

MAGYAR FRONT



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WINTER 2023



**On the Ribbons of
Orders, Decorations
and Medals Worn
During the Hungarian
Regency (Including
Those of the Austro-
Hungarian Empire)**

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

*"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

Historians and enthusiasts focusing on Regency, or Horthy-era Hungarian orders, decorations, and medals often encounter medal and ribbon groups that are a combination of Austro-Hungarian and the post-WWI Hungarian awards. Putting medals in their proper order or deciphering a ribbon bar in a photograph can be daunting - so far I have not encountered an easy to read, concise guide to the order of precedence of these two combined award systems. With very few exceptions, the ODMs from both eras were also worn as ribbons, often with miniatures, so I thought a ribbon chart would serve us well. I was inspired by the ribbon charts in books that I poured over as a youth, as well as some excellent online presentations and have always thought of medal ribbons as a colourful language in their own right, and I hope the following pages bring joy (and perhaps order, as well) to those keen on phaleristics.

After piecing together the ribbons on pages 5 to 9, Gergely Sallay joined me in the laborious process of checking everything for accuracy, and he then wrote the explanation and introduction on page 4. Through him, the Hungarian Military Institute and Museum has kindly allowed us to publish images of some of its most spectacular ribbon groups along with his own informative captions.

In this issue we are featuring two new recipients of or IHMHPS Badge of Honour - Zoltán Tálosi and György Borbandi. Check them out online - we will also shortly have the IHMHPS Recognition Project nomination forms and details on our homepage.

P.Cz.

Our cover:

Major General (vezérőrnagy) Oszkár v. Selkey, shortly after his capture at the end of World War II. This remarkably clear photograph documents his ribbon bar very well. The miniature Military Merit Cross, Third Class is missing from the fourth ribbon, as are the crossed swords device from his Austrian World War I Commemorative Medal (the second to last ribbon).

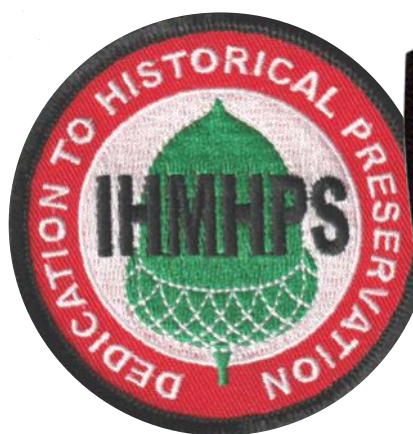
Support and promote our cause!

IHMHPS embroidered patches - \$5.00 each

Recognition Project patch
7.8cm (3")

IHMHPS patch 7.8cm
5.3cm x 8.8cm (2 1/8" x 3 1/2")

2014-2018 patch
5cm x 5cm (2" x 2")



IHMHPS 2014-2018
Badge \$20.00

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pin \$5.00





Zoltán Tálosi



György Borbandi



Museum Founders Receive Badge of Honour



bakamuzeum.hupont.hu

Two inspirational and dedicated collectors, György Borbandi and Zoltán Tálosi founded the Baka (the Hungarian affectionate colloquial term for a soldier) Museum in 2009, in Szekszárd, Hungary.

Their goal was to use their collection to commemorate the soldiers of Tolna County and Szekszárd, who disappeared, were killed in action, and wounded in the World Wars. They also raise awareness of those who served during the Cold War in the Hungarian People's Army. The museum's collection is constantly growing, and their items with local ties are particularly significant.

A group visits Bukovina (in northern Romania) annually, where they erected a cross in 2017 at what is believed to be the site of the lost cemetery of the 19th Honvéd Infantry Regiment from Pécs. It's located on the summit of the Capul (now Țapul Mare) Mountain north of the village of Kirlibaba. Every year they climb



György Borbandi working on the monument in Bukovina.

the 1663m mountain and repaint the cross to preserve the memory of the soldiers. It is the Baka Museum's mission to raise awareness through their artefacts and activities. In addition to maintaining the large collection of artifacts, the staff and friends of the museum also devote their time to the care and repair of gravesites as well as tutoring student visitors to the museum.

Zoltán Tálosi is a former high school history teacher and reserve First Lieutenant in the Hungarian Defence Forces, and author of *War Years 1941-1945: Aerial Events and Battles in Tolna County (Háborús Évek 1941-1945: Légiesemények és Harcok Tolna Megyében)*. György Borbandi, is a systems sales manager for a security company.

Many IHMHPS members have already discovered the wealth of information they share on their website and Facebook pages - and we are grateful for their exemplary dedication.



On the Ribbons of Orders, Decorations and Medals Worn During the Hungarian Regency, Including Those of the Austro-Hungarian Empire

by Gergely Sallay

The simplified form of wearing orders, decorations, and medals (ODMs) as ribbon bars was introduced in the Austro-Hungarian armed forces along with the pike grey field uniform in 1908. In June 1909, it was specified that ODMs in marching order were to be worn in the form of ribbons folded to a height of 15mm. Although it was not stated, ribbons were the 40mm width of the standard trifold medal ribbons. In 1910, it was further detailed that all ribbons were to be worn in one row on the left breast. Regardless of the class of the order represented, the ribbons were to be “plain”, i.e. miniatures specifying the class were not to be fastened on them. This was notwithstanding the fact that so-called “small decorations” of the highest classes of orders were already introduced in 1908 for members of the Austro-Hungarian armed forces who, instead of sashes and breast stars, for the sake of simplicity, could wear on the breast the lowest-grade insignia of the given order with a miniature symbolizing the higher grade attached to the trifold ribbon. An exception was the Military Order of Maria Theresa, which could not be worn as a small decoration.

The order of ribbons followed the order of precedence, with the senior ribbon positioned nearest the front tunic buttons and foreign decorations positioned last. Due to the regulation to wear ribbons in one row, one can often see overlapping Austro-Hungarian ribbons dating from the 1910s. Ribbons were sewn to each other and stitched onto the tunic.

During the First World War, when the wearing of ribbons was common practice in the battlefield, miniatures of higher grades of orders and decorations already appeared on ribbon bars, even on overlapping ribbons. In 1917 and 1918, several new small decorations were introduced to represent further higher grades of orders and decorations, and the miniatures to be attached to trifold ribbons also appeared on ribbon bars.

The practice of wearing ribbons lived on in interwar-period Hungary, but overlapping ribbons went out of fashion. Ribbons were to be worn in rows, four in a row, and to be placed centrally over the left breast pocket. When two or more rows were worn and there were insufficient ribbons to complete a row, the bottommost row had to begin at the (viewer’s) left, not placed centrally. Ribbons of foreign ODMs were positioned in a separate row below, even if the row above was incomplete.

Rows were either sewn together tightly or placed slightly apart. In any of the above cases, ribbons often were mounted, sewn over strips of cardboard or other materials, onto a material identical with or similar to that of the tunic, then stitched to the garment. Other attachment solutions, for ease of removal, were manufactured horizontal pin-back metal bars or a variety of wire or flat metal hooks which would engage with loops sewn to the uniform. Rows of ribbons could also be attached to the tunic separately in the same fashion. During the interwar period, ribbons could be worn in marching order or with undress uniform. When wearing ribbons, all ribbons were to be worn.

Bars symbolizing the multiple award of certain medals were not to be worn on ribbon bars, unlike on their trifold ribbons. In the case of multiple awards as many ribbons were to be worn as the number of awards of the same medal. Bars were only to be worn on the ribbon of the Fire Cross instituted in 1941. In that case, the aluminum bars representing the number of wounds were to be placed vertically. The wearing of miniatures on ribbons was not regulated in detail. An exception were the Hungarian Order of Merit and Bravery Medals, where the sizes of miniatures representing the different classes were officially specified. However, ribbon bars were privately purchased, and that resulted in a great variety in the use of miniatures.

Original 1942 period colour photograph with a good view of Major General György Rakovszky’s ribbon bar.



FORTEPAN 42514 KONOK TAMÁS SR



1. Order of Saint Stephen, Grand Cross



2. Hungarian Order of Merit, Grand Cross, with Holy Crown, on War Ribbon with Swords*



3. Hungarian Order of Merit, Grand Cross, with Holy Crown



4. Military Merit Cross, First Class with War Decoration and Swords**



5. Order of Leopold, Grand Cross with War Decoration and Swords**



6. Hungarian Order of Merit, Grand Cross, on War Ribbon with Swords*



7. Hungarian Order of Merit, Grand Cross



8. Order of Leopold, First Class with War Decoration and Swords**



9. Order of the Iron Crown, First Class with War Decoration and Swords**



10. Order of Saint Stephen, Commander's Cross



11. Hungarian Large Gold Medal on War Ribbon with Swords*



12. Hungarian Large Gold Medal



13. (FJ) Large Military Merit Medal on War Ribbon with Swords*



14. (K) Large Military Merit Medal on War Ribbon with Swords*



15. Order of Francis Joseph, Grand Cross on War Ribbon with Swords**



16. Order of Francis Joseph, Grand Cross



17. Red Cross, Star of Merit (also awarded with War Decoration)



18. Red Cross, Star of Merit with War Decoration (also awarded without War Decoration)



19. Badge of Honour for Arts and Sciences



20. Hungarian Order of Merit, Commander's Cross with Star, on War Ribbon with Swords*



21. Hungarian Order of Merit, Commander's Cross with Star



22. Order of Leopold, Commander's Cross with War Decoration and Swords**



23. Military Merit Cross, Second Class with War Decoration and Swords**



24. Order of Saint Stephen, Small Cross



25. Hungarian Order of Merit, Commander's Cross on War Ribbon with Swords*



26. Hungarian Order of Merit, Commander's Cross



27. Order of the Iron Crown, Second Class with War Decoration and Swords**



28. Order of Francis Joseph, Commander's Cross and Star, On War Ribbon with Swords*



29. Order of Francis Joseph, Commander's Cross and Star



30. Hungarian Order of Merit, Officer's Cross with War Decoration and Swords*



31. Hungarian Order of Merit, Officer's Cross



32. Order of Leopold, Knight's Cross with War Decoration and Swords**

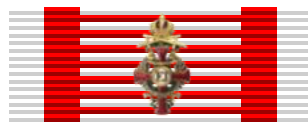
*Also awarded without Swords **Also awarded without War Decoration and/or without Swords



33. Order of Francis Joseph, Commander's Cross on War Ribbon with Swords*



34. Order of Francis Joseph, Commander's Cross



35. Order of Francis Joseph, Officer's Cross with War Decoration and Swords*



36. Order of Francis Joseph, Officer's Cross



37. Order of the Iron Crown, Third Class with War Decoration and Swords**



38. Hungarian Order of Merit, Knight's Cross on War Ribbon with Swords*



39. Hungarian Order of Merit, Knight's Cross



40. Order of Francis Joseph, Knight's Cross on War Ribbon with Swords*



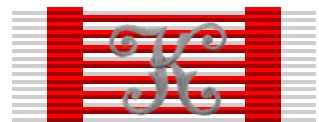
41. Order of Francis Joseph, Knight's Cross



42. Hungarian Officer's Gold Bravery Medal



43. Gold Bravery Medal for Officers



44. Large Silver Bravery Medal for Officers



45. Military Merit Cross, Third Class, with War Decoration and Swords**



46. Cross of Merit for the Clergy, First Class, on red and white ribbon*



47. Cross of Merit for the Clergy, Second Class, on red and white ribbon*



48. Cross of Merit for the Clergy, First Class, on white ribbon



49. Cross of Merit for the Clergy, Second Class, on white ribbon



50. (FJ) Silver Military Merit Medal, on War Ribbon with Swords*



51. (K) Silver Military Merit Medal, on War Ribbon with Swords*



52. (FJ) Bronze Military Merit Medal, on War Ribbon with Swords*



53. (K) Bronze Military Merit Medal, on War Ribbon with Swords*



54. Hun. Bronze Medal of Merit with Holy Crown on War Ribbon with Swords* and retrospectively authorized WWI award



55. Hungarian Silver Medal of Merit with Holy Crown on War Ribbon with Swords*



56. Hungarian Silver Medal of Merit with Holy Crown (military)



57. Silver Medal of Merit with Holy Crown (non-military)



58. Red Cross, Cross of Merit (also awarded with War Decoration)



59. (FJ) Silver Military Merit Medal (on red ribbon)



60. (K) Silver Military Merit Medal (on red ribbon)



61. Hungarian Bronze Medal of Merit with Holy Crown on War Ribbon with Swords*



62. Hungarian Bronze Medal of Merit with Holy Crown (military)



63. Bronze Medal of Merit with Holy Crown (non-military)



64. Gold Miklós Toldi Merit Medal



65. Silver Miklós Toldi Merit Medal



66. Bronze Miklós Toldi Merit Medal



67. (FJ) Bronze Military Merit Medal (on red ribbon)



68. (K) Bronze Military Merit Medal (on red ribbon)



69. Bravery Medal



70. Hungarian Gold Bravery Medal



71. Gold Bravery Medal



72. Gold Merit Cross with Crown on War Ribbon with Swords*



73. Hungarian Gold Cross of Merit (also awarded on War Ribbon)



74. Gold Merit Cross with Crown (on red ribbon)



75. Hungarian Cross of Merit, Fifth Class (awarded until 1935)



76. Gold Merit Cross, on War Ribbon with Swords*



77. Gold Merit Cross (on red ribbon)



78. Hungarian Large Silver Bravery Medal



79. Silver Bravery Medal, First Class



80. Red Cross, Medal of Merit (also awarded with War Decoration)



81. Hungarian Silver Cross of Merit (also awarded on War Ribbon)



82. Hungarian Small Silver Bravery Medal



83. Silver Bravery Medal, Second Class



84. Hungarian Silver Medal of Merit (also awarded on War Ribbon)



85. Silver Merit Cross, with Crown on War Ribbon



86. Silver Merit Cross with Crown (on red ribbon)



87. Silver Merit Cross on War Ribbon



88. Silver Merit Cross (on red ribbon)



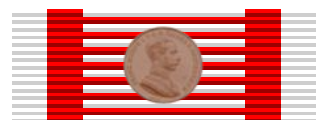
89. Hungarian Bronze Cross of Merit (also awarded on War Ribbon)



90. Hungarian Bronze Medal of Merit (also awarded on War Ribbon)



91. Hungarian Bronze Bravery Medal



92. Bronze Bravery Medal



93. Iron Merit Cross with Crown on War Ribbon



94. Iron Merit Cross on War Ribbon

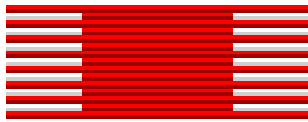


95. Fire Cross, First Class (with one aluminum bar, representing one wound)

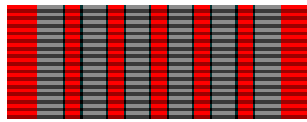


96. Fire Cross, Second Class

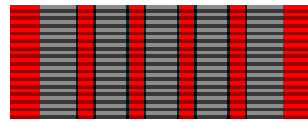
*Also awarded without Swords



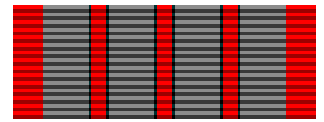
97. Emperor Karl Troops' Cross



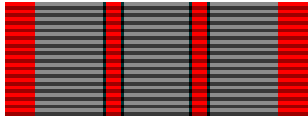
98. Wound Medal (five or more wounds)



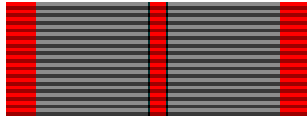
99. Wound Medal (four wounds)



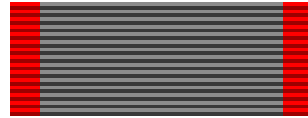
100. Wound Medal (three wounds)



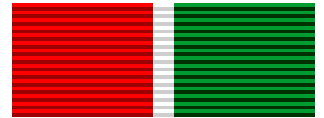
101. Wound Medal (two wounds)



102. Wound Medal (one wound)



103. Wound Medal



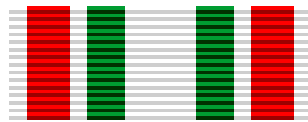
104. National Defence Cross



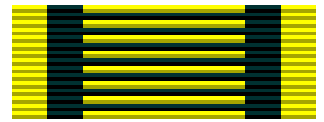
105. Fire Cross, Third Class



106. WWI Commemorative Medal for Combatants



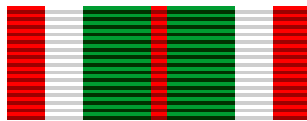
107. WWI Commemorative Medal for Non-Combatants



108. War Medal



109. Officer's Long Service Cross, First Class (ribbon for regular officers)



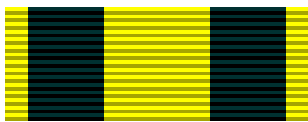
110. Officer's Long Service Cross, Second Class (ribbon for specialist officers)



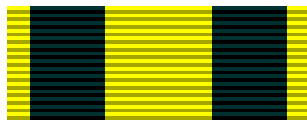
111. Officer's Long Service Cross, Third Class (ribbon for officials)



112. Officer's Long Service Cross, First Class



113. Officer's Long Service Cross, Second Class



114. Officer's Long Service Cross, Third Class



115. Red Cross Cross of Honour, First Class with War Decoration***



116. Red Cross Officer's Cross of Honour with War Decoration



117. Red Cross Cross of Honour, Second Class with War Decoration***



118. NCO's/OR's Long Service Cross of Honour



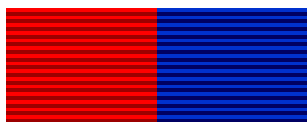
119. NCO's/OR's Long Service Cross, First Class



120. NCO's/OR's Long Service Cross, Second Class



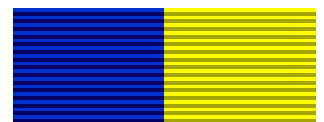
121. NCO's/OR's Long Service Cross, Third Class



122. Reclamation of Upper Hungary Medal



123. Reclamation of Transylvania Medal



124. Reclamation of Southern Hungary Medal



125. Red Cross Silver Medal with War Decoration***



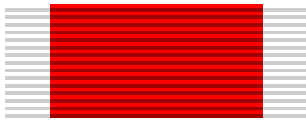
126. Red Cross Silver Medal of Honour with War Decoration***



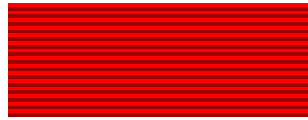
127. Red Cross Bronze Medal with War Decoration***



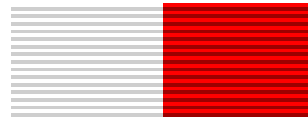
128. Red Cross Bronze Medal of Honour with War Decoration***



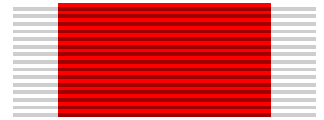
129. Jubilee Court Medal in Gold, Silver, and Bronze



130. Jubilee Medal for the Armed Forces



131. Jubilee Medal for Civil State Officials



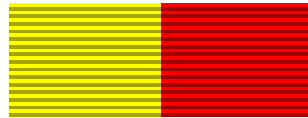
132. Court Jubilee Cross



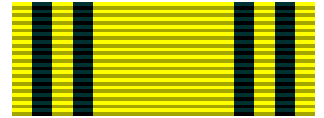
133. Military Jubilee Cross



134. Jubilee Cross for Civil State Officials



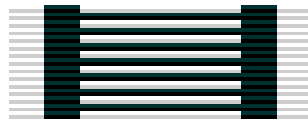
135. Bosnia and Herzegovina Medal



136. 1912-1913 Commemorative Cross



137. Fire and Life-Saving Service Medal of Honour



138. Austrian Marian Cross

FOREIGN ORDERS, DECORATIONS AND MEDALS

Foreign ribbons are sorted according to their grades, and ones representing higher classes of orders come first. Among ribbons representing the same grade (for example in the case of wearing numerous Commander's Crosses) the precedence is the following: first are ODMs awarded by the Papal State, then the awards of the great powers, based on their names in the French alphabetical order, followed by those of lesser states.



German 1939 Iron Cross, Knight's Cross



Order of the German Eagle with Swords



Order of the German Eagle



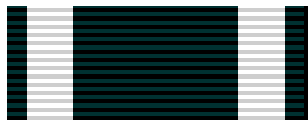
German 1914 Iron Cross, First Class



German 1939 Iron Cross, First Class



German 1914 Iron Cross, Second Class with 1939 Clasp



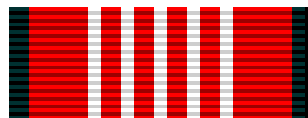
German 1914 Iron Cross, Second Class



German 1939 Iron Cross, Second Class



German Winter War in the East 1941-42 Medal



German Olympic Decoration



Austrian WWI Commemorative Medal with Swords for Combatants



Austrian WWI Commemorative Medal for Non-Combatants



Bulgarian Order of Military Merit



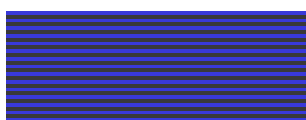
Bulgarian Order of Saint Alexander



Bulgarian 1915-1918 Commemorative Medal for Combatants



Bulgarian 1915-1918 Commemorative Medal for Non-Combatants



Finnish Order of the White Rose



Finnish Order of the Lion



Order of the Crown of Italy



Japanese Red Cross Medal



A Selection of Ribbon Bars from the Hungarian Military History Museum



HUNGARIAN MILITARY HISTORY INSTITUTE AND MUSEUM - PETER SZIKITS PHOTO

An Austro-Hungarian officer's ribbon bar with overlapping ribbons, from the 1910s.



HUNGARIAN MILITARY HISTORY INSTITUTE AND MUSEUM - PETER SZIKITS PHOTO

The ribbons of Air Force Colonel József Szintai (Steiner), who served both as a field pilot and an observer in the Austro-Hungarian Flying Corps during the First World War, from the early 1930s. The first ribbon is that of the Imperial Austrian Order of the Iron Crown, 3rd Class with War Decoration and Swords, which he received in 1918 for saving the life of his comrade after crash landing their aircraft on the Italian front. Szintai was promoted to major general in 1946, in the "Democratic Army."



HUNGARIAN MILITARY HISTORY INSTITUTE AND MUSEUM - PETER SZIKITS PHOTO

The final ribbon bar worn by Colonel General Géza v. Lakatos, Prime Minister of Hungary from August 29th to October 15th, 1944. In the first position, the ribbon of the Grand Cross of the Hungarian Order of Merit on War Ribbon with Swords, followed by the Hungarian Large Gold Medal on War Ribbon with Swords.



HUNGARIAN MILITARY HISTORY INSTITUTE AND MUSEUM - PETER SZIKITS PHOTO

The ribbon bar of one of the most decorated Hungarian officers, Major General Kornél v. Oszlányi, the only Second World War recipient of the Military Order of Maria Theresa. Note the ribbon of the Officer's Gold Bravery Medal in the third place, missing the letter K, differentiating between the Gold Bravery Medals of officers and the other ranks.



HUNGARIAN MILITARY HISTORY INSTITUTE AND MUSEUM - PETER SZIKITS PHOTO

Deputy Minister of Defence, Colonel General Imre Ruzskiczay-Rüdiger's ribbon bar. In 1940, he was awarded the Star to the previously awarded Commander's Cross of the Hungarian Order of Merit, and he also received the Officer's Cross in 1937 and the Fourth Class of the Hungarian Cross of Merit, the predecessor of the Hungarian Order of Merit, in 1930. The miniature of the latter is missing from the ribbon. None of the numerous foreign orders awarded to Ruzskiczay-Rüdiger are represented on this ribbon bar.

Right: Colonel General Imre Ruzskiczay-Rüdiger wearing the ribbon bar pictured above.



HUNGARIAN MILITARY HISTORY INSTITUTE AND MUSEUM - PETER SZIKITS PHOTO

Colonel (posthumously promoted to Major General) Zoltán v. Baló's ribbon bar. He is best known for his help to Polish and French military refugees in Hungary during the Second World War. The first ribbon in the bottom row represents the Commander's Cross of the Bulgarian Order of Saint Alexander.



HUNGARIAN MILITARY HISTORY INSTITUTE AND MUSEUM - PETER SZIKITS PHOTO

The ribbon bar of Air Force Colonel Sándor Gyiresy, who was awarded three different grades of the Hungarian Order of Merit - the Officer's Cross, the Knight's Cross on War Ribbon with Swords, and the Knight's Cross. In the bottom row among foreign medal ribbons, two different grades of the Order of the German Eagle are represented.



HUNGARIAN MILITARY HISTORY INSTITUTE AND MUSEUM - PETER SZIKITS PHOTO

This tattered and incomplete ribbon bar belonged to Colonel József v. Jánosházy. Note the two separate ribbons of the Cross of Military Merit, Third Class with War Decoration and Swords, in the second and third positions. When there was a second award of the same medal, a bar had to be attached to the medal ribbon, however, on a ribbon bar there were no bars representing multiple awards, it was the ribbon that had to be repeated.



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Major General János Markóczy's ribbon bar. It was against regulations to wear domestic and foreign ribbons in the same row but it can often be observed.



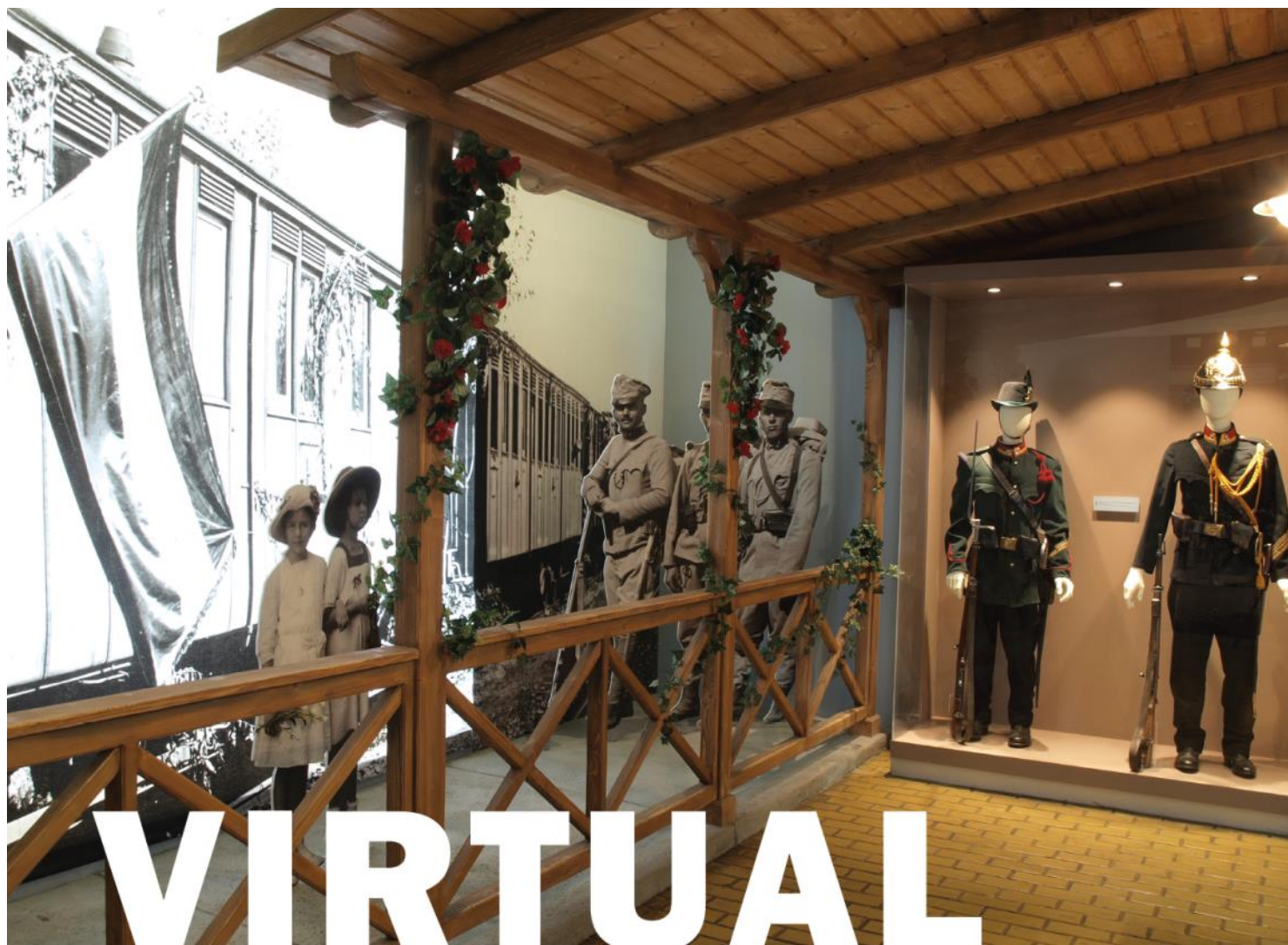
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Air Force Lieutenant Colonel Gyula Győrffy's ribbon bar. Note that only three ribbons are in a row, which was characteristic of ribbon bars worn by those serving with the Air Force. Gyula Győrffy was executed in November 1944 for not obeying orders to continue fighting after the Arrow Cross coup in October 1944.



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Major General Sándor Papp-Kökényesdy, Commander of the Life Guards of the President of the Hungarian Republic between 1946 and 1948, wore this ribbon bar including ribbons of Second World War medals even after 1945. Note the aluminum bar on the ribbon of the 1st Class of the Fire Cross, representing one wound.



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