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ARMY CHAPLAINSHIP IN THE HUNGARIAN ROYAL ARMY
BETWEEN 1868-1918
EMPHASIZING THE ACTIVITY DURING THE FIRST WORLD WAR

Introduction

Army chaplainship has long existing traditions in the Hungarian Army. In the previous centuries military and clerical leaders of the country took special care about the spiritual life of soldiers.

In wartime armies were always accompanied by priests who were the leaders of soldiers' spiritual lives. Army chaplains served in the armies of the Arpad-Age, the Hunyadis, in the christian armies fighting against the Osman Empire in the 16th and 17th centuries. Moreover they had outstanding roles in the honved troops during the Fight for Freedom in 1848. With the appearance of mass armies the role and importance of the army chaplains grew. Priests, pastors and rabbies served on the bloodiest battlefields of the first and second World War.

This historical tradition of the presence of army chaplains was broken under the communist dictatorship. The years following the second World War witnessed a systematic reduction of army chaplains. As a result of this in the effective force list issued on 1st November, 1951 army chaplains were not mentioned which meant the end of army chaplainship.

After the change in the Hungarian political system in 1989 the leaders of the reorganized Hungarian Army considered it important to set up army chaplainship again. Thus in 1991 the army episcopacy was set up and since then clergymen have been serving in the Hungarian Army.

The present Hungarian Army regards the armed forces organized in 1848 and 1868 its predecessors where army chaplains played an important role. The history of army chaplains serving in the Fight for Freedom was published by Peter Zakar. Then it was more and more needed to present a summary about the service and organization of army chaplains in the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy Army.

I have been researching the battlefields of the first World War for many years mainly along the River Isonzo on the Doberdo Plateau. In the course of my research I have become acquainted with the everyday lives of soldiers. I was also interested how they can digest the terrible events of fights and how they experience their situation. In the written sources and memoirs army chaplains were often mentioned as people who really helped soldiers to cope with their new situation. Then it raised the next question: how is it possible for soldiers in the frontlines to live according to religious rules? How do they keep their faith? Who are those pastors and priests ready to serve in the frontlines?

Research aims

Since about the service and organisation of army chaplains no Phd thesis has been published before, my research aim is to present a thesis in which:

- I will present and comment on the literature of the topic I have been researching
- I will present the literature and history of army chaplainship
- I will present and comment on the army chaplainship of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy
- Within the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy Army I will present the organisation of army chaplainship in the Hungarian Royal Army in peace and in war as well
- I will present and comment on the differences between the challenges they faced in peace and in wars
- I will study the documents that determine the service of army chaplains
- Through historical examples I will present army chaplains' service both in the frontlines and in the hinterland during the first World War
- I will draw conclusions about the role of army chaplains in soldiers' lives
- I will conclude the scientific results and on the basis of the conclusions I will make recommendations for the army chaplains serving in missions of the Hungarian Army.

In the first World War soldiers fighting in the first lines were a few hundred kilometers away from their homes. When the peaceful era ended, the war – with new guns and military inventions caused a great change in the life of the effective force. The changes were due to the great distance from home and the strange circumstances of the foreign land as well. Army chaplains had new and far-reaching responsibilities and tasks, which they completed successfully. Since Hungary's NATO partnership and membership our soldiers have been serving in missions abroad. Here they work far away from their homes in active services in wars. Leaving the peaceful hinterland, living amid extraordinary situations, army chaplains mean a great help for them.

Hypothesis

I have come to the conclusion that this thesis must present the history of army chaplainship in order to understand the whole system, the formation of army chaplainship, to see its relations and how chaplains' tasks changed and increased. Before this I believe it is essential to study and present the publications related to this topic. In the following I will present the history of army chaplainship in the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy Army, paying special attention to chaplains serving in the Hungarian Royal Army. I will describe their tasks in peace and war in details. I will devote a separate chapter to describe chaplains' work in the hinterland and the frontlines as well.

I will summarise the results of my historical research and I will conclude the new scientific results that my research has found.

The presentation of the historical example is directed by a dual aim. First to summarise the history and work of army chaplains in the Hungarian Royal Army and secondly through the analysis of the historic example I wish to set an example and thus help today's army chaplains.

Research methods

Prior to writing this thesis I studied Hungarian and foreign literature of this topic. I looked through the Hungarian and English literature about soldiers and army chaplains serving in the first World War. Then I read the Hungarian and German works that were written at the time of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy.

I searched for the regulations and orders of the Hungarian Royal Army that determined soldiers' life. I studied albums, memoirs and other works that were published between the first and the second World War. These publications present the routes of regiments during the war and very often include remembrances which explain the life of soldiers really well.

I examined the daily newspapers that were published during the war and in them the reports of correspondents working in the frontlines. During my research I found that mainly the newspapers 'Az Est' and the 'Székesfehérvári Friss Újság' helped my work significantly. Moreover I examined the publications of the Church in that era and also the front newspapers and numerous reports that were published in a book format. These were descriptions about the

life of the soldiers. My research was mainly done in the Országos Széchényi Könyvtár (National Library) and in the library of Zrínyi Miklós Nemzetvédelmi Egyetem (University of National Defence).

In the library of the Hadtörténeti Intézet és Múzeum (Institute and Museum of Army History) I found prayer-books that were published during the war and were made especially for the soldiers. I examined letters as well mainly in the Helyőrségi Múzeum (Garrison Museum) in Székesfehérvár.

Besides the library and special library research I did archival research in the Army History Archive of the Hadtörténeti Intézet és Múzeum in Budapest and in the Kriegsarchiv in Vienna. The memoirs, map sketches and registers were really useful in the research.

In the course of the battle and battlefield researches on the spot I gained such experience that enriched the content of this thesis. We were able to identify and find numerous spots along the River Isonzo, on the Doberdo Plateau, in Galicia and in Volhyna which were mentioned in memoirs and archival documents. These sites now – mainly in rural places, far away from civilisation – can entirely give back the atmosphere and impressions of the past.

On the battlefield researches together with my colleagues János Rózsafi and Tamás Pintér we succeeded in finding new research results which are in connection with this thesis. One of the most interesting findings is that we were able to identify more cemeteries on the Doberdo Plateau that were used in wartime but now they are out of use. The identification process was based on photographs and maps.

Expected result and use of the thesis

In my opinion my scientific experience gained during the research work and published in this thesis has resulted in new findings for first World War historians and for those who are

interested in this topic. Its practical importance is that the chaplains serving in the Hungarian Army in missions, independent of their denomination, can prepare for the special tasks that await them and get examples of how their predecessors solved problems nearly one hundred years ago.

When this thesis was being prepared I followed the advice of my professor, Dr Lajos Négyesi, lieutenant colonel but I was given great help from Dr Andrea Krautzer and Dr Nagy Miklós Mihály. Their help, knowledge and suggestions helped me in preparing the thesis.

Pastoral service in the army is not the characteristic of modern times. There have been people in the army dealing with soldier's spiritual life from time immemorial.

Now I would like to make the readers acquainted with the history of army chaplain service and the work of priests serving in the army of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy.

Historians studying this field have referred to the topic.¹ There are also numerous studies about priests' work in peacetime² and besides the regulation of army chaplain service³ is at our disposal, too.

In my study I make attempts to reveal frontline army chaplains' service and the difficulties they faced with.

Antecedents

„...When thou out goest to battle against thine enemies , and seets horses and chariots , and people more than thou, be not afraid of them: for the Lord thy God is with thee, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt. 2 And it shall be, when ye are come nigh unto the

¹ Dr. Varga József „Magyar Tábort lelkészek tevékenysége 1900-1950” Bp.1994 Kandidátusi értekezés (József Varga The Hungarian Army Chaplains 1900-1950 Candidate dissertation)

Borovi József A magyar tábori lelkészet története Zrínyi Kiadó Budapest 1992 (József Borovi History of Army Chaplain Service)

In the following: Borovi

² Dr. Melichár Kálmán A katonai lelkészet – Az Osztrák –Magyar Monarchia közös hadseregében (haditengerészetnél) és a magyar királyi honvédségnél- Budapest,1899. (Kálmán Melichár – Army Chaplain Service in the Joint Army of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy and in the Hungarian Royal Army) In the following lásd Melichár

³ A-19/1913 – Szolgálati utasítás a magyar királyi honvédség lelkészei számára (Regulation of Army Chaplain Service) In the following, Lásd: Regulation of Army Chaplain Service 26§

battle, that the priest shall approach and speak unto people. 3 and shall say unto them, Hear , O Israel, ye approach this day unto battle against your enemies: let not your hearts faint, fear not, and do not tremble, neither be ye terrified because of them; 4 For the Lord your God is he that goeth with you, to fight for you against your enemies to save you....”⁴ This law of Moses is from about 1200 B.C. which regulates war preparations both from military and spiritual aspect for the ancient Jewish soldiers.

Naturally the pagan people also had their rituals which helped them to take courage before a fight. For instance the well-known ‘haruspexes’ or augurs in ancient Roman Legions prophesied the success of battles from the migration and intestines of birds⁵.

With the spread of Christianity there was a greater demand among army men on practicing religion in wartime as well. In the Early Middle Ages we can always find outstanding churchmen, monks who were present in the armies but this was not an organized network then.

Archbishop Boniface, who was an excellent member of the German Catholic Church, summoned the „Concilium germanicum” in 741 A.D. Its second canon dealt with army chaplains : „...it is strictly forbidden for priests to be in arms and go to war, except for these who are sent to armies to celebrate mass and take care of relics...every head of army must have a priest who is entitled to judge the sins of the penitents and to determine the penance...”⁶

Crusades, which were announced in the name of the Church by II. Pope Urban in the Clermont convocation, brought an enormous change in army chaplain history. It became common then for chaplains to accompany the army in war.

On the Holy Land as a result of victorious fights they succeeded in establishing Christian countries, which unfortunately did not prove to be long lasting. Then knighthood was established to which such fighters joined who considered the defence of religion of primary importance.⁷

⁴ In : Holy Bible Old Testaments, Deuteronomy chapter 20, „...*Ha ellenséged ellen harcba indulsz s a lovakat, harci szekereket s magadnál népesebb hadinépet látsz, ne rettenj meg tőlük. Mert a veled van az Úr, a te Istened, aki kivezetett Egyiptom földjéről. Mielőtt a csata megkezdődne, lépjen elő a pap a sereg elé és szóljon a harcosokhoz: Halljad Izrael!Ma harcba szálltok ellenségeitekkel. De ne csüggedjen szívetek!Mert az Úr, a Ti Istentek kivonul veletek küzdeni ellenségeitek ellen és győzelemre segít benneteket...*”

⁵ In: Borovi pp.7-12.

⁶ In: Borovi p.12. or Hefele K. Konziliengeschichte 9. Bd. Freiburg 1850-1890: „...*szigorúan megtiltjuk a papoknak, hogy fegyvert hordozzanak és háborúba vonuljanak, kivéve azokat, akik szentmise végzésére és az ereklyék gondozása céljából vannak kirendelve a hadsereg kíséretére...minden seregszereparancsnok rendelkezzen egy áldozópappal, aki jogosult a bűnbánó bűneit megítélni, és azokra megfelelő vezeklést kiróni...*”⁶

⁷ Further reading in Bozsóky Pál Gerő Keresztes hadjáratok Agapé Kiadó 1995 (Pál Gerő Bozsóky Crusades)

In the fights against the Ottoman Empire also many chaplains took part to raise soldiers fighting spirit and help them to worship their religion. When the Ottomans were defeated in Hungary the Habsburgs ascended the throne, who had already had orders that gave soldiers the possibility of practicing their religion in wartime as well. I. Ferdinand pointed Antal Brus Generalis Vicarius. The regiment's chaplains celebrated mass in tents which were set up exclusively for this purpose. Soldiers had the possibility of confession and the holy commune at Easter. In 1614 Marenzi Antal published his comprehensive work „A tábori lelkészek szervezeti szabályzata” about the organizational regulation of army chaplains. Two years later a papal breve gave the leading of army chaplain service to the Jesuit order in the Habsburg Empire until the dissolution of the order in 1773.⁸

Following this the apostolic army board of vicars (tábori helynökség) was established, which first belonged to the bishopric of Bécsújhely and later to St. Pölten until 1826.

The law issued in April, 1848 orders to set up an independent national army in Hungary. The army chaplains had a great role in this. Many chaplains earned distinction in the fight for freedom: after the breakthrough in Branyiszkó in February, 1849 chaplain Imre Erdősi seeing that the attack had come to standstill, threw a one meter long wooden cross that he was holding into the snow and shouted at the soldiers: “Would you leave God to these pagans”⁹. Hearing this they continued the fight with renewed strength and managed to go through the mountain pass.

After the compromise of 1867 the Royal Army was established. They garrisoned locally so they belonged to the local church whose priest dealt with soldiers' spiritual life and the delivery of the sacrament. According to an order, issued in 1869, army chaplain service was only organised in case of mobilization. In 1883 the first army chaplain was pointed in peacetime who worked as a teacher in the Hungarian Royal Military Academy (Magyar Királyi Honvéd Ludovika Akadémia). Later we can find army chaplains in garrison hospitals in the capital city.

The mobilization

⁸ In Borovi pp.13-52.

⁹ *”Otthagynátok az Úristent ezeknek a pogányoknak”* In: Hermann Róbert 1848/49 A szabadságharc története Korona Kiadó Budapest, 2001 (Róbert Hermann Fight for Freedom in 1848/49). pp.209.

After the declaration of war in August, 1914 the Hungarian Royal Army and the Austrian landwehr formations with the joint regiments gave the Monarchy Army. The army chaplain service was reorganised so that the authority of the apostolic army board of vicars was extended to the whole army but in wartime a separate Hungarian Royal and Austrian Imperial army chaplain service had to be set up. Army chaplains both at the Hungarian and at the joint regiments received their commission from the apostolic army board of vicars.

In the process of mobilization not only soldiers were called up but also army chaplains. If somebody wanted to join the army one had to comply with strict requirements. Besides physical fitness there were other important criteria such as proficiency in theology.¹⁰ The clergymen serving in the joint regiments had to be citizens of the Monarchy and have immaculate past. Moreover the average age of the priests was not over forty. Those who served in the Royal Hungarian Army had to be Hungarian citizens and be fluent in a language that was spoken in the Monarchy. It was an advantage if this language was German. It was essential in this multicultural society as very often the soldier asking for help, confession or the extreme unction had other nationality.

A minimum of three years of civil service¹¹ was another indispensable condition that the applicant had to have.¹²

We also have to mention the question of the clothes the chaplains wore. They were bound to keep themselves to the regulations of the Church but naturally certain allowances were made for the special conditions they worked in. They belonged to the officers but did not wear sword which was part of the officers' garment.

During mobilization chaplains were temporarily dismissed from their parish. The county bishop presented them a certification with which they reported at the army superior. Then they joined the board led by the vicar apostolic but they were still listed in the register of their original diocese and were in contact with the ecclesiastical leader. As Melichar wrote, in case of mobilization the army chaplains are not under the episcopal county administration but put under the jurisdiction of the apostolic army board of vicars.¹³

¹⁰In: Melichár p.80

¹¹ In: Melichár p. 82., „legalább három évi polgári lelkészeti tevékenységnek”

¹² Further reading in: Melichár pp.80-87

¹³ In. Melichár p 125. In: „, már egészen ki van véve a rendes püspök megyei igazgatás alól és a közös hadsereg részére szervezett apostoli tábori vicariatusnak jurisdicciója alá helyezték...”

As the unexpected events the army chaplains met were always unforeseen, they were ordered to carry a stole, a cross, a box for the holy unction as well as the book of church services in a leather handbag every time.¹⁴

Front service

In the war that broke out both soldiers and chaplains had to live under extraordinary circumstances. Advance in technology resulted in more destructive weapons than ever before and a new, unknown war took shape, which caused huge losses and a great number of casualties. The presence of army chaplains meant real support for the soldiers who were fighting in the midst of inhuman circumstances.

They tried to send an army chaplain to every regiment who spent all of his time with the soldiers.

Chaplains' most valuable work was possibly with injured soldiers. They gave spiritual comfort, absolved after confession and delivered the sacrament to desperate and many times to seriously injured people. According to the regulation¹⁵ meanwhile fights were taking place chaplains had to always be at the place where first aid was given and they had to be the last to leave.¹⁶

Because of the incredibly great losses funerals went on almost continuously. Graves were dug beforehand and common soldiers were often buried into common graves. Identifying the dead and filling out death certifications was the chaplains' duty. It was not always possible for them to bury everybody – especially after a military operation with a great number of casualties – but in this case they blessed the graves later.

Losing a comrade meant real inner struggle for soldiers. A reserve officer wrote about it and underlined that seeing the chaplain above a fellow-soldier's grave made them extremely sad. They were sorry for two reasons: firstly because they buried a friend and secondly because a funeral always made them think about the fact that they might be the next one. Moreover the

¹⁴ In: Regulation of Army Chaplain Service 26§

¹⁵ In: Regulation of Army Chaplain Service 27§

¹⁶ First aid place was signed by two flags – white with red cross and yellow-black- by day, and red cross lamp at night.

ceremonies were short and held in bad circumstances.¹⁷ It was a real challenge for army chaplains to ease soldiers' pain in such situations.

Officers were always buried separately in wooden coffins and a chaplain was present every time. Sometimes the dead hero was put in a grave in a temporary cemetery behind the frontline and following a later exhumation the mortal remains were transported home and buried with military ceremony to a final grave.

A sad duty was to let the family know about their relative's death. This task was performed by the squadron writer but army chaplains also took their share of it. In exceptional cases the chaplain instead of an official notice wrote an informal one. So did Pál Hoitsy, the priest of the 17th infantry regiment of Székesfehérvár when he informed Emil Csokonay about his son's, László's death. He mentioned that the hero was his friend and was beloved by the regiment and his men.¹⁸

Soldiers did not forget about their dead comrades not even in the middle of the greatest battles. They always commemorated the day of the dead on 1 November. A soldier wrote in his memoirs that they scraped together candle pieces to decorate the graves and the wire used in barricades then served a more pious aim and formed pine tree branches into wreathes.¹⁹

Spending feasts far away from the beloved family was a strange and heart-rending feeling for soldiers. An officer in his memoirs described us how they celebrated the holy day of Christmas.²⁰ They put up Christmas trees and even a crèche, played the Nativity and sang Christmas carols. They also made presents for each other for which the available materials were used. They manufactured different kinds of knick-knacks from shell splinters that the Russians shot at them. Some of the presents were real masterpieces. There was a great variety of aluminium rings, watch-chains, ink-stands and candlesticks.

¹⁷Székesfehérvári Friss Újság XVI. évfolyam (newspaper) 1915. április 25-„...Nagyon elszomorul az arcunk, ha egy bajtársunk sírja felett áll a pap. Harangzúgás, ágyuk üvöltése, koporsó: egy szürkévé fagyott katonakabát s a bajtárs máris megy a föld alatti lakásába. A pap szentbeszéde ilyenkor kétszeresen fáj: a pap búcsúztat minket egy baráttól, de emlékeztet arra, hogy mi is meghalunk. S ki szeret még a harctéren is arra gondolni, hogy meg fog halni...”

¹⁸ Székesfehérvári Friss Újság (newspaper) XVII. évfolyam 1916,„... a hős fiú nekem jó barátom, az ezrednek szeretett tagja, kiválóan teljesítette mindvégig kötelességét. Katonái rajongva szerették. Nagyon fáj a csapás, ami Önöket érte, így hát eltudjuk képzelni az Önök nagy fájdalját. De reméljük, hogy a Mindenható Isten ki ezt a keresztet vállunkra helyezte erőt fog adni annak elviselésére. Ő adta, ő vette el...”

¹⁹ In: A cs.és kir. 23. gyalogezred hadialbuma – emlékkönyv írásban és képekben Szerk: Kun József Jenő Bp.1916 (József Jenő Kun War Album of the 23th Imperial and Royal Infantry Regiment)

„...az összekuporgatott gyertyákkal díszítették a sírokat és az akadályoknál használt drótok most az egyszerűbbekkel kegyesebb célt szolgáltak:messziről hozott fenyőgallyakat formáltak koszorúkká...”

²⁰ In: Egy tisztnaplójából – Laky Imre BP. 1920. (Imre Laky – From an officer's diary) „...Karácsony is elmúlt, karácsonyfákat is állítottunk mindenfelé. Még beilehem járás is volt, s a kis Jézuska sem feledkezett meg rólunk. Az oroszok által belőtt gránátok, srpnerek darabjaiból mindenféle csecsebecsét készítettek a katonák. Némelyek darab az iparművészet magaslatára emelkedik. Alumíniumgyűrűk pazar változatosságából, óraláncokból, tintatartókból, gyertyatartókból kiállítást lehetett rendezni...”-

Army chaplains also had to deal with spiritual preparation and try to create intimate atmosphere and to prepare soldiers for big events. They continuously confessed soldiers and together with the officers they tried to give the possibility of attending masses.

The body of officers was willing to give the possibility to religious soldiers to live a life according to the rules of the Church not only at Christmas but also on weekdays. Army masses were regular to which all the soldiers were free to go if their service made it possible. On these occasions they were able to confess and receive the sacrament. These masses were often celebrated outside and thus many times interrupted by the attacks of the enemy, which meant real danger to the people attending.

Masses were frequently in undamaged churches in the villages behind the frontlines but some special scenes occurred, too. Gallant Doromby describes a mass that was touching and elicited great emotions in a salt mine in Désakna. It was held on 17 June, 1917 by army chaplain Ferenc Mike and his assistant, István Rónai. For this very special event the salt mine was illuminated and among the giant salt columns a hand-made altar was erected by the soldiers which they surrounded with pompous wreathes and beautiful bunches of flowers.²¹

Since circumstances were really special, time and time again the mass was ecumenical. Army chaplains saw that now it was a need for changes and they knew that deviation from the Church regulations was needed. They thought giving real support and spiritual aid to soldiers -regardless of their denomination- was more important than asking about the sect they belonged to.

Once in Galicia after suffering great losses at the foot of the Gay height the 34th regulation from Kassa celebrated the mass together. After that they always desired to do so.²²

²¹ In: A volt cs. és kir 38-as gyalogezred története és emlékalbuma Írta: vitéz Doromby József Bp. 1936 – (József Doromby History and War album of the 38th Imperial and Royal Infarty Regiment) p.341.

„...Meghatóan szép, mély ihletet kiváltó tábori misét tartott 1917.június 17-én Mike Ferenc tábori lelkész és Rónai István segédkezése mellett a désaknai sóbányában a katonák számára. A sóbánya ebből az alkalomból fényesen ki lett világítva, a magas sóoszlopok között a katonák által faragott remekművű oltár emelkedett, elhalmozva pompásabbnál pompásabb koszorúkkal és virágcsokrokkal...”

²²Vitéz Pávai Mátyás Sándor A Máramaros és Ugocsa megyei 85. gyalogezred története (Mátyás Sándor Pávai The History of the 85th Infantry regiment of Máramaros and Ugocsa counties) p.721.

„...a nem szigorú értelemben vett felekezeti lelkészi szolgálatot végeztünk, az embert csak mint harcost tekintettük, kinek lelke szomjuhozza az onnan felülről jövő enyhülést. Így elkerültük az átkos felekezeti kérdést és ezeknek a feszegetését. Az olyan nagyon szükséges lelki együttműködés csak így volt lehetséges. 1914-ben

As it was wartime the army chaplain now and then found himself in strange situations. One day squadron commander László Illés died, first lieutenant Ember got a serious injury, a shot in the stomach. The two squadrons were left without officers so army chaplain Lajos Kun took over the command and only after defeating the enemy three times did he draw back at 9 p.m. The 218 people marched all night and arrived at the regiment at 10 a.m. on 31 August, 1915 as we can read it in the memoirs of the 17th infantry regiment of Székesfehérvár.²³ The chaplain got Signum Laudis medal for his bravery.²⁴

It is obvious from this short summary how varied army chaplains' work was in the frontlines of the First World War. They often risked their lives and many of them died while fulfilling their duty.

What army chaplains' presence meant for the soldiers is described by gallant Sándor Mátyás Pávai, retired lieutenant-general: "... the good old army chaplains were there everywhere to strengthen soldiers' spirit, before and during the fights, in the trenches, in the attacks, to encourage, to hearten, to inspire soldiers to traditional Hungarian prowess, gallantry and bravery, without noticing exertion they helped soldiers every time..."²⁵

Army chaplains in the hinterland also had various tasks to complete. They taught, worked in hospitals and took care of the spiritual life of soldiers in the hinterland.

Galíciában a szomorú emlékü Gay nevű magaslat lábánál a kassai 34-esek római katolikus lelkészével Szöllősy Istvánnal együtt tartottunk istentiszteletet az egész ezrednek s kölcsönösen részt vettünk egymás szertartásán. Ez a tény olyan jó hatással volt a jelenvoltakra, hogy ennek ismétlését óhajtották..."

²³ Mákosfalvi Sipos Gyula 17-esek a világháborúban (Gyula Mákosfalvi Sipos The 17th Regiment in the First World War) p. 21.

"...a századparancsnokok közül Illés László elesik, Ember főhadnagy súlyosan megsebesül (haslövés). A tisztnélkül maradt két századnyi légénység fölött Kun Lajos tábori lelkész veszi át a parancsnokságot, s még három rohamot visszaverve, csak 21h-kor vonul vissza. Egész éjjel menetelve, augusztus 31-én délelőtt 10 h-kor érkezik az ezredhez 218 emberrel..."

²⁴ Székesfehérvári Friss Újság XVI. évfolyam 1915. július 21.

²⁵ Vitéz Pávai Mátyás Sándor A Máramaros és Ugocsa megyei 85. gyalogezred története (Mátyás Sándor Pávai The History of the 85th Infantry regiment of Máramaros and Ugocsa counties) p.722.

"...ott voltak a derék tábori lelkészek mindenütt a katonák lelkének erősítésére az ütközetek kezdetekor, a harcok tartama alatt a lövészárkokban és a rohamokban, bátorítva, buzdítva lelkesítve a hagyományos magyar virtusra, bátorságra s vitézségre a fáradságot nem ismervé, minden körülmények között segítségükre siettek a katonáknak..."

Summarised results

Summary of the research process

In army history army chaplains – who took care about the spiritual life of soldiers making war - have always played an important role. Pagan nations adored their Gods so as he would enable them to win in wars. Magicians, augurs did all they could for the mercy of the gods and for the victorious leaving of the battlefield.

With the spread of monoteist religions the spiritual life of soldiers became more and more significant. This tendency has been going on ever since. In Hungary due to ideological reasons this became less important in the communist era, though. Then after the change in the political system of Hungary the leaders of the post communist countries reorganised army chaplain services again.

Throughout history army chaplains have always been important members of the Hungarian Army, except for those years when Hungary was a member of the Warsaw Treaty. The leaders of the reorganised Hungarian Army after the change in the political system payed special attention to soldiers' spiritual life again. There is a great need to do so and to enable soldiers to survive extraordinary circumstances when they go on foreign missions. Army chaplains are a great help for them.

It is really important that besides acknowledging previous national armies as predecessors, army chaplains who work here should get to know their predecessors' work - independent of their denomination .

The present army in Hungary accepts continuity with the honved troops of 1848 and 1868. Army chaplainship was an important part of these armies and as the history of army chaplains who served in the fight for freedom has already been studied and published, I considered it important to study the Monarchy Army from this point of view.

As a result of the scientific research I succeeded in elaborating the organisation of army chaplainship in the Monarchy and the tasks they had to carry out in the frontlines and in the hinterland, too.

During my research I have studied the literature of this topic. First I examined works in connection with general military history and the history of religion. We can assume that these publications do not cover army chaplainship in details.

I have come to the same conclusion when I was studying the specific army history publications about the first World War.

The publications that appeared during the war and between the first and second war mention the service of army chaplains. From the reports of the age and from the memoirs it is obvious that military leaders of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy considered giving the possibility of practising religion to soldiers important.

Readers were presented with numerous remembrances, in which army chaplains wrote about their experiences. Since these works were published in a limited number, finding them was not without difficulties. On the other hand during the scientific research they contributed to a better understanding of this topic.

In the first half of the thesis I presented the formation of the history of army chaplains' service and the life of the chaplains serving here. In the course of my research I have used the literature about army history and religion history and with the use of these I managed to summarise the several thousand years' process.

In the main part of the thesis I have written about the service of army chaplains in Austro-Hungarian Monarchy Army. I presented the work of army chaplains there and the organisation of the army episcopacy. Within the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy Army I also dwelt on the Hungarian Royal Army and the army chaplains working here. I analysed in details their service in peace and in war-time as well and those documents and orders which described their tasks.

I wrote about the differences of the tasks and the system in peace and war time. I have found that in the Hungarian Royal Army first four, later five army chaplains worked in peace-time. When the war started their number rose above one hundred.

I used historical examples to show how orders were realised during everyday life activities. Besides researches in the Archives, memoirs, diaries and publications from that period I made researches on the spot – in Volhynia and on the Doberdo Plateau - where previous, now unused cemeteries were identified. These researches on the spot made me understand the publications I read better.

Summing up we can conclude that the research was successful because I managed to study the work, the documents and the organisation of army chaplains. My thesis reflects the present

state of the research, as I continuously find documents which all add to my existing knowledge.

New scientific results

Now after that I have done the research work, I have written down my findings and I have drawn the conclusions, these are my scientific results below:

1. As a result of the research I have found numerous source-material, mainly memoirs that have not been studied or only few researchers knew about them as only a limited number of copies were printed.
2. The thesis describes the work of army chaplains in the first World War in details. This enriches our knowledge about the first World War.
3. The scientific research and the thesis presents new findings about how important soldiers' spiritual life was. The results show that the leaders of the army should always pay specific attention to this.
4. The thesis shows the army chaplains of today their predecessors' work and service. Besides the listed examples might help to prevent problems in the future.
5. The researches on the spots resulted in identifying some now not used cemeteries where memorials might be formed.

Recommendations

In my opinion making use of Phd theses in the future is really important. In the light of this when I wrote the recommendations I did it with the intention that it might be useful for military science, the Hungarian Army, army chaplains and historians.

As I see it my thesis in the future can be used in the following areas:

1. It can be used in universities teaching priests, ministers or rabbies. It is a good supplementation to their knowledge about the history of the Church and adds further information in the course of their studies.
2. It can be used in universities teaching historians and army officers. Through the thesis they can get to know life in the trenches and in the hinterland.
3. It can be used for priests during their preparation for missions in foreign countries. The examples mentioned in the thesis can give help to prepare for their service in wars. Army chaplains of today face similar problems like their predecessors in the first World War. Tamas Takács²⁶, lieutenant-colonel and army chaplain said the followings in an interview: “I think if somebody gets to their borders and the world around them changes dramatically or if they face difficulties or their life is endangered, they will see the things that were natural and belonged to everyday life from a different perspective. Because of this the need for army chaplains naturally comes.²⁷ From the interview it is obvious that the tasks of today’s army chaplains are exactly the same as their predecessors had in the first World War. Mostly they took care about the spiritual life of soldiers and helped to solve their spiritual problems. The occurring questions and problems are similar, too: celebrations, being far away from their families, and digesting the loss of a fellow soldier. “Working in a war means a 24-hour service, day and night. It often happened that after the end of my service a soldier arrived with a

²⁶ Dr Tamás Takács lieutenant-colonel is a leader at the Catholic Army Episcopacy

²⁷ <http://honvedelem.hu/cikk/21798/>”volt, amikor csak hallgattam a csendet

problem at 11 o'clock at night²⁸ - said László Mészáros, lieutenant-colonel, leading army chaplain of the Protestant Army Chaplainship Service in the Hungarian Army. In the interview he mentioned that in missions that have more than 150 people there should be an army chaplain, but it is difficult to complete. It can happen that a mission with fewer soldiers can not get an army chaplain's help because they are constantly on duty. In the first World War this problem was frequent, as numerous battalions fought far from their regiment, but just like today they were given a priest's help, "an army chaplain in a mission is like a life-bouy on a ship: many people feel safe, if they need support they get it."²⁹

Summing up we can say that from the interviews with army chaplains it is clear that the army chaplains of today face the same difficulties as priests in the frontlines of the first World War. Thus in my opinion the historical example can help them to prepare for their missions.

4. Historians who study this era can get to know numerous memoirs that can be used as source-material.
5. In popular science the thesis helps to describe the world of trenches and the life of soldiers fighting in the first World War from a special point of view.

²⁸ <http://www.honvedelem.hu/cikk/24639/fontos-a-lelki-gondozas>

²⁹ <http://www.honvedelem.hu/cikk/24639/fontos-a-lelki-gondozas>

“Army chaplains have so much pure clerical joy as no other priests have”

“The warm pulsing of life in the trenches of death – an island of peace in the torrent of the three-year fight, a couple of happy hours, the atmosphere of Palm Sunday are reflected both in the eyes of the soldiers who had seen better days and also on the brown, manly, scarred faces of children honveds. This is our lent and Easter as well. Army chaplains have so much clerical joy as no other priests have”- wrote Lajos Berta, army chaplain about his service in the frontlines.³⁰

The fighting soldiers were really grateful for the humble and self-sacrificing service of the army chaplains, as they gave spiritual support even in the most difficult moments. When a soldier lay dying on his bed thanked this way: “...Father, I would like to thank you, that although we were taught to spit on you and make fun of you, you are the ones who comfort us and give us strength regardless of the person. Our leaders’ lips are speechless now, their ink has dried, and have no cure to our wound...”

³⁰ Hangok hazulról, Pécs 1917.

