

COLLABORATION UNDER THE CANOPY OF THE PARACHUTE WITHIN THE SOCIALIST CAMP

Mircea TĂNASE*

Abstract: The Soviet Union may be regarded as one of the first countries that seized the new opportunities provided by the use of airborne forces in an armed conflict. Therefore, at the beginning of the Second World War a substantial structure of such forces had already been in readiness. However, the Soviets did not use those forces at full capacity, for tactical and especially for technical reasons (insufficiency of air transport capabilities).

The Romanian paratrooper unit, established by Marshal Ion Antonescu on 10 June 1941, was disbanded by the order of the Allied (Soviet) Control Commission in March 1945, in spite of the fact that it had received special training. After the Second World War, the Romanian Armed Forces were compelled to adopt the organisation principles and the way of action that were proper to the Soviet Armed Forces. The paratrooper unit, re-established on 1 November 1950, was, up to 1980, the only structure of this type in the Romanian Armed Forces, and extensive efforts were made to train and equip it so that it could meet the standards in the armed forces of the other countries in the Soviet sphere of influence.

Key words: Soviet Union, Second World War, Special Operations Aviation Brigade

The Soviet Union was one of the first countries that got aware of the penetrating power of airborne troops, seeking and succeeding in attaching the proper importance to them. Even since 1925, the Soviet envoys had been sent to the USA to get familiar with the Americans' preoccupations in the field. In 1930, in the Moscow military district, near Voronej, three *R-1* aircraft dropped two detachments from a height of 500 and 300 meters, each consisting in 12 paratroopers equipped with machine guns and muskets and having the mission to cause a diversion behind the enemy disposition.

In 1931, in the Leningrad military district that was under the command of Marshal Mikhail Tukhachevsky, General Alksnis established an experimental detachment, consisting of one fusilier company, pioneer, communication and light car platoons, a heavy bomber squadron, and an army corps aviation detachment. Later, it was made possible for the light armoured cars to be parachuted from the *TB-1* aircraft. In 1932, the first paratrooper battalions were established near Kiev, Leningrad, Moscow, and in the Far East.

* Colonel Dr.