

THE ROMANIAN TROOPS OF DOBRUDJA IN THE BULGARIAN CAMPAIGN OF 1913

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Abstract. Relationships with Bulgaria have been encumbered by a series of ambitions on the Sofia government's side, which came in contradiction with Romanian interests. The situation would worsen in the Balkan Peninsula as Bulgaria started the Second Balkan War on June 16/29, 1913. New army reorganizations were undertaken in 1912-1913. On the secondary direction of the military operations theatre, since June 27/ July 10 1913, the Army Corps of Dobrudja has advanced – with the fleet's support, until June 30/July 13 – into the claimed territory between the frontier established in 1878 and Turtucaia – Balcic line, including the town of Bazargic (the small Quadrilateral). On the main direction Sofia, operations started on July 2/15; until July 6/19, Romanian forces were about 25 km away from the capital of Bulgaria. While Dobrudjan troops were returning to the peace garrisons, Interior Minister Take Ionescu sent Dobrudja local authorities a telegram demanding “immediate measures to dress towns and villages. Let us show our gratitude towards H.M. the King, the army and the government through great public manifestations. Romania proudly steps out of this war, with an increased territory and admiration on all of Europe's behalf”.

Keywords: The Second Balkan War, the Army Corps in Dobrudja, Balkan Peninsula, military garrisons, the frontier in the South of Dobrudja.

Throughout the 30 years since the Dobrudja Active Division founding in 1879, February 22, the Dobrudjan ground forces have known a remarkable organizational evolution as well as an infrastructure enabling the military system's well-functioning, according to political orientation and the Romanian national aspirations.

The Romanian army's evolution aligned with a tense European background due to the great powers' arming and arms races. By 1908, the entire infantry structure had been made permanent, outing shifts in the active service. Based on that year's newly elaborated law regarding army reorganization, certain changes were brought upon the organizational structure of the army. Active duty for all marching units was reduced to 2 years. Infantry brigade teams were made up of two active regiments and 1 or 2 spare units. The infantry division came with 2 infantry brigades, 1 riflemen unit, 1 artillery brigade, troops and auxiliary services, while the army division had 2-3 infantry divisions, 1-2 cavalry brigades, 1 pioneer battalion, 1 telegraph company, troops and auxiliary services. In 1909,

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every infantry regiment was attributed a machine-gun division consisting in 3 pieces each¹.

In Bulgaria, the neighbouring country, during the first years of the 20th century, the quantity of purchased war material was “just enough to guarantee efforts of arming no less than 18 divisions”².

By the end of the 20th century’s first decade, King Charles I defined his policy as one aiming to “maintain a balance of powers in the Balkans by using armed force, when necessary, against any authority attempting to disrupt it”³.

Just in case any military conflict would have erupted in the Balkan area past 1910, Romania was believed to be better off remaining neutral and carefully observing the course of events, especially since, in December 1909, Bulgaria had concluded a secret military convention with Russia, by means of which the tsar engaged in supporting Bulgaria’s territorial claims upon Romanian Dobrudja⁴.

The First Balkan War began in the fall of 1912⁵. Romania decided to not get involved and refused to enact levy, as a *de facto* proof of its neutral policy. As Turkey came close to surrendering, Romania started deploying a sustained diplomatic activity, with a well-determined purpose: in case any territorial changes affected the Balkan region, a resumption of the 1878 discussions regarding the southern frontier of the Romanian state, ensuring greater geo-strategic protection in an area struck with particularly frequent military conflicts, appeared as inevitable⁶.

A November 9, 1912 report from Prime-minister Titu Maiorescu to King Charles I spoke for itself: “As soon as all of the general dispositions in the Treaty of Berlin are eliminated, the legitimacy of our imposed Dobrudjan border will also disappear, thus demanding a new regulation. We would want this regulation to be made amicably between Romania and Bulgaria and we are actually

¹ *Infanteria Română – 180 de ani* –, București, Centrului Tehnic-Editorial al Armatei Publishing House, 2010, p. 22.

² Arhivele Militare Române (furthermore cited as A.M.R.), fond 948, file nr. 14, nr. crt. 22, f. 22.

³ Arhivele Naționale Istorice Centrale (furthermore cited as A.N.I.C.), fond Anglia, roll 252, F.D. 3 71/1912, f. 3. English Minister Conyngham Greene to External Affairs Minister Grey, in the December 31, 1910 report.

⁴ Constantin Tudor, *Administrația românească în Cadrilater*, Călărași, AGORA Publishing House, 2005, p. 50-51.

⁵ In 1912, 100 years away from the Russian annexation of Bessarabia, this is what Halippa wrote concerning Romania’s lack of interest towards the brothers from across the Prut: “This indifference towards Bessarabia makes us think and suspect that the Romanian people only exalt and lend a helping hand occasionally, as a mere reassurance, leaving aside our situation in everyday life... And should that be true, there is no point in deluding oneself into hopeless dreams”. See Onisifor Ghibu, *De la Basarabia rusească la Basarabia românească*, Bucharest, “Semne” Publishing House, 1997, p. 71. Apud. *Viața Românească*, I, 1912, p. 409.

⁶ The endowment, training, coordination and insuring of the army troops fell upon this Infantry Inspectorate, which came into being in 1912.

expecting the initiative to be made on behalf of Bulgaria, given that it was the latter which had started the war against Turkey. Out of sheer consideration towards the King Ferdinand of Bulgaria, we wish to avoid any kind of pressure on this matter. However, on a friendly and confidential note, I may state that adjusting our border south of Dobrudja should comprise a boundary line from Turtucaia up to the Black Sea, on the hither side of Varna”⁷.

The main goal was to obtain a direct negotiation between Romania and Bulgaria so as to correct Dobrudja’s south frontier⁸. Faced with a definite refusal from Stoian Danev, the Bulgarian representative in conversations, N. Mișu messaged Bucharest on January 2, 1913: “Bulgaria finds itself in the position where it can only allow a small correction of the Dobrudjan southern frontier, which would mean turning the current devious border into a straight line”⁹. Conversations between Bucharest and Sofia came to an end with no results. After several appointments, the maximum concession accepted by the Bulgarian state targeted the assignation of the Silistra fortress along with a 3 km belt surrounding it. Bucharest regarded this solution as insufficient.

Under these circumstances, Romania warned it would have to take control over the Turtucaia-Balchik line, which got the Great Powers to touch Bulgaria up about recommencing negotiations and coming down with a more reconciliatory attitude. However, the January 23, 1913 Ottoman coup d’état led to the Balkan relapse of military hostilities, which consequently stopped the Romanian-Bulgarian negotiations in London. Both N. Mișu and S. Danev signed a protocol nonetheless, which merely recorded each of the co-signers’ point of view¹⁰.

On the basis of the High Decree no. 4609, the Romanian state initiated conscription June 20/July 3 1913, raising an army in the first day – June 23rd /July 6th 1913, at 24.00 hours.

The public opinion favoured military intervention, hence enthusiastically receiving news of a possible intervention in the Balkan conflict. N. Iorga refers to loud and “violent manifestations”, challenges, “preparations of rally hot heads, bellicose resolutions, outbreaks and threats”.

In that event, at 10 p.m., general Ion Culcer, Commander of the 5th Army Corps, sent the 34th regiment infantry in Constanța a copy of the telegraphic command no. 328 regarding the army levy that the Division General Constantin

⁷ *Cartea Verde, Documente diplomatice. Evenimentele din Peninsula Balcanică. Acțiunea României, septembrie 1912 - august 1913*, Bucharest, Minerva Publishing House, 1913, p. 13; see also Stoica Lascu, *Din istoria Dobrogei de Sud în cadrul României întregite(1913-1940)*, in “Revista istorică”, tome VI, nr. 11-12/1995, p. 963. Constantin Tudor, *op. cit.*, p. 50-110.

⁸ Ileana Bulz, *Relațiile anglo-române între anii 1880-1914*, in “Diplomație și diplomați români”, vol. II, Focșani, D.M. Press Publishing, 2002, p. 132.

⁹ *Cartea Verde. Documente diplomatice, op. cit.*, p. 27.

¹⁰ Constantin Tudor, *op. cit.*, pp. 58-68.

N. Hârjeu, War minister, had sent¹¹. Based on the High Decree no. 4609, armies ought to be prepared starting June 23 CY. All people are being called upon, contingent groups as well as reserves from 1911 to 1901 included, and all of those with individual call-up addresses or bearing a particular mobilization duty within the contingent groups from 1900 to 1895 included [...]"¹².

Out of 3.332 troop members in the Constanța regiment, they found 166 soldiers with incomplete training, all of which were from the contingent or reserve groups and had taken turns in performing the active service¹³. A series of malfunctions were to appear while carrying out the mobilization command within the regiment. "Soldiers' accoutrement was slow because only three companies could take items from the storage facility at a time, using the three existent access ways.

It took no less than 96 (ninety-six) hours to hand in all of the necessary items, having the companies hand in the parade supplies to the depot afterwards, since these were meant to mobilize other reserve units. [...] The regiment had both operative and enough weaponry and ammunition. There was a shortcoming of 493 revolvers, which were then replaced with Md.79s¹⁴ [...].

Item repurchase was performed as follows: one of the officers made an evaluation of where the necessary items could be found and a repurchase command, containing all the needed supplies and the places to find them, was sent to the City Hall; consequently, the City Mayor along with the authorized officer performed the repurchase as well as issuing the advices of delivery"¹⁵.

On the other hand, the June 21/July 4, 1913 circular command regulated the telegraph-postal military service. According to the 14th article of the standing order, at wartime, the mobilized clerks were considered the army's civil servants, bearing positions that fit hierarchic military ranks. Art. 23 provided that pay and other rights of the conscripted be determined according to the law and the army's payment regulations; their rights were to be paid by the Quartermaster Corps affiliated with the telegraph-postal service.

Inferior clerks and officials from the postal services were to receive a daily allowance for food consisting in 75 cents a day, provided for master sergeants as

¹¹ General Constantin Hârjeu held the position of Minister of War from October 14, 1912 to January 3, 1914; respectively March 6, 1918 to October 23, 1918.

¹² A.M.R., fond C.R.I., file nr. 809, f. 80-81.

¹³ Idem, fond 2272. file nr. 17, Dare de seamă asupra mobilizării de la 23 iunie la 10 august 1913, f. 2.

¹⁴ Austrian-made, Martini-Henry system infantry rifle, with simple or double-trailed carriage, md. 1879 A, cal 11,43 mm. Apud *Infanteria Română – 180 de ani –*, op. cit., p. 256.

¹⁵ The Constanța regiment repurchased 12 carriages, 221 horses and 49 pairs of harness, „having given no name of their rightful owners, no register number, no clue whatsoever about who they belonged to so that at least the animals could eventually be returned to the proprietors”. AMR, fond nr. 2272, file nr. 17, f. 1, verso.

rate no. 14 in the Pay Standing order annex. Those receiving a soldier's substantive pay were to be given an equipment bonus only in case they had been effectively mobilized and taken part in the active lot¹⁶.

During the five days that the mobilization needed to be complete, the troop was served warm meals, as the instructions called for. Food supplies came from providers in times of peace, while bread came from the army's store house. Alimentation was guaranteed along the transfer to the area where troops would gather, in accordance with the 5th Army Corps order no. 115 of 1913¹⁷. As far as the mobilized unit's state of mind was concerned, it appeared that "Upon observing the call-up rush, the enthusiasm shown in the face of the presentation and the joy as they left their families, barracks and towns behind so as to join the war, one could say not even the deepest connoisseur of the Romanian soldier's spirit would have expected such a high morale"¹⁸.

In the first assembling day, 1200 people from the completion and reserve units were passed out to 1st Infantry Brigade, as this was the first subunit with complete supplies.

The 1st Infantry Brigade, along with Section 1, marched to Caraomer via Topraisar on June 24 (OS) at 10 p.m., whilst the 2nd and 3rd Infantry battalions, together with the 2nd and 3rd machine-gun sections, started marching June 27, also at 10 a.m.

On June 24/July 7, 1913, at 9 a.m., a religious service was held in the Regiment's courtyard, in the presence of the unit's officers, honouring the departure of the first battalion. As soon as the religious service ended, Rădulescu, the garrison's clergyman, addressed the soldiers and spoke of the Romanian ancestors and forefathers' bravery, advising that they too do their bit in defending the nation. The 34th Infantry Regiment commander also took the floor, emphasizing for the soldiers in the 1st Infantry Battalion just how much "trust His Majesty the King and their Nation puts in them, as they are the first ones being sent off to confront the enemy and demanding that they abundantly respond to this trust"¹⁹. At 10 a.m., after all of these allocutions came to an end, the 1st Infantry Battalion "exited the barrack's gate as the crowd cheered, all flocked along Mangalia St."²⁰.

In Constanța, on June 27/ July 10, 1913, at 16:00, with respect to the mobilization instructions, the entire regiment in town gathered in the field near the 9th Călărași Regiment, where priest Rădulescu performed a religious service once

¹⁶ *Idem*, fond nr. 2272, file nr. 5, f. 35-36.

¹⁷ "The 34th Infantry Regiment, n.n. – only had one intake of war bread and canned meat, which was distributed to people in burlap sacks, while the second intake was completed with market-bought bacon and cheese". *Idem*, fond nr. 2272, file nr. 17, f. 1, verso.

¹⁸ *Ibidem*, f. 2.

¹⁹ *Ibidem*.

²⁰ *Ibidem*.

more. What came next was a speech from Colonel Ioan Dragalina, commander of the 29th Brigade, who expressed his deep regrets about having to “say goodbye to the officers and members of the 34th Regiment’s, whom he had worked with for two years and was confident would make the Romanian army utterly proud”²¹.

At 18.30, the regiment returned to its barracks, where the 2nd and 3rd infantry battalions, along with their subunits and formations, received the departure order. At 19.30, “after the officers and the unit had dinner and made some last-minute preparations, the regiment left the barracks’ premises and traversed Stefan cel Mare St., acclaimed by the crowds and heading for Cobadin via Hasidorluc”²². The troops marched by foot and reached Cobadin on June 28 /July 11, at 13.30. The next day, at 6 a.m, they continued marching through Caraclar (nowadays Coroana) and Ghiuvanlia so as to get to Caraomer (nowadays known as Negru Vodă), at 14.30²³. The marching progressed under optimal circumstances.

Septimiu Sfintescu²⁴ was a medical student in Germany and came back to Romania to serve as a soldier in the Medical Corps. „Only military trains were in circulation from Vârciorova. We arrived at 02:00, but had to make several stops until 16:00 because of the numerous people that had been called to arms. I got to Slatina at 4 p.m. and then home. On Thursday afternoon, I reported to the regiment, where I was introduced to Major Dr. Dimitriu, sub-lieutenant Dumitrescu and Călărășanu, and chief pharmacist Schwenck. I was given my brand new green soldier uniform by the 1st company; I remember thinking how much I would have liked to stay in that position, that of a soldier, working on the ambulance for a living, not wasting one bit of my strength by having to walk or carry the chatterbox on my back. I spent the night sewing, adjusting my uniform; I hadn’t received a rifle, a bayonet or a cross insignia, which is what every healthcare member needed”²⁵.

²¹ *Ibidem*, f. 2, verso.

²² *Ibidem*.

²³ According to the general census of December 19/January 1, 1913, in Dobrudja, this is how building materials of houses in rural settlements were classified: 13.3% masonry; 10.1% wood; 75.2% wattle and daub, ferule, loam, unburnt brick; 1.4% other materials. In Tulcea county, homes were built as follows: 2.2% masonry; 13.6% wood; 81.7% wattle and daub, ferule, loam or unburnt brick and 1.5% others. Constanța county had lodging made of 21.5 masonry; 7.3 wood; 70.0% wattle and daub, ferule, loam, unburnt brick; 1.2% others. Apud. Victor Axenciuc, *Evoluția economică a României. Cercetări statistico - istorice, 1859-1947*, Vol. I. Industria, Bucharest, Editura Academiei Române, 1992, pp. 311-312.

²⁴ Septimiu Sfintescu would later live the life of a sub-lieutenant medical officer during the 1916 war, both in the Dobrudja campaign as well as when he had to drop back all on his own, by foot, for several weeks, all the way from Bucharest to his unit in Focșani, much to the surprise of all of those who believed he had ducked-out and went to Germany. He became seriously ill with typhus as he managed a camp fever clinic near Adjud.

²⁵ „Thursday, July 3, Bonn am Rhein. In the morning, at 7, on my way to Frauen-Klinik, I see the following message: Bucharest 2 Juli 1913. His Majesty King Charles I signed the order for the

The Dobruđja Corps – embodying the secondary forces of the Romanian offence under the rule of Division general Ioan Culcer – was made up the 5th army Corps, with the 9th and 10th Infantry divisions, the 3rd reserve unit and the 31st mixed infantry brigade, centralized in the Cernavodă-Constanța area. This unit had been ordered to occupy the so-called “Quadrilateral”. The 9th infantry division had to march south on the Cernavodă-Turtucaia route, while the 10th division had to cover the Medgidia-Bazargic line²⁶.

The General Staff disposed that Dobruđja’s southern frontier be ensured by the military units dislocated in the area, enforced by peace officer and ranger units, subservient to the headquarters responsible for defending the borders. The fourth zone, between Ostrov and Ilanlăc (nowadays Vama Veche), in the Caraomer region (today known as Negru-Vodă), from Haidarchioi (currently Vânători) to Daulchioi (currently Darabani), with the central quarter in Caraomer, comprised the guarding units of the 1st battalion in the 34th infantry regiment in Constanța, and arrived in Caraomer on June 25/July 7, 1913, followed by the 3rd and 4th Squadrons in the 5th Roșiori regiment²⁷.

Romania signalized the Great Powers about not staying detached in case a new conflict would appear in the area. On June 26/ July 8, 1913, the Russian office of state in Bucharest told the Romanian Minister of Foreign Affairs that “Bulgarians wouldn’t hear of any moderation, they were in fact ready to start the war against Serbians and Greeks alike”²⁸.

As head of the conservative Government and with consent from King Charles I, Titu Maiorescu chose to settle differences with Bulgaria via military action²⁹. This is what a daily newspaper in Dobruđja wrote in the month of October, 1912: “The adjustment of our borders south of Dobruđja, [...] offering protection to our fellow citizens in Macedonia, these are our current

mobilization of the entire army”. „The telegram was seen by German people too, which is why, during classes, I had been asked about going to war. Other Romanian fellows must have seen it too: Ion Cristescu (medical school), Dim. Popescu and Arbore (agronomics), Costin Stoicescu (law), Emil Panaitescu (history), Ion Dumitrescu (law-agronomics), Leon Burada etc.”. <http://www.itcnet.ro/history/archive/mi1998/current8/mi40.htm>

²⁶ Just 18 days after the mobilization date, the Romanian army, along with its primary offensive forces, came as close as 20 km away from Sofia and 10 km away from Filippol, crossing the Balkan mountains and achieving the desired merging with the Greek army.

²⁷ Jipa Rotaru, Leonida Moise, Ion Giurcă, Costin Scurtu, *Divizia 9 Mărășești. 120 de ani de la înființare (1879-1999)*, Bucharest, Punct Publishing House, 1999, Divizia 9 „Mărășești”. 120 de ani, p. 17.

²⁸ Ion I. Nistor, *Recuperarea Cadrilaterului*, in „Analele Dobrogei”, Year XIX, nr. II/1938, p. 152; see also Dumitru Preda, *România și războaiele balcanice*, in „Magazin istoric”, Year XXVII, nr. 7/1993, p. 52.

²⁹ Ion Alexandrescu, Ion Bulei, Ion Mamina, Ioan Scurtu, *Enciclopedia de Istorie a României*, București, Meronia Publishing House, 2000, p. 103.

considerations, which we shall demand at any cost, with support from the 400.000 bayonets ready to perform their duty to this country!”³⁰.

The situation within the Balkan Peninsula worsened by the day. Bulgaria triggered the beginning of the Second Balkan War on June 16/29, 1913. On June 27/July 10, Romania declared war to Bulgaria.

Written by Titu Maiorescu, as President to the Board of Councils, the declaration of war ended with the following statement: “The government ordered its army to penetrate into Bulgaria”. Titu Maiorescu left for the General Staff, where he found Prince Ferdinand. As soon as General Alexandru Averescu, the Chief of Joint Staff³¹, guaranteed that units in Dobrudja were prepared, the declaration of war dispatch was sent to Sofia³².

Faced with the Bulgarian government’s refusal to put an end to hostilities, Romania launched military operations June 27/July 10, 1913. These were based on the General Al. Averescu’s plans elaborated throughout the first semester of 1913 (Hypothesis I bis); they mapped out an offensive approach via two strategic directions in the south of the Danube.

On the 37th of June/10th of July, 1913, the Dobrudjan Corpus on the secondary direction started advancing with support from the flotilla, continuing to do so until June 30/July 13, when it took control over the claimed territory between the 1878-established border and the Turtucaia-Balchik line, including the town of Bazargic (improperly deemed as the small Quadrilateral).

The Romanian army had been set in motion at such fast pace, that it took the Bulgarian quarter by surprise, since they believed it would have taken at least 14 days to prepare the troops. Romania had called in 509.820 people, amounting to 6% of the country’s population. The Romanian army started passing over the Danube on the 2nd/25th of July, 1913, aided by the river monitors. Events alternated quickly. The advanced units of the 5th army Corpus, led by general Culcer, occupied Turtucaia, Dobrich and Balchik on the 30th of June; Rusciuk, Varna and Sumla followed eight days later. In spite of being numerically inferior, one cavalry division (disposing of 3000 cavalymen), receiving orders from general Bogdan, seized an entire Bulgarian brigade. This rather bodacious action indirectly deterred Bulgarian soldiers, who believed they had to deal with some undoubtedly high-calibre forces; this consequently led to the decomposition of the Bulgarian 1st Army, that general Kutincev was in charge of. The rest of the army crossed over the Danube through Corabia. As far as the Sofia main course was

³⁰ I. Benteiu, *Războiul din Balcani și compensațiile noastre*, in „Conservatorul Constanței”, year IV, nr. 30 Oct. 28, 1912, pp. 2-3.

³¹ General Alexandru Averescu was the Chief of Joint Staff from November 18/December 1, 1911 to December 2/15, 1913.

³² Alexandru Marghiloman, *Note politice, România și războaiele balcanice (1912-1913)*, Volume 1, Bucharest, Scripta Publishing House, 1993, p. 112.

concerned, operations were set off July 2/15, 1913; by July 6/19, Romanian units had almost reached the Bulgarian capital, as they were just 25 km away.

On the 28th of June/11th of July, 1913, forces centralized in Dobrudja, having received army fire support from the "Al. Lahovari" monitor, went past the old frontier and took up Silistra, having met with no opposition. That same morning, King Charles I received the following telegram from general C.N. Hârjeu, the Minister of War: "I must respectfully bring into notice that, as of this morning at 11:00, Silistra fortress fell under King Charles I's rule"³³.

Yet another contemporary document described the events taking place in Silistra the day it became engaged by Romanian troops: "At this exact moment (11:00 - n. ns.), the popular fortress of Silistra belongs to Romania. The 1st Squadron proceeded immediately in effectively occupying the base. 250 weapons and 200 cartridge cases found in the garrison were seized. The commander of the Silistra Garrison, a Bulgarian major finding himself in the barracks, was left sword less. Romanians took control over the telegraph office and a series of posts were sent on the Medjidie-Tabia and Kalipetrova forts. The regiment's commander immediately sent notice to the General Culcer, the Ostrov Corpus army Commander, regarding the military occupation of Silistra fortress at 11:00. At 2 p.m., when the Minister of War, together with Mr. Nicolae Filipescu, former Minister of War, General Culcer, General Istrati, General Văleanu, Secretary to the Minister of War, Major Balif, the Minister's aide-de-camp, the commander of the 5th Regiment in Roşiori presented the situation at that point and was ordered to assemble all notable fellows from Silistra to the town hall, so as to let them know that, as of that day onward, Silistra was under the direct rule of His Majesty King Charles I"³⁴.

Having the Minister of War, General C.N. Hârjeu as well as Nicolae Filipescu, Prince Ferdinand's personal representative witness the event was meant to emphasize just how strategically important this area in the south of the Danube actually became at that moment in Romanian history. Upon welcoming France and Germany's ministers, Premier Titu Maiorescu explained onto them that... "We stepped onto Bulgarian ground for two main reasons: 1) to make sure we had a strategic border in Dobrudja, that is Turtucaia (some kilometres westward)-Dobrich-Balchik, seeing as how international conventions have no meaning to Bulgarians, who had basically attacked their own allies and 2) to really represent an integrating part of the treaty meant to readjust the territorial division that comes along with the allies defeating the Turks"³⁵.

Transferring the frontier in the south of Dobrudja on the Turtucaia-Dobrich-Balchik line was performed by the surveillance squad at the break of dawn on

³³ *Ibidem*, p. 113.

³⁴ I.T. Ghica, *Luarea Silistrei*, Bucharest, 1915, pp. 134-135.

³⁵ Titu Maiorescu, *România, războaiele balcanice și Cadrilaterul*, Ed. Machiavelli, Bucharest, 1995, p. 134.

June 28/ July 14, 1913. They were going to advance all along the 4th sector, except for the troops in front of Silistra. But there was a surprise awaiting the Romanian army as it entered the town of Silistra without firing one shot. In a memoir about how the Romanian Army's Secret Services institution was created, Mihail Moruzov wrote: "Up until the 1913 Balkan war, our army had not benefited from any so-called information services". "That is when people first thought of creating such an institution". Under several circumstances, Mihail Moruzov and Gheorghe Cristescu equally emphasized the lack of efficiency when it came to the secret information apparatus within the 2nd Section of the General Staff³⁶.

That being said, the Quadrilateral passed under Romanian command, which quickly started applying all sorts of defence mechanisms throughout the territory, so as to prevent any Bulgarian units from concentrating in the area³⁷.

Romanian troops received provisions from temporarily established storehouses, through direct purchases or regional requisitions. Money and goods represented the means of payment, based on how both sides established prices and in accordance with the law of corrections³⁸.

At the border, troops in Dobrudja gathered in company lines by battalions, organized in linear columns. The regiments' commanders addressed the soldiers, asserting the importance of the moment.

The 34th infantry Regiment was told that the Romanian army stepped into the "territory known as the Quadrilateral"³⁹, in order to once again take up the land that was once our own. As soon as the elocution ended, music started playing, and the entire regiment as it was crossed the border shouting Hooray! On the way to the frontier, throughout the march, the biker division and the 8th Company served as safety units. Once they crossed the border, the bikers and the 8th Company advanced to create the spearhead force. Meanwhile, the rest of the regiment stopped until all subdivisions reached the appropriately distanced positions"⁴⁰.

³⁶ Cristian Troncoță, *op. cit.*, p. 40.

³⁷ Dumitru Preda, *Ațiunea armatei române în cel de al doilea război balcanic*, in „Istoria militară a poporului român”, vol. V, București, Editura Militară, 1988, p. 289.

³⁸ Divizia 9 „Mărășești”. 120 de ani, *op. cit.*, p. 20.

³⁹ The Quadrilateral is the Romanian name for the southern part of Dobrudja, which is in Bulgaria and bears the Danube as a NW limitation, Beli Lom and Kamchiya rivers in the south and the Black Sea in the East. In the summer of 1946, the Peace Conference in Paris received a memoir on behalf of the Association for Dislodged People in Southern Dobrudja (the Quadrilateral). Former deputy Teodor Belu signed the memoir, which protested against the Peace Treaty with Bulgaria, dating from September 7, 1940 (Craiova). This is what the memoir said about the territory (back then known as the Quadrilateral) which had then been handed over to Bulgaria: "The term Quadrilateral, referring to southern Dobrudja, is not a geographic expression. It pertained to the XIXth century military cartography and, during the Russian-Turkish battles, it designated the vast military grounds between Silistra - Rusciuk - Kaliakra - Varna fortresses, which approximately marked a quadrangle". Constantin Tudor, *op. cit.*, p. 18. Apud *Memoire sur la Dobroudja du Sud (Quadriletere)*, București, 1946, p. 7 (in the manuscript within the Academy Library, under III 465807).

⁴⁰ A.M.R., fond 2272, file nr. 17, f. 4.

Here is what reserve lieutenant Constantin M. Ionescu, who took part in the events, declared in February, 1914: "I felt pleased to have a taste of the national pride one experienced upon entering Silistra on the first day of pursuit, along with the 1st battalion of the "Matei Basarab" 35th Infantry Regiment that I was in, joined by other units as well 5th Regiment of Roşiori and the 23rd Infantry Regiment; the next day, we had to take the outposts together with the 3rd company at Kalipetrovo, which prevailed in Silistra, and then, after going through several villages, we quartered in Balbunar, that was situated 45 km west of Turtucaia; from here on, having traversed other villages, we quartered in Dobrich, the most important town to be found on the former Turkish Pazargik; when we reached the beautiful port on the Silver Coast, Balchik, we were disbanded"⁴¹.

According to most testimonies thereupon, most of the territory's Muslim inhabitants believed that the Romanian troops entering the Quadrilateral and taking control over the citadel was a good thing. These people welcomed Romanian soldiers "with unspeakable enthusiasm, as they regarded our brave soldiers as saviours"⁴².

One leading article in the Constanța edition of "România Mare" referred to the subject as follows: "With the exception of Bulgarian people, why have all the other nations inside the New Dobrudja taken so much joy in the fact that Romanians had occupied the region? How come they greeted our troops with bread and salt, celebrating their arrival as if they were in fact liberators, who brought along the possibility of living a better life, completely different from what they had to put up with under Bulgarian rule? Why is that, now?"⁴³.

The 1st infantry Battalion in the 34th infantry Regiment, under Mihai Popescu's command, which was in Caraomer at that point, crossed the frontier and attacked the Bulgarian ranger platoon, taking some of the soldiers as prisoners of war. The battalion continued advancing up to Ghelengic, where it stayed until the hostilities ended, taking some safety measures towards Bazargic. The 2nd and 3rd infantry battalions, commanded by majors Petre Golescu and Vasile Voiculescu respectively, passed over the border as well⁴⁴. Within the 9th infantry Division, the 34th "Constanța" infantry Regiment represented the division's reserve.

In order to organize the occupied grounds, adjutant General Ion Istrati, commander of the 9th infantry Division, released a manifesto that said:

⁴¹ Constantin Tudor, *op. cit.*, p. 73. Apud „România Mare”, Year I, nr. 7/February 1914.

⁴² I.N. Roman, *Drepturile, sacrificiile și munca noastră în Dobrogea față de pretențiile bulgarilor asupra ei*, Iași, 1918, p. 51.

⁴³ Constantin Tudor, *op. cit.*, p. 74. Apud „România Mare”, Year I, nr. 4/25.12.1913. If the fact that Romania was seen as a liberator by the Islamist population, which constituted a majority in the Quadrilateral, is a historical truth, it is equally true that most of the Bulgarian people showed hostility towards Romanian administration.

⁴⁴ A.M.R., fond C.R.I., file nr. 809, f. 80-81.

”Everybody should know that severe measures have been taken so that the occupation units rightfully respect each of the replacement’s belongings and individuality. Also, it should be mentioned that the population ought to pay respect to the army and avoid any kind of misunderstanding or conflict that might come up, since there will be no discrimination based on either religion or nationality”⁴⁵. The proclamation was written in Romanian, Bulgarian and Turkish and displayed in all of the villages or small towns the division was responsible for.

We would also like to recall the fact that, on the 20th of June, 1913, the 10th infantry Division was ordered to mobilize its manpower and take part in the Second Balkan War. Dislocation towards Bulgaria started July 1, 1913. Balchik, Dobrich and Turtucaia were taken over on the 5th of July, 1913. The division returned to the country via Silistra in August that same year.

Around the same time, on July 5/18, Bulgaria’s tsar – Ferdinand I of Saxa Coburg-Gotha would send King Charles I of Hohenzollern-Sigmaringen a telegram soliciting the hold-up of Romanian troops. On July 6/19, 1913, the Bulgarian Government, given the pressure of the military events and advised by the Great Powers, sent the Romanian Prime minister a notice, offering to ”give in to Romania the Bulgarian territory situated in the north-east of the line ranging from Turtucaia to Balchik”. In exchange, he demanded that any military action be ceased and troops draw back from beyond the Danube and the Turtucaia- Balchik limitation. In addition to this, Romania was asked to declare neutrality towards the continuation of the Balkan conflict, but also when it came to any future regulation of the territorial differences in the area⁴⁶.

The Romanian army hoped to end hostilities as soon as possible, so that balance would once again dominate the Balkans. Bulgaria would sign truce on the 17th/30th of July, 1913. The armistice was made official between Romania and Bulgaria on July 18/August 1, 1913⁴⁷. The 5th Army Corpus commandment ordered all military structures under its rule to suspend any military actions and to consolidate the healthcare line, especially since the cholera epidemic was laying waste on the Bulgarian territory by mid-July. The moment the Quadrilateral was

⁴⁵ Divizia 9 „Mărășești”. 120 de ani, *op. cit.*, p. 21.

⁴⁶ Ion I. Nistor, *op. cit.*, p. 155.

⁴⁷ *Regulamentul privitor la legile și obiceiurile războiului pe pământ*, Haga, October 18, 1907. Section II, Ostilitățile, Chapter V, Armistițiul, Art. 36. The armistice interrupts war operations by means of a mutual accord between belligerent sides. Having no fixed duration meant that both sides could re-engage in war operations at any time, as long as the ennemy is given notice at the right time, according to the truce’s conditions. Art. 37. The armistice can be either general or local. The first stipulates that all war actions must stop on the belligerent sides. The second refers to ending hostilities for some of the belligerent units in a limited area. Art. 38. The armistice has to be officially announced and just in time for the appropriate authorities and troops to take notice. Hostilities end as soon as notice is taken or upon the agreed date.

annexed, there were doctors working in both Silistra and Dobrich, in charge of a series of medical centres led by healthcare specialists in the most important villages and towns. There in clinics in most part of the towns and there were actual "lazarets" in Silistra, Dobrich and Turtucaia"⁴⁸. The 9th and 10th infantry Divisions took the necessary healthcare measures south-west of the Turtucaia - Dobrich- Balchik line. Military healthcare specialists were ordered to check on every settlement where Romanian troops had quartered.

Captain Radu R. Rosetti, the 12th infantry Company commander of the 34th infantry Regiment noticed how the correspondence service for the (mobilized) army men and their families had very low performance during the campaign; in fact, there was a "total lack of remedies, bandages or fasciae, as well as surgical instruments in the 10th Division and 34th Constanța Regiment of Bulgaria back in 1913"⁴⁹. Professor Dr. Grigore Cantacuzino would later conclude that, given the amount of difficulties at the time, the cholera epidemic had spread throughout the entire region surrounding the Danube except for the Quadrilateral.⁵⁰

When in the Romanian Parliament, Nicolae Iorga said that: "Dobrudja had gradually formed an aggregate, which unfortunately disintegrated back in 1878 and was once again put together in 1913", and that "it meant an unhoped for settling of Romania's political and military hegemony, which is none other than a consequence of the ethnic value combined with the cultural rise of the Romanian people"⁵¹.

⁴⁸ Constantin Tudor, *op. cit.*, p. 84.

⁴⁹ General Radu R. Rosetti, *op. cit.*, pp. 66-67.

⁵⁰ See the more detailed Costin Scurtu, *Studii privind Serviciul sanitar militar român în perioada 1900-1916*, in the New Series, Year VII, Muzeul de Istorie Națională și Arheologie Constanța, Constanța, 2002, pp. 138-139.

⁵¹ N. Iorga, *Discursuri parlamentare*, vol. I, Second part, Bucharest, "Bucovina" Publishing House I.E. Toronțiu, 1939, p. 183.