wave of arrests, to which almost all the elite of the intellectuals of the old society fell victim²⁵. On 8 October 1944, it was issued a law on the purification of public administration, supplemented on 24 November 1944, which was aimed at verifying those didactical personnel that were illegally hired or promoted, and that had conducted their activity in a legionary,

²² In 1932, the Romanian military aviation was like *“a museum worthy of competing with a perfectly organised exhibition, in the aeronautics inventory being no less than 25 types of cells and more than 15 types of engines.”*, cf. Gheorghe Zaharia, Constantin Botoran, *Politica de apărare națională a României în contextul european interbelic, 1919-1939*, București, 1981, p. 141. For details relating to the armament trade see also Andrei Nicolescu, *Colaborarea româno-franceză în domeniul armamentului (1930-1936)* in *“Argesis”*, no. XIV, History series, Pitești, 2005, pp. 591-596. In fact, even Slăvescu noted that Ionel and Vintilă Brătianu neglected the armament issue, cf. Victor Slăvescu, *Note și însemnări zilnice, op. cit.*, p. 344, a more interesting statement considering the two mentioned persons were his party colleagues.

²³ The fall in disgrace, in 1934, of the future Marshal Ion Antonescu, a military attaché in London, was largely due to the protests against such royal armament business. Of course, at that time, there was no military procurement ministry.

²⁴ Victor Slăvescu, *op. cit.*, p. 316.

²⁵ Emil Răcilă, *Studii și documente privind Academia de Studii Economice. 1913-1993*, vol. II, București, 1994, p. 47.

fascist or Hitlerist organisation, had served foreign interests etc. In that regard, it was requested the establishment of a verification commission in each institution.

STEPS MADE BY ROMANIA TOWARDS DEMOCRACY

The signing of the Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Assistance in the capital of Poland laid the foundation of the North-Atlantic Alliance eastern counterpart²⁶. The Warsaw Treaty Organisation was, first and foremost, a response to the establishment of NATO (six years before), as well as the USSR reaction to the transformation of West Germany into an independent state and its NATO membership²⁷. Following NATO pattern, the Warsaw Pact gathered the armed forces of the signatory states under a single military command, initially represented by Marshal Ivan Konev, therefore dominated by the Soviet armed forces. Thus, in the armed forces of the member states, the armament was standardised, Soviet military manuals were introduced, joint training programmes as well as joint manoeuvres were organised, and, last but not least, uniforms inspired by the Soviet armed forces style were introduced²⁸.

The fall of the Berlin Wall was the signal for the separation of the Central and Eastern European countries from the Soviet Union and the transition to democracy. In Romania, the evolution of popular support for the European integration started from its rather aggressive rejection, in the early '90s, when the well-known slogan *“We do not sell our country!”* became popular. At that time, the *“pro-Western”* Romanian

²⁶ The Treaty was signed by the Soviet Union and seven Eastern European countries: Albania, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, East Germany, Hungary, Poland and Romania, all of them represented in Warsaw by their prime ministers and foreign ministers. The only European communist country that was not present was Yugoslavia, whose relations with the Soviet Union were still tense, following the split in 1948.

²⁷ According to the Treaty, in the event one of the organisation member states was attacked, the other states had to provide immediate assistance to it; moreover, the member states had to consult regarding important international issues related to their common interests. Therefore, a Political Consultative Committee was established, consisting of the members of the secretariats of the member states communist parties.

²⁸ The Warsaw Pact was invoked in 1968, when the Soviet Union used the Pact troops (from Poland, East Germany, Hungary and Bulgaria) to invade Czechoslovakia in order to reinstate the control over the government in Prague. As an ironic twist, it is the city where fights were conducted between demonstrators and the Warsaw Pact troops in 1968, and where, in June 1991, it was organised the conference following which the Pact was officially dissolved.



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The Romanians pro-European attitude, according to the periodical Euro-barometers, has been shared by an overwhelming majority, the population regarding the membership of the EU and NATO as a "miracle" solution to get out not only of the macrosocial crisis but also of the millions of individual crises experienced by large disadvantaged categories.

population represented a minority. Gradually, the group of supporters for the Romanian participation in the European project became larger, especially due to the acknowledgement of the advantages generated by such an integration²⁹.

The arguments of Romania's integration into NATO were the geostrategic advantages generated by the geographical position, on the one hand, and the conduct of our country, not only in the process of preparing NATO membership, but also at the regional and international level, on the other hand.

On 1 February 1993, Romania signed the Europe Agreement establishing an association between Romania, of the one part, and the European Economic Communities and their member states, of the other part. Subsequently, in June 1999, Romania adopted the National Programme for the Adoption of the Acquis, and in December the same year, in Helsinki, the European Council decided the beginning of the accession negotiations with six candidate countries, Romania included. On 12-13 December 2002, the European Council in Copenhagen decided the accession of 10 new member states and adopted the road maps for Romania and Bulgaria.

Actually, the United Europe is a construct that is both diversified and stratified. Within this conglomerate that is called the European Union and that, by statute, aspires to socio-economic homogeneity and spiritual diversification, Romania intended to make a place with its entire available cultural and material capital, as well as with its still remaining shortcomings (juridical, moral, economic, political). Therefore, starting on 1 January 2007, Romania became a fully-fledged member state of the Union³⁰.

The Romanians pro-European attitude, according to the periodical Euro-barometers, has been shared by an overwhelming majority, the population regarding the membership of the EU and NATO as a "miracle" solution to get out not only of the macrosocial crisis but also of the millions of individual crises experienced by large disadvantaged categories³¹. The preservation and protection of resources, as one of the main requirements for the European space sustainable development,

²⁹ Ioana Petre, *România rurală și integrarea europeană*, in "Calitatea vieții", XVIII, no. 3-4, 2007, București, pp. 241-252.

³⁰ *Ibidem*.

³¹ *Ibidem*, pp. 242-243.

have the role of countering the visible degradation of the environment, having effects – already manifest – such as floods, landslides, threats to the Danube Delta ecosystem etc³².

The definition of sustainable development entails the idea that its achievement becomes feasible only under the circumstances in which cooperation gets manifest among the members of the same generation, who exhibit tolerance, solidarity and mutual care; one by virtue of which one's good and well-being must in no way affect the happiness of another. In other words, the sustainable development project leads to the optimum of Vilfredo Pareto³³.

The experience gained on the road of sustainable development seems to entail the idea that the sense of equity cannot exclude the political area. The strategic importance of our country is given by its second place among the countries situated in the space between the Baltic Sea and the Black Sea in terms of: size, demographic and economic potential; vicinity of the Black Sea; the position in an area that allows for strengthening the southern flank of NATO; the fact that Romania represents a stability factor in an area having a highly conflictual potential in the medium term.

CONCLUSIONS

The solutions and tools needed to implement sustainable development are not used now, at the beginning of the 21st century, for the first time. Even before the term was established, certain experience had already been gained. Today, this experience, to the extent that it is fruitful, is transmissible; it can be assimilated in different degrees

³² For further details, see B. Cotigaru, V. Petrescu, I. Gh. Roșca (coord.), *Reconstrucția durabilă. Principii și acțiuni*, Editura ASE, București, 2004 and I. Bădescu (coord.), *Viața și moartea în satul românesc*, Editura Mica Valahie, București, 2006.

³³ The Italian sociologist and economist Vilfredo Pareto declared himself in disagreement with the way in which equilibrium theorists determined the collective welfare as an arithmetic sum of the individual welfare. Considering that individual utilities cannot be summed to obtain the measure of collective welfare on the grounds that practically no interpersonal comparisons of the utilities can be made, because the utilities depend on the personal parameters of each, Pareto realised that the optimum, in turn, can be defined neither as a sum of the individual utilities nor outside the distribution of the revenues; that, if the income is given, welfare can only be relative. Starting from it, Pareto defined the optimum as that balance position from which it is impossible to improve one's situation without diminishing the welfare of another or others. Vilfredo Pareto, *Manuale di Economia Politica*, Padova-Cedam, Casa Editrice Datt. Antonio Milani, 1974, pp. 241-267.



The definition of sustainable development entails the idea that its achievement becomes feasible only under the circumstances in which cooperation gets manifest among the members of the same generation, who exhibit tolerance, solidarity and mutual care; one by virtue of which one's good and well-being must in no way affect the happiness of another.



The evolution of the security environment, dynamic and complex, is characterised by the efforts made by South-Eastern and Central European states to integrate in the European and Euro-Atlantic structures as well as by the preoccupation of Russia to regain a decision-making role in the international issues, and by the increasing role played by the Asian countries in the global political life.

and proportions, depending on the socio-economic situation of each country, the technical and human potential available to implement sustainable development policies.

The evolution of the security environment, dynamic and complex, is characterised by the efforts made by South-Eastern and Central European states to integrate in the European and Euro-Atlantic structures as well as by the preoccupation of Russia to regain a decision-making role in the international issues, and by the increasing role played by the Asian countries in the global political life. To all the mentioned aspects the crises in Ukraine, in the Gulf area, and in Central Asia, as well as the effects of organised crime and poverty are added. There are created the conditions for the global stability and security to be increasingly influenced by the mentioned factors.

Romania's national security is projected and implemented by the Romanian state through its security policy – part of general policy –, conducted internally and externally. Our country military power resides in the combat power of the land forces, the air force and the naval forces. Practically, Romania's security is actualised through the implementation of the political, diplomatic, economic, cultural, ecological, humanitarian and, last but not least, military measures and actions by the responsible institutions in peacetime as well as in the event of an armed conflict³⁴.

Romania's security is closely connected to regional, European and global security and, under such circumstances, any approach to the existing issues can be taken only in the context in which it is seen as part of the European and Euro-Atlantic security system. The relation between the military power and the ways to achieve it (resources) and to manifest it (missions) should be as realistic as possible, in compliance with national interests, the legislation in force and the commitments made by Romania through treaties and other international agreements it is party to. Romania has become not only a security consumer but also a security provider, therefore there are a series of obligations and duties our country has to assume and fulfil. It is evident that, in order

³⁴ Dorin-Marinel Eparu, *Importanța puterii militare în asigurarea securității României (Importance of Military Power in Securing Romania)*, in *Impactul transformărilor socio-economice și tehnologice la nivel național, european și mondial*, no. 4/2015, vol. 4, https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2661331, retrieved on 7 October 2019.

to fulfil the new duties, the Romanian Armed Forces will tailor to meet the Alliance military requirements, the reconfiguration process being indissolubly linked to that of NATO transformation³⁵.

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³⁵ For details, see *National Defence Strategy*, București, 2010.





“THE OLD” OR A NEW TYPE OF WAR IN FUTURE CONFRONTATIONS IN INTERNATIONAL POLITICS? – A HISTORICAL AND GEOPOLITICAL PERSPECTIVE –

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Even though the world is eager for peace, history shows that the war has always been present in international relations and there are no signs that any major change will occur in this respect. Therefore, research, analysis and debates on the war phenomenon have continued in all its aspects, including as far as its physiognomy and features are concerned. This study seeks to answer a few questions regarding the objective and subjective factors that have generated essential changes in the war phenomenon and the way this domain is seen by the military, security studies and irenology specialists and geopolitical and history analysts in the field. Is there not a dialectic of the new and the old, which intertwine in different proportions, depending on the geopolitical and historical specifics of the human groups (states or non-state actors) engaged in a conflict?

Keywords: cognitive warfare, strategic shock, military technology, military art, proxy warfare.



INTRODUCTION

In recent decades, the notion/concept of *war* has been used in such a wide range of meanings and representations that analysts, but especially historians, experience ambiguity when researching and comparing a twentieth-century conflict with a more recent one. In researching the conflicts of the last century, historians have operated with the notion of *world war*, *civil war*, *partisan warfare*, *guerrilla warfare*, *air warfare*, *cosmic warfare*, but also with an extremely vague term as representation and perception, that of the *Cold War*. Today’s conflicts have thus acquired a multitude of meanings and representations not only in terms of description but also in terms of analysis. Today, we are informed that, in international politics, there are a series of conflicts whose representation is difficult to imagine not only in the perception of the general public, but also of specialists: *remote warfare*, *information warfare*, *hybrid warfare*, *liquid warfare*, *proxy warfare*, *surrogate warfare*, *vicarious warfare*, *political warfare*. Apparently, this multiplication of meaning leads to a better understanding of the phenomenon of contemporary conflict, but in reality, it increases the confusion in the collective mind of contemporary society.

In an attempt to reduce this confusion, some researchers have sought to identify both the transformations occurred in the essence of the war phenomenon and the ways and means belligerents use to achieve their goals. It followed the first great distinction in the specialised literature: the *old* type of war specific to the conflicts during the Cold War and before it and those wars waged after the end of the Cold War¹. This distinction, although widely shared, cannot be a very useful tool in understanding the essence of the war phenomenon,

In international politics, there are a series of conflicts whose representation is difficult to imagine not only in the perception of the general public, but also of specialists: remote warfare, information warfare, hybrid warfare, liquid warfare, proxy warfare, surrogate warfare, vicarious warfare, political warfare. Apparently, this multiplication of meaning leads to a better understanding of the phenomenon of contemporary conflict, but in reality, it increases the confusion in the collective mind of contemporary society.

¹ Mary Kaldor, *In Defence of New Wars, Stability: International Journal of Security and Development*, vol. 2, no. 1, 2013, pp. 1-16, <http://www.stabilityjournal.org/articles/10.5334/sta.at/>, retrieved on 12 October 2019.



For at least two centuries, if we take as a benchmark for the modernity of the war phenomenon the era of the French Revolution and the Napoleonic Empire, there was a lively debate on the theory and practice of military confrontation, generated by the emergence of material and spiritual factors that played the role of turning point or produced a real shock to the world at that time.

because it may be attributable “more to the demise of readily available conceptual categories than to the existence of profound differences”². On the other hand, information about new conflicts is incomplete and, most often, delivered with meanings and interpretations that are meant to justify or condemn them in the public opinion. The tendency to denigrate/justify recent or ongoing wars, especially when civil wars of other nations are compared to one’s own wars, is not new. In this sense, analyst Stathis N. Kalyvas found that this phenomenon was also found in the Anglo-American journalists when they presented in the media the Greek civil war³. This type of presentation of conflict and violence seems to indicate an ideological conceptualisation of war and, to some extent, a type of mystification of it. One might think that as long as the violence comes from “correct” sources/actors, exerting it is fair, correct and legitimate and the story of the war becomes legitimate. Otherwise, promoting violence to achieve political goals, as war was defined by General Clausewitz, will be irrational, brutal and savage⁴. It is not the sources that must be “correct”, but their aims and concordance with the system of widely shared norms and values of international law.

For at least two centuries, if we take the era of the French Revolution and the Napoleonic Empire as a benchmark for the modernity of the war phenomenon, there was a lively debate on the theory and practice of military confrontation, generated by the emergence of material and spiritual factors that played the role of turning point or produced a real shock to the world at that time. These factors originated in the emergence of new weapon systems and combat technologies, in the changes produced in the organisation, training and leadership of the armies and, last but not least, in the emergence of rare evolutions/phenomena in international relations.

² Stathis N. Kalyvas, “New” and “Old” Civil Wars: A Valid Distinction?, in *World Politics*, vol. 54, no. 1, October, 2001, p. 9.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 100.

⁴ Fabio Andrés Díaz, *Wars Old and New: How Our Definitions Can Cloud Our Understanding*, <https://www.fragilestates.org/2014/03/13/wars-old-new-definitions-can-cloud-understanding-fabio-andres-diaz/>, retrieved on 12 October 2019.

A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE ON THE EVOLUTION OF THE WAR PHENOMENON AND THE WAY IT WAS PERCEIVED BY POLITICIANS AND MILITARY LEADERS

In recent years, all these factors, in different proportions and with different intensities, have manifested themselves in the contemporary society. From this perspective, the debates about changing the nature of conflict in international politics fall within the realm of normality for both theorists and practitioners⁵. Referring to this, military expert Thomas E. Ricks believes that, “Taken together, recent changes in both the technological support of war and the nature of the enemies/adversaries we face have blurred the boundaries between what we have traditionally considered ‘war’ and ‘peace’, military and civilian, foreign and domestic, national and international”⁶. This fact, in the opinion of analyst George Dimitriu, “has led to a crisis in the field of strategic studies”⁷, which has manifested itself through a wide debate of the war phenomenon and, at the same time, of the strategy theory and studies to decipher the way it manifests in international relations in recent decades. Military theory is “the one that perfects the mind/thinking”, and its final test is the ability to solve the problems that war practitioners will face on the battlefield. A special challenge for war theorists is that their work must serve both the present and the future. A theorist must study the past using the applied historical method. His goal is to become, in essence, a “praxis theorist” who simultaneously reflects on the past and contemplates the present, but always in an attempt to anticipate trends⁸.

⁵ George Dimitriu, *Clausewitz and the Politics of War: A Contemporary Theory*, in *The Journal of Strategic Studies*, <https://doi.org/10.1080/01402390.2018.1529567>, retrieved on 12 October 2019; Mike Wells, Nicholas Fellows, *Access to History: The Changing Nature Of Warfare 1792-1945 for OCR*, Hodder Education, 2017; David J. Lonsdale, *The Nature of War in the Information Age: Clausewitzian Future*, Frank Cass, London, New York, 2004; Mircea Mureșan, Gheorghe Văduva, *Războiul viitorului – viitorul războiului*, Editura U.N.Ap., București, 2004; Ove Pappila, *The Nature of War Today*, in *Kungl Krigsvetenskapsakademiens Handlingar och Tidskrift*, no. 4, 2008, pp. 69-73.

⁶ Thomas E. Ricks, *The Future of War (II): As the Nature of War Changes, the Familiar Dividing Lines of Our World Are Blurring across the Board*, in *Foreign Policy*, 15 January 2014, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2014/01/15/the-future-of-war-ii-as-the-nature-of-war-changes-the-familiar-dividing-lines-of-our-world-are-blurring-across-the-board/>, retrieved on 23 September 2019.

⁷ George Dimitriu, *op. cit.*, in *loc. cit.*, p. 1.

⁸ Michael Evans, *The Continental School of Strategy: The Past, Present and Future of Land Power*, in Study Paper no. 305, Land Warfare Studies Centre, June 2004, p. 19.



ROMANIAN
MILITARY
THINKING

Military expert Thomas E. Ricks believes that, “Taken together, recent changes in both the technological support of war and the nature of the enemies/adversaries we face have blurred the boundaries between what we have traditionally considered ‘war’ and ‘peace’, military and civilian, foreign and domestic, national and international”:



Thus, in the field of academic research, but also of expertise, two great currents of thought have emerged. Theorists and, at the same time, prestigious strategists have appeared who believe that, from General Clausewitz to the present day, the nature of war has remained constant, but differs in time and space, depending on how it unfolds/ is waged by the belligerents. They are challenged by those who believe that, nowadays, it is possible for a classical/state or non-classical actor to achieve the political goals of a war without resorting to physical violence and armed confrontations, with casualties and material damages⁹.

The historical analysis of the conflicts of the last hundred years does not agree with any of the “sides”, because it is difficult to discern the form of a future conflict. Before the outbreak of World War I, which killed millions on the battlefield, works and studies on the war were written, which sought to predict what the future war would look like in international politics, under the impact of the second industrial revolution¹⁰. How many of the military and political analysts were able to predict the physiognomy and, especially, the duration of the First World War? Both belligerent sides have drawn up plans for a war in which victory could be achieved in a very short time¹¹ and with little losses/small costs¹². The harsh reality showed that the projection did not match the developments in the theatres of military operations. It was a long war of attrition.

After the first world conflagration ended, military theorists, great commanders, as well as politicians sought to understand what the physiognomy of armed struggle would look like in the future and find

After the first world conflagration ended, military theorists, great commanders, as well as politicians sought to understand what the physiognomy of armed struggle would look like in the future and find the right strategy to win the “next world war”.

⁹ George Dimitriu, *op. cit.*, in *loc. cit.*, p. 2.

¹⁰ Colonel (r.) dr. Vicențiu Cojan, *Arta militară în Primul Război Mondial*, Editura Academiei de Înalte Studii Militare, București, 2002, pp. 40-79; William McElwee, *The Art of War: Waterloo to Mons*, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, London, 1974, pp. 106-146; Hew Strachan, *European Armies and the Conduct of War*, George Allen & Unwin, London, 1983, pp. 97-129; Archer Jones, *The Art of War in the Western World*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1987, pp. 387-434.

¹¹ Joseph A. Karas, Joseph M. Parent, *World War I, in Theory*, in *Politique étrangère*, 2014/1 (Spring Issue), pp. 16-17.

¹² Jack S. Levy, William Mulligan, *Shifting Power, Preventive Logic, and the Response of the Target: Germany, Russia, and the First World War*, in *Journal of Strategic Studies*, vol. 40, no. 5, 10 July 2017, pp. 731-769.

the right strategy to win the “next world war”¹³. The French believed that not much would change in theory and practice, and for their defence policy opted to build the Maginot Line and the fortress system along the German border. The Germans, defeated, studied the causes of their defeat and came to the conclusion that the next would be a new type of war, a “Blitzkrieg”¹⁴. The first experiment of this type of war was the campaign against Poland in September 1939, followed by the one against France in May 1940¹⁵. Although both tanks and aircraft appeared during the First World War, few people still sensed the effect of the binomial between the two categories of weapons on the battlefield. This time, although theorists were very close to understanding the physiognomy of the next conflagration, they could not, however, perceive what role the size of the volume of human resources and technology that would allow mobility in the theatres of military operations would play. The United Nations Coalition won, which had a ratio of power in the balance of power far superior to Germany and its allies.

After World War II, the two superpowers that dominated the international political world for more than half a century built armies and alliances, namely NATO and the Warsaw Pact, for *World War III*, which they believed would follow the patterns of the previous one. The emergence of the revolution in nuclear physics and the production of weapons of mass destruction led the two superpowers to a new security dilemma and avoid direct confrontation. In addition to the nuclear arms race, a new phenomenon was taking place in order to deter a possible attack. The *proxy war* appeared, through which the two superpowers would face each other all over the world, indirectly, through loyal allies, but considered powers of medium or small size. Thus, the American armed forces, which were built to stop a Soviet



The emergence of the revolution in nuclear physics and the production of weapons of mass destruction led the two superpowers to a new security dilemma and avoid direct confrontation.

¹³ Roland Kiss (1st. Lt./Res.), *The Future of War, the Wars of the Future* Roland Kiss (1st. Lt./Res.), *The Future of War, the Wars of the Future*, in *Defence Review*, vol. 145, Special Issue 2017/1, p. 30.

¹⁴ Brian Holden Reid, *Fuller and the Operational Level of War*, in idem, *Studies in British Military Thought: Debates with Fuller and Liddell Hart*, University of Nebraska Press, Lincoln, NE, 1998, p. 67.

¹⁵ Daniel Coetzee, Lee W. Eysturid, *Philosophers of War: The Evolution of History's Greatest Military Thinkers, The Ancient to Pre-Modern World, 3000 BCE- 1815CE*, Praeger, Santa Barbare, California, Denver, Colorado, Oxford, England, 2013, p. 316.



With the end of the Cold War, military theorists and analysts in the field of security studies believed that the demise of the USSR, the US's main competitor to global hegemony, would lead the world to secured world peace and economic prosperity created by widespread economic liberalism.

invasion of Germany, had to fight against mass infantry assaults “in the snowy hills of Korea and guerrillas in the Vietnamese jungle, while Soviet forces, which were built up to invade Western Europe, had to fight on the Chinese border and in the mountains of Afghanistan”¹⁶.

With the end of the Cold War, military theorists and analysts in the field of security studies believed that the demise of the USSR, the US's main competitor to global hegemony, would lead the world to secured world peace and economic prosperity created by widespread economic liberalism¹⁷. The armed forces of the great powers, and not only, have been prepared to deal with regional crises, intrastate conflicts and insurgencies¹⁸ through military operations called “other than war”¹⁹. This type of war-specific operations were seen during the Cold War as at most a peripheral task of the armed forces of the great powers. The events of September 11, 2001 came, which invalidated the beautiful theories of the *niche war* of the 1990s and generated other changes in strategic theory. Most military officials believed that the world had entered the logic of a global war on terrorism²⁰. These conflicts, known as “campaigns for freedom”, “stood out as unusual, in the sense that they were not wars of national survival, as were the two world wars, but wars of choice, that is, those on which the political administrations of Washington and London deemed necessary”²¹.

¹⁶ Roland Kiss, *op. cit.*, p. 30.

¹⁷ Richard K. Betts, ed., *Conflict After the Cold War: Arguments on Causes of War and Peace*, 4th edition, Routledge, New York, 2013, p. 28.

¹⁸ Bettina Renz, *Russian Responses to the Changing Character of War*, in *International Affairs*, no. 95, issue 4, 2019, p. 818.

¹⁹ *Military Operations Other Than War. Air Force Doctrine Document 2-3*, 5 October 1996, pp. 7-23.

²⁰ Alastair Finlan, *Contemporary Military Strategy and the Global War on Terror: US and UK Armed Forces in Afghanistan and Iraq, 2001-2012*, Bloomsbury, New York, Sydney, London, New Delhi, 2014; Bruce R. Nardulli, *The Global War on Terrorism: An Early Look at Implications for the Army Documented Briefing*, Arroyo Center. Strategy, Doctrine, and Resources Program, RAND, 2003; Michael J. Boyle, *The War on Terror in American Grand Strategy*, in *International Affairs (Royal Institute of International Affairs 1944)*, vol. 84, no. 2 (March 2008), pp. 191-209; Lieutenant Colonel (r.) Robert R. Leonhard, *The Evolution of Strategy in the Global War on Terror*, <https://www.jhuapl.edu/Content/documents/Strategy.pdf>; retrieved on 23 September 2019.

²¹ Alastair Finlan, *op. cit.*, p. 2.

After almost two decades of actions carried out selectively by the great powers, in various areas where global terrorist networks and groups were established, the effects of the strategies adopted by military specialists and politicians were found to produce results that were more than modest. Some military analysts are not afraid to say that “the fight against global terrorism has failed”²², and military strategies in the Washington Department of Defense “initiated a necessary course correction to address this challenge. As Secretary of Defense James Mattis said in January [2018, A/N], high power competition – not terrorism – is now Pentagon’s top priority”²³. This little journey through the history of one hundred years of conflict shows us that military theory lags behind practice and whoever prepares the defence of their society based on previous military experiences will fail in a future defence war!

Although there are many analysts and theorists of international relations who considered, at the end of the twentieth century, that a war between great powers became unlikely in the context of increasing globalisation and increasing interdependencies²⁴, today more and more specialists and military strategists wonder what the future war will look like in a confrontation in which high-tech states and mass armies will be engaged. Specialists from Rand Corporation (RAND) have tried to provide an answer to what seems unbelievable today, namely a confrontation between China and the US²⁵, and other researchers

²² Brahma Chellaney, *The Global War on Terrorism Has Failed. Here’s How to Win*, in *Foreign Policy*, 11 May 2019, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2019/05/11/the-global-war-on-terrorism-has-failed-heres-how-to-win/>; Brandon J. Weichert, *America Is Losing the Global War on Terrorism*, in *The American Spectator*, 24 April 2019, <https://spectator.org/america-is-losing-the-global-war-on-terrorism/>, retrieved on 23 September 2019.

²³ Elbridge Colby, *How to Win America’s Next War. The United States Faces Great-Power Enemies. It Needs a Military Focused on Fighting Them*, in *Foreign Policy*, 5 May 2019, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2019/05/05/how-to-win-americas-next-war-china-russia-military-infrastructure/>, retrieved on 23 September 2019.

²⁴ John S. Mearsheamer, *Disorder Restored*, in Allison Graham, Gregory F. Treverton, eds., *Rethinking America’s Security. Beyond Cold War to New World Order*, Norton Company, New York, London, 1992, pp. 218-221.

²⁵ David C. Gompert, Astrid Stuth Cevallos, Cristina L. Garafola, *War with China, Thinking Through the Unthinkable*, RAND Arroyo Center, 2016.



As Secretary of Defense James Mattis said in January (2018,A/N), high power competition – not terrorism – is now Pentagon’s top priority.



have sought an answer to a scenario of worsening relations between Moscow and Washington²⁶ or even a confrontation between the two nuclear powers²⁷.

GEOPOLITICAL REFERENCES AND SCENARIOS – THE PHYSIOGNOMY OF WAR IN INTERNATIONAL POLITICS

Geopolitics can bring new frameworks for interpreting the physiognomy of the conflict of the future in international relations, because it explains why states and non-state actors, as strategic players, are interested in controlling certain spaces (physical-geographical, symbolic-virtual and, more recently, cybernetic/communications in the economic, financial and social field), considered to be of vital interest. As these spaces intersect or even overlap depending on the evolution of the political-military, economic and financial interests of the great powers, rivalry and conflict become inevitable in international relations. The real/perceived changes in the political, military, and economic-financial leadership of the United States regarding areas of interest have led them to “redirect their resources – military and otherwise – to Europe and East Asia, to ensure that we are willing to protect ourselves and our allies from the revisionism of our rivals”²⁸. According to recent studies by US military analysts, the US should expect, for example, “a great 21st century energy competition to cover not only the Middle East and Central Asia, but also the Latin American and Caribbean (LAC) regions and Africa”²⁹. In the fight between US competitors for global hegemony, China has adopted a number of (so far) specific soft power strategies in an effort to improve its influence in these regions. Beijing’s strategies are designed to portray China as a non-threatening but reliable economic partner that can provide

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²⁶ R. Loss, L. Kucharski, A. Reddie, *Annotated Bibliography: “U.S.-Russian Nuclear Arms Control: Crisis and Collapse or Crossroads?”*, 27 July 2018, <https://www.osti.gov/servlets/purl/154494>, retrieved on 23 September 2019.

²⁷ Leonid Savin, *Is the US Preparing for War With Russia?*, in *Gheopolitika.ru*, 14.06.2019, <https://www.geopolitika.ru/en/article/us-preparing-war-russia>, retrieved on 23 September 2019.

²⁸ Mark D. Miles, Charles R. Miller, *Global Risks and Opportunities. The Great Power Competition Paradigm*, in *Joint Force Quarterly*, Issue 94, 3rd Quarter 2019, p. 81.

²⁹ *Ibid.*

the countries in the region with the capital, technology, infrastructure and equipment needed for greater prosperity and stability. China is not like the United States, and that promotes a destabilising and predatory influence³⁰. In the face of these types of strategies promoted by the leaders of the great powers aspiring to hegemonic status, the US Administration cannot remain indifferent and must quickly redefine its type of reaction/response, including by developing scenarios of a future conflict.

The great paradigm of power competition presented in the national defence strategies of the great powers aspiring to global or regional hegemony offers a way to think strategically about interstate competition in a multipolar world. Current geopolitical developments show that the Middle East, Central Asia, Latin America and Africa will be key areas for great power competition between the United States, China and Russia. US military experts believe that “military power will ensure our partners and allies, and military cooperation can catalyse greater regional integration. In a rivalry in which diplomatic, informational and economic power will be the decisive means, we must ensure that our military power is fully positioned to support our governing efforts”³¹. In this situation, military specialists and strategists of the great powers do not yield to a dense media fog of today related to cyber and/or hybrid warfare. The proliferation and improvement of military capabilities in cyberspace will not change the nature of war. The basic concept of cyberwar starts from the premise that one must have the ability to control/destroy the opponent’s communication infrastructure and its political and economic foundations. And according to specialists, “this idea can hardly be called revolutionary”³². Some experts point out that the emergence of major US competitors for hegemony in different regions of the world also leads to the possibility of a large-scale confrontation in all four dimensions of the battlefield³³.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 82.

³¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 83-85.

³² Maxim Suchkov, Sim Tack, *The Future of War*, Valdai Discussion Club Report, August 2019, p. 8.

³³ Michael E. O’Hanlon, *The Future of Land Warfare*, Brookings Institution Press, Washington, DC, 2015, pp. 6-8.



Some experts point out that the emergence of major US competitors for hegemony in different regions of the world also leads to the possibility of a large-scale confrontation in all four dimensions of the battlefield.



Scenarios for a possible conflict between two or more powers that possess mass armies certainly exist and are of interest to both political and military leaders alike, but it is hard to believe that the aims pursued and therefore the physiognomy of their conflict will have much in common with the wars and conflicts of recent universal history.

And here is how, in the more distant/near future, what we call the new wars today will have no relevance in the fight for hegemony on a global scale! Robert D. Kaplan pointed out, as early as 2005, that in the struggle for global hegemony, the dreaded opponent for America was not Russia, but China, and that this confrontation would go on by all forces, from land to naval and aerial ones³⁴. In January 2019, the same analyst wrote: *“That future has arrived, and it is nothing less than a new cold war: The constant, interminable Chinese computer hacks of American warships’ maintenance records, Pentagon personnel records, and so forth constitute war by other means. This situation will last decades and will only get worse, whatever this or that trade deal is struck between smiling Chinese and American presidents in a photo-op that sends financial markets momentarily skyward. The new cold war is permanent because of a host of factors that generals and strategists understand but that many, especially those in the business and financial community who populate Davos, still prefer to deny. And because the U.S.-China relationship is the world’s most crucial – with many second- and third-order effects – a cold war between the two is becoming the negative organizing principle of geopolitics that markets will just have to price in”*³⁵.

Scenarios for a possible conflict between two or more powers that possess mass armies certainly exist³⁶ and are of interest to both political and military leaders alike, but it is hard to believe that the aims pursued and therefore the physiognomy of their conflict will have much in common with the wars and conflicts of recent universal history. If geopolitical developments continue in the direction of diminishing the role played by the classical actor in international politics, the belligerents of the future will not necessarily be “states”, but non-state actors with interests that do not necessarily reflect those

³⁴ Robert D. Kaplan, *A New Cold War Has Begun*, in *Foreign Policy*, 7 January 2019, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2019/01/07/a-new-cold-war-has-begun/>, retrieved on 12 October 2019.

³⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶ Randolph Kent, *The Future of Warfare: Are We Ready?*, in *International Review of the Red Cross* no. 97 (900), pp. 1341-1378; Mark F. Cancian, *Avoiding Coping with Surprise in Great Power Conflicts*, A Report of The CSIS International Security Program, Washington, 2018; James Holmes, *A U.S.-China War Scenario: How Would China’s Military Attack a “Great Wall in Reverse”?*, <https://nationalinterest.org/blog/buzz/us-china-war-scenario-how-would-chinas-military-attack-great-wall-reverse-49697>, retrieved on 12 October 2019.

of the state³⁷. The corporate alliance between the state and private industry has an impact on politics, the economy and society, but in ways that have not conformed to the recognised patterns of behaviour associated with modern warfare³⁸. This is probably the reason why the war-state relationship, specific to the modern and contemporary era, should be seen as declining.

In this type of war, the goal will not be to achieve victory, but to achieve political and/or strategic interests³⁹, and not only those of the state, but also of non-state actors in a certain region/area of industrial, financial or commercial interest. Katie Paul wonders what kind of victory was achieved in Iraq and Afghanistan? The analyst believes that, *“At a very minimal level, Iraq is simply a victory, because Saddam Hussein has disappeared. But so much can happen between eliminating the original fighter and securing peace. It is that goal that was difficult to achieve”*⁴⁰. Today, the control of a conquered military space is no longer managed as in the era of the classical war, when, *“after taking over the country, no one showed reproach to the external power. But, it is much more difficult to get the victory today, because the occupying powers cannot resort to the same strategies used in the past”*⁴¹. It is a possible explanation for developments in Iraq after the military victory over Saddam Hussein’s regime. Another example is provided by the Russian Federation, which, in the conflict with Ukraine, which resulted in the annexation of Crimea, did not seek to defeat it and declare victory in a war as was done in classical conflicts. It only aimed to gain a strategic advantage in the Black Sea area. This type of conflict calls into question a key element of international security, which has

³⁷ Randolph Kent, *op. cit.*, in *loc. cit.*, p. 1355.

³⁸ Warren Chin, *Technology, War and the State: Past, Present and Future*, in *International Affairs*, vol. 95, issue 4, July 2019, pp. 765-783.

³⁹ Milena Michalski, James Gow, *War, Image and Legitimacy. Viewing Contemporary Conflict*, Routledge, New York, 2007, pp. 198-200.

⁴⁰ Katie Paul, *Why Wars no Longer End with Winners and Losers*, in *Newsweek*, 1/11/10, <https://www.newsweek.com/why-wars-no-longer-end-winners-and-losers-70865>, retrieved on 23 September 2019.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*



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The physiognomy of war will be strongly influenced by several factors, both objective, such as the revolution in knowledge, and by some subjective, related to the perception/error of perception of a leader of a state that has weapons of mass destruction in its military potential.

functioned in recent decades – that of deterrence⁴² and leads to a strategic dilemma: How to deal with small/limited attacks with large strategic consequences of a great enemy/competing power in an era of rapid technological change?⁴³

Couldn't the Russian annexation of Crimea encourage China? What will be the reaction of the great powers that have been/are engaged in promoting regional security through peacekeeping operations? What kind of war could be born: a classic one or one specific to the 21st century?

The physiognomy of war will be strongly influenced by several factors, both objective, such as the revolution in knowledge, and by some subjective, related to the perception/error of perception of a leader of a state that has weapons of mass destruction in its military potential. In the first case, it is very possible that, in the future battlefield, the direct presence of man will be reduced due to the involvement of robots, drones and other artificial intelligence fighting techniques⁴⁴. But man cannot be absent. In the second case, things get complicated. If a leader of a nuclear-weapon state becomes convinced that they can achieve a political or strategic goal through the limited use of nuclear weapons, a new “Cuban missile” crisis may ensue. In the case of the Cuban crisis, the solution was not found in the usual diplomatic arsenal of the two superpowers. According to analyst John K. Warden of the Center for Global Security Research, “*Limited nuclear warfare is a terrifying possibility that most Americans prefer to ignore. But as the United States turns its attention to high-powered competition, it must take into account the important role that nuclear weapons play in adverse strategies for a war against the United States and its allies*”⁴⁵. From this perspective, the American analyst considers

⁴² Klaus-Dieter Schwarz, *The Future of Deterrence*, SWP Research Paper, Berlin, June 2005, https://www.swp-berlin.org/fileadmin/contents/products/research_papers/Microsoft_Word_S13_05_swz_engl_ks.pdf, retrieved on 12 October 2019.

⁴³ Michael E. O'Hanlon, *The Senkaku Paradox: Risking Great Power War Over Small Stakes*, Brookings Institution Press, Washington D.C., 2019.

⁴⁴ Randolph Kent, *op. cit.*, in *loc. cit.*, p. 1356; Warren Chin, *Technology, War and the State: Past, Present and Future*, in *International Affairs*, vol. 95, issue 4, July 2019, pp. 765-783.

⁴⁵ John K. Warden, *Limited Nuclear War: The 21st Century Challenge for the United States*, Livermore Papers on Global Security no. 4, Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory Center for Global Security Research, July 2018, p. 44.

that “*The problem of limited nuclear war must be understood as it exists in the current security environment, not as it was before*”⁴⁶.

CONCLUSIONS

War, as a classic phenomenon, as enshrined in the military history of the last century, is no longer an effective tool at the international level for achieving political interests and goals due to the increasing destructive capabilities of nuclear, chemical, biological weapons. This has led states to turn to non-military means to subdue their rivals and achieve their economic and financial interests in a resource-rich or commercially efficient area. In this geopolitical environment, battles will be fought on the “*theatres of operations*” generated by economic and financial competition, those of social networks through campaigns to influence public opinion to overthrow a government that is contrary to their own interests, even if it is legitimate, those of cyberspace to create material and financial damage, but also those of political ideologies. All these, metaphorically, are called forms of non-classical warfare. But, in such confrontations, there is an enormous risk, generated by misperceptions about how each of the great competing powers in regional/global hegemony will react to reach a critical point, that of the belief/conviction that war is the ultimo ratio! Perception errors generated by the illusion of technological advantage over a possible opponent! In this context, the classical war can no longer be avoided. History offers, in this sense, multiple examples. We will draw attention only to the error of perception of the political and military leaders in the Central Powers camp, who believed that they had technical and logistical superiority over the states in the opposing camp, generated by a higher number of kilometres of railway⁴⁷. The accidental factor generated by the “*machine factor*”, equipped with artificial intelligence in triggering a preventive reaction of one

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

⁴⁷ Francis J. Gavin, *Crisis Instability and Preemption: The 1914 Railroad Analogy*, in George Perkovich and Ariel E. Levite, Editors, *From Understanding Cyber Conflict: Fourteen Analogies*, Georgetown University Press, 2017, chapter 7, https://carnegieendowment.org/files/GUP_Perkovich_Levite_UnderstandingCyberConflict_Ch7.pdf, retrieved on 12 October 2019.



In this geopolitical environment, battles will be fought on the “theatres of operations” generated by economic and financial competition, those of social networks through campaigns to influence public opinion to overthrow a government that is contrary to their own interests, even if it is legitimate, those of cyberspace to create material and financial damage, but also those of political ideologies.



great power over another, cannot be excluded⁴⁸. However, the belief that reason will always underlie political decisions that make the difference between peace and war in international politics has never disappeared in human history.

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⁴⁸ Eric Schlosser, *World War Three, by Mistake, Harsh Political Rhetoric, Combined with the Vulnerability of the Nuclear Command-and-Control System, Has Made the Risk of Global Catastrophe Greater than Ever*, in *The New Yorker*, 23 December 2016, <https://www.newyorker.com/news/news-desk/world-war-three-by-mistake>, retrieved on 12 October 2019.

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