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**THE TACTICS OF THE HUNGARIAN DEFENSE FORCES
DURING THE WAR OF INDEPENDENCE IN 1848/49**

an exposition to the Ph. D. dissertation by the author

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1. Defining the academic proposition

The lack of knowledge on the formations and tactics during the War of Independence in 1848 and 1849 makes it more difficult to understand the outcomes of the clashes of arms. The various tasks and capabilities of the various arms had a decisive significance on the battlefield, and not only the leaders of the troops, but even the highest chiefs had to take this fact into consideration. Rarely did they make exceptions, but if they did so, in most cases the breaking of the rules on the battlefields had a disastrous outcome. A tactical mistake, or breaking the laws of battles could decide not only the soldiers' destiny, but even the outcome of the encounter, or it could even threaten the success of the whole campaign.

However, obeying the code of regulations, which was well taught to all ranks, was the basic premise of the successful battle, and it helped all the soldiers to maintain order and *esprit de corps* as well.

In Europe, the martial processes that evolved during the Napoleonic Wars caused a significant change in terms of military actions; certainly, these changes were put down in various types of regulations. The military regulations of the Austrian Monarchy were the basis of the trainings held for the Hungarian forces that formed in 1848, thus, during the War of Independence, the enemies fought in the battles and combats according to these regulations. But how was that exactly?

When we describe a battle, is it enough to report the mere orders of events? It was not a secret amongst those who learned martial sciences, that the features of the terrain, the lie of the land, had a powerful effect on the battle itself, and these days, the researches on battlefields are gathering more and more ground. On the other hand, the military tactics of the troops, namely, the profession of war in practice, is not widely known! But in many cases it could shed light on the reasons beyond a hard-gained victory, or a defeat. Among others, we could find out how did a battalion manage to achieve a brilliant victory by raiding and dismissing the Austrian cavalry, or how could it happen that the lack of scouting could lead to the breakup of a whole legion.

During the one and a half centuries that have passed since the Hungarian War of Independence in 1848-49 the rules and procedures of warfare have changed significantly, the technical knowledge that was so much sufficient those times is not taught today in military academies at all. The mid 19th century knowledge of the military profession has become only history, only some elements of it may be taught in military history subject.

2. Research objectives

The research is aimed to collect and evoke those pieces of military-professional knowledge that characterized the tactical actions of the Hungarian Defense Forces during the 1848-1849 War of Independence. Thereupon, those military regulations had to be conceived that played important role in the training of the Hungarian Defense Forces. This research work, namely the compilation of the matching military literature was done in my separate study (*Military Clauses, Commands in Military Post and the Others... Bibliography of the Works on the Hungarian Martial Sciences*) (*Hadi tikkelyek, tábori utasítások és a többiek... Magyar hadtudományi munkák bibliográfiája, 1790-1849*).

The aim of my essay was to describe the era's military formations, tactics and other controlled activities connected to the battlefield (such as march securing, scouting and encampment) in all the three branches of the land forces (infantry, cavalry, and artillery). At the same time, I reviewed the relation of the certain branches with the other two, namely in what ways did they fight against the other two. Then, I endeavored to present the basis of all major clashes, the cooperation of the branches, namely to examine how did they help and support each other's activities.

The aim of the further research would be to get a more detailed view on a question by studying the functioning of the Hungarian armed forces, namely, how much did the Hungarian Defense Forces meet the military requirements of the age. As a part of this question, it would be a further task to analyze the effects of the geographical surroundings on the tactics of the Defense Forces.

3. Research methods

I described the branches' military formations and actions and all other rule-governed activities connected to the battlefield, and the relation and cooperation of the branches, by using the contemporary military regulations.

The core of my essay is built up by those military regulations that were made for the training of the Hungarian Defense Forces; mainly these are the translations of the contemporary Austrian and German regulations. On the grounds of these, it is possible to

reconstruct the tactics formations, the types of military actions, march commands, march security rules, and the requirements during an encampment.

As the methods used by the Hungarian Defense Forces evolved during the Napoleonic Wars, and lasted till the spreading of the breech-loading handguns (approximately the end of the 1860s), I used not only the regulations from 1848 and 1849, but also the military literature from the era mentioned above.

Also, I integrated the data of the modern literature dealing with the era, and I compared their results and conclusions with my researches. Concerning this, it was an understandable difficulty that most researches concentrate on the Napoleonic Wars, but for example the Hungarian Defense Forces did never use big mass formations (regiment, brigade, division legion) unlike others did. Accordingly, I had to allot upon similar differences. Of course, it was also true for the usage of the regulations!

Finally, I collected and compared the methods written in the military regulations with the military hints in the recollections of the participants of the war, that is, did the actual operation of the Defense Forces meet the requirements, or not. When they failed to do so, how much negative or positive effect did it have; and based on these researches, how much was the Hungarian Defense Forces up to the contemporary military tactics.

4. The description of the survey

In the first chapter, I reviewed the basic military principles of the beginning and the mid 19th century, and described briefly, how did the line-tactics of the previous ages turn into mixed-tactics. At the same time, I surveyed the mayor tasks of the various branches.

The second chapter is on the description of the weapons used by the Hungarian Defense Forces. Along with the weapons' technical parameters and their usage, I reviewed the efficiency of the firearms, in order to understand the limits of the various branches.

In the third chapter, I explained the formation and the tactics of the most important branch of the era, the infantry. First, the description of the closed infantry movement and formation comes, then the open infantry (chain of strikers) is discussed, then the military actions against other branches is unfolded, and finally, the description of the attack and the protection of certain objects comes.

In the fourth chapter, I described the buildup, the open and closed battle array of the cavalry, and, like in the previous chapters, their methods against the other two branches.

The fifth chapter is about, the buildup of the artillery, and its battlefield activities, artillery troops' tasks during defense and assault, and their relations to the other two branches. I aimed to unfold the operation and tactics of the contemporary missile troops. They are categorized together with the artillery, but they are not well researched yet.

The sixth chapter is about the cooperation of the three different branches, first about two in pairs, then about all the three, together. I determine the exact location and tasks of the different branches in the formation, the possibilities and the difficulties of their cooperation.

In the seventh chapter, I highlighted the contemporary principles of the march and the march security.

In the eighth chapter, I described the observances of encampment and the safekeeping of the military camps; how did the different branches locate themselves in the camps in order to be on alert, and how did they take their role in safeguarding the camps.

5. Summary

As a result of the research, we can state, that the Hungarian Defense Forces operated basically according to the regulations; however, more complicated maneuvers could hardly be done because of the shortness of their training. By successfully breaking the regulations (for example, infantry bayonet raids after a short fusillade, or aggressive infantry attack against cavalry) the Hungarian Defense Forces could gain victory many times. At the same time, in other cases, the lack of battlefield experience, or lack of discipline led to the breaking of those rules that would have led to victory.

After all we can tell, that the tactics of the Defense Forces met the requirements of the age, moreover, concerning artillery, it meant to be modern. At the beginning of 1849 the troops' discipline and combativeness strengthened, and the Spring Campaign could be started in April. The Hungarian Defense Forces beat the Austrian army time after time, and during the summer they were on a par with the allied Austrian-Russian forces.

6. New scientific achievements

New scientific achievements of my work:

1. The thorough description of all the three branches of the Defense Forces.
2. Presenting the era's main military regulations.
3. The examination of the materialization of the main principles in the Defense Forces' tactics.
4. The plain and understandable introduction to the military formations, with the help of figures and illustrations.

7. The practical usage of the scientific achievements

The results of my essay can be used during military history researches in the course of interpreting military encounters. In higher military education, as an important stage of military science, it can help in acquiring the modern military principles. Moreover, it can be well used in scientific documentary literature; either to make books about the War of Independence more interesting, or to make those groups' activities more authentic that are cultivating historical traditions.

8. Publication list in military history subject

The military history of the War of Independence in 1848–49

1. *Lajos Schedius' and Sámuel Blaschnek's Variant Editions of Hungary Maps*

In: *Geodézia és Kartográfia*, 2002/11th issue. (p. 12-17)

2. *Recollections on the War of Independence in 1848-49 in Transylvania. Written by Sándor Imreh.*

(Source Issue with Introduction and Notes. Vetted by Dr. Gyula Kedves lieutenant colonel.)
National Széchényi Library, Budapest – Gondolat Kiadó, 2003. (p. 215)

3. *Military Clauses, Commands in Military Post and the Others... Bibliography of the Works on the Hungarian Martial Sciences*. In: *Hadtörténelmi Közlemények*, 2007/3rd issue. (p. 1005-1081)

Other military history

1. *First Detailed Graphing and Unknown Fortification Plan of the Castle of Esztergom (Floriani Pompeo's Manuscript Plans on the Occasion of the Recapture in 1595)*. In: *Hadtörténelmi Közlemények*, 2000/1st issue. (p. 121-144)

2. Military Maps in Ferenc Széchenyi's Manuscript Collection

In: *The Catalog of the Earl Ferenc Széchenyi's Maps and Atlases*. 1st volume. *Manuscript Maps and Atlases*. Edited by Katalin Plihal. National Szécheny Library, Budapest– Osiris, 2002. (p. 79-116)

3. *Fortress of Ada Kaleh (Újorsova)*. In: *Várak, kastélyok, templomok. Történelmi és örökségturisztikai folyóirat*, 2005/3. (p. 32-34)

4. *Fortress and Counter-fortress Along the Rhine [Breisach and Neuf-Brisach]*. In: *Várak, kastélyok, templomok. Történelmi és örökségturisztikai folyóirat*, 2005/4. (p. 29-32)

5. *Fortress of Karlovac*. In: *Várak, kastélyok, templomok. Történelmi és örökségturisztikai folyóirat*, 2006/2. (p. 18-21)

6. *Fortress of Querfurt*. In: *Várak, kastélyok, templomok. Történelmi és örökségturisztikai folyóirat*, 2006/3. (p. 22-24)

7. *The Recapture of Esztergom in 1595*. In: *Várak, kastélyok, templomok. Történelmi és örökségturisztikai folyóirat*, 2006/4. (p. 29-32)

8. *The Citadell in Spandau*. In: *Várak, kastélyok, templomok. Történelmi és örökségturisztikai folyóirat*, 2007/1. (p. 29-31)

9. *An Artillery Fortress in Berlin: Fort Hahneberg*. In: Várak, kastélyok, templomok. Történelmi és örökségturisztikai folyóirat, 2007/3. (p. 33-35)

10. *Fortress on the Cliffs: Königstein*. In: Várak, kastélyok, templomok. Történelmi és örökségturisztikai folyóirat, 2008/1. (p. 42-44)

11. *Elvas, the Bastion of Portugal*. In: Várak, kastélyok, templomok. Történelmi és örökségturisztikai folyóirat, 2008/4. (p. 36-39)

9. Scientific-professional Curriculum Vitae

Personal details:

Name: László Pásztai

Place, date of birth: Budapest, 8 August 1973

Workplace: National Széchényi Library, Department of Cartography

Status: scientific associate

Studies:

1987-1991	Móricz Zsigmond High School, Budapest
1992-1997	Eötvös Loránd University, Faculty of Science, Geography Teacher Course
1993-1998	Eötvös Loránd University, Faculty of Humanities, History Teacher Course
2003-2006	Zrínyi Miklós National Defense University Kossuth Lajos Faculty of Martial Science, Martial Ph. D. School

Qualifications:

1997	High school geography teacher Thesis title: The Armaments Industry of the War of Independence in 1848 and 1849
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1998 High school history teacher
 Thesis title: The Tactics of the Hungarian Defence Forces during the War of Independence in 1848 and 1849

Workplace, profession career:

1 September 1997 National Széchényi Library, Department of Cartography
 2002 National Széchényi Library, membership in the Board of NEKTÁR
 2005 *Geographical names as the title access points database records.*
 Presenting and approving *Regulations on informing about library and vocational literature*
 Operator of “the database of geographical names” in National Széchényi Library
 2007 Cartography Friendship Circle of the Pruessischer Kulturbesitz e. V. Foundation: membership (Berlin, Germany)

Bursaries:

2003 Klebelsberg Bursary (Halle, Germany)
 Collecting Hungary related cartographical documents in Franckesche Stiftungen
 2004 Klebelsberg Bursary (Berlin, Germany)
 Collecting Hungary related cartographical documents in Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin
 2007 Klebelsberg Bursary (Berlin, Germany)
 Collecting Hungary related cartographical documents in Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin

Language skills:

German: intermediate, language exam “C” type
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