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## Croatian Soldiers, Generals in Galicia and Bukovina in the years 1772–1918

The article concerns the presence of Croatian soldiers in Galicia and Bukovina during the period of Austrian partition, with a detailed list of officers who, at a certain stage of their military career, reached the rank of general. By referring to their example, the article will demonstrate the significance of soldiers from the southern Slavic regions for Galicia, as well as how the presence of these military personnel is perceived in Croatian historiography. We are particularly interested in events from the period of World War I, in which some of the mentioned soldiers participated.

Keywords: military service, Polish-Croatian relations, military history, Galicia, World War I

### Introduction

In this article, we would like to outline the topic of military relations between Poles and Croats during the period when both nations inhabited the Habsburg Empire. As a starting point for illustrating these relations, we will focus on a group of 116 generals from Croatian lands<sup>1</sup> who served in the Austrian or Austro-Hungarian army in Galicia and Bukovina between 1772 and 1918. The term “Croatian generals” does not imply that all the officers mentioned here were ethnic Croats whose Croatian national identity could be confirmed. On the other hand, using terms like “South Slavic generals” or

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<sup>1</sup> This term is used in the context in which it appears in Croatian literature. It includes the territories of contemporary Croatia with Istra, Baranja and Medimurje, as well as Srijem and the Bay of Kotor.

“Balkan generals” would be imprecise since we are not considering officers from Vojvodina or Carinthia. Therefore, we have adopted the criterion of the regions they originated from in our selection process. Regarding their military rank, we have considered the rank of general in which soldiers served in Galicia and Bukovina or received it after leaving the territories annexed by Austria at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century.

Let’s delve back into the issue of nationality for a moment because it requires a slightly broader comment, especially in the case of military personnel. Looking back, due to the lack of a clear national declaration, it is difficult to determine if a person, even if born in present-day Croatia, Serbia, or Slovenia, or bearing a South Slavic surname, actually felt like a Croat, Serb, or Slovene. This especially applies to soldiers who, due to the nature of their work and their sense of loyalty to their superiors, often regarded Austria or Austro-Hungary as their country first and themselves as members of a specific national community second. This applies to all soldiers serving in the Habsburg army, including Poles.<sup>2</sup> The words of Bogumił Nowotny, an admiral of the Austro-Hungarian fleet who later contributed to the Polish Navy after World War I, illustrate this perfectly. Regarding his Polish identity during his service in the Imperial and Royal Navy, he wrote: “During my long service in the navy, despite my Polish origin, I primarily felt like a subject of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy and showed almost no interest in national matters”.<sup>3</sup> Likely, a similar mindset guided a military commander famous in Galicia, General Svetozar Borojević, whom Croats consider Croatian and Serbs consider Serbian.<sup>4</sup> He himself was primarily a loyal Austro-Hungarian soldier, and after World War I, the authorities of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes prevented his return to his homeland. He himself was primarily a loyal Austro-Hungarian soldier, prevented by the authorities of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes from returning to his homeland after World War I.<sup>5</sup>

The source base of the article draws on both scholarly literature, including dictionaries (especially the *Österreichisches Biographisches Lexikon 1815–1950*), as well as newspapers, Croatian, German, and also Hungarian. Additionally,

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<sup>2</sup> See: J. Rydel, *W służbie cesarza i króla. Generalowie i admirałowie narodowości polskiej w siłach zbrojnych Austro-Węgier w latach 1868–1918*, Kraków 2001.

<sup>3</sup> B. Nowotny, *Wspomnienia*, Gdańsk 2006, p. 150.

<sup>4</sup> D. Nečak, *Nekaj premislekov, dilem in popravkov o življenjepisu feldmaršala Borojevića: junak ali uživač?*, „Prispevki za novejšo zgodovino” 2015, no 45/2, p. 174–175. Borojević’s ancestors were Vlachs, a pastoral population living in the Balkan Peninsula, who adhered to the Orthodox faith.

<sup>5</sup> D. Nečak, *Feldmarszałek Svetozar Borojević de Bojna – bohater frontów w Galicji i nad Soczqą?* [in:] *W Galicji i nad Soczqą. Polacy i Słowacy na frontach I wojny światowej*, ed. A. Cetnarowicz, D. Nečak, S. Pijaj, B. Todorović, Kraków 2016, p. 74–75.

we relied on military yearly records (schematisms) issued by the Imperial and Royal Army. Apart from outlining the issue of soldiers from Croatian lands in Galicia and Bukovina, which has not been described in Polish historiography so far, we decided to delve more deeply into the mentioned generals by asking several questions: From which social circles did Croatian officers originate? Where did they serve? And in which battles in Galicia and Bukovina during World War I did they participate? Of course, we are aware that there could be more questions, nevertheless, due to the limitations of the article's scope and its limited contributory nature, we deemed it better to focus on a few selected issues, while deeper studies on this topic will be prepared in the form of a monograph. Therefore, these are not typical prosopographical studies but rather an attempt to portray a broader issue, which is the presence of South Slavic soldiers in Galicia and Bukovina, showcasing this topic through the prism of the military elite, in this case, the 116 generals.

### The Galician Front of World War I and the Croatians

The presence of soldiers from Croatian lands in Galicia and Bukovina represents, thus far, a largely untapped research field that could be used for joint Polish–Croatian–Slovenian–Bosnian–Serbian projects. The potential of this issue is even greater as it may be of interest not only to military historians but also to Balkanists, as the battles fought in Galicia have also left their mark on the historical memory of southern and Balkan inhabitants.<sup>6</sup> During World War I, Croatian soldiers constituted the largest part of South Slavic soldiers who fought in Galicia and Bukovina. Memories of that time still resonate in Croatian culture, and the military actions taken then are considered the greatest sacrifice the Croats made for the Habsburg monarchy during the war. At the same time, many Croats, especially in the younger generation, are often unaware of how many of their ancestors who perished between 1914–1918 rest in cemeteries in modern-day Poland and Ukraine.

In a large part of Croatia, words such as “Galicia” or “Bukovina” still evoke fear and respect among older residents. In my early childhood (Boris Trnski), my grandfather Franjo Trnski used to tell me about his father, who participated in “the terrible war against the Russians” in Galicia and Bukovina during World War I. He described it as “a land of the thickest fog he had ever seen in his life, so dense that one could drive a bayonet into it and hang a coat”. Croatia still does not know how many of its sons left their bones there because of World War I,

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<sup>6</sup> See: M. Krleža, *Dzienniki i eseje*, Łódź 1984.

although there is a monument in honor of many soldiers who died there on every piece of its land.

At the beginning of World War I, Croats were estimated to comprise about 14% of the Austro-Hungarian army.<sup>7</sup> Over the course of four years from 1914 to 1918, approximately one million men were mobilized from the areas of the Croatian Banovina, as well as Dalmatia, Istria, Bosnia, and Herzegovina (including around 496,000 ethnic Croats), of whom 180,000 never returned home. Among them, the highest number of soldiers lost their lives in Galicia and Bukovina (between 53% and 79%). According to some sources, between 100,000 and 150,000 Croatian soldiers died.<sup>8</sup> Croatian soldiers who died from exposure, wounds, or disease are buried in provincial and larger cemeteries across the territories that were once Galicia and Bukovina. The largest number of bodies were placed in improvised graves, often collective ones where soldiers of other nationalities from the Austro-Hungarian army, and sometimes even their opponents from the Russian forces, were also buried.<sup>9</sup> The magnitude of human losses in Galicia and Bukovina during the Christmas season was described by the then-soldier, later renowned writer Miroslav Krleža in his novel “The Flag”: “The Royal Hungarian-Croatian 25th Regiment – 14,000 dead [...] The Royal Hungarian-Croatian 26th Regiment – 20,000 dead [...]. The Imperialand Royal 53rd Regiment – 18,000 dead”.<sup>10</sup>

This knowledge, especially in Croatian historiography, is widespread. However, much less attention is paid to the fact that Croatian soldiers were not only “cannon fodder” in Galicia and Bukovina but that many of them also held key positions in the army. Moreover, some of them received military honors and noble titles due to their daring actions and military skills. Similarly, in earlier years, “Croatian generals” in Galicia and Bukovina played an important role alongside Austrian, Czech, or Hungarian officers. Military personnel in Vienna were keen to send Croatian officers to serve or fight in Galicia or Bukovina because of linguistic or cultural similarities, which facilitated their interactions with the local population. In addition to their military activities, soldiers were also ordinary people who formed friendships, rested, and, generally speaking, enjoyed themselves during their service, engaging with the local community. During the mentioned period, every third Croatian general served or fought in Galicia and Bukovina during their military career. Among them, 40 served

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<sup>7</sup> J. Borošak Marijanović, *Postrojbe u austrougarskoj vojsci*, <https://hrvatski-vojn timer.hr/postrojbe-u-austrougarskoj-vojsci/> [accessed on 29.11.2022]

<sup>8</sup> J. Paščenko, *Hrvatski grobovi 1914–1918. Karpati, Galicija, Bukovina*, Zagreb 2016., p. 37

<sup>9</sup> B. Graľjuk, *Bojišnice i grobišta hrvatskih vojnika na karpatskom ratištu u Prvom svjetskom ratu*, „Riječi, časopis za književnost, kulturu i znanost MH Sisak” 2013, no 1–3, p. 25.

<sup>10</sup> M. Krleža, *Zastave, svezak šesti, knjiga treća*, Zagreb 2000, p. 396.

in the rank of general from 1804–1914, from brigade commanders to corps commanders, of whom 39 participated in World War I from regimental commanders to army commanders.

### **Social class background (social estate) and professional training**

In Polish historiography, not much attention has been devoted to research on the South Slavs who were part of the Austrian military forces. If at all, this topic appears somewhat on the margins.<sup>11</sup> Historians, especially those focused on military history, have so far mainly indicated certain phenomena, but comprehensive studies, ideally based on research by Polish and South Slavic historians, are still lacking. The importance of such collaboration can be understood from the fact that the final result would be more satisfying. Reading the book “Galicija 1914” highlights how crucial such cooperation is for producing a satisfactory outcome. Although the work aims to present this topic, significant from the Croatian perspective, the author completely overlooks the contributions of Polish historiography (not to mention the relevant sources), which unfortunately affects the content presented in the book.<sup>12</sup>

Analyzing the group of 116 generals from Croatian lands, we should first consider from which social circles the soldiers in our study group originated. As seen in Chart 1 below, the majority of them (70%) came from noble/knightly families, with 57 = 49% from noble families, 24 = 21% from baronial families, and 5 = 4% from countly families. However, it is worth noting Michał Baczkowski’s suggestion that the social composition of the Habsburg officer corps in the years 1772–1867 was variable and complex.<sup>13</sup> In the case of the analyzed group, we also see a situation that was dynamically changing. Until 1850, all Croatian generals of the Austrian army who served in Galicia and Bukovina came from noble or baronial families. Only later did the political and social situation begin to change, and promotions also started to be given to individuals not from the nobility but to those who advanced professionally due to their military skills, such as Jakov Ratković, the last adjutant of Ban Josip Jelačić.

Social origin was crucial for this group, especially in the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. In later years, talents and individual work started to be more appreciated, and the social group from which a soldier came was much less

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<sup>11</sup> M. Baczkowski, *Galicija a wojsko austriackie 1772–1867*, Kraków 2017, p. 76.

<sup>12</sup> This is an important work from the perspective of Croatian historiography; however, the lack of reference to Polish research makes it incomplete. F. Katanić, *Galicija 1914*, Zagreb 2020.

<sup>13</sup> M. Baczkowski, *Galicija...*, p. 78.

significant. Nevertheless, a high military position, in the case of the studied group, still correlated with a high, although not always noble, birth. 37 generals from the studied group were graduates of the elite Theresian Military Academy, accounting for approximately 32%. On the other hand, 17 individuals graduated from the Technical Military Academy, comprising just under 15%. Summing up, 54 individuals = 47%, or nearly half, represented the two most important military academies in Austria and later Austro-Hungary. The remaining 53% were mostly graduates of cadet schools. However, there were exceptions, such as Ivan Nikić, who graduated from the Military Academy of Empress Ludovika in Budapest.<sup>14</sup> As an interesting fact, among the studied group, 6 individuals graduated from cadet schools in Galicia, namely; Spiridon Mitrović – Przemyśl, Danjel Kolak – Sanok, Antun Došen – Nowy Sącz, Ivan Sivković – Nowy Sącz, Stjepan Pilar – Przemyśl, and Emmanuel Cvjetičanin in Stanisławów. Among them, the last general gained the most fame and between 1878–1882 he was responsible for establishing the gendarmerie structures in Bosnia and Herzegovina.<sup>15</sup>

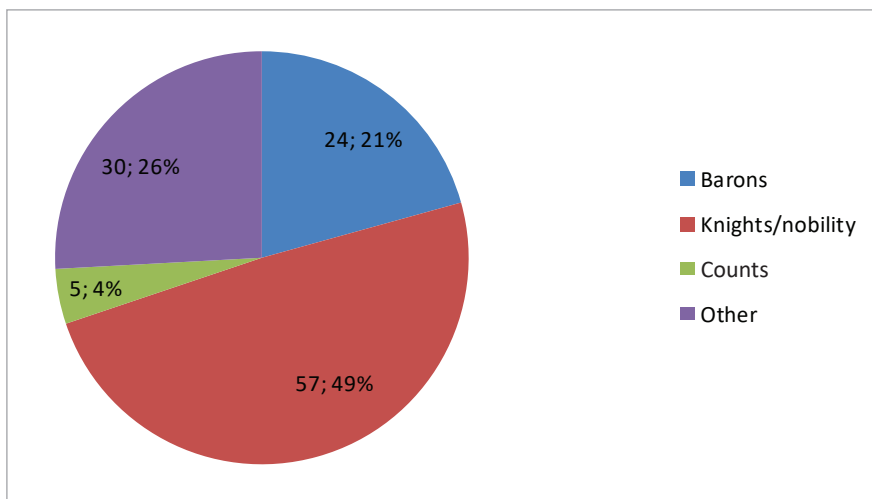


Chart 1. Social class background of Croatian generals in Galicia<sup>16</sup>

<sup>14</sup> „Wiener Zeitung”, Wien, no 260 (11.11. 1891), p. 2; „Militär-Zeitung”, Wien, no 11 (24.03.1900), p. 84.

<sup>15</sup> H. Brendel, „Lieber als Kacake als an Hunger sterben”. *Besatzung und Widerstand im k. u. k. Militärgeneralgouvernement in Montenegro (1916–1918)*, Frankfurt–New York 2017, p. 76.

<sup>16</sup> The information used to create this chart was obtained from the sources and literature listed at the end of the article.

The above information indicates that during peacetime, the highest-ranking officers from the Balkan Peninsula who served in Galicia and Bukovina were well-educated individuals from high, often noble backgrounds. However, this situation changed over time, and talents within a unit increasingly determined one's promotion to the rank of general, with less emphasis on social origin.

### Service until 1914

Since their incorporation into the Habsburg state, Galicia and Bukovina became permanent locations for military presence, with soldiers coming from all corners of the monarchy. According to research by Stanisław Szuro, the so-called military population, meaning individuals associated with the army, in this case, the Austro-Hungarian army, constituted between 10% to 20% of the total military personnel in Galicia, while the local population represented only 0.5% to 1%.<sup>17</sup> Contemporary literature suggests that these military personnel were mostly rank-and-file soldiers, predominantly sons of peasants recruited from nearby villages, which further fostered a sense of attachment to the army among the local populace.<sup>18</sup> The situation differed for soldiers who continued their military careers. They had to reckon with the necessity of migration, not only during periods of unrest but also during times when the monarchy faced no immediate threats. A good example here is the Polish generals who served in the Polish Army after World War I, originating from the Austrian army, many of whom served for varying periods in the Balkans.<sup>19</sup>

On the other hand, South Slavic officers were often sent to Galicia to gain military experience there. This policy was a deliberate action by the authorities because the army was one of the common elements that held together the Habsburg Empire. This did not change even in the dualistic era. Therefore, soldiers often migrated to different parts of the monarchy during their careers, partly to avoid becoming too attached to their region of origin and partly to gain experience in completely different cultural and geographical circumstances.

Moreover, during the Austrian partition, Galician officers were not particularly valued in the first half-century. It was believed that Poles were disloyal to the emperor, especially the nobility, which expressed their discontent with the emperor in various ways. Evidence of Polish disloyalty was seen in the

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<sup>17</sup> M. Szuro, *Ludność wojskowa Galicji w latach 1869–1913 (próba analizy demograficznej)*, „Rocznik Naukowo-Dydaktyczny. Prace Historyczne” 1992, issue 126, p. 139.

<sup>18</sup> M. Baczkowski, *Tożsamość narodowa żołnierzy armii austro-węgierskiej*, „Zeszyty Naukowe Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego. Prace Historyczne” 2017, no 144 (2), p. 360.

<sup>19</sup> See: A. Wojtaszak, *Generalicja wojska polskiego 1918–1926*, Warszawa 2012.



wave of desertions among recruited soldiers, which affected Galicia during the Napoleonic Wars. Consequently, in the 1830s, only 13% of the officer corps of the Austrian army in the partitioned territories were locals.<sup>20</sup> It was only later, in the 1840s, that it became apparent that peasant recruits from the Austrian partition would form a significant support for the army,<sup>21</sup> although they mostly remained in lower ranks. Generally, only a few sons of peasants could aspire to become generals.

As a consequence of this situation, there was a frequent recourse to higher officer ranks originating from other parts of the monarchy, including the Croatian lands. Especially during crises, soldiers from distant regions were often sought after because it was expected that they would not integrate with the local population but rather loyally serve their duty: "In the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, it was a custom for cavalry regiments not only to station outside their own recruitment districts but also beyond the borders of their home crown lands".<sup>22</sup> After the experiences of the Spring of Nations, the uprisings of the Hungarian and Italian populations, with whom the military sometimes allied, the practice of rotations became even more widespread.

Such actions were sometimes ineffective. For instance, a conspiracy of officers formed in Galicia between 1837–1840, led by Tomislav Dmitrasinović, a soldier of the Austrian army from Dalmatia, aimed at organizing an anti-Habsburg uprising. According to sources, many more individuals from the South Slavic regions were involved in the conspiracy. However, the uprising failed because Dmitrasinović and his collaborators were exposed.<sup>23</sup> He himself ended up in prison in Mukachevo, from where attempts were made to free him.<sup>24</sup> This was, however, an isolated case. Generally, soldiers diligently performed their duties in the name of the emperor, often serving as a pacifying force during unrest such as the Galician peasant uprising (1846), the Spring of Nations (1848), or the attempted lynching of Jews in Western Galicia (1898).

During the dualistic period, both the army and the state underwent significant changes. Although the army continued to serve the entire monarchy, in Austria soldiers swore allegiance to the emperor, while in Hungary, they swore to the

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<sup>20</sup> M. Baczkowski, *Galicja...*, p. 44–46.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 57.

<sup>23</sup> P. Żurek, *Hotel Lambert a dekonspiracja chorwackiego „Branislava” (1844/1845)*, „Studia z Dziejów Rosji i Europy Środkowo-Wschodniej” 2005, no 40, p. 261–262; J. Skowronek, *Sprzymierzeńcy narodów bałkańskich*, Warszawa 1983, p. 131.

<sup>24</sup> In some works, it was incorrectly stated that Dmitrasinović was Polish. See: S. Kieniewicz, *Rewolucji 1848–1849*, ed. W. F. Potemkin and A. I. Mołok, Moskwa 1952, „Przegląd Historyczny” 1953 no 44/3, p. 451.



king.<sup>25</sup> This act symbolized the changes brought about by the division of the country into Austrian and Hungarian parts. These changes occurred not only at the symbolic level but also in terms of the army's structure and equipment. The defeats suffered first against Italy (1859) and especially against Prussia (1866) highlighted the deficiencies of the Habsburg army.

Although as part of the Croatian-Hungarian Compromise,<sup>26</sup> Croats gained units where Croatian was used, soldiers who wanted to progress and advance in their careers had to continue migrating to different parts of the monarchy, as was the case before 1867, often ending up in Galicia. Officers, especially in smaller towns, were a colorful element of the local elite. Officer casinos often served as entertainment centers in these places, and military orchestra concerts were always occasions for the army and civilians to integrate and socialize. Integration could be particularly close, as in the case of the parents of Croatian writer Ferdo Bečić. His father, an Austrian officer, married a Polish woman named Agnieszka née Wojsztarowicz during his service in Galicia, and Ferdo himself was born in Przemyśl.<sup>27</sup>

## Participation of Croatian units in World War I

The soldiers from the Croatian Banovina were present on the Galician front from the first days of the war. Since the beginning of the conflict, units from the southern borders of the monarchy, including Croatian lands, were willingly sent to Galicia, which was the main battleground in the east. Among the units sent there were the 70<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment from Petrovaradin, the 96<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment from Karlovac, the 5<sup>th</sup> Uhlans Regiment from Zagreb, the 12<sup>th</sup> Uhlans Regiment from Varaždin, the 38<sup>th</sup> Light Artillery Regiment from Zagreb, and the 31<sup>st</sup> Rifle Battalion from Zagreb. Besides them, Croats also fought in other armed formations that participated in the battles in Galicia in the fall and winter of 1914–1915.<sup>28</sup> In Croatian historiography, these struggles are referred to as the “Great Galician Battle”.

At the turn of August and September, Croatian regiments found themselves on the right flank of the Austro-Hungarian army in the Dniester Valley, which was

<sup>25</sup> R. Basset, *For God and Kaiser. The Imperial Austrian Army*, London 2015, p. 370.

<sup>26</sup> M. Pojić, *Ustroj Austrougarske vojske na ozemlju Hrvatske 1868–1914.*, „Arhivski vjesnik” 2000, no 43, p. 148–150. Więcej o samej ugodzie chorwacko-węgierskiej: L. Heka, *Hrvatsko-ugarska nagodba. Pravni odnos bana i hrvatskog ministra*, Zagreb 2019; W. Felczak, *Ugoda węgiersko-chorwacka 1868 roku*, Wrocław 1969.

<sup>27</sup> D. Jelčić, *Ferdo Bečić*, <https://hbl.lzmk.hr/clanak.aspx?id=1544> [accessed on 27.03.2023].

<sup>28</sup> F. Katanić, *Galicija...*, p. 80–92.

then part of eastern Galicia. It was there that the Croatian regiments suffered the heaviest losses in clashes with the larger Russian army. The first Croatian unit to fight in Galicia was the 96<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment from Karlovac, which took part in the Battle of Gnila Lipa (29 and 30 August 1914) as part of the 34<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division of the 7<sup>th</sup> Corps from Timisoara (Romania). On August 30, 1914, near the town of Rohatyn in eastern Galicia, on the western bank of the Gnila Lipa River, a clash occurred with parts of the 12<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> Russian corps within the 8<sup>th</sup> Russian Army. Despite fulfilling their combat mission, the regiments had to acknowledge the Russian superiority in artillery and armament, as a result of which on August 31, 1914, all Austro-Hungarian forces were pushed back from the Gnila Lipa River. Subsequently, these units took part in the lost Battle of Rawa Ruska (6–11 September 1914). The losses suffered during that time were very high, ranging from one to one and a half infantry battalions (from 1064 for the 96<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment to 1612 for the 70<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment).<sup>29</sup> Because maintaining the southwestern front was crucial for the Austro-Hungarian army, an increasing number of soldiers were brought in, reaching 65,836 recruits from Croatian lands in early 1915, which was even seven times more than in 1914.<sup>30</sup>

In 1915, two of the largest units of the Austro-Hungarian Armed Forces from the territory of the Triune Kingdom of Croatia, Slavonia, and Dalmatia were brought to the Galician front. These were the 13<sup>th</sup> Corps and the 42<sup>nd</sup> Guard Infantry Division.

The official name of the unit was the 13<sup>th</sup> Croatian-Slavonian Corps, composed of regular joint forces and being the largest Croatian military unit. It operated in the territories of Croatia, Slavonia, Rijeka, and the Kvarner Islands. The Corps was established in 1883 by the Main Military Command in Zagreb during the major reorganization of the Austro-Hungarian Army.<sup>31</sup> Recruits for the Corps came from the districts of Bjelovar, Osijek, Karlovac, Otočac, Petrovaradin, Zagreb, as well as from the district that was part of the naval forces in Rijeka. The command of the 13<sup>th</sup> Corps was located at the Jezuit Square in Zagreb. At the beginning of World War I, the 13<sup>th</sup> Corps was commanded by General Colonel Adolf Freiherr von Rhemen zu Barenfeld from Austria. He led the Corps until July 1916 when General Colonel Maximilijan Čičerić took over command.<sup>32</sup>

At the beginning of World War I, the 13<sup>th</sup> Corps consisted of two infantry divisions: the 7<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division from Osijek and the 36<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division

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<sup>29</sup> F. Katanić, *Pješačke pukovnije Austro-Ugarske Vojske s područja Banske Hrvatske i Slavonije u Galicijskoj bitci 1914. godine*, „Zbornik Janković” 2018, no 3, p. 248.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 254–255.

<sup>31</sup> M. Pojić, *op. cit.*, p. 153.

<sup>32</sup> Por. M. Čičerić, *Dnevnic austro-ugarskog generala Maksimilijana Čičerića*, Zagreb 2012.

from Zagreb, along with the 8<sup>th</sup> Cavalry Brigade from Zagreb. It was supported by the 13<sup>th</sup> Artillery Brigade from Zagreb. The 7<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division included the 13<sup>th</sup> Infantry Brigade from Osijek, consisting of the 52<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Regiment from Pécs (Hungary), the 78<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment from Osijek, and the 13<sup>th</sup> Engineering Battalion from Osijek. It also included the 14<sup>th</sup> Infantry Brigade from Zemun, consisting of the 68<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment from Szolnok (Hungary), the 96<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment from Karlovac, and the 31<sup>st</sup> Rifle Battalion from Zagreb. The 36<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division from Zagreb included the 71<sup>st</sup> Infantry Brigade from Rijeka, consisting of the 70<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment from Petrovaradin and the 79<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment from Otočac, as well as the 72<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Brigade from Zagreb, consisting of the 16<sup>th</sup> and 53<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Regiments from Zagreb and the 97<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment from Trieste (Italy). Additionally, infantry battalions from the territories of Croatia and Slavonia were part of the mentioned infantry regiments from Hungary and Italy. The artillery was reinforced by an artillery brigade, consisting of four artillery regiments and a heavy howitzer battalion, with the inclusion of the 23<sup>rd</sup> Medical Division. The cavalry, comprising one cavalry brigade, consisted of one hussar regiment and one uhlans regiment from Zagreb.

At the beginning of World War I, the 13<sup>th</sup> Corps was reorganized in such a way that instead of the 7<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division from Osijek, the 42<sup>nd</sup> Guard Infantry Division from Zagreb and the 13<sup>th</sup> Infantry Brigade from the 7<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division from Osijek were incorporated. After the reorganization, in August 1914, the 13<sup>th</sup> Corps, which was part of the 5<sup>th</sup> Army, was sent to the Serbian battlefield near the Drina River.

After the battles with the Serbs, the majority of Croatian troops, following a brief rest, were sent to the Carpathians in mid-January 1915. Upon arriving in the Carpathians theater, Croatian units received a new operational schedule, similar to the 13<sup>th</sup> Corps, which included the Operational Group “Ljubičić”. The 5<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division from Olomouc (Czech Republic) and the 6<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division from Graz were part of the Army Group “Pflanzer-Baltin”. The Zagreb 13<sup>th</sup> Corps remained in Galicia and Bukovina until May 1918 when its remnants (Zagreb 36<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division) were sent to the Italian front.

On the other hand, the 42<sup>nd</sup> Guard Infantry Division was formed based on the 1868 law on the National Guard, consisting of the Sixth Command District of Croatian-Slavonian in Zagreb. This was the highest military-administrative command for the country’s defense units in the territories of the Kingdoms of Croatia and Slavonia.<sup>33</sup> In 1871, with the increase in the number of Guard Districts, the Croatian-Slavonian District of Zagreb became the Seventh. During the war, it formed the 42<sup>nd</sup> Guard Infantry Division with its headquarters in Zagreb.

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<sup>33</sup> M. Pojić, *op. cit.*, p. 157.

At the beginning of World War I, the division consisted of the 83<sup>rd</sup> Guard Infantry Brigade from Zagreb, including the 25<sup>th</sup> Guard Infantry Regiment from Zagreb, the 26<sup>th</sup> Guard Infantry Regiment from Karlovac, and the 84<sup>th</sup> Guard Infantry Brigade from Osijek, comprising the 27<sup>th</sup> Guard Infantry Regiment from Sisak and the 28<sup>th</sup> Guard Infantry Regiment from Osijek. The division also included the 10<sup>th</sup> Guard Hussar Regiment from Varaždin, as well as the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> Guard Artillery Battalions from Zagreb providing fire support to the division.

The Zagreb 42<sup>nd</sup> Guard Infantry Division joined the 13<sup>th</sup> Corps at the beginning of World War I and fought in the Drina River area. After participating in battles on the Serbian front, and under the command of General Ivan Salis-Seewis, it was sent to Galicia in mid-January 1915, where it joined the 11<sup>th</sup> Corps from Lviv, part of the Army Group "Pflanzer-Baltin". It remained in Galicia until February 1918 when it was sent to the Italian front.

### Generals from Croatian lands during the battles in Galicia and Bukovina

Among the soldiers from Croatian lands who took part in the battles in Galicia and Bukovina, there were 39 generals. Among the military personnel who held the most important positions or distinguished themselves with exceptional merit, the first to mention is Svetozar Borojević, who not only prevented the fall of the Przemyśl fortress in the first weeks of the war but also demonstrated his skills during the Battle of Limanowa-Łapanów.<sup>34</sup> The second highest-ranking general after Borojević was Pavao Puhallo, who replaced him in 1915 as the commander of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Army when Borojević was transferred to the Isonzo Front.<sup>35</sup> Maksimilijan Čičerić (Maximilian Csicseric), who served as a military envoy of the Austro-Hungarian army to Manchuria during the Russo-Japanese War in 1905, was decorated multiple times for his actions during the battles in Galicia.<sup>36</sup> He also participated in the Brest-Litovsk negotiations as a representative of the Supreme Command of the Army.<sup>37</sup> Stjepan Ljubičić distinguished himself

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<sup>34</sup> D. Nečak, *Feldmarszałek Svetozar Borojević...*, p. 70–71.

<sup>35</sup> T. Balla, *Hrvatski generali najvišeg ranga u Austro-Ugarskim oružanim snagama u prvim dvjema godinama Velikog rata* [in:] 1914. prva godina rata u Trojednoj Kraljevini i Austro-Ugarskoj Monarhiji, ed. V. Herman-Kaurić Zagreb 2018, p. 240–241; *Hrvatski biografski leksikon, Leksikografski zavod „Miroslav Krleža“* 1993, vol. 3, p. 60.

<sup>36</sup> Hrvatski Državni Arhiv, Lični fond Čičerić Maksimilijan, sign. HR-HDA-792.

<sup>37</sup> M. Wrzosek, *Okolicznosci towarzyszące zimowo-wiosennym operacjom wojsk niemieckich i austro-węgierskich w 1918 roku*, „Studia Podlaskie” 1993, no 4, p. 249.

during the battles of Limanowa-Łapanów,<sup>38</sup> and later in the Battle of Gorlice. At the same time, Johann (Ivan) Nikić, as a two-star general, commanded the 41<sup>st</sup> Honvéd Infantry Division operating in the Raba River Valley.<sup>39</sup> Anton Lipošćak, mentioned earlier, was a very talented commander and efficient administrator who replaced Stanisław Szeptycki as the General-Governor in Lublin in February 1918.<sup>40</sup> Lipošćak, known for his firmness and reluctance towards the Germans, gained significant sympathy among the local Polish population.<sup>41</sup> Earlier, from 1915–1916 and briefly in 1917, he led the 42<sup>nd</sup> Guard Infantry Division. After him, Luka Šnjarić (1916–1917), Mihael Mihaljević (1917–1918), and Teodor Soretić (1918) served as commanders until the dissolution of the Division.<sup>42</sup> Most of the generals received various decorations and medals for their contribution to the fight on the Galician and Bukovinian fronts, including the highest military decoration, the Knight's Cross of the Order of Maria Theresa. This was the case for several generals like Svetozar Borojević,<sup>43</sup> Rudolf Pilepić,<sup>44</sup> and Geza Lukačić.<sup>45</sup> Some individuals also received noble titles for their exceptional merits, such as Georg Mišćević, who participated in battles in Pawłówka and defended the Belzec-Rawa Ruska railway line, receiving a noble title from Emperor Charles at the end of the war.<sup>46</sup> Teodor Bekić, a veteran of the battles of Gorlice and Tarnów, similarly received the title “von Bović” in 1916.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> F. Julier, *Bitwa pod Limanową 1914*, Oświęcim 2015, p. 24–25; „Wiener Zeitung”, Wien, no 240, (11.10.1914), p. 1; T. Balla, *op. cit.*, p. 242.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 243.

<sup>40</sup> S. Pijaj, *Anton Lipošćak: portrait of a general and military governor in Poland*, „Historijski Zbornik”, 2022, vol. 75/1, p. 100.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>42</sup> T. Šarić, D. Marjanić, “Zagrebačke” *postrojbe austrougarske vojske u Prvom svjetskom ratu – statistički pregled uzorka poginulih na temelju vojnih matičnih knjiga umrlih*, [in:] Zbornik radova s Druge međunarodne konferencije “Učešće dobrovoljaca i uloga civilnog stanovništva u Prvom svjetskom ratu” (29. i 30. oktobra 2015. godine), ed. D. Kašić, M. Jaćimović, Novi Sad 2016, p. 209.

<sup>43</sup> D. Tatić, *Feldmaršal Svetozar Borojević – Životopis prešućenoga velikana*, Zagreb, 2019; *Znameniti i zaslužni Hrvati te pomena vrijedna lica u hrvatskoj povijesti od 925–1925*, ed. E. Laszowski, Zagreb 1925, p. 34; *Österreichisches Biographisches Lexikon 1815–1950*, Bd. 1 (Lfg. 2, 1954), p. 103.

<sup>44</sup> *Österreichisches Biographisches Lexikon 1815–1950*, Bd. 8 (Lfg. 36, 1979), p. 76; I. Ćosić Bukvin, *Visoki vojni časnici Austro-Ugarske vojske s područja Međbosuća na Balkanskom i Istočnom bojištu*, [in:] *1914. prva godina rata u Trojnoj Kraljevini i Austro-Ugarskoj Monarhiji*, ed. V. Herman-Kaurić Zagreb 2018, p. 276.

<sup>45</sup> *Österreichisches Biographisches Lexikon 1815–1950*, Bd. 5 (Lfg. 24, 1971), p. 360.

<sup>46</sup> F. Katanić, *Galicija...*, p. 64–65; „Oestereichische Wehrzeitung”, Wien, no 51, (17.12.1937), p. 8.

<sup>47</sup> N. Tominac, *Hrvati u Zimskim bitkama za Karpate i probouju kod Gorlica i Tarnowa 1915. godine*, „Časopis za suvremenu povijest” 2018, vol. 50/2, p. 294.

The courage, sacrifice, and successes of Croatian generals are best evidenced by the fact that during the war, they received 115 high decorations, out of which 21 were “Knight’s Crosses”, solely for heroic deeds performed in Galicia and Bukovina. Additionally, Croatian General Antun Plivelić was the first Austro-Hungarian general awarded the Golden Medal for Bravery for Officers. Nine Croatian generals were wounded on the battlefield, and Brigadier General Karlo Mihanović, who spent the entire war on the Galician front, was wounded twice.

The hardships of war took a toll on the health of the generals, some of whom died due to illness and overall exhaustion. Brigadier General Rudolf Sekulić, due to the difficult frontline conditions, fell ill and died on October 15, 1917, in military barracks in Chernivtsi (Bukovina). Similarly, Major General Milan Grubića died on June 29, 1917, at the Franciszek Lazne Military Hospital in Czechia, Brigadier General Eugen Vučinić passed away on August 14, 1918, in Baden near Vienna, and Major General Aleksandra Vidulović died in Vienna on November 5, 1918. They were all between 54 and 57 years old.

The fall of Austria-Hungary was synonymous with the end of the world for many high-ranking officers. The army, along with the civilian administration, was one of the pillars of the Habsburg monarchy. Soldiers remained loyal to the monarchy until the end, so many of them struggled to cope with the new reality. This problem affected not only “Croatian generals” who served in the Austro-Hungarian army but the majority of the general staff regardless of their origin.

After going through the hell of Galicia and Bukovina, the generals from the Croatian lands faced a difficult and uncertain future. By the end of World War I, they were left without the country they fought for and without the homeland they were not allowed to return to. Even if they managed to reach their native lands, they were not welcomed as representatives of the former “regime” and struggled to make ends meet. They were probably among the biggest losers of World War I. They possessed a series of worthless decorations and useless noble titles that would have ensured prosperity and a comfortable retirement in earlier times, but now barely covered their basic life needs.

For individuals like Borojević or Puhallo,<sup>48</sup> this meant nothing but a life on the brink of poverty. They did not receive their deserved military pensions, so they had to rely on the help of their friends to survive. They often struggled mentally with the situation they found themselves in, as was the case with Oskar Baukovac,<sup>49</sup> who, unable to count on state benefits in 1922, committed suicide. Out of the 39 generals mentioned here who fought on the fronts of Galicia and Bukovina, more than half, 22 of them, died in poverty and obscurity within 10 years after the war ended.

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<sup>48</sup> Österreichisches Biographisches Lexikon 1815–1950, Bd. 8 (Lfg. 39, 1982), p. 328; T. Balla, *op. cit.*, p. 245–246.

<sup>49</sup> „Pester Lloyd”, Budapest, no 36 (14.02.1922), p. 5.



## Conclusion

Croatian soldiers of higher ranks serving in Galicia and Bukovina in the 19<sup>th</sup> century constitute an interesting group not only from a military perspective but also as a social phenomenon. They were mostly of noble descent, who graduated from the best military academies in the country, constituting the military elite of their nation. They gained combat experience far from their homeland. The Habsburg army's policy of personnel rotations led many of them to Galicia and Bukovina, where they developed as military leaders, spending time there both in peacetime and during war. Before World War I, Croatian military personnel in Galicia and Bukovina were primarily well-born and highly educated individuals – the elite. However, the situation changed during World War I when many Croats, serving as cannon fodder, arrived in these regions. In Croatian historiography, it is their sacrifice that is remembered, while the earlier service of higher-ranking officers has been forgotten and is absent both in Croatia and in Poland.

Awareness of the presence of military personnel from the southern Slavic regions in the Austrian partition from 1772 to 1918 is limited and mainly confined to military history enthusiasts. They are most often discussed in the context of World War I, especially when examining specific battles involving units from the southern Slavic regions. However, this topic seems to have much greater potential from a historical research perspective. There is a lack of joint Polish-Croatian studies on this issue. This article aims to initiate a discussion on this topic and also suggests certain directions for scholarly debate. Besides purely military aspects, which we have mostly focused on, there are also issues related to historical memory. Galicija and Bukovina were a trauma for an entire generation, who lost thousands of husbands, sons, and fathers over four years. This article also aims to show how Poles, alongside soldiers of other nations, fought united under the common banner of the Habsburgs.

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## Chorwaccy żołnierze, generałowie w Galicji i na Bukowinie w latach 1772–1918

### Streszczenie

Artykuł dotyczy obecności chorwackich żołnierzy w Galicji i na Bukowinie w okresie zaboru austriackiego, z wyszczególnieniem oficerów, którzy na pewnym etapie swojej wojskowej kariery dosłużyli do stopnia generała. Odwołując się do ich przykładu, chcielibyśmy pokazać, jakie znaczenie dla Galicji mieli wojskowi, którzy pochodzili z południowej Słowiańszczyzny, jak również jak obecność tych wojskowych jest postrzegana w chorwackiej historiografii. Szczególnie mamy tu na myśli wydarzenia z okresu I wojny światowej, w których udział brała część wymienionych w artykule żołnierzy.

**Słowa kluczowe:** służba wojskowa, stosunki polsko-chorwackie, historia wojskowości, Galicja, I wojna światowa