

ROMANIAN HIGHER MILITARY EDUCATION – THE 130TH ANNIVERSARY OF SUPERIOR WAR SCHOOL –

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***Abstract:** Over the centuries, ever since the establishment of the first states, their rulers have often been leaders whose soul vibrated in the rhythm of the virtues of this nation. They knew that through the fineness of their military spirit and personal example, they would inspire patriotism among their people and motivate them to fight for statehood. These were the beginnings of the army, an army that did not benefit from a centralized organizational framework, did not have a permanent character, did not have an endowment that could contribute to the loss of as few human lives as possible.*

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From the moment it was created, higher military education in Romania, as part of the entire system of military education has had a trajectory dominated by the historic events that our country crossed one or another stage in history. The first forms of military education in the Romanian Countries were noted in the medieval age – together with the diversification of tasks that soldiers, depending on their rank and means, had to accomplish in war – and referred not only to their training for the ruler's army, but also to the training of specialists who made weapons and built citadels and fortifications.

Chronicles show the fact that rulers such as Vlad Țepeș (Vlad the Empaler), Ștefan cel Mare (Stephan the Great) and, after that, Mihai Viteazul (Michael the Brave) and Vasile Lupu appointed men in military positions following the losses suffered in the battles fought, aiming at completing their general culture studies as well as their military training. Sons of rulers or noblemen were often sent to royal courts abroad, to the

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countries that Romanian countries had relations with, or other institutions of education.

In 1784, a military institute was founded¹, affiliated to the Pedagogical School in Năsăud, where pupils participated in activities of theoretical and practical military training.

Setting up, starting with 1830, the first units of modern Romanian army, during 1830-1847, also led to the settlement of the first institutions of Romanian military education with the purpose of creating a corps of career servicemen, fully professional, with specific duties and statute.

The measures adopted by Alexandru Ioan Cuza and his main collaborators, among whom we could also mention his ministry of war, general Emanoil Florescu, make them worthy of being considered founding fathers of education in the Romanian modern army. The system created by these true parents of military education lasted, with only minor changes, until 1872.

The continuous development and modernization of the Romanian army, the diversification of organizational structures and the increasing need for higher numbers of officers with special and multilateral training resulted in – during the period after Independence War 1877-1878 – the appearance of military institutions of higher education². Up to the last decade of 19th century, the superior training of officers, especially for staff positions, was obtained by sending them to military academies in Western Europe states, especially in France and Prussia. Most often than not, the officers who graduated the courses of foreign military academies, with the approval of the Romanian state, also completed a practical stage, up to five years, in the armies of the respective countries.

Under these circumstances, the development of national military thinking, the efforts made for putting together a national military doctrine and, last but not least, the development and diversification of military education created the necessary conditions and actually required the founding of higher education institutions.

¹ Angelescu, P., *Școala noastră superioară de războiu*, din publicațiile Revistei Infanteriei, București, 1911.

² Fălcoianu, St.I., *Istoria Războiului din 1877-1878 (ruso-romano-turc)*, curs profesat, Tipografia "Voința Națională", București, 1895.

The main priorities were the needs to provide the army with enough officers to fill in the staff and command positions (in headquarters of major units and in the Ministry of War) and military doctors. As a consequence, efforts were directed, during 1878-1879, towards setting up institutions that might ensure the training of this category of personnel: Superior War School and Military-Medical Institute.

The Superior War School appeared due to the necessity to create an educational institution that could ensure the training³, at a superior level, of staff and command officers. This stringent issue had been felt before 1877, after the structure of the army in full modernization process also started to include the major units, such as division. Their commands had to be filled in with officers with a kind of training that could not be provided solely through the courses of military schools.

The first attempts to create a military institution of higher education go back to 1872, when, Decree no. 1283, regulating the organization and structure of military education, also included the settlement of the *War Academy (Academia de Răzbel* in the language of the times), meant to provide “*higher training to officers belonging to any branch in order to make the most appropriate choice for Army Command*”⁴.

The evolution of military education was permanently influenced by historic circumstances, not always favorable and thus the provisions of this decree could not be put into practice, either because of the lack of funds and of military professors or because of the political events that led to the war between 1877-1878.

In 1889, as a result of arduous efforts made by an entire generation of elite officers, the request of setting up the respective institution of higher military education was finally accomplished when, according to the provisions of Decree no. 2073 of 8th August, the Superior War School was established.

Significant merits in the accomplishment of this highly important desideratum for military education can be attributed to General Ștefan Fălcoianu, former Ministry of War between 1883 and 1886 and current

³ Popescu, M.; Boaru, Ghe., *Învățământul superior militar românesc, de la tradiție la era digitală*, Editura Casa corpului didactic Cluj, Cluj-Napoca, 2017.

⁴ Monitorul Oastei nr. 11/1872.

Chief of General Staff on the date of birth of the institution and General George Manu, Ministry of War during the period 1888-1889. According to the stipulations of military regulations, the Superior War School admitted, following an exam, “*lieutenants and captains from all branches, with at least two years of service in training units and good service assessments*”⁵. The courses lasted for two years. The daily program of student-officers comprised twelve hours of educational activities, of which eight hours of classes (five hours in the morning and three hours in the afternoon) and four hours of riding and fencing practice and other activities. The efforts made by students were also amplified by the fact that self-study was only performed with the help of course notes or lithographs, as there were but a few textbooks or published courses. Although the curricula and the teaching practice was progressively adapted to the demands of modern pedagogy, the strenuous work of student-officers was maintained throughout the whole existence of this school. As it can be noticed, even from the very beginning, this institution anticipated the projection of the entire activity within the superior school through the epigraph “*Labor improbus omnia vincit*” (*Persistent work always wins*).

For Romanian military education, the period until the beginning of First World War was especially efficacious; thus, starting from the existence of a single school, the Military School, in 1859, a diversified network of military school institutions appeared. From the perspective of hierarchic organization on levels, profiles and categories of service, the Romanian military system of education was comparable to the European ones. During this period, in Romania, there were military high-schools, military schools of active and reserve officers, special branch schools and higher military education institutions such as Superior War School and Military-Medical Institute.

In 1907, a complementary course was established⁶, meant for officers who had graduated the Superior War School and were performing service duty in order to obtain the Staff Patent, a course through which they completed and updated the knowledge they had acquired in school.

⁵ Regulamentul Școalei Superioare de Resbel, 1889.

⁶ Regulamentul bibliotecii Școalei Superioare de Războiu, București, 1940.

The activity of Superior War School continued to be carried out, with remarkable results, until 1914⁷, when political-military events and the outbreak of World War I led to suspending classes until the accomplishment of the Great Union.

The troubled national history during World War I also influenced the activity of Superior War School. Thus, the personnel of the institution were assigned to operational units and participated in combat actions, starting with 1916. The courses were resumed in October 1918, in Iași and in December they were brought back to Bucharest.

During the inter-war period, Romanian military education continued to be represented by two institutions: Superior War School and Military-Medical Institute, renamed Sanitary Institute in 1921.

The first inter-war class of alumni graduated the two-year-long courses in 1921. The period between 1929 and 1939 is one of the most remarkable ones, also being the interval when the institution started to function in the building on Panduri Street.

During World War II, due to the hard work of the teaching body, despite the hardships of the times, the activity was not interrupted, the courses being only temporarily stopped or the contents being only temporarily reduced.

In 1948, the institution got the name Military Academy⁸, still well-recognized at present, too. The recent evolution of the institution was characterized by changing the length of courses, setting up the doctoral programs of study in 1990 and broadening the spectrum of educational offer addressed to foreign officers too. Besides these, also following the evolution of society on the whole, we find the inherent institutional developments, re-subordinations and name changing, namely, Academy of Higher Military Studies in 1991, National Defense University in 2003 and “Carol I” National Defense University in 2005.

Regardless of the name it has had, this prestigious institution has always followed a path of development determined by tradition and modernism. The first of this coordinates refers to the permanent fame given by the fact that it represents the highest step in Romanian military

⁷ *Istoricul Școalei Superioare de Războiu, 1889-1939, București, 1939.*

⁸ *Istoricul Academiei Militare (proiect) 1889-1989, Academia Militară, București, 1989.*

education. At the same time, modernism has been given by the unrelenting preoccupation of the teaching body to be permanently connected to the realities and tendencies in evolution of the battlefield.

“Carol I” National Defense University keeps providing the best kind of training to the officers of Romanian army, meant to consolidate the scientific tools necessary for a superior employment of principled of military action and command at tactical, operational, and strategic levels and, at the same time, a wide range of educational offers at the level of Bachelor degree, Master degree and PhD studies as well as numerous life-long learning programs.

„Carol I” National Defense University has not only passed the test of time and history, being able to prepare command and staff officers during the two World Wars, but also the test of modernity, being able to adjust to international requirements resulting from Romania’s membership to North Atlantic Treaty Organization as well as from the necessity to permanently adapt to the demands of national higher education system.

Along the years, the officers belonging to the one hundred twenty-two classes of alumni who have this institution as alma mater have been the main dynamic factor of the process of modernization of the army and military education. The educational process in the university has developed and has constantly become better and better, keeping up with the changes in Romanian education and Romanian Armed Forces.

The exigencies of the principles embraced by Romania, as a signatory of Bologna Declaration, regarding the settlement of a European space of higher education, have represented an important landmark for „Carol I” National Defense University in its activity of assessing and optimizing education and research within the institution, in accordance with the specificity of the mission and the requests of the Ministry of National Defense. All these aspects need to also be regarded in relation to the commitments assumed by Romania deriving from both the National Defense Strategy of the Country and the membership in the North Atlantic Alliance, the European Union, the United Nations Organization. Thus, it has become increasingly harder to emphasize enough the role of „Carol I” National Defense University as a main instrument of promoting and developing the fundamental domains Military Sciences, respectively, Intelligence and National Security.

From the point of view of ensuring the quality of the educational process, „Carol I” National Defense University has double subordination, conducting programs upon the demand and in accordance with the needs of its main beneficiary, the Ministry of National Defense, but at the same time abiding by all principles, norms, and standards applicable to the system of higher education in Romania, which the university is part of. Thus, the efforts of the university were focused on ensuring fluent higher education, the professors and the personnel of the university adjusting the curricula and directing their efforts in the sense of implementing Bologna system and implementing, since 2011, the provisions of the Law of National Education, measures that redefined the features of higher military education in the present Euro-Atlantic context.

The double belonging of “Carol I” National Defense University brings along multiple opportunities of development for the system of education, of promoting cooperation and international relations, as well as the permanent connection to European and trans-Atlantic trends, our university offering the only kind of study programs for commanders as well as studies benefitting from the expertise of the most renown specialists in the domains of intelligence and national security.

The results of learning, specific to the programs of Bachelor, Master, and PhD studies, as well as those specific to the post-graduate studies organized and conducted within „Carol I” National Defense University do not reflect only the professional and transversal competencies specific to each program of instruction, but also the development of a sense of belonging, of the loyalty to Romanian Armed Forces and Romanian State, of the sense of duty and the military leadership abilities. All these results are acknowledged by the international partners, evidence in this respect being the participation to the courses organized by the university of hundreds of officers belonging to NATO member states or foreign armed forces with which the Ministry of National Defense has signed cooperation agreements.

The permanent reconfiguration of university study programs, abiding exactly by the specific standards set by the Romanian Agency of Ensuring Quality in Higher Education, and at the same time answering to the training needs of the Ministry of National Defense personnel led to successful results. The proof is the permanent diversification of the educational offer, following the changes of paradigm, not only of theoretical and practical

military and security concepts, but also from the perspective of educational management. This was demonstrated by the setting of Security and Defense Faculty, in 2013, as well as by the successful initiation of procedures for operationalizing the third faculty, the Information Management and Cyber Security Faculty and by the certification as Highly Trustworthy institution, subsequent to external evaluation in order to obtain institutional accreditation.

“Carol I” National Defense University, a successor of Superior War School, is an institution that managed along the years to build bridges between the generations of officers who passed over its threshold; it is a high shelter for military culture whose prestigious professors have trained dozens and dozens of officers who later became true leaders, fully committed to Romania and who did not hesitate to make the supreme sacrifice, giving their blood to our sacred homeland.



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