



## The structure of the Romanian press during WW2

The Romanian media flourished during the inter-war years. In 1935, there were a total of 2300 newspapers, out of which 118 daily newspapers, 1200 weekly newspapers and 950 periodicals. Their numbers reduced by the time Romania entered WW2 (June 22 1941). Many titles disappeared: famous daily newspapers like "Dimineata" (The morning) or "Adevarul" (The Truth), newspapers edited by political parties, banned newspapers (like the ones connected to the Iron Guard) and others. The war years, with the unavoidable censorship and paper shortages, led to the vanishing of other titles (MP Mihai Antonescu proudly stated in 1942 that 47 "useless" newspapers were closed down by the government) and the creation of others (some for propaganda purposes).

**The Daily newspapers** Four newspapers from Bucharest had the biggest market share and circulation: "Universul" (The Universe, led by Stelian Popescu), "Curentul" (The Current, edited by Pamfil Seicaru), "Porunca vremii" (The word of our times) and "Timpul" (The Times). The first pages were always occupied by the news from the Eastern front, the other pages also had info about the situation on other fronts. These newspapers were rarely distributed to the troops on the front. Their format remained unchanged, except for the few pages with war news. The rest was still filled with entertainment, gossip, advertising, classifieds and various information. They also kept their large number of readers.

**The propaganda press** The Ministry of the Propaganda edited a sizeable number of newspapers, both for the soldiers and for the home population. Two daily titles

were edited especially for the rural population: "Cuvantul Maresalului catre sateni" (The Marshall's message for the villagers) and "Argesul". These were distributed directly in the villages, avoiding any competition with the four large newspapers.

Other titles were distributed only to the soldiers on the front: the weekly "Gazeta militara" (The military gazette), "Soldatul" (The Soldier, issued 3 times per week) and "Santinel" (The sentinel). The propaganda companies printed some titles directly on the front, like "Victoria" (The Victory) and "Ecolul Crimeei" (The Crimean Echo). The propaganda press was usually the only source of information for the troops because the regular newspapers rarely reached the front lines, with a great delay.

**The military press** The military magazines were printed monthly, in low numbers and were distributed only to officers. They only published specialized articles about training, weapons and tactics. Every specialty had its own magazine. Some examples: "România militară" (Military Romania), "Revista infanteriei" (The infantry magazine), "Revista artileriei" (The artillery magazine), "Revista marinei" (The navy magazine), "Revista Geniului" (The engineers' magazine), and others.

**The foreign newspapers in Romanian** The propaganda services of the great powers edited several titles in Romanian, in order to influence the morale of the army and civilians. The Germans edited 2 illustrated magazines, issued twice per month, "Signal" and "Der Adler". These were printed in excellent graphic conditions, clearly superior when compared to the Romanian publications. The distribution

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## Argument

**The Sentinel is a free electronic magazine, dedicated to the Romanian Armed Forces in The Second World War. I will also publish any other history-related information, from any country and period.**

**Many Romanians died in WW2. Many others survived and are still alive today. My grandfather is one of them. Today, nobody cares about these people and their sad stories. I decided to edit this small magazine in my free time, so that at least some of those stories will be remembered.**

**Please send any feedback or contributions to my e-mail adress.**

## FROM THE NEWSPAPERS

"The people flooded the streets like a human wave, hugging each other. They all had tears in their eyes. The citizens of Bucharest had only lived similar moments in August 1916. A hot sun warms everybody with his blessed heat, including the people and their souls thirsty for justice. The plazas are particularly crowded, like forests of heads. The military bands play patriotic songs. Suddenly, a guy near the statue of King Carol I invites a girl from Bucovina, dressed in her picturesque folk costume, to a popular dance. It was like a thunder. Everybody joined the dance, like in a poem." ("Timpul", June 22 1941)

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was also superior and they were usually distributed to the front before their Romanian counterparts. Another magazine edited by the Germans was "Deutschland", with articles in several languages including Romanian.

The Italians edited a single magazine in Romanian, "Tempo", similar to the German "Signal".

The Soviets printed a small propaganda newspaper, "Graiul liber" (The free word), distributed to the Romanian POWs in their camps. It was also parachuted over the Romanian territory.

**Other titles** The Romanians also edited some newspapers in the occupied territories. The weekly "Transnistria" was printed in the province with the same name. Odessa even had a daily newspaper, "Bugul" (The Bug), focused on local subjects.

An interesting magazine was printed in Bucharest, "Romania Ilustrata" (Illustrated Romania). It was very popular in the inter-war period and during the war itself.

**The underground press** A Soviet-sponsored newspaper, "Romania libera" (The

Free Romania), was printed illegally by the communists. It was distributed since 1942 in the Banat province and since 1943 in Bucharest. Other communist newspapers were edited in the Northern part of Transylvania, an area occupied by the Hungarians. The communist movement used mostly flyers to print their messages.

Of course, there were many other various magazines and newspapers. This article only covers those active in the propaganda war.

## From the newspapers

"The High Command announces: our troops breached Odessa's defensive lines. The enemy retreats everywhere, Gniliakovo, Dalnik and Tatarka were occupied since 8 o'clock. Our troops continue to advance. The city is on fire." ("Timpul" daily newspaper, October 16 1941)

**The photo below:** The oath, Constanta garrison, 1938. The military priest is my grand-grandfather, Lt-Colonel priest Ilie Deleanu. He was the confessor of the Constanta garrison between 1934-1942.



## From the newspapers

"The annihilation of the fascist German troops, encircled in the Stalingrad area, is now complete. For the first time the strategic plan to encircle and crush an enemy army succeeded. Dozens of Nazi divisions were caught in a pocket and, although the modern defensive tactics are based on strategic redeployments and counterattacks, they couldn't avoid being annihilated. No commander in the world ever accomplished such an absolute victory on the battlefield.

The battle of Stalingrad is unique in the history of warfare, for it opens a whole new page in the military art, a brilliant example of strategy and modern offensive tactics used to surround and completely crush the enemy." ("Graiul Liber", February 10 1943)

## Proclamation issued by General Antonescu at the start of WW2

"Soldiers,

From the very first day of the new reign and of my national combat i vowed to lead you to victory. To wipe off the dishonour blemish from the book of nation and the humiliation shadow off your forehead and epaulettes. Now is the time of the holiest battle, the battle for our forefathers' rights and of the church, the battle for the Romanian abodes and altars of all times.

Soldiers, I order you: cross the Prut!

Crush the enemy from the East and North. Throw the red yoke of Bolshevism off your overrun brothers. Bring back to the country body the Bassarabian ancient native land and the voivode forests of Bucovina, your fields and realms. [...]

Soldiers, forward! Fight for the glory of our nation. Die for the homes of your fathers and sons. Fight to free our brothers from Basarabia and Bucovina, fight to honour your homes and churches desecrated by the barbarian invaders. [...]

Soldiers, the victory will be ours. To battle! God is with us."

General Ion Antonescu, 22 June 1941

## Warstories: The man who fought in the English Channel

Commander Engineer Gheorghe Radulescu Popescu was born on September 6, 1916, in Bucharest. Between 1935-1938 he studied at the Naval Academy "Mircea cel Batran" from Constanta and graduated as a marine officer.

Each promotion of the Academy was required to take a training cruise aboard the "Mircea" sail training ship. In 1937 however, the "Mircea" was under repair and the cadets were embarked for the cruise on the gunboat "Dumitrescu". They sailed from the homeport of Constanta to the island of Rhodes. While in Salonic, the gunboat was visited by a group of officers from the famous battlecruiser Hood, which was anchored nearby. "The next day our commanding officer was invited by the Admiral aboard the Hood to return the visit. We were also invited. The ship was impressive; it looked like a floating island made of iron. It was very powerfully armed, with guns of all calibres, torpedoes and a reconnaissance aircraft."

In the fall of 1940, Gheorghe Radulescu Popescu was one of the 6 Romanian naval officers selected to be sent to Germany, in order to train as torpedo-boat captains. Each officer was sent aboard a Lurssen-type torpedo-boat (displacement 110 tonnes), based at Scheweningen in the Netherlands. They were involved in all the actions of their ships between September-December 1940. The veteran recalls one of the missions:

"We searched for an enemy convoy but we didn't find it, so we waited along the only possible route for the enemy ships: between the English coast and the sand banks parallel with the coast. The German tactic was to wait in ambush during the night. When every one of the torpedo-boats had a target in front of it, they launched the torpedoes simultaneously and afterwards turned to run away in different directions, in order to dodge the enemy escorts.

This time, our torpedo-boat hit an enemy oil tanker. The burning oil on the sea surface revealed our ship. Our commander turned the ship and tried to run away.

One of the escorts, a British destroyer, came after us. They used their secondary guns to fire tracer ammo, in order to reveal our position, while their big guns were trying to sink us with direct hits. The chase continued for around half an hour but our commander managed to dodge all the shots, through brutal variations in speed and heading. We were lucky and the wind brought a thick fog and we escaped, but we lost contact with the other boats. The way back was a real nightmare. The fog was so thick that the sun cannot be seen, although by that time it was daytime. The only way to navigate was to measure the water depth frequently and to estimate the distance to port based on the speed of the boat."

In the summer of 1942 he was sent again to Germany, for another training stage of two months. This time he practiced torpedo-launching at a torpedo-boat flotilla based at the North Sea, in the Stettin area. "I had the chance to see the Kiel canal. Submarines were assembled on its banks, on improvised shipyards. The

port of Kiel was full of large German cargo ships, unable to sail because of the Allied blockade. Food rationalisation was already severe and the civilians formed long queues to get aliments, something we didn't see in Romania. I concluded that the Germans had already lost the war."

In 1942, four MTB hulls, made from thin mahogany wood, arrived in Galati. These were part of the booty captured by the Germans when they invaded the Netherlands. The hulls were fitted with Rolls-Royce aircraft engines, adapted to ships. "The engines were cooled with a mixture of water and ethilenglycole, through a pump that was prone to breakdown. Also, one of the transmission parts was a rubber belt that didn't resist for long at maximum turation (3000 rpm). Because of these problems, the MTBs were used only to patrol and survey the shorelines and the passage zones through the minefields." Gheorghe Radulescu Popescu was assigned to command MTB number 6 ("Vijelia" - The storm), with which he executed patrol missions in the Gura Portitei-Mangalia area. When the MTB was under repair he was also assigned as Deputy Commander of torpedo-boat "Naluca" and torpedo officer on destroyer "Regele Ferdinand". He took part in several convoy escort missions in the Black Sea with the destroyer. Here are his recollections about such an escort mission:

"We were part of a convoy with transport ship "Ardealul", destroyers "Regele Ferdinand" and "Regina Maria" and 2 German R-boots. The convoy left Constanta on 27/28 October 1943. After we avoided a submarine attack a terrible storm unleashed. The ships were forced to stop the evasive maneuvers. The waves became stronger and stronger and the R-boots were forced to sail behind the "Ardealul". During the storm, the R-boot crews tied themselves to their ships. Nevertheless, I saw them when we arrived in port and I can tell you that they were covered with wounds, every single part of their body was bandaged.

As we approached Crimea, the storm was over and we were attacked by Soviet airplanes and MTBs. The ships used evasive maneuvers and fired all the guns and we finally managed to enter Sevastopol Bay without any damage.

On the return route, the convoy had to face again several waves of Soviet aircrafts and MTBs. We managed to dodge all attacks, with serious efforts. As we left Crimea behind, the night came and the attacks stopped. We had escaped without any damages again. During the night, the ships performed evasive maneuvers. The general route was changed several times, to avoid the Soviet submarines that were probably waiting for us on the way, alerted by their airplanes. We reached Constanta in the morning."

In 1942, Gheorghe Radulescu Popescu was awarded the Order of the Crown with swords, knight class (I.D. 2196/1942). After the war he was discharged from the navy through the Order 719/1951, for "political and moral reasons". He died in December 2002.



## Romanian medals: The victory medal for the second Balkan War (1913)

The second Balkan war was fought between Bulgaria and a coalition comprising Greece, Serbia and Turkey. When the war came to a stalemate, Romania declared war on Bulgaria and attacked them from the back, crossing the Danube. The Romanian army advanced basically unopposed, the bulk of the Bulgarian troops being deployed on the other fronts. Romania's intervention was decisive and Bulgaria was defeated quickly.

The medal was awarded to all the soldiers that took part in the war and also to all auxiliaries and clerks that came with the army. The medal has a round shape and 35 mm in diameter. It is made from a white alloy. Some medals have a maker mark (a single letter) stamped on the bottom edge. The ribbon is blue with yellow and orange stripes on each edge.

The obverse depicts an eagle with open wings, a symbol of the Romanian kings. The bust of king Carol I is displayed in the middle, surrounded by the text "Carol I King of Romania". The word "Peace" is inscribed under the bust. The inscription around the edge of the medal reads "To remember the heavenly upsurge 1913".

The reverse depicts the Romanian army crossing the Danube into Bulgaria. The text reads: "From the Carpathians, across the Danube, to the Balkans."

This medal was awarded in great numbers, it is a common medal also present in almost all WW1 medal bars, also in many WW2 medal bars.

(Photo from [www.marksmedals.com](http://www.marksmedals.com))



## List of the German Ground units (Heer) destroyed in Romania during the Soviet Jassy-Kishinev operation (20 August - early September 1944)

Corps Command HQ:

- Stab/General-Kommando IV.Armeekorps
- Stab/General-Kommando VII.Armeekorps
- Stab/General-Kommando XXX.Armeekorps
- Stab/General-Kommando XXXIV.Armeekorps
- Stab/General-Kommando LII.Armeekorps

## Corps troops:

- Feldgendarmerie-Trupp 404
- Feldpostamt 404
- Kraftfahr-Kompanie 404
- Kfz-Instandsetzungs Zug 404
- Korps-Nachrichten-Abteilung 44
- Vetr.-Kompanie 333
- Feldgendarmerie-Trupp 407
- Feldpostamt 407
- Kraftfahr-Kompanie 407
- Kfz-Instandsetzungs Zug 407
- Korps-Nachrichten-Abteilung 47
- Korps-Nachrichten-Staffel 407
- Fahr-Schwadron 407
- Tussen-Kompanie 407
- 3./Fahr-Schwadron 123
- Feldgendarmerie-Trupp 430
- Kraftfahr-Kompanie 430
- Kfz-Instandsetzungs Zug 430
- Korps-Nachrichten-Abteilung 430
- Kraftfahr-Kompanie 430
- Kfz-Instandsetzungs Zug 430
- Korps-Nachrichten-Abteilung 430
- Feldgendarmerie-Trupp 444
- Feldpostamt 444
- Kraftfahr-Kompanie 444
- Kfz-Instandsetzungs Zug 444
- Korps-Nachrichten-Abteilung 444
- Feldgendarmerie-Trupp 452
- Feldpostamt 452
- Kraftfahr-Kompanie 452
- Kfz-Instandsetzungs Zug 452
- Korps-Nachrichten-Abteilung 452
- Quartiermeister-Nachschub LII.AK

## Infantry divisions:

- 9.Infanterie-Division
- 15.Infanterie-Division
- 62.Infanterie-Division
- 79.Infanterie-Division
- 106.Infanterie-Division
- 161.Infanterie-Division
- 257.Infanterie-Division
- 258.Infanterie-Division
- 282.Infanterie-Division
- 294.Infanterie-Division
- 302.Infanterie-Division
- 306.Infanterie-Division
- 320.Infanterie-Division
- 335.Infanterie-Division
- 370.Infanterie-Division
- 376.Infanterie-Division
- 384.Infanterie-Division

## Army troops:

- Armeewaffenschule 6
- Sturm-Bataillon AOK 6
- Granatwerfer-Bataillon AOK 6

## Artillery troops:

- Artillerie-Regiments-Stab z.b.V. 612
- Artillerie-Regiments-Stab z.b.V. 792
- Artillerie-Regiments-Stab z.b.V. 1036
- leichte-Beobachtungs-Abteilung 23
- Beobachtungs-Abteilung (tbew) 52
- Beobachtungs-Abteilung (tbew) 66
- Beobachtungs-Abteilung (tbew) 68
- Beobachtungs-Abteilung (tbew) 73
- V.-Messtrupp 501
- Heeres-Sturmgeschütz-Brigade 243
- Heeres-Sturmgeschütz-Brigade 278
- Heeres-Sturmgeschütz-Brigade 905
- Heeres-Sturmgeschütz-Brigade 911
- Heeres-Sturmartillerie-Brigade 236
- Heeres-Artillerie-Abteilung II./46
- Heeres-Artillerie-Abteilung II./54
- Heeres-Artillerie-Abteilung II./72
- Heeres-Artillerie-Abteilung I./731
- Heeres-Artillerie-Abteilung 735
- Heeres-Küsten-Artillerie-Abteilung 144
- Heeres-Küsten-Artillerie-Abteilung 145
- Heeres-Küsten-Artillerie-Abteilung 707
- 1./Heeres-Küsten-Artillerie-Abteilung 903
- Heeres-Pak-Artillerie-Abteilung 1007
- Heeres-Pak-Artillerie-Abteilung 1008
- Heeres-Pak-Artillerie-Abteilung 1009
- Heeres-Pak-Artillerie-Abteilung 1010
- Heeres-Pak-Artillerie-Abteilung 1054
- Heeres-Pak-Artillerie-Abteilung 1055
- Heeres-Pak-Artillerie-Abteilung 1056
- schwere-Panzerhaubitze-Abteilung II./40
- Heeres-Flak-Artillerie-Abteilung 271
- Heeres-Flak-Artillerie-Abteilung 300

## Engineer troops:

- Pionier-Regiments-Stab 605
- Heeres-Pionier-Brigade (tmot) 754
- Heeres-Pionier-Bataillon 213
- Bau-Pionier-Bataillon 119
- Bau-Pionier-Bataillon 217
- Bau-Pionier-Bataillon 219
- Bau-Pionier-Bataillon 246
- Bau-Pionier-Bataillon 551
- Bau-Pionier-Bataillon 781
- Bau-Pionier-Bataillon 782
- Bau-Pionier-Bataillon (k) 16
- Bau-Pionier-Bataillon (k) 115
- Ld.Pionier-Bataillon 503
- Brüko B 1./41
- Brüko B 2./427
- leichte-Sturmboot-Kompanie 905

## Security troops:

- Grenadier-Regiments-Stab 385
- Grenadier-Regiments-Stab 685 z.b.V.
- Radfahr-Sicherungs-Regiment 4
- Sicherungs-Bataillon 264
- Sicherungs-Bataillon 282
- Sicherungs-Bataillon 465
- Sicherungs-Bataillon 499
- Sicherungs-Bataillon 552
- Sicherungs-Bataillon 571
- Landeschützen-Bataillon 318
- Landeschützen-Bataillon 494
- Landeschützen-Bataillon 552
- Landeschützen-Bataillon 742

## Misc. troops:

- Nachrichten-Betriebs-Kompanie R
- 10./Kranken-Transport-Abteilung 592
- Sanitätsmaterial-Ausgabe-Stelle 21
- Sanitätsmaterial-Ausgabe-Stelle 28
- Chemie-Unter.-Stelle 5
- Feldpostamt 365
- Feldpostamt 746
- Feldpostamt 783
- Feldpost-Leitstelle 557
- Armee-Briefstelle 550
- Technische-Kompanie (M.-Öl) (R)

(List contributed by Kamen Nevenkin)