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Doctoral Thesis

*Allies and Enemies in the Perception of Romanian
Combatants in the Second World War*

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Key words: war, ally, enemy, perception, Wehrmacht, Red Army, Eastern Front

Abstract

My research, finalized in the doctoral dissertation, *Allies and Enemies in the Perception of Romanian Combatants in the Second World War* frames an analysis of the main clichés attributed by the Romanian soldiers to the allies and enemies from the last world conflagration. Using the oral records and the period documents, my endeavour focuses on the juxtaposition of the perceptions recorded seven decades after the moment they had been constituted and the image captured in the documents drafted while the impressions were still fresh in the witnesses' memory. By using the two main sources, I tried to create an objective image of the two states (ally/enemy), resulting in a construct based on the overlap of the two time frames – “then” and “now” – which, by joining the symmetrical perceptions, offered a complex view of the obverse.

Contrariwise, for the last living soldiers, my research represented the opportunity to bear testimony to what fighting “weapon in hand” meant on the battlefield of the most brutal conflict in the history of humanity. The unique sources offered my research an innovative character, reflected in the means in which the subject had been approached: firstly, the recovery of the “bottom memory” of war through oral investigation was a method rarely used by Romanian historians in reconstructing the Romanian participation in World War II; secondly, the theme itself offers an atypical approach, focusing on the way in which the Romanian army, viewed by the representative witnesses, perceived the ally/enemy and the way in which it related to them in different situations on the battlefield; thirdly, although the emphasis is on oral testimony, the research did not overlook the other historical sources – archive documents and the memoirs were used to confirm or invalidate the hypotheses resulted from interpreting the testimonies.

The comparative approach stated in the title of the research can be found in the structure of the two distinctive levels, ally and enemy, similarly structured, starting with the first impressions and cataloguing the important components of the ally/enemy image: physical description, behaviour, military equipment, tactics and strategies used in combat. A unique aspect of the historical research dedicated to the participation of the Romanian army in World War II regarded establishing the image of the other allies/enemies with whom the Romanian

soldiers interacted on the battlefield: the Hungarian and Italian armies, the Spanish and Croatian contingents, as well as the English-American enemy, all subjects approached in separate subchapters.

My research also frames a discussion about the image of the ally/enemy that overcomes the classic image, the sources making possible its analysis on two levels: on the one hand, the official speech that used propagandistic means in constructing features adequate to the situation of the targeted group, and on the other hand, the personal, individual, subjective speech, represented by the image that resulted from direct, interpersonal interaction between the witnesses and the two separate groups. The process of reconstructing the image of the targeted otherness was a complex one, comparable with a puzzle. Its pieces are, in this case, represented by the disparate clichés resulted from the oral testimonies or from the memoirs, the fragments from period documents also adding to the complexity of the effort in matching the aforementioned puzzle pieces. Reflecting the personal choice stated from the very beginning, the oral testimony was the most important and most consistent historical source upon which I have tried to express the image construct.

From a structural point of view, my research can be divided in two symmetrical sections that correspond to the two forms of otherness. Moreover, it contains a consistent introductory chapter, meant to offer an insight to the motivation of the choice of theme, the methodology of oral history applied in the research and a presentation of the historiography subject. The last subchapter of the introductory part discusses the connection between the war and the notes on the experience of war throughout history, especially during the last decades of the 20th century, deeply scarred by this calamity. Each of the two chapters dedicated to the image of the ally and of the enemy was divided in several subchapters that correspond to each element that was considered relevant to the other's perception.

For both analysed aspects, the starting point was represented by probing the dormant stereotypes from the collective mind of the Romanian society at the beginning of the last century. The purpose of these "introductory" subchapters was to offer an explanation regarding the manner in which the clichés that had been spread could influence the view on the ally/enemy during the first encounters and, later, during the confrontation on the Eastern Front. Thus, in the case of the Wehrmacht, the origin of the first descriptive clichés could be identified in the Medieval Age, when the Romanians had come into contact with the groups of Saxons that had

been colonized on the Principedom territory. The analysis was deepened in the second part of the 19th century and the first decade of the 20th century, when part of our country's elite had the opportunity to travel and to study at prestigious universities in Germany, thus coming into contact with the realities of the German space and could describe the pattern of the German behaviour. All of these impressions had been approached at length in the beginning of the chapter II – the German ally.

The evolution of German military forces in the interwar period had been covered in subchapter II.1, where some of the definitive aspects of the combat style of the Wehrmacht in World War II were also approached. Among them, we mention the “mission-type tactics” principles – or *Auftragstaktik* – that characterized the operating model of the German troops on the battlefield, the “Blitzkrieg” doctrine – that marked a turning point in the evolution of military tactics. This subchapter also discusses aspects regarding the organizational evolution of the German battle formations, the development of modern military tactics (tanks, aviation), as well as the appearance and spread of the mythical “invincibility” of the Wehrmacht after the resounding victories in the first two years of war.

The first impressions after the direct contact with the German soldiers were analysed within subchapter II.2. The arrival of the German military mission in Romania represented an important event for the interaction with the German soldiers. The relationships between the soldiers of the two armies between October 1940 and June 1941 contributed to a transformation of the German from a possible enemy sponsored by the national territory into an ally in the war against the USSR.

The analysis of the German ally deepens in subchapter II.3, its 7 separate parts numbered from a to g discussing the main elements that influenced the perception of the German soldier and the relationship between the two armies. The first component taken into consideration is represented by the physical description, the physical features representing a reference point for the imagological representations. In this subchapter, I focused on obtaining information regarding the appearance of the German ally and their preoccupation for physical appearance. Through asking questions about this aspect, I also focused on ascertaining the myth spread by the Third Reich propaganda: the similarities between the appearance of the German soldiers and the features ascribed to the Arian typology.

The behaviour of the German soldiers was analysed in subchapter 2.3.b by focusing the investigation on the description of their attitude towards the Romanian ally during the military confrontation on the Eastern Front. The remembrances of the participants and the archive documents illustrate an honest, comradely behaviour, sometimes overshadowed by an arrogant attitude of the German officers towards their Romanian homologous. The evaluation of German behaviour was made considering at least two aspects traditionally associated with the German army: the superior training and discipline. Another subject approached in this subchapter is represented by the attitude of the members of the Wehrmacht towards the adverse soldiers and civilians, in an attempt to nuance the mystifications regarding, on the one hand, the implication of the German army in genocide and war crimes on the Eastern Front and, on the other hand, the attempt to exculpate them through “Wehrmacht’s clean hands” myth.

Another topic that caused a great deal of debate in the post-war period was represented by the level of subsidy of the German military forces. As suggested by the contents of subchapter II.3.c., due to the well-known successes in the first stages of World War II, the Wehrmacht received a false image of invincibility. The origin of this mystification was represented by the use of the Blitzkrieg tactics and the exaggeration of the percentage of armoured and motorized troops that had supposedly been used by the German army in the campaigns between 1939 and 1941.

A subchapter that is interesting for evaluating the efficiency of the German military forces on the Eastern Front is the one dedicated to the strategies and combat tactics used by the Wehrmacht. In general, the historiography that approached this subject focused on studying the offensive operations, specific to the “lightning war” strategies, while ignoring the elastic defensive principles successfully implemented by the Wehrmacht and that represent, on the one hand, a greater percentage of the operations on the Eastern Front and, on the other hand, the source of some tactical innovations that are comparable to the Blitzkrieg. The military operations deployed by the Wehrmacht especially in the summer of 1943 had shown the efficiency of the German army within defensive battles. Furthermore, operations such as the evacuation of the Caucasus and of the Crimean Peninsula had illustrated the German war machine’s ability to adapt to defensive tactics.

Subchapters 2.3.e and 2.3.f follow the evolution of the relationships between the two allied armies during the Eastern campaign. While the first subchapter analyses the relationships

between the two parts in the offensive stage of the hostilities, resulted in successes that bolstered the military cooperation, the second subchapter focuses on the event that had led to the first cracks in the military cooperation between the two states and their armed forces, the battle of Stalingrad. The image that results from the two subchapters is representative for the policies adopted by the leading partner of the coalition, Germany, towards its satellite states in the Eastern war. As long as the hostilities had ensued in favour of the Axis, the collaboration developed well, fact proven by the cordial relationships between the superior echelons of the two armies and by the sincere collaboration between their soldiers. The Battle of Stalingrad marked the turning point for the relationships within the Axis, the Germans thus blaming their Italian, Romanian and Hungarian allies for the major defeat suffered on the banks of the Volga. According to the eyewitnesses and to the information provided by archive documents and memoirs, the responsibility for the defeat belonged to the German military leadership, which knowingly and repeatedly disregarded the warnings received, regarding the possibility of a great Soviet offence in this sector of the Eastern Front. Furthermore, the testimonies and documents revealed that the abusive behaviour of the Germans towards the allies placed in exposed positions, lacking operative reserves and the means necessary to face a Soviet offence equipped with great armoured units.

The last subchapter of the segment regarding the allies on the Eastern Front reviews the image of the other military contingents within the Axis: the Hungarians, the Italians, the Croats, the Slovaks and the Spanish. My analysis focused on the image of the Hungarians and Italians, who are representative for the clichés regarding the “goaded ally” or the “conjunction ally”, considering the relationships with these people prior to the common implication in the German-Soviet war. After the evaluation of the “crusade against Bolshevism” character attributed by the German military leadership to the common war against the USSR, the conclusion is that the military alliance was rather a conjunction one and, thus, a dysfunctional one, the implicated effectives being affected by a series of tensions. The state of tension had not gravely affected the cooperation relationships while the military operations on the anti-Soviet front had ensued favourably, but once the situation deteriorated and the realization that the war was inevitably lost set in, the tension surfaced and was amplified by the crises that followed the hostilities. Among them, the Battle of Stalingrad represented the maximum tension point among

the armies of the Axis, the battle's conclusion thus long-term affecting the collaboration that was proving more and more difficult.

Profiling the image of the enemy followed the same pattern of the German ally, the analysis starting with the clichés present in the collective mind, regarding the “great neighbour from the East”. The situation of the Red Army in the period preceding the German-Soviet war is the subject of a short presentation in subchapter III.1, approaching the evolution, equipment, doctrine and training of the Soviet military forces in the inter-war period. Similar to the German army, the discussion focuses on the specific tactics adopted by the Soviet military leadership, such as the deep operation, but also the qualitative and quantitative development of battle arsenal, which made the Soviet army the first in the world, considering the quantity of weaponry held at the beginning of the second world conflagration. This chapter also discusses the factors that contributed to the failures of the Soviet military forces during the first two years of war: the purges from within the army and the officers' lack of experience, enhanced by the political commissioners' authority, as well as the training deficiencies of the troops.

The subject of the second subchapter regarding the image of the enemy places us in the field of direct perceptions of the Soviet army; the analysis thus using the impressions resulted from the first contacts during the recession of the Romanian army from the conceded territories after the Soviet ultimatums from June 1940. The hostility towards the feared neighbour from the East was fuelled by the tensions that arose after the territorial ruptures from the summer of 1940, tensions that foreshadowed the confrontation that was to take place one year later. The clichés born from the cautious encounters between the Romanian soldiers and the Soviet troops sent to occupy the conceded territories were the original sources for the negative impressions that were to characterise the way in which the Romanian soldier related to the enemy.

The analysis deepens and becomes more nuanced starting with subchapter III.3, divided in six different parts, numbered from a to f, each approaching certain elements that compile the image of the Soviet enemy: appearance, behaviour, battle tactics and strategies, the realistic situation of the Red Army and the myths regarding its inferiority/superiority, the space and attitude towards the Soviet civilian and the image of other enemies. After 22 June 1941, the state of enemy combatant determined an enhancement of the negative features already attributed, on the basis of daily realities encountered in the USSR, especially after the escalation of confrontations between the two sides. Therefore, the image of the enemy was subjected to some

distortions in order to emphasize the negative features and to place the other in an antithesis with what represented normality for the soldiers of the Axis. Within this process, influencing the perception of the appearance of the enemy soldier was a key component in the process of demonizing them, through associations between the appearance and the behaviour of the enemy, both attributable to the evil influence of the communist regime and to the influence of Russian geography on its inhabitants.

The subject of subchapter III 3.b. was the description of the Soviet soldier's behaviour in combat. Regarding the enemy's behaviour on the battlefield, the descriptions made by the Romanian soldiers did not show notable influences of the official propaganda, as was the case of the German soldiers, thus illustrating the enemy in an objective manner: on the one hand, they were seen as dishevelled, undisciplined, sometimes unqualified, but willing to make the ultimate sacrifice in order to stop the advance of the Germans and of their allies. On the other hand, the physical mutilations their comrades had been subjected to had a particularly powerful impact on the Romanian soldiers, the barbaric process reflecting the savagery and extreme violence to which the Soviets resorted in their attempt to induce a state of perpetual fear and insecurity to the invading troops.

The analysis of the battle tactics and strategies used by the Soviets, present in subchapter III.3.c, proves that they were in fact far from being the unqualified enemy willing to renounce battle at any point – according to the cliché that was circulated by the German propaganda through the “feet of clay” myth; the Soviet soldier proved to be an agile, cunning fighter, who knew the battle tactics of attack and defence very well and who used a series of ingenious tricks in order to surprise and cause great losses for the troops of the Axis. It is also true that the brave conduct and the sometimes fanatical resistance of the enemy troops can be motivated by the omnipresence of the political commissioners or by the draconian measures taken by the Soviet leadership in order to limit the number of deserters and the defeatist attitude revealed after the disasters in the first months of the war. Another measure taken by the Soviets in the process of distorting reality was the large-scale use of alcohol as a means of “doping” the troops, especially in the moments that preceded offensive operations. The alcohol abuse contributed both to the soldiers' lack of inhibition and to the possibility of their subjection to criminal orders through which they were often uselessly sent to their deaths.

The battle potential and equipping the Soviet troops with military tactics represented two of the central subjects of my analysis, approached in subchapter III.3.d. The post-war image of the Red Army was marked by its inefficiency during the first months of the conflict, its defeats and great losses recorded during 1941 and during the first half of 1942, thus overshadowing its later progresses. One of the factors that significantly contributed to the improvement of the tactic efficiency was the enhancement of the military arsenal, together with focusing the war industry production on some of the key weapons that proved their efficiency on the battlefield: the “Katyusha” rocket launcher, the T-34 medium tank, the K.W. and I.S. series heavy tanks, the automatic weapons and the artillery. In spite of the negative clichés that had appeared during the first years of World War II regarding the quality of the Soviet weapons, the experiences on the Eastern Front demanded their reevaluation, thus being appreciated, in the end, for the very characteristics that had initially been criticized: their rudimentary appearance and mechanisms. Probably the most significant progress of the Red Army was registered as a result of the evolution of war doctrines, together with the experience accumulated by the superior echelons and by the officers through implementing the principles of “deep operations” tactics. In other words, the Soviets proved to be masterful in applying more unorthodox tactics, such as night battles, enemy harassment through subversive groups (partisans, guerrillas), who sometimes resorted to terrorist-like attacks.

Subchapter III.3.e focuses on the perception of space and of Soviet civilians, analysing the climatic characteristics and especially the impact of the geographical particularities of different operational areas on the Eastern Front. The geographic diversity and the climatic variations in the vast Soviet territory represented major sometimes insurmountable impediments both for the troops and for the military equipment of the contingent troops of the Axis. From this viewpoint, the most vulnerable proved to be the soldiers from the Mediterranean, the Italians and the Spanish who were exposed to the extreme cold characteristic to Russian winters. The pressure of the extreme geographic and climatic conditions from the USSR amplified the feeling of insecurity felt by the soldiers who were unfamiliar with the distinctiveness and savagery of the Soviet environment. The perception of the enemy civilian was influenced both by the effects of the rough climate and by the difficult situation in which the population was at that time, as a result of the austerity policies implemented by the leadership in Kremlin. The shock inflicted by

the poverty of the Soviet peasantry is omnipresent in the descriptions of the abject living conditions in the villages encountered during the operations within the USSR.

The last subchapter of the segment regarding enemy military forces approaches a subject less discussed in historiography and whiteout which the image of the enemy would be incomplete: the perception of English-American aviators. Their analysis revealed that they represented a rather “unwanted” enemy, considering the collective perception of the Romanian society regarding England and U.S.A in the pre-war period and even during the war. Nevertheless, the oral sources and documents revealed a different relation with this “abstract” enemy, especially considering the fact that the Romanian soldiers rarely came into contact with the troops brought down during the confrontations that had taken place on the Romanian sky. The information used allows us to state that the English-American prisoners had had good accommodations and food, based on the resources of the Romanian authorities in that context. The attention given to the American and British captives was motivated by the attitude of the deciding factors and of the Romanian society towards the Allies, but also by the historical context at that time, Romania conducting negotiations in order to leave the alliance with Germany and move to the side of the Allies.

70 years after the events presented and analysed in the present paper, one can ascertain the fact that the memory of eyewitnesses still operates with clichés and stereotypes ingrained in the collective mind after the experiences of World War II. Therefore, while the German is described as polite, clean, considerate towards civilians, representing all the characteristics of a civilized soldier, the Soviet soldier is associated with filth, lack of education, theft and even more so with the wave of rapes and crimes committed by the brave “liberators” of Central and Eastern Europe from under the Nazi dominance. I am certain that by referring to a diverse information (oral and unique archival sources) and interpretative palette, my research can offer some explanations, nuances and even revaluations of certain clichés regarding the perception of ally/enemy combatants during World War II.

Bibliography

I. Sources

1) Unpublished

a) Oral History Interviews

- Botiș Volumiu Colonel (r) – during World War II he was second lieutenant. Born 23th February 1915, Romanian Nationality, Greek-Catholic religion. He graduated the Military School of Reserve Officers in Ploiesti. He was assigned to the 7th Mountain Troops Regiment and he went to the Eastern Front in the summer of 1942. In the winter of the same year he was severely wounded. After a while, he was declared fit for duty and became instructor for young recruits who were about to leave for the Eastern Front. Specialization: mountain troops. The interview was recorded in 2008.
- Breban Aurel Soldier, served in the Hungarian Army. Born 5th February 1915, Romanian Nationality, Greek-Catholic religion, no education. Recruited in the Hungarian Army on the 14th of October 1942, he was assigned in 1943 to the sapper troops. He took part in fights after 23th of August 1944 in the Hungarian Army. Specialization: mountain troops - sappers. The interview was recorded in 2008.
- Brudașcă Iosif Colonel (r) during World War II he was second lieutenant. Born 16th February 1921, Romanian Nationality, Greek-Catholic religion. He graduated the Civil School of Pilotage (ARPA) and enlisted in the 2nd Squadron Someșeni, Cluj. He served as pilot on observation and light bomber planes (IAR 37/38, Fiesler Storch) on the Eastern Front. After that, he participated on the Western Front as a liaison officer for the Red Army. Specialization: air force - observation. The interview was recorded in 2008.

- Carp Mircea Colonel (r), during World War II he was second lieutenant. Born 28th January 1923, Romanian Nationality, Orthodox religion. He graduated the Nicolae Filipescu Highschool from Dealu Monastery, in 1942. He enlisted for the officers school and was sent for a specialization stage in Germany (1942-1944). During the three months compulsory military stage he was sent on the Eastern Front with the 20th Panzer Division. After he returned in Romania, in the summer of 1944, he was sent to the front with the 4th Romanian Army, being assigned to the tank group of the unit. Specialization: cavalry-armour. The interview was recorded in 2012.
- Căliman Ioan: Lieutenant (r during World War II he was non-commissioned officer. Born 19th February 1922, Romanian Nationality, Orthodox religion. He graduated highschool and Non Commissioned Officers school. He was sent to Germany for specialization courses (1942-1944). After his return, he was assigned to the 7th Border Guards Regiment and fought on the Western Front. Specialization: Border Guards. The interview was recorded in 2008
- Cenan Alexandru Lieutenant (r), during World War II he was sergeant-major. Born 28th January 1923, Romanian Nationality, Orthodox religion. Refugee from the Northern Transylvania, he enlisted in the army. He was trained in the Bucharest Anti Aircraft Instruction Center, promoted to the rank of sergeant and sent to the front in the summer of 1941, where he was in charge of a AA section of the "Patria" armoured command train. After that, he was assigned to the 3rd AAA Regiment, and he took part in the battles for Moldavia in the summer of 1944. After 23th August 1944, he participated to battles in Hungary and Czechoslovakia. Specialization: Anti Aircraft Artillery. The interview was recorded in 2013..
- Cenan Vasile Soldier. Born on the 27th of September 1921, Romanian Nationality, Orthodox religion. He graduated primary school. He was recruited in 1943 to the 83 Infantry Regiment, and was sent to the front in Iași-Focșani-

Nămoloasa region. On the 26th of August 1944 he was captured by the Soviets and sent to P.O.W. camps in Siberia, from where he returned in 1948. Specialization: infantry. The interview was recorded in 2013.

Coca Petru Colonel (r), during World War II he was non-commissioned officer. Born 13th May 1928, Romanian Nationality, Orthodox religion. He was a refugee from Bucovina and in February 1944 he volunteered for army service. He became a soldier in the Border Guards Regiment of Turnu Severin. With his unit, he was on the Western Front and fought in Czechoslovakia. Specialization: Border Guards. The interview was recorded in 2008.

Dragomir Constantin Squadron General (r), during World War II he was second lieutenant. Born 16th January 1928, Romanian Nationality, Orthodox religion. He graduated B.P. Haşdeu Highschool in Buzău and the Military School of Flight Officers in 1941. He was assigned to the 3rd Observation Wing, 18th Light Bombers Squadron. He flew combat missions on the Stalingrad Front. After the campaign of 1942, he was recalled in Romania and reassigned to 3rd Stuka Bomber Group, with which he fought in Kuban, Mius, Mariupol, Taganrog, Crimeea Fronts. In the summer of 1944 he was sent for a specialization course in Germany, where he became a prisoner of war after the 23th of August 1944. He was captive until the end of the war. Specialization: air force - bombardment. The interview was recorded in 2009.

Daniş Ioan Colonel (r), during World War II he was non-commissioned officer. Born 13th August 1920, Romanian Nationality, Orthodox religion. He graduated the Military School for Non Commissioned Officers and after the 23th of August 1944, he was sent on the Western Front. Specialization: infantry - front medic. The interview was recorded in 2008.

Dumitrache Ion Second Lieutenant (r) - during World War II he was sergeant. Born 20th October 1928, Romanian Nationality, Orthodox religion. He graduated a

Commercial Highschool and the Military School for Non Commissioned Officers in Râmnicu Vâlcea, specialization combat sappers. He fought on the Moldova Front (summer of 1944) and on the Western Front (September 1944-May 1945). Specialization: sappers. The interview was recorded in 2008.

Fecske Aurel Colonel (r) during World War II he was second lieutenant. Born 15th August 1922, Romanian Nationality, Orthodox religion. He graduated the Officers School of Câmpulung-Muscel and was assigned to the 89th Marine Infantry Regiment in Constanța. He fought on the Western Front. Specialization : marine infantry. The interview was recorded in 2008.

Georgescu Ion Colonel (r), during World War II he was non commissioned officer. Born 2nd of Decemcer 1924, Romanian Nationality, Orthodox religion. He graduated the School of Airforce Foremen in Bucharest in 1943. In September 1943 he was sent in München for a training course and after the 23th of August 1944 he became a P.O.W. He returned in Romania in 1946. Specialization: radio operator - air force. The interview was recorded in 2008.

Hărduțiu Sabin Colonel (r), during World War II he was second lieutenant. Born 11th November 1915, Romanian Nationality, Orthodox religion. He graduated Law School and was assigned to the 93th Infantry Regiment. He was sent on the Eastern Front and, after 1944, on the Western Front. Specialization: infantry. The interview was recorded in 2009.

Joldoș Aurel Soldier, served in the Hungarian Army. Born 16th July 1920, Romanian Nationality, Greek-Catholic religion. He graduated primary school. He was drafted in the 24th Hungarian Artillery Regiment and sent to the Eastern Front in 1942-1943, and recalled in Hungary in 1944. He was injured in the summer of 1944, and sent to hospitals in Budapest and Viena, from where

he walked back home in Romania. Specialization: artillery. The interview was recorded in 2009.

Mailat Iosif Commander (r), during World War II he was second lieutenant. Born 19th of May 1915, Romanian Nationality, Orthodox religion. He graduated a Commercial Highschool and the Navy School (1939-1942). When the war broke out, he was aboard NMS "Mărăști" destroyer. On the 1st of May 1942 he was assigned to the Submarines and Torpedo Boats Group, where he activated aboard "Delfinul" Submarine. When he was aboard gun boat "Ghiclescu Ioan" he took part in the evacuation of German and Romanian troops from Crimeea. Specialization: navy. The interview was recorded in 2008.

Micu Augustin Colonel (r), during World War II he was second lieutenant. Born 4th April 1920, Romanian Nationality, Greek-Catholic religion. He graduated a Industrial Highschool, was drafted and sent to officers school in 1943. He was assigned for his mandatory stage to the 2nd Mountain Troops battalion, on the Eastern Front. He graduated the officers school in 1944 and was sent on the Western Front. Specialization: mountain troops. The interview was recorded in 2009.

Nițu Marin Stan Colonel (r), during World War II he was second lieutenant. Born 14th of September 1921, Romanian Nationality, Orthodox religion. He graduated Dinicu Golescu Highschool in Câmpulung-Muscel and the No. 3 Military School in Breaza. He was assigned to 3rd Olt Regiment and sent to the Eastern Front in June 1942. He fought in the Stalingrad battle and in the defensive battles in Russia. He was again sent to the front in the spring of 1944 when he was wounded. After 23th of August 1944, he fought on the Western Front. Specialization: infantry. The interview was recorded in 2008.

- Pangrațiu Liviu Colonel (r during World War II he was non-commissioned officer. Born 30th of March 1920, Romanian Nationality, Greek-Catholic religion. He graduated the Polytechnic University in Timișoara. He served in aerial reconnaissance and signal unit. In 1943 he was sent to Germany for a specialization course. He fought on the Western Front. Specialization: aeriean signal troops. The interview was recorded in 2006.
- Pavel Petru Soldier. Born 21st of November 1921, Romanian Nationality, Greek-Catholic religion. He graduated primary school. He was recruited in the summer of 1942 in the 82th Infantry Regiment. He fought on the Eastern Front in 1943-44. After 23th of August 1944 he was captured by the Soviets and sent to a P.O.W. camp in Baku, from where he returned in 1949. Specialization: infantry. The interview was recorded in 2009.
- Pop Adrian Second Lieutenant(r), during World War II he was sergeant. Born 8th of March 1915, Romanian Nationality, Greek-Catholic religion. He graduated a commercial highschool. Drafted in the summer of 1941, he was sent on the Eastern Front, reaching Stalingrad, where he was captured on the 23rd February, 1943. He was a P.O.W. until July 1951. Specialization: infantry. The interview was recorded in 2008.
- Pricop Ovidiu Colonel (r), during World War II he was second lieutenant. Born 6th of August 1921, Romanian Nationality, Orthodox religion. He graduated the Commercial Academy and the Military School of Reserve Officers no. 2 in Bacău (1943). First, he was assigned to the 6th Infantry Regiment and then to the 13th Mountain Troops Regiment. He fought on the Moldova Front in the spring and summer of 1944. Specialization: infantry-mountain troops. The interview was recorded in 2008.
- Sabou Ioan Soldier, served in the Hungarian Army. Born 7th December 1920, Romanian Nationality, Orthodox religion. He graduated primary school. He

was drafted in the 16th Hungarian Infantry Regiment and sent on the Eastern Front for 8 months, where he served as an auxiliary for the Hungarian troops. He was captured and detained by the Soviets until the end of the war. Specialization: infantry. The interview was recorded in 2010.

Sămărtinean Simion Colonel (r) during World War II he was second lieutenant. Born 3rd April 1919, Romanian Nationality, Orthodox religion. In 1940, he was a refugee from North-Western Transylvania and volunteered for military service. He was assigned to the 1st Mountain Troops Sapper Regiment, and was sent to the Sapper Officers School, which he graduated in 1941. He was sent to the Eastern Front with the 2nd Railway Regiment. He fought on the Eastern and Western Fronts. Specialization: sapper troops. The interview was recorded in 2014.

Tomescu Mircea Division General (r), Knight of the "Michael the Brave" Order, during World War II he was captain, major. Born 14th March 1906, Romanian Nationality, Orthodox religion. He graduated highschool and the School of Cavalry Officers in Târgoviște and the Special School of Cavalry in Sibiu. He was assigned to the 2nd Cavalry Regiment in Bârlad and he took part in the fights on the Eastern Front and on the Western Front. Specialization: cavalry. The interview was recorded in 2006.

Voicu-Dolj Aurelian Colonel (r), during World War II he was second lieutenant. Born 4th February 1920, Romanian Nationality, Orthodox religion. He graduated the military Highschool in Târgu-Mureș in 1938 and the School for Officers in 1939. Initially assigned to the Artillery Military School for Officers "Carol I" Timișoara, he was reassigned to the 52nd Artillery Regiment in June 1940. He fought on the Eastern and Western Fronts, reaching as far as Stalingrad in the East, from where he retreats together with his unit. In the West, he reached as far as Czechoslovakia. Specialization: Anti Aircraft Artillery. The interviews were recorded in 2008 and 2010.

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