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National Defence of Hungary – Military Units and Military Facilities of Debrecen (Part 2)

Units of the Royal Hungarian Honvéd and the Hungarian Defence Forces in Debrecen

Abstract

The army has always played a major role in the performance of defence tasks in Hungary. This article presents the development of Hungary's national defence from the collapse of the Austro–Hungarian Monarchy in 1918 to the present day. It describes the ground, cavalry and air units of the Royal Hungarian Army stationed in Debrecen since 1920, the military facilities used by the Soviet Red Army in Debrecen, and the units of the Hungarian Defence Forces operating in the city. It presents the work, activities, tasks and military facilities of the following entities: HDF 5th "István Bocskai" Infantry Brigade, HDF 24th "Gergely Bornemissza" Reconnaissance Regiment, HDF 2nd "vitéz Antal Vattay" Territorial Defence Regiment, 3rd "Sándor Oláh" Territorial Defence Battalion and the HDF Military Administration and Central Registry Command 2nd Augmentation and Recruitment Centre, and the 3rd Augmentation and Recruitment Office, the last two of which being responsible for providing supplies.

Keywords: national defence, Hungarian Defence Forces, military units, barracks

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1. Introduction

In the 20th century Hungary, the main player in national defence was the army. The city of Debrecen also played a significant role in the performance of defence tasks. The significant military past of the city is demonstrated by the fact that there were still more than ten barracks in the city in the early 1900s.

This study presents in detail the units of the Royal Hungarian Honvéd and the Hungarian Defence Forces tied to the city of Debrecen after the collapse of the [Austro–Hungarian Monarchy](#) in 1918. It describes the ground, cavalry and air units, as well as the military facilities of the Royal Hungarian Army stationed in Debrecen, enumerates the military facilities used by the Soviet Red Army in Debrecen between 1945–1991, and provides an overview of the units of the Hungarian Defence Forces currently operating in Debrecen.

2. National defence of Hungary from the turn of the century to the present day

The set up of an independent Hungarian army, the Royal Hungarian Honvéd, outside the “Common Army” of the Imperial-Royal Army, took place in 1869, following the establishment of the Austro–Hungarian Monarchy. The Royal Hungarian Ministry of Defence was established in Budapest. The legal regulations governing the military affairs of the Monarchy were laid down in Act XL of 1868 on the Defence Forces, Act XLI of 1868 on the Hungarian Honvéd and Act XLII of 1868 on the Royal Hungarian k.u. Landsturm until 1912. The establishment of the Royal Hungarian Ludovika Military Academy was already provided for in Act VII of 1808 by the Diet. The foundation stone of the building was laid by Archduke Joseph of Austria, Palatine of Hungary in 1831, but the building complex stood empty for a long time after its completion in 1936. The actual operation of the highly necessitated Royal Hungarian Ludovika Military Academy began in 1872.³ Section 1 of Act XXX of 1912 on the Defence Forces provided for the military service obligation, and Act XXXI of 1912 on the Hungarian Honvéd provided for the purpose, deployment, augmentation and military obligation of the army.

World War I (1914–1918) necessitated the introduction of the total military service obligation, the independence of the augmentation system, the lowering of the minimum age, a thorough, versatile training, and a more differentiated military force. It has become necessary to supplement the reserve system.⁴ During conscriptions, three persons from the conscript groups of 13 were posted to the Hungarian Honvéd and ten to the Common Army. The Royal Hungarian Honvéd operated as part of the armed forces of the Austro–Hungarian Monarchy until the collapse of the monarchy in 1918. The disarmament of those returning from the front and other units had begun,

³ 1872. évi XVI. törvény cikk a magyar királyi honvédségi Ludovika-Akadémia felállításáról.

⁴ Tamás Csikány: *A Hazáért. A Magyar Honvédség múltja és jelene 1848–2004*. Budapest, Szaktudás Kiadó Ház, 2006. 143.

until the end of November, 700,000 soldiers returned home.⁵ After the collapse of the Monarchy, an attempt was made to organise an independent military force. The task of the military force is to secure internal order and to protect the civilian population against looting soldiers.

After the First World War, the Republic of Councils in Hungary, also known as the Hungarian Soviet Republic, was proclaimed on 21 March 1919. The Red Army was part of the armed forces of the Soviet Union. Given the conditions at that time, the organisation of its units and subunits was modern (the divisions consisted of two brigades, the brigades consisted of two regiments, and six battalions)⁶. On 1 November 1918, the Ministry of Defence was transformed into the "Hungarian War Ministry", and on 6 June 1919, Miklós Horthy established the National Army with a decree promulgated in Szeged.⁷ Its task was to fight against the Red Terror and to restore order.

After the Treaty of Trianon of 1920, the historical Hungary lost 71.52% of its territory and 63.561% of its population.⁸ The military provisions of the signed peace treaty ensured the full military superiority of the members of the Little Entente, thus allowing Hungary to maintain only an army that was incapable of executing offensive operations and could not even provide the minimal protection for the country. The military provisions of the peace treaty were contained in Act XXXIII of 1921. Universal military obligation had to be abolished in Hungary. The Hungarian army could be a mercenary army based on voluntary enlistment, whose profession was to maintain internal order and provide border service. The numerical strength of the army was set in 35,000 individuals.⁹ These provisions put the military force in an emergency situation, and the conscripts had to be kept hidden, so they served in the staff of law enforcement agencies and bodies, the gendarmerie, the police and the customs guard. With regard to the peace treaty, those performing military administration had to operate in hiding and secretly, applying various cover decrees, e.g. county statistical offices, public welfare offices. Regular training of reservists has become impossible. Volunteering has appeared in the army, but supporting the cause of national defence on a voluntary basis was not yet an integral part of social culture.

On 4 January 1922, the name "National Army" was changed to "Royal Hungarian Honvéd". Act XLIX of 1921 on the Royal Hungarian Honvéd contains the establishment of the Royal Hungarian Honvéd and the framework of the army. Act III of 1922 described the modifications to the formation of the new military force. These legislations were covert attempts to circumvent the narrow framework of the Treaty of Trianon (unauthorised recruitment, units hidden in the customs guard, hiding munitions, etc.). The basic unit of the newly established military force consisted of seven mixed brigades (Budapest, Székesfehérvár, Szombathely, Kaposvár, Szeged, Debrecen, Miskolc).¹⁰

⁵ Csaba Horváth: *A Magyar Királyi Honvédség 1919–1940 között*. In Tamás Csikány (ed.): *A Magyar Honvédség 1848–1989*. Budapest, Zrínyi Miklós Nemzetvédelmi Egyetem, 2004. 215.

⁶ Horváth (2004): op. cit. 223.

⁷ Hadsereg és katonapolitika 1919–1940 között. In *A honvédség fejlődése a századforduló után*. s. a.

⁸ Horváth (2004): op. cit. 234.

⁹ A trianoni békeszerződés teljes szövege.

¹⁰ Horváth (2004): op. cit. 330.

On 23 December 1927, a ruling was made to develop the army in three stages. The numerical strength of the Hungarian Army was increased to 57,648 individuals, the ratio of infantry to artillery improved, but further developments failed due to the Great Depression (1929–1933).

The increase in the possibility of another war resulted in the development of the military force, and the continuous development of the numerical strength of the army began. Military service obligation was reintroduced in 1932, and a goal of scaling up the existing seven mixed brigades into a division consisting of three regiments was set. In 1934, training of the reservists began. In 1935, two air regiments and four anti-aircraft artillery divisions were established. During mobilisation, the Royal Hungarian Honvéd set up its war strength through the so-called "twin system". In the peacetime battle of order of the 1930s, each mixed brigade contained three regiments (altogether 21) and three artillery divisions (also 21 altogether). During mobilisation, these numbers were duplicated by the application of the "twin system". Part of the effective strength, led by the deputy regimental commander, left the infantry regiments and thus formed the so-called twin regiment. Both regiments replenished their war strength with the enlisted reservists. In 1936–1937, the artillery and the air force were further developed, and the firepower of the infantry and cavalry units was increased.¹¹

The draft of the Huba Plan developed for the quantitative and qualitative development of the Army, came into force on 1 October 1938.¹² The Bled agreement of 1938 provided Hungary an equal right to armaments, which resulted in a reduction in the arms disadvantage. In 1939, draft agencies were established to fulfil independent and specifically military administration tasks. The commands of the Royal Hungarian Air Force and the Royal Hungarian River Guard were established. Military service obligation became generalised. The 1939 regulation introduced a new district division and regulated the powers of the territorial military administrative organisations. Draft agencies performed the tasks related to augmentation (conscription, drafting, conscript records), managed subordinate administrative bodies, the district command was responsible for executing training outside the military force, and the county military command acted as liaison to the jurisdictions and also carried out tasks related to the mobilisation of the country.¹³ Act II of 1939 on national defence defines national defence as a civic duty, by devotion through self-sacrifice. The system of military organisation is based on full military service obligation, and it was possible to create a group of officers and non-commissioned officers in the formation of reserve and secondary reserve forces. Once again, volunteering has appeared in the Hungarian Army.

In 1940, the position of the Commander-in-Chief of the Hungarian Army was terminated, control of the army was taken over by the General Staff operating since 1938. The triple division of the military leadership existing since 1922 had been abolished,

¹¹ Az önálló magyar haderő megszervezése 1919–1921. s. a.

¹² Huba-hadrend. *Magyarország a második világháborúban*. Lexikon A–ZS. Budapest, Magyar Hadtudományi Társaság, Petit Real Könyvkiadó, 1997.

¹³ Pál Kádár: A katonai központi igazgatás feladatai és szervezeti evolúciója. In Júlia Hornyacsék (ed.): *A védelmi igazgatás fő területeinek változásai az elmúlt időszakban, és a fejlesztés lehetséges irányai*. Budapest, Nemzeti Közszolgálati Egyetem, 2019. 9–35.

and three army commands were established. The 1st army command commanded the Debrecen VI, Kassa VIII and Kolozsvár IX, the 2nd army command commanded the Budapest I, Székesfehérvár II and Miskolc VII, and the 3rd army command commanded the Szombathely III, Pécs IV and Szeged V corps.

The first phase of the Huba Plan, the quantitative development of the Hungarian Army, had been completed until 1941.¹⁴ The second phase was the establishment of the armoured and air defence forces from 1941 to 1943 (the establishment of two armoured and one motorised rifle divisions and one air defence corps consisting of two air defence artillery brigades, as well as the expansion of infantry heavy armament and artillery ammunition). The third phase of the Huba Plan from 1943 to 1945 was the development of the armoured forces and further increase the army's firepower, as well as to modernise the air force with fighters and bombers issued under the Messerschmitt program. The implementation of the second and third phases had not been completed due to the limited performance of the Hungarian industry. The short-term army development concept of the Szabolcs Plan, developed in 1943, did not define a quantitative but an in-depth-structured reorganisation, but these plans had not been realised either.¹⁵

During World War II, the number of augmentation commands decreased, drafting centres were established, and the infantry brigades took over the task of the county commands. Act XIV of 1942 amends and supplements Act II of 1939 on national defence and Act IV of 1938 on the recognition of the gunfighters' merits in the World War of 1914–1918. In 1942–1943, new ministerial departments were established (at the central level of the military administration) with the task of mobilising and augmentation, as well as keeping records of conscripts. Towards the end of World War II, the Interim Government of Hungary operating in Debrecen declared war on Germany on 26 December 1944. Troops of the German army were driven out from the country by the Red Army (the united Soviet–Romanian force), by the end of March. In 1944–1945, the Soviet army occupied or "liberated" Hungary, after which it remained in Hungary for forty-seven years. During this time, the Soviets, about 55,000 soldiers and approximately 50,000 civilians, were stationed in 104 settlements of the country in 288 facilities.¹⁶ By the end of April 1945, the Hungarian military force had practically ceased to exist.

After World War II, the national armed forces had to be reorganised. In 1945, a large-scale development of the military force began, and the voluntary-based organisation was replaced by conscription. Act XVIII of 1947 regulated the expansion of the armed forces, according to which Hungary had the right to organise an army of 70,000 people. In December 1947, officer training began at the Honvéd Military Academy. The Hungarian Defence Forces were established in 1948, reorganised from the remaining personnel and technical staff of the Royal Hungarian Honvéd. In the 1950s, county and district augmentation commands were established, adapting to

¹⁴ Huba-hadrend.

¹⁵ *Hadrendek* (Huba I., Huba II., Szabolcs). Budapest, Hadtörténeli Intézet és Múzeum, s. a.

¹⁶ Tamás Csapody: *Landmines in Hungary*. Budapest, Institute for Political Science, 2000.

the system of public administration. The name of the Hungarian Defence Forces were changed into Hungarian People's Army on 1 June 1951.¹⁷

After the defeat of the Hungarian Revolution of 1956 by the Soviets, the Soviet Army took away a significant part of the equipment of the Hungarian People's Army out of the country, causing great losses. The development of a new force had to begin. The Budapest Metropolitan Augmentation Command and the county, district, city and metropolitan district augmentation commands (176 in total) were established, which kept the registers of conscripts. In the autumn of 1961, training for reserve officers began. Tasks relating to augmentation and mobilisation belonged to the Defence Staff Organisation and Mobilisation Directorate of the Ministry, at the central level of the military administration. By 1972, a single-level organisation of the military administration based on county division was established, which operated until 2007. The Hungarian People's Army Conscripts Registration and Information Centre was established in 1973 (based on the HPAGS Central Mobilisation Staff, which was established on 1 September 1967). Its task was to plan and organise the military tasks of the population register, and to establish a unified conscript register system. From 1987, it was reorganised into the Information and Military Administration Centre and supplemented with the functions of the disbanded Emergency Centre Mobilisation Staff.

Prior to the system change, Hungary, as a member of the Warsaw Pact, did not have its own military doctrine. The establishment of the Hungarian People's Army Command on 1 December 1989 was the beginning of the system change within the armed forces. From the beginning of the 1990s, Hungary's security policy, national defence and military defence have changed. At the time of the system change, following the withdrawal of the Soviet Army, pursuant to a government decree of 30 November 1989, a large-scale military downsizing and a force reduction in the area of organisation and military technology was carried out.¹⁸ As a result, territorial defence teams were phased out and the training and further training of reservists was kept to a minimum.¹⁹

From 15 March 1990, the name of the Hungarian People's Army was renamed again to Hungarian Defence Forces. On the basis of a treaty signed by the representatives of the member states in Budapest on 25 February 1991, all military bodies and structures established within the framework of the Warsaw Pact were abolished, thus the Hungarian Defence Forces became independent again.²⁰

At the beginning of 1992, the Hungarian Defence Forces Military Administration and Data Processing Centre was established. Hungary became a member of NATO on 12 March 1999. The operating conditions and also the functions of the Hungarian army have changed, the emphasis has shifted to prevention and defence. From 2000, the Augmentation and Training Command took over the administrative tasks

¹⁷ Csikány (2006): op. cit. 290.

¹⁸ László Makk: *A haderő átalakítása a hidegháború utáni korszak biztonsági kihívásainak tükrében. A Magyar Honvédség haderőátalakításai a rendszerváltástól a NATO tagságig.* Budapest, Zrínyi Miklós Nemzetvédelmi Egyetem, 2008. 54.

¹⁹ László Bombay: *A honvédelem négy éve 1990–1994.* Budapest, Zrínyi Katonai Könyv- és Lapkiadó, 1994. 22.

²⁰ Imre Helgert – Gyula Mészáros: *A magyar honvédség a rendszerváltás sodrában. Néphadseregből – Magyar Honvédség.* Lakitelek, Antológia Kiadó, 2017. 9.

of the Defence Staff Augmentation Directorate on the central level of the military administration. Its primary tasks were recruitment and to operate the eight recruiting stations established within the organisation of draft agencies. In 1999, the Defence Staff Military Council adopted the concept underlying the voluntary reservist system. A new form of service, the voluntary reservist service, has been established. The necessity of establishing a voluntary reservist system was determined by the fact that the role of military service obligation changed significantly, and its political and social acceptance changed in Hungary by the beginning of the 2000s, especially with regard to conscription in peacetime.²¹

Universal conscription was abolished on 3 November 2004 (introduced in 1868 with the enactment of Act XL), so that after 135 years, conscription and military service applied in peacetime ceased to exist. The mass army applied was replaced by a professional, voluntary-based force. The voluntary reservist system exists on government level from 2000, and it exists on legislation level from the adoption of Act XLIV of 2001 on the amendment of the laws affected by changes in the order of conscription and reserve military service fulfilment. The legal basis for the transition to voluntary force was created by Act CV of 2004 on national defence and the Hungarian Defence Forces. The Voluntary Defence Reservist System was established in 2011 and the Voluntary Operational Reservist System in 2012.

The HDM Augmentation and Central Registry Command was established with effect from 15 November 2011, as the Defence Staff Personnel Directorate Military Administration Division, the HDM Draft Agency of Eastern Hungary and the Draft Agency of Western Hungary were abolished and merged into the HDM Military Administration and Data Processing Centre, by integrating these professional organisational structures for the joint and centralised performance of their tasks. On 1 July 2016, the Augmentation, Preparatory and Training Command was established (the predecessor institutions were the HDM Training and Doctrine Centre and the HDM Augmentation and Training Command).

The name of the HDM Augmentation and Central Registry Command changed to the HDM Military Administration and Central Registry Command with effect from 1 July 2016.

The command is the central administrative and data processing body of the Hungarian Defence Forces, with national jurisdiction. Within the framework of its administrative activities, this organisation manages the central personnel register of professional and contract soldiers and civilian employees of the Hungarian Defence Forces and the tasks related to the register defined in the relevant legal regulations. Three military administrative centres have been established in Hungary, in Budapest, Debrecen and Székesfehérvár.

In 2017, the Zrínyi 2026 Defence and Army Development Program started.²² The primary goal of the program was to create an army equipped with modern equipment

²¹ László Lakatos: Az önkéntes tartalékos rendszer fejlesztésének időszzerű kérdései. *Új Honvédségi Szemle*, 3 (2009). 8–10.

²² Tibor Benkő: *Honvédelem és haderőfejlesztés*. Prezentáció. Budapest, Gazdálkodási és Tudományos Társaságok Szövetsége, 2019a. 5.

and to provide a hinterland.²³ The program was divided into two parts: national defence and the development of the army.²⁴

Two territorial defence regiments were established: the HDM 2nd "vitéz Antal Vattay" Territorial Defence Regiment and the HDM 6th "Gyula Sipos" Territorial Defence Regiment. The plans include to set up five more territorial defence regiments by 2026. As part of the army development program, the reservist system was renewed and the territorial defence forces were organised. In 2017, the Voluntary Territorial Defence Reservist System was introduced within the Voluntary Reservist System, the Special Voluntary Reservist Service was launched on 1 July 2020, then the Voluntary Military Service was launched from July 2021. In 2018, the training of reserve officers and non-commissioned reserve officers was resumed.

With effect from 1 January 2019, the Hungarian Defence Forces Command was established as a new military organisation by merging the Defence Staff and the Joint Forces Command, as their successor entity. At the same time, the Ministry of Defence and the Defence Staff were separated. With effect from 31 July 2020, two new organisations were established, the Hungarian Defence Forces Reserve and Support Command (as the legal successor institution of the HDM Logistics Centre) and the Hungarian Defence Forces Transformation Command (as the legal successor of the HDF Augmentation, Preparatory and Training Command). The territorial defence regiments are also under the subordination of the Hungarian Defence Forces Reserve and Support Command.

In 2021, following an organisational change, military augmentation and recruitment centres and recruitment offices were established instead of military administrative centres. There are seven augmentation and recruitment centres in the country (their headquarters are in Budapest, Debrecen, Székesfehérvár, Szolnok, Szeged, Veszprém and Kaposvár), and a total of 20 augmentation and recruitment offices have been established under their command.

The following sections present the units of the Royal Hungarian Honvéd and the Hungarian Defence Forces operating in Debrecen from the beginning of the 1900s to the present day, as well as the barracks located in the city in the use of the different units.

3. The armed forces of the Royal Hungarian Honvéd in Debrecen between 1920–1945

From the period of the Treaty of Trianon signed in 1920, after the disintegration of the Austro–Hungarian Monarchy, the "in-house regiment" of Debrecen ceased to exist, but the city was not left without an army. Pursuant to Act XLIX of 1921 on the army, the Royal Hungarian Honvéd was established on 1 January 1922. From 1 May 1922, its armed forces consisted of seven mixed brigades (the 6th mixed brigade was established in Debrecen).

²³ *Biztonsági piac évkönyv 2019*. Budapest, Biztonsági piac Média és Kiadó Kft., 2019. 54.

²⁴ Tibor Benkő: A Magyar Honvédség jelene és jövője. *Hadtudomány*, 29, nos. 1–2 (2019b). 151.

3.1. Ground units

The Royal Hungarian 6th Honvéd Mixed Brigade Division was established in 1920 with its headquarters being in Debrecen. One of the regiments of this mixed brigade command was the 11th "István Bocskai" Hajdú Regiment, which carried on the legacy and traditions of the Hajdú-Bihar predecessors of the 39th regiment in Debrecen until the end of World War II. The Royal Hungarian VI Corps started operating at the headquarters of the 6th Mixed Brigade on 22 November 1938. When it was created, the command of the corps was established in the barracks on Péterfia Street in Debrecen. The 16th Infantry Brigade of Szolnok, the 18th Infantry Brigade of Békéscsaba and the 17th Infantry Brigade established on 23 October 1938 of Debrecen, were under the command of the corps. The infantry brigade was activated during the mobilisation, half of its effective strength left the infantry regiments and artillery divisions registered in the peacetime battle of order, thus the twin regiment of the infantry regiment and the second artillery division were formed. The twin regiment of the 11th Infantry Regiment became the 41st Infantry Regiment, the 6/I mother and the 6/II twin divisions were created from the 6th artillery division. The basis of the infantry brigade was the two infantry regiments consisting of the mother and twin regiments and the artillery regiment organised from two artillery divisions. The actual numerical strength of the thus created infantry brigade was replenished to combat strength with reservists during mobilisation. This mobilisation system lasted until 1942.²⁵

After Hungary had entered the war, the units of the VI Corps joined the activities of the Hungarian Occupying Forces. The 41/II and 41/III battalions of the 41st Infantry Regiment of Debrecen were integrated into the 121st Infantry Brigade, and the 41/I Battalion of Debrecen was integrated into the I Light Division.²⁶ In 1943, the light divisions were formed into infantry divisions, consisting of three infantry regiments and four field artillery divisions. One infantry division was assigned into every corps. In February 1944, the Infantry Division, together with the VI Corps, was mobilised as part of the 1st Army. In the Carpathians, their task was to advance, to hinder Soviet forces, and to restore broken connections between German army groups. Towards the end of the war, as a result of the mobilisation, only the army reserve of the ground units stationed in Debrecen remained in the city. On 24 August 1944, a field reserve division was created from the army reserve of each corps. In Debrecen, the 6th field replacement division was established with incomplete training and inadequate equipment. This reserve division took part in the recapture of Arad as part of the 3rd Army, where it was destroyed.²⁷

²⁵ Attila Bonhart: Magyar Királyi Honvédség 1919–1945. In Jolán Szijj (ed.): *Fond és Állagjegyzék – A Hadtörténeti Levéltár Őrzésében lévő katonai iratok*. Budapest, 1997.

²⁶ Pál Földi: *A Magyar Királyi Honvédség a második világháborúban*. Budapest, Anno Kiadó, 2000. 52–54.

²⁷ Bonhart (1997): op. cit.

3.2. Air units

Under the Treaty of Trianon signed in 1920, the country could not have an air force, but the treaty did not prohibit theoretical developments. Some of the former air units and pilots belonged to the civilian Aviation Authority. Pilot training has also started in Hungary in Budapest, Szeged, Szombathely and Miskolc. Based on the lessons learnt from the experience of the First World War, the so-called Douhet theory,²⁸ born in the early 1920s, proclaimed the theory of "air domination" and "unlimited air warfare", respectively. In the period between the two world wars, this subject occupied almost every force in the world, modern strategic and operational views on the organisation and use of the air force gradually developed, which ensured the further rapid development of the emerging armed force.²⁹ The Royal Hungarian Honvéd Air Force was established in 1938. Based on the decision of Miklós Horthy, it was to operate as an independent arm from 1 January 1939. Before entering the war, the Hungarian Royal Air Force VI Close Reconnaissance Company was stationed at Debrecen Airport, which later settled in Kecskemét and merged into the 3rd close reconnaissance units.

The staff of the 3rd Bomber Regiment, the two squadrons of the 3/III Bomber Division (with "Falcon" and Caproni Ca-135bis aircraft) and the 3rd aircraft repair workshop were also stationed in Debrecen. Two squadrons of the 3/II Bomber Division moved from Kecskemét to Debrecen under the name of 3rd Bomber Practice Division. The 3rd Bomber Regiment ceased to exist on 1 October 1941, and its division stationed in Debrecen was renamed to 4th Bomber Division. From Debrecen, the following units were dispatched to the eastern front: the 4/1 Bomber Air Squadron under the subordination of the 1st Air Brigade in June 1942, and the 3/1 and 3/2 Bomber Air Squadron in November. After suffering heavy losses, the last two was merged and returned from the front in the spring of 1944 as the 102/1 squadron. Then it was stationed from Debrecen at the Hajdúböszörmény airport and was merged into the squadrons of the 102nd Bomber Division. In October 1942, the 2nd Air Brigade Command was established in Debrecen. The 1st Fighter Division of Szolnok, the 2nd Fighter Division of Kolozsvár, the 3rd Bomber Division of Debrecen and the 4th Close Reconnaissance Division of Ungvár were under the subordination of the brigade. On 6 January 1944, the Hungarian 1st Army and the VI Corps under its subordination, and in June 1944, the 102/1 and 102/2 air squadrons under the subordination of the 2nd Air Brigades were sent from the Debrecen area to the front in the Carpathians. The 102nd Close Reconnaissance Squadron moved from Ungvár to Debrecen, then, after a short-term stay, it was relocated to the airport of Börgönd.³⁰

²⁸ Giulio Douhet: *A légiuralom. Szemelvények a burzsoá katonai teoretikusok műveiből I.* Dezső Tandori trans. Budapest, Zrínyi Miklós Katonai Akadémia, 1971.

²⁹ József Szabó: A Magyar Királyi Honvéd Légierő története. *Hadtudomány*, 10, no. 3 (2000).

³⁰ Miklós M. Szabó: *A Magyar Királyi Honvéd Légierő a második világháborúban.* Budapest, Zrínyi Katonai Könyv- és Lapkiadó, 1987. 216.

Following the withdrawal of Romania from the German alliance (23 August 1944), three squadrons of the Division I of the 4th Bomber Regiment (32 aircraft), the 123/3 Close Reconnaissance Squadron (16 aircraft), one night fighter squadron, the 100/4 Night Fighter Squadron, the 4/3 Night Combat Aircraft Squadron, as well as the 15th Squadron of the 151st Combat Aircraft Regiment from Hajdúböszörmény were settled in Debrecen. It is not known how long the staff of the 4th Air Fleet stayed in the city. The Royal Hungarian Honvéd Air Force ceased to exist in May 1945.

3.3. Cavalry units

Within the framework of the Huba Plan, the VI Independent Hussar Company was settled in Debrecen, and from 1929, to Nyíregyháza to the place of the 6th Honvéd Hussar Regiment. The VI Independent Hussar Company became the hussar company of the reconnaissance division of the 16th Infantry Division from 1 October 1943, and served in it until the end of the war.³¹

3.4. Intelligence service

According to the general tactical manual of the Royal Hungarian Honvéd, the task of the intelligence service was to perform general military intelligence. The 2nd (reconnaissance) divisions within the commands of corps (military districts) stationed in the territory of Hungary had created a division of labour among themselves. The intelligence in Budapest worked mainly against Czechoslovakia, the one in Debrecen worked only against Romania and the one in Szeged worked against Yugoslavia and Romania.³²

4. Military facilities of the Royal Hungarian Honvéd in Debrecen

There were several military objects in Debrecen being used by the Royal Hungarian Honvéd.

³¹ A magyar királyi honvéd lovasság adatbázisa. s. a.

³² Lajos Hajma: *A katonai felderítés és hírszerzés története*. Budapest, Zrínyi Miklós Nemzetvédelmi Egyetem, 2015. 90–92.

4.1. Barracks on Kassai Road/Artillery barracks/Emperor Wilhelm hussar barracks



Figure 1: The former barracks on Kassai Road
Source: Photo by János Perge.

The construction of the barracks began between 1896 and 1898. It used to be the barracks of the Imperial and Royal 7th (Wilhelm) Hussar Regiment, then operated under the command of the Royal Hungarian Honvéd 6th Mixed Brigade. In 1924, there were five multi-storey barracks, 29 single-storey farm buildings, ornamental gardens and courtyards on the area of the barracks. In 1925, there were 32 buildings on the area, half of which were destroyed in the bombings during World War II. It can be found at 26 Kassai Road, currently used as a university campus. In the early 1900s, the area of the barracks was extended towards Zákány Street. The new buildings were built by the city in 1911–1912.³³ This part of the property was taken over by the military on 18 November 1912, and was used by the military intelligence company.³⁴

³³ József Papp: *Debrecen város birtoktapsztere 1924–1950*. Hajdú-Bihar Megyei Levéltár közleményei 23. Adattár B. V. honvédelmi bértelek. Debrecen, 1997. 101.

³⁴ Papp (1997): op. cit. 99.

4.2. Honvéd Barracks/Royal Hungarian Honvéd infantry barracks

The first contract was for 25 years from 1891 for the Royal Hungarian Honvéd station headquarters, and then the building was used by the Royal Hungarian VI Corps Command. Parts of the barracks are: the main building 1,558 m², built-in area, offices, archives, telegraph office, restaurant, reading room, warehouse 996 m², prison 1,160 m², residential building for non-commissioned officers 152 m², barrack rooms 2,072 + 2,059 + 2,075 m² built-in area, 34 + 35 + 31 m² rooms and other chambers, gymnasium, coach house. From 1950, the property manager for the barracks is the Hungarian Army.³⁵ It is state property and can be found at 58 Péterfia Street. Today, the barracks are called Nagysándor József Barracks. The entities that currently operate in this building complex are: the Hungarian Defence Forces Military Administration and Central Registry Command 2nd Augmentation and Recruitment Centre, the 3rd Augmentation and Recruitment Office, the 3rd "Sándor Oláh" Territorial Defence Battalion under the subordination of the HDF 2nd "vitéz Antal Vattay" Territorial Defence Regiment, and finally the court martial.



Figure 2: Honvéd/Nagysándor József Barracks
Source: Photo by János Perge.

4.3. Honvéd hussar barracks

The construction of the barracks began by the city of Debrecen in 1887 and the facility was handed over to the army on 3 January 1893 for 25 years. From 1918, it was used again by the military.³⁶ Parts of the building complex have already been demolished

³⁵ Papp (1997): op. cit. 103.

³⁶ Papp (1997): op. cit. 104.

(the blacksmith's workshop, the prison bathhouse and guard building, the stable for sick horses, the horse bath, the manure storage and other small buildings), the rest are still there. After the war, the old bearing company ("Kis Göcs") operated in it, while the building of the manège was used by Hajdúság Dairy and Commodity Cooperative. Barrack room No. II was used by the Fazekas Mihály Primary School. Today many smaller or bigger businesses operate in the old and classic building complex worthy of a better fate, which can be found at 59 Széchenyi Street.



Figure 3: The former Honvéd hussar barracks
Source: Photo by János Perge.

4.4. Salétrom Street barracks

The building complex (military manège, garage, residential building for officers, office and equipment room) was built by the military treasury in 1873. Part of it was used by a motorised infantry company. According to an inventory taken in 1926, the building complex included a 735 m² barrack room, petrol warehouse, a 1,150 m² manège, a blacksmith's workshop, and a nearly 500 m² warehouse. During the American bombing on 2 June 1944, everything but the building of the manège was destroyed.³⁷ The barracks was on a plot of land in the corner of the current Szoboszlói and Salétrom Streets, currently it is located at 1 Salétrom Street.

³⁷ Papp (1997): op. cit. 103.



Figure 4: The building of the Salétrom Street barracks
Source: Photo by János Perge.

4.5. Gilányi Barracks/"lamplighter barracks"/customs guard barracks

From 1889, according to the decree of the Imperial-Royal 7th Corps Command, the barracks, which can be found on the current 7 Mikepércsi Road, was the property of the city, the Imperial-Royal Military Engineering Directorate of Arad and the Imperial-Royal Military Treasury. The property was taken back from the military in 1917 and then temporarily handed over to the Imperial and Royal Station Command on 13 June 1918. In 1921, the customs guard and the Royal Hungarian Gendarmerie applied for a permit to live outside the barracks. They did not receive the permit, yet they took possession of the barracks.³⁸

4.6. Tóth Barracks/military jail

The area of the jail building was nearly 1,000 m² (615 m² right wing + 350 m² left wing), and it also had a stable and a guardhouse.³⁹ From 1889 (endorsed in 1902), according to the decree of the Imperial-Royal 7th Corps Command, it was used by the Imperial-Royal Military Engineering Directorate of Arad and the Imperial-Royal Military Treasury until 1914. From 1920, it was taken back by the military without a valid contract, and it was used by the customs guard until 1929, when it was handed over for use to the Levente. In 1950, the plot of land, along with its "strict accessory" urban warehouse buildings, was handed over for establishing an ambulance station. From 1952, the property manager for the area was the National Ambulance Service. Currently the main building houses the Medgyessy Museum and it can be found at 28 Péterfia Street.

³⁸ Papp (1997): op. cit. 101.

³⁹ Papp (1997): op. cit. 102.



Figure 5: Former military jail/Tóth Barracks
Source: Photo by János Perge.

4.7. Pavilion Barracks/István Bocskai Barracks



Figure 6: Pavilion Barracks
Source: Photo by János Perge.

It was formerly the barracks of the 39th Imperial and Royal Infantry Regiment, then used by the Royal Hungarian Honvéd 6th Mixed Brigade. Buildings: Residential building for officers 668 m², including a great hall of 16 m clear height, dining room, six rooms, main building 668 m², offices, rooms, classrooms, non-commissioned officer and victualler building 1,596 m², rooms, kitchens, bathrooms, workshops, canteen, reading rooms, warehouses, offices, barrack room, infirmary building, military kitchen, bath, jail, armourer's building with workshops, warehouses 1,488 m², coach house,

bowling alley, shooting range, close combat training ground, tennis court, piggery and poultry house.⁴⁰

After World War II, it became known as the István Bocskai Barracks and prisoner of war barracks. In the years 1945–1947, it was the initial site for providing domestic supply and food for more than 200,000 Hungarian prisoners of war returned home from the Soviet Union.



Figure 7: Memorial plaque in honour of the 39th Infantry Regiment and the prisoners of war returning from the Soviet Union at Pavilion Barracks
Source: Photo by János Perge.

Between 1945 and 1949, the barracks had changed hands several times. From 1958, it was managed by the Ministry of Defence, used by the Hungarian People's Army, and became a military training ground. Soviet troops were stationed here until their withdrawal in 1990, at which point they moved out of the entire barracks complex of more than two acres, leaving everything to their fate, except for the main building on the right, where the Military Prosecution Office was based. Now the buildings of the barracks have been renovated. Today, the local directorates of the Hungarian Central Statistical Office of Debrecen and the National Tax and Customs Administration, and on the largest part of the barracks, the Kossuth Lajos Grammar School operate in these impressive buildings. Today, the huge area of the barracks is located between Faraktár and Vágóhid Streets. Its main building can be reached from Csengő Street.

⁴⁰ Papp (1997): op. cit. 105.

4.8. Military stables

The property with houses was used by the royal treasury, there were flats for non-commissioned officers, military stables, a wagon house and a blacksmith's workshop⁴¹ in the area located at 49 Péterfia Street. In 1936, the property was sold, and the purchase price was used to build a mausoleum in the Heroes' Cemetery.

4.9. Airport

It was used by the military even during World War II, Hungarian and German aircraft units were also stationed at the facility.



Figure 8: Debrecen airport
Source: Photo by János Perge.

In addition to these, the following facilities could also be found: a military shooting range and an ammunition depot in the military barracks of the Great Forest, Honvéd barracks on Hajdúböszörményi Road (now 521 Bellelegelő) and an air defence barracks at the end of Kassai Road.

5. Soviet military areas in Debrecen between 1945 and 1990

Soviet troops occupied the country during World War II and then in the mid-1950s.

After "liberating" Hungary, they remained here for 47 years. They arrived in Debrecen in 1944, then their numerical strength was increased, and buildings with different functions were built to serve their needs: barracks, residential houses, training centres, warehouses, training and shooting ranges.⁴² They were stationed at 288 facilities in 104 settlements of the country.⁴³ The complete withdrawal of troops began on 12 March 1990, and the last Soviet soldier left the country on 16 June

⁴¹ Papp (1997): op. cit. 102.

⁴² György Ránki: *A második világháború története*. 2. kiadás. Budapest, Gondolat Kiadó, 1976. 442–463.

⁴³ Csapody (2000): op. cit.

1991. In Debrecen, there were also several military facilities used by them in different parts of the city.⁴⁴

5.1. Barracks on Kassai Road

The Soviets moved into the barracks in the 1950s, extended its area by about 50% and built 19 new buildings, most of which were later demolished. It is currently a university campus.



Figure 9: The former barracks on Kassai Road
Source: Photo by János Perge.

5.2. Barracks on Sámsoni Road (Tamás Esze Barracks)



Figure 10: Barracks on Sámsoni Road (Tamás Esze Barracks)
Source: Photo by János Perge.

⁴⁴ Debrecen katonai objektumai. s. a.

It was taken over by the Soviets from the 1960s. The barracks for the armoured forces were located on the outskirts of the city on an area of 26.6 acres. At the time of the withdrawal, 106 different buildings were located on the property: residential, guard and educational buildings, combat vehicle storage buildings, kindergarten, boiler room, etc. The better apartments have become privately owned by now. The rest part of it remained state-owned. Until 2015, a refugee camp operated here, which was the largest open reception camp in the country. At present, the Riot Police, the Northern Great Plain Regional Directorate for Aliens Policing (the legal successor of the Northern Great Plain Regional Directorate for Immigration and Naturalisation Department) and the Civilian Guard operate in the buildings of the barracks at Sámsoni Road.⁴⁵

5.3. Training ground on Sámsoni Road

The area of about 146 hectares, located northeast of the barracks on Sámsoni Road, was used as the training ground for the tank unit. It is currently state-owned.

5.4. Airport

The most significant military facility used by the Soviet troops. The airport included three areas of different types and functions: the operating and the housing estate part of the airport and the homing stations. The airport was in Hungarian civilian and Soviet military use at the same time until the 1960s, after which the Soviets gradually ousted Hungarian civil aviation. Since the 1950s, the Soviets have established several buildings in the area with different functions: runways, taxiways and service buildings, storage facilities, warehouses, a sludge treatment plant, a medical lab, shelters and covers.⁴⁶ It was taken over by the HDM Directorate-General of Maintenance and Placement in 1990, and in 1994, the local government received the property of the airport from the Treasury Property Management Organisation.

The 23-acre residential neighbourhood of the airport has been in use since 1950. Before World War II, only a few buildings were located here. From the 1950s, Soviet troops made significant investments: they built 52 residential brick, panel and block buildings, as well as several service buildings (e.g. school, shop, infirmary, cultural centre). At present, this constitutes the 608 renovated flats in the Mikepércsi housing estate. The school still operates as an educational institution. Several buildings still function as military service apartments.

⁴⁵ Gábor Kozma – Krisztina Kádár: *Szovjet katonai területek funkcióváltása Debrecenben*. s. a.

⁴⁶ Debrecen katonai objektumai. s. a.



Figure 11: Renovated flats on the residential neighbourhood of the airport – currently called Mikepércsi housing estate
Source: Photo by János Perge.

Homing radio stations. Four pieces. Facilities of the homing stations included radio transmitters, residential buildings for housing staff members, wells, outbuildings, storage facilities and aggregator housings. Currently, only the northern close homing station on Szávay Street exists, but it is in ruins, the other three have already been demolished.

5.5. Barracks and clothing store on Böszörményi Road

The buildings of the 1.3-hectare property had been used for commercial and storage purposes before World War II, and later gained the function of a clothing store and barracks. During this period, the warehouse was used by the Hungarian and Soviet parties at the same time.



Figure 12: The former barracks on Böszörményi Road
Source: Photo by János Perge.

The four single-storey Soviet buildings were renovated, there are garages and warehouses in them, two of the three (pre-war) Hungarian buildings were renovated, and currently various businesses operate here.

5.6. Military ammunition depot on the area of Apafa

The 3.5-hectare site was an area with several Soviet buildings. Environmental remediation did not take place until 2001. Based on the proposal made by the Debrecen Shooting Club in 2009, shooting ranges were established on the site.

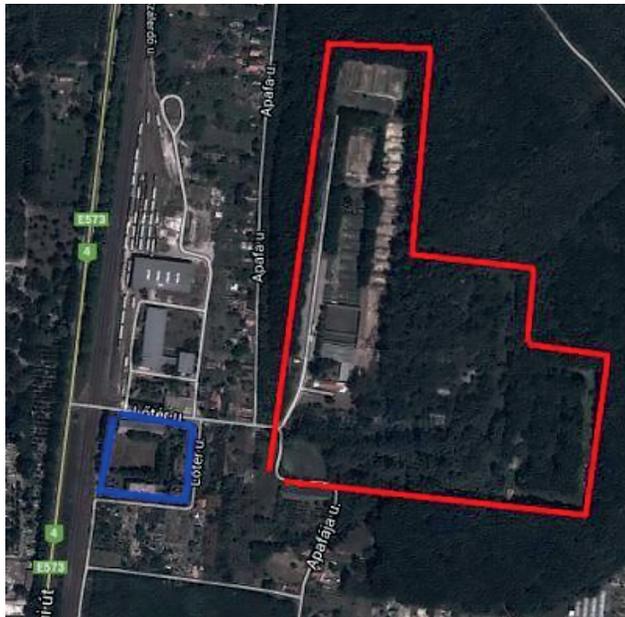


Figure 13: Apafa shooting range (marked with red)

Source: [www.google.com/search?q=Apafai+1%C5%91t%C3%A9r+\(piros\)&source=lnms&tbm=isch&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwiRzIKRoKvWAhWpAhAIHZl1D2gQ_AUoAXoECAEQAw&biw=1680&bih=939#imgrc=h1xw0Hpk-WgrW4M](http://www.google.com/search?q=Apafai+1%C5%91t%C3%A9r+(piros)&source=lnms&tbm=isch&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwiRzIKRoKvWAhWpAhAIHZl1D2gQ_AUoAXoECAEQAw&biw=1680&bih=939#imgrc=h1xw0Hpk-WgrW4M)

5.7. Bomb depot on the area of the Pac forest

On the outskirts of Debrecen, in the so-called Pac Forest, the Soviet army set up a 6-unit bomb depot on a 7.8-hectare area in 1952, to store the weapons of aircraft stationed at the airport. Currently, only a bomb depot of concrete covered with soil and a few service buildings of Soviet origin refer to the former users. The property operated as a sports and leisure centre (Víg-Kend Major) and is currently not in use.

5.8. Signal office and apartments on Nagy Lajos király Square

Most of these apartments, garages, warehouses, guard buildings have already been demolished. A new building was built in its place in the early 2000s, with more than 20 apartments and several shops.

5.9. Apartments rented outside the barracks

There were 75 of these on Ószirózsa Lane, Landler Street and Apafi Street, not even a fifth of them were comfortable.

6. The units of the Hungarian Defence Forces in Hungary

The withdrawal of the Soviet troops from Hungary began in April 1989 and finished on 19 June 1991. In the few years after the system change, five Hungarian military facilities operated in the city, today only the facilities on Füredi Road and Péterfia Streets are functioning.

- Nowadays, the following army units and organisations operate in Debrecen:
- Hungarian Defence Forces Military Administration and Central Registry Command 2nd Augmentation and Recruitment Centre, and the 3rd Augmentation and Recruitment Office
- Hungarian Defence Forces 2nd "vitéz Antal Vattay" Territorial Defence Regiment, Hungarian Defence Forces 3rd "Sándor Oláh" Territorial Defence Battalion
- 5th "István Bocskai" Rifle Brigade of the Hungarian Defence Forces
- Hungarian Defence Forces 24th "Gergely Bornemissza" Reconnaissance Regiment
- Debrecen Military Prosecution Office

6.1. Hungarian Defence Forces Military Administration and Central Registry Command 2nd Augmentation and Recruitment Centre, and the 3rd Augmentation and Recruitment Office

The Hungarian Defence Forces Military Administration and Central Registry Command 2nd Military Administration Centre operated in Debrecen, and the recruiting office was opened in November 2001. In 2021, following an organisational change, military augmentation and recruitment centres and recruitment offices were established instead of military administrative centres. The Hungarian Defence Forces Military Administration and Central Registry Command 2nd Augmentation and Recruitment Centre as an executive body, and the 3rd Augmentation and Recruitment Office operate in Debrecen. Its headquarters is located at 58 Péterfia Street, Debrecen, in the Nagysándor József Barracks, which is one of the oldest barracks in Hungary, a classic, classicist-style, historic building of the city. The facility was handed over to the army in 1893. Previously, the 3rd Honvéd Infantry Regiment was stationed here.

Three recruiting offices operate under the subordination of the 2nd Augmentation and Recruitment Centre, the 3rd Augmentation and Recruitment Office (County Hajdú-Bihar), the 4th Augmentation and Recruitment Office (County Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén), the 5th Augmentation and Recruitment Office (County Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg), and the Augmentation and Registry Department. As a territorial body of the military administration, the purpose of the Augmentation and Recruitment Centre in its area of competence is to plan, organise and carry out military administrative and augmentation tasks, and to plan, organise, control, supervise and carry out professional activities related to recruitment, advocacy, funeral, defence education and war grave care, as well as participation in battlefield research in peacetime and during the existence of a special legal order. During the period of military service obligation, its task is to establish the Recruitment Centre on its base, and to operate the draft boards and the outsourced draft boards in its area of competence.

6.2. 5th "István Bocskai" Rifle Brigade of the Hungarian Defence Forces

The 5th "István Bocskai" Rifle Brigade can be considered the late heir of the 39th regiment due to the numerous attachments, the traditions taken over, and the established cultural and intellectual connections. The brigade moved from Mezőtúr to Debrecen in 1991. The 5th "István Bocskai" Rifle Brigade of the Hungarian Defence Forces military organisation is the largest ground unit of Hungary. It was established on 1 November 1951.⁴⁷ Currently, the 5th "István Bocskai" Rifle Brigade operates in the Kossuth Barracks located at 59–63 Füredi Street. The brigade is responsible for the armed protection of the homeland and securing the state border, as well as for participation in crisis management tasks and for the general military and vocational training and tactical preparation of the personnel and the subunits, and for participation in disaster management tasks.⁴⁸

The history of the brigade and the evolution of its name:

- From 1951: Hungarian People's Army 93rd Rifle Regiment.
- The legal predecessor of the brigade was established on 1 November 1951, in Mezőtúr. In 1987, the regiment was reorganised into a mechanised infantry brigade, which settled in the Kossuth Barracks in Debrecen in 1990.
- From 1990, its name changed to 5th "István Bocskai" Mechanised Infantry Brigade of the Hungarian Defence Forces. On 29 September 1990, the brigade adopted the name of István Bocskai, after the Prince of Transylvania of the same name. In 2004, two light battalions belonging to the 62nd "Miklós Bercsényi" Mechanised Infantry Brigade (located in Hódmezővásárhely), were also restructured in the brigade, and the sub-units previously stationed at Nyíregyháza moved to Debrecen and part of it to Hajdúhadház.

⁴⁷ *Magyar Honvédség 5. Bocskai István Lövészandár alapító okirata, módosításokkal egységes szerkezetben.* 2013.

⁴⁸ *Magyar Honvédség 5. Bocskai István Lövészandár Szervezeti Működési Szabályzata.*

- From 2007, its name is 5th "István Bocskai" Rifle Brigade of the Hungarian Defence Forces. Due to the altered security challenges and the objectives of the force reform, the unit was reorganised in early 2007. On 1 March 2007, the Minister of Defence of the Republic of Hungary established the 5th "István Bocskai" Rifle Brigade of the Hungarian Defence Forces. Its garrisons are in Debrecen, Hódmezővásárhely and Hajdúhadház.

The support units of the 5th "István Bocskai" Rifle Brigade of the Hungarian Defence Forces are: the Command Company, the Signal Company, the Combat Engineer Company and Operations Support Engineer Battalion. Its combat units are: the 39th Infantry Battalion (Debrecen), the 3rd "Miklós Bercsényi" Infantry Battalion (Hódmezővásárhely) and the 62nd Infantry Battalion (Hódmezővásárhely). Its logistics units are: the Logistics Battalion, the Medical Centre, the Garrison Support Command (Debrecen) and the Garrison Support subunit (Hódmezővásárhely).



Figure 14: Kossuth Barracks
Source: Photo by János Perge.

After joining NATO, the task system of the brigade was extended with a number of new international obligations, mainly the accomplishment of peacekeeping missions and serving in other missions (Kosovo, Afghanistan, Iraq). In Debrecen, the 5th "István Bocskai" Rifle Brigade of the Hungarian Defence Forces performs the tasks of the Defence System for Disaster Management. According to General László Muhoray, there was an air defence barracks in the Medicor building opposite the current barracks, which was the base for rookie training, the officer candidates, who were replaced every

six months, enlisted here, and the sports squad of the Hungarian People's Army, the world champion weightlifters, had trained here.

The 24th "Gergely Bornemissza" Reconnaissance Battalion entered the Debrecen garrison from Eger in 2007, as a subordinate reconnaissance battalion of the 5th "István Bocskai" Rifle Brigade of the Hungarian Defence Forces. On 1 January 2018, the battalion was separated from the staff of the 5th "István Bocskai" Rifle Brigade. Regained its independence and was renamed the 24th "Gergely Bornemissza" Reconnaissance Regiment.

6.3. HDM 3rd "Sándor Oláh" Territorial Defence Battalion

In Hungary, the Voluntary Territorial Defence Reserve service form was established in 2017. The first territorial defence regiment established within the reservist system of the Hungarian Defence Forces was the Hungarian Defence Forces 2nd "vitéz Antal Vattay" Territorial Defence Regiment. Its headquarters were Nyírtelek, then Debrecen, and from 2019, Nyíregyháza. The regiment is under the subordination of the Hungarian Defence Forces Reserve and Support Command. Within the framework of the reserve system organised on a territorial basis, territorial defence battalions were established in the organisation of the regiment. Their task is to plan, organise and lead on county state, coordinating the implementation of training tasks performed by the organisational elements preparing the Voluntary Reservist staff and preparing contracts for reservists, planning for their enlistment and dismissal. Currently, nine battalions are under the subordination of the 2nd "vitéz Antal Vattay" Territorial Defence Regiment. Of these, the 3rd "Sándor Oláh" Territorial Defence Battalion of the Hungarian Defence Forces carries out activities in County Hajdú-Bihar. The headquarters of the battalion is located at 58 Péterfia Street, Debrecen, Nagysándor József Barracks. The battalion is named after the brave Sergeant Major Sándor Oláh, who won the Golden Medal for Bravery in 1916 for his series of military operations.

The purpose of the battalion is to establish, maintain and develop the Voluntary Territorial Defence Reservist System, and to prepare the Voluntary Territorial Defence Reserve Staff for territorial defence tasks. Leads and controls the activities of the Training Squadrons and Territorial District Squadrons under its subordination. It performs disaster prevention, protocol, representation, training, traditional, war grave care and social networking tasks. The military protection of Hungary's independence, territorial integrity and borders, performing joint defence tasks arising from international treaties, accomplishing humanitarian activities in accordance with the rules of international law. The tasks of the battalion are the professional management of the district companies and the operation and development of the territorial defence system. Carrying out coordination activities related to the planning, modernisation and implementation of training.⁴⁹

⁴⁹ *Magyar Honvédség 2. vitéz Vattay Antal Területvédelmi Ezred Szervezeti Működési Szabályzata.*

7. Summary

The significant military past of Debrecen is demonstrated by the fact that there were still more than ten barracks in the city in the early 1900s.

After the collapse of the Austro–Hungarian Monarchy, the National Army was established in November, 1919. After signing the Treaty of Trianon, according to Act XXXIII of 1921, universal military obligation was abolished in Hungary, the profession of the army was to maintain internal order and provide border service. On 4 January 1922, the name “National Army” was changed to “Royal Hungarian Honvéd”. Act XLIX of 1921 on the Royal Hungarian Honvéd contains the establishment of the Royal Hungarian Honvéd and the framework of the army. Act III of 1922 described the modifications to the formation of the new military force. The basic unit of the newly established military force consisted of seven mixed brigades. Continuous military force development began in the 1930s. The numerical strength of the military force was increased, military service obligation was reintroduced in 1932, training of the reservists began in 1934, two air regiments and four anti-aircraft artillery divisions were established in 1935. The draft of the Huba Plan developed for the quantitative and qualitative development of the Army came into force in 1938. Military service obligation became generalised. In 1939, draft agencies were established to fulfil military administration tasks. A new district division was introduced and regulated the powers of the territorial military administrative organisations, draft agencies were established. It became possible to set up a group of officers and non-commissioned officers and to form reserve and secondary reserve forces. Once again, volunteering has appeared in the Hungarian Army. The first phase of the Huba Plan, the quantitative development of the Hungarian Army, had been completed until 1941. The second phase from 1941 to 1943 was about the establishment of the armoured and air defence forces, the third phase from 1943 to 1945 was about the development of the armoured forces and further increase the army's firepower, as well as to modernise the air force, but neither of these plans had been fully realised. The short-term army development concept of the Szabolcs Plan developed in 1943 about an in-depth-structured reorganisation, had not been realised either.

During World War II, drafting centres were established, the infantry brigades took over the task of the county commands and the number of augmentation commands decreased. In 1942–1943, new ministerial departments were established (at the central level of the military administration) with the task of mobilising and augmentation, as well as keeping records of conscripts. After World War II, the national armed forces had to be reorganised. According to Act XVIII of 1947, it became possible to organise an army of 70,000 through conscription.

The Hungarian Defence Forces were established in 1948 from the remaining personnel and technical staff of the Royal Hungarian Honvéd. The name of the Hungarian Defence Forces was changed on 1 June 1951 to Hungarian People's Army. After the defeat of the Hungarian Revolution of 1956 by the Soviets, the development of a new force began, the Budapest Metropolitan Augmentation Command and the county, district, city and metropolitan district augmentation commands (176 in total) were established, which kept the registers of conscripts. In the autumn of 1961, training

for reserve officers began. Prior to the system change, Hungary, as a member of the Warsaw Pact, did not have its own military doctrine. The establishment of the Hungarian People's Army Command in 1989 was the beginning of the system change within the armed forces. After World War II, the Soviet troops remained in Hungary for 47 years, the withdrawal of these troops from Hungary began in April 1989 and finished on 19 June 1991.

From 15 March 1990, the name of the Hungarian People's Army was renamed again to Hungarian Defence Forces. Since 1990, the central leadership of the Hungarian Defence Forces had changed several times, the following organisations had been established: the HDM Military Administration and Data Processing Centre in 1992, the Augmentation and Training Command in 2000, the HDM Augmentation and Central Registry Command in 2011, and after the reorganisation of these bodies, the Augmentation, Preparatory and Training Command in 2016 and the HDM Military Administration and Central Registry Command. With effect from 1 January 2019, the Hungarian Defence Forces Command was established as a new military organisation by merging the Defence Staff and the Joint Forces Command. On 3 November 2004, universal conscription was abolished and was replaced by a professional, voluntary-based force. With effect from 31 July 2020, two new organisations were established, the HDF Reserve and Support Command (as the legal successor institution of the HDM Logistics Centre) and the Hungarian Defence Forces Transformation Command (as the legal successor of the HDF Augmentation, Preparatory and Training Command). The territorial defence regiments are also under the subordination of the HDM Reserve and Support Command.

This study describes the ground, cavalry and air units of the Royal Hungarian Army stationed in Debrecen since 1920, the military facilities used by the Soviet Army in Debrecen, and the units of the Hungarian Defence Forces operating in the city. It presents the work, activities, tasks and military facilities of the following entities: HDF 5th "István Bocskai" Infantry Brigade, HDF 24th "Gergely Bornemissza" Reconnaissance Regiment, HDF 2nd "vitész Antal Vattay" Territorial Defence Regiment, 3rd "Sándor Oláh" Territorial Defence Battalion and the HDF Military Administration and Central Registry Command, the last of which being responsible for providing supplies.

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