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**ABSTRACT DOCTORAL THESIS  
THE SOLDIER GREAT ROMANIA'S ARMY**

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## **KEY WORDS**

Soldier;

Great Romania;

Army;

Recruitment system

Military training;

Soldier ordinance;

Corporal;

Chief Corporal;

Sergeant;

Equipment;

Food;

Armed nation;

Reconstruction Army;

Moral, patriotic and health education;

Military barracks;

Rights of soldiers;

Obligations of soldiers;

Recruitment Law;

Interior service;

## THE SOLDIER IN THE ARMY OF GREAT ROMANIA

After the implementation of the Act of Union, the state, through its decision-makers, faced challenges determined by the new existing realities. The geographical configuration of the country's borders changed, with Unified Romania ranking 10th in Europe, with an area that had increased from 138 000 km<sup>2</sup> in 1915 to 295 049 km<sup>2</sup> in 1920<sup>1</sup>.

The obvious consequence was an increase in the number of inhabitants. From 7 248 061 inhabitants on 19 December 1912 to 15 541 424 inhabitants in 1920, with a steady increase leading to the registration of 18 057 028 inhabitants in the census of 29 December 1930<sup>2</sup>, divided into nine provinces, 71 counties, 322 settlements, 172 towns and 15,201 villages. Of the total population, the number of men was 8 870 778<sup>3</sup>. Although the most common ethnicity was still Romanian, the achievement of the new union state also meant a significant minority percentage of almost 30%, compared to 8% before the war. Depending on the area people lived in 77,78% of the total population lived in villages, with an increasing trend towards the end of the interwar period to 81,8%, as a result of the increased birth rate in rural areas<sup>4</sup>.

The post-war Romanians' view were influenced by a number of factors. The first of them was the fact that the victory was possible due to heavy sacrifices from peasant soldiers. They were used to the shortcomings of everyday life, so they successfully coped with the lack or less military equipment and training. The union state, perceived as a historic victory, was another factor of influence, along with the promised and expected reforms. First of all, the electoral lawlegislation, which removed inequities, and made citizens aware of the role they could play in the political life of the country, but also the rural law, which made possible the transfer of 6 377 668 ha<sup>5</sup> into the possession of peasants.

From an economic point of view, Romania remained a predominantly rural country, where production was surplus because of the large cultivated areas and less to a modern, mechanized and

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<sup>1</sup> Ioan Scurtu, Ion Alexandrescu, Constantin Rezachievici, Stan Stoica, Encyclopedia of Romanian History, volume II, Bucharest, Meronia Publishing House, 2003, p. 184.

<sup>2</sup> *Idem*, pp. 183-184.

<sup>3</sup> Ioan Scurtu, Ion Alexandrescu, Constantin Rezachievici, Stan Stoica, Encyclopedia of Romanian History, volume II, Bucharest, Meronia Publishing House, 2002, pp. 334, 338.

<sup>4</sup> Ioan, Short, Contemporary History of Romania (1918-2007), Bucharest, *Romania of Tomorrow Foundation* Publishing House, 2007, p. 10.

<sup>5</sup> International major Florea Popescu, 2nd Army Inspectorate, "Study and proposals in relation to the training and maintenance of the troops", in the Review of the intendance and administration of the army, year V, no. 10, October 1925, p.273.

efficient agriculture. The industry made substantial progress mainly towards the end of the analysis period, but the rural component remained dominant.

Political life was characterized by the numerous successive governments in power, mainly of the two major parties that faced each other on the interwar scene (the National Liberal Party and the National Peasants' Party of 1926). It should be noted that, in terms of defense policy, governments had a similar vision. The domestic and international climate dominated by a certain insecurity was speculated by extremist orientations, which registered a rapid rise on the political scene of the time. On the cultural level, the many achievements of the field were marked by the antithesis of the existence of a majority population which had a little or no cultural baggage, which a high of illiterates, especially in the village world.

From a military point of view, the decision-makers had to step up to the challenge of creating the legislative framework that could apply to the present times when the army be called to exercise its duties. In this context, the reorganization of the army was seen as "a state necessity imposed" on the one hand by the new principles of military organization highlighted by the war experience, and on the other hand by the military needs of United Romania, which was somewhat obliged by its general situation to be prepared to defend the integrity of the state<sup>16</sup>.

In this general context, the interwar military institution was modeled under the imperative of two forces. A functional imperative that stemmed from threats to national security, and a social imperative that stemmed from established state policy. The interaction between these two forces represented the core of the relations between the soldier and the military institution, their degree of connection depending on the intensity of needs, security, the nature and strength of the value model of society.

Based on the nature and purpose of the military institution, it was necessary to find that objective balance of control of hierarchical authority, by which the soldier, coming from the civil society, would be able to respond to the allocated mission, with selfless commitment, in the service of their country. The Romanian dictionary defines a soldier as "a soldier who has none or the lowest rank in an army. By generalization, the person who performs military service, the professional military man, and figuratively, the person who supports a cause, an idea and fights for it"<sup>17</sup>. Interestingly, in the reference documents elaborated in the interwar period, the term soldier appears defined in a single Regulation, which states that "any citizen of the Country, called

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<sup>16</sup> Ministry of War, Great General Staff - Section I, Army Reorganization Project, Bucharest, Great General Staff Printing Office, 1922, p.2.

<sup>17</sup> <https://dexonline.ro>, accesat la 20.03.2024.

according to the law, to bear arms for the defense of the Country and its institutions, is called *a soldier*<sup>8</sup>.

As I stated in the lines above, in the political-military environment, the imperative of defending the state's integrity remained a constant desire, on which all politicians agreed, regardless of the party in power. Thus, from a legislative point of view, the purpose, mission, and role of the institution were subsumed under this objective. The relationship between the military institution and the civil authorities, was best explained via the concept elaborated after the First World War, that of the Armed Nation. The influence of the military discipline order was applied in the preparation of the eligible population in the organization and mobilization of country's territory. The concept translated into the creation of a defense industry, a network of railways and transport by water and land, and the mindset prepared an eventual war. Besides, during the interwar period the idea that the war was no longer fought by armies, but by nations started to form. Even if no notable actions have been recorded in this regard, one aspect is remembered. It is about the introduction of the pre-military training system, mandatory for all young Romanian citizens aged 18, 19 and 20, which responded both to the desideratum set out above, and to solve the problem of full training, considering the time factor.

In terms of functionality, the army had to solve the problems inherited from polictician, upgrading the military organization according to needs, but especially resources, mainly of a financial nature. Immediately after the war, the army's contribution to the consolidation of the internal situation aimed both at maintaining a order, but also at the combined contribution of its human and material forces to economic recovery, although challenges and social turmoil did not bypass this segment either. The Ministry of War<sup>9</sup> provided support for rebuilding the homes of war victims, contributed to the repair and construction of numerous roads and railways, provided support in agriculture through labor and related logistics (tools, wagons, animals). Through the concept of the Constructive Army, the role intended for the institution was to become people's army being aimed at restoring the link between the beneficiaries of the rural reform, the peasants who own the land, and the military service, respectively the duty to defend it.

During the reference period, the organization of the army was governed by the three laws voted at 23 June 1924, 30 April 1930 and 28 April 1932, laws establishing the objectives,

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<sup>8</sup> Ministry of War, Great General Staff, Provisional Regulation on the Internal Service for troops of all arms, Bucharest, Great General Staff, Printing Office, 1922, p.1.

<sup>9</sup> Over time this ministry has had different names: Ministry of War (January 22, 1862), Ministry of the Army (June 7, 1930), Ministry of National Defense (June 6, 1932), Ministry of War (September 1, 1944), Ministry of National Defense (30 December 1947), Ministry of the Armed Forces (24 March 1950), Ministry of National Defense (21 November 1972).

components of the armed forces and their duties, the organizational framework of units and large units, the military organization of the territory, the duration of military service<sup>10</sup>.

Thus, between 1918-1940, the need was felt on one hand to create new commands, units, services, and the other hand, units were abolished or their organizational structure was modified. The workforce also varied during that period, according to the changes above.

Regarding the status, mission and duties of the soldier, the legislation provided sufficient framework. The duration of military service was set at 29 years (from 21 to 50 years old), and the modalities of incorporation and division of Romania's territory from the point of view of army command, respectively recruitment resources (in seven military regions corresponding to the seven army corps) were regulated. Each military region was divided into recruitment centers, with soldiers conscripted from all over the country based on a regional recruitment system. The legislative framework for army recruitment established the legal principle by which every citizen at the age of 21 had the right and duty to contribute to the defense of the country. There were a number of legal and medical regulations limiting this service, as well as a series of provisions granting postponements or dispensations to certain categories of young people. A number of civilian and military structures were working together to carry out this complex recruitment activity. Thus, in the village or city halls, based on population registers, notaries drew up the primary records for recruitment. For Romanian citizens abroad, accredited military attachés had the obligation to draw up recruitment tables, which through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs were submitted to the relevant ministry.

The recruitment centers, based on the documents received from the council, continued the operation of drawing up recruitment records and individual records documents of the military, transcripts and matriculation registers, evidencing the military history from conscription to the end of service were recorded in detail. Upon completion individual records, were transformed into numerical records that were forwarded to territorial commands and then to the General Staff, which annually determined the proportion of young people assigned to each army field before recruiting operations began.

In terms of organization, the Romanian military system included the Land Army (Army), Aviation and Navy. Depending on the legislation in force, the duration of military service was as follows:

- Between 1918 and 1930 for those assigned to the infantry arms, military service lasted two years under arms and five years in addition. For those assigned to cavalry, artillery, pioneers,

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<sup>10</sup> Gheorghe Zaharia, Constantin Botoran, Romania's National Defense Policy in the Interwar European Context 1919-1939, Military Publishing House, Bucharest, 1981, p. 124.

communications troops, military police and border guards, military service was three years under arms and four years in addition, and for those in the Navy, military service was four years under arms and three in addition.

- Between the years 1932-1940, the military service duration remained as in the previous period, with the exception of the aviation, which entered the category of army fields that required a two-year training. The ratio of army fields to services was directly related to the mission and the role they had to fulfill in the battle. From this point of view, the infantry remained predominant in the Romanian army even after the war, although with the advent of new military techniques, the percentage decreased further. From the projections carried out by the Great General Staff, the actual count of the military in the term was approximately 180 000 men. Their distribution by arms was as follows: 55% infantry, 7% cavalry, 15% artillery, 5% engineering (technical troops), 2% air force, 3% navy, 13% services. In the individual allocation of men to different parts of the army, physical abilities and occupation in civilian life were taken into account. Eligible citizens from the united territories had to be included in this organization. The issue of the integration of soldiers from the united territories into the Romanian army was a particularly sensitive one, given the past, origin and culture, each nationality. Following the analyzes carried out, it was appreciated that in principle, the optimal proportion within the units was 70% Romanian and 30% minorities.

Regarding the number of military personnel expected to be maintained based the allocated budgets, these figures were closely related to the economic situation at the time, the dynamism of the 1920s being followed by the collapse at the beginning of the fourth decade, followed by the economic revival, which in the military field meant an attempt to recover the technical and equipment disadvantages that the army was facing, correlated of course with the organization of the army.

The life of the soldiers in the barracks carried out according to a well-established schedule, in which everyone had their place, their position (craftsmen, barbers, nurses, stretcher bearers, secretaries, orderlies, trumpeter, firemen, storekeepers, etc.), rank (soldier, corporal, sergeant), well-defined rights and obligations.

After being incorporated and assigned to sub-units (companies and battalions), the soldiers were given a medical check-up, shaved, cut, washed, and asked to put on their military uniform for the first time. During their first days, the soldiers learned the routine of the daily schedule: how to wash, eat, put on their uniform, how to make their bed, clean their uniform and shoes. They got to know the army they were part of, gradually learning what the function of a soldier entailed, from the military salute, to the way of presentation in front of the superiors, the

services performed in the barracks, combat instruction and psychological training, the last term being known under the concept of moral training .

The internal service regulations were the main document by which soldiers learned the importance of following the hierarchy, and orders received, what were their rights and obligations. From the point of view of discipline in the army, in general the most frequent offenses were disobedience to incorporation and first desertion which represented 74.26% of the general total and 2.25% of the total of contingent-level cases. At a great distance were self-mutilation, discipline offence the second desertion, fraud, sale of military goodse, murder, which recorded percentages between 0.02% and 0.76% of the total crimes related to the number of soldiers in a contingent. It should be noted that the majority of those who deserted or did not show up for incorporation cited family reasons, fear of punishment or lack of knowledge of the Romanian language as the main reasons. Therefore, the defense function of the army in the event of an external danger was not jeopardized, the majority of soldiers being generally docile, not marked by rioting or destabilizing actions.

In this paradigm, however, an important role was played by the psychology of the soldier, who encountered the specific characteristics of the people, they were coming from (rural), therefore a relatively large dose of passivity and inertia, in addition to docility and tolerance. But as a result of the boomerang effect, the model of established pasivity, corroborated with the lack of optimal solutions on the part of political decision-makers, were determining factors that contributed to the fact that the majority of the population hads almost zero educational, civic and sanitary backgraound. With this backgraound soldiers came to military units and for this reason the army assumed the role of school of the nation. Due to its uniqueness, the institution was the only one that gathered at the same time and relatively in the same place, a considerable mass of people, on which same action could be taken. A special role in this complex process was played by the superior ranks, who by their position and status commanded respect and were a model worth following. When we analyze the cultural role of the army, the first thing we refer to is the so-called literacy school and the Romanian language school, for those who did not know it. The educational material was composed of the "Military Alphabet" and "Methodica writing-reading in army book schools", the schools operating on Sunday-Tuesday, Thursday-Friday, between 2.30-3.30 pm, teachers being only officers, assisted by a non-commissioned officer as appropriate.

Another function that the army performed was the social-educational function. In principle, the environment in which the future soldier was formed and which was in interaction with was the family, which we can characterize as being the foundation of the edifice of what, in the interwar period, the school, the church and the army completed. Thus, at the time of the

presentation to satisfy the military service, the young people had their views formed by the environment in which they lived. It thus fell to the military decision-makers the role of changing the strongly rooted mentality among the peasant-soldiers, that what their parents did, they will also do.

Against the background of the poor civic culture that the soldiers possessed, the subversive views, sometimes masked in the form of religious propaganda, required special attention and constant monitoring. For this reason, the role of religious education and military priests were particularly important, as they maintained the spirit of loyalty to the state, institution and leaders, to which both military ranks and soldiers were responsible through the military oath taken.

Because the connection between morality, health and food was obvious and demonstrated by all the studies that addressed this topic, the efforts of the decision-makers were also focused on the line of ensuring an optimal nutritional intake for a young person performing a series of activities that required a certain effort. Based on these considerations, the food ration in the Romanian army was established as follows: bread - 1,100 g, oat conflour - 600 g, breadcrumbs - 1,100 g, fresh meat - 400 g, canned meat - 350 g, cheese - 350 g, potatoes - 400 g, vegetable - 50 g, beans, peas or dry lentils - 200 g, fresh fish - 500 g, salt - 25 g, coffee - 8 g, tea - 1 g, sugar - 16 g, wine - 400 g. In case of war the ration was increased. Since general rules suitable for both the individual and the masses could not be established simultaneously, through the research carried out at the time, it was concluded that the optimal formula for the functioning of the body of a young man with an average weight between 70 and 75 kg, able to work in an interval of 9-10 hours, without intense physical activity was 2,887 calories. The importance of ensuring at least the minimum required for optimal nutritional intake results from the very mission intended for the soldier who in war conditions needed increased resistance, taking into account the weight aspect of the complete set of combat equipment of the infantry soldier, which weighed a little over 34 kg.

From the perspective of symbolism, but not only, the uniform played a particularly important role. It represented the symbol of belonging to the group, showed the importance of the entrusted mission, defending against unfavourable conditions and ensured the optimal functioning of the soldier on the battlefield. From this perspective, a balance was sought, not always very successful. The military outfit consisted of the small equipment, two shirts, two leggings, a tie, two wipes/towels, two pairs of socks (or obiels), a brush, a pouch with a penknife, needle, white and black thread, a box of metal for grease and vaseline, two handkerchiefs, the individual booklet, the identity card, a bandage package. The actual uniform consisted of a cloak with a hood, a blouse, a pair of trousers, two pairs of shoes, a helmet, a gas mask, a tunic. Because the training activities

were quite demanding, the quality of the material from which the uniform and shoes were made was not always up to par, the financial resources were limited, in general in this chapter the reality revealed major deficiencies. These shortcomings could not limit the combat training or the execution of the service, there were situations in which the soldiers were taken out for training in blouses or tunics, although the outside temperature imposed the necessity of wearing a coat or making wooden oversoles, to replace the lack of soles from boots.

Considering from this reality, but without generalizing the above examples, we can imagine the effort that the soldiers put into the act of combat training. The documents that laid down the general principles of organization and operation of the military ensemble, both in peacetime and in wartime, and established universal the rules to approach, analyze and act in a given situation were the regulations. These had to be known by all the ranks, from the general to the soldier in the parts that concerned them. The structure of these regulations followed the same pattern of organization, being elaborated on titles and chapters, accompanied by annexes and models of standardized documents, which ensured a unitary way of military and administrative management. There were two distinct categories: the general regulations for troops of all arms which laid down the rules of service and discipline of officers, non-commissioned officers and troops, inside and outside the barracks, and the individual regulations for each arm and service. The content was specific to each individual regulation and each army fields for which it was developed. In it, the norms to be respected were described in general, as complete as possible clarifications on the general mechanism and the training and combat procedures for small units, without going too much into technical details, in an attempt to remain in force for a longer period of time. At the same time, it included the organization of the management and execution teams, their hierarchy with the specific attributions, as complete data as possible on the necessary materials and the way of their use and operation, the connection and the difference between various units. Regarding the form, the regulations were structured in parts, titles, chapters, articles, being drafted in technical terms, uniform, clear, concise, and in most cases, precise.

An essential role in the implementation of the rules established by these regulations went to the superior military ranks, who represented the element of permanence and stability. The commander of the military unit had the direct responsibility to know the skills of those under his command and to draw up the absolutely indispensable program with the help of which he ensured the development of the entire training, directing and executing it based on the regulations, directives and instructions of the higher units. In the same time, the training officers, based on the general design and organization document, drew up corresponding programs grafted onto the general one, following exactly the milestone set by the commander. The commander's mission

does not end with the development of the general training program. He had to follow its implementation, monitoring the activity and results of subordinates. Sub-lieutenants, lieutenants and captains were the military ranks that commanded subunits that primarily ensured the war training of soldiers.

The training year was staged, divided into periods and subperiods, in which the training was learned progressively. The ranks of corporal and sergeant were selected from among the soldiers who were distinguished by their qualities, behavior and knowledge. These degrees could be acquired under certain conditions and as a result of completing the courses of the schools related to the degree. From a legislative point of view, the framework was considered by the beneficiaries to be excessively theorized, being impossible to follow up. Moreover, those that elaborated the military training documents implicitly recognized this, inserting in the implementation orders the principle of learning only the useful elements in case of war.

The combat training as regulated by military orders, directives, regulations and instructions was achieved through a judicious combination of the two instructional components. In addition to the technical, strictly military part in which the soldier had to know the weapons provided and how to use them, to acquire skills that would use them in potential armed confrontations, there was the less visible component, which combined a complex of factors, act both on the body, by fortifying it to allow it to endure the hardships of war, but also on the spirit, determining a strong will and a positive mentality.

The proportion of their implementation is difficult to quantify, since if for combat training the time allocated was fixed by the regulations, regarding the second component, much more complex and less visible, things were different, since it could be done all the time, at training, meals, animal care, hygiene, during rest hours, of course, with the input and direct involvement of military personnel. Naturally, this component was also marked by the experience of the war. It revealed the fact that the soldier had deficiencies in training, especially in the case of physical education which before the war was neglected.

In general, from practical experience, it was considered that during the first two periods of training, about 6% of the sessions, apart from those performed daily, at calltime, were sufficient for the teaching of educational concepts, with the amendment that they were also directly related to the level of culture of the recruits. The duration of a session was 50 minutes. From a pedagogical point of view, the military regulations did not condition the officers regarding the use of pedagogical methods, leaving for each to teach according to the method they knew and especially mastered. These varied according to the nature of the subject, but also according to the soldiers abilities and knowledge to whom the subjects were taught. The four values of the regulations,

virtue, honor, patriotism, subordination were the basic pillars embraced in this interval, but the concept of loyalty occupied the central place in the hierarchy of military values. The significance of emphasis of this value was also directly related to the presence of a significant number of soldiers of foreign nationality.

If previously obedience to the hierarchy without commenting on orders was the key note, after the war the need for initiative was recognized, but not without obedience and through loyalty. In practice, it was intended that the directives drawn up by the higher rankss mark the route, and that the lower ranks, down to the last soldier, reach the level of capacity and ability in which they have initiative, but in all situations act with loyalty and obedience. The new emphasis reflected the direction towards which it was moving, namely the mutual trust in the abilities and professionalism of the each other, but the Romanian military system had its shortcoming perpetuated over time (for example the practice of beating as a means of punishment for various deviations), which contradicted the obbjectives of the military programs in theory.

Of the total percentage, the components of the moral, military and patriotic education segment represented 1.5%, being taught during 40 and 30 sessions, respectively, which were not supposed to exceed 50 minutes. Civic education represented a percentage of 1% of the whole, being taught in 20 sessions, and religious and aesthetic education was taught in 10 sessions each, representing a percentage of 0.5%.

Symbolism also played an important role in the implementation of these values. This is how the military oath ceremony was considered a unique event in the life of recruits, which confirmed their becoming soldiers in the defense of the homeland, being taken by permanent recruits, as a rule, one month after incorporation. The commander of each military unit was responsible for organizing the solemnity, established to take place as a rule in the morning, between 9.00 and 11.00. To mark the moment, a meal was organized in the barracks at which all the soldiers, officers, non-commissioned officers of the corps and representatives of the civil authorities took part, then the soldiers were allowed to go out into the city. The religious aspect had a special role in this process, as between the religious dogmas and the military establishment there was a close relationship, with benefits for both parts. Through its concepts and teachings, religion was considered the root of a citizen's morality, which once he became a soldier transferred it and transformed it into attributes necessary for the intended mission: trust and above all fidelity to the country and its leaders, to the order established in the state and above all the desire to defend them out of conviction and not out of fear.

Although military regulations promoted physical education and moral education equally, in reality physical education was the easiest to carry out, followed at distance by moral education.

And such was the case, the World War demonstrated that the armies that had soldiers trained, sometimes at the limit of their capacity, in the speed of execution, courage, the endurance in the environment in which they were going to carry out their effort, chose the right strategy. Physical education through its sub-branch military physical education, was in a symbiotic relationship with combat training, by inserting the actions of the latter factor on the results of the former. The role of physical education was essential in the military training of soldiers, this being absorbed into the process of general training, by studying the training structures, the nature and duration of the efforts that soldiers would make in a hypothetical war. General physical education aimed at the harmonious development and strengthening of the body from a physical point of view. This was done through gymnastic exercises, walking, running, climbing, maintaining balance, lifting weights, jumping, wrestling, swimming, etc.

The normal functioning of the body and its health, was achieved as a result of the dynamics between a number of factors. Military hygienic measures, represented those prophylactic measures undertaken permanently, so that the human body was protected against diseases, both in peacetime and in wartime. The coordinated action regarding military hygiene represented the concern for preserving and improving the health of the soldiers, determined by the special conditions in which they lived, namely the large groups of individuals that could easily constitute vectors for the spread of contagious diseases, and the special hygiene measures that had to be taken in the case of these collectivities.

Political decision-makers considered that the environment of discipline and execution of orders within the military system created the right conditions for military hygiene to be the embryo and model for general, social, collective hygiene. Let us not forget that vaccination measures were first implemented and amplified in the army. Due to the fact that the majority of the male population was doing military service, it was hoped that the basics of basic hygiene concepts would be learned and applied even after the end of the military service. During this, the soldier was obliged to apply the notions of body washing, he was taught about the importance of using the pillow, blanket, napkin/personal towel, tableware, handkerchief, clothing as non-transmissible personal items<sup>11</sup>. However, in the reports that the military decision-makers transmitted hierarchically, health education was evaluated as worrying. For this reason, the for health education to be given equal importance with the other educational segments, as it was obvious that without a long-term program in this direction, the foundation of the military service in terms of human resources was directly affected. Special attention was paid to measures for the

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<sup>11</sup> Divisional physician Dr. I. Antoniu and physician lieutenant-colonel Dr. I. Bălănescu, "The role of the army in the health education of the people", in Military Romania, Year LIII, no. 1, January 1921, p. 431.

prevention and treatment of contagious diseases. Unfortunately, it was an established fact that the soldiers returning home completely forgot everything they had seen and learned during military service, as if "for them these teachings were useless, it seems that they were forced even martyred to carry out the measures to preserve health".<sup>12</sup>

Therefore, according to the fundamental values developed in the pre-war period, the army has kept its character of constancy and its purpose of defense in the face of internal dangers, but especially external ones. Military service has retained its mandatory nature for all citizens. Also, the social function of the army was maintained, its role as a school of the nation, but in the context in which mentalities evolved, the importance of that time was a much stronger one, being considered as the first institution that could ensure the much-desired cohesion after the achievement of the Act of Union .

The overall picture of the "Soldier in the Army of Great Romania" takes shape as an accumulation of mutual intrinsic and extrinsic influences, impossible to separate, which contributed essentially with good and bad to the general reinforcement of the system. Through the legislative framework, the authorities provided the necessary basis for training, sufficiently theorized, perhaps even more than the need was, but which suffered from a series of shortcomings when applied in practice. In an overwhelming proportion, the difficulties were determined by the insufficient financing of the system during the entire analyzed period, which makes it impossible to really appreciate the value of the human factor, from the perspective of the trainer and that of the trained. The Romanian's endurance in the face of shortcomings actually represented the most valuable quality of the soldier. On a bigger scale, in the action-reaction relationship, the passivity and lack of reaction determined the semi-failure of the educational program, since the docility of the Romanian soldier also translated into a mute resistance to apply in civilian life the models seen and learned in the army.

But with all the shortcomings, we appreciate that the forces of influence that directed this immense mass of people, still managed to ensure the necessary balance to allow the operation to function more or less smoothly, the problems of the system undoubtedly exceeding the military framework. Later, the events that marked the evolution of the state and implicitly the military body, some determined by factors outside our remit, made impossible the evaluation that General

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<sup>12</sup> General Physician Papiu Alexandru, *Notions of military hygiene for the Lower Sanitary Schools*, Medical Book, 1934, p.7.

Rudeanu placed on his descendants, "only the future will prove if we were worthy to be, those what we are today"<sup>13</sup>, in the sense that the real human value of the soldier can be fully analyzed.

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<sup>13</sup> General Rudeanu, "Our national defense and the riches of Romania complete", in Artillerie Magazine, Year XLV, No. 11-12, November-December 1933, p. 1.

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