

LUDOVIIKA UNIVERSITY OF PUBLIC SERVICE

Doctoral School of Military Science

THESIS

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**The establishment and battlefield deployment of the Hungarian royal 1st assault
artillery battalion**

Summary of doctoral (PhD) thesis

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1. Formulation of scientific problem

The biggest problem with research on the Hungarian Royal 1st assault artillery battalion is that few people have studied the subject, so its history has not yet been summarized.

The research often encountered difficulties. The surviving documents of the 1st assault artillery battalion in the collection of the Military History Institute and Museum Military History Archives of the Ministry of Defense are several times more numerous than those of the other seven assault artillery battalions, but even so, they are very fragmentary and scarce. For example, almost no archival material has survived from the 7th (Sümeg) and 13th (Csongrád) assault artillery battalions. At the same time, the starting point for research on assault artillery could be the history, operation, and battlefield performance of the 1st assault artillery battalion, since it was the first to be organized and served as a model for the establishment of the other assault artillery battalions. The officers of the later assault artillery battalions were also trained in Hajmáskér, at the base of the 1st assault artillery battalion, where a separate assault artillery training center was later established. This military organization was also the first to be equipped with the domestically developed and manufactured 40/43M Zrínyi-II assault howitzer, and it was the first to be deployed to the eastern theater of operations, where the unit underwent its baptism of fire. Thus, in my opinion, the 1st assault artillery battalion is best suited for examining the organizational and operational characteristics of the Hungarian assault artillery during World War II, as well as its combat application.

In terms of sources, it was difficult that the documents issued by the Chief of the General Staff were very incomplete, and the source material of the higher units under whose command the battalion fought was also largely destroyed. During the final phase of the siege of the capital, the materials of the 1st assault artillery battalion were buried so that they would be preserved for posterity, but they were not found later, so the lack of sources made research very difficult.

2. Hypotheses

When I began my research on the 1st assault artillery battalion, I formulated several hypotheses:

The establishment of the Hungarian assault artillery was preceded by a long and lively scientific debate. Ernő Billnitzer, who actively participated in this debate, later became the supervisor of the assault artillery units. **Hypothesis:** I assumed that the intellectual work preceding the organization of the new unit spared the assault artillery from many teething problems.

In the surviving sources, the battalion commander is surrounded by strong admiration and respect. This shows that Captain József Barankay, who was entrusted with the formation of the unit, had a great influence on the later battlefield activities of the assault artillery. The future battalion commander conducted a rigorous screening of those who applied to join the assault artillery, so those who had the honor of wearing the assault artillery badge had to prove their aptitude. **Hypothesis:** I assumed that the courage and valiant conduct demonstrated on the battlefield was due to the higher standards applied in the selection of assault artillery officers and crew.

Reading the memoirs of former assault artillery officers and based on the decorations earned by them, the assault artillery corps seemed to me to be an elite unit of outstanding combat value. **Hypothesis:** I assumed that the assault artillery was one of the most effective units of the Royal Hungarian Army.

Based on logs and memoirs, most of the assault howitzers were not destroyed in combat, but had to be left behind due to technical reasons arising from improper use. **Hypothesis:** I assumed that the technical losses were due to improper use by higher-ranking commanders.

The Hungarian royal 1st assault artillery battalion quickly became renowned within the army for its high fighting spirit, sacrifice, and at the same time, its cohesion and camaraderie. **Hypothesis:** The effectiveness of the assault artillery battalion depended largely on the preparedness and commitment of the officers, which they were able to live up to.

3. The aim of the research

My aim in writing my doctoral dissertation was to use the available source material to provide as thorough an account as possible of the history of the 1st assault artillery battalion, from the selection of the first officers to the battalion's disbandment. Another goal was to present the officer corps by sketching the biographies of those who belonged to the assault artillery battalion, even if only for a short time, as conclusions can also be drawn from personal stories. An important element of my work is to present to the reader, as a case study, how a new branch of the military was established in the Royal Hungarian Army. Last but not least, I examined how assault artillery was used on the battlefield. So, in addition to the role initially intended for the new branch of service, I show how it was used by commanders in real combat conditions and what the consequences of their decisions were.

4. Research methodology

During my research, I endeavored to locate and process all available source material on the 1st assault artillery battalion. To this end, I first reviewed the assault artillery collection held by the Military History Institute and Museum (HIM) of the Ministry of Defense (HM) in the Military History Archives (HL). This source group contains documents collected by members of the former Assault Artillery Comrades' Circle, as well as memoirs written by former assault artillerymen. Based on the assault artillery collection, I first reconstructed the battalion's officer roster.

I then searched the Military History Institute and Museum (HIM) of the Ministry of Defense (HM) Central Archives for the personal files of the assault artillery officers, which brought to light additional individuals and events. This was aided by the autobiographies found in the personal files, which included their participation in battles and their contact with former comrades.

Unfortunately, apart from the officers, we know almost nothing about the other members of the unit. The logs and memoirs mention a few non-commissioned officers and enlisted men, but they are mostly mentioned in connection with their heroic deaths. It should also be added that thanks to the database of fallen heroes published by the Military History Institute and Museum, a highly accurate list of fallen soldiers can be compiled.

Some of the department's personnel also appear in the minutes of the Rohamtüzér Bajtársi Kör (Assault Artillery Comrades' Circle) organized after the change of regime, but it is clear that it was mainly the officers who kept in touch with each other, with only a very small proportion of the crew represented.

In the next phase of my research, I studied tape recordings of interviews with former assault artillery officers, which revealed new individuals, making it highly likely that I was able to compile a complete list of the officers belonging to the 1st assault artillery battalion.

Finally, I reviewed the records of the Ministry of Defense's registry and casualty departments, where I found data on soldiers who were killed, wounded, sickened, or disappeared during combat.

In my dissertation, I processed the military science literature published between the two world wars, as well as studies related to assault artillery that appeared in the columns of the Hungarian Military Gazette and the Hungarian Military Review.

5. Concise description of the research conducted, chapter by chapter

The thesis consists of five chapters.

In the **first chapter**, I analyzed Hungarian military science literature from between the two world wars. Based on the articles described in the dissertation, it can be said that the artillery officers of the time were seriously concerned with the question of how they could most effectively fulfill the combat tasks expected of them. The vast majority of the authors of these studies fought as young officers in World War I, and based on their battlefield experience, they sought to find solutions for the most effective use of accompanying artillery. The restrictions imposed by the Treaty of Trianon stimulated academic life, so that by the time the opportunity arose to organize assault artillery, consensus had been reached on several controversial issues. Thanks to this, it can be said that the assault gun was a very modern combat vehicle during World War II, which – with proper preparation and training – could provide serious firepower during the final phase of an attack, the assault, through mutual support and cover with the infantry. Assault guns could prove to be a decisive factor when used at the right time and in the right terrain.

In the **second chapter**, I examined the most important stages in the establishment of the assault artillery unit. Hungary's entry into the war on the side of the Third Reich made it necessary to expand the Royal Hungarian Army as quickly as possible and equip it with modern weapons. The events of World War II showed that military virtues cannot compensate for technological backwardness; soldiers cannot fulfill their duties without suitable weapons. It is therefore essential to continuously develop the army and put modern military technology into service. During World War II, assault artillery emerged as a modern and effective branch of the military. The experiences gained on the Eastern Front led military decision-makers to organize this new branch of artillery within the Royal Hungarian Army, following the German model. When organizing the unit, the Chief of the General Staff selected a charismatic leader and experienced commander as the first step to learn from the experiences of his German counterparts in the German assault artillery course, then adapt them to Hungarian conditions

and organize young, talented officers around him. The Hungarian assault gunner course was organized by the training staff based on the methods and topics learned from the Germans. Both the German and Hungarian assault artillery courses prepared participants for battlefield conditions, were difficult to complete, and screened participants. First Lieutenant Rolf Werner, an instructor at the German assault artillery training school in Burg bei Magdeburg, was a member of a committee that observed the assault artillery course in Hajmáskér and, in his opinion, it perfectly met German training requirements. The main focus of the assault artillery officer training was to ensure that they could perform all the tasks that would later be expected of an assault gunner, so that the officers would be aware of the consequences and casualties that their orders could entail. Completing the course was not easy, as participants had to meet high expectations. Even during the preparation period, the class commander made no secret of the fact that higher casualty rates were to be expected among the team than elsewhere. The training of the officers was followed by the training of the crew, which took place partly in parallel. The requirements during training were the same as those expected of the officers. The difference was that the officers had to know all the tasks of an assault gunner, while the crew only had to know their own tasks. When organizing the 1st assault artillery class, the Hungarian Army General Staff paid special attention to ensuring that the best trained and most suitable officers were assigned to the new unit. Once the core of the officer corps had been assembled, the training of the crew could begin, led by officers with up-to-date knowledge. The leaders considered it important to equip the newly formed assault artillery battalion with the best possible military technology, which led to the production of the Zrínyi-II assault howitzer, which met the requirements of the assault artillery.

In the **third chapter**, I dealt with the battlefield application of the 1st assault artillery battalion. Hungarian assault howitzers were first deployed in April 1944 against the opposing Soviet forces, and then, as a result of the Soviet offensive operations in July 1944, they participated in the retreat to the Carpathian line under the command of the VII Corps of the 1st Hungarian Army. The rearguard battles were fought by the 2nd Armored Division and the 1st and 2nd batteries of the 1st assault artillery battalion under the command of Major General Zsedényi. The subsequent battles of the 1st assault artillery battalion were not characterized by thoroughly prepared and planned offensive operations similar to those of the past, but rather by reactive and defensive combat in response to the current situation. The task of the assault gunners was often to cover the retreat and delay the Soviet advance. As a result, the assault gunners were unable to choose the most ideal terrain and time for using their assault howitzers, but had to adapt to the conditions imposed on them by the Soviets. The conditions for the use of assault artillery were also not met by the fact that the first two batteries of the assault artillery battalion mainly supported the retreat of the 7th Infantry Division, which, according to its own commander, Major General Géza Vörös, was unable to put up serious resistance. Even in the case of minor enemy attacks, the soldiers of the infantry division repeatedly fled or deviated from the enemy's line of attack, so the assault artillery did not receive the infantry support that would have been essential for effective combat. Due to the inadequate courage and perseverance of its soldiers on the battlefield, the 7th Infantry Division was later disbanded as an example, and its personnel were merged into the 24th Infantry Division. The 1st and 2nd

batteries began their retreat together, but as a result of the situation that had developed in the meantime, the two batteries broke up into smaller units, which were able to reunite from time to time. The pace and direction of the retreat were determined by the orders of the commander of the 2nd Armored Division, which stipulated the time until which certain points or settlements of tactical importance had to be held in order to cover the retreating army. However, this resulted in the advancing Soviet forces regularly encircling and surrounding the rear guard assault artillery units, which were then forced to break through enemy lines in order to re-establish contact with their own forces and receive supplies. After reaching the Carpathian line, Romania's defection gave the 1st assault artillery battalion a new combat mission. As a result of the Romanian defection, Soviet troops quickly invaded Transylvania. The Hungarian military leadership was not sufficiently prepared to defend the area, so it was necessary to redeploy striking forces to the new front as soon as possible. In addition to the 7th and 10th assault artillery battalions, the 1/3rd assault artillery battery was also deployed, but they did not take part in serious combat and were not assigned tasks appropriate to the role of assault artillery. The technical equipment of the 1/3 battery was handed over to the 10th assault artillery battalion, and then the 7th and 10th assault artillery battalions also withdrew continuously to Torda and the Great Plain, where they were deployed again. Subsequently, Major General Ernő Billnitzer, commander of the assault artillery troops, ordered the assault artillery battalions to defend Budapest under the command of the Chief of the General Staff of the Hungarian Army in order to support the capital's defenders during the fighting. Urban warfare was completely contrary to the rules of assault artillery use, as the advantage of the assault howitzer's mobility could not be exploited in the battles fought on the rubble-covered streets. Unfortunately, the surviving sources are very incomplete, but it is clear that complete chaos reigned in the capital, with assault howitzers being deployed ad hoc at points where the risk of the defensive line being breached was highest. The assault artillery had few assault howitzers at the beginning of the siege, but the unfavorable conditions and lack of supplies completely depleted the combat vehicle stock, so most of the assault artillery soldiers took part in infantry combat, which was also a waste. By the end of the siege, the personnel of the 1st assault artillery battalion had either been killed or taken prisoner by the Soviets. This marked the end of the unit's history.

In the **fourth chapter**, I analyzed the organization and leadership of the 1st assault artillery battalion. From the beginning of the organizational process, the Hungarian royal 1st assault artillery battalion received significant support from the Chief of the General Staff. He appointed a charismatic commander with good organizational skills to lead the battalion, gave him considerable leeway in selecting personnel, and equipped him with the most modern military technology and equipment. The assault artillery officers were committed to the battalion, and under their leadership, the battalion quickly became a close-knit group. The biggest obstacle was the lack of knowledge among the commanders and personnel of the infantry units, as they had not received sufficient training in cooperating with the new unit. When organizing the new unit, the Chief of the General Staff chose a leader who had repeatedly proven his command abilities to head the model unit, and then appointed a senior officer who was familiar with the unit's tasks, purpose, and capabilities and had participated in the scientific debate prior to its establishment to head the unit. He then provided all the necessary equipment,

from the most modern combat vehicles to training aids. Last but not least, the most suitable soldiers were selected, who were worthy of using the high-value military technology and were able to meet the high expectations. These factors ensured the battlefield success of the Hungarian royal 1st assault artillery battalion.

In the **fifth chapter**, I presented and analyzed the careers of officers who played a role in organizing the assault artillery unit and served in the 1st assault artillery battalion. The analysis focused on the officers' age, origin, educational background, rank, frontline experience, specialized training, transfer to other units, decorations, injuries, captivity, date of termination of legal status, post-war emigration, further education, and the proportion of those who died heroically. The analysis shows that the officers of the Hungarian royal 1st assault artillery battalion were highly trained, committed, courageous, and self-sacrificing soldiers who undertook missions involving heavy losses and led their subordinates to the bitter end. The competence and aptitude of the officers were the cornerstone of the battalion's effectiveness.

6. Summary conclusions

At the beginning of my research, I assumed that the assault artillery was one of the most effective branches of the Hungarian Royal Army. I came to this conclusion after reading the memoirs and recollections of former assault artillery officers.

When writing my dissertation, I tried to reconstruct as thoroughly as possible the circumstances of the 1st assault artillery battalion's deployment on the battlefield, the details of the battles, and their effectiveness. Subsequently, through the biographies of the assault artillery officers, I presented the military leaders and commanders who determined the reputation of the assault artillery. The evaluation of their life paths proved to me that the military officers who were assigned to the assault artillery underwent a rigorous selection process, were well trained, and highly motivated.

I also presented the main military technical equipment used by the 1st assault artillery battalion, the 40/43M Zrínyi-II assault howitzer, comparing it with the artillery used by other assault artillery battalions. This comparison shows that the Hungarian-developed Zrínyi-II assault howitzer was a serious combat weapon, and that Hungarian tank manufacturing, which lagged behind its competitors, managed to produce something outstanding with this assault gun. (It should be added that some criticized the Zrínyi's 105 mm howitzer for not having enough energy to penetrate the armor of more modern Soviet tanks. However, the Zrínyi assault howitzer was not designed and manufactured for this purpose; the Zrínyi-I assault gun was intended for this purpose.)

Closely related to this is the fact that, according to recollections, most of the Zrínyi II assault guns were not destroyed during assault artillery combat missions, but had to be damaged and rendered combat ineffective by the crew due to technical malfunctions during the poorly organized retreat to the Carpathians. At the same time, the assault howitzers of the 1st assault artillery battalion destroyed a large number of Soviet tanks, thus demonstrating their high combat value.

Two of the assault artillery officers presented in the chapter on the officers of the Hungarian royal 1st assault artillery battalion died heroically when their combat vehicles were destroyed. Among them, First Lieutenant András Kulifay died heroically during the battle of Budapest in a Turán tank, not in a Zrínyi-II assault howitzer, while First Lieutenant Barnabás Kőszeghy fought in a StuG-III assault howitzer and was already the battery commander of the 7th assault artillery battalion at the time. Among the casualties, there are five cases that occurred during the firing of assault howitzers. Two of these were confirmed to have occurred during the battles fought in the Carpathian foothills, when Warrant Officer Lőrinc Buszek and Sergeant Zsigmond Csengery-Papp were hit by armor-piercing grenades fired their Zrínyi. Warrant Officer István Forintos's assault gun was hit during the fighting in Budapest, while Warrant Officer Lóránt Molnár's was hit during a counterattack in the direction of Érd. We also know about the Zrínyi assault howitzer fired at the Southern Railway Station, commanded by First Lieutenant Tibor Rátz. This assault howitzer, christened Sárika, remained on the outskirts of Városmajor for months after the fall of the capital. In total, we know of five assault guns being fired. Since the battalion certainly did not receive new ammunition during its retreat to the eastern theater of operations and its withdrawal to the Carpathians, I will treat this period separately. During the withdrawal from the fighting, the battalion handed over the remaining assault guns to the 7th and 10th assault artillery battalions, and due to a lack of sources, we do not know whether the assault guns used later came from new supplies or were the Zrínyi IIs that had been used originally. Thus, it can be stated with certainty that by June 1944, 31 Zrínyi II assault guns had been delivered to the eastern theater of operations as artillery for the 1st assault artillery battalion, two of which were destroyed by the Soviets.

All that remains of the 1st and 2nd batteries is that by the time they reached the Carpathian Mountains, they had only four assault howitzers left. According to recollections, the 3rd battery had a full complement of assault guns when they reached the Tatár Pass. This is contradicted by the fact that they were supplemented with two Zrínyi IIs before being transported to Transylvania and deployed in the defensive battles there. If the two batteries (and the staff battery accompanying them) had only four guns left, it follows that 17 of the original 21 Zrínyi IIs were lost. These two batteries included Warrant Officer Buszek and Sergeant Csengery-Papp, so two of the presumed 17 assault guns were demonstrably fired by the enemy, while most of the remaining 15 assault guns were probably rendered inoperable for technical reasons due to insufficient maintenance capacity and capabilities. Recollections of the retreat repeatedly mention that the Germans forced the Zrínyis into a stream beside the road or were forced to destroy the stuck assault gun.

According to sources, despite the small number of assault guns lost during the actual combat, the assault gunners inflicted heavy losses on enemy armor and wreaked havoc on enemy manpower. Unfortunately, due to the incompleteness of the surviving sources, it is not possible to quantify the effectiveness of the assault gunners, but based on the ratio of losses suffered and inflicted, it can definitely be said that this unit represented a high combat value.

At the beginning of my research, I also assumed that the personality of the battalion commander greatly determined the effectiveness of the unit on the battlefield. While organizing the archival materials, I repeatedly came across comments from former assault artillery officers stating that Captain Barankay was greatly admired. The battalion commander was nicknamed Döce because of his slight limp, which was a sign of a direct, friendly relationship. As I pointed out in my analysis of the officers' careers, he was probably the instructor of fourteen of the twenty-three professional officers who graduated from the Ludovika Academy. At the beginning of the organization of the assault artillery unit, these young military officers volunteered to serve under the command of their former teacher. Since they knew Captain Barankay, there is no doubt that they knew that the class commander expected complete dedication from his subordinates. This is also demonstrated by the fact that he transferred married officers to other assault artillery units, as only those who lived for the assault artillery corps and did not shy away from life-threatening situations could serve in the 1st assault artillery battalion.

The unit's unanimous request to name the unit after its commander, who died a heroic death, also shows the deep respect they had for him.

In writing my dissertation, I also examined how the screening criteria for volunteers who applied to the assault artillery affected their courage and bravery on the battlefield.

Captain Barankay personally selected the first assault artillery officers. This guaranteed the committed toughness of the team's command staff. Subsequently, when selecting the crew, the selected officers carried out the screening themselves, allowing only the most capable among them to join, as this allowed them to maintain their own reputation. As First Lieutenant Fedor Waczek described in his memoirs, both the applicants' education and their determination were tested, and only the most suitable were allowed to remain and begin assault artillery training.

The memoirs contain several accounts of events when volunteers were sought for a dangerous undertaking. There were usually applicants for such tasks, as the assault gunners did not shy away from greater dangers.

Warrant Officer Gyula Patay wrote in his diary about an incident when the defensive battles around Budapest were still ongoing and some of the men went to the cinema in the capital to relax. The newsreel showed the battles of the assault artillery troops, and the audience applauded the assault artillery officers wearing black gloves and assault artillery badge. Wearing this distinctive insignia was a great honor, and its wearers did everything they could to earn it.

To sum up the dissertation, it can be said that the history of the assault artillery unit is a narrow but very interesting segment of World War II military history. During its short, less than two-year existence, the Hungarian Royal Army's assault artillery corps progressed from its initial stages of organization to the point where eight assault artillery battalions were deployed, thus inscribing the name "assault artillery" into Hungarian military history.

As I wrote in the introduction, the main motivation for writing this dissertation was to fill an 80-year gap. In the 1990s, there was an initiative by former assault artillery officers to write the history of the assault artillery. Unfortunately, the advanced age of the former assault artillerymen involved, as well as illness and death, prevented the work from continuing. This work was continued by András Paláthy and Attila Bonhardt, who conducted audio interviews with the elderly assault artillerymen. The work then came to a halt for about two decades, and the source material remained in the Military History Archives of the Military History Institute and Museum of the Ministry of Defense. I came across this when I was looking for some source material about my late grandfather, József Jenő Kovács, a former assault gunner, as he was reluctant to talk about his war memories after his return from Soviet captivity. My mother knew that he had held the rank of lieutenant, but she could not provide any details. During my research, I discovered that he was not a lieutenant, but a sergeant, then a warrant officer in the Hungarian royal 7th assault artillery battalion in Sümeg, and only received the rank of reserve lieutenant after the war. Unfortunately, I was unable to learn more about his personal history, but through him I became aware of the lack of research on the history of the assault artillery unit, the previously collected material, and the newsletters of the Assault Artillery Comrades' Circle, which set me on the path to settling the debt that military history and military science owed to the assault artillery soldiers.

While writing my dissertation, I also learned a lot as a military officer. I am grateful to have been able to learn about an important period in the lives of these outstanding people. Once again, I would like to thank all those who started me on this research and those who supported me in it.

Assault artillery, forward!

7. New scientific findings

1. I proved that there was serious debate in Hungarian military literature between the two world wars regarding the issue of accompanying artillery, and based on this, I concluded that the development of artillery was closely followed by the artillery officers of the time and that there was lively scientific debate on the subject. I showed that the theoretical work carried out facilitated the organization of the troops and helped to overcome the initial difficulties.

2. I proved that the strict requirements for selecting personnel for the Hungarian royal 1st assault artillery battalion contributed to its outstanding battlefield results.

3. Using the available sources, I reconstructed the principles of combat application of assault artillery battalions and their implementation in the case of the 1st assault artillery battalion during the operations of higher-level units. Based on this, I demonstrated that the appearance of assault artillery on the battlefield had an encouraging effect on soldiers of other branches of the military, and I highlighted that it represented outstanding combat value when the conditions for its use were met.

4. First, I reconstructed the history of the Hungarian royal 1st assault artillery battalion based on archival sources and the recollections of participants. Based on these, I evaluated the establishment of the new unit in terms of its organization and leadership and concluded that its performance on the battlefield depended largely on the strict requirements imposed by the battalion commander, the support and appropriate use of higher-level superiors, and the preparedness of the supported subunits to cooperate with the unit. I proved that the vast majority of the losses incurred during the retreat from the Galician theater of war were due to the improper application of the rules by the superior commanders.

5. First, I managed to reconstruct the officer corps of the 1st assault artillery battalion and compile the officers' biographies. By analyzing these biographies, I proved that the assault artillery officers were among the elite of the officer corps of the era. In addition to their high level of training, their willingness to accept high casualties also contributed to the performance of their units on the battlefield.

8. Recommendations

I recommend this dissertation to those interested in history, particularly military history, as it provides the most thorough analysis possible of the history of a military unit. Microhistorical research is suitable for examining a smaller topic from as many angles as possible, thus providing an interesting glimpse into a small slice of the past.

I recommend this work to the senior leadership of the Hungarian Defence Forces, as it can serve as a lesson when organizing a new unit. I believe that it is worthwhile to learn both positive and negative lessons from the past, and this is no different in the case of the history of the 1st assault artillery battalion.

I recommend studying this dissertation to decision-makers involved in the procurement of military equipment within the framework of the military development program, as during the process of establishing the assault artillery unit, the military leadership paid serious attention to ensuring that the soldiers of the young unit received the most suitable military equipment possible.

I also recommend it to soldiers belonging to the artillery branch, as the self-propelled artillery battalion, which has been re-established as a military unit in recent years, can be considered to some extent the predecessor of the assault artillery of World War II.

I also recommend it to young people who are currently studying at one of the Hungarian Armed Forces' educational institutions, such as the Faculty of Military Science and Officer Training at the National University of Public Service, the Steel Cube Non-Commissioned Officer Training System, or one of the educational institutions belonging to the Hungarian Cadet Program. I believe it is very important for young people to find role models from whose lives they can draw motivation and strength. Assault artillery soldiers are truly suited to fulfilling this role model function.

Finally, I recommend my work to all Hungarian soldiers, as the soldiers of the assault artillery unit proved their competence, self-sacrifice, and commitment to the fate of their country on the battlefields of World War II, which is a requirement for all Hungarian soldiers.

9. Practical applicability of research results

The research results obtained during the preparation of the dissertation can be used in military planning, as they highlight that soldiers are able to defend their country at the highest level when they have the most modern military equipment suitable for combat tasks.

The dissertation can also be used in the compilation of training programs, as it shows that it is important to learn as much as possible from allies and then adapt the acquired knowledge to domestic conditions. An important principle of the assault artillery courses was that leaders took the lead in completing tasks and only demanded something from trainees after demonstrating how to do it correctly. Furthermore, it is important that rare and expensive weapons be entrusted only to the most suitable and capable people; the best of society are needed to serve the country.

The dissertation also has practical value in terms of training future military officers, since, to quote Cicero, "history is the teacher of life." Future military officers can learn from the way assault artillery officers cared for their subordinates, trained them, and led them.

10. List of publications by the author

Aspects of the modernity of the 40/42M Zrínyi II assault howitzer. Military Science Review XII. vol. (2019) No. 1, 117-128.

The battlefield deployment of the Hungarian royal 1st assault artillery battalion as reflected in the memoirs of assault gunners. In: Security and National Defense. Sustainable Security and Social Environment Studies II. [ed. Árpád Pohl]. Budapest, 2020. 1133-1148.

The selection and training of personnel for the Hungarian royal 1st assault artillery battalion. In: Military Science and the 21st Century [ed. Petra Kovács – Orsolya Luca Pollák]. Budapest, 2020. 208-220.

The battlefield deployment of the Hungarian royal 1st assault artillery battalion as reflected in the memoirs of assault artillerymen. Chapters from Military History 9. From Ancient Military History to Modern Armed Conflicts. Proceedings of the National Conference of Young Military Historians [ed. Krisztián Bene-Ferenc Fazekas-Márton Kiss-István Sarlós]. Pécs-Budapest, 2021. 287-307

Lessons from military history on organizing a new unit – Field artillery, or self-propelled artillery. Military Science Review XIV. vol. (2021) no. 2, 45-54.

The military science debate on the topic of accompanying artillery (1920-1943). In: Military Science and the 21st Century [ed. Dr. Ildikó Szelei]. Budapest, 2022. 89-105.

Argument on infantry support gun on academic level (1920-1943). Military Science Review XV. vol. (2022) no. 4, 23-36.

The officer corps of the Hungarian royal 1st assault artillery battalion. Military Science Review XVIII. vol. (2025) no. 1 149-169.

11. Professional and academic biography

Personal details

Name, rank: First Lieutenant Botond Hunor Mátyás

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Positions

2014: MH 25th György Klapka Rifle Brigade, reservist basic training

February-May 2015: MH Non-Commissioned Officers Academy, contractual military basic training

May 2015-July 2017: MH HKNYP (later MH KIKNYP) 1st Military Administration Center, subordinate officer in charge of wargraves

July 2017-January 2019: MH HFKP Public Relations and Wargraves Department, subordinate officer

January 2019–June 2020: Ministry of Defense, Ministerial Secretariat, Military Communications Department, public affairs officer

June 2020–October 2021: MH Pápa Air Base, Communications Directorate, public affairs officer

October 2021–October 2022: MH Pápa Air Base, Communications Directorate, acting chief

October 2022–October 2023: MH Pápa Air Base (later MH 47th Air Base), Communications Directorate, public affairs officer

October 2023–: MH 47th Air Base, Communications Directorate, acting chief

February 2024–August 2024: MH Air Force Command, Command Office, senior officer

August 2024–: MH Klempa Kálmán 7th Territorial Defense Regiment, 31st Territorial Defense Battalion, military instructor

Foreign service experience

January 1, 2023–January 15, 2024: NATO JFAC PAO (within the NRF)

Qualifications

2008–2011: University of Pécs, Faculty of Humanities, Bachelor of Arts in History

2011-2014: University of Pécs, Faculty of Humanities, certified historian

2014-2015: Eötvös Loránd University, Faculty of Humanities, Eastern Languages and Cultures, Arabic-Persian specialization

2015: Basic public administration exam

2016: Basic national defense administration exam

2018-2025: NKE Doctoral School of Military Science, doctoral student (completed coursework, currently pursuing degree)

2019: NATO-accredited Basic Public Affairs Officer certificate (North Macedonia, Skopje)

2019: NATO-accredited Crisis Communication certificate (North Macedonia, Skopje)

2021: NATO Air C2 Advanced Module (JFAC Command Group) training (Germany, Kalkar)

2023: NATO Basic Air C2 training (Veszprém)

Language skills

English intermediate C

German intermediate C

Awards

Service medal for handling the migration crisis

Officer Service Medal, 3rd class (after 10 years)

Promotions:

Lieutenant 2015

First Lieutenant 2020

Captain 2025