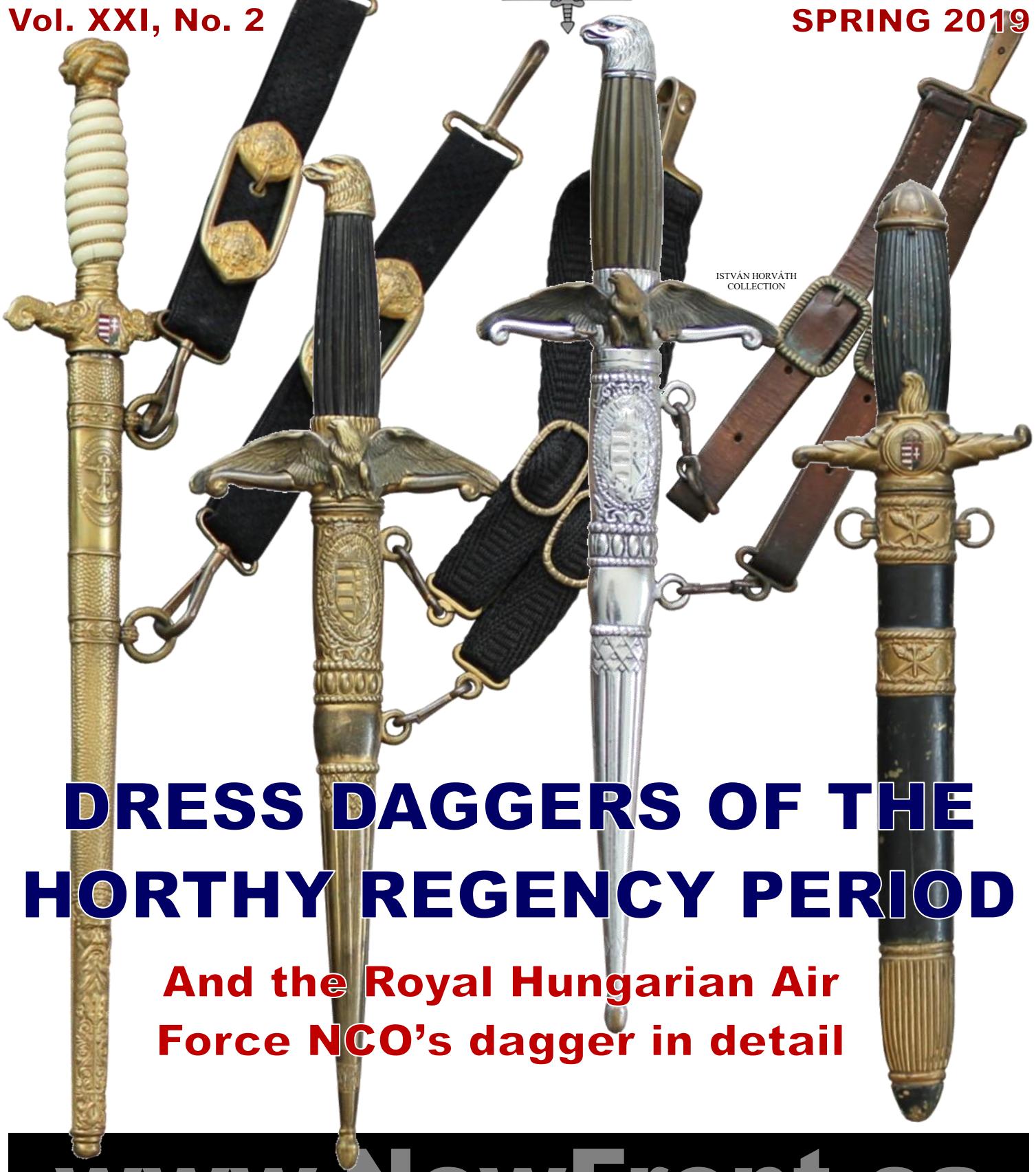


# MAGYAR FRONT.



Vol. XXI, No. 2

SPRING 2019



## DRESS DAGGERS OF THE HORTHY REGENCY PERIOD

And the Royal Hungarian Air  
Force NCO's dagger in detail

[www.NewFront.ca](http://www.NewFront.ca)



## MAGYAR FRONT VOLUME XXI, ISSUE 2 SPRING 2019

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**Peter Czink, Editor-Designer**

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*"To strive, to seek, to find,  
and not to yield."*

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Membership in the  
International Hungarian Military History  
Preservation Society is \$40.00 annually,  
and includes the *Magyar Front*.

The original *Magyar Front* was the  
weekly newspaper of the Frontline

Fighter's Association, and was  
published from the early 1930s until  
the end of the Second World War.

## A note from the Editor

Little has been written about Hungarian dress daggers, and I hope this issue of the *Magyar Front* sheds a some light on the subject. I was also going to include a piece on the recently discovered prototype Royal Hungarian Defence Forces officer's and NCO's General Issue dagger, however, due to unforeseen circumstances, that article will be postponed. I think there is still plenty in this issue to please our readers in spite of that.

I have also touched on the subject of counterfeit daggers. Copies certainly have a legitimate use when originals become out of reach of collectors and even institutions. The quality of copies get better as values increase, and it would take a constantly updated database to keep track of them - a task that would be almost impossible. I think, however, that it's prudent to at least raise awareness of types that never even existed back in the day.

I would like to thank IHMHPS members Tamás Baczoni and Péter v. Laborc for their tireless help and guidance. Also, I am very grateful to István Horváth, György Kókay and Lovice Ullein-Reviczky for their generosity in sharing precious images with us. I have also used some of the excellent photos from Fortepan ([www.fortepan.hu](http://www.fortepan.hu)) - don't forget to browse their website occasionally, as they are constantly adding to their collection.

**P.Cz.**





1934, Hungary, Csenger frontharcos zászló avatás. A felvétel 1934. július 29-én készült.  
TAG: flag / medal / soldier / tableau / uniform +  
ADD TO LIST | DOWNLOAD | FULL SCREEN | DONOR: FÁBIÁN LÁSZLÓ PHOTO ID: 100950 RESULTS: 2 / 2

### IHMHPS 2014-2018 COMMEMORATIVE BADGE (Right) Available by donation\* (any amount is appreciated).



Embroidered insignia  
(Left) \$5.00\* each



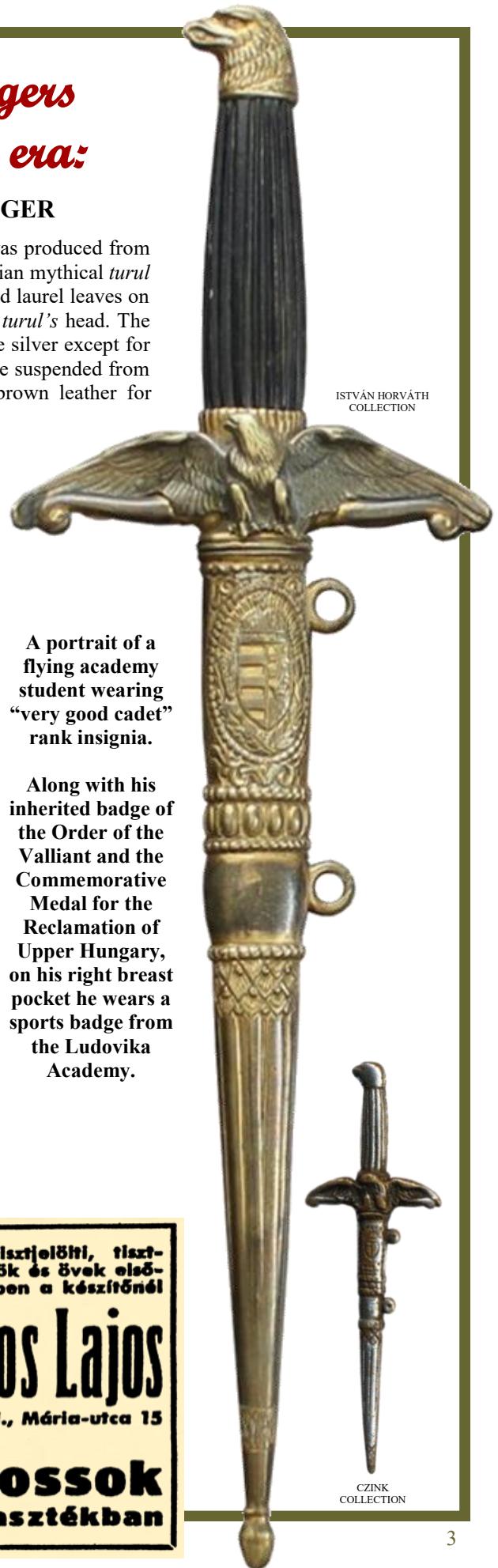
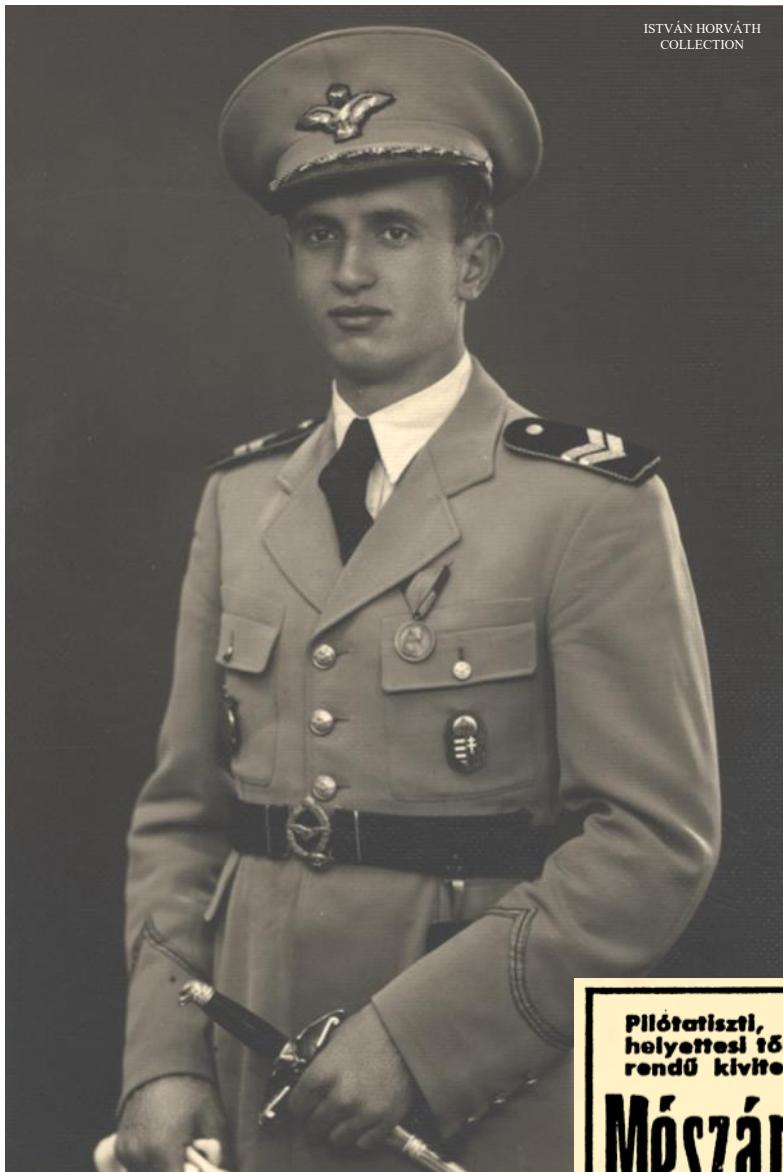
2008-2018 Badge  
(Left) \$10.00\* each

\*Donations and payments can be made via Paypal (czink@shaw.ca). Postage not included.

# *There were five official daggers produced during the Horthy era:*

## **THE ROYAL HUNGARIAN AIR FORCE DAGGER**

The Royal Hungarian Air Force officer's and NCO's dress side-arm was produced from the 1930s until the end of the Second World War. It featured the Hungarian mythical *turul* bird as its cross-guard and the national coat of arms surrounded by oak and laurel leaves on the scabbard. A black hand-grip ended with a metal representation of a *turul*'s head. The metal parts of the officer's version were gold-plated, and the NCO's were silver except for the *turul* on the cross-guard, which had a bronze finish. The daggers were suspended from dagger hangers which were made from black cloth for officers and brown leather for NCOs, and were clipped to matching belts.



Right: A small newspaper ad for the Lajos Mészáros firm which manufactured daggers, belts and miniature dagger brooch pins (one is pictured actual size, far right).



COURTESY OF FORTEPAN (52474)

A religious service in the field attended by Royal Hungarian Air Force officers wearing their dress daggers.



COURTESY OF FORTEPAN (30254)



COURTESY OF FORTEPAN (30256)



COURTESY OF FORTEPAN (30255)

Images of a recently graduated academy cadet wearing his shiny new dress dagger.

## THE RIVER FORCES DAGGER

The wearing of naval dress daggers was already established during the Austro-Hungarian Empire, and the Horthy-era version which came into use in the mid 1920s was of a traditional pattern. From the Turk's head knot pommel to the anchor decoration on the scabbard, this dagger features many time-honoured nautical motifs including dolphins and King Neptune. An enamelled Hungarian coat of arms is featured on the centre of the cross-guard.



GYÖRGY KÓKAY COLLECTION



Black woven cloth hangers with gilded brass buckles matched the officer's belt, and were similar in design to those of many of the world's navies.

ISTVÁN HORVÁTH  
COLLECTION

Regent Admiral Miklós Horthy wearing the Royal Hungarian River Forces dress dagger.



COURTESY OF FORTEPAN (55251)

A high-ranking Royal Hungarian River Forces officer wearing his dress dagger according to regulations.



COURTESY OF FORTEPAN (114925)

The Royal Hungarian River Forces dress dagger being worn with a greatcoat.

## THE DIPLOMATIC OFFICIAL'S DAGGER

This dagger was instituted for Hungarian diplomatic officials in January of 1939, most likely to correspond with the period fashion of the German diplomatic corps. A beautifully patriotic design featuring the Hungarian coat of arms on the scabbard and a representation of the Holy Crown as a pommel, only a few must have ever been produced for the small contingent of uniformed officials. Only one original example is known to exist today.



COURTESY OF THE  
ANTAL ULLEIN-REVICZKY  
FOUNDATION  
PÉTER SZIKITS PHOTO



Foreign Minister Csáky wearing the diplomatic official's dagger.

CZINK COLLECTION

## THE FIRE SERVICE OFFICER'S DAGGER

Hungarian fire brigades had a long tradition of wearing dress side-arms, and this standard type was in use from 1940. It's a very rare item, and perhaps even rarer are photos of it being worn - like this portrait of a very highly decorated Fire Service officer.

The pommel is in the form of a fireman's helmet and fire-fighting motifs decorate the cross-guard and scabbard. A small enamelled Hungarian coat of arms is applied to the centre of the cross-guard, while a large, round release button is placed at the back.

Traditional woven cloth dagger hangers were worn, however, they attach to two rings which are situated on either side of the scabbard's throat.

### Below:

A close-up of the unique pommel made in the shape of a fireman's helmet.



GYÖRGY KÓKAY COLLECTION



ISTVÁN HORVÁTH  
COLLECTION



**Left:**  
**Obverse of the**  
**Fire Service dagger.**

**Right:**  
**The reverse, showing**  
**the large button which**  
**engages the scabbard**  
**release hook.**

ISTVÁN HORVÁTH  
COLLECTION

A rare set of hangers for  
the Fire Service dagger.

NCO's belt  
and buckle.



NCO's dagger  
hangers.

CZINK  
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Sergeant's  
shoulder  
boards.

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COLLECTION



NCO's  
field cap with  
non-regulation  
embroidered  
insignia.

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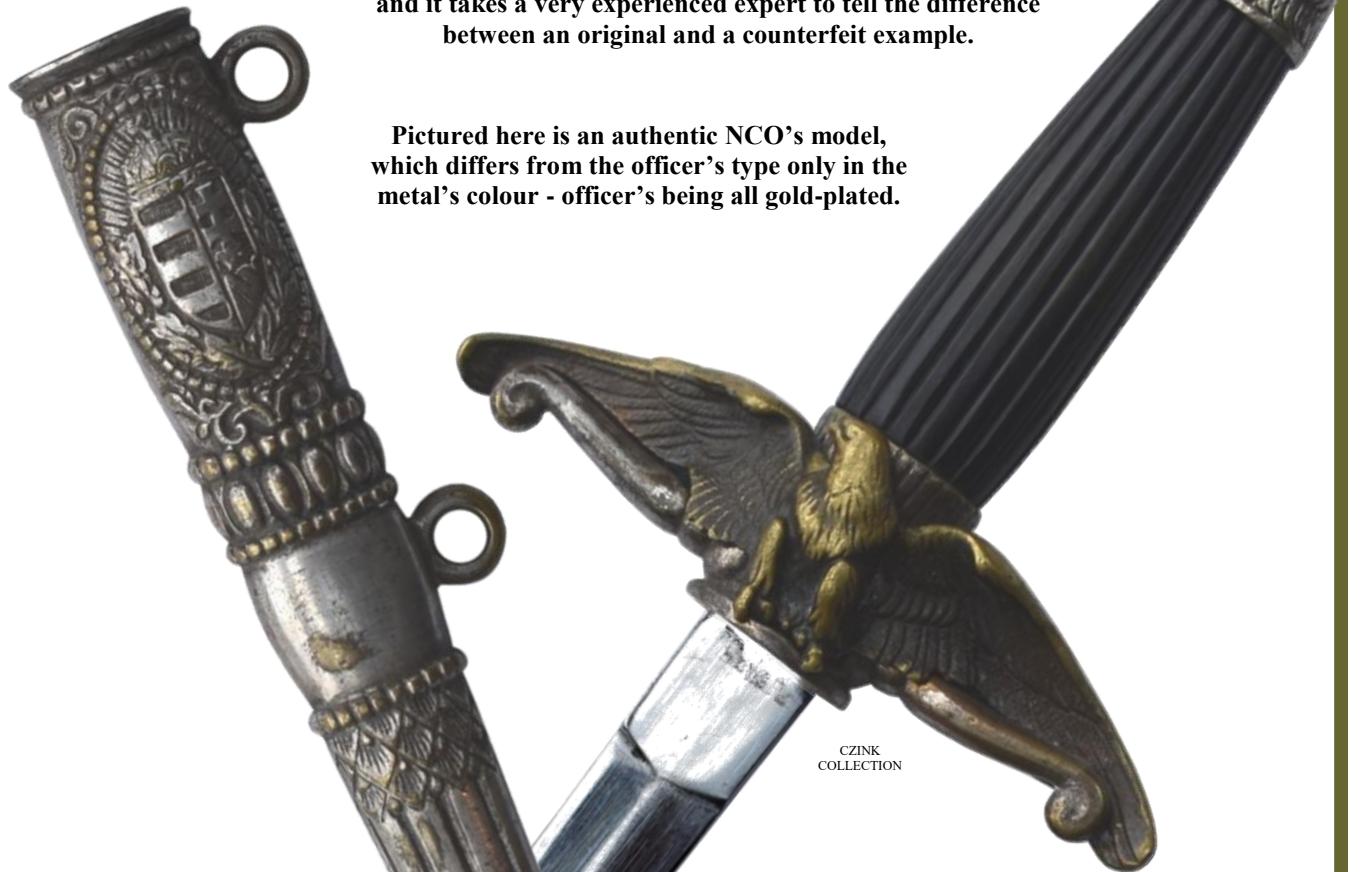
CZINK COLLECTION



# The Air Force Dagger in Detail...

Excellent copies of the Royal Hungarian Air Force dagger have been produced in Hungary (and elsewhere) since the 1960s, and it takes a very experienced expert to tell the difference between an original and a counterfeit example.

Pictured here is an authentic NCO's model, which differs from the officer's type only in the metal's colour - officer's being all gold-plated.



Scabbards were produced in two halves, soldered together. The reverse is similar to the obverse, but without the coat of arms.

More than one firm produced daggers for the Air Force, so variations are to be expected. It's possible that some were customized with things like engraved blades, however, such details are rarely, if ever, encountered on originals; whereas many of the modern copies are decorated with fanciful designs. Often gilded coats of arms and dedications to high ranking personalities make the blades of copies irresistible to unsuspecting collectors.

Some originals carry makers marks, however, some, like this example have none.

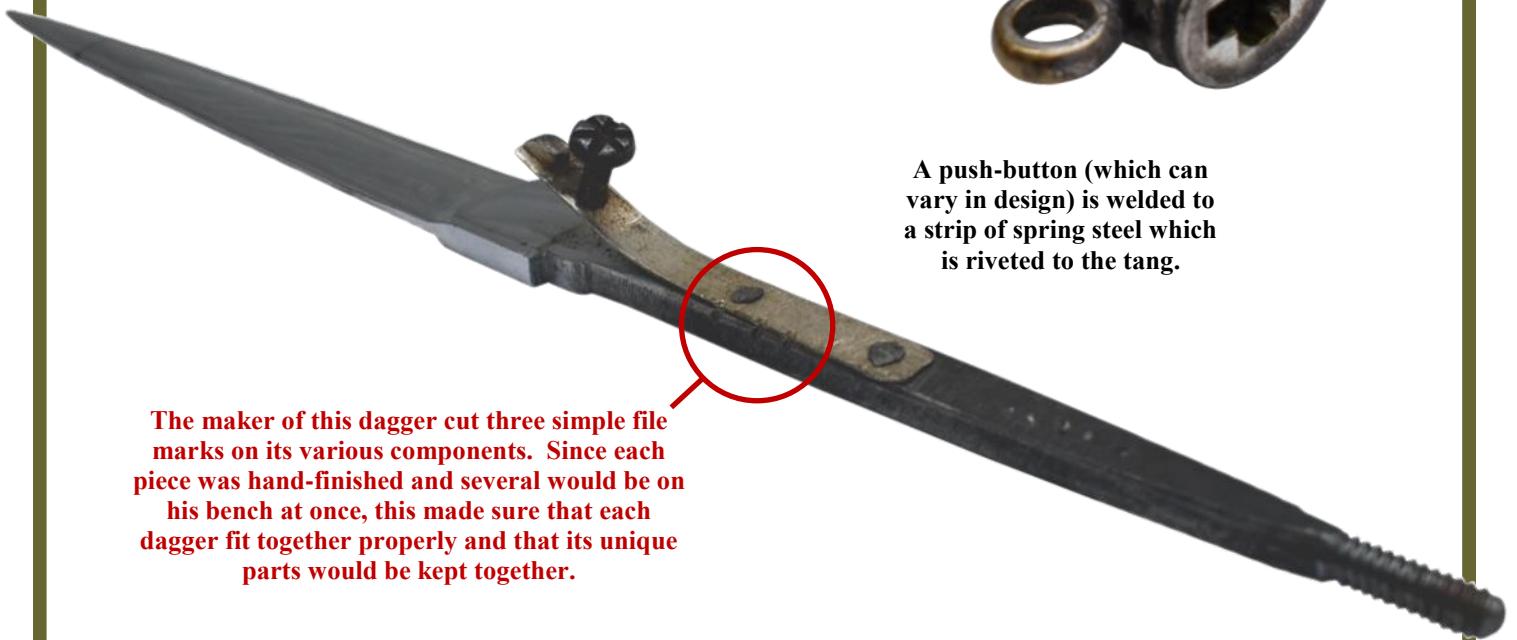
Counterfeit items have been aged artificially for centuries, but it's always worth taking a close look for genuine wear and tear. Original examples in mint condition may exist, but would be extremely rare.





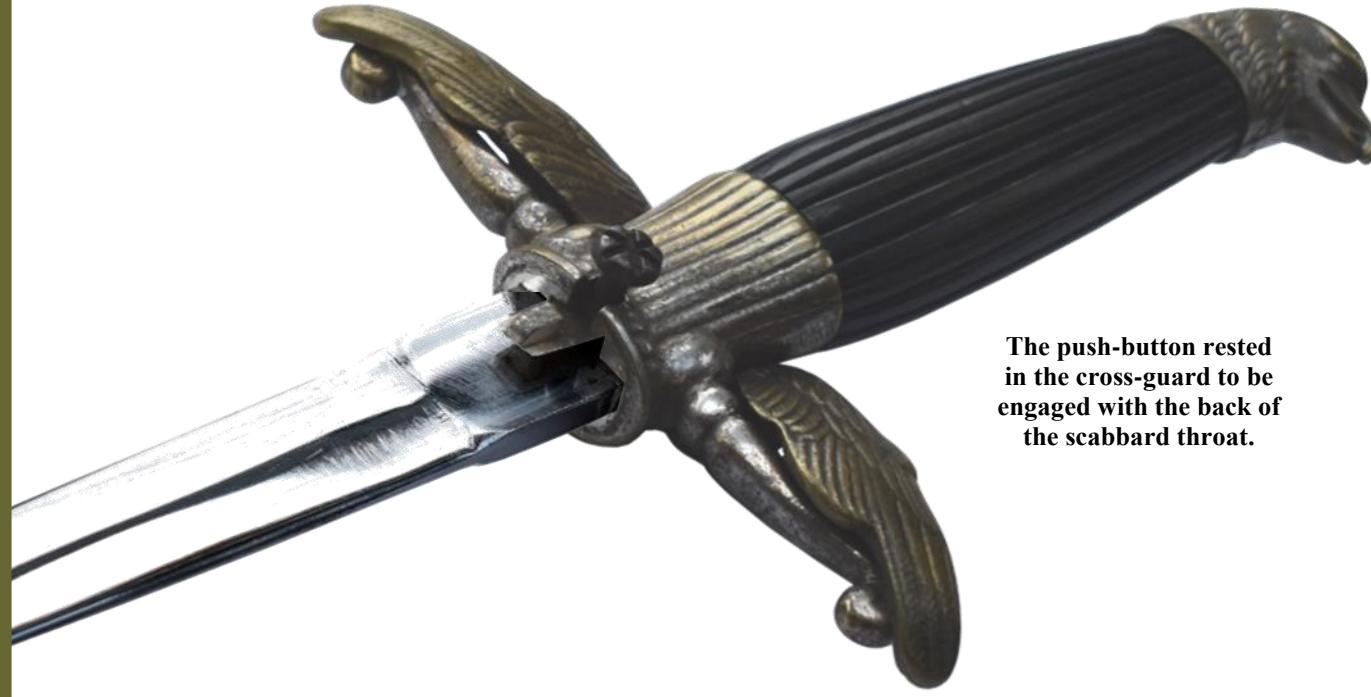
The scabbard throat is designed to accept a locking hook to ensure the dagger doesn't come out accidentally.

The dagger's blade and tang end in a threaded portion which attaches to the pommel.



The maker of this dagger cut three simple file marks on its various components. Since each piece was hand-finished and several would be on his bench at once, this made sure that each dagger fit together properly and that its unique parts would be kept together.

A push-button (which can vary in design) is welded to a strip of spring steel which is riveted to the tang.



The push-button rested in the cross-guard to be engaged with the back of the scabbard throat.



The *turul* head was cast and recessed for the end of the grip. A threaded hole enabled the pommel to be screwed onto the dagger's tang.

NCO's dagger hangers were made of brown leather to match their belts.

This carved and stained hardwood grip (some were made moulded rubber) also bears the three file marks of the maker.



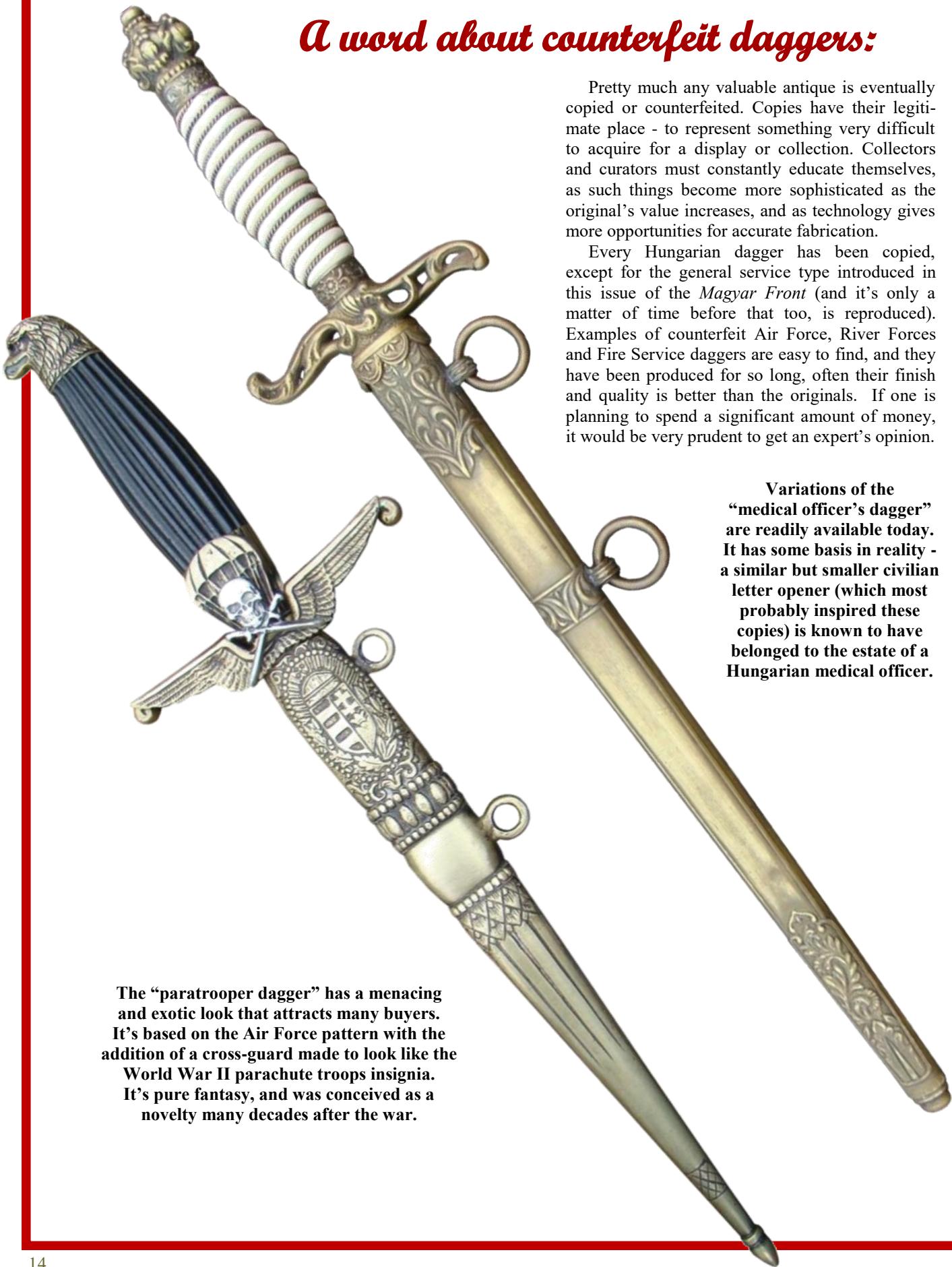
The obverse (above) and reverse (below) of the cross-guard.  
It's made of two components - the *turul* is held in place by a square nut.



A view of the securing nut, along with the maker's three file marks.



## *A word about counterfeit daggers:*



Pretty much any valuable antique is eventually copied or counterfeited. Copies have their legitimate place - to represent something very difficult to acquire for a display or collection. Collectors and curators must constantly educate themselves, as such things become more sophisticated as the original's value increases, and as technology gives more opportunities for accurate fabrication.

Every Hungarian dagger has been copied, except for the general service type introduced in this issue of the *Magyar Front* (and it's only a matter of time before that too, is reproduced). Examples of counterfeit Air Force, River Forces and Fire Service daggers are easy to find, and they have been produced for so long, often their finish and quality is better than the originals. If one is planning to spend a significant amount of money, it would be very prudent to get an expert's opinion.

Variations of the “medical officer’s dagger” are readily available today. It has some basis in reality - a similar but smaller civilian letter opener (which most probably inspired these copies) is known to have belonged to the estate of a Hungarian medical officer.

The “paratrooper dagger” has a menacing and exotic look that attracts many buyers. It’s based on the Air Force pattern with the addition of a cross-guard made to look like the World War II parachute troops insignia. It’s pure fantasy, and was conceived as a novelty many decades after the war.



A variation of the “paratrooper dagger” is the fantasy “Levente Youth dagger” pictured at left.

**Right:**  
Modern, fanciful pieces  
like this Air Force variant  
are commonly sold as  
genuine daggers.

**Left:**  
This dagger is offered under  
different spurious designations,  
but most often it is sold as a  
“Royal Guard dagger.”

One aspect of the counterfeit market that is particularly counterproductive is the manufacture and sale of fantasy daggers - ones that never existed historically. They can be very attractive, but for anyone wishing to have a wartime artifact, they are not going to provide any fulfillment. One of the most commonly encountered fantasy pieces is the “paratrooper dagger.” It’s inspired by the Air Force variety but instead of the *turul* on the cross-guard it sports a version of the parachute troops’ insignia. Such a thing never existed. A “Levente Youth” version is also available.

Other fantasy pieces are the “Royal Guard” and “Medical Officer’s” daggers, along with various Air Force designs that are equally spurious.

# MILITARY TREASURES

Selected Artefacts  
from the Hungarian  
Military History Institute  
and Museum in  
Its Centenary Year

HADTÖRTÉNETI 100  
1918-2018

