

**NATIONALUNIVERSITY OF PUBLIC SERVICEFACULTY
OF MILITARY SCIENCESANDOFFICER TRAINING
Doctoral School ofMilitarySciences**

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**The NationalOfficer'sClub historyand
lessonslearnedfromits operation**

PhD ThesisIntroduction

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THE SCIENTIFIC PROBLEM

In mid-19th century founded Officers' Clubs (in Hungary called as 'Casinos') – like all around in Europe – were very helpful and more effective community building, knowledge providing institutions for the Hungarian officer corps until 1944.

In the post-II World War period, the public educational institutions ran by Hungarian People's Army were not suitable for the continuation of earlier traditions, which led to the death of the spirit of these clubs.

At the beginning of this century, after the abolition of the conscript military system – amid the growing economic difficulties – it has become a common view that the soldiers do not need community life because they are organizing their free time themselves.

Indeed, the former cultural centres have lost their raison d'être, but the need increased once again in the professional army to develop and strengthen the corporate spirit. Historical experiences show that the most effective institution of this is the Officers' Club. The social esteem of the officer corps was largely determined by cultural indicators, morality and a high degree of professional knowledge in the Monarchy and between the two world wars. Officers of the above mentioned era can be exemplary in preserving tradition, in education for patriotism, in the military-ethical, moral and social role-taking behaviour.

The development of the armed forces cultural life, possibly its negative tendencies and potential impact on the crew – and especially for the professionals – has always been in the centre of my interest. This isn't a coincidence, since I have served nearly 25 years in such kind of positions what is called nowadays fashionably 'cultural manager'.

Already as a military college cadet, and then from 1983 as a freshman officer I could feel the positive function of the operating garrison clubs, which were promoting network and fostering a sense of community and – not least – providing a kind of social, helper umbrella.

Despite the fact that I have had only couple of times the chance to visit the Officers' House on the Váci Street in Budapest, its elegance impressed me. In the early 90s, as an officer in charge of cultural affairs I was supervising 14 clubs of the 3rd Military District which was stationed in Cegléd. This responsible position meant for me a huge challenge and a great honor also. Unfortunately, I was participating of the closure of some clubs or the transfer of them for the local governments. This trend continues until today, and as a result – in the classic sense – no one operates any of them. This fact, as well as trying to find a way out, encouraged me to choose the topic of my doctoral dissertation the operation of the Officers' Clubs between two world wars. I need to add that this topic is almost completely unknown by

the public and not seriously and deeply researched by anyone. It motivates me – in the belief to restart them – also to analyse the related results and to provide some useful suggestions for today decision-makers how to run these institutions.

HYPOTHESES

At the beginning of my work the following hypotheses were set up:

- 1) I assumed that the garrison Officers' Clubs, which were founded in the 1860-ies, were the prefiguration of the later established National Officers' Club (NOC).
- 2) In the 19th century started Officers' Club movement was expanded during the period between the two world wars, by the completion of NOC.
- 3) In the period between the two world wars the National Officers' Club played a significant role in the education of the officer corps and shaping and strengthening the spirit of them.
- 4) Nowadays the operation of NOC could be an example for the Hungarian Armed Forces cultural institutions.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

- 1) I'm conducting a research, and then I will analyse and evaluate the roots of the Hungarian Officer's Club (Casino) movement, as well as its key features.
- 2) On the basis of archival, bibliographic sources and media I'm defining the establishing date, the circumstances and the most important characteristics of the first Hungarian Officers' Club.
- 3) I introduce the circumstances of the establishment (founding) and the operational characteristics of the mentioned Váci Street Officers' Club.
- 4) I process and analyse the operation of NOC between the two world wars, according to its main activities, which was systematized by me.
- 5) I summarize briefly the current status of the cultural institutions of the Hungarian Defence Forces, and based on that, combined with the conclusions I recommend some current and future tasks of the possible NOC.

APPLIED RESEARCHMETHODS

In order to achieve the research objectives of the dissertation I preceded a lengthy data collection, organization and document discovery. Because of the fact that the bibliographical resources were fairly limited, it was needed to take into account the specific and traditional research methods as well.

In order to achieve the research goals I relied primarily on archives, but I discovered, analysed and classified

the related subject literature and publications. It was needed to understand better the Officers' Club operation in the period between the two world wars, so it was important to deal with the economic, political and cultural peculiarities and the consequences resulting therefrom. In order to achieve this, I mapped the related bibliography.

Keyword searches on the internet facilitated successfully also the data collection. The contemporary – be/was it civilian or military –

has served a lot of additional knowledge of the Clubs' operation. Among the foreign resources there are some extremely important documents, such as the 'Kriegsarchiv' (Vienna, Austria) papers which prove that the first Officers' Club (Casino) was established in 1861 in Budapest.

Before finishing the dissertation I published the interim results, which significantly contributed a lot to the last stages of the work. After formulating some partial and then the aggregate conclusions I set up recommendations for the Officers' Clubs future operation.

I realized during the resource collection that my effort is niche, due the fact that nobody was writing an PhD dissertation on this topic, even articles were made in one or two times focusing on general matters/ description of the Officers' Clubs. Dr. Béla Novák, dr. Gábor Pajkossy and Mr. József Bölönyi were focusing on Officers' Club history, who were publishing some related articles too. Mr. János Bogárgave a thorough description about the capitol's Officer' Club life in his book, titled "Three decades of the gentleman club life" (in Hungarian: „Háromévtizedegyúrikaszinóéletéből"). Nowadays, Ms. Eöry Gabriella is focusing on casino history, but focusing on the civilian ones (especially on the National Civilian Casino). However, a detailed research and analyse didn't happen until now.

The first resource which has got some details of this topic was written by Mr. Danczer Alfons in 1899, titled „Our armed forces. The folks of the Austro-

Hungarian Monarchy in arms and under flags" (In Hungarian: „Amihadseregünk. Az osztrák-magyar monarchia népe ifjegy verbenészászlókalatt"). Some lexicons are mentioning this topic in a few lines but in a quite succinctly way. I was conducting my research in the National Archives, in the National Széchenyi Library, in the Military History Museum and Archives – sometimes wrong –

and in Budapest Archives too. Furthermore, the contemporary press and film archives added many helpful documents, even though I found only fragmented materials. The only reliable and background material was the so-called "Kaszinó-Lap" (Casino News), which was a periodical of NOC. This newspaper was founded in 1929 – and despite the fact that some articles were contradictory – it gave me much information.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE ANALYSES

I arranged my dissertation according to my research objectives.

In the first chapter I review the literature on the subject.

In the second chapter I formulate the scientific problem, set up the hypotheses, and I define the research objectives and methods.

In the third chapter I review, analyze and evaluate the establishment of Officers' Clubs until the First World War. In particular, I identify the club (casino) concept, and the circumstances of their creation in Europe. Also in this chapter I present the history of the club (casino) movement in Hungary, as well as key features of it. After this I analyze the date and establishment circumstances of the first Hungarian Officers' Club. Using the contemporary documents I present the creation efforts and the circumstances building its headquarter. In the last part of this chapter I'm dealing with the operation of the Officers' Clubs until the First World War.

In the fourth chapter I introduce the key features of the Hungarian officers between the two world wars. This includes the political, economic and cultural relations of the Hungarian society too. I analyze the post-

first world war military relations, the composition, origin, social status and financial situation of the officer corps. After the presentation of the public thinking and military awareness I describe the officers' literacy in a separate section.

In the fifth chapter – according to systematized principal activities and aspects – I'm gathering, processing, and analyzing the operation of Officers' Club between the two World Wars. I have a separate section on the scientific and educational activities, literary contests, the so-called "Goblets speeches," the casino in cinemas, the balls, evening parties, concerts, dance and entertainment events, the casino sports-related activities are represented, as well as the so-called welfare institutions.

In the sixth chapter I briefly summarize the current state of the cultural institutions of the Hungarian Defense Forces.

In the seventh chapter I formulate the summarized conclusions.

The eighth chapter contains a list of scientific achievements.

In the ninth chapter I propose recommendations based on the research findings and on the current and future tasks regarding Officers' Clubs (Casinos).

The doctoral thesis ends with the cited bibliography and with a list of publications.

SUMMARIZED CONCLUSIONS

In Europe, meeting points (usually mentioned as „casinos”) already existed and operated from the 17th century. Such places – established to rouse social life – did not exist in Hungary. Their appearance in Hungary is owing to Count István Széchenyi, who founded the first such place in Hungary in 1827, patterned after the British style. It was the „Pesti Casino”, the first „rally point” in Pest. From that point on, the number of casinos – important organizations of the reform era and the fight for civilization and independence – has begun to increasingly grow. The popular casino-campaign was stopped by the strict provisions, following the end of the freedom fight, but the interim period did not take so long to prevent the restart of the casino-campaign, some years before the Compromise in 1867. Thanks to this, from that point, the establishment of casinos has become an accepted phenomena, not in the capital only. Casinos built even in the cities of the countryside and in towns as well.

Attending a casino was not a privilege of the aristocracy anymore, because differentiation of social classes has begun, furthermore, new casinos were setup by several professions, like the Officers’ Clubs, etc. Casinos lived their heydays in the period between the Compromise and World War I. Another, last prosperity took from 1920 by the end of World War II, more precisely, by the take over of the Arrow Cross Party.

In Budapest, the Officers’ Club, formed in the Károly-caserne in 1861, was patterned after the Prussian style. The destination of the casino was to provide opportunity to form and sustain intellectual relations between officers of all military units and branches garrisoned in Budapest, furthermore, to strengthen comradeship and to facilitate public spirit. The casino’s long-run operation and regular maintenance was granted by the casino’s comprehensive and prudent statutes, controlling organizations and committees. Social places, fitted up in the Károly-caserne, served the officer corps effectively. Year by year, the casino hosted multiple events, shows, concerts and the popular and gentle dancing-parties as well, by the end of the 19th century. From that point, a new chronology begins. At this time, the Army’s leaders created a new plan, aiming the establishment of a new Staff Building, in which the Officers’ Casino would take place, in addition to the Headquarters and the Military Staff. The plan was approved, thanks to this circumstance – and the assistance of Prince Lobkowitz – the buildup of the new clubhouse of the “National Officers’ and Academic Club (Casino) Association”, or “National Officers’ Club” in the Váci Street started in the period of 1897-1899. From this time, not only Vienna, but also Budapest took pride in its own, well-

laid and beautifully furnished Officers' Club. At this point, not only a new century, but also a new, hopeful era

has begun in the existence of the Officers' Club of Budapest, a period lasted until the outbreak of World War I.

The National Officers' Club, founded in 1899, should have to restart in 1920 on new basis, with service interrupted during the Great War and the following period, the era of the Hungarian Republic of Councils. Reconstruction from the shambles, caused by the communism and the Romanian occupation, took several years. Inspite of all odds, the Club booked a spectacular success by the end of the decade, squarely confirmed by 6000 members and the high-quality of the content of work.

During the examined period, the Officers' Club performed huge work in the dissemination of scientific knowledge. If we analyze this topic, it is clearly visible that 329 presentations were implemented during these years. It means that usually 20 presentations were kept a year. At the beginning, such presentations focused on topics introducing wartime experiences and military history. At the same time, they took pains over the demonstration of academic results in the areas of the heart of war, warcraft and technological development (military technology). Other topics, like philosophy, religion, ideology – fascism, irredentism, national theory, adoration of Italian and German culture – appeared constantly. Presentations related to Trianon and the building of the future had also considerable popularity. It is also not a coincidence that recitations began to concern the matters of preparation for war more and more often, from the middle of the '30s. After the outbreak of World War II, in addition to the shadowing of the events of the war, the most important aim was to share experiences and to identify new ways. It is very important to underline that such presentations were kept by the leaders of the Army, orits' former commanders and officers with combat experiences.

The „Heroes' Goblet” was founded by the same intention, namely the spiritual preparation for war. The primary objective of the Goblet-dinners and the following events, the Goblet-speeches was to strengthen faith community, to improve Hungarian self-awareness and comradeship. Such events were very exclusive, thanks to the high social rank of the lecturers and the crowd of noble guests. We can say that the Goblet-speeches were outstanding protocol-events in the life of the Casino, usually personally attended by the Governor and his wife.

The movie of the casino served the guests, casino-members and their folks over 30 years. The movie was one of the strong points, which was operating with the same intensity during whole of the year, except the three-month-long summer holiday. 2-3 presentations were kept a day, four times a week. During the operation, the movie always secured its exclusivity, thanks to strict provisions controlling the people.

eattendingthemovie. Thiscinemawasoneofthe

most elegant ones in Budapest, but as a service, it was still affordable. The milieu was civilized, attended by intelligent audience. The movie was developing constantly, which was – from the middle of the '30s – a real second-run movie, not just one among many. It was a glory to attend it even as a guest.

In the Club milieu – from the beginning – the level of social life was a very important factor. The most common two things have been reported from the last third of the 1800s: on the one hand about the lectures (performances), on the other hand about the successful balls and concerts.

In the reviewed period – if the balls, concerts, fashion events are recalculated – it can be stated that more than 500 of such events were organized. The large number of events is showing off or us the program frequency. In each active season, one every Saturday there was organized a dance even at the main hall of the Club. In each year there was New Years Eve party and – except of the year of 1943 – Santa Claus Event for the kids. There were performances, concerts, art lover evenings where the officer or many members of their families also performed. It is needed to be mentioned the so-called charitable or mitigating poverty concerts, which was under the patronage of the governor's wife.

It is important to note that there were wide programs offered for children entertainment as well. There cognition of the institution is well-demonstrated by the fact that several programs, competitions, concerts were organized on national-level and the club's band (orchestra) was well-known by the people due of radio broadcasting.

However, in the Club not only the cultural, but the sport events were considered too. In particular, the most important was to support fencing, modern pentathlon, shooting, rowing, tennis and recreational sports. The Officers' Fencing Club was providing more and better performances since 1925; soon it qualified the most successful professional fencer department in the country. Its members couldn't participate on the Los Angeles Olympics in 1932, but by this year the Club developed already a real high quality and membership of more than 200 people. In the second decade in order to achieve more success the number of fencing masters and assistants has been significantly increased, providing further growth. They responded immediately to the sport challenges (for example that sabre fencing's popularity grew), as a result they were able to create a strong basis for future successes. It is an undeniable merit of the Club that it – as the only sport organization in that time in the country – created the modern pentathlon division and a few years later they formed the shooting division as well. Thanks to the fencers 20, the pentathlonists 10, the shooters 2 years of tireless work the Officers' Fencing Club was providing the country's best sport performance. There was

possible to play tennis and rowing, however these divisions were founded just in mid 1930's. The boat house of the Club was built on Margaret Island and it was providing enough background for success. In 1944 the rowing division was on the 2nd place in Budapest. Of course, it was unthinkable that the Club's tennis players weren't participating in high level competitions.

It is an indisputable fact that the Officers' Club was being accompanied by high-quality welfare services at all times. The luxurious equipment, the modern technology has always been characteristic of the casino.

Restaurants and pubs operated downstairs, shops and workshops performing a variety of services – their reduced costs and cheap food prices – improved the Club comfort level. The highest standards of taste, convenience and practicality were recognized not only at home but also abroad. It is no coincidence that even diplomats often chose the Club for a location of their banquet. And what else was offered by the Club? Cheap tourist programs, a limited number of free child summer programs, medical advice and legal assistance. It was possible to access to the cultural and recreational services offered by the city on reduced costs. It was available a variety of specialized divisions for the members.

The quickly won prestige and long-term reputation wasn't coincidence. On Margaret Island built boathouses not only served the sport, but also leisure, recreation and entertainment activities.

However, this possibility from 1943 – as a result of the war – was cancelled such as the National Officers' Club, which was operated on Váci út 38, in Budapest.

Based on the above mentioned facts we can confirm that the Clubs (casinos) – including the Officers' Club too – played important role in the domestic social life. Clubs operating in the armed forces were providing correct conditions for spending free time, for confidential discussions and for strengthening the spirit of fellowship.

The elected, highly trained and well known Club directors guaranteed that the casinoperform quality work at all times. It was also ensured by them that community abuse, flagrant irregularities don't happen. As a result, the Club life was characterized by peace, culture and by quality work. This is provided a positive impact on the military cultural organizations and successfully promoted a sense of togetherness.

It seems that today the Club (Casino) movement restarts again and in some communities and groups is becoming popular again. There could be several reasons for this. There are some registered non-governmental organization called the "casino" because they like this name. There are those who say that the clubs (casinos) have a great historical tradition in our

country, therefore their existence is non-debatable. There are some casinos, which are using their original names and operating in their old locations. This is the situation in Hungarian Defence Forces too. In classical terms there isn't any garrison Club in our homeland. There aren't professionals (experts), there aren't permanent and continuous open in ghours, the Club libraries were closed, buffets don't operate as well.

The commanders and officers corps of bigger garrisons believe that there is a great need today for the creation of the community and for cultivating personal relationships. It is referred many times that "the army is a big family". However, for the family existence it is necessary a space, an object, and a site, where the "family warmth" can be spread.

Based on this thinking, with self organization and by minimal support of the Defence Forces the Garrison Officers' Club were founded. The first was created in Szolnok, and then in Székesfehérvár, in Budapest and in Veszprém. These club associations – because of lack of financial resources – cannot undertake to do more than providing cultured environment, and meetings held twice a month, when they have organized programs.

They feel instinctively the necessities which were offered by the Officers' Club in earlier times. It is no coincidence that the most popular programs are the informative lectures, community events, and fellowship dinners. If we remember on the cultural services offered by the National Officers' Club we can notice that much more needed to be done. However, for this is the self-organization and enthusiasm is not enough: financial assistance, superior support, and a lot of collective wisdom are needed.

Hoping that my dissertation provides successful and efficient help for the decision-makers, I'm sure that the time will come soon when there will be again such kind of community spaces which will be able to maintain and to fill it with useful content in favour of the defence forces and the soldiers. Doing these all for the HUNGARIAN DEFENCE FORCES and for OUR HOMELAND!

NEW SCIENTIFIC RESULTS

- 1) I searched, analyzed and evaluated the roots of the Hungarian Club (casino) movement, and its key features.
- 2) Based on archives and on bibliographical and on press sources I defined the date when the first Officers' Club was created (1861). I defined its establishment circumstances and the most important features.

- 3) I explored the circumstances of the Officers' Club construction in Váci utca (Budapest) in 1897-1899. I described its operating characteristics.
- 4) I'm the first, who proved the fact that the Officers' Club made an enormous work in 1920-1944, in order to collaborate the officers and their families; to strengthen the community spirit; to widen the military-professional culture; for the military education, for civilized amusement; for introduction to movie culture; for creating sport opportunities, for health education. It was especially important to demonstrate that the most prominent representatives of the supreme political, military, scientific and artistic groups were actively participate in all of this far-reaching process.
- 5) I summarized briefly the current status of the cultural institutions of the Hungarian Defence Forces. Based on this and on the research result I formulated conclusions and recommendations for the current and future tasks regarding Officers' Clubs.

RECOMMENDATIONS, THE PRACTICAL APPLICATION OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

The thesis can be used for domestic cultural matters in order to inform decision-making and executive bodies, in order to provide information about the operation and characteristics of the National Officers' Club.

The thesis can be utilized for the experts of the Ministry of Defence and the Defence Staff to dispute the components and knowledge relating to the current club operation.

It can be used for MoD experts working on human/cultural fields who can benefit from the information and findings for their decision making activities.

It can be used to give information for cultural associations and civil society organizations being in connection with the Hungarian Defence when they are operating their own clubs.

It can be used for educational material for cadet training or in socializing programs created by Ludovika Battalion.

LIST OF PUBLICATIONS

Study in edited book

1. Azrinyi-újvári emlékhely kialakítása és a Zrínyi-emlékek polása a régióban. In: Zrínyi-Újvár emlékezete. Szerkesztette: Hausner Gábor és Padányi József. Argumentum, Budapest, 2012. 123–136. o.

Study in qualified Hungarian periodicals

2. Kísérlet egy honvédségiművelődési rendszer kiépítésére. Nemzetvédelmi Egyetemi Közlemények, 7. évfolyam (2003.) 5. 203–207. o.
3. Hausner Gábor–Négyesi Lajos–Papp Ferenc: Juhakol a szőlőhegyen. Kísérlet Zrínyi-Újvárhelyzetének meghatározására Különenyomata Hadtörténelmi Közlemények, 118. évfolyam (2005.) 3. 835–862. o.
4. Atiszti kaszinók szerepe a művelődésben. Hadtudomány, 2009. 3–4. 148–158. o.
5. Felnőttképzés esművelődés. Társadalom és Honvédelem, XIII. évfolyam (2009.) 2. 123–131. o.
6. A Zrínyi-szobor alkotója, Barba Péter emlékére. Nemzetvédelmi Egyetemi Közlemények, 9. évfolyam (2005.) 1. 225–231. o.
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http://www.mhtt.eu/hadtudomany/2010/2010_elektronikus/2010_e_18.pdf
8. Az országos tiszti kaszinóműködése 1930-ban
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9. Kaszinók az Osztrák–Magyar Monarchiában. Hadtörténelmi Közlemények, 127. évfolyam (2014.) 2. 504–520. o.

Foreign language study in Hungarian periodical

10. Das Nationale Offizierskasino im Jahr 1931–32.
http://hhk.uni-nke.hu/downloads/kiadvanyok/hirvill_2evf_2sz.pdf

Foreign language study on abroad

11. Gábor Hausner–Lajos Négyesi–Ferenc Papp: „Tor” usredvinogradanabrijegu. Pokušaj određivanja lokacije Novog Zrina. Podravina. Časopis za multidisciplinarna istraživanja (Koprivnica), 10. évfolyam (2006.) 10. 28–49. o.

Hungarian language article

12. A Jászberényi Tiszti Kaszinólétrejötte.

- http://www.biztonsagpolitika.hu/documents/1296762762_papp_ferenc_kaszino.pdf
13. Az Országos Tiszti Kaszinóműködése 1933–34-ben.http://www.biztonsagpolitika.hu/documents/1315329174_Papp_Ferenc_orszagostiszti_kaszino_1933-1934_-biztonsagpolitika.hu.pdf
14. Az Országos Tiszti Kaszinóműködése 1935–36-ban.http://www.biztonsagpolitika.hu/documents/1334175215_PAPP_Ferenc_Az_orszagostiszti_kaszino_mukodese_1935-36_ban_-biztonsagpolitika.hu.pdf
15. Az Országos Tiszti Kaszinóműködése 1937–38-ban.http://www.biztonsagpolitika.hu/documents/1343650613_PAPP_Ferenc_Az_Orszagostiszti_Kaszino%20_mukodese_1937_38_ban_-biztonsagpolitika.hu.pdf
16. Az Országos Tiszti Kaszinóműködése 1939–40-ben.http://www.biztonsagpolitika.hu/documents/1361901139_PAPP_ferenc_orszagostiszti_kaszino_mukodese_1939-1940_-biztonsagpolitika.hu.pdf

CURRICULUMVITEA



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Studies:

1975–1979 TiszapartiGimnázium in Szolnok;

1979–1983 KossuthLajos MilitaryCollege in Szentendre (artillerybranch);

1992–1995 Janus PannoniusUniversity(JPU)Pécs (humanactivitiesbranch).

1998–2004 Zrínyi Miklós NationalDefenceUniversity(ZMNDU),Doctoral School ofMilitarySciences

Otherstudies:

1987–1988 Theatre directingcourse (NationalCenter for Public Education);1991–1992Intermediatepublic culture course (HungarianInstitute for Culture–ELTE);

1993 OrganizationalDevelopmentcourse (JPU, Pécs);1996–1997 German basic languagecourse(ZMNDU);1997–1998 Germanintermediate languagecourse(ZMNDU);1999–2000 Russianintermediate languagecourse(ZMNDU).

Job experience:

In 1983-1990 I was working in Cegled at the Artillery Brigade, until 1985 as an artillery officer after as an instructor for culture.

In 1990-

1994 I was the head instructor of public education responsible for the related activities in the Eastern part of Hungary, stationed in Cegled, focusing on military libraries, clubs and other professionals.

In 1994 I became an officer for human activities at the Zrínyi Miklós Military Academy and until 2007 I fulfilled many positions related to human and cultural activities.

From 2007 – with some small changes in tasks and positions – I'm working in Ministry of Defence at the Office of Social Relations and Tribute in office head position.

Others:

Through my military career I was two times achieving higher rank in shorter promotion period in 1994 I became captain, in 2001 lieutenant colonel.

From 15th November 2011 I was promoted for the rank of colonel.

Fields of interest:

Cultural Organization (education management, human resources management)

Hobby: music, movie, reading