



# LUDOVIKA

English Edition

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# Dedication

Hungarian officer training has always been closely intertwined with the nation's strivings for freedom and national independence. The long history of this officer training and of the building constructed to house it is a true reflection of this struggle, which saw both uplifting and tragic moments.

Here in Hungary, in the shadow of a multitude of threats, we may with some justification consider that every important action we take – either directly or indirectly – influences the independence of the Hungarian nation and its freedom. Such is the fate of small nations living in the shadow of large empires. The “Ludovika” spirit of serving the cause of an independent Hungarian state and nation is still alive today. We believe that in spite of the unfortunate events of Hungarian history, into which we have so often stumbled in the last century, many of its elements remain valid and still need to be upheld today. This Ludovika spirit is the ideal of self-sacrifice for the benefit of others and of the community, which protects our values beyond one's individual interests. Its legacy is still relevant in the 21<sup>st</sup> century even if it feels different from the notions which prevail in the present day.

The restoration of the dilapidated building complex of the old Ludovika Military Academy can be regarded as the moral duty of the Hungarian state after 2010. Little by little, everything will be put in its proper place, even if its history was left to be forgotten, and its traditions were left to decay: the buildings of the Ludovika Academy have been restored in all their splendour, a new university was built from the ruins with an amazing campus surrounded by a beautiful park, and instead of the sound of gunfire, today we can only hear the buzz of a quiet construction work in the building. Every citizen of the university works towards a peaceful, balanced, prosperous and constantly evolving 21<sup>st</sup> century Hungary, and within the walls of this university, filled with the spirit of history, their responsibility also seems greater.

The Ludovika – University of Public Service is, in many respects, the intellectual heir of the former Ludovika Academy. In the pages of this volume, the exciting, often uplifting, sometimes sad, but in every regard Hungarian story comes to life, which has led to the establishment of today's university, following the winding, complicated and often torturous paths of the last centuries.

Budapest, 21 August 2021



**András Koltay**  
Former Rector  
(2018–2021)

Ludovika – University of Public Service





# Welcoming Thoughts

The National University of Public Service (NUPS) started its operation in 2012 as the most important educational institution of the Hungarian public service, but its mission to serve the public and the country has a long tradition. Our University's mission is to ensure that our students are prepared and committed to public service, so that they can use the knowledge they have gained at the University in their careers. This requires continuous improvement and responsive management of change. Our task is also to remain true to the traditions of the Ludovika, to perpetuate the creed of independence of the Ludovika and at the same time the cause of a cohesive community and Hungarian values, ready to act and serve. Ludovika – University of Public Service of today is the traditional heir of the Ludovika Academy, and together, tradition and innovation are shaping the image of our University and the survival of the tradition of the Ludovika in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Our University is the most important source of knowledge in the fields of public administration, diplomacy, security, military, law enforcement and water management. With our training, all talented young people who are committed to public service can find the career that suits them best. Our training programme for public servants also ensures that the quality of the public service continues to improve.

Students who wish to pursue a scientific career can also obtain a doctorate. This, and the work of the Eötvös József Research Centre, which is the scientific base of the university, is particularly relevant to increasing the competitiveness of Hungary and the quantity and quality of research of strategic importance to the Hungarian state.

The architectural renewal of the Ludovika Academy was essential to maintain its values. One of the most beautiful and modern campuses in our country is helping to restore the Ludovika to its former glory and the military and law enforcement careers to their former prestige. The modern university infrastructure guarantees high quality education and follows the development of 21<sup>st</sup> century teaching technology. All of this contributes to the development of defence and law enforcement officers, public administration leaders and staff trained at our University into well-educated and broad-minded professionals, loyal to Hungary and our national values. The Ludovika Campus is also home to the exemplarily equipped Ludovika Arena, several outdoor sports fields, a shooting club and the Ludovika Hussar Riding School. The Ludovika Sports Association, with its twenty-two divisions, also has the largest university fencing department in the country. Candidates for law enforcement and military service are required to take fencing or riding lessons. This enhances the prestige of our University and integrates the traditions of the Ludovika Academy into university education.

In addition to presenting the history of the Ludovika Academy, this volume also preserves and transmits the values that our University represents. I am convinced that our achievements in the development of the public service are beneficial for our institution, our country and our nation.

I heartily recommend this volume to readers, and I trust that they will find it useful!



Rector

Ludovika – University of Public Service



# Foreword

## Opera, beer... and piano... or in praise of military education

It is perhaps best to be clear from the outset: this is going to be a biased dedication.

My positive bias towards military education in Hungary dates back to my infant years when I was still discovering the world on all fours. My little journeys often ended at my mother's large wardrobe, with balm-scented clothes hanging in the upper part, and with all sorts of exciting metal and paper boxes in the lower sections hiding treasures that fascinated me greatly. After opening the squeaking door wide open, I happily grabbed the large box in which several hundred postcards preserved my Grandpa's feelings for my future grandmother, half a century earlier. Back then, naturally, I was only excited about the beautiful images, but later as I learned about the related stories, those mesmerised me as well. The collection used to number a couple of thousand cards – as my mother explained – but the two world wars and a number of moves had unfortunately reduced the contents of the box greatly.

However, my future grandmother was not a simple *Postkartensammler*, and did not collect postcards just for their beauty. To my childish heart, the gist of our family stories was the ancestors' emotional struggles reflecting the eternal fight between the Kuruc (good) and the Labanc (bad). According to family legend, the young lieutenant, Tihamér, was serving at Székesfehérvár when he fell in love with the charming Irma, my grandma, otherwise known as "Ádika". When it turned out that their emotions were mutual and felt just as strongly by both, the young officer requested an audience with the Emperor. The military budget of Austria-Hungary did not stretch to financing the pension of military widows, so the regulations stipulated that only an officer or non-commissioned officer who paid a cash deposit into the military treasury could be married, the interest of which had to be sufficient to provide for his widow. This was all very well, but young officers at a marriageable age did not have such an amount of money. Lieutenant Tihamér hoped to ask the king to make an exception to the rule and therefore, he buckled on his sword and went to the king. "Nein!" – The lieutenant received this laconic, not very generous answer, which saddened the heart of the two lovers and, at the same time, laid the foundations for this precious postcard collection. From that day onwards, Tihamér, wherever he was, sent postcards to Sas street in Fehérvár – sometimes several times a day, writing a few words, possibly a few sentences, under the pictures. His words were simple and often clichéd, as prescribed in the decency code at the time. The gesture he made in sending them was an honest one.

According to my mother, this agony lasted for ten long years. The many "Kuruc"s of this intellectual, decent

middle-class family hated the petty Franz Joseph for it even more than before. But the "schwarzgelbs" also felt sorry for the lovers and in the end they accumulated the necessary sum of money. Even after that, Tihamér kept sending postcards for a while as he had to serve in postings all across the Monarchy. The only change was that in addition to sending his lovely greetings to Ádika, he also sent his warmest parental hugs to Tibor, my future uncle. If all the postcards, the entire collection, had survived, it would have been a real treasure for the historians of today. However, the remaining nearly two and a half hundred cards that still exist today are no longer suitable for this purpose as they cannot fully reflect the complete itinerary of the military officer's service and the associated gestures reflected in the texts. On the other hand, even a couple of examples are enough to demonstrate the effectiveness of the Hungarian military officer training of the time, from a distance of a hundred years.

One of the cards arrived from Vienna, dated 25 March 1903. On the left, there is a picture of a large Dreher pub in Vienna with a note from the first lieutenant:

*"We often have dinner here after the opera. With warm regards, Tihamér."*

What an impressive duality! On the one hand, an opera performance, following the music from the score – the wonders of classical music from Mozart to Wagner at the famous Vienna State Opera on the Opernring. Then in the prestigious pub, in the adjacent street, Operngasse, where he enjoyed a large portion of Tafelspitz (as we know, it is the Emperor's favourite...) and a good pint of beer. High culture and entertainment with the fellow officers. Both of these activities are part of a complete and healthy personality, the metropolitan lifestyle of a citizen who is at home at different levels of culture. From this perspective, it is merely a coincidence, that this person is also a young infantry officer of the Imperial and Royal Army.

Let's look at another postcard, also from Vienna, that was sent a few months later. It shows one of the impressive avenues of the Schönbrunn Palace and Park. A fountain is in the foreground, surrounded by strolling visitors, and behind it is the Baroque palace which served as the summer residence of the Habsburg family. On Tuesday 29 June 1903, the student of the officer training course, in legible and disciplined handwriting, shared his daily schedule with his loved one:

*“We went to the zoo, then drank some beer and went for lunch. After lunch, I played the piano for an hour and I will start studying now, if I can. We will visit the dairy hall on Wednesday at 10 p.m. With warm regards, Tihamér.”*

Even though Tihamér was not studying at the Ludovika, in a broader sense he was ultimately part of the same system of pedagogical and cultural expectations as his fellow Hungarian cadets. It would not be mistaken to consider his cultural horizons to be close to those of the cadets and alumni of Üllői Avenue. Let's look at the agenda! Firstly, a walk in a castle park and a visit to the zoo – both are high-quality mass cultural entertainment, but can also be considered to a certain degree to be experience-based learning. Drinking beer gives one an enjoyable insight into the daily life of the Imperial City, and helps to refresh the body in the summer heat, as well as the soul in a friendly environment. Playing the piano is a highly-cultured activity, an active and creative enjoyment of art. Studying is a morally motivational action in preparation for the military profession – even if it may not be at the forefront on that specific afternoon... The next day's visit, taking place in a commercial facility, is a classic “field study”, an extracurricular learning opportunity. Here is a great example of a young, educated soldier who wishes to expand his knowledge and at the same time gain cultural experiences – all on one single postcard! Because of all this, when I picked up Colonel Lajos Négyesi's wonderful book, I read it through the rose-tinted spectacles of emotional bias. I could clearly picture the Ludovika cadets he presented, as characters much like my grandfather was. This experience reminded me of the feeling I had when I first read one of the greatest novels of Hungarian literature in the 20<sup>th</sup> century: *School at the Frontier* by Géza Ottlik. Reading that novel awakened similar feelings in me, as my grandfather, before his postcard era, went to the same military school in Kőszeg as Géza Ottlik and the characters in the novel. This book evoked similar feelings in me – it has the same values, the same attitude! There was my grandfather's piano, which was loaded by his crew onto a horse carriage every time he was ordered to redeploy, so that its re-tuned strings could sing their songs in the new garrison and on which even I banged out tunes in the Budapest of the 1950s–1960s; as one of the last survivors of a bygone bourgeois lifestyle slowly sinking down into the void like an inhabitant of Atlantis. In this vein, – half a century after the romantic intermezzo and in the darkest years of socialism – the colonel was relocated to a little village in the foothills of the Mátra Mountains, and the local policeman was instructed to check up on him, “the enemy of the working class”. The policeman, an intelligent son of a peasant, felt so ashamed doing this in front of the villagers that he always fetched a pair of broken alarm clocks and took them to the snow-white bearded handyman to be repaired as a pretext for his visit. Most certainly because of these memories, the fading light of the dusk of the old world casts an aurulent light, in my eyes, on these military officers as a group, as if I need to weigh their merits one by one.

Lajos Négyesi is both a military historian and a pedagogical historian, so he not only tells the “story” of the spirit of the institution, the realisation of this spirit, and then of the building and its environment – in other words, the Ludovika's “own” story. He also embeds this account into a broader history of imperial military education and then specifically into the history of Hungarian education, taking in the changes which this rich and vital area underwent over the last three centuries, filled with information and thoughts as well as human faces. As Négyesi puts it, we often find ourselves on the gunsmoke-filled battlefield, in the middle of political struggles between the great European powers. Then the scene shifts to the happy, peaceful, revolutionary or even counter-revolutionary meeting rooms of the ministries, we flick through the textbooks and regulations, and sometimes, in the dormitories, we can even hear how the young cadets are sleeping after a busy day. We find out what the students learned in this – without exaggeration – legendary institution. When quoting Géza Perjés, the acclaimed military historian, the author not only confutes the accusations made against the alumni of the Ludovika during the party state era with definite objectivity, but also accepts reasonable criticism of the matter – even if he does not consider it his duty to unravel every thread of this criticism. Négyesi claims that, “the military education received there formulated a certain point of view of the world in those graduates, gave them a kind of resigned life philosophy. Something that provided a safety net against serious traumas on the one hand, and also gave them confidence and security on the other hand, albeit at the cost of forming an insurmountable barrier between them and the civilian world.” This is the much maligned “exclusiveness”, which entailed a “complete identification with military ethics, putting the collective [military] interest first”. This also had a positive impact: “Love as well as trust binds academy graduates closely even decades after the completion of their studies.” It also posed a serious danger, however, so it is no coincidence that Lajos Négyesi felt that he had to mention it even in the context of the glorified life of the Ludovika cadets and alumni.

Earlier, pointing to the jovial dualism of beer and opera, I sought to depict how, at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, this gulf was not “insurmountable” between the military and civilian worlds. Nevertheless, we cannot use this metaphor either – unless we insist on a geomorphological analogy – as there may have been only a narrow ditch between them which could be crossed with ease. But by the turbulent mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, a kind of social and communicative “insurmountability” was already present, which would become a source of serious trouble at a time when the meaning of even the most obvious words was beginning to change.



Nowadays, social psychology explores more deeply than ever the functioning of a system of spiritual-emotional relations known as national feeling. Its deep structure and group identity, as with that of religions, is becoming clear to us: firstly, how a certain part of the national tradition can become an ideology (e.g. our medieval history when it is referred to as St. Stephen's Hungary) and secondly, how the regular evocation and practice of this "text" during ceremonies (state celebrations) can become the basic spiritual experience and emotional reinforcement of the group's closeness (patriotism). Aside from concretisation, this is how nationalism works, and there is no problem with it as long as the members of the community understand and interpret its idioms and symbols in the same way. When the understanding is no longer uniform, however, situations begin to become ambiguous. For example, the words "blood" and "origin" no longer mean the same thing to the racist and non-racist members of the community.

Take a single example from the chapter on the ideals of education in the Interwar period. "Save the Hungarian blood!" – this was the guiding principle of the officer cadets during their training, as the author quotes the contemporary norms. However, this seemingly simple and unambiguous statement can unexpectedly become a source of serious dilemmas should it not be clear enough whether or not someone called Sztojákovits or Szalosján can really have Hungarian blood. At this point, that particular gap and its "insurmountability" become crucial questions. If, on the civilian side of the community, historical experiences are accumulating in such a way that these calls for action will acquire a new meaning, how quickly will this change be followed by soldiers of the community, who have to take decisions in life or death situations during wartime? Or, on the contrary: how quickly can a new idea bridge the "insurmountable" gap if soldiers begin to reinterpret the existing concepts of patriotism and freedom? There were actually plenty of examples of both scenarios in World War II, therefore the moral is clear: if both sides do not constantly strive to identify this gap and overcome it as soon as possible, conflicting decisions arising from ambiguous situations can, over time, divide even the most seemingly organic community.

Of course, not everyone was able to conform at all times and in all aspects to the humanist military ethos of the old days – times which were not only cheerful and jovial, but often complicated and cruel – the foundation of which was once defined by the values and ideal of self-determination of the Hungarian Reform Era and the War of Independence of 1848–1849. The author, correctly, did not consider it his duty to muster those cases in which soldiers did not live by but abused the ideals on which the ethical attitude of the "Ludovika cadets" was built. After all, the history of education is primarily concerned with efforts to create and pedagogically enforce positive norms and this richly documented, great volume represents this idea in the modern era. Let me refer back here to Ottlik's great novel. This is why the peculiar normativity of the history of education, arising from its involuntary, professional essence, is so perfectly complemented by the genius storytelling of a writer who is familiar with the unfathomable depths of the human soul. He can show the endlessness of what can be achieved, whether it be good or bad, with the norms defined by regulations and slogans, in the real human universe.

Lajos Négyesi gives his readers a gift with this book that is rich in historical and literary value. What a special gift it is! He does not merely exalt the deeds of the past, but instead sets expectation for the future. By simply telling the stories of the Ludovika and its inhabitants, he inadvertently raises the bar high for those who have not only undertaken the monumental restoration of the Ludovika building in the last decade, but who are also attempting to recreate its former institutional ideals. This book makes it clear that this project would make no sense if the result did not live up to the expectations of a two-and-a-half-century, norm-setting history of patriotic military education.

There is much to do, then, for those who want to meet these standards. But if the task seems too daunting or the effort too taxing, I recommend you follow my beloved grandfather's tried and tested recipe as a lieutenant: go to the opera, and afterwards clink tankards of frothy, golden beer.

**László Csorba**

Historian

Honorary Director of the Hungarian National Museum





“To gain expertise in military science,  
it is necessary to provide the youth  
with certain education”

18



Countless historical examples have proven that a strong national army plays a key role in maintaining the independence of a country and in allowing it to pursue its political interests. The military effectiveness of a country depends on the quality of its soldiers, military technology and command staff, the latter being the core of the military. Under the most trying wartime circumstances, military leaders bear the burden of achieving success. The motto of the Ludovika expresses the essence of this profession: “For the Homeland Until Death”. A good officer, if required, sacrifices his life for the cause, although this should only be expected as a last resort. The military needs soldiers who possess a certain knowledge and expertise in order to be able to execute orders and carry out tasks while preserving both their own and their subordinates’ lives.

For many years, it was their experience of military service that provided soldiers with the knowledge required to serve effectively. In 1526, prior to the Battle of Mohács, Pál Tomori, Archbishop of Kalocsa was appointed Commander in Chief of the Army at the war council of Bába. Even though he had emerged triumphant from several battles in the border region, he initially refused to take office as he felt he lacked the necessary experience. According to Chancellor Stephanus Brodericus, Tomori believed he was “not suitable for this important task since had never before seen such a tremendous war that was now ahead of His Majesty”.<sup>1</sup> The decades-long Ottoman–Habsburg wars enabled Hungarian military leaders to accumulate experience in managing the defence of border fortresses, to learn from the small wars of light cavalry and infantry, and to acquire expertise in these fields. As Bálint Balassi, a Hungarian Renaissance poet who had also been involved in the battles of his time, reflected on this era: “To lay ambush on the road – fighting hard night and day is their work and their play.”<sup>2</sup>

Imperial armies consisting of infantry, cavalry and artillery were usually commanded by generals of German, Italian, or Spanish origin who gained experience in the joint use of different combat branches in battles in the Austrian Netherlands or in the course of the Thirty Years’ War. Meanwhile, Habsburg rulers recognised over time that selecting the leaders of border fortresses from among the Hungarian nobility may better serve the Empire’s purpose. In 1600, Matthias, then Archduke of Austria made the following proposal on appointing the head of the Transdanubian Captaincies: “One cannot rely at all on foreign officers and soldiers because they consume everything, ruin the subjects and banish them. For this reason, in my humble opinion both border fortresses should be commanded by a captain from the Hungarian nobility who keeps his subjects, goods and friends nearby.”<sup>3</sup> The Archduke clearly acknowledged the importance of patriotism, since while both patriotism and military leadership are equally important requirements, one cannot replace the other.

Miklós (VII) Zrínyi heavily criticised both the indiscipline of Hungarian soldiers and the lack of military knowledge of Hungarian commanders. In his work *Virtuous General*, he says: “Forgive me, Hungarians, I have to tell the truth! We are no different than the walking of a stud or beast; there is only one officer, a lieutenant in a troop, no one looks for order, no one desires it, rather hates it. Not only do we lack discipline here, but we also lack it in everything else. Other nations write books on army discipline, and we laugh at them; how much more profession and science is required for us; it is enough for us to have a large army.”<sup>4</sup> At the same time, however, the raiding tactics masterfully executed by the Hungarian army proved to be excellent in the Ottoman–Hungarian border struggles. Elsewhere, revolutionary changes were taking place in European military affairs: regular fighting was established on a scientific basis and the deployment of different branches also became regulated. At that time, it was a ground-breaking idea that one could learn both military leadership and military science from books. In the Hungarian military literature this paradigm shift was first linked to Zrínyi’s *Virtuous General*:



*Bálint Balassi, prominent figure of Hungarian literature and the 16<sup>th</sup>-century Renaissance*



*Miklós Zrínyi poet, military commander, military scholar (Jan Thomas)*

*"I must confess that learning and reading history are the most helpful exercises for the human mind to understand not only warcraft, but also everything else. These are your honest advisors, because they do not try to charm you. In this way, one could learn in a short time all those things that happened a long time ago. One can find the deeds of great men of the past, your ancestors, who will guide you and not let you fall, who show all the dangers and how to avoid them. And, if reading books does not seem to provide you with anything more, there is one thing for sure. No calamity may find you that you had not read about before, and you do not despair as much as those, whose minds have not been filled with such knowledge; they are unaccustomed and unprepared. The human life is so short that one can only do five or six great deeds, and by the time one can learn from these experiences, life ends and you cease to exist. However, those who do not read only five or six things but numerous ones, and thoroughly cooked their ideas in their minds, are ready for action immediately and may start right away."*<sup>5</sup>

Zrínyi believed that the most important factor in the renewal and development of the Hungarian military lay in trained and experienced officers, who would be able to pass on the necessary knowledge to their subordinates. In his work, *An Antidote to the Turkish Poison*, aside from highlighting the need for establishing a Hungarian national standing army, Zrínyi also emphasises the role of officers in the organisation: "As it stands today, we have a very low number of officers in the army. We should increase this number as the officers are the ones who teach the art of war to the people. My fellow Hungarians, here is my advice: for a while, take in foreign officers from other nations."<sup>6</sup> This statement, however, may mistakenly suggest that Zrínyi considered foreign mercenaries as a sensible path of development. For him, the most important goal was rather to gain knowledge. "I want to have a military comprising of Hungarians, but during the long peace our nation has become indifferent to the art of warfare; henceforth, we must find foreign masters by whom we can regain the once forgotten spirit. Therefore, it is not a shame to learn from those who know more; the shame is when we keep ourselves in ignorance without learning."<sup>7</sup>



*Zrínyi's sabre (replica)*



In his work on military science, Zrínyi attempted to summarise all the necessary skills and knowledge required for military leadership. Much to his regret, he was forced to conclude that the nobility of his era had not showed any

interest in learning about military sciences, and that they lacked both the endeavour and need to learn about and create independent Hungarian military affairs. His disappointment is well reflected in the following lines:

*“I have written a short work, called Virtuous General; however, I will keep it for myself because there is no one around here who would appreciate reading it, although one could learn a lot from it. I do not pretend to know enough to teach everything, since I have little experience from the few battles I have fought. But I have read and heard a lot, so I believe that I know more than some others. As I said, I am writing these now to share my knowledge and expertise with those who may benefit from it, and to express my good intent to those who wish to do otherwise.”<sup>8</sup>*

Zrínyi’s ideas were ahead of his time. He envisioned a standing army of Hungarian soldiers capable of conducting regular warfare according to the high standards of the era. Zrínyi believed that the right training was an essential requirement for the military, thus he considered skilled and experienced foreign mercenaries to be the right personnel for this task. In his works, he did not describe the implementation of institutionalised Hungarian military officer training, but he certainly anticipated that the Hungarian standing army would be led by a Hungarian officer branch.

Zrínyi’s ideas were later implemented by Francis II Rákóczi, grandson of Zrínyi’s brother and ruling prince of Hungary, who established the Hungarian national army during the 1703–1711 War of Independence. Throughout the years of combat, Rákóczi constantly struggled with the lack of well-

trained officers. Those commanders who had also previously fought in the Kuruc army of his stepfather, Emeric Thököly were a bitter disappointment to him, a feeling which he also voiced in his memoirs. According to Thököly’s commanders, the “best strategy was to setup our camp as far from the enemy as possible, and appointing guards was not necessary at all. Soldiers had to eat, drink and sleep, and once the people and horses were all well refreshed, the army marched intensively for 1, 2 or 3 days until it reached the enemy and a surprise attack could be launched on them. If the enemy troops ran away, they had to be followed. If the enemy resisted, we had to withdraw. It was the whole nation’s definition of warfare.”<sup>9</sup>

Over time, the course of history proved Zrínyi right regarding the establishment of an Officer Corps within the regular regiments: it was mainly foreign officers who were appointed to these positions. At the same time, the education of capable, young noblemen for the Hungarian officer branch had begun. In 1704, the prince established the Noble Army, whose members, in addition to performing body-guard duties, were also trained to serve as commanders of the army. “If there had been someone to teach military sciences to them, they would certainly have enjoyed learning and become obedient soldiers.”<sup>10</sup>

In order to establish a military science literature in Hungarian, in 1705 Count Simon Forgách published for the first time the manuscript of Zrínyi’s *An Antidote to the Turkish Poison*, while in 1707, Francis II Rákóczi translated François de La Valière’s *Pratique et maximes de la guerre* [Practice and Maxims of War]. The first ever, 21-point service manual (*Edictum militare*) was published in September 1703 and this was followed by 12 detailed field manuals and other similar instructions in Hungarian (fortress order service manual, camp service manual and technical manuals, etc.). A few years later, during the Diet of Hungary at Ónod, the *Regulamentum universale*, a detailed, general field manual was introduced. Together with the relevant Military Code, these represented decisive improvements in the history of Hungarian military



organisational literature. Unfortunately, the benefits of these efforts were only slowly manifested, as proved by the order of Francis II Rákóczi in Jászberény that he issued following his defeat at the Battle of Romhány on 25 February 1710. “During our battles and other trials, we have experienced that confusion arose not due to the faint-heartedness of our forces, but due to the ignorance of our officers. Some of which, led by their brave hearts, took the core of their forces, leaving their regiments and companies behind, and charged the enemy without any resemblance of order. While others, under the pretext of reasoning, let others go ahead in that way and saved their own lives and blood in the process.”<sup>11</sup>

On 11 May 1711, the approximately 12,000 Kuruc soldiers surrendered on the fields outside Majtény (present day Moftinu Mare in Romania), leading to the dissolution of the independent Hungarian army. Even though Act VIII of 1715 confirmed the establishment of a Hungarian standing army, the right to dispose of both the financial and human resources approved by the Estates remained the exclusive privilege of the Emperor. Therefore, instead of a Hungarian army, the new Hungarian regiments had to serve under the unified army of the Habsburg Monarchy. During the reign of Charles VI, Holy Roman Emperor, Hungarian soldiers mainly served in one infantry regiment and five Hussar regiments. When Maria Theresa succeeded him on the throne, during the Diet of Hungary at Pozsony in 1741, the Hungarian Estates offered a further twenty thousand soldiers in addition to the Insurrectio troops. By the year of the Queen’s death, in 1780, Hungarian soldiers were serving in 28 infantry regiments, 3 grenadier battalions

and 19 Hussar regiments out of the Empire’s 88 infantry regiments, 21 grenadier battalions and 52 cavalry regiments, although they were national in character only to a limited extent. Although the Hungarian Hussar and Hajduk regiments retained their Hungarian uniforms and the use of Hungarian language for internal matters, they operated like the other regiments of the great imperial army in all other respects.

Since the Hungarian Estates renounced the establishment of an independent, Hungarian standing army in Act VIII of 1715, the efforts at Germanisation of the imperial army had also become more noticeable among the Hungarian regiments. The Hungarian noblemen raising Hungarian Hussar and Hajduk regiments and later even the regimental commanders of Hungarian descent often led their units not according to the Hungarian fashion, but instead in the “German way”, without coercion, of their own will. When, in 1769, Lieutenant General Károly Nauendorf, on behalf of the war council, revised the tactical manuals of the Hussar regiments, taking an impartial approach, he suggested that it be published in Hungarian, not in German, given the fact that it was only for Hungarian officers and soldiers. András Hadik refused his proposal as he believed that the spread of the German language was crucial not only among military officers but also among non-commissioned officers, to make sure they understood the language, manuals and regulations of the imperial army. Hungarian regimental commanders and regiment owners used German as the operational language of the Army mainly to emphasise their equality with other regular regiments. In these circumstances, it is understandable that the Officer Corps, that mainly comprised Hungarian officers during the rule of Charles VI,

1. “To gain expertise in military science, it is necessary to provide the youth with certain education”

*The coronation procession of Maria Theresa in Pozsony  
(Johann Daniel Herz)*





started to accept more and more foreign national officers by the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century, and Hungarian regiments were even led by foreign commanders.

With the raising of the feudal militia (*insurrectio*), Hungarian noblemen began to contribute, independently of the standing army, to the defence of the Empire. During Maria Theresa's reign, and in the early stages of the War of the Austrian Succession, when the troops of Frederick the Great reached the Hungarian border after gaining control over Silesia, it had become imperative to call to arms the participants in the earlier noble uprising to defend the country. After the end of the war, the government wanted to keep the nobility armed and ready, and at the beginning of the Second Silesian War, the lords suggested the reintroduction of the *insurrectio*. It was then, in 1745, that the Hungarian-language regulations were drawn up in Pozsony (present day Bratislava), entitled *On the Order of War of the Noble Hungarian Nation and on the Insurrection (i.e. raising the militia) to the Defence of the Majestic King and the Country, the Short Summary of these According to the Law.*<sup>12</sup>

The question of the language of command was also raised in regard to the *insurrectio* regiments. The Hofkriegsrat and the commanders of the imperial army insisted on the use of German as the language of command, in order to ensure uniform procedures and easier leadership of the troops. In a letter to Sándor Károlyi, Provincial Councillor Márton Szuhányi described how he had failed to convince the regimental commanders to use Hungarian as the operational language: "I have argued with the Lord Colonel about it, trying to stop his intention (of using German as the language of command), but they do not see a way for the regiments to serve on equal terms with the German regiments, if they are not commanded in German."<sup>13</sup> However, the "insurgent" army did not adapt well to the German command, and the army would soon have disbanded had count Joseph Esterházy, the judge royal, not intervened with the Queen at an early stage. The Hungarian insurgent army was transformed into a separate Hungarian corps, commanded by Hungarian generals, with the palatine as commander in chief.

Institutionalised military officer training started in the Theresian era. The Imperial and Royal War Council (Hofkriegsrat) established the Artillery Corps School in 1746 in Bergstadt, near Budweis, then in 1778 it established an Artillery Lyceum in Vienna, which was reorganised in 1786 to train artillery officers. On 14 December 1751, the Queen ordered the establishment of the Noble Military Academy in Wiener Neustadt. The maintenance cost of the new institution was secured by reducing the army staff by one person in each imperial regiment, and that amount was transferred to the Academy. Count Leopold J. Daun, Field Marshal of the Imperial Army was appointed as the first *Oberdirektor* (senior commander) of the institution. The Academy admitted young boys from the age of fourteen upwards, with 200 cadets joining each year: one hundred nobles and one hundred sons of officers.



*Hungarian Noble Guard in parade uniform  
(Georg Balthasar Probst)*

These cadets received education, as well as full provision free of charge on the condition that, once graduated, they had to serve in the military. The curriculum of the Academy was divided into five classes and when the cadets had completed a year's curriculum, they were able to advance to higher classes. They attended courses between 7 a.m. and 7 p.m., which included an hour-long lunch break.

In 1756, an engineering school was established in Gumpendorf, with 202 cadets, of whom 18 were Hungarian. The head of the school was Field Marshal Count Ferenc Esterházy. The number of Hungarian cadets slightly increased over the years and of those, 21 cadets attained the rank of general in the Imperial Army. Following the reorganisation of the school in 1778, education at the institution continued under the title Academy of Military Engineering, and joining the military engineering general corps became conditional on graduating from there.

The young Hungarian boys who served as royal guards received military training in the Royal Hungarian Noble Bodyguard, founded in 1760. For five years, the 70 guards had to attend classes from 8 until 12 in the morning and from 2 until 7 in the afternoon. Once they had completed their service, they became entitled to fulfil officer posts in the army.

Joseph II, Holy Roman Emperor, son and successor of Maria Theresa, was a proponent of enlightened absolutism, with the ambition of unifying the Empire. He clearly understood that respecting Hungarian national interests was a serious obstacle to the realisation of his own political plans. In order to not be restricted by the oath to the Hungarian Estates, he refused to be crowned with the Holy Crown of Hungary (which is why he was known as the "King in the Hat"). In 1784, Joseph II made German the compulsory official language, abolished the counties in Hungary that could exercise a veto against his regulations and had the Holy Crown of Hungary, the symbol of its independent statehood, transferred to Vienna.

Later, in 1787, he formed an alliance with the Russian empress Catherine the Great, which led to Austria becoming embroiled in the Russian–Turkish War, which brought a series of defeats instead of the expected success. After two

years of battle, the war – the cost of which was mainly borne by Hungary – came to a standstill. The troops fighting on the battlefields were decimated by pandemics and even the emperor fell ill at the front. Not long after he had returned to Vienna, while still ill, he passed away in 1790.

As a result of Joseph II's absolutist measures, the Austrian Netherlands sought to secede from the Monarchy. At the same time, the idea of a national resistance became popular among the Hungarian Estates and secret negotiations began with the Prussians about a possible change of dynasty. When Leopold II succeeded to the throne, he decided not to follow his late brother's policies but instead, at the beginning of his reign, attempted to gain the support of the Hungarians. His first effort was to order the return of the Holy Crown of Hungary to Buda, which took place in a solemn ceremony at the end of February 1790. The Hungarian Estates had high expectations of the Diet in Buda that Leopold II convened for 6 June 1790. They took the National Constituent Assembly of the French Revolution as an example to follow and they were ready to enforce the interests of Hungary to the greatest extent possible.

Several Hungarian officers on duty endorsed and committed themselves to this idea: The Gyulai Regiment from the Trans-Tisza region, the Károlyi, Pálffy, Nádasdy and Splényi Infantry Regiments from the Turkish theatre of war and the camp at Prahova. The chief officers of both the Erdődy and Toscana Cavalry Regiments sent a petition to the Diet in which they requested changing the operational language of the Army to Hungarian. The biggest reaction was triggered by the request of the officers from the Graven Hussar Regiment, namely Lieutenant Colonel Count György Festetics, Captains János Laczkovics and Pál Archi, First Lieutenants János Vincze and István Csicsmán. Their regiment was ordered from the Turkish theatre of war to Buda for the duration of the Diet to act as a policing force. In their proposal, they suggested that only Hungarian officers should be employed at Hungarian regiments and also that the operational language should be Hungarian. Furthermore, the document contains a truly revolutionary idea, as they articulated the need for a Hungarian military officer training institution:

*"It is argued that to gain expertise in military science, it is necessary to provide young people with a certain education. That is why, in the future, there is going to be no need for German youth educated at Wiener Neustadt or elsewhere, if the country – as the initiators hope – will take care of the training of its own youth preparing to be soldiers. Since we consider the love of one's nation as an ideal and not as a fault – as shown by examples all around – we think that foreign officers' wishes would also be fulfilled, if they are allowed to go home and their places are filled with Hungarians. They may fulfil their own love of their country there, without supplanting Hungarians."<sup>14</sup>*



At the same time, Count Festetics was also among the group which sought support for the Hungarians' cause through the Prussian ambassador to Vienna. However, Leopold II came to an agreement with Prussia by the Treaty of Reichenbach signed on 27 July, when the latter renounced the support of the Hungarians. The Emperor summoned Count Festetics to Vienna, to the Hofkriegsrat to account for the matter of his petition. After arriving in Vienna, he was constantly under surveillance and then questioned by a military committee led by Archduke Alexander Leopold of Austria. The 35-year-old count insisted that he had not acted against the service manual by writing the petition, but even so on 6 August he was sentenced to fourteen days of imprisonment. After fourteen days, he was still being held captive, as the Emperor wanted to initiate a lawsuit for high treason because of his negotiations with the Prussians, in a case in which the main defendant would have been the count himself. His wife wrote several letters to Leopold II asking for him to pardon her husband. As a result of this correspondence, by the special grace of the Emperor, Festetics and his fellow officers were pardoned on 21 September, although they were simultaneously relieved of their duties as commanders and were transferred to foreign imperial regiments. On behalf of Captain János Laczkovics, a member of the gentry who had assisted with the formulation of said request, his brother, the Deputy Lieutenant of Temes county, wrote several letters to the Emperor. In the end, Laczkovics and his companions were also freed and were transferred to Mantua to continue their service; however, due to his insurrectionist conduct, he was forced to leave the army. He was later to take part in the revolt organised by Ignác Martinovics, for which he was condemned to death and beheaded.

After his release, Count Festetics was transferred to the La Tour Dragoon Regiment, stationed in the Austrian Netherlands, but it was decided that this location was simply too close to revolutionary France and because of his rebellious views, this was considered a threat. For this reason, the Hofkriegsrat ordered his return to Vienna and then his transfer to Milan. However, the count wished to retire from service. The emperor did not approve his request as the count's actions were easier to oversee from within the army. In his monthly reports, the commander of the dragoon regiment in Milan gave a favourable assessment of his behaviour. The Emperor ultimately authorised the retirement of Festetics on 19 May 1791. In 1797, at his estate in Keszthely, he established a three-year agricultural college called the Georgikon, where the languages of education were Latin, German and Hungarian.

During the 1790–1791 Diet, the Danubian provinces initiated the establishment of a Hungarian officer training program. In their proposal, they argued that “in order to promote military education, a national military school should be created for the noble youth, where they could receive theoretical and practical training similar to that of Neustadt. It would be set up in Buda and the counties could select and send young

noblemen to the institution in proportion to their contribution to the foundation.”<sup>15</sup> While Leopold II did not reject the idea, all the tasks related to realising it were postponed until the following Diet. As a preparatory measure, Act LXVII of 1790–91 enacted the establishment of nine national committees and the appointment of representatives. Committee number seven, the Committee on Science and Education (*deputatio in re litteraria*) was assigned the task of examining the educational and academic regulations on a national level. The committee was dedicated, among other things, “[to] planning the foundation of a military academy with the aim of transforming it into a military officer training institute; additionally, those who had a deeper understanding of the management of such an institute were also invited to the committee meetings.”<sup>16</sup>

Between August 1791 and February 1793, the Committee held its sessions in two terms, the first being held from 12 August until 29 September 1791. During this time, the members organised sixteen sessions and discussed the reform proposals assigned to them. As no military officer had the competence to prepare a draft plan for a Hungarian military academy, it was decided to put the task on hold until a suitable expert could be involved. For the time being, committee member and palatine János Somogyi was entrusted with the collection of all the related documents. Eventually, on 29 September 1791, during the last meeting, committee chair József Űrményi was entrusted with the elaboration of the military academy's plans. When the committee reconvened on 5 November 1792, they discussed a study on the establishment of the first Hungarian officer training institute prepared by an architect, Captain Mihály Péchy, a member of the Military Engineer Corps. Péchy “had a deeper understanding of the management of such an institute” as he had graduated from the renowned institutions in Vienna, the Military Engineering Academy and the Academy of Fine Arts. In his introduction, he listed and described the human qualities and scientific knowledge the military officers are required to possess. According to him, young cadets need health, courage, intelligence, and knowledge of other disciplines. He highlighted that those young men who “are in contact with many other nations, serve together with soldiers from different countries, and can understand military literature in foreign language cannot be deprived of the opportunity to study the German, French and Italian languages. At the same time, the heads of the institute must maintain the high value of the Hungarian language in the eyes of the cadets and give them further education in it.”<sup>17</sup>

According to Péchy, it was essential that the Hungarian military academy have its own admission requirements and curriculum that are independent from both the Military Academy in Wiener Neustadt and the Military Engineering Academy. He emphasised that the future military academy should not only train military officers “as is done in Wiener Neustadt, but I believe we need to see these young men as good patriots and true Hungarians at the same time.”<sup>18</sup>



Portal of the Theresian Military Academy

He did not recommend the admission to the future academy of cadets below 14 years of age since "as we see from the experience of the Military Engineering Academy in Vienna, those who are admitted to the academy at a later age become more prepared and knowledgeable than those cadets who enter the academy younger, at 9 years old, and spend more years in the institution."

Writing about the composition and the number of the academic staff, Péchy recommended "selecting teachers from our nation rather than inviting professors from foreign countries". He also proposed to appoint a staff officer as commander of the institute who would also act as the

teacher of military tactics, while a well-trained military engineer would fulfil the role of scientific leader and at the same time teach the science of fortification.

Furthermore, he insisted that the teachers of algebra, arithmetic, geometry and logic have a relevant university or academic degree, and that only a competent physics teacher should hold classes in mechanics, artillery, physics and natural history. The teachers of ancient and modern history as well as geography must be skilled experts in these areas who also possess deep knowledge of planning for battles and operations. Péchy envisaged that each year the institute would admit 120 cadets to its four-year-long program.

*"An academic year at the military school could last 10 months, from mid-September until mid-July when the heat softens the body and mind in the same manner. Those who graduated in geometry at this time could gain some experience in their own village as surveyors, while others could practice drawing and riding. From early to mid-September there would be an Exam, a trial and the examination of the cadets' morality and, if appropriate, a recognition of these. The cadets would be divided into four classes:*

*In the first year class, they would study either German or Hungarian language, logic, geography, ancient history, poetry and drawing.*

*In the second year class, they would study arithmetic, French language, Hungarian history, German manners, morality and drawing common site plans.*

*In the third year class, they would study physics, mechanics, artillery, modern history, French language in greater detail and drawing more complex site plans.*

*In the final year class, they would study the science of fortification, tactics, applied physics and the Italian language. During the holidays, the cadets could practice dancing in the morning after attending the morality courses and then in the afternoon, after catechism."<sup>19</sup>*

Even though Ūrményi was aware of Péchy's proposal, he did not implement it because he wanted to establish a military course rather than an academic program. This course would have worked in parallel to a university curriculum. At the session held on 10 November 1792, he asked the members of the committee to approve a very modest version of the academy and renounce the idea of an institution that would have been similar to the military academy in Wiener Neustadt.

He explained that, due to the lack of financial resources, Hungary would not be able to maintain such an expensive military academy. During one of the last sessions he presented a proposal in Latin with the title of *Projectum circa erigendam Academiam Militarem* [Projects Concerning the Establishment of the Military Academy], with the intention of submitting it to the National Assembly. The proposal was then accepted by the committee without any objections.





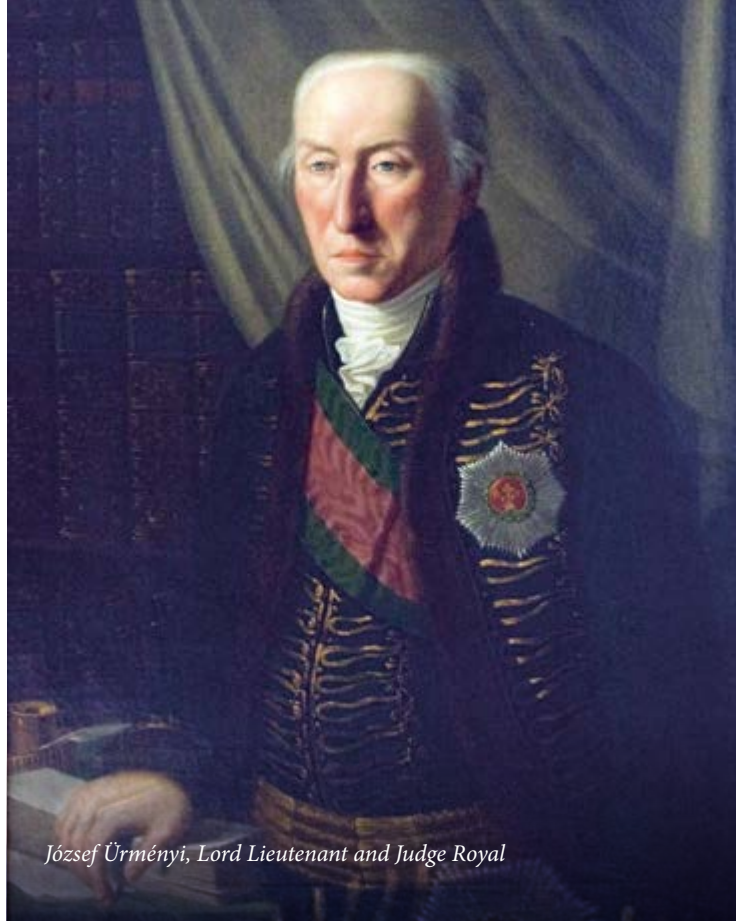
*The Meeting between Leopold II, Grand Duke of Tuscany and Emperor Joseph II  
(Pompeo Batoni)*



One of the major elements of Ürményi's view was that – unlike the military academy in Wiener Neustadt where the pupils were admitted at a very young age – in Hungary, young men could apply to the military academy once they had completed a general education. This would bring two benefits: firstly, those who did not have the necessary physical attributes and skills could be screened; and secondly, the expenses of the state could be lowered. During their studies, future officers would be accommodated in civilian houses as private individuals. This solution offered some great advantages as the cadets, living together in the city among the civilian population would learn the life, discipline and obedience of a soldier while at the same time, it would soon become clear who is unable to meet these requirements. If, for some reason, the scholarship holder became unfit for the scholarship, it would be withdrawn and then given to another cadet. Apart from the teachers of tactics and military architecture, no special academic staff would be required, and the students can attend lectures in all the other required subjects in public college courses or through private lessons. Since the students would have studied several subjects during their high school and college years, the academy's two-year-long courses would be limited only to disciplines closely related to the military sciences.

Ürményi proposed that the commander of the institution should be chosen from among the former students of either the military academy in Wiener Neustadt or another military school, and must be familiar with the operation and management of such institutes. A full-time soldier should also be appointed as one of the teachers, who at the same time would become the official substitute of the commander. The officer candidates would also be required to learn fencing and attend military exercises. After completing the two-year-long military training, the prominent young men would be sent to Vienna, to receive detailed practical training, mainly in artillery. In order to increase the motivation of the youth, His Imperial Highness would be asked to give special consideration to the graduates of this military academy when appointing officers of the Hungarian regiments. Regarding the institute's budget, Ürményi made a very moderate forecast of 6,300 Forints a year. This very modest draft of the military academy, which included several disputable parts, was eventually not submitted to the parliament either, but was only placed in the archives. At the next Diet, the estates rightly complained about not discussing the plan for the establishment of a military academy.

On 1 March 1792, Leopold II suddenly died and his son, Francis I assumed the title of Emperor. The new ruler took a more conservative position on the Hungarian national aspirations than his predecessor, so the emphasis in the Diet was no longer on the establishment of a military academy, but rather on improving the situation of Hungarian officers serving in the Imperial Army. As regards Hungarian officer training, the Diet requested the approval of the king to “train Hungarian young men for military service



*József Ürményi, Lord Lieutenant and Judge Royal*



*Francis I, Emperor of Austria, King of Hungary and Bohemia  
(Johann Jakob Hermann)*

in Hungarian academies”. On the other hand, Act IX of 1792 declared merely that “the sons of the Hungarian military officers should, as much as possible, be given the opportunity to train themselves for military service in military academies”.<sup>20</sup> With this, the question of Hungarian military officer training was removed from the agenda.



“Let it be called Ludovika Academy”

18





One year after the Habsburg Monarchy had signed the Treaty of Lunéville in 1801, following a series of defeats against France, Vienna sought to reorganise the Imperial Army, a burden which would have been borne primarily by Hungary. In order to enlist the support of the Estates, the Emperor convened a Diet in May, which also provided

a good opportunity for putting the question of Hungarian officer training back on the agenda, as proposed by Festetics. As a result of significant monetary contributions, Act IV of 1802 on the military academy, studies and on the supporting foundation by Count György Festetics, Lajos Rhédey and Mihály Párnitzky was approved, which declared that:

*“The Estates hereby express their humble gratitude to His Imperial Majesty for approving their intention that, as long as a military academy is not accessible in the country to train the noblemen in the sciences necessary for their military advancement, a department of the University of Pest should organise military lectures during this interim period, and for graciously allowing young men conducting these studies to keep their scholarships and eventually receive new ones. We also express our deep gratitude to Count György Festetics de Tolna, Lajos Rhédey de Kisréde and Mihály Párnitzky for their noble contributions. Because of their faithful reverence and enthusiasm for His Imperial Majesty and inspired by their strong love for their compatriots and homeland, they gifted 40, 10 and 1 thousand Forints respectively. As stated in their charter, this contribution will help some young men to study military sciences at the military academy in Vienna until a similar institute is built in this country too. We thank you for not only graciously accepting the proposal, but also for promising to take action through the Hofkriegsrat to admit new foundation students to the Military Academy in Vienna.”<sup>21</sup>*

Unfortunately, regardless of the abovementioned Act, the establishment of the Hungarian military academy was not only delayed but, due to the burdens of the renewed war against France, suspended for quite some time. Act VIII, adopted by the Diet of Pozsony in October 1805 stated that, in the circumstances of war, the issues prepared by the committees in 1791 would not be discussed because those are already known to the Emperor. Nonetheless, the palatine promised to advocate for and endorse this cause in the imperial court and “His Majesty also assured his grace and consolation.”<sup>22</sup> Citing the severe war conditions was justified,

as the empire was indeed in a very difficult position. On 12 May 1805, Napoleon’s forces occupied Vienna and on 2 December the Austrian Empire suffered a decisive defeat by the Grande Armée at Austerlitz. Considering these events, it is understandable that the proposal to establish Hungarian military officer training was not an immediate priority for Francis I. His only response to the 14-year-old issue of a Hungarian military academy was to acknowledge it. The way he assured his promise and the half-hearted consolation he offered clearly shows his absolutism and lack of interest in and sympathy towards the Hungarian cause.



Francis I, Emperor of Austria and Napoleon at Austerlitz



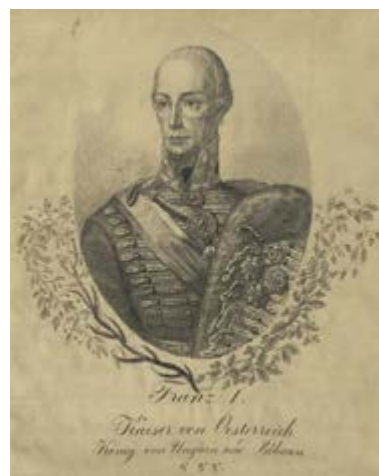
Following his failure in 1805, in the following year the Emperor appointed Archduke Charles as generalissimo, the highest ranking military officer, leading an entire army. One of the major questions debated by the Diet which convened in 1807 was to decide the ratio that Hungary would share in the replenishment of the imperial forces that had just suffered great losses in the war. From Francis I's perspective, it would have been favourable if the Diet had provided a proportionate number of recruits from Hungary. However, the Hungarian Estates decided to offer just 12,000 conscripts, and an additional 200,000 Forints for recruitment. To cope with the shortage of military manpower, providing 12,000 conscripts would have in any case been a near certainty as that was the duty of the counties, even by means of conscription. On the other hand, although the amount allocated to recruitment was an uncertain factor, it nevertheless helped young men to volunteer for 20 years of service.

The Diet drew the attention of Francis I to the fact that military service was not an attractive career path for Hungarians in many respects. The young men who enlisted did not receive any assurance that they would not be assigned to a German regiment where, due to the language barrier, they would not be able to acquire the necessary knowledge even during training, nor would they be able to perform well in combat. For this reason, they would be put at a disadvantage compared to other soldiers and would lose the opportunity to advance to a higher rank. Should the staff and the officers be selected from among Hungarian candidates, the circumstances in the Hungarian regiments would be more favourable, although the operational language would remain German, which could nevertheless complicate the life of the soldiers. In order for young men to voluntarily join the army, it would be essential to guarantee that they would be assigned to Hungarian regiments, where the officers as well as the operational language was Hungarian. Permitting Hungarian to be used as an additional operational language of the army did not seem feasible from the perspective of the ruler as only 27 regiments out of the 120 imperial regiments were Hungarian. The Emperor insisted on continuing the regular practice: within the Hungarian regiments, German language was used until the rank of battalion commander; then, within the companies, orders were issued in Hungarian.

The Diet of Hungary, in accordance with the Emperor's wishes, enacted that Hungary would provide 12,000 recruits to compensate for the losses of the Imperial Army and allocate 200,000 Forints for recruitment. However, in Paragraph 9, Act I of 1807, it was decided that:

*"The major concern in the recruitment of volunteers is that they would not understand each other and the orders received if they are assigned to a company where the Hungarian language cannot be used; these difficulties would not only affect the enthusiasm of recent joiners, but also that of others. In order to avoid the occurrence of even more serious challenges that would possibly jeopardise military service, His Highness will take the necessary measures to appoint chief officers and non-commissioned officers who are knowledgeable in the Hungarian language."*<sup>23</sup>

In terms of the operations of the Imperial Army during war, one had to accept that no further concessions could be made at that time to protect Hungarian interests. It was not possible to assign all the young Hungarian recruits exclusively to Hungarian regiments, considering that the Imperial Army, consisting of 340,000 soldiers, had suffered heavy losses during the recent wars. Using a common operational language in the army was an essential condition for efficient cooperation. Furthermore, it was not feasible to jointly deploy the Hungarian regiments as Hungary did not have its own artillery units, and when it came to the cavalry, Hungarian soldiers served in Hussar units together with other nationalities.



Francis I, Emperor of Austria,  
King of Hungary and Bohemia  
(Albert Riemensberg von  
Radmannsdorf)



*The main square of Pozsony in 1843 (Rudolf von Alt)*











Dagobert Wurmser (1724–1797) Austrian Field Marshal  
(unknown author)

Moreover, even at brigade level, it was inevitable that both German and Hungarian soldiers would serve jointly. Consequently, neither the Emperor nor those who dealt with the military affairs of the Empire were interested in treating the issue of Hungarian military officer training as a priority. It was much more practical to educate officers of different nationalities in Austrian academies who would then become committed to serving the Empire rather than promote the establishment of an institution in Hungary that maintained the idea of Hungarian national independence.

As a result of the French Revolution, the concept of mass national conscription, the *levée en masse* had been introduced. This entailed the requisitioning of all able-bodied men for military service at a certain age. Compared to all the previous recruitment efforts, the number of men in the army as well as their replenishment became a lot more efficient through this measure. Although the Revolution made it possible to implement this system in France, it was unfortunately not possible in the Habsburg Empire – especially in Hungary – due to the legal order in place. The noblemen were exempt of tax payments, but in return, they were required to take up arms to defend the nation. In spite of this responsibility, they were not obliged to serve in the Imperial Army, but rather in locally raised units known as *banderium*. The largely untrained, poorly equipped insurgent troops of these units did not attain the standards of the regular regiments, but they still represented an armed force for the Emperor.

In addition to the Imperial Army, the *Landwehr*, an armed militia, was established in Austria in May 1808 for territorial defence tasks, while in the Kingdom of Hungary this was the responsibility of the *insurrectio* (often translated as feudal militia). Even as far back as the Ottoman Wars in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, the untrained and poorly equipped armies of the noblemen had not represented a significant military force and this situation did not change at all in the following centuries. During the Diets held at the time of the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars (1792–1815), the development of the armed forces was one of the major topics on the agenda. Amid rising losses, the question of military supplements received renewed attention. The *insurrectio* militia was considered to be a potential reserve that could have been utilised to replenish the losses in the regular army. The Estates naturally did not view the Imperial and Royal Army as a Hungarian entity, since from the noblemen's perspective the *insurrectio* was the only Hungarian army, although clearly it had to adapt to the requirements of the era.



Major General Count Joseph Esterházy  
(Johann Baptist Glunk)

Count Joseph Esterházy (regimental commander of the insurgent troops) had submitted a proposal back in 1797 to establish a standing army that would execute the tasks of the Hussars and Hajduks at the county level in peacetime, while in wartime would provide the organisational framework for the *insurrectio*. Major Count Bittner presented a proposal in June 1806, in which he emphasised the importance of a permanent

army that would be composed of all the branches except the artillery. In peacetime, its primary task would be to train officers and non-commissioned officers, thus avoiding the need to transfer command staff from the Imperial Army during a war. In the Hussar companies an additional 24 cadets, carefully selected from the elite noblemen, would serve alongside the regular active staff. These men, after mobilisation, would enter the insurgent Hussar regiments as fully trained and able officers or non-commissioned officers. A third proposal was made by Retired Hussar Colonel János Gosztlányi, who envisioned an army of 60,000 soldiers that would comprise 520 military officers and 4,800 men in peacetime. Officers and NCOs would be selected from young noblemen, but he never clarified how they would have gained all the necessary knowledge to serve in the military.

Due to the frequent defeats of the Habsburg Monarchy, regulating the *insurrectio* became a regular item on the agenda from 1807, but this time it acquired more significance. Archduke Charles, Chief of Staff of the Imperial Army, could not stress enough the need to increase the number of regular soldiers and the importance of having a consistent number of officers available. He believed that the *insurrectio* was an obsolete remnant of the medieval feudal system. He also pointed out that the insurgents would never defeat the enemy or save the empire, since they did not have enough time to be formed and to exercise appropriately. Hence, instead of regulating the *insurrectio*, he proposed a solution to this obligation, that would be a burden for everyone. Field Marshal Baron József Alvinczy recommended the establishment of a "reserve militia" which would form a separate army, but in reality it would receive the same treatment as the standing army.

It was only the newly appointed judge royal, József Ürményi who raised the idea of modernisation. He warned that having the *insurrectio* subordinated to the Hofkriegsrat would lead to unpredictable consequences and compromise the cooperation with the Estates. The details of the reorganisation were planned by General Miklós Vay who emphasised that the *insurrectio* should be in line with the military requirements of his time. To remediate its recognised deficiencies, he suggested that the insurgent noblemen serve in the imperial standing army, but as a separate part of the army. The number of permanent soldiers would be set at 50,000, with an additional 100,000 recruits if required. These ideas were not received positively: the imperial court was reluctant to accept a proposal for a separate, large Hungarian army, while the nobility were not keen on the idea of joining a standing army. In 1808, the Emperor called on Archduke Joseph, Palatine of Hungary to make a proposal on reforming the Hungarian armed forces. The palatine, recognising the interests of the Estates, was aware that the impoverished nobility – which made up the majority of the insurgent forces – would be exposed to a heavy financial burden once called to arms; and that the *insurrectio* could be subordinated to the Hofkriegsrat as a result of the reorganised military structure. The latter was also confirmed by Archduke Charles, who had stated that the restructured *insurrectio* would belong to his command.

Archduke Joseph defined the role of the *insurrectio* in three aspects: in peacetime it was a reserve for the imperial standing army, in wartime it took part in the protection of the country and it also served to maintain order within the country. The training of the *insurrectio* was



View of Vienna from the Belvedere gardens  
(Robert Wallis)





Archduke Joseph, Palatine of Hungary  
(Dietrich Montent)

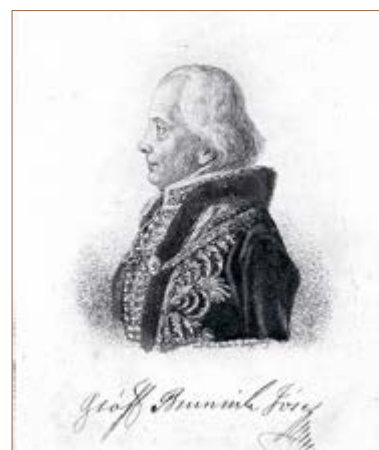


to be carried out in peacetime, and in emergencies they could be deployed together with the regular forces. This proposal finally met with the approval of the Emperor who then convened the Diet to discuss the execution of these reforms. Act II of 1808 formally regulated the *insurrectio*. In the following three years, the Emperor, in case the country was attacked by foreign forces, was entitled to call the *insurrectio* to arms without convening the Diet. However, he was not authorised to use these forces to replenish the losses of the Imperial Army. The insurgent troops were to be commanded by Hungarian noblemen and Paragraph 20 highlighted that "in these units, Hungarian language should be used for orders and reports".<sup>24</sup>

Although these were significant achievements for the Hungarian nationalist endeavour, the conditions still had to be created for the insurgent commanders to become acquainted with the rules of military tasks and to be able to carry out military manoeuvres with their subordinates. Back in 1800, the Palatine had already asked György Keglevich to make a summary of the Austrian regulations for the Hungarians. As a result of his work, the manuals *Duties of Hungarian Insurgents* and *The Hungarian Insurgent* were published. Then, in 1808, General Baron Miklós Vay translated the latest regulations written one year earlier – and edited personally by Archduke Charles – for the infantry of the Imperial and Royal Army. Subsequently, József Csohány, Sándor Tanárky and László Teleki began translating the other regulations, and finally six Hungarian-language military regulations were prepared for the *insurrectio* (feudal militia), all based on the regulations of Archduke Charles. Creating a Hungarian operational language which was compliant with the requirements of the period was a serious challenge, hence they had to revisit the regulations of Francis II Rákóczi.

Due to the difficult circumstances arising from the Napoleonic Wars and as a result of great efforts on the part of the Hungarian Estates, the Diet of 1808 finally settled the question of Hungarian military affairs while simultaneously giving full backing to the establishment of a national military officer training institute. In September, a fundraising drive was organised to support the building of the military academy. As a result of this effort more than half million Forints had been collected by 1 October 1808. On 3 October, Francis I donated the building of the Theresianum in Vác to the future academy, and the Queen consort of Hungary, Maria Ludovika, also supported the cause with a donation of 50,000 Forints from her coronation gift. In response, Baron István Acél, chair of the National Assembly, asked the queen consort for her consent to have the academy named after her. "We would be honoured to support the deeds of our husband. We would like to make the same effort to serve the nation. Let the academy be called Ludovika Academy. The name will not represent our donation, but rather our commitment and love to the nation"<sup>25</sup> – replied the queen consort.

On 25 October, Master of Treasury, Count József Brunsvik, who was also the chair of the selected committee of the military academy, presented a detailed plan for the institute. This document stipulated that the first year's intake would comprise 40 cadets and this number would be increased to 200 by 1814. The education would last for six years, with a maximum of 30 cadets in each class. 13 to 15 years old young men with the necessary knowledge (in subjects such as Latin, geography, arithmetic, calligraphy and history) would be admitted, and in the first part of their education the emphasis would be on enhancing their German language skills. Applications were scheduled for May, admissions for September while the academic year would start in October. Throughout the training, special attention would be paid to physical training that included swimming, dancing, riding, wrestling and ball games. Additionally, they would gain some experience with weapons. Three meals a day were to be provided for the cadets. The academy would also provide uniform for its students: a dark one for weekdays and a white one for holidays. Reveille would be at 6 a.m., and the morning classes were organised between 7 a.m. and noon. After a lunch break, the classes would continue from 2 p.m. until 8 p.m. The classes would be followed by dinner, then the cadets would retire at 9 p.m. Each class was to have an officer and two cadet sergeants assigned to them as supervisors and preceptors. The first three classes were to be transformed into a company to be commanded by a first lieutenant. The final three classes were to be merged into a company commanded by a captain. The company commanders would be assisted by two lieutenants and six cadet sergeants. The cadet companies would be commanded by a major. The provisions were secured by two lieutenants and four cadet sergeants.



József Brunsvik,  
Lord Lieutenant and Judge Royal  
(Ferdinand von Lütgendorf-Leinburg)



From the second year onwards, education was to be held in German. The following subjects were on the curriculum: religion, language proficiency (German, Hungarian, Latin, French), calligraphy and spelling, writing and official language, geography, history, statistics, logic, morality, legal knowledge, natural sciences, arithmetic, fortification, infantry and cavalry, tactics and military, drawing, cartography, terrain, practice, riding, dancing, fencing, gymnastics and swimming. Prominent graduates should be promoted to sub-lieutenant, while the others received the rank of warrant officer. According to the draft, the aim of the academy was to prepare young nobles to join the Hungarian regiments as skilful and well-prepared officers, and to be able to serve as auxiliaries on the field, as offi-

cers at the headquarter, and with time, to achieve even the highest military ranks.<sup>26</sup>

During the Diet held between 27 and 29 October, both houses discussed the proposal and submitted it to the Emperor. In his response on 3 November, Francis I agreed that the graduates could complete their seventh year at the Academy in Vienna. Regarding the maintenance costs, the Estates suggested that, similarly to the Theresian Academy in Vienna, the Hungarian military academy should also benefit from the income of the abbey in Báticasék, but this idea was rejected by the chancellery. To conclude the Diet, the act on the establishment of the military academy was promulgated on 5 November.

*View of the Ludoviceum from the garden  
(Carl Vasquez)*







## ACT VII OF 1808 ON THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE LUDOVIKA MILITARY ACADEMY

As the Estates discussed the defence of the country, their deliberations were extended not only to the present time but also to the future, so that their sons and descendants would be able to fight not only with force but also, more powerfully, with science, for their homeland, the ancient constitution, and the majestic ruler: Driven by the feelings of reverence for His Imperial Majesty and love of the homeland, they gathered a significant foundation from their voluntary offerings that will be used to build a national military academy and to develop the military sciences in the country. Their efforts were supported by the excellent generosity of Her Majesty Empress consort of Austria and Queen consort of Hungary; His Imperial Majesty, our most gracious King, has approved the wishes of the nobles and, in order that the establishment of such a useful institution not be delayed, he donated the former Theresa building in Vác to house the military academy. For this reason, as the nobles gathered around the throne of His Imperial Majesty, they expressed their gratefulness and devotion and asked that the academy be called Ludovika to honour the memory of the majestic Queen consort and her love for the Hungarian nation. The nobles immediately decided to establish such a useful and necessary institution, with the gracious approval of His Imperial Majesty:

Section 1. The national military academy is to be located in the former Theresa building in Vác, in order to preserve the memory of the majestic Empress and Queen consort's love for the Hungarian nation, and also to publicly make an infinite homage to the majestic lady, Ludovika.

Section 2. His Imperial Majesty graciously declared that he will not only assume the chief supervision of the institute under the law and the constitution of the country, but will also arrange for the recruitment of individuals suitable and worthy for this office. Also, the whole institute and the funds necessary for its operation are to be sufficiently governed by the intention of the founders and according to the resolution of the National Assembly. Lastly, the nature, character and purpose of the institution of the Academy cannot be changed outside the National Assembly.

Section 3. This institute – the establishment of which was so much desired by the nobles, which was based mainly on the freely given and noble donations of the locals, and which is intended primarily for the future training of Hungarian youth in the military – was offered to the palatine of Hungary as the chief captain of the country by common accord and by unanimous agreement. He received the trust of the people with a grateful heart, and with the gracious approval of His Imperial Majesty, will manage the organisation of this institute according to the principles adopted by the National Assembly and will administer it in all circumstances.

Section 4. The main goal of this academy is to educate and teach the Hungarian youth in the sciences by which they will be suitable and able to serve the homeland usefully, both in the regular army and during a national uprising. However, the young people educated at the academy will also be allowed to enter public service, where their merits will be recognised.

Whereby

Section 5. The educational system in the military academy should include subjects and studies that train youths for both careers, but especially for military service.

Section 6. We can assume that there will be young men living outside the academy who wish to study military sciences. Such young people may be admitted to academic lectures, but on condition that their progress in the sciences and their moral conduct present at least a first-class certificate to the director of the Ludovika Academy. They also should be proficient in the studies required of the other students and obtain permission to visit the academy from the director.

Section 7. The description of the rules and the entire internal organisation of the academic institute will be printed and communicated to the public authorities.

Section 8. The Ludovika Academy shall receive the following benefits with the gracious approval of His Imperial Majesty, both for the director and the educating and teaching officers, as well as for the students:



- a) Both the commanding and supervising officers and the teaching officers shall retain their rank and the advancements which they would have had in their respective regiments.
- b) If places in the academy become vacant, they will be promoted in relation to the merits earned and the usefulness of the individual.
- c) Students who have completed the academic course with excellent or first class results will receive the same employment and benefits as those established at the Academy in Wiener Neustadt.

Section 9. To make the management of this institute more effective, the palatine of Hungary makes a proposal to His Imperial Majesty on the director, supervisor and teacher positions, and appoint other individuals based on the proposal of the director.

Section 10. The director and deputy director of the academy, of whom the latter replaces the former in case of illness and absence, should be a man who teaches military sciences if possible, is a respectable noble patriot, excels in military virtues, and if possible has experience in the education of the youth. Military sciences teachers, as well as supervisors of academic youth, should be chosen from among Hungarian-born officers on active duty, who, as far as possible, have a demonstrated knowledge of the aforementioned sciences and who are recommended by their good and educated characteristics and gentility. Law, Hungarian history, natural sciences and mechanics teachers, as well as masters of languages and physical exercises, will be appointed from among civilian individuals with the necessary qualities if no military officer candidate can be found for these positions. In addition to superintendents, servants are assigned to the academic youth who are selected from among non-commissioned officers and privates of good moral standing. Similarly, it will be necessary to select the right medical staff for the institute, along with a manager, inspector and treasurer needed to manage the funds and keep the accounts. Additionally, the domestic workers should all be loyal and of good moral standing.

Section 11. The director and the deputy director must have the rank of staff officer.

Section 12. As a general rule, young men between the ages of 12 and 15 cannot be admitted to the Ludovika Academy. This was required so that men only enter the Academy after completing either a grammar school or a basic public education. Each applicant was required to certify their excellent or first-class progress in their studies and morals with a school certificate; in addition, they must be in perfect health. The military academy is mainly to admit the sons of noblemen and bourgeois, regardless of their religion.

Section 13. Furthermore, the number of students must be partly in line with the foundation of the institute. It must be determined in such a way that teachers will not be too busy and will have time to take care of each individual, therefore, the number of students cannot exceed 120. Students who pay tuition fees will be obligated by the regulations of the Diet.

Section 14. The training at the Academy will last for six years and the curriculum will include subjects defined by the Diet.

Section 15. Discipline in this academy will follow the model of military discipline, so that the youth educated there will be accustomed to strict obedience, and as soon as they move from the academy to actual military service, they will transition easily.

Section 16. All offerors are obliged to issue bonds dated 1 January 1809, and pay a 6% interest rate from that date. Those who submit their offer later will issue bonds that become effective on the day of their offer, and they are required to pay the 6% interest rate from that day as well. These obligations will, by course of the present act, take precedence over later obligations.

Section 17. Anyone who has offered less than 5,000 Forints shall be required to pay it to the national treasury in semi-annual instalments within one year of 1 January 1809. Those who offered 5,000 or more Forints can keep the amount with them and pay the 6% interest rate until they are dispatched either of necessity or for security reasons.

Section 18. For every 10,000 Forints, whether paid by someone alone or jointly, the founders have the right of presentation, which will be exercisable according to the principles established by the Diet. Furthermore, to eternally preserve the memory of those who have made offerings to this academy with honourable zeal, their names shall be entered in the next line.

The names are as follows:

- Maria Ludovika, Empress consort of Austria and Queen consort of Hungary – 50,000 Forints.
- Archduke Joseph of Austria, Palatine of Hungary – 10,000 Forints.
- Archduke Karl Ambrosius, Archbishop of Esztergom, Primate of Hungary – 20,000 Forints.
- Prince Albert of Saxony – 30,000 Forints.
- Count Sámuel Beleznay, Royal Chamberlain – 14,000 Forints.
- József Zichy, Royal Chamberlain and Councillor, Emissary of Somogy county – 10,000 Forints.

We can assume from the number of offers – even when the donator was not present at the Diet – that there will be more donations, hence further names will be enacted in the next Diet.

Section 19. All obligation letters will be kept in the national archives; the capital is to be paid into the national treasury, and the same applies to the cancellation and placement of the capital, under the supervision of the Palatine of Hungary.

Section 20. The capital for the foundation of the academy shall be placed in loans under the same conditions. Those who wish for the capital borrowed from them to be repaid must report the cancellation to the national treasury six months in advance. This also applies when the board of directors revokes the capital.

Section 21. The administration of the funds of the academy shall be managed by a master, who shall take over the interest received with an assigned inspec-

tor. He shall cover the necessary expenses, but never without the approval of the director or deputy director, who will exercise adequate supervision over the financial and economic affairs of the Institute. The master also maintains the accounts and present them to the headmaster at the end of each year. The Palatine shall order the preparation of a report on the condition of this institute through the directors and it shall be submitted to him together with the treasury's statement. He examines the accounts of the academy at the end of each year and issues a letter of discharge to the accountants. Finally, at the end of each year, the director shall make a complex report on the progress of the Academy and submit it to the Royal Supreme Court with a cash receipt and an extract from the accounts. This annual report will then be communicated to all legal authorities in the country for their information.

Section 22. The director of the institute shall report to each Diet on the state of the academy and the academic progress of the youth.



*Corridor of the Ludovika Main Building, commemorating the patrons*