

## NICOLAE IORGA AND THE SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP WITH THE 9<sup>TH</sup> HUNTERS REGIMENT DURING THE WAR FOR THE REUNIFICATION OF THE ROMANIAN NATION

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**Abstract.** The special relationship between the great historian and patriot Nicolae Iorga and the 9<sup>th</sup> Hunters Regiment was founded on two elements, both of a subjective nature; 1. the high regard in which the historian duly held officer Gheorghe Rasoviceanu, battalion commander and subsequently commander of the 9<sup>th</sup> Hunters Regiment for five years, from October, 7<sup>th</sup> 1916 to October 7<sup>th</sup> 1921; 2. the presence of his son, Petre Iorga, and his son-in-law, officer Dimitrie Chirescu, future general (married to Florica Iorga) in the 9<sup>th</sup> Hunters Regiment. We find Second Lieutenant Petre N. Iorga in the Regiment, as Head of the Intelligence Office from June 16<sup>th</sup> 1917, taking part in the great battle of Mărășești, Muncelu and Poenile Popii (July-August 1917) and captain Dimitrie Chirescu from August 15<sup>th</sup> 1916 and the autumn of 1919. It was only natural then for the great historian to take such an interest in the Regiment and to nervously and eagerly follow its development throughout this period.

**Keywords:** Nicolae Iorga, the 9<sup>th</sup> Hunters Regiment, War of the Unification of Romania, "Neamul Românesc" newspaper

The special relationship between the great historian and patriot Nicolae Iorga and the 9<sup>th</sup> Hunters Regiment was founded on two elements, both of a subjective nature; 1. the high regard in which the historian duly held officer Gheorghe Rasoviceanu, battalion commander and subsequently commander of the 9<sup>th</sup> Hunters Regiment for five years, from October, 7<sup>th</sup> 1916 to October 7<sup>th</sup> 1921; 2. the presence of his son, Petre Iorga, and his son-in-law, officer Dimitrie Chirescu, future general (married to Florica Iorga) in the 9<sup>th</sup> Hunters Regiment. We find Second Lieutenant Petre N. Iorga in the Regiment, as Head of the Intelligence Office from June 16<sup>th</sup> 1917, taking part in the great battle of Mărășești, Muncelu and Poenile Popii (July-August 1917) and captain Dimitrie Chirescu from August 15<sup>th</sup> 1916 and the autumn of 1919. It was only natural then for the great historian to take such an interest in the Regiment and to nervously and eagerly follow its development throughout this period.

The unparalleled extent of Nicolae Iorga's involvement in the realization of the national ideal since **the Cultural Establishments** were founded at Vălenii din Munte in 1908 and throughout the War of the Unification of Romania was the

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subject of the remarkable monograph *Nicolae Iorga*, by the "Iorghist" specialist Petre Țurlea, published in the collection *Personalities of the Great Union of 1918*<sup>1</sup>. The author appreciated that the work carried out in the **cultural establishments** of Vălenii de Munte, in their first phase, from 1908 to 1914 "*was very important for the spiritual preparation of Romanians in order to achieve the ideal of a Great Romania and defined Nicolae Iorga, even before the First World War, as one of the creators of the United National State*"<sup>2</sup>. During his days of refuge in Iași, November 1916 - 27<sup>th</sup> December 1918, Nicolae Iorga continued to be the most important voice in the affirmation of the national ideal, either from the rostrum of the Parliament, or through the daily articles in his newspaper "Neamul Românesc" (tr. note *The Romanian people*) and through public lectures. The Romanian army, exhausted in the autumn of 1916 or in a clash with the superior enemy forces on the Moldavian front in 1917, found words of encouragement in the pages of the newspaper "Neamul Românesc", which was distributed in the trenches of Dobrogea, Muntenia and then in Moldova. We do not know under what circumstances he met officer Gheorghe Rasoviceanu who, on 15<sup>th</sup> August - 7<sup>th</sup> October 1916, in the rank of major, was in charge of the 1st Battalion of the 9<sup>th</sup> Hunters Regiment, on the Dobrogea front, under the command of Colonel Ion Velescu. The heroism displayed by the 9<sup>th</sup> Hunters Regiment, the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion and, in particular, by Major Rasoviceanu during the battles on the heights of Amzacea in the afternoon of **September 20<sup>th</sup> / October 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1916** was to be evoked years later by the historian Constantin Kirițescu.

*The attack on the position at Amzacea has been set for 4 p.m. and will be made by troops of the 17<sup>th</sup> Poetaș Brigade; on the right will be the 9<sup>th</sup> Hunters Regiment, and on the left mixed troops, including most of the 40<sup>th</sup> Călugăreni Regiment. The attacking troops are heavily reinforced. **The hunters are led by Major Rasoviceanu, a commander whose energy is surpassed only by his ardour and contempt for death***<sup>3</sup>. (I.S.)

In the counter-attack of the same afternoon, Major Gheorghe Rasoviceanu is wounded and evacuated after much insistence by Colonel Stan Poetaș himself, commander of the 17<sup>th</sup> Infantry Brigade to which the 9<sup>th</sup> Hunters Regiment belonged. The Major remains in hospital between 20<sup>th</sup> - 25<sup>th</sup> September 1916,

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<sup>1</sup> Petre Țurlea, *The personalities of the Great Union of 1918 Nicolae Iorga*. Bucharest, Enciclopedic Publishing House, 1916. The volume was appreciated by: acad. Alexandru Zub, *N. Iorga, militant pentru unitatea națională. Marginalii la o sinteză "En Historien"*, in "Scriptor", Year II, no. 7-8 (191-20) July-August 20116, p. 102-103; Valeriu Râpeanu, *Simbol nepieritor al unității și solidarității naționale*, in "Curierul Național", Tuesday, 12 September 2016, p. 6; Valeriu Stancu, *A new book about the great historian Nicolae Iorga, signed by Petre Țurlea*, in "Condeii ardelean", no. 350, 29 July - 8 September 2016.

<sup>2</sup> Petre Țurlea, *op. cit.*, p. 25.

<sup>3</sup> Constantin Kirițescu, *History of the War for the Reunification of Romania*, Editura Științifică și Enciclopedică, Bucharest, 1989, vol. I., p. 376.

when he returns to command the battalion<sup>1</sup>. Rasoviceanu's letter to Professor N. Iorga dates from those five days in hospital.

*"As you can see, I'm sending you the second letter from hospital. I am, however, about to return to the front, wrote the officer from the hospital bed, continuing:*

*The regret that I could not at first conquer the four canons was erased by my battalion, with which, after 11 days of fighting, I conquered seven more canons and 1,000 prisoners, and concluded by pledging: As long as I live, be sure that I will do my duty"*<sup>2</sup>.

The young officer's bravery and determination impressed the great historian who considered that by publishing the officer's letter in "*Neamul Românesc*" of 30<sup>th</sup> September 1916, he could be an example of encouragement for the army. In fact, the newspaper will publish numerous such letters sent to the historian by many soldiers in the trenches. Nicolae Iorga's confidence in Major Gherghe Rasoviceanu's military capabilities would propel him, as early as 7 October 1916, to the command of the 9<sup>th</sup> Hunters Regiment, when Lieutenant Colonel Ion Velescu became unavailable, after being evacuated from the front line on a stretcher. We find this information in General D. Chirescu's *Memoirs*, who was a lieutenant at the time and held the post of adjutant of the 9<sup>th</sup> Hunters Regiment:

*"During the retreat of the 9th H[unters] R[egiment], the regimental commander being seriously ill .... was carried on a stretcher by the medics to the position occupied by the regiment. [...] Arriving at the new position occupied by the regiment, Lt. Col. Velescu handed over the command to Major Rasoviceanu, as recorded in the minutes of the meeting, measure approved by the Division and communicated to the unit and the troops by order of the 17<sup>th</sup> Infantry Brigade"*<sup>3</sup>.

Our assumption that Major Gh. Rasoviceanu's promotion as commander of the 9<sup>th</sup> Hunters Regiment was also influenced to a certain extent by the great historian, is based on a letter that Rasoviceanu sent to N. Iorga from Hungary<sup>4</sup> at a later date, on 19 August 1919 in which, among other things, he confessed that

*"I can still recall those days from more than three years ago. I was in Bazargic. I asked you to intervene on my behalf for the position of commander of*

<sup>1</sup> Ion I. Solcanu, *A Hero of the Romanian War of Independence: the 9<sup>th</sup> Hunters Regiment* (hereafter *A Hero...The 9<sup>th</sup> Hunters Regiment*), Iași, Editura Junimea, 2018, p. 48.

<sup>2</sup> Petre Țurlea, *op. cit.*, p. 172-173.

<sup>3</sup> *Operations and history of the 9th Hunters Regiment in the War for the Reunification of the Romanian Nation. 1916 - 1919*, editor, introductory study, illustration and appendices by Ion I. Solcanu, Edit. Enciclopedică, Bucharest, 2018, p. 619 (hereafter *Operations and History of HR 9*).

<sup>4</sup> On 18 August 1919, the 9th Hunters Regiment was in Hungary, at Vecsés, from where it sent detachments to disarm Tápióság, Csehoczag, Kava and Pand; on 19 August, it disarmed the population of Tápióboske and Tápió Szent Marton, and on 20 August, it carried out the same mission at Tápiószelle, cf. *Ibidem*, p. 541 and 543, note 1. If the letter was sent from Budapest it is to be assumed that the Division's Censorship Service was there.

*the 9<sup>th</sup> Hunters Regiment. I pledged myself to be worthy. I tried as hard as I could to keep my promise.*"<sup>1</sup>

An additional argument in support of our statement is the information provided by Nechifor Crainic, a close collaborator of the great historian at the editorial office of the newspaper "Neamul Românesc" during its early days in Iasi, and one of the three main editors.<sup>2</sup> In his *Memoirs*, written during his years of refuge (1944-1947) through Transylvania, and revised after his release after 15 years of imprisonment, Nichifor Crainic described Rasoviceanu as "*Iorga's friend*".<sup>3</sup>

After yet another glorious campaign on the front in Muntenia, on the Neajlov and the Argeş rivers, the 9th Hunters Regiment, decimated by half and continuously pursued by the enemy, withdrew to Moldova, to Bălteni-Râpi and Capul Rediului, near Vaslui, for completion, reorganization and recovery, between December 1916 and July 1917. When, on the eve of *St. George's Day*, Russian soldiers contaminated by the Bolshevism morbus were stirring up the spirits and preparing a coup d'état in Iași, the 9th Hunters Regiment was ordered to come to Iași *accompanied by machine-guns, as well as company caissons, loaded with cartridges*, with the obvious purpose of discouraging the troublemakers. Their triumphal entry into the city, from the Nicolina neighbourhood, to the unceasing sound of 40 buglers and a huge male choir, with machine guns in full view, received at the foot of the Copou hill by General Prezan, assisted by the entire officer corps of the General Staff, created an invigorating impression on the population demoralised by typhus and famine.

"Evenimentul" (tr. note The Event)<sup>4</sup> and "Mișcarea" (tr. note The Movement)<sup>5</sup> newspapers reported the excitement caused by the military corps on parade. Nicolae Iorga evoked in his newspaper - "Neamul Românesc" - that

*"Yesterday morning the 9<sup>th</sup> Hunters Regiment, under Lieutenant-Colonel Rasoviceanu's command, marched through the streets of Iasi in splendid dress. With flowers and green leaves adorning their hats and rifles, the soldiers marched in cadence, full of life. And at the head, the commander himself, alongside the French captain".* And on this occasion the historian instils a note of optimism in the reader:

*"A large audience filled the streets, windows and balconies and watched in awe as this proud parade heralded better times."*<sup>6</sup>(emphasis added).

Nicolae Iorga's relationship with the 9th Hunters Regiment became even closer from June 1917 onwards, following the appointment of his son, Second

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<sup>1</sup> Petre Țurlea, *Letters to N. Iorga*, VI, part I, Romanian Academy. National Foundation for Science and Art. Institute of History and Literary Theory "G. Călinescu", Bucharest, 2002, p. 140.

<sup>2</sup> Idem, *Personalities of the Great Union of 1918. Nicolae Iorga*, p. 260, note 10.

<sup>3</sup> Nichifor Crainic, *Zile albe, zile negre. Memorii*, Casa Editorială Gândirea, București, 1991, vol. I, p. 145.

<sup>4</sup> *Evenimentul*", year XXV, no. 68, Thursday, 27 April 1917.

<sup>5</sup> *Mișcarea*", year IX, no. 93, Thursday 27 April 1917, p. 2.

<sup>6</sup> *"Neamul românesc"*, year XII, no.133/Friday, 28th April 1917.

Lieutenant Petru N. Iorga, to this elite unit.<sup>1</sup> It was yet another proof of the historian's confidence in the officer Gheorghe Rasoviceanu. *The order of battle of 16th June* records "*Second Lieutenant Iorga N. Petre as Chief of the Intelligence Bureau*,"<sup>2</sup> in the regimental staff. A few days later, on 19<sup>th</sup> June, he commanded the team that constituted the regiment's Observation point at the Șerbănești bridge, on the left bank of the Siret; between 27<sup>th</sup> July and 7<sup>th</sup> August he took part in the battles at Mărășești,<sup>3</sup> then, between 16<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> August, at Muncelul and Poienile Popii<sup>4</sup>. Knowing the clash of forces on these fronts, and given the presence of his son in the 9<sup>th</sup> Hunters Regiment, the historian eagerly and anxiously followed his actions. He got his information from the Grand Headquarters or other reliable sources. Thus, on 6<sup>th</sup> August, on the occasion of his meeting with General Petala, the historian learned from him that:

*"The 9<sup>th</sup> Hunters Regiment, in which my son Peter is, has been caught and destroyed in barbed wire, while being engaged on the front, due to a clumsy manoeuvre. The additional news states: this model regiment, the pride of our army, has almost disappeared, like the 32<sup>nd</sup> regiment. My son is rumoured to be among the eleven officers saved with the colonel."*<sup>5</sup> A few days later, on 9<sup>th</sup> August, he communicated the news to his wife, Catinca:

*"The 9<sup>th</sup> Hunters Regiment has been "sorely tried" according to officials, according to others, almost destroyed. I quickly inquired and was told that Peter was neither on the list of casualties, nor the missing in action. But the danger to everyone on this front still remains."*<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Petru was the eldest son of Nicolae Iorga and Maria V. Tassu, his first wife, daughter of the Junimist Vasile Tassu, cf. Lavinia Dacia Dumitrașcu, *Modest contributions to the history of the Nicolae Iorga family: Petre N. Iorga*, in "Studii de Istorie" III, Brăila Museum, Brăila 2014, p. 172-173.

Vasile Tassu was originally from Baia commune, jud. Suceava. He did all his studies, from primary school up to his law degree, in Iași, where he also started his career as a magistrate. Here he climbed the judiciary ladder up to the Court of Appeal, from where he was promoted to the High Court of Cassation, when the whole family moved to Bucharest. However, he worked at the High Court of Cassation for just over two years, dying of pneumonia at the age of 50, cf. *Operations and history HR 9*, p. XV, note 3.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid*, p. 257. We also find him in the same position in the Regimental *Order of Battle* of 27<sup>th</sup> July 1917 and that of 8<sup>th</sup> August 1917, *Ibidem*, p. 336 and 403.

<sup>3</sup> Ion I. Solcanu, *A Hero... 9th Hunters Regiment*, p. 125 and the following.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid*, p. 155 and the following.

<sup>5</sup> N. Iorga, *Memoirs. Daily notes (May 1917 - March 1920). The National War. Struggle for a new political life*, vol. I., Editura "Națională" S. Ciornei, f.a., p. 86-87. The information given by General Petala was largely correct. During the 12 days of fighting on the front line at Marasesti - 28 July - 7 August 1917 - the situation of the 1st Battalion was as follows: 17 men from the 1st Company were still alive; the 3rd Company had only six soldiers left, and 50 soldiers were killed from the other. Adding up the losses, the regimental commander, Lt-Col. Rasoviceanu reported to his superiors that among the officers he had six dead, wounded or missing, and among the troops he had 411 dead, wounded and missing, so that only 640 combat troops remained, Ion I. Solcanu, *op. cit.*, p. 151-153.

<sup>6</sup> Nicolae Iorga, *Letters to Catina (1900-1939)*, Bucharest, Minerva Publishing House, 1991, p. 155-156, apud, Lavinia Dacia Dumitrașcu, *op. cit.*, p. 175.

Exhausted and with its effectives greatly diminished due to heavy losses, the Regiment is completed on the spot, on the front, and finally, on 24<sup>th</sup> August, it was withdrawn and called to Iași for recovery. After an arduous march, on roads hidden from enemy eyes, the Regiment reached Ghidigeni railway station on August 30<sup>th</sup>, and a few days later, on September 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1917, it entered the temporary capital of Romania. Almost the entire press in Iași, "Acțiunea română"<sup>1</sup>, "Mișcarea"<sup>2</sup> and "Neamul Românesc", report the moment. The latter even evokes it under the signature of its own director, the historian Nicolae Iorga, in the editorial *O vedenie de războiu*. Of all the commentators on the event, only N. Iorga captures the heavy blood sacrifice of the young men who ***gave their lives to preserve their Homeland and its ideal alive*** (emphasis added I.S.), thus emphasising the full meaning of the sacrifice made by hundreds and hundreds of brave men:

*"For a whole month, on three battlefields Rasoviceanu's brave men showed up in the most dangerous place and defended it. They filled the gaps and held the line" wrote the great patriot, to remind his readers that*

*"But not everyone knows **at what cost**. Among the 1,400 people who passed through the streets yesterday, **only two hundred were left** of those who had been so eager to leave three months ago [...] The others had remained in the places where they had held up that flag torn by bullets so many times, which yesterday was once again waving on the streets of Iasi. In the plains of the Siret, on the hills of Putna, in the ravines of the Țușița lie the young bodies who so willingly **sacrificed their lives to keep their Homeland and its Ideal alive!**"<sup>3</sup> (emphasis added. I.S.).*

Nicolae Iorga followed with the same interest the presence of the Regiment in Iași, which enjoyed the special attention of the high military and political officials. On 6<sup>th</sup> September, all the officers of the 9<sup>th</sup> Hunters Regiment were invited to lunch by the Chief of the General Staff, General Prezan; two days later, the Minister of War himself, General Iancovescu, offered a banquet to honour the same heroes.

*"On Friday, September 8, a luncheon was held at the Military Circle, given by the garrison of Iași in honor of the officers of the 9<sup>th</sup> Hunters Regiment, headed by Lieutenant Colonel Rasoviceanu, General Iancovescu, Minister of War, General Herescu, Colonel Boboc, Colonel Niculescu, etc."* announced "Neamul Românesc" in its issue from Monday, September 11, continuing:

*"A warm atmosphere of brotherly camaraderie reigned throughout the meal. The Minister of War toasted the Dynasty and the brave 9<sup>th</sup> Hunters Regiment. General Herescu praised in touching words the glory of the 9<sup>th</sup> Hunters Regiment. Lieutenant Herescu's own grandson had lost his life fighting in the same Regiment.*

<sup>1</sup> "Acțiunea română", Saturday, September 2, 1917.

<sup>2</sup> "Mișcarea", Saturday, September 2, 1917, p. 2.

<sup>3</sup> Ion Agrigoroaiei, *Mărăști, Mărășești, Oituz - 100 years. Reflections in the press of the time*, Iași, 2017, Alfa Publishing House, p. 84 with a photocopy of the article in "Neamul românesc", year XII, no. 241, Iași, Sunday, September 3, 1917, p. 184.

*Lieutenant-Colonel Rasoviceanu, the Regiment's commander, replied, giving reassurance that the same faith in victory and the same enthusiasm for battle would rule his regiment until the end".<sup>1</sup>*

Between 16th October and 3<sup>rd</sup> - 17<sup>th</sup> November, the 9th Hunters Regiment was at Cârломănești-Slobozia-Corni, north of the borough of Negrești, where its training camp was established. But as the state of anarchy, disorder and agitation of the Russian troops in Iași had become dangerous again, the 9<sup>th</sup> Hunters Regiment was urgently called up. The deployment was carried out in stages, by Companies and Battalions, so that on 19th November, the entire regiment was in Iasi. Nicolae Iorga, happy to see his son Petru again, writes in his diary "*The rest of the 9th Hunters Regiment has arrived here*".<sup>2</sup>

At the end of November 1917, Lenin and Trotsky sent a Bolshevik commando of about 80 people to Iasi, led by Simion Grigorievich Roșal (Rochal), whose objectives were to take over the leadership of the Russian army on the Moldovan front, arrest King Ferdinand<sup>3</sup> and the government and proclaim Romania a Soviet republic. These objectives must have been well known since we find them in the writings of I.G. Duca, in the *Diary* of Queen Mary and Nicolae Iorga, but also in the memoirs of the militant social-democrat Mihai Gheorghiu Bujor, from Iași, etc.

On 18<sup>th</sup> November Nicolae Iorga noted that "*It is said that a coup had been planned in Iași on the 17<sup>th</sup> or 18<sup>th</sup>; hence all the security measures*".<sup>4</sup> In order to achieve this goal, General Șcerbacev, commander of the Russian troops in Moldova, had to be assassinated. A few days later, on 30th November, the historian noted with concern:

*"Now Roșal, the president of the Kronstadt republic, is coming to Iasi with his guard of matroses and this "guard", which is capable of anything, should be stopped."*<sup>5</sup>

The events precipitated on the night of 8<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup> / 21<sup>st</sup>-22<sup>nd</sup> and on 9<sup>th</sup>/22<sup>nd</sup> December 1917. Colonel Rasoviceanu and his regiment were to participate directly in one of the most dramatic moments that the temporary capital of Romania had ever experienced, events known to contemporary historiography thanks to the memoirs of I. G. Duca<sup>6</sup>, C. Argetoianu<sup>1</sup>, N. Iorga<sup>2</sup>, Queen Mary's *Diary*<sup>3</sup>, etc.

<sup>1</sup> "*Neamul românesc*", year XII, no. 249, Iași, Monday, 11.IX.1917

<sup>2</sup> N. Iorga, *op. cit.* p. 172-173.

<sup>3</sup> Mihail Gheorghiu Bujor's testimony on Lenin's planned assassination attempt against King Ferdinand of Romania in Florian Tănăsescu, ed., *Communist Ideology and Structures in Romania. 1917-1918*, National Institute for the Study of Totalitarianism, Bucharest, 1995, p. 299. It should be noted that as early as 18-19 November 1917, rumours of a "coup" were being spread in Iasi.

<sup>4</sup> N. Iorga, *op. cit.* loc. cit.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 188-189.

<sup>6</sup> I.G. Duca devotes an entire chapter, the 39th, to these events, entitled *1917. The Night of 9 December. Disarmament of the Bolsheviks. The Liquidation of the Russian Front*, in *Political Memories, Collection of Memoirs and Testimonies*, Jon Dumitru-Verlag, Munich, 1981, vol. III, pp. 30-43.

The assassination attempt on General Șcerbacev is foiled. Lieutenant-Colonel Rasoviceanu then provides security and arrests the plotters, led by Roșal and his girlfriend Boga, Lenin's envoys. Rasoviceanu entrusted their guard to a team under the command of Lieutenant Petru N. Iorga, and the next day, supported by other forces, he disarmed the Russian anarchist troops concentrated around Socola station. The facts are recorded in the Regiment<sup>4</sup>'s diary but also by the great historian:

*"My son, Peter, was in charge of guarding Roșal and his partner, Mrs. Boga, in Copou. The latter had taken it upon herself to draft the proclamation, which the group of male imbeciles was not capable of, in the (Russian, our note) Headquarters, on the night the Maximalists had stormed there. The couple were forwarded to the Fourth Division, which split them up..."*<sup>5</sup> Two days later, on December 14<sup>th</sup>, the historian notes *"Colonel Rasoviceanu told me what had happened at Șcerbacev's, events in which he himself got involved in the second part"* and that *"at Socola the disarmament went smoothly"*<sup>6</sup>.

After this victory, between 16<sup>th</sup> December 1917 and 23<sup>rd</sup> February 1918, the 9<sup>th</sup> Hunters Regiment was given the mission to protect the civilian population of Botoșani and Dorohoi counties from the looting of the retreating Russian army. From this period the historian notes on 25<sup>th</sup> January 1918 that

*"The 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion of the 9th Hunters Regiment is in Bucovina"*<sup>7</sup>.

The very next day after this report, the Regiment moved to the commune of Hermeziu, on the Prut, which it crossed on 12<sup>th</sup> April to guard the border of the Nistru, the old and new border of Romania. Nicolae Iorga notes in his diary *"The 9th Hunters Regiment went there"*<sup>8</sup>. From "there" the flag of the Regiment is sent to Iasi *"according to the order of the Great General Headquarters to take part in the memorial liturgical service"*<sup>9</sup> (for all the fallen heroes, our note I.S.). Nicolae Iorga, who attended the ceremonial parade of battle flags, noted that

*"On awarding the second decoration for the flag of the 9<sup>th</sup> Hunters Regiment, the King spoke at length, mentioning that wherever there was danger, the Regiment*

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<sup>1</sup> C. Argetoianu, *Pentru cei de mâine ...*, vol. IV, part V, p. 64 ff.

<sup>2</sup> N. Iorga, *op cit.* p. 196-197, 199

<sup>3</sup> Maria, Queen of Romania, *War Diary. 1917-1918*, vol. II, edited by Lucian Boia, Editura Humanitas, Bucharest, 2015, p. 311-312.

<sup>4</sup> *Operations and history HR 9*, p. 458-460.

<sup>5</sup> Nicolae Iorga, *op cit.*, p. 199

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 200-201.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 260. The Regimental Front Diary records that on 20 January 1918 the 1st Battalion was on a mission to Ober-Sinăuți and Sinăuți to disarm the former Russian Allied troops, and on 21-24 January it moved to Ițcani-Suceava to take over a Russian armaments depot, cf. *Operations and History R 9 V*, pp. 463-464.

<sup>8</sup> Nicolae Iorga, *op cit.*, p. 348.

<sup>9</sup> *Operations and History HR 9*, p. 469.



was there"<sup>1</sup>.

In the summer of 1918, another important event was to attach N. Iorga even more to the 9<sup>th</sup> Hunters Regiment. His daughter, Florica, Petru's sister, married Lieutenant Dimitrie D. Chirescu<sup>2</sup> who had been an adjutant of the 9th Hunters Regiment since the time of the Dobrogea front. In the worried atmosphere of Iași, the marriage between Nicolae Iorga's daughter and the young lieutenant was to be a real event, which was extensively recorded even in Queen Mary's *Diary*, who, among other things, noted that

*"The godparents were Maria Știrbei and a colonel, because the groom is an officer. The Știrbey girls took care of the bride very nicely, dressed her, helped her - the Iorga family needs a little help with practical, mundane things."*<sup>3</sup>

From Dimitrie Chirescu's memoirs we learn that his daughter Graziela was born on May 11<sup>th</sup>, 1919, while the 9<sup>th</sup> Hunters Regiment was on campaign in Transylvania defending the Great Union:

*"I sent a telegram to Bucharest to my father-in-law, Professor Nicolae Iorga and my wife's mother, as well as to my family"*. Ten days later, during a visit to Brad, King Ferdinand conveyed to the young family Professor Iorga's "annoyance" that they had made him a "grandfather"<sup>4</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Nicolae Iorga, *Memoirs. Daily notes (May 1917 - March 1920). The National War. The struggle for a new political life*, vol.II., Editura "Națională" S. Ciornei, f.a., p. 15.

<sup>2</sup> Associate Professor Lavinia Gheorghe, *From the "dynasty" of the Chirești family of Cernavodă: Dimitrie D. Chirescu* in Andreea Atanasiu-Croitoru, coordinator, *Studia varia in Honorem professoris Panait I. Panait octogenarii*, Editura Muzeului Marinei Militare, Constanța, 2011.

In his memoirs, Dimitrie Chirescu notes that *"In 1918, on the second day of Palm Sunday, I asked for the hand of Professor Nicolae Iorga's eldest daughter, Florica, and received his consent (emphasis added). I presented myself alone, unaccompanied by anyone to recommend me. The professor had information about me, about how I had finished military school and, above all, how I had behaved in the war. At Mărășești, I was decorated with the highest military order: "Mihai Viteazul", cf. Operations and History HR 9, p. 653.*

On the eve of Romania's entry into the war, on August 15, 1916, in the first *Order of Battle* of the 9th Hunters Regiment on the Dobrogea front, the second position in the General Staff, that of "Adjutant" was occupied by "Lieutenant Chirescu Dumitru". He kept his position of "Adjutant" in the following Orders of Battle of 20.X., 1.XI., 14.X., 26. XI. 1916 even if, starting from 27. II. 1917, the first place of this position was occupied, temporarily, by the French captain Piet Lataudrie. On the front in Transylvania and Hungary we find Dimitrie D. Chirescu, now in the rank of captain, in the same position of "Adjutant" of the 9th Hunters Regiment, cf. *Operations and History of HR 9*, pp. 13, 151, 157, 163, 208, 237, 476.

<sup>3</sup> Maria, Queen of Romania, *War Diary, vol. III, 1918*, Translation by Anca Bărbulescu, Edited by Lucian Boia, Editura Humanitas, Bucharest, 2015, p. 169<sup>3</sup> *Ibid*, p. 260. The Regimental Front Diary records that on 20 January 1918 the 1st Battalion was on a mission to Ober-Sinăuți and Sinăuți to disarm the former Russian Allied troops, and on 21-24 January it moved to Ițcani-Suceava to take over a Russian armaments depot, cf. *Operations and History R 9 V*, pp. 463-464.

<sup>4</sup> *Operations and history HR 9*, p. 659. And Captain Dimitrie D. Chirescu continues the story: *"H" is "M"ajesty" gave me orders to write home and give the letter to Prince Știrbey who will hand it over to*

The great historian notes with conciseness the actions of the Romanian Army against Bèla Kuhn's Bolsheviks on the front in Transylvania and Hungary. The offensive of the Romanian army launched on 16<sup>th</sup> April 1919 against the bands and the Hungarian Army requires new sacrifices. On 18<sup>th</sup> April Iorga notes that

*"The General Headquarters informs me that the operations are going well: the gorges have been crossed and the plain has been reached. An officer from the 9<sup>th</sup> Hunters Regiment, who came on a mission, said that the current situation was not to be kept; at least if the gang attacks continue on the new line, they will no longer be carried out to the detriment of a Romanian territory".<sup>1</sup>*

It was Colonel Rasoviceanu himself, who arrived in Iasi on 25<sup>th</sup> June "from the Tisa", where the 9<sup>th</sup> Hunters Regiment had fought hard with enemy troops<sup>2</sup>, who brought him the latest news, described at length in his diary. After a few days of stationing near Budapest, the 9<sup>th</sup> Hunters Regiment left for the country on October 18, 1919, arriving in Bucharest on October 23<sup>rd</sup>. After two days, Nicolae Iorga notes with contentment "*Colonel Rasoviceanu and my son are coming from Kis-Pest*"<sup>3</sup>. This was the end of the historian's constant worry for his son Petru, who had been entrusted to the care of his friend Rasoviceanu to serve the Country and her superhuman effort to set her sons free and gather them together at home in Greater Romania.

To our knowledge, the last moment of the special relationship that Nicolae Iorga had with the 9<sup>th</sup> Hunters Regiment and its commander during the War of Reunification dates back to 22 May 1931 when the unveiling of the statue "Infanteristul" dedicated to this collective hero took place with great pomp, with the participation of King Charles II. The event is extensively reported in two successive issues of the newspaper "Universul" that relates:

*"Yesterday, at 11.30 a.m., in the presence of His Majesty the King, HRH Prince Nicolae and Professors N. Iorga, President of the Council of Ministers, Ghika, Minister of Foreign Affairs... the monument of the 9<sup>th</sup> Hunters Regiment, erected at the entrance to Cotroceni Street, was inaugurated. His Majesty the King embraced General Rasoviceanu, former co-commander of the 9<sup>th</sup> Regiment of Hunters during the whole campaign, decorating him with the "Romanian Crown" in the rank of Grand Officer. Prime Minister Iorga also congratulated him. Thanking him on behalf of himself and the Government for the deeds of arms committed during the war".<sup>4</sup>*  
(I.S.)

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*the professor. We did it, giving the letter to Prince Știrbey whose daughter wedded us thus becoming our godmother on June 3, 1918, at the Schitul [of] Tărăță, south of Iasi, in Bucium", Ibidem, p. 659.*

<sup>1</sup> N. Iorga, op. cit. p. 191-192.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid*, p.222-223.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid*, p. 257.

<sup>4</sup> "Universul", year XLIX, no. 135, 24<sup>th</sup> May 1931, p. 7. The same publication reports that the inauguration took place on Friday, 22<sup>nd</sup> May 1931 and not on Saturday, 23<sup>rd</sup> May, as the first line of the article suggests.