

**NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF CIVIL SERVICE  
Doctoral School of Military Science**

**Review by the author**

of the PhD dissertation

**Hungarian war correspondence  
in the First and Second World War**

by Éva Gorda

Supervisor: LTC (ret.) Dr. József János Szabó  
Associate Professor

Budapest, 2012

## **Objectives**

The fact indicates the topicality of the subject, to this day, that the Hungarian press regularly delegates war correspondents to war and other conflict zones. War correspondence went through significant changes to date with the development of technology. The nature of wars, people's demand for information and their involvement in the conflicts have changed. War correspondents had to constantly adapt to the available sources and the system, in which they worked, and to the demand for information of the readers. Only fragments have appeared so far on the history of Hungarian war correspondence, with large gaps. I would like to give a comprehensive picture, with my work, of the activities of military correspondents of the First and Second World War, and of the structure of the organization of war correspondence, its tasks and the lessons learnt in the world wars.

I examine the concepts related to war correspondence at the beginning of my dissertation. I briefly summarize the development of the Hungarian war correspondence, and the activities of the Hungarian war correspondents before the World War I. I examine the organizational structure, functions and operation of the system of the First and Second World Wars' war correspondence. I review the activities of war correspondents, their tasks, the progress of reporting, their possibilities and limitations. I briefly summarize the characteristics of the contemporary press, demonstrate the place, role and functioning of censorship during the world wars. Based on all this, I compare the organizations of war correspondents in the two World Wars and sum up the experience gained.

Given that war correspondence has many forms, I only deal with the research of the written media coverage in my thesis, and analyze the propaganda activities of war correspondents. I make a special mention of the field of newspapers/journals, the editing and filling with content of which were an integral part of the tasks of war correspondents, and I present the work of military photographers as "imagery immortalizers" of wars. I briefly describe the technical tools available to war correspondents. I show how they have changed the organization of war correspondence and the tasks of war correspondents. Based on the lessons learnt from the war correspondence during the First and Second World War, I wish to demonstrate that it is essential to possess some degree of military knowledge in the wars of the modern age, in order to properly perform the tasks of war correspondents.

## **Research methods**

During my research I had to process a wide range of sources. In order to achieve the research objectives, the following methods were used in the preparation of the thesis.

- From its first phase, I tried to process the domestic literature in the most profound way.
- Content analysis of major newspapers and weekly magazines, and field journals published in Hungary during the world wars.
- Research in archives, studying, analyzing, and rating of military journals, appearing in print, and studying of reports of and correspondence by war correspondents.
- Studying and processing of doctoral dissertations, domestic literature, printed and electronic publications, and legislation relating to my topic.
- A general method of study, including comparison and generalization, as well as a comprehensive historical method.
- Processing and publishing of partial research results.
- Consultation with persons with expertise in research projects.

In my judgment, my topic of research is a rarely researched field and, as such, it belongs to the topics rarely published.

## **A short summary of the chapters**

In chapter one, I formulate my research objectives, I take stock of the research methods necessary for its implementation and the available sources, and outlined a brief historiographical overview of the topic.

In chapter two, I examine the concepts related to war correspondence. In short, I describe the emergence and development of war correspondence. I present the initial media products and the features of censorship of the given era.

In chapter three, I give a short presentation of the war correspondence of 1848-49 war of independence and the field newspaper features. I review the activities of Hungarian war correspondents in the First World War. Through the recollections of war correspondents, I present the lessons learnt.

In chapter four, I present the Hungarian war correspondence during the First World War. I show the structure, the organizational system and the functions of media headquarters, activities of war correspondents, and I detail the work of military photographers and painters. I outline the conditions of its evolution and the characteristics of field newspapers. Through the recollections of war correspondents, I present the lessons learnt. Finally, I give an account of the peculiarities of the contemporary press and how censorship functioned.

In chapter five, I present the Hungarian war correspondence during World War II. I demonstrate the structure and organizational system of Department 6 of the General Staff and of the War Correspondent Company, the activities of war correspondents; I detail the work of war correspondent photographers. I outline evolution circumstances and characteristics of field newspapers. Through the recollections of war correspondents, I present the lessons learnt. I give an account of the peculiarities of the contemporary Hungarian press and how functional Censorship. Finally, based on experience, I compare the formations of war correspondence during the two world wars, and take stock of the similarities and differences.

## **Conclusions**

Despite the fact that the equipment available to war correspondents evolved over the last centuries enormously, the course and principles of war correspondence showed little change. In the First World War and even before, at the sites war conflicts, civilian war correspondents were organized in groups; the military leadership coordinated the group and provided war correspondents with adequate information. War correspondents wrote their reports and sent them home, using the information provided to them and collected locally, and based on their own experience.

Based on the First World War experience, in the Second World War, soldiers performed the tasks of war correspondents, who, before fulfilling their assignments, received military training as well. War correspondents were organized in companies, next to the combat units. Members of the company participated in editing the field newspapers, propaganda tasks, beyond the tasks of war correspondents.

## **Scientific achievements**

1./ Analyzing the war correspondence of the periods of the two world wars, I have pointed out the sharp change in the organization and scope of tasks and the process, as a result of which,

by the time of World War II, war correspondents, as personnel of the military forces, after military training and organized in Army-subordinated companies, next to combat units, performed diverse propaganda and culture management tasks, beyond the tasks of war correspondents.

2./ Primarily by analyzing the personal recollections of war correspondents and archived documents, I summarized the practical lessons learnt during the implementation of tasks of war correspondents.

3./ Analyzing the history of war correspondence, I proved that the wars of the modern times, the professional implementation of the tasks of war correspondents requires that war correspondents possess theoretical and practical military knowledge.

### **Recommendations**

With respect to the findings of the thesis, I recommend to continue my research, given the fact that the activities of war correspondents in our country are less researched, and the training of war correspondents has recently gained accreditation. Using interdisciplinary research methods, it could be possible to clarify many questions unanswered yet, thus exploring more deeply the history of Hungarian war correspondence and the activities of war correspondents.

### **The practical utility of research results**

The “Zrínyi Miklós” National Defense University and the Budapest College of Communication and Business signed a cooperation agreement in 2008 to launch and operate an advanced study branch of war correspondence. Unfortunately, the training has not started yet. In my opinion, the start of the training of war correspondence would be essential. I find it useful to implement the war correspondent training, the acquisition of knowledge of war correspondence, taking into account the findings of the dissertation, based on the university military training, within the educational system of the National University of Civil Service. Such a unique and advanced training at may hold a great interest on an international level as well. The present study can greatly contribute to founding and deepening the knowledge of such training.

## THE AUTHOR'S PUBLICATION LIST

- **Academic and Applied Research in Military Science** 2009/8/4: The early years of Hungarian military journalism; pp. 723–729
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<http://haditudosito.gportal.hu/gindex.php?pg=34455252>

## CURRICULUM VITAE

**Name:** Éva Gorda

**Place of birth:** Hatvan

**Date of birth:** 13 February 1984

**Address:** 1149 Budapest, Fogarasi út 28-54. 618.

**Phone number:** +36-20-378-0486

**E-mail:** evagorda@gmail.com

### Education:

- 1998 – 2002 “Szent Margit” High School; Budapest
- 2002 – 2007 “Zrínyi Miklós” National Defense University  
“Bolyai János” Faculty of Military Technology  
Defense Administration Specialty  
Defense Administration Manager
- 2007 – 2010 “Zrínyi Miklós” National Defense University  
Doctoral School of Military Science  
PhD training
- May 2010 Basic examination in public administration
- 2008 – 2010. “Zrínyi Miklós” National Defense University  
“Kossuth Lajos” Faculty of Military Science  
Graphoanalytical postgraduate specialist training,  
Certified Graphoanalytical

### Foreign languages

- German, superior degree “C” (ARMA)  
English, basic degree “C” (Origo), intermediate degree “A” (BTU)

### Professional experience

- From June 2011 National Directorate General for Disaster Management, MoI  
National Inspectorate General for Industrial Safety,  
Critical Infrastructure Coordination Section  
Senior Desk Officer, Counselor
- 2010 – 2011. Department for Protection Coordination, MoI  
Desk Officer
- 2008 – 2010. Ministry of Local Government  
Secretariat of the Governmental Coordination Committee,  
Scholar