

## THE ROMANIAN ARMED FORCES IN THE SECOND BALKAN WAR

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**Abstract:** The Balkan Wars took place as a final episode of the Oriental Problem. Until the start of the war, the Ottoman Empire still owned in the Balkans a continuous strip of territories, between the Black Sea and the Adriatic Sea. In 1913, The Second Balkan War breaks out, during whom Serbia teams up with Greece against Bulgaria, in order to stand out against Bulgaria's pretenses. Within this context, Romania's entrance in the war against Bulgaria was going to stop hostilities and prepare the Treaty of Bucharest. Romania's entry into the war was a decision Prime Minister Titu Maiorescu, approved by King Carol I. The Romanian Armed Force campaign plan states that the military action should take place in two theatres of operation. Immediately after signing the peace treaty, the Ministry of War issued the Instructions relating to demobilisation .

**Keywords:** Balkan War, military, Romanian, General Staff, crisis, frontier, armistice, neutrality, meeting, operation, government, conference, Danube

The early twentieth century was marked by political and military instability in the Balkan Peninsula, against a background of certain events that brought Bulgaria into the European spotlight because of its hegemonic tendencies that got manifest soon after the Bulgarian state became independent. That state of affairs affected peace south of the Danube, having undesirable consequences for neighbouring countries, Romania included.

After completing the implementation of the provisions of the Treaty of Berlin in 1878, the Romanian-Bulgarian relations were only apparently cordial, even if the neighbour south of the Danube was a state with limited sovereignty, being still under the control of the Ottoman Porte. The Peace Treaty of San Stefano, through its provisions referring to the territories that had to return to Bulgaria, in agreement with the idea deliberately promoted by Tsarist Russia, persisted in the geopolitical thinking of the political and military leaders in Sofia, so the territorial claims at the expense of neighbour states were constant until 1912, when the First Balkan War broke out.

The Romanian-Bulgarian relations were dominated by the claims on Dobrogea, intensified after 1908, when Bulgaria gained independence, formulated

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informally but obvious to any observer of the politics promoted by Sofia<sup>1</sup>, as well as by the treatment of the Romanians and the Aromanians on the territory under its administration.

King Carol I and the leaders in București supported the political aspirations and the efforts made by the governments in Sofia, especially to gain independence and to have the independent state acknowledged, but viewed with some suspicion the benevolent and friendly statements that were made to the Romanian leadership on various occasions.

The development of the military body in Bulgaria, the anti-Romanian propaganda relating to Dobrogea as well as the cultivation by Sofia of special relations with Russia, which continued to pose as the protector of the Christian peoples in the Balkans, prompted the political and military decision-makers in București to consider the risks to national defence and to take the necessary measures to reject an attack from Bulgaria. Against a background of a favourable situation for Bulgaria, which gained the state independence in 1908, the Romanian Great General Staff, concerned about the political and military attitude of the new sovereign state south of the Danube, developed a project on operations, entitled "*Report on the Concentration of the Romanian Armed Forces in the Event of a War with Bulgaria*"<sup>2</sup>. Based on the available information and on the military and political assessments relating to Bulgaria, in the above-mentioned document it was shown that it paid special attention to strengthening and developing its military power; it attached importance to the exaltation of nationalism, by promoting and maintaining the belief that Bulgaria would have historical and ethnic rights over some territories in the composition of other states; by its rigid and provocative position, Bulgaria prepared intensively to be able to derive as important as possible benefits from the political and military complications that might arise in the Balkan Peninsula. Two years later, the Romanian Great General Staff developed a project on operations in the event of a war with Bulgaria, called "*Hypothesis C*"<sup>3</sup>, where it was stated that "*a Romanian-Bulgarian war may be admitted for many reasons but especially because Bulgaria tends to enlarge its territory in the Balkan Peninsula to become the leading state*"<sup>4</sup>. Unlike the "*Report*" in 1908, according to "*Hypothesis C*", in the view of the Romanian Great General Staff the war with Bulgaria had to be offensive as far as Romania was concerned. It was estimated that, seeking the unification of all the Bulgarians in the former Ottoman Empire, Bulgaria intended to create an issue of

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<sup>1</sup> More details in Ion Crînguș, Ion Giurcă, *Cedarea și evacuarea Cadrilaterului în anul 1940*, Editura Conphis, Râmnicu Vâlcea, 2010, pp. 19-33.

<sup>2</sup> Romanian Military Archives (RMA), the *Great General Staff* Collection, *Operations 3<sup>rd</sup> Section*, file no. 23/1908, pp. 20-23.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibidem*, file no. 28/1910, pp. 1-8.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 1.

Dobrogea in its relations with Romania, an issue similar to that of Alsace and Lorraine. Therefore, Romania should take appropriate measures to avoid surprise, not to find itself in the situation of France in 1870.

To counter Bulgaria, it was important to seize strategic initiative. Although it was appreciated that the objective pursued by the Bulgarian armed forces was Dobrogea, Romanian military planners projected our armed forces concentration in Oltenia, their crossing the Danube in the Corabia area, and their heading directly for Sofia, which resulted in avoiding any Bulgarian offensive in Dobrogea and the conduct of military operations on the national territory. “*Hypothesis C*” was a realistic, courageous and achievable plan under the conditions of an alliance with another Balkan state. It could be Serbia or the Ottoman Empire, although Romania rejected the Ottoman Porte proposals to conclude an alliance with this state against Bulgaria on several occasions. “*Hypothesis C*” was the document that remained in force until the summer of 1913, when Romania entered the war against Bulgaria. Until the outbreak of the First Balkan War, in 1912, the Romanian-Bulgarian relations were not likely to create a favourable climate in many areas, although the main concern of the government in Sofia was the removal of the Ottoman influence and presence in the Balkans, which, according to the ideas promoted in Bulgaria, had to be reduced to the dimension of the influence and presence Constantinople enjoyed in the mid fifteenth century.

The major event in the early twentieth century in Europe was the so-called “*Balkan crisis*”, reflected in the conduct of the two wars in which Bulgaria, Greece, Serbia, Montenegro, Romania and the Ottoman Empire engaged. The political crisis in the Ottoman Empire, which started with the “*Young Turk*” Revolution, was an opportunity for Italy to attack the Porte possessions in North Africa and the Middle East. Thus broke out the Italo-Turkish War (1911–1912), seen by Italian nationalists as “*Italy’s return to Ancient Rome’s Mediterranean policy*”<sup>5</sup>. Trying to grasp an opportunity, Bulgaria took the necessary steps for a military cooperation with Italy against the Ottoman Empire, action rejected by the government in Rome “*not to turn that war into a European war*”<sup>6</sup>. Determined to go to war against the Ottomans with the support of Russia, Bulgaria managed to draw Serbia, Montenegro and Greece into a political alliance that was concluded on 29 February/13 March 1912, followed by the four countries signing a military agreement on 29 June/12 July the same year<sup>7</sup>. Broken out on 5/18 October 1912, the First Balkan War was marked by a rapid success of the allies against the Ottoman Empire, which determined the Porte to sign an armistice with Bulgaria on 20 November/3 December, while the armies of Greece and Montenegro

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<sup>5</sup> Nicolae Ciachir, *Istoria popoarelor din sud-estul Europei în epoca modernă*, Editura Științifică și Enciclopedică, București, 1987, p. 328.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 329.

<sup>7</sup> Colonel George G. Garoiescu, *Războaiele balcanice 1912-1913*, Tipografia Centrului de Instrucție al Infanteriei, Sfântu Gheorghe, 1935, p. 8.

continued the offensive against the Turkish forces in Ianina and Scutari. The conclusion of the armistice by Bulgaria highlighted the disunity within the alliance, a trend that remained visible in the next period.

Bulgaria and its allies started the war against the Ottoman Empire being assured, by the Prime Minister Titu Maiorescu, of the fact that Romania did not have an alliance with the government in Istanbul, and that it “*will maintain strict neutrality as there will be no territorial changes*”<sup>8</sup>. Romania’s position on the war that foreshadowed was made known to the Turkish ambassador in București, Sefa Bey, on 20 September/1 October 1912, as follows: “*As for our attitude in relation to the complications that may occur in the Balkans, we are decided to maintain neutrality for the time being*”<sup>9</sup>. Even before the war broke out, București became the hub of the Balkan politics. The representatives of Russia, Austria-Hungary, the Ottoman Empire and Bulgaria informed the Romanian Prime Minister about the progress and the position of the governments they represented, while exploring Romania’s attitude towards a possible conflict. At the meeting between the Romanian Prime Minister and the Bulgarian ambassador to București – Kalinkov, on 16/29 October 1912, occasion on which the Romanian official was presented the note verbale relating to Bulgaria breaking out the war, Titu Maiorescu said that “*within the limits of the Treaty of Berlin, Romania’s neutrality is natural. If there are territorial changes in the Balkans, Romania will have its say on it*”<sup>10</sup>.

The conduct of war and especially the danger of a direct attack on Istanbul determined the great European powers intervention to settle the conflict in the Balkan Peninsula. Acknowledging the role of Romania in the geopolitics of the Balkans, on 22 October/4 November 1912, the Russian ambassador informed the Romanian Prime Minister about their intention<sup>11</sup>: the Turkish dominion in Europe reduced to Istanbul and surrounding area, including Adrianople; the division of the western part of the territory ruled by the Ottomans between the four Balkan countries; as compensation for Romania, Dobrogea’s frontier rectification. The desperate situation facing the Ottoman government and the danger of the Bulgarians entering Istanbul resulted in the Ottoman authorities sending to București a request like that of Grand Duke Nicholas of Russia after the second defeat of the tsarist troops before Plevna. The message of the Turkish government stated, inter alia, “*the Romanian government is asked to employ all means to prevent the Bulgarians from entering Constantinople*”<sup>12</sup>. Romania’s position relating to possible frontier changes in the Balkans was made known to the

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<sup>8</sup> Central National Historical Archives (CNHA), the *Royal House* Collection, file no. 16/1912, p. 1; Titu Maiorescu, *op. cit.*, p. 161.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 163.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 164.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibidem*.

Russian ambassador in București, who was fully involved in the crisis south of the Danube, during a meeting he had with the Romanian Prime Minister on 27 October/9 November 1912. Titu Maiorescu said that the Romanian-Bulgarian frontier rectification had to be the result of the agreement between the two countries and the initiative should belong to the government in Sofia, as the initiator of the war against the Ottomans. On that occasion, the Romanian party expressed its territorial claims for the first time: “...*friendly and confidentially, I can say that our border rectification in Southern Dobrogea should contain a line from Turtucaia to the Black Sea, on this side of Varna*”<sup>13</sup>. At the suggestion of Russia, the President of the Bulgarian Parliament visited București on 26 November/9 December 1912, occasion on which the situation in the Balkans was discussed and the Romanian-Bulgarian future relations were analysed. After promising that “*the Aromanians living in the regions annexed by the Bulgarians after the peace with Turkey will be allowed to use their language in their schools and churches and to have the own episcopate*”<sup>14</sup>, demands that were systematically rejected after 1878, the Bulgarian official addressed the issue of territory at present and in the future. With obvious lack of sincerity, but with apparent firmness, given by imposing the armistice on the Ottoman Empire, he stated, as noted by Titu Maiorescu in a report to the king, that “*no serious Bulgarian thinks of taking Dobrogea, that there are good neighbourly relations between the two countries and therefore there can be neither compensation nor strategic line for Romania... In conclusion, we can consider the frontier rectification, which can have a good moral effect for both countries, but, in this regard, Bulgaria cannot admit, for example, to cede Silistra*”<sup>15</sup>. Without clearly expressing Romania’s claims relating to the rectification of Dobrogea borders, Titu Maiorescu firmly stated the idea that “*Any frontier rectification should start with Silistra annexation by Romania*”<sup>16</sup>. The meeting between the two officials ended without any concrete result, the problems having to be discussed in London where, on 3/16 December 1912, the Peace Conference began to put an end to the First Balkan War. At the conference, Romania was represented, if needed, by Ambassador Nicolae Mișu. Although there was the idea of Romania’s participation in a meeting of ambassadors, along with Germany, Austria-Hungary, Italy, Russia, France and England, it did not materialise. However, the new Romanian Minister in London received precise instructions regarding the requirements of the government in București related to the conditions of peace that was expected to be concluded. The basic idea was that “*Romania should obtain a boundary line that goes from the Danube to the Black Sea, drawn as*

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<sup>13</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 165.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 166.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibidem*

<sup>16</sup> *Ibidem*

south as possible from the present border”<sup>17</sup>. Three days later, on 18/31 December 1912, the Romanian ambassador to London was sent from București the message that “a border line starting west of Turtucaia and getting south of Ekrene, with or without Dobrici”<sup>18</sup> had to be negotiated with the Bulgarian party. The talks in London between the Bulgarian and the Romanian delegations did not lead to any result, the Bulgarian party maintaining the view expressed in the talks in București. Under the pressure from the European powers, the government in Sofia expressed, on 28 December 1912/10 January 1913, “the ardent desire of Bulgaria that it should conclude an agreement with Romania, in the broadest sense possible, able to guarantee the interest and dignity of the two states”<sup>19</sup>. Somehow irritated by the delay in the Romanian-Bulgarian talks in London, Titu Maiorescu asked the Romanian ambassador, on 12/25 January 1913, to resume the talks with the representative of Bulgaria relating to setting the border between the two states, considering the following requirements: “maximum Turtucaia, Dobrici, Balcic, minimum Silistra, Balcic, without Dobrici”<sup>20</sup>. Following talks, in the coming days, on 16/29 January 1913, a Protocol between Romania and Bulgaria was concluded. The core issue of the Protocol, the territorial one, was not regulated to meet the Romanian requirements, Sofia’s delegate stating that “the Bulgarian delegation considers that the latter request – a real cession of territory meant to deal a fatal blow to the friendly relations between the two kingdoms – cannot be taken into consideration”<sup>21</sup>. The Bulgarian party delay in signing an agreement on the frontier rectification, as demanded by Titu Maiorescu, caused some nervousness and hurry in București, in the context in which, in London, on 17/30 January 1913, the Peace Conference was interrupted. Notable in this regard is the telegram sent to Romania’s ambassador to Sofia by the Prime Minister, in which it was shown that: “We have to put an end to it immediately. Any delay worsens the situation.... Please insist on immediate resolution. The country has lost patience. Any day delay aggravates the situation”<sup>22</sup>. Bulgaria’s reserved attitude may have been determined by Russia’s encouragement. This statement is based on a declaration made by a Russian official, according to which “Russia can never admit that Romania could inflict violence on Bulgaria”<sup>23</sup>. The failure in the Romanian-Bulgarian talks generated the idea of mediating the dispute by the European powers. Launched by England, until 5/18 February 1913 the proposal was taken up by the majority of the European states engaged in solving the Balkan crisis. In this context, the

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<sup>17</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 170.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 175.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 182.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 185.

<sup>21</sup> Apud, Titu Maiorescu, *op. cit.*, p. 184.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 190.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 207.

Romanian government accepted mediation in the territorial dispute with Bulgaria by the six European powers, proposing Petersburg as the place where the talks were to be held. On 15/28 February the Romanian government sent the "*Romanian Government Memorandum on the dispute between Romania and Bulgaria*" to the capitals of the six great European powers as well as to their representatives in București, London, and St. Petersburg, providing historical, demographic, military and other arguments to support its claims. The European powers Ambassadors Conference was held in St. Petersburg between 18/31 March and 26 April/9 May 1913, ending by concluding a Protocol which, inter alia, stipulated that "*Silistra has to belong to Romania... Bulgaria consents to give autonomy to the Koutsovlachian schools and churches that are to be found on the Bulgarian territories as long as these schools are attended by Koutsovlachian children, and to allow the establishment of a bishopric for the same Koutsovlachs, these cultural institutions being subsidised by the Romanian government under the supervision of the Bulgarian government*"<sup>24</sup>. The spring of 1913 was marked by tense relations between Bulgaria and its former allies, which was made known to the government in București by the representatives of Greece and Serbia. After the Petersburg Protocol was ratified by the Romanian Parliament, on 16/29 May, the commissions to implement its provisions were set up by Royal Decree no. 4075/1913. The provisions referred to: the border demarcation around Silistra, the compensation awarded to the inhabitants who would emigrate in the area of Silistra, the delimitation of the Bulgarian fortifications. The developments in the spring of 1913 prevented the commissions from accomplishing the assigned tasks as a new crisis that could degenerate into an armed conflict was likely to arise starting in June. The good knowledge of the situation in the Balkans and the anticipation of the developments determined the Romanian government to notify all its legations, on 23 May/3 June 1913, sending them a circular note in which it was shown, inter alia, that "*the possible aggravation of the situation in the Balkans could not leave Romania indifferent*"<sup>25</sup>. In the same vein, during a meeting with the Austria-Hungary ambassador to București, Prince of Fürstenberg, Titu Maiorescu said that "*if war broke out between the Balkan allies, Romania would mobilise immediately and would firstly occupy the Turtucaia – Balcic line, which we intend to maintain permanently*"<sup>26</sup>. Bulgaria was warned about this situation, on 13/26 June 1913, at the suggestion of the Minister of Russia in București, who had repeatedly warned the government in Sofia not to start war against the Greeks and the Serbs. Despite all the received warnings, as a result of the disagreements between the allies on the division of the territory liberated from the Ottoman rule, on 16/29 June 1913, Bulgaria carried out a surprise attack on Serbia, thus triggering the Second Balkan War. It was a suicidal

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<sup>24</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 207-208.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 211.

<sup>26</sup> CNHA, the *Royal House* Collection, file no. 16/1912, p. 37.

action of Bulgaria, which overestimated its potential and relied, without having the necessary guarantees, on the support of Austria-Hungary and Germany, which were reserved as far as Serbia ascent in the Balkans was concerned. Initially, Serbia and Greece, and then Montenegro and Romania (27 June/10 July 1913) declared war and launched military operations against Bulgaria, and the Ottoman Empire took Adrianople back.

Romania's entry into the war was a decision of the Prime Minister Titu Maiorescu, approved by King Carol I, who, on 20 June/3 July 1913 signed Royal Decree no. 4751 on the mobilisation of the Romanian Armed Forces, action that started on the night of 22/23 June – 5/6 July 1913, in compliance with the rules of mobilisation. The mobilisation decision was well received by the population, as proved by the popular demonstrations that took place in București and other cities of the country and by the response above expectations of the mobilisable personnel to the order issued and transmitted using the existing means, as it was stipulated by the Great General Staff plan. 1897-1911 contingents and reservists were mobilised, as well as 1895-1896 militia contingents that received special orders.

Mobilised commands and large units, in the operational forces, sedentary troops, and territorial troops, mobilised 8 693 officers and 500 400 troops (non-commissioned officers, enlisted personnel, and soldiers), of whom in the actions south of the Danube and the Quadrilateral participated: in the main theatre of operations – called in the epoch “*in Bulgaria*” – 6 180 officers, 272 400 troops, having 514 cannons, 262 machine guns and 89 650 horses; in the secondary theatre of operations – “the Quadrilateral” – 1 310 officers, 71 000 troops, having 128 cannons, 60 machine guns and 23 900 horses.

The general comments on the armed forces mobilisation, in the media of the time or in some official documents, revived in the years to come by those who wrote on this subject, were laudatory, mainly referring to the active and reserve large units and units. From the “*General Report on the Armed Forces Operations since Declaring Mobilisation up to Crossing the Danube Back*”, prepared by General Alexandru Averescu on 23 August/5 September 1913, it resulted that: “*Great shortcomings emerged while mobilising all the necessary ancillary services, particularly ammunition columns, artillery stocks, subsistence columns and various sanitary formations, because of excessive centralisation. Requisitions also left much to be desired, in terms of time but especially order. The support provided by administrative authorities was less effective in some parts and therefore, in order to have no time lag in mobilisation, expeditious procedures were resorted to, which, of course, gave rise to arbitrary acts*”<sup>27</sup>.

Mobilisation was performed safely as a result of the measures taken to cover the southern frontier of the country on the Danube, executed with the forces

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<sup>27</sup> RMA, the *Great General Headquarters (GGH) Collection*, file no. 61/1913, pp. 1-2.



assigned for this purpose by the 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> Army Corps. Between Turnu Severin and the confluence of the Olt and the Danube, the 1<sup>st</sup> Army Corps assigned 6 active battalions, 3 militia battalions, 7 squadrons and an artillery battery, the 2<sup>nd</sup> Army Corps introduced into the disposition, between the Olt River and Lake Greaca, 4 active battalions, 4 squadrons and 2 artillery batteries. The 5<sup>th</sup> Army Corps had the mission to take part in covering the southern frontier between Lake Greaca and the Black Sea with 6 active battalions, 2 territorial battalions and 2 artillery batteries. The forces intended for covering observed the south bank of the Danube permanently and reported the situation in the area of responsibility daily. Later on, they got into the disposition of the units they belonged to and acted in the established directions and districts.

Given the fact that there were no large-scale military confrontations, which would have required large consumption of ammunition, food, feed and other necessary materials, and that the losses generated by fighting were not important, the effects of the reported shortcomings were minor, noticed only by those who had a complete picture of the military system operation at war, as well as by those who were aware of the responsibility associated with the positions they filled. The concentration of the operational forces and of the sedentary troops in the established areas was performed in compliance with the plans for mobilisation and transport, by rail and on the Danube, using mobilised or requisitioned means of transport, as well as on foot. It was considered a real success, which surprised even the organisers, but especially the Bulgarian political and military analysts. The rapidity of the operational forces mobilisation and concentration resulted in timely covering the country's southern frontier, a prerequisite for the establishment of task forces to conduct military actions in Bulgaria, in compliance with the plan for operations prepared by the Great General Staff, updated and implemented by the Great General Headquarters, the head of which was appointed Crown Prince Ferdinand, while the chief of the Great General Staff was General Alexandru Averescu.

The Romanian Armed Forces campaign plan states that the military actions should take place in two theatres of operations, situated at a distance of several hundred miles, to meet the political and military objective of war: the military defeat of Bulgaria and the occupation of the claimed territory in southern Dobrogea, as a strategic safety measure for the area between the Danube and the Black Sea. In line with this concept, the main group of forces and assets (the 1<sup>st</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Army Corps, the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Cavalry Divisions, and the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Reserve Divisions) were concentrated in the area Corabia – Turnu Măgurele, and the secondary group (the 5<sup>th</sup> Army Corps and the 3<sup>rd</sup> Reserve Division) in the district Cernavodă, Medgidia, Murfatlar. The main group of forces had to cross the Danube in Bechet – Rahova as well as in Corabia – Ghingen sectors, on the pontoon bridge in the former sector and by river vessels in the latter sector. On

1/14 July 1913, in Corabia and Bechet were concentrated the 1<sup>st</sup> Army Corps, the 1<sup>st</sup> Cavalry Division, the 1<sup>st</sup> Reserve Division, the 7<sup>th</sup> and the 13<sup>th</sup> Infantry Brigades, all able to start crossing the Danube. The first subunits crossed the Danube on 2/15 July 1913, in the morning, in Bechet – Rahova sector by river vessels, while in Corabia the pontoon bridge started to be installed. The bridge was completed after 7 hours and 30 minutes, which allowed the passage of the first units until the evening of the same day. The next day, the Danube was crossed, event that was attended by King Carol I, who “*inspected the troops that crossed the Danube at Măgura – Ghighen, and then got to Bechet by monitor to see how the Danube was crossed by vessels there*”<sup>28</sup>.

When the political and military preparations for Romania’s entering the war against Bulgaria were completed, on 27 June/10 July 1917, Titu Maiorescu, as the Minister of Foreign Affairs, with the consent of King Carol I, sent to the Bulgarian government, through the agency of the Romanian Minister Plenipotentiary to Sofia, as well as to all the Romanian legations, to be brought to the attention of the states in which they were accredited, the following telegram: “*the Romanian Government has warned the Bulgarian Government about the fact that if the Balkan allies were in the state of war, Romania could not preserve the attitude of reserve it has imposed in the interest of peace, and it might see itself forced into action. The Bulgarian Government has not considered necessary to reply to that communication; on the contrary and unfortunately, the war broke out first by the Bulgarian surprise attacks against the Serbian troops, even without observing the basic rules of previous notifications that at least would have proved the respect for international conventions and practices. Faced with this situation, the Romanian Government has ordered the armed forces to enter Bulgaria*”<sup>29</sup>. In this context, the Romanian Great General Headquarters implemented the campaign plan by giving the necessary orders to the directly subordinate army corps and divisions to initiate the preparatory operations for the forces in the composition of the main group, which were to act in the west of Bulgaria towards Sofia, to cross the Danube.

The massive passage of the Danube was scheduled for the period 4/17 – 8/21 July, when the four army corps troops had to finish the concentration in the districts established south of the Danube, while advancing in the set directions towards the passes of the Central and Western Balkans, and then towards Sofia. The Romanian troops’ entry into Bulgaria was preceded by the transmission, employing various means, of a *Proclamation* to the Bulgarian population, written in the Romanian and Bulgarian languages, to show the aim of their presence there: “*The Romanian Armed Forces overstepped the boundaries of Bulgaria, only*

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<sup>28</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 5.

<sup>29</sup> Apud, Titu Maiorescu, *România, războaiele balcanice și Cadrilaterul*, Editura Machiaveli, București, 1995, pp. 218-219.

*forced by circumstances, and not out of hostility towards the Bulgarian people. Our goal is to put an end to a state of affairs that is dangerous for all the neighbouring countries of Bulgaria, and exerts pressure even on the Bulgarian population. If we are forced to employ weapons to achieve this goal, the peaceful populations do not have to be worried at all. The Romanian soldier is not only brave but also disciplined, and he will be gentle and kind to people in villages and cities, for whose liberation he shed his blood so generously in 1877 alongside the brave Russian army. Therefore, people should perform their daily activities, fully confident that the Romanian soldiers will not harm or trouble anyone”*<sup>30</sup>. In the same context, on 5/18 July 1913, the Army Corps General and Prince of Romania, Ferdinand, as Commander-in-Chief of the operational armed forces, signed Order of the day no. 162, stating: *“Soldiers. We have crossed the Danube in Bulgaria so that, through your bravery, you can compel the Bulgarian military to respect the others rights which they now disrespect. Do not forget that 36 years ago your fathers shed their blood for the liberation of the Bulgarian people and so you cannot have hatred for it. The population in the villages and towns, as it does not take up arms and quietly performs daily activities, should see your kindness and goodness in every respect. Prove to those that have the eyes on you today that the braver you are in the face of those who stand in your way having weapons in their hands, the gentler you are with those unarmed”*<sup>31</sup>. The Romanian troops advanced cautiously between the Danube and the Balkan Mountains following two directions. As they did not encounter a powerful enemy, determined to put up strong resistance, they managed to rapidly move forward, the vanguard being mainly the cavalry divisions or the cavalry units of infantry divisions. The occupation of Pleven and Orhanie opened penetration routes in the mountainous region of Bulgaria in the following directions: Ferdinand, Bercovița, Sofia; Orhanie, Sofia; Zlatița, Sofia. On 9/22 July began the preparations to get into the mountainous area, and the next day began the advance, planned in detail for each and every day until 14/27 July, when the vanguards had to get through to the Sofia Valley. The political and military developments in the theatres of operations south of the Danube determined King Carol I to order that *“the reconnaissance cavalry troops should not get out of the gorges under any circumstances, and the 1<sup>st</sup> Army Corps, which was in the most advanced position in the direction of motion and whose penetration in the gorges with the 1<sup>st</sup> Division was unknown at the Great General Headquarters, was especially prescribed not to force the gorges until the day before most of the troops got there, i.e. on 13 July”*<sup>32</sup>. On 11/24 July 1913, King Carol I ordered a halt until new orders were received. However, taking into account that the vanguards of the 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, and 4<sup>th</sup> corps were moving in the

<sup>30</sup> RMA, the GGH Collection, file no. 16/1913, p. 22.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibidem*, file no. 21/1913, p. 33.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibidem*, file no. 61/1913, p. 10.

established directions, it was decided that they could continue the march, “allowing the army corps to dispose the troops so that they could station for quite a long time”<sup>33</sup>. The operational needs related to the troops stationing, the safety measures that were specific to the Romanian Armed Forces general and special situation, the large units logistics requirements, and especially the cholera outbreak forced the troops to continually move up until 17/30 July, when the armistice was concluded on the fronts in the Balkan Peninsula. Throughout this period, in the main theatre of operations, there were only few and low-intensity clashes between the Romanian and the Bulgarian troops, having a magnitude that was somewhat lower than it was presented in the epoch, with battles that did not exceeded the level of cavalry and infantry subunits. The Romanian military historiography records and presents in detail the battles of some subunits of the 1<sup>st</sup> Cavalry Division in Liuța and Borovici, where acted the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> squadrons in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Roșiori Regiment and the 2<sup>nd</sup> Artillery Battalion in the 7<sup>th</sup> Roșiori Regiment, actions that resulted in capturing a Bulgarian brigade in Ferdinandovo, as well as the actions of some subunits of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Cavalry Division in Praveț and Lojane<sup>34</sup>. The clashes resulted in deaths, injuries and troops and materials seizures on both sides, the Bulgarian troops being forced to withdraw from several localities in the area of action of the 1<sup>st</sup> Cavalry Division vanguards.

In the theatre of operations in Dobrogea acted the 5<sup>th</sup> Army Corps, having in composition the 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> Infantry Divisions, subordinating the 3<sup>rd</sup> Reserve Division, which had the mission “to occupy the territory in Bulgarian Dobrogea to the south of Turtucaia – Balcic line”<sup>35</sup>. According to the received orders, the 5<sup>th</sup> Army Corps Commander took the necessary measures to occupy Silistra on 28 June 1913/11 July 1913. Then, the 9<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division had to advance towards Turtucaia and the 10<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division to Dobrici. By 30 June/13 July 1913 the two divisions vanguards advanced up to the established alignment, without encountering any resistance, and by 8/21 July the entire Quadrilateral was under the units of the two divisions control. In the following days reconnaissance actions were organised south of the established stop line, which resulted in the loss of two soldiers who were shot dead by the Bulgarian patrols. A suicide case was registered, for reasons that were unclear at that time. The 5<sup>th</sup> Army Corps was the only large unit that was not affected by the epidemic of cholera, as it acted outside the contaminated area.

For 15/28 July 1913, the Great General Headquarters, under the orders of King Carol I, ordered measures for the prolonged troops stationing in the areas where they were and “the Cavalry Divisions and the 1<sup>st</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Army Corps could push detachments forward to secure the mountain passes, if not strongly defended

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<sup>33</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>34</sup> Colonel George G. Garoiescu, *op. cit.*, pp. 130-136.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 22.

by the Bulgarians, but no more than the opposite edge of the passes”<sup>36</sup>. On that day, in the units of the 1<sup>st</sup> and the 2<sup>nd</sup> Army Corps, several confirmed cases of cholera were reported, marking the onset of the epidemic that created havoc for the Romanian troops in the following days, resulting in a large number of illnesses and deaths. On 17/30 July 1913, during the Peace Conference in București, the present military delegates signed the proceedings in which the conditions for the suspension of hostilities were reformulated, in compliance with the decisions made during the Conference that stipulated: “a demarcation line will be set at an equal distance from the outpost lines on the day of 18/31 July at noon. This line will be marked by white flags; the suspension of arms will last for 5 days starting on 18/31 July at noon, Central European Time; the movement of troops and supplies of any kind will not be prevented behind the outpost lines; the belligerents shall notify each other of the present stipulations, in order to cease hostilities simultaneously; the provisions of art. 40 and 41 of the convention on the laws and customs of war on land shall be applied”<sup>37</sup>. Following the proceedings of the conference, on 18/31 July 1913, the Ministry of War issued Order no. 80 according to which “Each and every reconnaissance detachment has to be withdrawn behind the outpost line, line that cannot be passed under any circumstances”<sup>38</sup>. The temporary suspension of military operations, converted, on 25 July/7 August, in an armistice with no time limit until the signing of the peace treaty allowed the Ministry of War, the Great General Headquarters, and the Armed Forces Health Service to focus their efforts on combating the epidemic of cholera, adopting measures that ultimately proved effective. On 28 July/10 August 1913, the Peace Treaty<sup>39</sup> was signed in București, an event that was brought to the attention of the Great General Headquarters and of all the units in the theatres of operations in Bulgaria. As far as the military actions of the signatory states were concerned the Treaty stipulated Bulgaria’s obligation to demobilise the armed forces starting on the day that followed the conclusion of peace, the beginning of evacuation of the Bulgarian territory immediately after the demobilisation of the former enemy state armed forces, which had to be completed within 15 days. Moreover, the Romanian Armed Forces had to be stationed on the demarcation line marked out by the following localities: Șistov, Lovcea, Turski, Isvor, Glozene, Zlatița, Mircovo, Araba, Konak, Orchania, Mezdra, Vrata, Bercovița, Lom, Dunăre<sup>40</sup>.

The signing of the peace treaty was an opportunity for the political and military leadership of the country to send messages to the Bulgarian population,

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<sup>36</sup> RMA, the GGH Collection, file no. 58/1913, p.109.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 116.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 117.

<sup>39</sup> Apud Titu Maiorescu, *op. cit.*, pp. 232-239.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 236.

the Romanian armed forces, and the troops on the demarcation line, in compliance with the requirements arising from the document signed by the parties and with the realities in the area of military operations, even if the actions had been suspended.

Thus, on 28 July/10 August 1913 Prince Ferdinand signed a Proclamation addressed to the Bulgarian population, urging it *“to refrain from hostile impulses against the Romanian troops, and informing the public that the most severe measures will be taken against the perpetrators and accomplices, making responsible for any attack also those who could have stopped it but they did not”*<sup>41</sup>. The next day, the Chief of the General Staff for Operations, issued a *Publication* addressed to the inhabitants of the territory where the Romanian armed forces acted, inviting them that *“in case they have any complaint, irrespective of its nature, they have to submit it to the Bulgarian local administration as soon as possible. The Bulgarian administrative authorities are requested to communicate the complaints they might receive to the closest troop commander, no later than 5 August”*<sup>42</sup>.

On 31 July/13 August King Carol I issued a High Order of the Day to the Army, which read: *“You have gone cheerfully and confidently on the battlefield, leaving your fields, determined to face all the dangers of war manfully. Many of your comrades have fallen victim to fatal illnesses across the Danube. My heart bleeds for the tragic loss of them. You have reached the crest of the mountains of Bulgaria at a speed that exceeds all expectations. Your presence here has imposed peace without bloodshed, has enlarged our country by adding an important piece of land to strengthen its border, and has made Romania worthy of note. Soon you will be able to return to your homes highly contented that you have done your duty and you have written one of the most important pages in the history of your Motherland. Thank you from the bottom of my heart. TO MY DEAR ARMY I WILL ALWAYS GIVE MY PATERNAL LOVE”*<sup>43</sup>.

According to the Peace Treaty of București, on 2/15 August 1913, the Great General Headquarters issued the *Operations Order no. 115*, on the evacuation of the territory of Western Bulgaria, stipulating the following aspects<sup>44</sup>: the schedule of crossing the Danube by the troops on the bridges from Zimnicea and Turnu Măgurele, as well as of the transshipment from Rahova to Bechet; the schedule of the march from the districts of disposition to the crossing points; the rules to be observed during the marches; the general and specific hygiene measures as there were outbreaks of infection and a large number of soldiers infected with *Vibrio cholerae*, and so on.

<sup>41</sup> RMA, the *GGH* Collection, file no. 16, p.186.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 204.

<sup>43</sup> RMA, the *GGH* Collection, file no. 21/1913, p.14.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibidem*, file no. 16, p. 142.

The deployment of the units and large units to the crossing sectors established by the Operations Order no. 115 started on 4/17 August 1913, being a continuous, generally well planned, managed, and coordinated action. However, it was disturbed to some extent by the condition of the units that were contaminated with *Vibrio cholerae*, having many patients who were quartered in the so-called medical observation areas from Zimnicea, Turnu Măgurele, and Bechet, established by the Ministry of War through the agency of the Armed Forces Health Service, leading to a series of disputes between the Minister of War and the Chief of the General Staff, given the fact that: *“Then the Health Service intervened asking that troops should be stopped after crossing the Danube to be examined. This disposition caused true disturbance, without even being implemented. Undeniably, measures had to be taken. However, it was not at all necessary to revolutionise the entire deconcentration plan based on the opinion of the doctors charged with combating cholera from the beginning, doctors Cantacuzino and Babeş”*<sup>45</sup>. The dispute was amplified by a letter sent by Eliza Brătianu, the wife of I. I. C. Brătianu, to King Carol I on 6/19 August 1913, informing about some serious cases among the troops stationed in medical observation areas<sup>46</sup>, which subsequently proved exaggerated, amplifying the tension between C. Hârjeu – the Minister of War and General Alexandru Averescu on the execution of the activities intended for the units withdrawing to the garrisons they belonged to. It was necessary the presence of King Carol I in Zimnicea and Turnu Măgurele, on 15/28 and 16/29 August, to calm the spirits. The decision was that the troops should leave the medical observation areas as fast as possible and they should be sent to the garrisons they belonged to in the shortest time possible. A review of withdrawal plans and a better collaboration between the doctors in the Armed Forces Health Service and the officers in the General Staff resulted in putting an end to the Romanian troops presence in the areas of medical observation, considering 22 August/4 September 1913 as the end of the Romanian military campaign in the summer of that year. On that day Prince Ferdinand signed Order of the Day no. 16, which stated: *“Soldiers. When leaving the position of commander-in-chief of military operations, it is my moral obligation to express my deep and vivid gratitude to the officers, NCOs and troops. You return home, some of you to your garrisons and others to your peace time jobs, all of you having the feeling that you have done your duty diligently and have helped the country to become larger in the eyes of the entire world. By the enthusiasm you have shown during mobilisation, by your power of resistance and your abnegation during the difficult and long marches, by the discipline you have shown throughout the campaign, you have proven worthy of the trust your high and great Captain and King has placed in you. The comradely and sacrificial*

<sup>45</sup> RMA, the GGH Collection, file no. 61/1913, pp. 20-21.

<sup>46</sup> CNHA, the Royal House Collection, file no. 7/1913, p. 3.

*behaviour while facing the severe and cruel disease that has been contracted by many of you and put an end to so many lives full of hope provides you with a new right to the love and respect of your superiors. The memory of these victims will always remain in our hearts. Soldiers. I am parting from you today expressing my deep gratitude for the time spent with you, gratitude grounded in the strong bonds of love and trust that unite us in our beautiful army”<sup>47</sup>.*

Immediately after signing the peace treaty, the Ministry of War issued the *Instructions relating to demobilisation*<sup>48</sup>, action that was to take place after the arrival of the units and commands in the garrisons they belonged to, including three distinct activities: taking back the equipment from troops, giving back or selling the requisitions of all kinds, transporting those demobilised in their places of residence. The way the three activities were to be performed was detailed or stipulated in the regulations that had to be considered. Under the High Decree no. 5141 on 30 July/12 August 1913, demobilisation started on 31 July/13 August 1913, the first units being the sedentary ones or those that did not leave the deployment garrisons, followed by the units that were part of the operational armed forces. No general deadline was imposed for demobilisation because of the specific situation of the units. However, it was desirable that the activities should be performed as quickly as possible, taking into account the costs generated by maintaining a large number of troops under arms, as well as the need of labour force in all sectors of the economy, especially in agriculture. A special case was represented by the 5<sup>th</sup> Army Corps in Dobrogea, which had to leave certain forces in the Quadrilateral, as specified by higher orders, and certain contingents that had been mobilised.

Thus, in the territory incorporated into Romania, in accordance with the peace treaty, had to be deployed and installed in garrisons: the 35<sup>th</sup> Regiment “Matei Basarab” with two battalions in Dobrici and one battalion in Balcic, the 9<sup>th</sup> Battalion in Kurtbunar, the 40<sup>th</sup> Regiment “Călugăreni” with two battalions in Turtucaia and the 5<sup>th</sup> Roşiori Regiment with two squadrons in Dobrici and Kurtbunar. The other units of the 5<sup>th</sup> Army Corps had to return to the garrisons they belonged to while the logistic and the health service structures were to disband.

The Second Balkan War had an element of absolute novelty, namely the participation of aviation in the conduct of operations in all the phases of the conflict, which represented a good opportunity to test the human and material potential of the service that was newly established in the Romanian Armed Forces, thanks to the concerns in this regard of the Ministry of War as well as of the engineering and flight school that had already distinguished itself in the domestic and international activities involving powered aircraft.

<sup>47</sup> RMA, the *GGH* Collection, file no. 58/1913, p. 216.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibidem*, file no. 59/1913, pp. 6-7.



According to the plan drawn up by the Great General Staff, the “*war air squadron*” was mobilised, consisting of 4 squadrons from the Military Flight School and the Air League, each of the two structures forming a section that was heterogeneous in terms of the types of aircraft, flight performance, and the training of pilots and other personnel. The 1<sup>st</sup> Section included the personnel and the assets of the Military Flight School, having an active and a reserve squadron, the positions being filled by: 6 pilot officers, a civilian pilot employed under contract by the Ministry of War, namely engineer Aurel Vlaicu, a civil servant, and 33 conscripts, who operated five planes (Farman, Bristol, Vlaicu II), two cars and two trucks. The Air League mobilised 3 active and 1 reserve squadrons as well as 14 active and reserve officers, a military pilot, a civilian one, and 9 conscripts, having available 13 aircraft of various types, and the material resources necessary for the transport, installation, and shelter the aircraft<sup>49</sup>.

During the war the aviation squadrons were deployed to Siliştioara, Lukovit and Telis, from where they carried out the assigned missions, namely the observation of the Bulgarian land and troops and the execution of aerial reconnaissance by pilots, and in some cases, by officers in the land forces. Although at that time there were laudatory appraisals of the actions of the Romanian aviation in war, military analysts were more reserved. Thus, Lieutenant Colonel Alexandru Anastasiu, Head of the 4<sup>th</sup> Section Transport in the Armed Forces General Staff, considered that: “*Neither the Air League, except the 1<sup>st</sup> Squadron having Lieutenant Capşa and Soldier Poli Vass as pilots, nor the military flying assets could meet the service requirements*”<sup>50</sup>. The same officer who prepared a report about the place and role of aviation in war, perhaps too demanding and subjective, appreciated that “*almost all officers, more dilettante than professional, enthusiastic and passionate pilots, were professionally untrained and emotionally unaccustomed to the sacrifice entailed by servicing as pilots or observers. Hence some lack of confidence, timidity, and fear while executing risky, audacious, military flights*”<sup>51</sup>. Regardless of the assessments, one thing is certain. Romania was among the few countries in the world that had specialists in aviation at that time. Moreover, it had military aviation that successfully fulfilled a part of the assigned tasks, having created the prerequisites for the development of this armed forces service in the years that followed.

Navy had a very important contribution in all the phases of the war, participating in it with consistent material and human resources. During the mobilisation it was established the Navy Headquarters, consisting of: the Navy Command, whose Commander was Rear Admiral Eustaţiu Sebastian; the Staff Service, led by Captain Spiropol Ioan; Artillery Service – Commander Ciuchi

<sup>49</sup> RMA, the *GGH* Collection, file no. 69, pp. 100-109.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 103.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 104.

Constantin; Machinery Inspectorate – Ștefănescu Constantin; Health Service – Dr Ciomac Mardar; Quartermaster Service – Major Budeanu Alexandru<sup>52</sup>. Of the two structures of the Navy, in the operations in the summer of 1913 were employed the forces and assets of the Danube Division, commanded by Captain Poienaru Dumitru. The Division had in its composition the following: monitors “I.C. Brătianu”, “Lascăr Catargiu”, “Alexandru Lahovari”, “Mihail Kogălniceanu”; Galați – Tulcea – Sulina Region with torpedo boats “Năluca”, “Zborul” and “Zmeul”, gunboat “Alexandru cel Bun”, boat “Prut”; Cernavodă - Fetești Region with gunboats “Grivița”, “Bistrița”, “Olt”, “Siret”, motorboats “Teleorman”, “Trotuș”, “Vedea”, “Argeș”; Transport Service with tug “Măcin”, torpedo-boat destroyer “România”, motorboats “Smârdan”, “Rahova”, “Opanez”<sup>53</sup>. Subordinate to the Danube Division Commander were also the requisitioned vessels belonging to the Romanian Inland Navigation and the Hydraulic Service “Mihai Viteazul”, “Basarab”, “Alexandru cel Bun”, “Măgurele” and ship “România”, as well as other river equipment having different destinations.

During the mobilisation and concentration of troops, the crossing of the Danube (in both directions), the military operations, the return of the troops to the country, and the demobilisation, the forces and assets of the Danube Division accomplished various missions including: the river transport of the units and subunits from/in the garrisons of residence, in/from the areas of concentration, the crossing from one bank of the Danube to the other of the troops of the 1<sup>st</sup> Army Corps, the 1<sup>st</sup> Cavalry Division, and the 1<sup>st</sup> Reserve Division, the participation in the construction, protection and defence of the bridges over the Danube at Siliștioara – Măgura and Turnu Măgurele – Nikopol; the crossing over the Danube of the railway rolling stock used to transport troops and supplies for the units logistical support; health care services for the wounded and the sick on the hospital ship; the provision of all the river transportation service needs generated by operational requirements, including for the high officials of the state, the safeguard of the crossing areas of the Danube on both banks, the defence of the crossing points and the port areas on both banks of the river and many other missions<sup>54</sup>. The actions and activities of the Danube Division forces proved to be of great utility for the military operations, contributing to the overall success of the war waged by Romania in 1913.

The war was managed by the General Staff, whose head was Prince Ferdinand. Thus the campaign in the summer of 1913 was a good opportunity for him to prepare for the future position as head of state and the armed forces, position in which he proved to be highly successful during the National

<sup>52</sup>RMA, the *GGH* Collection, file no. 43/1913, p. 87.

<sup>53</sup>*Ibidem*, pp. 90-98.

<sup>54</sup> Captain Dr Marian Moșneagu, *Marina Militară Română în Campania anului 1913*, in *Revista de istorie militară*, no. 3-4, 2013.

Reunification War. Yet the leadership role in the military operations was played by General Alexandru Averescu, the Chief of the Armed Forces General Staff, directly involved in all the actions and activities from the first day of mobilisation up to the completion of demobilisation and the transition of all the armed forces units to the state of peace. Although the rules of the war management were clearly stated, King Carol I and the Minister of War encroached on the Great General Headquarters activity, which resulted in certain malfunction in the conduct of ongoing actions, as well as in certain animosity between the military leaders, felt by the operating personnel in the great military echelons.

Although the war was more a show of military force without employing great battles, the Romanian Armed Forces suffered heavy losses, caused primarily by the inability to properly manage the epidemic of cholera that affected an important part of the troops. There were more than 1 100 people who died of cholera (General C. N. Hârjeu noted on 17/30 August 1913 that “*Until now we have had about 1 200 dead people in the armed forces and 200 victims of cholera in the country*”<sup>55</sup>). The great number of cases of cholera was evidence for the low capacity of the armed forces health service to prevent and act effectively to combat the disease. The service did not act timely, did not have sufficient means of intervention, sometimes taking ineffective measures thus being in contradiction with the General Staff planners with regard to the overall conduct of combat operations, the evacuation of Bulgaria, and the withdrawal to the garrisons of residence. The deficiencies occurred during the Romanian military campaign, more or less officially presented at that time or later, although in the fall of 1913 a real campaign against some military leaders and some military services was launched in the media, were overshadowed by the praise given to the royal family, the political class in power at the time, and formally to everyone who participated or was involved in the war. The war contributed to strengthening Romania’s European reputation and praise was fully expressed. It was an opportunity to test the military potential of the country, the armed forces leadership ability, the morale of active and mobilised troops, and all Romanians response to a major crisis situation. Flaws and deficiencies in many areas were identified, correct conclusions were drawn, and remedial actions were ordered and taken in accordance with the existing or allocated financial resources. The war was a warning sign for the country’s political and military leadership, who understood that the state of affairs had to be improved, especially as the situation in Europe was becoming increasingly complex and unpredictable given the geopolitical and geostrategic developments.

After the completion of all the activities in connection with the Romanian Armed Forces participation in the war, a series of measures were adopted meant

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<sup>55</sup> General C. N. Hârjeu, *Studii critice și militare*, vol. I, Editura Librăriei Stănciulescu, București, 1921, p. 45.

to express gratitude to those who were mobilised, fought, and died for their country in the summer of 1913. Through High Decree no. 6247, “Avântul “Țării” commemorative medal was established, which “*will be awarded to all the military and those assimilated into the military, irrespective of the rank, who took part in the campaign of 1913, who augmented or who were attached or employed with different assignments to the troops or the military services. The medal will be also awarded to the civil servants and the persons who, not directly belonging to the armed forces, were called to actually and permanently perform their duty alongside the Romanian Armed Forces. This category also included the civilian doctors who carried out their activity in ambulances and hospitals, nursing homes, and the persons who helped to nurse the sick and the wounded*”<sup>56</sup>. During 1913 and 1914 the medal was awarded to the participants in ceremonials that were different from case to case, depending on the organisational and social context of those to whom it was awarded. The memory of those who fell on the battlefield was honoured in the years that followed by erecting military commemorative works in București and other localities all over the country, the most representative one being “Avântul Țării” monument in the capital city, in Valter Mărăcineanu Square, inaugurated in 1921.

Romania’s participation in the Second Balkan War remains a milestone in the country’s political and military history in the early twentieth century, whose effects were visible in the Romanian-Bulgarian relations, especially between 1916 and 1940, when the border issue between the two neighbouring countries got important again. Romania’s involvement in the war south of the Danube was, given the geopolitical and geostrategic conditions in the summer of 1913, an objective necessity stemming from the need to put an end to a conflict that was not desired, nor even by the European powers, although there were acute contradictions between them, as the Balkan states were of major interest to the states belonging to the two political-military alliances that consolidated their position in Europe.

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<sup>56</sup> *Monitorul oficial*, no 49, 11 November 1913, p. 655.