

# *The contribution of the Military school to the building of the national security system of Bulgaria in the period 1878-1885*

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**Abstract.** The present article is part of an in-depth scientific study focused on the evolution of officer training in the Bulgarian military school from 1878 to the present day. The subject of this report is the role of the military school in the developing system of national security in the period 1878-1885. The purpose of the report is to determine the contribution of the military school to national security based on the analysis of quantitative and qualitative indicators. To achieve the goal, the following research tasks have been formulated: 1. To carry out a study of the available military-historical archival funds and units to establish the parameters of the quantitative and qualitative indicators of the study. 2. Based on the analysis of the career development of officers who successfully graduated from the military school, to determine their contribution to national security for the period of study. The research methodology covers the use alone or in combination of the generally accepted scientific methods of analysis and synthesis, comparison, induction and deduction, historical references, studies of specialized publications on the subject, etc.

**Keywords:** *military school, Bulgaria, national security*

## I. INTRODUCTION

The role of the military education system in the national security system is the subject of research by many modern Bulgarian scientists. Some of them research the modern approaches to education and management in the system of security (Stoykov S., Marinov P., 2019) [1], the influence of military organizational culture on individual performance of the learners (Petrova E., 2019) [2], the styles of management for military security systems (Marinov R., 2020) [3], as well the leadership style of the Bulgarian cadets as a part of national security education process (Atanasova-Krasteva, 2015) [4].

And while the role of the military school in its modern form is the object of constant research by military specialists, it is striking that there is insufficient research on the initial stage of the process of creation and development of the military school, as the basis of statehood and the

security system in Bulgaria, namely the period 1878-1885. After the end of the Russian-Turkish War, Bulgaria gained its independence after a long period of Ottoman rule. According to Article 6 of the preliminary San Stefano peace treaty, a Russian occupation army remains on the territory of liberated Bulgaria for a period of 2 years to maintain order and protect the state and to provide its national security. Later according to Art. 22 of the Berlin Treaty, this period is reduced to 9 months. [5]

Prince Dondukov-Korsakov, who was appointed on 08.05.1878 as the Imperial Russian Commissar in Bulgaria, understood very well that after its liberation, Bulgaria would need a strong army to defend its conquests. For this new established army, command staff will be needed, which it cannot get anywhere, but must train and prepare itself. Moreover, the acceptance of the first set of 30,000 young men into the Land Army is scheduled for the month of September 1878. That is why one of the first steps of the Imperial Russian Commissar was to establish as soon as possible an institution for the training of junior officers. While the issue of non-commissioned officers can be resolved with the recruitment of personnel from the militia companies, the issue of officers remains open. Indeed, in the Russian army there is a core of 36 Bulgarian officers, mostly junior officers, but a small part of them are in the Balkan theatre of military operations.

The present article is part of an in-depth scientific study dedicated to the development of officer training in the Bulgarian military school from 1878 to the present day.

## II. MATERIALS AND METHODS

According to the research results of the available electronic database in Bulgarian State Military Archive Agency, the archival fund of the Bulgarian military school consists of 39 inventories with a total of 2,774 archival papers and documents covering the period 1878 - 2001. They are the main open sources of historical information for the fundamental research of which this article is a part.

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The subject of this report is the role of the military school in the national security system developing process in the period 1878-1885.

The purpose of the article is to research and determine the contribution of the military school to national security based on the analysis of quantitative and qualitative indicators.

To achieve the main research goals, the following research tasks have been formulated:

1. To research the available military-historical archival funds and units to establish the parameters of the quantitative and qualitative indicators of the study.

2. Based on the analysis of the career development of officers who successfully graduated from the military school, to determine their contribution to national security for the period of study.

The research methodology covers the use alone or in combination of the generally accepted scientific methods of analysis and synthesis, comparison, induction and deduction, historical references, studies of specialized scientific publications on the subject, etc.

### III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Establishment of a military school - the strategic move of the Imperial Commissar.

According to a number of specialists who have worked on the subject (Zlatev M., 2004; Ruchev N., 2012) [6], [7], the establishment of the military school at the dawn of the newly liberated state is of extreme importance for statehood in Bulgaria. Even before the decisions of the Berlin Congress regarding the future fate of the newly established Bulgarian principality, according to the Treaty of San Stefano were known, the Imperial Commissioner in Bulgaria, Prince Dondukov-Korsakov, fearing an unfavorable decision by the Congress on the period for the stay of Russian troops on the territory of The Principality proceeded to form in Plovdiv a military training unit, composed of Bulgarian youths, who were to be given elementary military training, so that, if political circumstances required, they could be produced in the first rank of officers and fill the command staff of the newly created Bulgarian Land army. This strategic move aims to prevent the recruitment and entry into the army of foreign officers.

The main specialist in Bulgarian military history (Zlatev M., 2004) [8] define the beginning of this first period in the creation of the military school in Bulgaria as a period of searching for the optimal option in the construction of the military school in a country that has just gained freedom after 500 years of slavery, which lacks a suitable personnel potential to create officer corps. The choice of the best option is influenced by an extraordinary number of circumstances that are difficult to summarize and accept.

The analysis of the socio-political situation in national and international aspects reveals several main factors that have a negative character in relation to the idea of creating a military school. In the first place is the training time, or rather the lack of sufficient time for the training of an

officer, according to the political circumstances of the period.

The other main challenges at the beginning are:

- the absence of own personnel and teaching staff to conduct the officer military training,

- lack of theoretical and applied materials for military training and training of officers - instructions, doctrines, field manuals, etc.,

- there is no educational and material base for military training,

- weak or almost non-existent general educational training of incoming cadet candidates,

- language barrier in the use of Russian teachers and instructors,

- complete absence of historical experience and traditions in military officer training, etc.

Therefore, we should not be surprised at the frequent changes, numerous compromises and not always adequate solutions in the process of these searches.

It is enough to mention even just the wandering in determining the period of training from several months to five years, and in later periods and 6-7 years, in order to assess the difficulties faced by the first builders of the Bulgarian military school.

2. The command of the "volunteers".

On March 1878, a Russian language course was opened in Plovdiv with the task of preparing young people for translators and secretaries in the newly appointed district administrations and other state departments in the new established Bulgaria. The course participants are 120 people from all over the country, mostly graduates of the best grade schools, as well as high schools abroad. Classes are held at Holy Trinity School. The course is led by the Russian captain Nikolai Fedyai, and the director is Grigor Nachovich. The director Nachovich informed all students that very soon a military school for the training of officers would be opened in Sofia. Before that, he informed them that a military training command was being opened in Plovdiv. The so-called command of the "volunteers" in which they will be able to enter and which will become the germ of the future military school. At the end of May 1878, in the lower floor of the former Turkish inn in Plovdiv, guard captain Nikolay Fleischer accepted requests to join the command, where 40 people enrolled in the translator course. Captain Fleischer takes over the senior control and organization of the classes. In August 1878, this command already numbered 80 people and was renamed a company of volunteers. Many of those who enrolled graduated from Aprilov High School, Plovdiv Grade School, Bolgrad Bulgarian High School, Robert College and Galatasaray Lyceum in Constantinople and other educational institutions abroad. At the same time, Prince Dondukov-Korsakov instructed the head of the military department of the Imperial Commissariat, Major General Zolotarev, to study the issue of establishing a military school in the country as soon as possible and to do everything possible for its soon opening. From the very beginning of the formation of this command, intense classes began to be

held with it. This is necessary in view of the possible danger that the graduates will be produced earlier in the first officer rank. In addition to conducting drills, lectures on topography were given by staff captain Ryabinkin and on fortification by engineer captain Saranchov. When, after the signing of the Treaty of Berlin on 01/07/1878, it became known that the Russian occupation troops would remain in the Principality of Bulgaria and Eastern Rumelia for 9 months, not 2 years, and when around the middle of August 1878 the first reports appeared about the establishment of a military school, training in the command is limited almost exclusively to military training with the desire for the upcoming major military ceremony to present itself in the best possible way. After the ceremony, the company's classes are almost suspended, because preparations are already being made for its departure to Sofia to enter the military school. In the first days of August 1878 Major General Zolotarev drew up a proposal and after its approval, on 15-08, a notice was published for the knowledge of the Bulgarian youth for admission to the newly established military school. In the initial situation for the establishment of the military school, some main principles were laid down, which were in force for a long period of its existence. The aims of the school are stated very briefly, but still clearly enough. Only one military school is established for all branches of troops, which is of fundamental importance for the uniformity of the officer corps. Unfortunately, in later periods these principles were drastically violated in favour of the recognition of the role of the Bulgarian officers. Recently after the announcement, the program for the entrance exam of the candidates was also announced. Of interest are not only the subjects on which they will be tested, but the main questions on which they must demonstrate knowledge. The program was published in issue 16 on 19-th of September 1878 of Maritsa newspaper. The program for the entrance exam for admission to the junior class includes the disciplines of God's law, Russian language, Bulgarian language, mathematics, arithmetic, geography and history. The examination program for the senior class includes the disciplines of God's law, Russian language, Bulgarian language, mathematics, arithmetic, geometry, geography and history. The newly established military school was under the department of the Imperial Commissar and under the authority of the member of the council and the head of the military department. The Imperial Commissar has the highest supervision in the direction of the educational part. The closest management of the school is assigned to its head. The military school has a study committee and a library.

### 3. Terms of study.

When establishing a school, cadets are accepted simultaneously for 2 classes for a training period of 1 year for the senior class and 2 years for the junior class. However, due to the complicated situation in Bulgaria after the decisions of the Berlin Congress, the training of the first graduating class was shortened and they were produced as officers on 10/05/1879, that is, after staying at the school for about 5 and a half months. In 1880 it was concluded that a two-year course of study was insufficient to thoroughly pass the material, both in educational and military subjects. Therefore, by order of the military department No. 156 of the same year, it was ordered to switch to a 3-year training

period from the academic year 1881-1882. Subsequently, it was judged that this was insufficient and real since 1881. year the school is on a four-year course, having the following classes – junior class, senior class, main first special class and second special class. At the beginning of the next academic year, the fall of 1882 one more main class is opened, called preparatory class, which makes the full course of the school 5 years. However, this continued until the autumn of 1884, when the duration was again switched to 4 years of training, which was considered to be quite sufficient to give the necessary theoretical and practical training to future officers. After the Serbo-Bulgarian war of 1885, due to the premature production of the cadets of the senior class and their sending to the front, the number of trainees in the school decreased and again it was switched to a 3-year training course.

In 1888, another preparatory class was opened, which made the training period four years again. This situation in the school was preserved until the end of the century.

In 1900, serious changes took place in the school. They are mostly related to the opening of a military high school for him. The credit for this goes to the then chief, Colonel Mikhail Savov, and the class inspector, Captain Nerezov. The reason for the change is primarily the aspiration of the school's command to reach the European level in the training of officer cadres. By starting their education and upbringing at an early age. Undoubtedly, this is one of the ways to achieve better military training of the future young officers. [9]

### 4. Analysis of the realization of the graduates of the military school for the period 1879-1900.

In order to properly analyse the realization of the graduates of the military school for the period 1879-1900, it is necessary to correctly select the indicators through which we can obtain the necessary results.

For the purposes of the present study, we can use as quantities indicators Tcad (total number of accepted cadets) and SGrad (number of successful graduates) as quantitative indicators. As an indicator of the effectiveness of the training received in the military school is the realization of the graduates in the professional career, denoted by Rprof (professional realization).

TABLE 1 RESEARCH INDICATORS

Graduated classes	Research indicators		
	Tcad	SGrad	Rprof
1 graduated class	252	163	36
2 graduated class	177	84	14
3 graduated class	139	62	7
4 graduated class	72	50	13
5 graduated class	95	45	7
6 graduated class	93	58	17
7 graduated class	112	74	3

Source: created by author

First graduated class – 10/05/1879

The value of Tcad<sub>1</sub>= 252 represent the total number of accepted cadet candidates in the first graduated class. The

value of the indicator  $SGrad_1 = 163$  shows to us that 64,68% from the cadets successfully graduated the military school.

As a quality indicator  $Rprof_1 = 36$  (22,09%) is representing the number of the successfully graduated who achieved the highest possible duty rank – General. The first group is so called “General graduation group”, due to the largest number (36) of graduated who later in the military carrier became Generals. It is interesting to note that till 1913, 83 (50,92%) of them commanded regiments, 42 (25,77%) brigades, 15 (9,20%) divisions, and 8 (4,90%) armies. In addition, 5 became heads of the military school, 3 became inspectors of artillery 2 of cavalry, 5 officers reach the rank of chief of the army staff, 6 officers reach the top of the career and become ministers of defence.

#### Second graduated class – 30/08/1980

As shown on the Tab. 1 the value of  $Tcad_2 = 177$  means that the second cadets group is about 70,24% from  $Tcad_1 = 252$  as total amount of the cadets accepted one year earlier. The value of indicator  $SGrad_2 = 84$  shows that only 47,46% of all accepted cadets successfully graduated military school. After a two-year training course graduated 84 infantry officers, 62 artillerymen, 11 cavalrymen, 7 and 4 engineer officers.  $Rprof_2 = 4$  is the quality indicator and it represents the realization of 16,67% of successfully graduated who achieved the highest rank in military carrier.

#### Third graduated class – 30/08/1882

$Tcad_3 = 139$  candidates entered (21,47% less than the previous year), and  $SGrad_3 = 62$  (44,60%) cadets successfully graduated, of which  $Rprof_3 = 7$  (11,29%) reached the rank of general.

#### Fourth graduated class – 30/08/1883

In the 4th graduating class,  $Tcad_4 = 72$  (48,20% less than the previous year) candidates entered, who study for 4 years. They graduated earlier that it had been scheduled on 30/08/1883, with  $SGrad_4 = 50$  (69,44%). From them,  $Rprof_4 = 13$  (26%) officers reached the rank of general.

#### Fifth graduated class – 30/08/1884

The fifth graduating class of  $Tcad_5 = 95$  (31,94% more than the previous year) candidates was admitted to the school on 09/19/1880. The graduation was on 30/08/1884, when  $SGrad_5 = 45$  (47,37%) people became officers. Of these,  $Rprof_5 = 7$  (15,56%) officers reached the rank of general.

#### Sixth graduated class – 30/08/1885

In May 1881 a total of  $Tcad_6 = 93$  candidates were admitted to the school in the 6th graduating group. Graduation took place on 30/08/1885.  $SGrad_6 = 58$  (62,37%) became officers. Of these,  $Rprof_6 = 17$  (29,31%) officers reached the rank of general.

#### Seventh graduated class – graduated in the combat units

The seventh graduating class entered in 1882 for a four-year study period. The values of indicators are  $Tcad_7 = 112$  (20,43% more),  $SGrad_7 = 74$  (66,07%). The Serbian-Bulgarian war, which began in 1885, required that the graduating class be produced ahead of schedule in the rank of portupty-junker and sent to the front line. Later, without

returning to the school, at different times they were promoted to officer ranks. From this graduating class,  $Rprof_7 = 3$  (4,05%) officers reached the rank of general.

## IV. CONCLUSIONS

1. Already at the dawn of post-liberation Bulgaria, we can define the idea of guaranteeing the security of the nation by establishing of a military school for the training of officers for the needs of the Bulgarian Land Forces as a strategic decision in the field of national security.

2. Despite the difficulties and the absence of minimum necessary conditions for training - qualified teachers, necessary study materials, study-material base, national traditions and experience in the training of officers, etc. the leadership of the military school, by applying "ad hoc" solutions, managed to prepare the necessary officer cadres for the young Bulgarian army.

3. Despite the insufficient time and conditions for the research period of 1878 until 1885 the military school managed to prepare 536 officers who with their expertise build the national security system in its military component, with 87 of the graduates reaching in their carrier the rank of general. The analysis highlights the achievements of the first graduating class, called "general class", from which by 1913, 83 of them commanded regiments, 42 commanded brigades, 15 commanded divisions, and 8 commanded armies. In addition, 5 became heads of the military school, 3 became inspectors of artillery 2 became inspectors of cavalry, 5 officers reach the rank of chief of the army staff, 6 officers reach the top of their careers and became ministers.

4. The analysis of the origin and development of the military school in the studied period reveals that it was established with Russian support in 1878 in the city of Plovdiv, subsequently moved to the city of Sofia, where it was officially opened, which gives us reason to assume that with its establishment, the beginning of the construction of the military-educational system, as an fundamental element of the national security system of Bulgaria in the end of the XIX century.

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