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Dear Friends,

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“When the patrolling gendarmes stepped in, even the thoughts stood at attention.” This is how a friend of mine characterized the respect and stature the Hungarian gendarmes had.

In January, I received a phone call from a lawyer in New York. He informed me that he is probating the will of a Hungarian gentleman, who, after directing sums of money to various organizations, has bequeathed the remainder to our veterans’ organization. I asked for the name of the Hungarian gentleman, but it was not familiar. I asked what sort of sum are we talking about? The lawyer stated well over \$100,000.00. He requested certain information from me, as to prove our incorporation and tax free status. I asked that he would send his request for information to me via email on letterhead stationery.

When I hung up, I could barely believe what I had just heard, but I have learned not to let my emotions get the best of me. All too often, I have been promised various things in the past, which unfortunately never materialized. Nevertheless, I started thinking of the possibilities for such a large sum of money. I thought that perhaps we could now set up a gendarme garrison room at the Opusztaszer Park in Hungary, or establish a very



**v. János Hangodi, the youngest Sgt. Major in the
Hungarian Royal Gendarmerie,
Mounted gendarme garrison commander.**

much needed gendarmerie museum in Tata.

After not hearing from the lawyer for a week, I called him. As it turned out, it was not our gendarme veterans' organization to which the money was to be directed, but rather the World Federation of Hungarian Veterans (MHBK). I gave him the names and phone numbers of the individuals whom he should contact. Well, at least for a short time, we could dream. I hope though that someday our dreams will come true.

I was talking recently with a friend, whose father, János v. Hangodi, was a gendarme sergeant major (alhadnagy). I asked him to write for us a biography of his father's life as a gendarme, as I felt his story is a very good representation of the fate of the gendarmes in general. We are in the process of compiling this significant material to be placed in the biography section of our website. It will include the usual timeline of his life with photographs, but also will contain his notes of the tortures, unbelievable humiliation, and brutal treatment he and other gendarmes suffered at the hands of the AVO. There is no other group in Hungary that suffered so unjustly and so severely, as did the gendarmes for their "sin" of serving faithfully.

János v. Hangodi was the youngest gendarme in the country to be promoted to the rank of Sgt. Major. He was the garrison commander of the largest mounted gendarme unit in Hungary, received several national awards in equestrian jumping, as well as in marksmanship, and also received first place in a competition of garrison landscaping. His last assignment as a gendarme was to take a large group of gendarme families west towards the Allies, as the Russian Army advanced. He was successful in reaching the Allies and surrendered to the British. He won the admiration of the British major in charge, who became aware of Hangodi's excellent horsemanship. The major offered to take him and his family to England to manage his horse farm. Sgt. Maj. Hangodi thanked him for his generous offer, but said he desired to live in his own homeland, and he had no hesitation going back, as he had always acted right, and therefore had nothing to fear. But as soon as he re-entered Hungary, he was taken into custody and his severe maltreatment by the AVO started, and lasted for several years. It was only during the Hungarian Freedom Fight of 1956 that he was able to escape with some of his family to the West, and eventually settle in Canada, where he made a living with his landscaping skills.

The communists exploited the tragedy of the Holocaust by laying all the blame on the gendarmerie. With this false accusation, to their Western allies they gave an appearance of justice, as to why they abolished and persecuted the gendarmes. Their propaganda was so effective that even today, 60 years later, most Hungarians still believe the Jewish deportations were the reason for the termination of the gendarmerie. But now, our website exposes this clever deception. The 1945 order terminating the gendarmerie may be found on our website in its entirety. The document does not even mention the Jews or their deportation (and the nature of the concentration camps was not widely known about at that time). From the order it is clear, that the gendarmerie was annihilated for purely political reasons.

Every gendarme under custody had to be examined by a board to determine if the given gendarme would or would not be "proved," that is, if he needed to be subjected to further "investigation" or set free. The criteria for being "proved" were tantamount to a gendarme betraying his oath by having been a traitor to his homeland in collusion with the communists. As a consequence, very few of them got proved. But here again, in these criteria there was no mention of the Jews or their deportations. The deportations were conveniently incorporated as a judgment against the gendarmerie well after their incarcerations, tortures, beatings, and often executions. Documentations such as the biography of v. János Hangodi exemplify this fact

well. He was brutally treated, even though he was innocent of all crimes, and was even instrumental in the saving of several Jewish lives during the war. Documentation, like this, so clearly shows that the purging of the gendarmerie was a purely political act and had nothing to do with war crimes. Anyone in disagreement with the communists and their methods was dealt with extreme force.

It is heartbreaking to read biography after biography of gendarmes, such as János v. Hangodi's, seeing what outstanding men they were, and then read how they and their families had to suffer. At the same time, our homeland was robbed of the gendarmes' outstanding contributions to the betterment of society, with their excellent character and talents. For example, one of János v. Hangodi's sons was a very talented artist, but had to live his life as a mechanic, because, as the son of gendarme, he was not allowed to receive higher training or education.

In our last newsletter, we made a mistake in the caption of Jenő Péterffy's wedding photograph. He was not a Sergeant Major, (alhadnagy), as the caption said, but a 1st Lt. (főhadnagy) at the time. We regret this error.

We have recently reached another major milestone. We now have over 300 books on our website. I could not have imagined this a few years ago. I can still recall how thrilled we were, when we put our first volume, Dr. Béla Rektor's book, onto our site. We felt a great satisfaction and sense of accomplishment. Our website now has every book on it that we know of, that survived the willful destruction of these books by the communists and can be found in the major libraries and major private collections. The last five additions were contributed again by our colleague, Gábor Orbán. This is a great accomplishment indeed. We thank God for making it possible.

Having put all books, newspapers, and newsletters on the website, we are now updating and correcting the captions of the photographs of the website's Museum. After that, our last major undertaking will be the placement on our site the massive collected biographical notes of György Perjési.

We thankfully acknowledge again those, who have made a donation in the past three months to help in the work of the MKCsBK:

Advocate: Kálmán Beöthy; István v. Serényi; János v. Hangodi

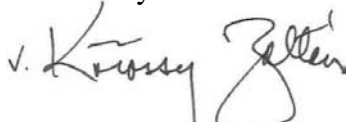
Patron: Margaret Morris

Supporter: Klára Horváth; Róbert Várkonyi

As always, it is my sad duty to report the loss of another gendarme: Béla Békeffy, 1st Lt., Budapest, Hungary. We extend our deep condolences to his family.

Please continue to inform us of any event or news that might be of interest to the friends of the gendarmerie.

We wish you a blessed Easter. With best regards,



Zoltán v. Körössy
MKCsBK Central Director

Híven, becsülettel, vitézül!