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ITEM No. 3863/52

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21 Mar
VII/120

RUMANIA

BORDER ZONES
Border Guards

Security Measures Along The Yugoslav Border

SOURCE TRIESTE: a Rumanian refugee who fled from Rumania to Yugoslavia on 26 September 1951. He was a corporal in the 3rd Frontier Guards Regiment in the village of IAM on the Rumanian-Yugoslav border.

DATE OF OBSERVATION: September 1951.

The Commandant of the Frontier Guards (Trupele de Graniceri) in the Ministry of the Interior in BUCHAREST is Gen. BULAN Iacob; his aide and political commandant of the troops is Gen. BOICU Mihail.

The Frontier Guards are organized in divisions, regiments, battalions and platoons (pluton.) In 1950 on the occasion of the celebration of the 23 August Liberation, the entire Rumanian army was changed by the introduction of Soviet systems of organization. Even the frontier troops were reorganized; the companies disappeared and the platoons were extended to 80 men, while before they were composed of 40. Source claims that this organization was only introduced among the regiments along the Yugoslav frontier, whereas the other regiments still have companies.

The organization of the brigade of Frontier Guards of LUGOI is as follows:

- 3rd Regiment of Frontier Guards of CRAVITA;
- 4th Regiment of Frontier Guards of TIMISOARA;
- Instruction Center of LUGOI Frontier Guards;
- Instruction Center of CARANSEBES Frontier Guards;
- Artillery Instruction Center of CARANSEBES Frontier Guards.

The 3rd Regiment of CRAVITA has three battalions: one at COMORASTE, the second at RACASLIA and the third at SOCOL. Each battalion has eight platoons composed of from 80 to 82 men, plus a non-commissioned officer and two lieutenants. At regiment headquarters in CRAVITA there is also a company of engineers and a "reeducation" company. The engineers are employed in building fortifications along the frontier; the "reeducation" company (officially called "compania de pistolari") is composed of soldiers who during their tour of duty at the border misbehaved in some manner (drinking, fighting, etc.) They are stationed at headquarters and are sent wherever they are needed in case of emergency along the frontier. They receive harsh treatment and military instruction every day.

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The Regiment's headquarters include the following offices: military instruction, political education and administration.

The soldiers of a given battalion patrol a strip of land along the border 60 km long. The 3rd Regiment patrols the Rumanian-Yugoslav border from BAZIAS to PICHETUL 1 MAI, a distance of about 120 km.

The 2nd Battalion of RACASDIA has platoons in the following localities: GIORTEA, IAM, MILCOVENI, RUSOVA NOUA, PETRILOVA, NAIDAS, LESCOVITA and CAMPPIA; altogether eight platoons, each composed of from 80 to 82 men, plus the commandant and the political aide, two lieutenants and a sergeant major, head of the administration. Each platoon is armed as follows: 40 ZB rifles, 40 PSS automatic pistols of Soviet make, 12 automatic rifles, and two machine guns (one ZB and the other Mauser.) Since 1950 the following work has been done on the Yugoslav frontier:

- a) a barbed wire fence, two meters high;
- b) a 10-meter-wide strip of plowed and raked land (to reveal footprints of clandestine border crossings;)
- c) a 10 meter-wide strip mined at intervals of 40 cms;
- d) an automatic rocket warning system triggered when anyone attempts to cross border (no one else seems to know of this, but source claims he saw it.)
- e) a 500-meter wide strip where all trees have been cut down and where it is forbidden to grow tall plants;
- f) a border zone 30 km wide where no one may enter without a special identity card issued to the inhabitants of the zone, or a permit issued by militia for those living outside the zone who have to enter it for special and definite reasons.

Near the plowed strip there are observation towers, each containing three soldiers equipped with binoculars. The towers are hooked up with platoon headquarters by field telephone and are located one kilometer from the other.

During the day the following personnel are on duty at the border:

- a) three soldiers in the observation towers;
- b) two soldiers lying in wait near the plowed strip;
- c) groups of two soldiers who control the people working near the frontier.

At night, there are no soldiers in the towers, but the two men hidden near the plowed land and the patrols of two are on duty.

Each soldier has a seven-hour-tour of duty. When he is not on duty his daily program is as follows:

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0800 hours: reveille, exercise and breakfast;
 1000 to 1200: political education;
 1200 to 1530: dinner, rest;
 1530 to 1800: military instruction;
 1800 to 1900: supper;
 1900 to 2000: the soldier's hour (ora ostasului) that is political education;
 2000: retreat.

For two hours in the morning and for one hour in the afternoon the soldiers are "educated" along Marxist lines. They must study the history of the Russian Bolshevik Party, the Five-Year-Plan, the wealth of the Soviet Union, the situation in Yugoslavia, etc. Three times a week there is a "seminar" during which the soldiers must answer questions put to them by the political instructor. Besides these lessons, on Sundays there is the ARLUS (Asociatia Romana pentru Strangerea Legaturilor cu Uniunea Sovietica) hour. During this hour the international events of the week are discussed.

All the officers of the Frontier Guards are Communists, and even if an old army officer is in service (which is very rare among the officers of the troops of the Ministry of the Interior) he must join the Party and carry on a married political activity. Among the officers of the 2nd Battalion at RACASDIA there is not a single old army-officer; all are ex-workers and sometimes ex-farmers who had entered the ranks of this army within the last few years.

About half of the soldiers are members of the Party. The non-Party members are always sent on duty together with a Party member in order to prevent desertion.

No soldier may send or receive mail except through the military post office (the postal number of the 3rd Frontier Guards Regiment is 5480.) The letters are censored by the political commandant of the platoon or regiment and reach the addressee open. On 10 September 1951, the soldier FIRITA Ion of the 2nd Battalion of RACASDIA was arrested and sent to work on the Danube-Black Sea Canal for having written in a letter to his mother something about the Yugoslav border incident of 5 September 1951. In 1950 another soldier, BARBU Mihai, was also sent to the Danube-Black Sea Canal for a similar infraction. The political officers of the frontier guard units have their informers among the soldiers, the spy of the 2nd detachment of IAM is the soldier DOBROGEANU Gheorghe of gypsy origin, from the province of ILFOV.

EVAL. COMMENT: confirmed by other sources.