

MAGYAR FRONT



Vol. XXV, No. 4

FALL 2023



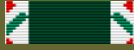
REVEALED IN THE MAGYAR FRONT FOR THE FIRST TIME SINCE WWII

**THE ROYAL HUNGARIAN
DEFENCE FORCES OFFICER'S AND
NCO'S GENERAL ISSUE DAGGER**

**PLUS:
A SELECTION OF
POST-WWII HUNGARIAN
MINISTRY OF DEFENCE
PRESENTATION DAGGERS**



www.NewFront.ca



MAGYAR FRONT VOLUME XXV, ISSUE 4 Fall 2023

Published quarterly by
Peter Czink, Editor-Designer

The New Front:
(International Hungarian Military
History Preservation Society)

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

Peter Czink
Founder/President

Lorraine Weldeman
Vice-President, Webmaster

Péter v. Laborc
Vice-President, Hungary

George Hennessy
Vice-President, Australia

Manfred Winter
Vice-President, Austria

Dr. Gergely Pál Sallay
Historical Consultant, Correspondent

PO Box 74527 Kitsilano PO
Vancouver, British Columbia
V6K 4P4 Canada

czink@shaw.ca
www.NewFront.ca

©2023 All rights reserved

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

For those interested in the history of Hungary's ceremonial edged weapons we have a treat in store - previously unpublished information on the Royal Hungarian Defence Forces Officer's and NCO's General Issue Dagger, presented to the public for the first time. Since only a simple line-drawing of it exists, I asked IHMHPS member Lorraine Weideman to paint her artist's impression, based on the information we have of this unusual sidearm.

Also featured are a selection of post-WWII presentation daggers issued by the Hungarian Ministry of Defence - a more modern subject, however, very little technical or historical information is available about them. Two recipients' (pages 9 to 14) daggers include brief biographies, which are vastly different from the political perspective, and they illustrate the astonishing political and social swings which have taken place in Hungary in the 20th century.

Not surprisingly, IHMHPS members Tamás Baczoni, Péter v. Laborc, and Gergely Sallay have helped me with my endless questions.

2024 will be the twenty-fifth year of publication of the *Magyar Front*. We have published an enormous amount of material over the years, most of which was presented to the public in for the very first time - including many unique discoveries we can take credit for.

I would like to call upon all IHMHPS members to consider writing articles for next year's silver jubilee - I intend to feature your personal stories in all four 2024 issues.

P.Cz.



CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS

**IHMHPS members are invited to
share their stories for our silver jubilee.**

Tell Magyar Front readers about your favourite Hungarian military history related item (or group of items) – something in your collection that has great significance to you, or a meaningful family heirloom. It can be anything from a rare antique to a photograph of a revered ancestor.

Write your story, or just provide notes (and we'll help you with editing), and photograph your pieces. There is no limit on length, and the more images the better.

Be sure to include a photograph of yourself and any bio information you would like to share. Your thoughts on, and experiences with the Magyar Front and the IHMHPS are most welcome. (Keep in mind that issues of the Magyar Front are also published online and are accessible by the public.)

The Magyar Front will feature these stories throughout 2024, our 25th year of publication – this is our opportunity to raise awareness about personally significant artifacts and our dedication to historical preservation.

Submissions can be made as Word documents or via email.

Digital images should be as high resolution as possible.

Text and files should be sent to czink@shaw.ca.



Our Badge of Honour Recipient András Huszár: Keeping us mindful of past heroism.



“Dedicated to historical preservation” is an applicable description of András Huszár – a Hungarian native whose list of successful awareness-raising projects is too lengthy to list here. His specialty is bringing to light the stories of Hungarian military heroes and ensuring that they are appropriately memorialized.

In 2019, together with a friend (Kolos Kövesdi) of his, András initiated the funding of a memorial plaque commemorating Captain József Barankay, recipient of the Hungarian Gold Medal of Bravery for Officers. The memorial was inaugurated in Bácsalmás, on October 5th, 2019.

Keeping with the theme of Hungarian Gold Medal of Bravery for Officers recipients, next, Captain György Debródy was memorialized. A commemorative plaque was unveiled on May 29th, 2022 in Lajoskomárom, Fejér County (above). The local mayor, Debródy’s family, and enthusiasts were present. As a result of yet another initiative, funds were collected for a commemorative plaque for air force First Lieutenant László Molnár. The memorial was inaugurated on August 14th, 2022, in Sopron.

András launched his fourth enterprise to raise money for a memorial plaque for hussar Second Lieutenant Tamás Marjay. The memorial was unveiled on December 2nd, 2023, in Pápateszér. A speech was made by Lieutenant Colonel Roland Maruzs, Deputy Commander of the Hungarian Military History Institute and Museum.

In 2022, he launched a regular series of military history lectures - “The Way of Heroes” in his hometown of Nagykanizsa, in cooperation with the local library. The aim of the series of talks is to share knowledge in the field of military history with local citizens, especially the youth, as well as to commemorate Hungarian heroes (in particular those from Zala County and Nagykanizsa) from various historical eras.

Hungary has established a program for the public to nominate exceptional people, uniquely Hungarian products, places of cultural significance, literature, etc. for the status of “national treasure.” András’ efforts have successfully added a number of Hungarian military heroes to their official lists.

Another subject that receives his close attention are military graves. Over the years, he has visited the burial plots of Hungarian military heroes and has written requests to the National Heritage Institute to initiate the official preservation of their graves – he has been successful in several cases. He also regularly visits and maintains a number of these memorials.

One of András Huszár’s goals is to visit the final resting places of all the recipients of the Hungarian Gold Medal of Bravery for Officers and to pay homage to them. So far, he has been to most of them and hopes to include those of János Bozsoki in Zurich, Switzerland, and László Duska, who rests in Calgary, Canada.



The Royal Hungarian Defence Forces Officer's and NCO's General Issue Dagger

by Peter Czink

The development of edged weapons are a significant aspect of military history, and swords, bayonets, and daggers have always been very popular with collectors too. I assumed that the documentation of the handful of official Hungarian military daggers was complete (thanks, in part, to our discovery of the diplomatic official's type). However, not so long ago plans and details (some type-written correspondence with notations and a line drawing) of a formerly unknown "Royal Hungarian Defence Forces Officer's and NCO's general issue dagger" came to light among some forgotten documents at the Hungarian Military Archives. One more mention of was found in the pre-1945, third volume of *Royal Hungarian Military Technical Institute Infantry Weapons (Magyar Királyi Haditechnikai Intézet Gyalogsági fegyverzet)*.

A few odd documents can easily be overlooked - the Hungarian Military Archives holds so many, that if stacked together they would make a neat pile more than seven kilometres high, and they preserve around nine and a half million microfilms and seventeen thousand military-related film rolls as well.

By the Second World War, many European armed forces were issuing dress daggers in lieu of traditional ceremonial swords, and on November 19th, 1942, Admiral Horthy approved the idea of a dress dagger for officers and NCOs of the ground forces (the air and river forces already had their own unique daggers). The concept was intended for a sidearm that could be issued to all branches of the armed forces, however, the air and river forces were against the idea. Most of the preliminary details have been lost, and the pieces that remain are somewhat contradictory - on October 13th, 1941 the proposed sidearm was referred to as an "officer's dagger," on November 12th, 1942 it was called the "officer's, military official's and NCO's dagger," in December of that year it was called the "unified army dagger" and then the "unified dagger," and finally on July 16th, 1943 it became simply the "parade dagger."

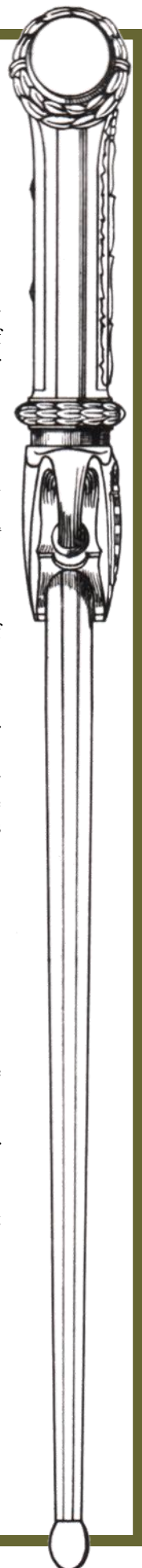
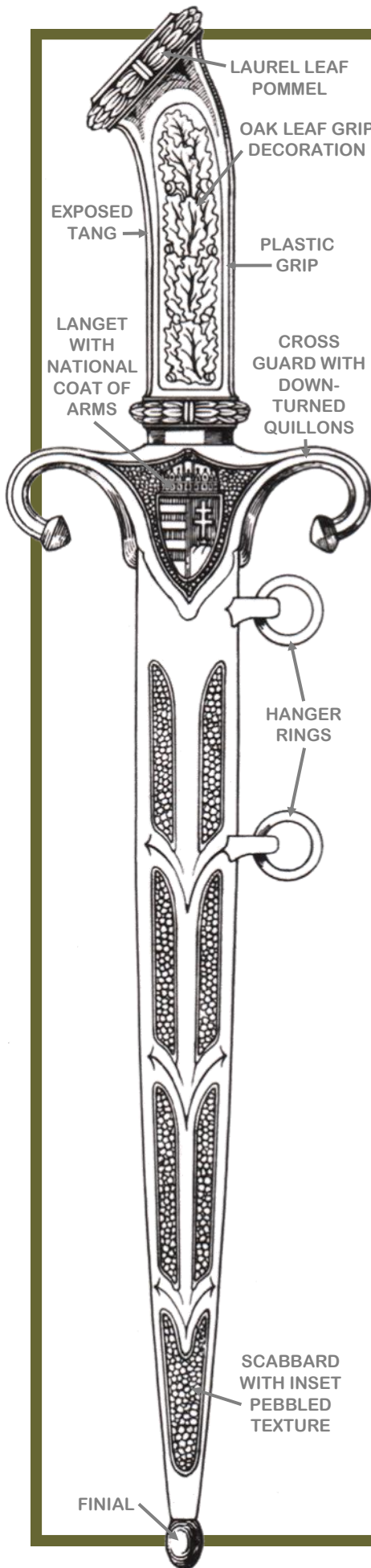
According to the existing documents, in October of 1941 the Uniform and Equipment Department of the Ministry of Defence sent a prototype dagger to their Infantry and Artillery Weapons Department, however, its details are unknown.

In the meantime, the Uniform and Equipment Department of the MoD commissioned the Hachspacher Edged Weapons Factory to produce another prototype to their design specifications, however, it was deemed unsatisfactory and was not approved, and the firm ceased to be involved in the project. While these events took place, it was decided that it would be prudent to put the project on hold until after the war when raw material like copper, nickel, and chrome would be more readily available.

Dialogue regarding design and prototypes continued. The plan remained to produce a general issue dagger for all branches of service, including the air and river forces, and the design would be opened to competition. There was even discussion about issuing such a dress sidearm to the officials of the Levente Youth organization.

During a meeting regarding the prototype dagger on August 7th, 1941, the Uniform and Equipment Department commented that "[The dagger] should have a darker grip, a longer cross guard, and a matte-finished scabbard," and that "it should be worn on a belt similar to those of the air and

Continued on page 6...



WATERCOLOUR
ILLUSTRATIONS BY
LORRAINE WEIDEMAN

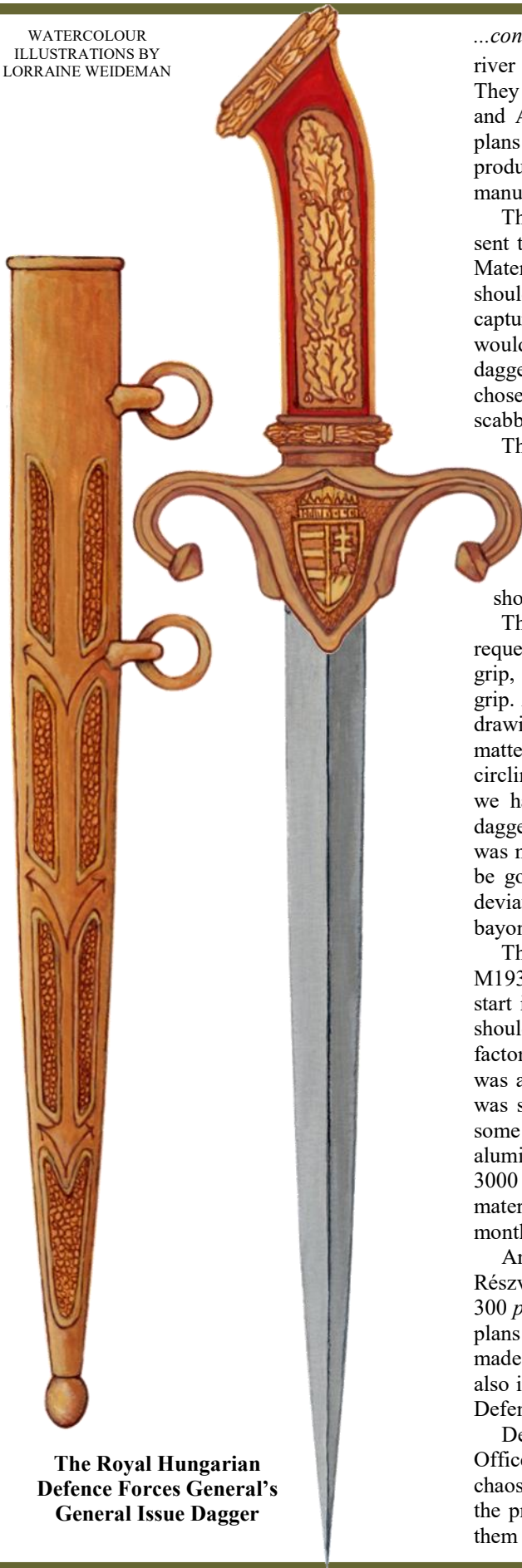
Left:
Artist's impression of
the intended plain grip
of the NCO's dagger.



**The Royal Hungarian
Defence Forces NCO's
General Issue Dagger**



**The Royal Hungarian
Defence Forces Officer's
General Issue Dagger**



**The Royal Hungarian
Defence Forces General's
General Issue Dagger**

...continued from page 4

river forces, but in a field brown colour and with a suitable belt buckle.” They also specified that a gold *portepée* should be provided. The Infantry and Artillery Weapons Department was tasked with producing the final plans for the dagger and the Central Clothing Depot was ordered to produce the cloth belt and metal buckle. The braid and embroidery manufacturer of András Bende was asked to make a prototype *portepée*.

The drawing, along with information on the material requirements were sent to the War Technical Institute, and the Military Equipment and War Material Department. These two departments stated that the daggers should be made of aluminum rather than steel – another idea was to use captured bronze war booty (the initial consideration for 50,000 daggers would have required 12,500kg of bronze). It was decided to make the daggers’ grips from plastic (a variety with the tradename of “futurite” was chosen) instead of the hard rubber previously used for such grips, and the scabbard was to be stamped out of galvanized sheet steel.

The Fegyver és Gépgyár Részvénytársaság, or FÉG (Metalware, Weapons, and Machinery Inc.) firm produced a new prototype, but there were still some problems – the areas which were meant to have a smooth finish weren’t smooth enough, the grip was made from wood and was ill fitting, and the dagger was generally not well balanced. FÉG explained that the problems were due to their short deadline.

The Infantry and Artillery Weapons Department then made some new requests. They wanted the NCO’s dagger to be silver coloured with a black grip, and the officer’s should also be silver with silver laurel leaves on its grip. Although the original documents specify “laurel leaves,” the existing drawing clearly illustrates oak leaves on the dagger’s grip. To confuse matters for historians today, the original illustration includes laurel leaves circling the pommel and the base of the grip – for our modern illustrations we have chosen to keep the oak leaves on the general’s and officer’s daggers, and deleted them from the NCO’s (we can only hypothesize it was meant to be made this way). For generals, the dagger was intended to be gold plated with a red plastic grip. Interestingly, the dagger design deviates considerably from tradition – the grip being more like that of a bayonet, with an exposed tang.

The cost of the dagger was worked out to be 30 to 35 *pengő* (the M1935 NCO’s bayonet cost 31.19 *pengő* at that time). Production was to start in four months, however, the Minister of Defence ordered that they should only begin to produce them after the opening of a new aluminum factory that was to take place in mid-1943. The Manfred Weiss Factory was able to provide aluminum which contained iron contaminants, and it was suggested that it could be used for the production of the daggers if some pure aluminum were to be added to the mix. FÉG required 0.3kg of aluminum per dagger, which meant they needed 15,000 kg (plus another 3000 to cover material loss) to produce 50,000 pieces. The amount of other materials was negligible, and they could fill the order in under eight months.

Another prototype was ordered from the Mike Tivadar Rézárúgyár Részvénytársaság (Tivadar Mike Copperware factory Inc.) firm which cost 300 *pengő*. On March 16th, 1943, the War Technical Institute finalized the plans for production of the dagger and the construction drawings were also made after the prototype was approved on the 10th of June. The documents also include a note dated October 8th, 1943 that states that the Minister of Defence has postponed the production of the daggers.

Despite all the plans, the Royal Hungarian Defence Forces Army Officer’s and NCO’s General Issue Dagger was never mass-produced. The chaos in Hungary at the end of the war concluded any further discussion of the project. A total of three different prototypes were made, but none of them survived the war.

The overall length of
dagger and scabbard
is 42.7cm.

The Royal Hungarian
Defence Forces General
Issue Dagger for officers
(left), generals (centre),
and NCOs (right) in
their scabbards.

WATERCOLOUR
ILLUSTRATIONS BY
LORRAINE WEIDEMAN

Hungarian Military Daggers after the Second World War, and Presentation Daggers of the Ministry of Defence

by Peter Czink

Left: Period regulation drawing of the M1945 “general issue” Dress Dagger.

Right: Current reproduction based on the very few known originals.

Following World War II, and the abandonment of the proposed Defence Forces General Issue Dagger, a new design was conceived and produced, albeit in very limited numbers. The cross guard was in the shape of the Hungarian *turul* bird and the scabbard throat was decorated with the crown-less “Kossuth” style coat of arms. The period drawing at left shows the pommel to be a Hungarian crown, however, the handful of known originals have plain, rounded pommels.

It was designated the M1945 Dress Dagger and meant for all branches of service, although today it is often mis-identified as a strictly air force sidearm (the post-war use of the *turul* was a nod to Hungarian tradition rather than necessarily an aviation motif).

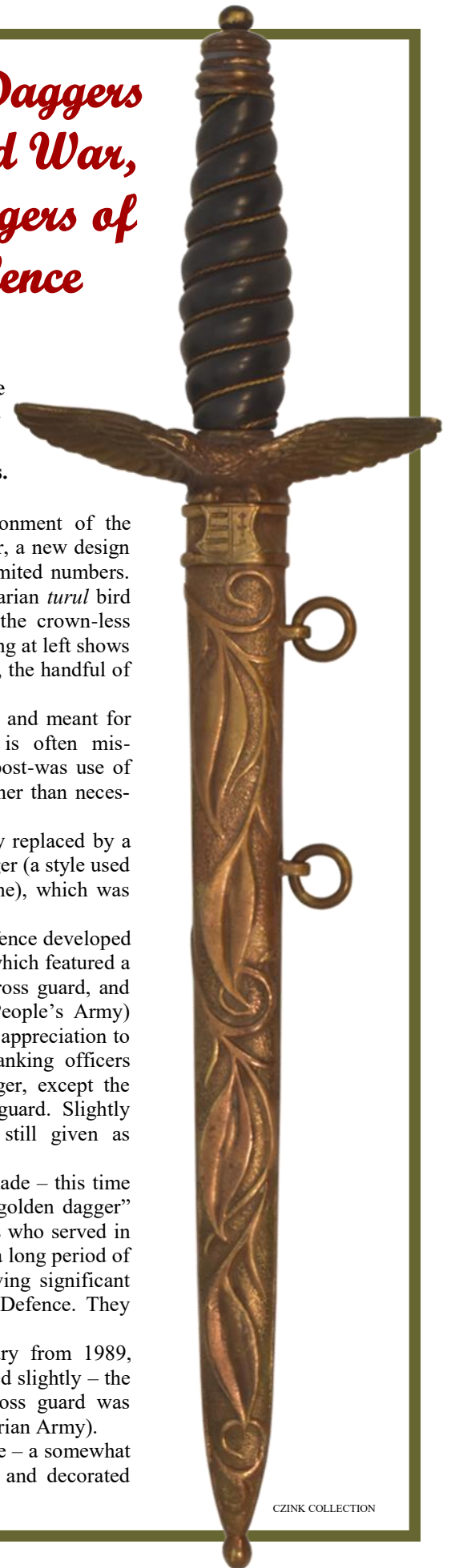
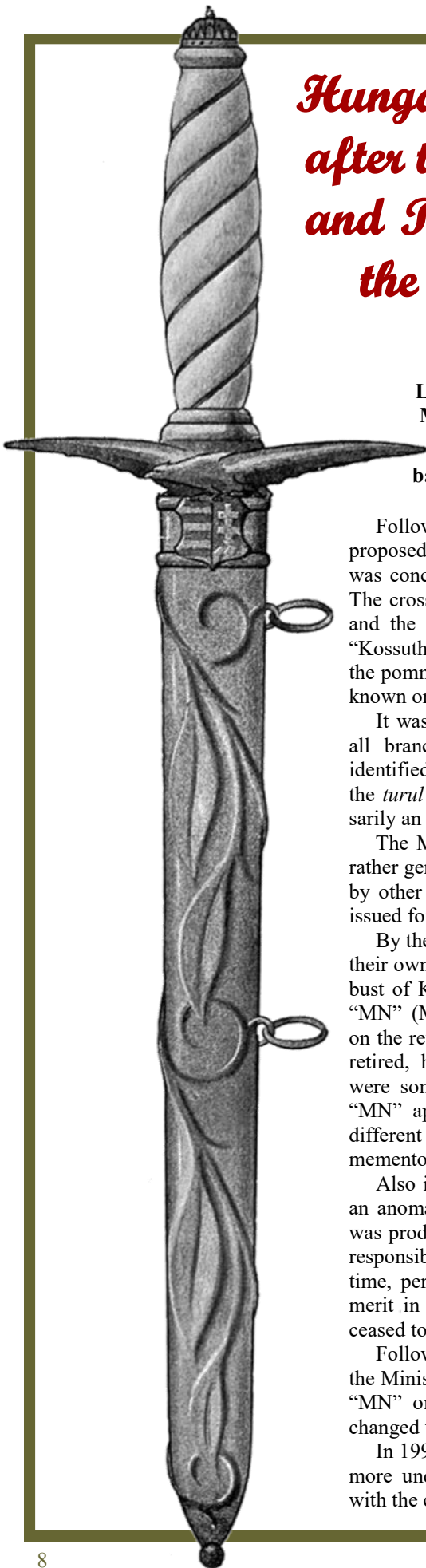
The M1945 Dress Dagger was very quickly replaced by a rather generic version of the Soviet parade dagger (a style used by other Warsaw Pact armed forces at the time), which was issued for the next couple of decades.

By the 1970s the Hungarian Ministry of Defence developed their own unique and ornate “honour dagger” which featured a bust of King Stephen on the obverse of the cross guard, and “MN” (Magyar Néphadsereg, or Hungarian People’s Army) on the reverse. These were given as tokens of appreciation to retired, high-ranking officers. Serving high-ranking officers were sometimes awarded with the same dagger, except the “MN” appeared on both sides of the cross guard. Slightly different versions of this same design are still given as mementos today.

Also in the 1970s, another deviation was made – this time an anomalous, highly elaborate presentation “golden dagger” was produced to reward “generals and colonels who served in responsible positions and as commanders over a long period of time, performing outstanding work and achieving significant merit in the development of the Ministry of Defence. They ceased to be issued in 1992.

Following the political changes in Hungary from 1989, the Ministry of Defence honour daggers changed slightly – the “MN” on the obverse and reverse of the cross guard was changed to “MH” (Magyar Hadsereg, or Hungarian Army).

In 1992 a new presentation dagger was made – a somewhat more understated design, it’s of finer quality and decorated with the current Hungarian coat of arms.



CZINK COLLECTION

The 1970s Ministry of Defence Honour Dagger

Hungarian People's
Army Honour Dagger
presented to Colonel
Sándor Strahl.



NEMZETI EMLÉKEZET BIZOTTSÁGA

Above:
Lt. Colonel Sándor Strahl
in the late 1950s.

Left:
Obverse of the dagger.
The “MN” (Magyar
Néphadsereg) shield
is featured on both
sides of the cross
guard.

Sándor Strahl (March 26th, 1919 – September 11th, 1995) was conscripted into the labour service in 1942 and sent to the Russian Front where, in 1943 he was taken prisoner. He chose to become a partisan and was eventually returned to Hungary in 1945.

Strahl entered the Kossuth Academy and was a 1st Lieutenant by 1947. He continued his military education at the Stalin Military and Political Academy, took the Zrínyi Officer's Interpreter Preparatory Course, attended the Lenin Military Political Academy in Moscow, and by 1957 he had been promoted to the rank of colonel.

He spent much of his career as a political and educational officer in the Hungarian People's Army, and retired on December 1st, 1976.

Below: Enlarged detail of the engraved inscription on the blade of Strahl's honour dagger (presented to him on his retirement): “To Comrade Colonel Sándor Strahl, December 1st, 1976, from the Minister of Defence.”

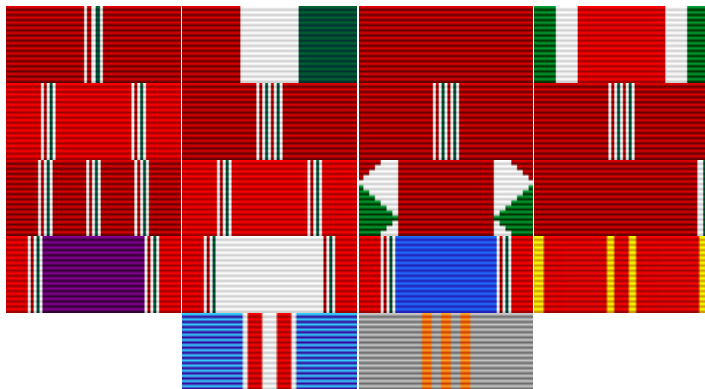


CZINK COLLECTION



CZINK COLLECTION

Above:
An unissued, blank award document for the Hungarian People's Army Honour Dagger. It features the coat of arms of the Hungarian People's Republic which was in use from 1957 until 1990.



A representation of the ribbons of Sándor Strahl's orders, decorations, and medals earned from 1947 to 1976:

Socialist Homeland Order of Merit (*Szocialista Hazáért Érdemrend*), Workers' and Peasants' Rule Medal (*Munkás - Paraszt Hatalomért Emlékérem*), Order of Merit of the Red Star (*Vörös Csillag Érdemrend*), Order of Merit of Hungarian Freedom, Bronze Grade (*Magyar Szabadság Érdemrend bronz fokozata*), Silver Merit Medal of the Hungarian People's Republic (*Magyar Népköztársasági Érdemérem ezüst fokozata*), Distinguished Service Order (*Kiváló Szolgálatért Érdemrend*), Distinguished Service Medal (*Kiváló Szolgálatért Érdemérem*), Meritorious Service Medal (*Szolgálati Érdemérem*), Merit Medal of the Hungarian People's Republic, Fifth Grade (*Magyar Népköztársasági Érdemérem V. fokozata*), Commemorative Medal of Honour for 1848-1849 (*48-as Dízérem*), Liberation Jubilee Medal (*Felszabadulási Jubileumi Emlékérem*), Meritorious Service Medal after 30 years (*Szolgálati Érdemérem 30 év után*), Meritorious Service Medal after 25 years (*Szolgálati Érdemérem 25 év után*), Meritorious Service Medal after 20 years (*Szolgálati Érdemérem 20 év után*), Soviet Lenin Commemorative Medal (*Szovjet Lenin Emlékérem*), Soviet 50 Year Anniversary of the Armed Forces Medal (*"50 éves a Szovjetunió Fegyveres Ereje" Emlékérem*), and the East German Brotherhood in Arms Gold Medal (*NDK "Fegyverbarátságért Érem" arany fokozata*).



Above: Enlarged detail of the engraved inscription on the blade of Strahl's gold honour dagger (presented to him on his 50th birthday): "To Comrade Colonel Sándor Strahl, March 26th, 1969, from the Minister of Defence."

The 1970s Ministry of Defence Golden Dagger

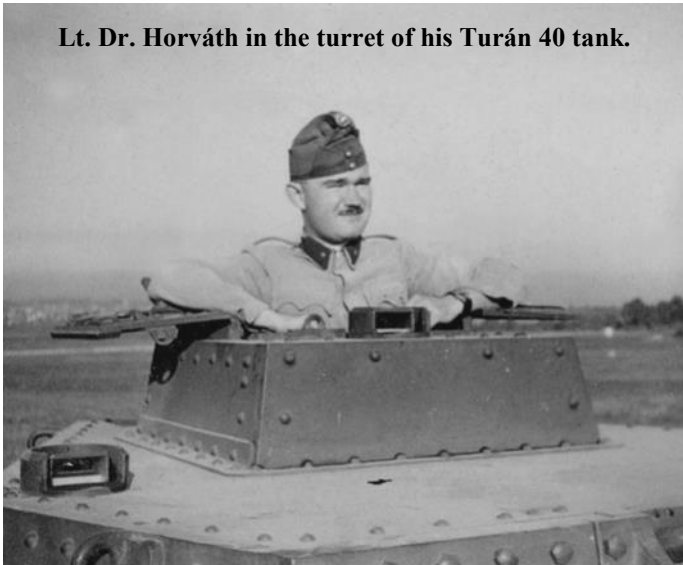
Hungarian
Ministry of
Defence Gold
Honour Dagger
presented to
Sándor Strahl.

CZINK COLLECTION

Below:
Detail of the underside of the
cross guard showing the outstanding
workmanship of its finely
engraved decoration.

The overall length of dagger
and scabbard is 30cm.

Lt. Dr. Horváth in the turret of his Turán 40 tank.



CZINK COLLECTION

Dr. Mihály Horváth was born in Zagreb, Croatia on June 30th, 1915. His family moved to Hungary in 1920, where he attended school in Győr. He later studied law at the Péter Páymány University in Budapest, earning a PhD in law in 1937. He joined the Hungarian Defence Forces, and in the armoured branch of service participated in the Reclamation of Upper Hungary, Transylvania, and Southern Hungary.

He was sent to the Russian front in June of 1944, and was captured a month later. He was a prisoner of war until March 1st, 1945 and was returned to Hungary. He joined the Szeged 5th Division which was intended to work with the Red Army to fight against the Germans. The war ended, and he was accepted by Hungarian Police where he was promoted to the rank of captain, however, he was later arrested for his wartime affiliations and sentenced to fifteen years imprisonment. He was eventually pardoned and left Hungary for Paris in 1949.

*Continued on
page 14...*



CZINK COLLECTION

**Post 1989
Hungarian Army
Honour Dagger awarded
by the Ministry of Defence,
fitted in its original
presentation case.**

Dr. HORVÁTH MIHÁLY T. ŐRNAGYNAK
1991. OKTÓBER 23.
A HONVÉDELMI MINISZTERTŐL

The Post-1989 Ministry of Defence Honour Dagger

Above: Enlarged detail of the engraved inscription on the blade of Horváth's honour dagger (presented to him long after he served): "To Reserve Major Dr. Mihály Horváth, October 23rd, 1991, from the Minister of Defence."

Hungarian Army
Honour Dagger presented to Major
Dr. Mihály Horváth, as a token of
appreciation of his former service.

Right:
Obverse of the dagger. The "MH"
(Magyar Hadsereg) shield is featured
on both sides of the cross guard.

Below:
First Lieutenant Horváth's
field cap with blue *topán* of the
"Rapid" (Motorized) Troops.

CZINK
COLLECTION

The overall length of dagger
and scabbard is 40.5cm.

CZINK COLLECTION

...continued from page 12

Dr. Horváth joined the MHBK (Magyar Harcosok Bajtársi Közössége – Federation of Hungarian Veterans) and emigrated to Canada in 1951. In 1963 he moved to the United States and earned a degree in library science, later working at the Catholic University and the McKeldin Library in Maryland. He and his wife Margit involved themselves in many Hungarian organizations and dedicated their spare time to the Hungarian cause – presenting folk art displays, academic lectures, travelling and permanent exhibitions, and producing educational material. Dr. Horváth passed away on September 16th, 2008.



Left: Lieutenant Mihály Horváth around 1940, following the reclamation of Transylvania. He wears the Company Officer's Badge, also pictured here.

The small aluminum plaque above bears his name and rank.

Below: His post-WWII police captain's shoulder straps.



Above: Hand-painted sign: "Station Director - Dr. Mihály Horváth, Police Captain"

CZINK COLLECTION

The 1992 Ministry of Defence Honour Dagger

The overall length of dagger
and scabbard is 42cm.

The 1992 Ministry of Defence
Honour Dagger has a black leather-
covered scabbard and black grip.
The fittings are finely-made and gilded.
The blade is plain, and diamond in section.

Below and at left:
Motifs used on the
presentation document.



CZINK COLLECTION

Support and promote our cause!

IHMHPS membership pin
(also miniature Badge of Honour) \$5.00



IHMHPS
Insignia in gold
or silver \$7.00



IHMHPS
embroidered patch
\$5.00

2008 - 2018
Commemorative
Badge in gold or
silver \$7.50

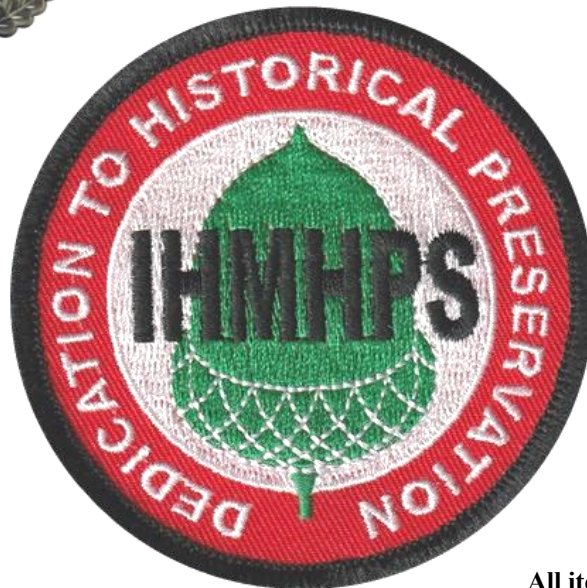


IHMHPS
2014 - 2018
Commemorative
Badge \$20.00

IHMHPS Awards
(Extras or replacements only available
to those who have been awarded them.)
Price on request



Magyar Front pins
in gold or bronze
\$5.00



Recognition Project
embroidered patch
\$5.00

All items shown
actual size.
(Prices do not
include shipping.)



IHMHPS
2014 - 2018
embroidered patch
\$5.00



IHMHPS Ribbon Bars
(Only available to those who have been awarded them.)
Price on request