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The Teimer-Rétay Adventure



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The New Front:
(International Hungarian Military
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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

Readers of the *Magyar Front* are in for a treat this issue. IHMHPS member Joe Gyokeri's featured group of militaria is spectacular to say the least, however, its meticulous research and loving preservation shines even brighter than these lustrous decorations and gold braid. Groups such as this don't turn up every day, and sadly they seem to be split up and lost over time; but we can all hope to discover gems now and again.

Perseverance and a little luck are helpful too, and while we search for the hidden treasure we can learn a great deal from even the most common antique item. I also know from experience that it's not necessarily the value or rarity of something in my collection that excites me most - it's the pursuit of historical knowledge and understanding that's the most rewarding. Some hard work (a lot of hard work in Joe's case) can yield enormous satisfaction - indeed, treasure and adventure are all around us. *P.Cz*



1. Silver spectacle case. 2. Oszkar (Teimer) v. Retay's [OTR] general's dress belt. 3. OTR's general's greatcoat collar tabs. 4. Postcard of General Istvan Stadler [IS]. 5. Rank star (most likely OTR's). 6. Post-WWI photo of IS and presumably his wife Franciska Weingartner. 7. Emperor Franz Josef 60-year Jubilee Medal (most likely OTR's). 8. Silver and bronze engraved plaque presented to OTR of the 51st Field Artillery Regiment. 9. Silver cigarette case (most likely OTR's). 10. A clipping with a caption that reads: "Vitez Lieutenant General Istvan Stadler of Monte San Michele, 39th Infantry Brigade." 11. Order of Vitez Badge. 12. Wallet dated 1854. 13. Fan depicting Austro-Hungarian and German leaders. 14. IS's Order of the Iron Crown with wartime wreath and swords, commander's grade. 15. IS's Austrian Long Service Cross, II Class. 16. Leather wallet dated 1938 (most likely OTR's). 16. National Defense Cross awarded to OTR in 1944. 17. OTR's brass spurs. 18. The Emperor's Troops' Cross (most likely OTR's). 19. Wound Medal (most likely OTR's). 20. Group photo - OTR sits 4th from left. 21. 1912-1913 Balkan War Cross belonging to IS. 22. Medal group that belonged to OTR. 23. 51st Field Artillery Regiment flag ribbon. 24. OTR's field cap badge. 25. German Iron Cross, II Class (most likely OTR's). 26. National Defense Cross awarded to OTR in 1944. 27. OTR's medal mounting bar. 28. Order of Vitez Badge. 29. OTR's field-grade officer's dress belt. 30. OTR's sword knot. 31. Emperor Franz Josef 50-year Jubilee Medal (most likely OTR's). 32. Brown leather wallet. 33. Silver game case with miniature dice. 34. OTR's artillery cartridge pouch. 35. Lieutenant Commander Sathy's ID locket. 36. Identification papers carried inside the ID locket. 37. Hungarian WWI Commemorative Medal (most likely OTR's).

**Lt. General Monte San
Michele István v. Stadler
and his wife.**

GYOKERI PHOTO/
COLLECTION



The Teimer-Rétay Adventure

by Joseph Gyokeri

For this issue I am very proud and excited to share the World War I military grouping belonging to Major General Oszkár (Teimer) v. Rétay and Lieutenant General Monte San Michele István v. Stadler. Researching the items pictured on these pages was quite perplexing to say the least. The details concerning these two gentlemen and their personal military memorabilia was accomplished through on-and-off-again research over the past four years. This research would not have been possible without the help of several IHMHP members who helped me with many questions.

The story of this collection begins in Iraq where I was deployed in 2010-2011 with my U.S. Army Aeromedical Evacuation (MEDEVAC) platoon. Back then I was a first lieutenant and an HH-60M Black Hawk helicopter pilot serving as a section leader with the duty of supervising a handful of warrant officer helicopter pilots. The shifts were 24-48 hours on duty, going on missions outside the base only when urgent calls for medical evacuation were called in. Long and often lackluster days with no missions meant many hours spent on the half-rate internet that we had access to in our living quarters. The soldiers of the World Wars would no doubt be amazed at the kinds of luxuries that technology has afforded modern day combat soldiers. Having just started out seriously collecting Hungarian and Austrian military items a few years prior, I continuously searched the internet

for militaria and good deals. My interest unquestionably came from my own Hungarian heritage - my grandfather served in the Royal Hungarian Army during the Second World War and his father served in the Austro-Hungarian Army during the First World War. I never knew my great-grandfather, but I was very close with my grandfather. I suppose collecting allows me to stay connected to my grandfather who passed away in 1997.

It was sometime in February 2011 that I came across what looked to be a fascinating and rare lot on Ebay consisting of medals and decorations, and a wide-variety of other military and personal items from an officer in the Austro-Hungarian Army. I had never seen such a complete grouping before and rarely does the opportunity arise to have a chance at owning one. The title of this Ebay auction stated the entire set had belonged to a Lieutenant Colonel Oszkár Teimer. Seeing the photographs of the contents in the collection, I instantly recognized that the tarnished, once-gold embroidered bullion greatcoat collar tabs, belonged to that of a general officer. I knew this collection had to belong to a prominent commander and chalked up the title referring to the man as a lieutenant colonel to a misinformed seller.

As many do, I waited until the last minutes of the auction to place a bid. With my luck, the internet was giving me errors each time I attempted a bid, and with only a few minutes left, I decided to shut down my computer and restart.

Oszkár (Teimer) Rétay general officer's gold bullion embroidered greatcoat collar tabs. (shown actual size)



GYOKERI PHOTO / COLLECTION

I was getting very nervous and started sweating. My heart pounded as I began thinking I had lost the grouping for good. After restarting my computer, I was able to get back on the internet and with my fingers crossed, I made a successful bid with only a few seconds to spare. I had won the auction! I let out a large sigh of relief thinking of how close I had come to losing these wonderful items.

The real torture immediately began because I still had over three months to go until I could go home on my two-week mid-tour leave. Once home, going through the items was like finding a long lost treasure. It soon became apparent that the items did not all belong to the same gentleman, and was going to take some research to figure everything out. Once I returned home from my deployment for good, I reached out to the seller of the items to find out if there was

any additional information.

The seller stated that Lt. Colonel Oszkár Teimer's great-granddaughter was Rose-Ann Lynch, a retired U.S. Marine Corps lieutenant colonel. Fortunately I was able to get in contact with Rose-Ann and I found out that she had additional items that belonged to her great-grandfather. Unable to find any museums interested in her family's items she had sold the collection to a military dealer where she lived in Virginia, hoping that a serious collector would appreciate the items.

The items in the set I purchased included multiple WWI awards and decorations, post WWI-era general's greatcoat collar tabs with gold bullion embroidery, a few photographs, a general officer's gold dress belt, a field-grade officer's dress belt, a gold sword knot, a large artillery plaque with

Continued on page 7...

Teimer sits fourth from left with his legs crossed.



GYOKERI COLLECTION

Facing page: Silver and bronze plaque presented to then Lieutenant Colonel Oszkár Teimer featuring his officers' engraved signatures. It reads: "To our beloved regimental commander Oszkár Teimer from the officers of the Royal Hungarian 51st Field Artillery Regiment on the occasion of the regiment's first anniversary, April 14th, 1917. Shown smaller than actual size of 22.9cm x 33.4cm.



1916 SZERETETTEL ÉZREDPARANCSONOKUKNAK 1917
 TEIMER OSZKÁR
 ALEZREDES ÚRNAK
 A M KIR 51 HONVÉD TÁBORI TARACKOS EZRED
 TISZTIKARA
 AZ EZRED EGY ÉVES FENNÁLLÁSA ALKALMÁBÓL
 1917 ÁPRILIS 14.

<i>Csomoritsky ds</i>	<i>Grafz ds</i>	<i>Berusföh</i>	<i>Schweidrich ds</i>
<i>Wagner ds</i>	<i>Weiland ds</i>	<i>Mary ds</i>	<i>Zambich ds</i>
<i>Fornovics ds</i>	<i>Wimmler ds</i>	<i>Kantner ds</i>	<i>Wittmann ds</i>
<i>Wagner ds</i>	<i>Lipp ds</i>	<i>Wagner ds</i>	<i>Winkler ds</i>
<i>Székely ds</i>	<i>Jurcsák ds</i>	<i>Günther ds</i>	<i>Wiesner ds</i>
<i>Hörner ds</i>	<i>Lakos ds</i>	<i>Slye Lajos</i>	<i>Szabó ds</i>
<i>Frass ds</i>	<i>Francia ds</i>	<i>Kling ds</i>	<i>Busch ds</i>
<i>Stankó ds</i>	<i>Tejcs ds</i>	<i>Lidy ds</i>	<i>Barth ds</i>
<i>Tócs ds</i>	<i>Julló ds</i>	<i>Lejcsy ds</i>	<i>Polgár ds</i>
<i>Jakó ds</i>	<i>Radó ds</i>	<i>Mészáros ds</i>	<i>Almásy ds</i>
<i>Wagner ds</i>	<i>Jurcsák ds</i>	<i>Schwarz ds</i>	

A patriotic fan depicting prominent Austro-Hungarian military leaders and their signatures believed to have belonged to Oszkár (Teimer) Rétay. Such items were sold to raise funds for war-relief (*kriegsfürsorge*) organizations. (shown actual size)



GYOKERI PHOTO /
COLLECTION

Enlarged detail of
the official stamp on
the back of the fan.

...continued from page 4

multiple engraved signatures, a large Hungarian streamer with gold script, a silver and brass decorative cartridge pouch, brass spurs, and additional personal effects.

Included in the collection were photographs of two distinct officers. One postcard-sized portrait print pictured a decorated lieutenant general in his dress uniform along with a printed note that read “*vitész monte san michelei Stadler István altábornagy.*” An oval gold-painted wooden frame pictured the same general officer in his *attila* along with what is presumed to be his wife Franciska Weingartner. Another large undated WWI-era photograph showed a group of officers, most likely the command and staff of a battalion or regimental unit. Below the photograph in neat cursive was written the name of each soldier in black ink. Oszkár Teimer is shown seated fourth from left looking away from the photographer; his name at the bottom simply reads “Teimer O.” In pencil on the back, someone more recently had written in pencil, “4th from bottom row (seated) Réтай Oszkár (Teimer O.) Rose-Ann’s great grandfather.”

Also included in the collection was a WWII-era Hungarian military dog tag with serial number 1816-99-0055, belonging to *Törzsalkapitány* (Lieutenant Commander) Kornél Sáthy of the Royal Hungarian River Forces born in 1899. After looking at the documents inside, it appeared that Kornél Sáthy was married to an Alice Réтай, and he was the son of István v. Stadler and Franciska Weingartner. With all of the different names floating around in the collection, the greatest task was connecting the dots as to how all the names were related. The biggest mystery was solving who exactly Oszkár Teimer and Oszkár v. Réтай were. Records for Oszkár Teimer seemed to indicate that his highest rank was lieutenant colonel, and he was not a recipient of the Order of Vitéz. I therefore assumed that the general officer items as well as most of the decorations and medals must have belonged to *vitész monte san michelei Stadler István altábornagy.*

Over the next several years of sending bits of information to members of the IHMHPs, they assisted in looking up records and helping me slowly piece together the information. Rose-Ann, the great granddaughter of Oszkár Teimer was able to explain the family connections further. It seemed that Oszkár Teimer and Oszkár v. Réтай were indeed the same man. For those Hungarians with non-Hungarian surnames, I learned that it became popular to “Hungarianize” their family-name during the inter-war period. Even more, because the requirements of the Order of Vitéz only allowed Hungarian nationals to receive the award, many recipients of non-Hungarian decent were encouraged or pressured to “Hungarianize” their surnames. It is for this reason that I believe Oszkár Teimer took his wife’s Hungarian maiden name (her full name was Illona von Réтай) in 1921. Oszkár was awarded the Order of Vitéz in 1922. The same question existed as to why *vitész monte san michelei Sáthy Kornél törzsalkapitány* had a different surname than his father. This is still a mystery, but he perhaps “Hungarianized” his name as well.

It wasn’t until 2013 that I learned that records for Oszkár Réтай indicated that he was breveted to the rank of major

general and retired in 1923. According to the records under the name Oszkár Réтай, he was a recipient of the Order of Vitéz (1922). Piecing together the relationship of the many individuals was no easy task. Having deciphered the information on Kornél Sáthy’s dog tag, I relayed the information to General Oszkár Réтай’s great granddaughter Rose-Ann. She replied back, “*I didn’t realize that Grandpa Kornél was István Stadler’s son... Kornél was my father’s stepfather. I knew both Kornél and Alice [Réтай]. They settled in Lakewood, Ohio and lived well into their late 80s.*”

The two generals were connected through the marriage of their children to one another. Rose-Ann went on to explain that, “*Oszkár (Teimer) Réтай was married to Ilona Réтай (My father said it was Ilona von Réтай). Their [only] daughter was Alice. Alice married Albert Wix – I was told that he was a wealthy Dutch man that she didn’t want to marry. Their son was Louis Odiló Wix, who was my father. When my father came to the states in the 1950s, they accidentally inverted his name to Odiló Louis Wix... Alice divorced Albert Wix early in the marriage and married a Hungarian [Lieutenant] Commander, Kornél Sáthy.*”

Little was found about Oszkár (Teimer) v. Réтай until I found an online article in August 2015 written in Hungarian about General Réтай. The article written by László Galambos and published in *Magyar Szó* in the July 26, 2014 issue, describes how an elderly man named Sándor Kelemen was taking care of the grave of General Oszkár (Teimer) v. Réтай and was looking for someone or some organization to take on the task of managing the grave. The grave lies in Novi Sad, Serbia. Sándor Kelemen contacted the author of this particular article in 2005 to discuss the matter of keeping up the maintenance of General Réтай’s grave. Mr. Kelemen was the childhood friend of Odiló Wix, the grandson of General Réтай. László Galambos wrote:

“*Our long conversation [in 2005] ended in the visit of the military cemetery (which can be found at the back of the Futaki Road Roman Catholic cemetery) and [Sándor Kelemen] kindly showed me the grave of Royal Hungarian General Oszkár Réтай which lies close to the grave and monument of the Royal Yugoslavian Air Force officers. At that time, the name of Réтай could be seen on the stone cross, today it can only be felt by the fingers.*”

The article highlights a theme that we have seen in previous issues of the *Magyar Front* illustrating how the graves of Hungarian soldiers are being left uncared for as the family and friends that once knew these brave men die off. This is universal to soldiers and veterans of all nations. The younger generations now seem so far removed from their forefathers that the vast majority will never know the great hardships the men and women of the great World Wars endured.

László Galambos, the author of the aforementioned article, went on to write a small biography of General Oszkár (Teimer) v. Réтай using several resources. He stated, “*Eventually, I managed to write General Réтай’s biography with the help of the Military History Archives, Odiló Wix (the full name of General Réтай’s grandson), Sándor Kelemen, the Name of Mary Church in Novi Sad and the Novi Sad*

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Obverse (left) and reverse (below) of the Order of the Iron Crown
Commander's Grade with War Decoration and Swords that belonged to
Lieutenant General vitéz Monte San Michele István Stadler (see page 3).

This, along with an Officer's Long Service Cross II Class and a 1912-1913 Balkan War
Cross are the only decorations known to survive today that belonged to the General.

(medals shown actual size)



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COLLECTION

Right:
1914 Iron Cross
II Class presumed
to have belonged to
General Oszkár
(Teimer) v. Réтай.



Teimer's Knight's
Cross of the Order of Leopold
(the first decoration in his
medal group) is unique -
The central medallion on its
reverse bears a custom
engraving commemorating
the Officer's Corps of the
Royal Hungarian 51st Field
Artillery Regiment.

An enlarged image of the
medallion is shown at left.



GYOKERI PHOTO /
COLLECTION

paper, the *Reggeli Újság* (or *Morning News*).”

The story of General (Teimer) v. Rétay is that of a career Army officer. When World War I erupted in 1914, Oszkár (Teimer) v. Rétay had already been in the Army 26 years, but it seems that the First World War would be the highlight and peak of his career in which he displayed his true leadership abilities. His short biography as written by László Galambos is as follows:

“General Oszkár v. Rétay was born Oszkár Teimer, on May 29th, 1870 in Mórítzföld, Temes County. His father, Rudolf Teimer, was also an officer – first lieutenant (engineer). Oszkár Rétay attended the Temesvár Piarist Grammar School. He started his career at the artillery regiment of the Temesvár Corps, which he joined in 1888 as a volunteer. As a young officer he served with the mounted artillery division of Kisszentmiklós. Meanwhile, he graduated as an instructor at the riding school in Vienna, which he attended between 1896 and 1898. He married Ilona Rétay, daughter of Sándor Rétay de Hahód (manager of the Temesvár post office), in 1901. Oszkár Teimer took on the maiden name of his wife in 1921 and used it until his death.

In 1912, when the Royal Hungarian [A]rtillery was established, he served with the Royal Hungarian 8th Artillery Regiment of Lugos as captain. At the outbreak of the First World War he went to the battlefield as division commander of the Kassa Mounted Artillery Regiment and he fought in the Russian, Romanian and Italian battlefields. He played a major role in the Battle of Limanowa with his regiment and later in the liberation of Transylvania as commander of the 51st Field Artillery Regiment - in the Battle of Vád the whole regiment fought under his command. It was the successful intervention of the artillery that won this battle, as it opened the way to the re-occupation of Brassó and to the Gorge of Tömös which connects important routes in the Southern Carpathians. General Rétay spent 52 months in service in the Great War, in which he performed his duty outstandingly and set an example to his soldiers with his heroic conduct. For his brave and heroic conduct he was awarded the Knight's Cross of the Order of Leopold with Swords, the 3rd Class of the Military Merit Cross twice (in Hungarian: “Katonai Érdemkereszt”), the Wound Medal, the Bronze and Silver

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A period photo of painter Franz Graf posing with Lieutenant Colonel Oszkár v. Teimer and his freshly painted oil on canvas portrait. The painting is marked: “In the field 1917. April - May, Franz Graf.”

Military Merit Medals, known as the “Signum Laudis.” As the recognition of his gallantry and exceptional conduct, Emperor and King Francis Joseph I bestowed the 3rd Class of the Order of the Iron Crown with War Decoration and Swords on Major Oszkár Teimer of the Royal Hungarian 3rd Field Cannon Regiment (published in the *Military Gazette* on 10 May 1915). In the same year, the German emperor awarded the 2nd Class of the Iron Cross to Major Oszkár Teimer (*Military Gazette*, 17 November 1915). In October,

1918, after the outbreak of the Hungarian revolution, he became commander of the artillery camp in Hajmáskér and saved enormous quantities of munitions for the Hungarian [A]rmy during the period of the Hungarian Soviet Republic and the Romanian occupation. Later, he was appointed as military commander of Veszprém County and commander of the artillery regiment of the Szombathely district as colonel. In 1923, he retired as major general. He moved to Budapest with his family, later, in the fall of 1941 they moved to Novi Sad, since his only child, Alice and her husband, Royal Hungarian [Lieutenant] Commander Kornél Sáthy saw service in Novi Sad. The following piece of news was published on 9 January 1944 in the *Reggeli Újság* (Volume 25, Issue 6, page 1): “Oszkár

Rétay, member of the Order of Vitéz, Royal Hungarian Major General (Ret.) passed away after long suffering [from 25 years of complications from war injuries] at the age of 73, on Saturday morning in Novi Sad. Funeral service will be performed on 10 January, at 15.00 in the Novi Sad hospital chapel. Frontline Fighters and members of the Order of Vitéz will take part at the service.

The *Reggeli Újság* published an article entitled “Major General Oszkár Vitéz Réтай (Ret.) was buried with military honors on 11 January 1944” (Volume 25, Issue 7, page 2): “The valiant soldier of the First World War was buried on Monday afternoon in Novi Sad. A funeral march was held for Major General (Ret.) Oszkár v. Réтай from the hospital chapel to the Catholic cemetery. The coffin placed on a gun carriage hid the mortal remains of an outstandingly valiant artillery officer who fought in many great battles. Many participated in the officer's delegation which was led by Commodore Ödön Trunkwalter. Also, the frontline fighters and members of the Order of Vitéz of Novi Sad attended the

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obsequies to say a last goodbye to the deceased major general.” . . . According to the church note he had the Last Sacraments and his funeral service was held by Field Chaplain István Szenthelyi Molnár.

Sándor Kelemen, the caretaker of the grave, was friends with Odiló Wix, the grandson of General Réтай, and knew the General personally. Mr. Kelemen described the General as “a friendly, simple and genial man.” Most of the Réтай family immigrated to the United States after the Second World War to escape communist rule, and so Kelemen took on the caretaking of the grave after the Réтай family had moved away. László Galambos concluded his article with a plea stating that, “Perhaps, the Hungarian Military History Museum or the Ministry of Defence would be eager to support the grave of a Royal Hungarian major general so as to save it for the future generations. This would serve the interest of the Novi Sad Hungarian community and all Hungarian people.”

After I got in contact with Rose-Ann Lynch, the daughter of Odiló Wix and great-granddaughter of General Réтай, she informed me that she had additional documents, photographs, and some items that belonged to the military grouping as well. Due to busy schedules and living far enough apart (I live in Connecticut and Rose-Ann lives in Virginia), we were unable to meet up so that I could see the additional items. She recently had a chance to take photographs of the remaining items consisting of several original photographs, documents, and certificates that belonged to General Réтай. Among the documents there was a certificate giving Oszkár Teimer a commission as a Lieutenant in the Reserves, a certificate promoting him to the rank of Captain, and award certificates for the Order of Leopold Knight’s

Cross with war decoration and swords, and the Military Merit Knight’s Cross with wartime wreath and swords.

Of all the unique and valuable items within this collection, the Order of Leopold III Class with war decoration and swords is most interesting. The decoration is all intact and the original ribbon has hardly faded through the years, although at some point over the years the wartime laurel wreath decoration was bent away from the crown. In a gentle attempt to restore the wreath back to its original position, I quickly found that I would need to apply a great amount of pressure as the metal arms that had been bent away did not want to move easily. I decided not to continue the attempt as I surely did not want to break this very unique piece, and so it remains in the condition that I received it in. On the reverse of the cross, instead of the typical golden wreath encircling the inscription of “OPES REGUM COR-DA SUBDITORUM” meaning “the deeds of the King win the hearts of his subjects,” there was a brass disc with an engraving that read: EMLÉZÉSŰL, BRASSÓ-PREDEÁL-RA, 1916 X-XI, A. M. KIR. 51 HONVÉD TÁB., TARACK EZRED, TISZTIKARA. This translates to: TO COMMEMORATE [The fights at] BRASSÓ AND PREDEÁL, OCTOBER – NOVEMBER 1916, THE OFFICERS’ CORPS OF THE ROYAL HUNGARIAN 51ST FIELD ARTILLERY REGIMENT.

Over the past four years, I have slowly been able to separate the medals and decorations out as having belonged to either General (Teimer) v. Réтай or to General v. Stadler. It has not been easy and I have flip-flopped my conclusions on some of the medals multiple times as to who the actual owner was. I do not have solid evidence as to which General owned several of the medals, but I can make good assertions based on what I do have. I know for a fact that the Order of

Ceremonial cartridge box for officers of the mounted Royal Hungarian armed forces. The Austrian model featured the double eagle badge, while this type carried the Hungarian version of the royal cipher (“1FJ”) and crown.



GYOKERI PHOTO/
COLLECTION

The two Order of Vitéz insignia in the collection. The badge on the left has an unusual fastening solution on its reverse, while the one on the right has the more common double prongs. The badge at right has “241 SZ.” engraved on it, however, it does not match any of the certificate or archival numbers for any of the gentlemen involved with this grouping of militaria. (shown actual size)



GYOKERI PHOTOS/
COLLECTION

Leopold, the Military Merit Cross, the Silver and Bronze Signum Laudis Medals on wartime ribbons, and the Hungarian Regency's National Defense Cross belonged to General (Teimer) v. Rétay as there is specific evidence tying the medals to him through documentation and photographs. Documentation lists General (Teimer) v. Rétay as having been awarded the National Defense Cross in 1944, although it stands to reason that he most likely would have been awarded the Cross posthumously because of his death on January 8, 1944. I also know for a fact that the Order of the Iron Crown in the Commander's Grade, the Austrian Long Service Cross II Class, and the 1912-1913 Balkan War Cross belonged to General v. Stadler due to the simple fact that General (Teimer) v. Rétay was never awarded these medals. Finally there are the medals that are in the collection that were awarded to both gentlemen, and so it is impossible to assign these medals to their proper owners. All I can do is make my best assumptions. For the simple reason that the collection came from the great-granddaughter of General (Teimer) v. Rétay and the majority of the items in the collection belonged to General (Teimer) v. Rétay, I strongly believe the remaining medals belonged to him.

As for the two Orders of Vitéz in the collection, I cannot venture any guesses as to which gentleman owned which badge. One of the badges is unique in the fact that it has a single prong on the back. The top of the prong is hinged and is held down at the bottom by a small screw with a handle. This leads me to believe that it is an early 1921-1922 version of the badge and most likely belonged to one of the Generals rather than to Kornél Sáthy (the son of General v. Stadler who inherited the title of "Vitéz" from his father). My own feeling is that this badge belonged to General (Teimer) v. Rétay, but it cannot be proven. The other Order of Vitéz badge has the more commonly seen double-prong on the back. This badge is inscribed with "241 SZ" on the reverse side. Unfortunately, this number does not match any of the official archival or certificate numbers associated with these men. And without the original Order of Vitéz award diplomas, I am unable to investigate this badge further as to

which gentleman owned this badge.

Other items in the collection presumed to belong to General Oszkár (Teimer) v. Rétay are an Austrian field grade officer's yellow and gold ceremonial belt, a Hungarian general officer's gold ceremonial belt, general officer's gold-embroidered greatcoat collar tabs, an artillery officer's maroon-leather ceremonial cartridge pouch with silvered-brass cover and gilded-brass trim, an officer's gold sword knot, a set of brass spurs, and a single silver embroidered six-pointed star. A red, white, and green commemoration banner with gold script refers to General (Teimer) v. Rétay's 51st Field Artillery Regiment. Several silver cigarette cases, cigarette holders with blackened ends, a silver spectacle case, and various leather wallets and other personal items complete this wonderful collection.

Researching historical items from another country with an unfamiliar language poses many challenges to say the least. What little information I have found about General István v. Stadler comes from my fellow colleagues in the IHMHPs, the limited English information on the internet, and several Hungarian articles I was able to dig up online that had to be translated. General István v. Stadler was born in 1862, although much of the detail concerning his life up to WWI seems to be scarce. At some point he married Franciska Weingarten and in 1899 their son was born. It is assumed that his name would have been Kornél Stadler and for an unknown reason perhaps changed it to Kornél Sáthy in later years. As a Colonel, István Stadler commanded the 3rd Infantry Regiment at the outset of the War in 1914, then moved up to be the commander of the 39th Infantry Brigade. There is conflicting data as to Stadler's rank at the outset of the war. Online sources state he was a colonel and regimental commander in 1914, while a portrait made after the war shows Stadler as a major wearing several of his WWI wartime decorations. If the portrait is accurate, it means that Stadler was at least a major at the outset of the war, and probably did not become a colonel and regimental commander until sometime after 1914.

As a general officer, he took command of the 20th Infan-



Oszkár Teimer with his horse Nordstar.

LYNCH COLLECTION

try Division towards the end of the War. His military service took him to the frontlines on the Russian and Italian fronts during the War. His leadership and fighting prowess at the slopes of Monte San Michele on the Italian front perhaps earned him the name “*monte san michelei Stadler István*” as it would be said in Hungarian. After the War, he was awarded the Order of Vitéz in 1921, and later died in 1941. His dedication and love for his soldiers is well reflected in this commemorative regimental book introduction:

Fellow Soldiers!

Let me greet the former 4th (Nagyvárad) Regiment and Reserve Units' Comradely Association, which depicts its war memories with pure loyalty and exceptional devotion in this book. As their ex-superior, I had had the opportunity to observe their military activity and to judge their war achievements for a long time, therefore I can safely state that the soldiers from Bihar County always fully met with all the military requirements by their honest conduct and they can be considered among those valiant soldiers who lived and died for the glory of the Hungarian motherland. This book is about heroic combats that all give proof of their highly developed inherent military merits. I can safely state that their self-denying and strenuous conduct worked miracles in crucial situations. For instance, in the Battle of Weretyszowo, in which almost on an entirely open terrain, against the superiority of the Russian infantry, in the fiercest

gunfire they endured for long hours, in the hope of the success of their attack launched against the left wing of the enemy. Their hope was fulfilled. It was their self-sacrifice and strong perseverance that earned them victory. I also saw them fighting on the cliffs of the Krn and Monte San Michele – exhausted by the hardships originating from the unfamiliar terrain but always committed to the salvation of their homeland and never doubting the ultimate Hungarian victory.

Let me mention a few more good war memories of mine in connection with the soldiers of the 4th (Nagyvárad) Regiment. The military conduct of the sometimes quite great number of foreign soldiers never gave cause for any real complaints. I personally think that it was the encouraging conduct of the Hungarian officers and other ranks that had such a marvelous impact on them – as if the glorious example set by the ancient Bihar valour urged the foreign fellow-soldiers to fight fearlessly, too. I wish from all my heart that this book raises the interest of not only the former members of this glorious regiment, but also of those who wish to learn and draw conclusions from written historical events.

May the flame of valour blaze in the hearts of every Hungarian!

Budapest, 6 September 1934

*István vitéz Stadler of Monte San Michele,
Lieutenant-General (ret.),*

formerly Commander of the 39th Infantry Brigade, (later of the 20th Infantry Division.)

An interesting 2013 article in Hungarian involving Colonel Stadler turned up on the internet as I continued my research from the Nagy Háború (Great War) Editorial Office. The article, worth mentioning, was translated and is entitled, "The Suspicious Clean-Shaven Soldiers." The short article speaks to the uneasiness of the Austrian and Hungarian commanders with regard to the loyalties of the soldiers of their Army that came from the different ends of the Empire and from all different nationalities, including Italians. The article begins:

In August 1915, Commander of the 19/IV (Pécs) Reserve Battalion, Adolf Fritz noticed something rather weird – a group of his soldiers lost their beards during the previous night.

The case that was supposed to be funny was not at all entertaining in the eyes of the commanders who had just fought and survived the Second Battle of the Isonzo and was therefore in rather an exalted state of mind. Moreover, the case raised suspicion and therefore called for a lengthy investigation.

Captain Adolf Fritz commanded the reserve battalion which fell under Colonel Stadler's 39th Infantry Brigade. The odd occurrence developed during the battles at Monte San Michele, and Colonel Stadler was ordered to apply martial law by General Géza Lukachich to contain and investigate the situation.

Martial law needed to be enforced "against those who – by having had their faces shaved – are under suspicion of making themselves obviously distinguishable and by this way, trying to collaborate with the enemy." The division command had the 17 clean-shaven soldiers arrested, separated, and forbidden from speaking to one another as an investigation and trial ensued. While the investigation and trial records were lost to history, it was assumed that the 17 soldiers were eventually cleared and returned to their posts.

The 19/IV (Pécs) Reserve Battalion fought bravely in the battles of the following period. With or without moustaches. We will probably never find out whether or not the hastily conducted investigation played any role in this or not. Also, we will never get to know what whim or fashion craze led those 17 Fiume soldiers to get rid of their facial hair from one moment to another during that August night in 1915.

It is quite likely there are numerous records on these two generals beyond what I have discussed here. It is my hope that documents and photos continue to resurface that allow more details of their lives to be revealed. More questions than answers arise from the many personnel items included in this collection.

For instance, the photo of then Major Oszkár Teimer holding what appears to be a bandage on his head begs the question of whether this was caused from wounds of war or some other odd happening. Or perhaps the photograph was more for laughs?

With as many questions as this research has raised, this research has allowed me to learn so much more than I could have imagined and the thrill of finding out new information is as rewarding as it is exciting.



A mysterious posed photo of Major Oszkár Teimer. He is clearly trying to convey something to the future viewer - is it in reference to being wounded or just a demonstration of the effects of the summer heat? He holds his field cap rather unnaturally, displaying the old-fashioned baroque patriotic cap badge now in Joe Gyokeri's collection (shown actual size below). We can only indulge ourselves in conjecture, however, I would like to imagine it as a challenge and hope to us all that like Joe, we will endeavour to analyze the past more diligently in order to preserve the great treasures it has to offer.

P.Cz.



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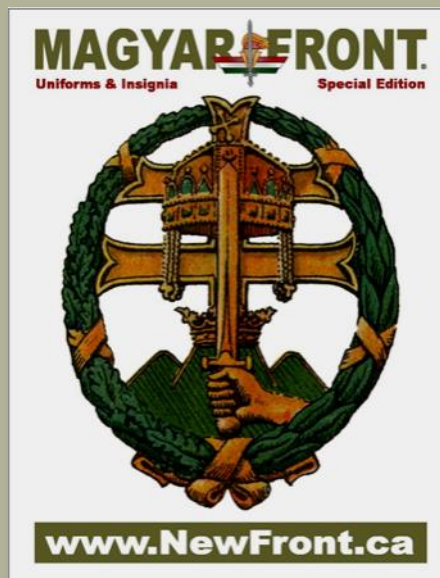


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