

G U R P S<sup>®</sup>

# Michael's Army<sup>™</sup>



**AN e23 SOURCEBOOK  
FOR GURPS<sup>®</sup> FROM  
STEVE JACKSON GAMES**

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Like Poland, Romania had long been a country surrounded by unfriendly neighbors. After centuries of struggles for independence and a disastrous WWI campaign on the side of the Allies, it found itself involved in WWII as the third partner of the Axis in Europe. The Romanians never shared the global goals of the Germans or Italians, nor their ideological motives; Romania's aims were less high-flying, aimed at defending their own territorial integrity. Once they had taken back from the Soviets the border regions they had been forced to give up, the Romanians were pushed and pulled rather reluctantly along by the Germans on their way to Moscow. Another Romanian province was much closer to their hearts, but, unfortunately, it was in the hands of another Axis partner, Hungary.

Romania's surprisingly large military was ill-prepared for a modern war, however, and it soon showed. While they were prepared to pay high prices for their victories, such as taking Odessa, the toll became unbearable as the troops were caught in savage battles farther and farther away from their homeland, including the infamous disaster that was Stalingrad.

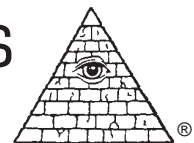
And when the tide turned, Romania chose to switch sides. Fighting alongside the Soviets, their suspicious former enemies and new allies, Romanian troops advanced through Hungary all the way to Germany.

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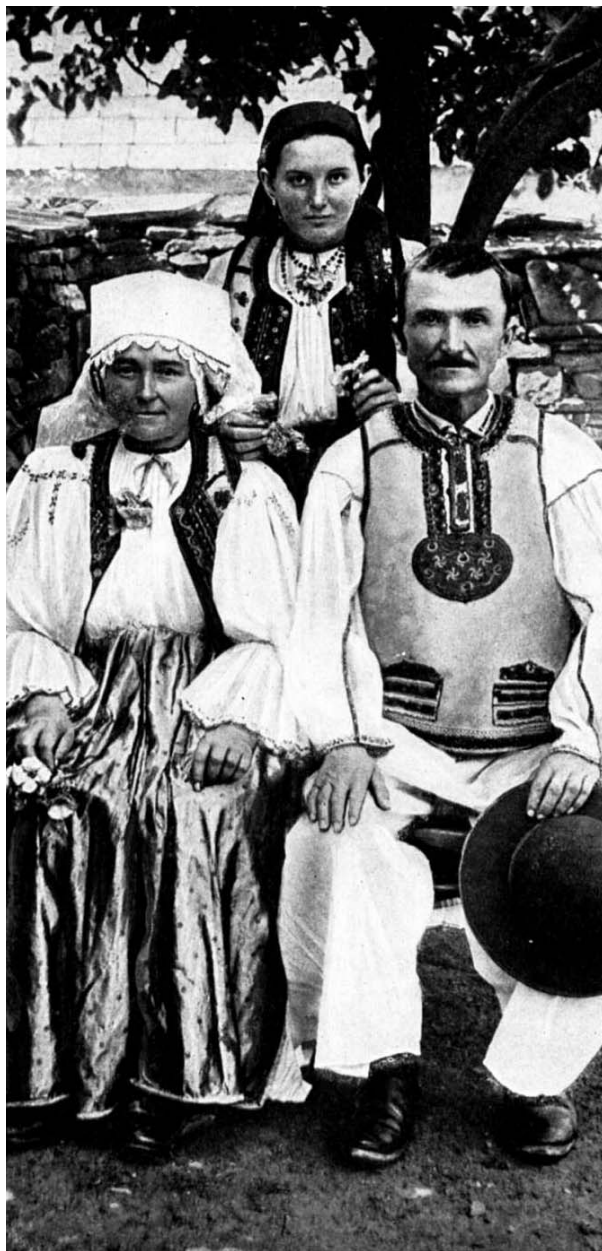
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The end of WWII saw Romania on the side of the victors, but the country gained little from the struggle. The peasantry making up most of the population was still dead poor, the military was only a shadow of itself, many Romanian citizens were dead, and the survivors would soon be shrouded by the Iron Curtain.

As a setting for a *GURPS WWII* campaign, Romania offers many interesting prospects. Internal politics allow for adventures involving Romanian agitators, courtiers, and decision makers, as well as foreign agents; backroom deals and court intrigues will often give way to political assassinations and street fighting. Other campaigns might put Romanian soldiers against the Russians (perhaps on the side of the Germans at Stalingrad), against their archenemy, the Hungarians, or even against the Germans, fighting the Nazis with their own weapons, supplied by them earlier in the war. Play-



ers wanting to fight the Soviets on the Eastern Front may do so, without having to accept characters who bear the Nazi stigma.

Foreign servicemen also have much to do in or over Romania. German troops fought side-by-side with Romanian soldiers, Soviet tankers swerved into Romania on their way to Germany, and U.S. bombers dropped their load over Romanian targets.

Romania also offers unique possibilities for *Weird War II* campaigns. Many Romanians were deeply superstitious, and the nation offered a colorful folklore to match. Vampires, werewolves, ghosts, and other horror creatures abound. The gamemaster could easily create widely different campaigns based on one or more of these legends, with the war either a mere background, or being influenced by paranormal activities into alternative directions.

## ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Michele Armellini is a translator living in Udine, Italy. He contributed to many *GURPS WWII* books, and is the author of *GURPS WWII: Grim Legions*. He is fascinated with modern military history, wargames, and roleplaying, in whatever order. He may spend inordinate amounts of time studying the social forces at work behind obscure historical events – and trying to convert them into game mechanics!

Hans-Christian Vortisch is a writer and translator based in Berlin, Germany. He contributed to most other books in the *GURPS WWII*-line and is the author of *GURPS WWII: Motor Pool*, as well as several other *GURPS* titles. His main interest lies in technology, its interaction with man, and its statistics in the game. However, he is also fond of the weirder aspects of life . . .

## GURPS REFERENCES

The authors refer to a number of other *GURPS* books in Michael's Army, and make specific page references for those who want to read further. Here is a key for those abbreviations:

B is *GURPS Basic Set, Third Edition*; CB is *Cabal*; CI is *Compendium I*; HB is *Hellboy*; HT is *High-Tech*; Mliii is *Magic Items 3*; W is *World War II*; W:AKM is *All the King's Men*; W:D is *Dogfaces*; W:DWE is *Doomed White Eagle*, a product only available as a PDF on e23; W:FH is *Frozen Hell*; W:GL is *Grim Legions*; W:HS is *Hand of Steel*; W:IC is *Iron Cross*; W:MP is *Motor Pool*; W:RH is *Return to Honor*; and W:WW is *Weird War II*.

# 1. ROMANIA AT WAR

Cornered in the uncomfortable periphery of Europe, Romania had spent centuries fighting for independence. In both World Wars, it fought to keep its borders intact and to reclaim its lost provinces, but where in World War I it stumbled upon victory in defeat, in World War II it ultimately found defeat in victory.

## RUBBER- BAND BORDERS

In 1918, empires collapsed and new countries appeared on the map of Europe. Romania, however, had already been in existence as an independent state since 1861, but from that date to 1945, it was to experience wild changes to its borders. While economic, social and ideological forces were at work in Romania just as everywhere else in the interwar years, the territorial and ethnic issues were more troublesome than in many other countries.

## VICTORY IN DEFEAT

When World War I began, Romania (p. W60) was a small, crescent-shaped kingdom born of the erosion of the Ottoman Empire and the Balkan Wars (see *Bloody Balkan Backwaters*, p. 4). Its king, Ferdinand I, was related to the German Kaiser, and was sympathetic to the Central Powers, but an alliance with them was impossible because of the territory that filled the hollow of the crescent: Transylvania. This mountainous region's population was two-thirds Romanian, but it was part of Austria-Hungary, and the Hungarians had very much the upper hand there. So Romania remained a neutral; one, however, whose goodwill was critical for the Central Powers – Romania provided them with petroleum and the supply line that made Turkey's war possible.

For these same reasons, the Allies began pressuring the Romanians, offering them territory and military support. Siding with them could be the only way to wrest Transylvania from its Austro-Hungarian masters.

On August 27, 1916, Romania declared war against Germany and Austria-Hungary and was immediately overrun by an offensive that took over 90% of its territory; the court, government, and remaining forces were pushed into Iasi, with their backs to the Russian border, and when Russia surrendered, Romania had no choice but to do the same. However, in the end, it declared war again, just in time to make it on the winning side.

So after being thoroughly trounced on the battlefield, Romania came out smelling like a rose, doubling in size. It got Transylvania from Austria-Hungary and solidified its control over Southern Dobrudja; the collapse of Russia allowed it to grab Bessarabia, too. These were largely Romanian-speaking regions, but they came burdened with large foreign minorities. The language barrier with these minorities was a real hurdle, since Romanian was, and is, the only Romance language in the region.

## Enemies Everywhere

Romania was surrounded by resentful rivals. The heir of the Czarist Empire, the Soviet Union, would remain weak for years to come, but its sheer size made it an awkward neighbor, with Ukrainian minorities in Bessarabia. Both Bulgaria and, beyond it, Turkey, had no love for the Romanians.

Most importantly, there were the Hungarians, who had just lost Transylvania and had a minority population in that now-Romanian province. Hungary was smaller than Romania, but still it made a roughly matched enemy, smarting for revenge. It did not help that, in 1919, Romanian troops had advanced all the way to Budapest in order to stomp out the short-lived Hungarian Communist government of Bela Kun. The Magyars did not forget the occupation of their capital.

## Treading Carefully

The main objective of Romanian foreign policy after 1919 was making sure that those enemies wouldn't

## BLOODY BALKAN BACKWATERS

The history of Romania prior to WWI was influenced most by its unfortunate geographical position: a corner of the European continent between two empires, Turkey and Russia. For centuries, the Romanians struggled under the repression of their traditional foes, the Turks, which left them inclined to consider anybody who did not share their fervent form of the Orthodox Christian faith as enemies. Nor was their relationship with Russia any better, with Russian armies invading every few decades throughout the 18th and 19th centuries.

Romania did not gain full sovereignty until after the Crimean War in 1878, and even then sizable numbers of Romanians remained under foreign rule, most notably in Austria-Hungary. Together with its poor Balkan neighbors, the country lagged far behind the rest of Europe. A bloody peasants' rebellion wreaked havoc in 1907. It stayed out of the First Balkan War in 1912, when the crumbling Ottoman Empire was attacked by Greece, Bulgaria, and Serbia, but it was drawn in the ensuing conflict over the spoils – thus acquiring Southern Dobrudja. Then WWI came.

So after WWI, Romania had in its history an explosive cocktail: firebrand nationalism, a deep-seated mistrust for foreigners and non-Christians, a touch of Byzantine intrigues, and the ferocity of Balkan-style warring.

come back for what they had lost. Romania turned to Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia for a mutual-defense alliance, the so-called Little Entente. This came into being as early as 1921, and since all three countries had border regions with Hungarian minorities, its main purpose was very clear. However, this bloc also needed a more powerful sponsor, and France nicely fit the role, since the French were already worriedly looking for a counterweight to Germany.

Romania and France also established a special relationship, aided by the common Latin origin of their languages, but above all by the fact that France could be not only an important patron in the West but also a supplier of modern weaponry. Another state Romania had no quarrel with was Poland, but while the two countries together could certainly bully Hungary, there were bigger bullies on the block.

One of them seemed to be dealt with in 1933, when the Romanians also reached a settlement with the Soviet Union. Bulgaria could never go after Southern Dobrudja on its own. So at that time, it seemed that all the possible dangers were handled, or, at least, effectively guarded against.

## YEARS OF IRON

If foreign relationships seemed reasonably peaceful, things were quite different within the country.

### Crown Swapping

Much of the blame for Romania's problems can be laid on King Carol II (see *Who's In Command?*, p. 5). He had already become thoroughly unpopular with both the nobles and the people for such things as deserting his unit in WWI and taking a Jewish lover, and he had been forced to abdicate his position as heir in 1926. So when King Ferdinand I died in 1927, a regency was set up for Carol's son, Mihai (Michael).

Carol, however, didn't intend to remain in exile. He waited for his scandals to fade from memory, and in 1930 he was back again, reclaiming the throne from his own son. This dynastic crisis was over by the end of that year, but certainly it did not make the crown steadier. Along the road to political rehabilitation, Carol had promised to get rid of his lover, but soon after he was back in power, they were living together again.

The King's greed, corruption, and vices spawned similar behavior among the ruling class, which contributed both to the unenviable economic situation and to the popularity of firebrand reformers.

### Poor as Always

Way, way below the court's pomp, ceremony, and riches there was the overwhelming majority of Romanians: impoverished peasants, whose plight had barely been improved by the weak attempts at land reform that had followed the 1907 uprising (see *Bloody Balkan Backwaters*, above). The middle ground was thin and, outside the capital, it was mainly made up of people who, after two or more generations living in Romania, were still considered "foreigners": East European Jews and *Volksdeutsche* (ethnic Germans). Such a middle class was feared by the nobles and disliked, when not positively hated, by the peasants.

Though rich in natural resources, Romania still was a backward country, and had barely begun to exploit its petroleum, forests, coal reserves, or the wide and powerful Danube. The agricultural methods were primitive. Industry was underdeveloped, and a strict protectionist trade policy was unsuccessful in promoting development. In 1940, the infant death rate in Romania was the same as in India.

# WHO'S IN COMMAND?

Some of the personalities listed below were no longer “in command,” or, for that matter, alive, by 1941. They are briefly described here anyway, for a pre-war Romanian setting.

*Marshal Ion Antonescu (1882-1946).* A respected WWI commander, Antonescu was an obvious choice when Romania needed a strongman in 1940. Antonescu's beliefs were close to the Iron Guard's positions, despite him having Jewish relations, but he was first and foremost fanatically patriotic, as well as ruthless and Calous. A competent general (Strategy-13), he was less effective as a politician, though he certainly did not lack Strong Will (+1). He adopted the title of *Conducator* (leader), the Romanian equivalent of *Führer*. He was a reliable ally, but not a yes-man. Antonescu was arrested in 1944, and sentenced to death for his war crimes by the Communists in 1946. He was red-haired, and Legion members unflatteringly nicknamed him “*Cainele Rosu*” (Red Dog).

*King Mihai I (1921- ).* The young king had been mostly a figurehead until 1944, when he began a dangerous plot to oust Antonescu and bring his country in on the winning side. He was popular with his subjects (a good Reputation) and probably had above-average IQ (12+). He bargained hard and cleverly in order to obtain the best possible deal from the Soviets, but went into exile in 1947.

*King Carol II (1893-1953).* Showing clear symptoms of Lecherousness, Greed and general lack of self-control throughout his life, this king

also earned a bad Reputation, especially because of his continuing relationship with his influential Jewish mistress, Magda Lupescu (born Elena Wolff, 1895-1977). He also had other shorter liaisons and largely neglected his wife, Queen Helena of Greece. He made sure the state indemnified him personally for losing crown estates in the provinces that had to be given away. He abdicated in 1940.

*Corneliu Zelea Codreanu (1899-1938).* Born Cornelius Zelinsky to immigrant parents, this religious and political leader was fervently nationalistic, anti-Bolshevik and anti-Semitic. Codreanu had at least Charisma+2 as well as Fanaticism and Intolerance (and, some would say, Voice). He probably had high skill levels in Bard and Fast-Talk, and was extremely popular (Reputation+4), but see also the Disadvantages all the Iron Guard leaders would have (*The Archangel's Nest*, p. 21). He was murdered by order of King Carol II.

*Horia Sima (1907-1993?).* The second leader of the Iron Guard, he was more anti-Semitic than Codreanu, if possible. He certainly had Fanaticism, Intolerance, and maybe Bloodlust. He was briefly in power, as Antonescu's Vice-Premier, but he pushed for an all-out “legionary” state, on Nazi Germany's model. From 1941, he was in German custody as Hitler wanted to keep him as a reserve, and indeed he set up a puppet government in exile in Wien in 1944. Sima then went into hiding, probably in Spain.

The National Peasants' Party, led by Iuliu Maniu, should have been the obvious choice for tackling these economic problems; but many Romanians were attracted to more extreme measures.

## St. Michael's Guardsmen

Corneliu Zelea Codreanu, a young man who had been steeped in the anti-Semitic environment of the Iasi university, founded a small religious group in 1927 as an offshoot of the League of the National Christian Defense. It was called the *Legiunea Arhanghelul Mihail* (Archangel Michael's Legion). It was to become better known under the name of its paramilitary wing, the *Garda de Fier* (Iron Guard). The movement was devoutly Orthodox and nationalist, feeding off the deep-felt roots of the nation's mystique; it was also rabidly anti-Communist and anti-Semitic. The basic unit was a 13-member *cuib* (nest), and the initiation suppos-

edly involved blood rituals. Members used to carry crosses and pouches filled with Romanian soil on their bodies.

In 1929, Codreanu acknowledged that religion alone couldn't fulfill the Legion's objectives, and he entered politics. In 1932, the Guardsmen gained a few parliamentary seats. They were using the whole range of typical fascist tactics, from blood-curdling propaganda and violence to beneficial initiatives like volunteer work and charity. All of it was laced with religious fanaticism, processions, and even “miracles.” The ruling Liberal Party saw the threat, and outlawed the Legion in 1933; the Prime Minister was promptly assassinated. Legionnaires were killed in turn, but this only gave the movement its martyrs. This pattern would be repeated several times, until in 1937 the Legion would peak at some 35,000 nests; that year, it became the third party in the country.

## SHAKY NEUTRALITY

Things came to a head in 1938, just as storm clouds were gathering all over Europe. Codreanu was too popular, a charismatic leader who was said to be supported by St. Michael himself. The peasants called him *Capitanul* (Captain). He was a threat to King Carol II, who on January 12, 1938 abolished the constitution, dissolved all parties, and began ruling as an absolute monarch. Codreanu and his lieutenants were arrested, and on November 30 they were “shot while attempting to escape.” Another bloodbath followed, with legionnaires killing government officials and vice versa.

### Diplomacy Unraveled

Meanwhile, the system of mutually supporting alliances that Romanian diplomats had built was collapsing. By 1939, Czechoslovakia had been dismembered – Romania’s arch-enemy Hungary gobbled up some of it, and the rest became a German protectorate. Yugoslavia was still there, but was becoming weaker and less stable by the day. Meanwhile, Stalin was making threatening noises about Bessarabia. After swallowing Czechoslovakia, Germany began political and economic maneuvers aimed at gaining a dominant position in the foreign trade of the remaining Balkan countries; the Nazis were particularly interested in Romanian oil.

The Romanians still had their Western allies, the French. Moreover, in April, 1939, the same kind of sweeping guarantees that Great Britain and France had given to Poland were extended to Romania. Any relief was short-lived, though, as the Polish defeat a few months later proved how worthless such guarantees were. With Poland’s demise, too, another friendly bordering state left the map. With the fall of France in 1940, Romania was left utterly alone.

The rising star was Germany – a country friendly with both Hungary and the Soviet Union.

### A Bitter Write-off

What the Romanians did not know was that the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact between Russia and Germany included a clause about Bessarabia. Stalin had decided that the only defense policy that made sense was to increase the thickness of the Soviet Union’s buffer belt, and that was his price for letting the Germans take Poland with his blessing. The buffer belt included Finland, the Baltic countries, Eastern Poland, and Bessarabia, a former Czarist land. The pact only recognized a Soviet “sphere of interest” there; once the fall of France had left Germany the sole continental power in Western Europe, Stalin moved (on June 28, 1940) and took over not only Bessarabia but also Northern Bukovina.

## STOPOVER

The Polish army made its final stand with their backs to the Romanian border, and a significant portion of it (some 35,000 men) sought internment in that neutral country. Some pilots came with their aircraft.

As a neutral country, Romania had a duty to intern the Poles for the duration of the war, so that they couldn’t fight any more. The Germans soon began applying pressure for the Romanians to do just that. But the relationship between the two Eastern European countries had been good, and no country is happy to host a large numbers of internees. Camps were set up, but security was intentionally lax, and what guards there were could be easily bribed.

Soon Poles left Romania in droves, through Yugoslavia or the seaport of Constanta. Top officers could not leave so easily (their disappearance would have been too difficult to explain to the Nazis), and the Polish aircraft also stayed behind, soon to be pressed into service by the Romanians (see p. 29).

Resistance would have been doomed. The Romanian forces had no choice but to withdraw. It was a bitter sacrifice, and it wasn’t over. Indeed, when King Carol turned to Hitler, he discovered the bill would be higher still. The Hungarians came first on the list of German clients. They got the northern slice of Transylvania; this was the Vienna Arbitrate, though the Romanians referred to it as a Dictate. The *Führer* probably found it expedient to have both sides displeased with the settlement, so they would still need to woo him if they wanted something better.

Finally, Bulgaria got Southern Dobrudja. By the first days of September, 1940, the rubber-band borders were contracting again, and a third of the country was gone.

### Siding with Germany

In exchange, Romania got to side with Germany. This was not nearly enough, not only for the nationalistic Iron Guard, but also for the average Romanian patriot, who had much to complain about: the killing of Codreanu; the loss of several provinces; the King was inviting more foreigners in; and an ominous earthquake provided a further bad sign. Huge crowds were gathering daily in the squares of Bucharest, invoking the *Capitanul* (and rumors about Codreanu being back spread wildly), protesting against the sell-off and demanding King Carol II’s last abdication. On September 6, 1940,

the new King was Mihai I . . . again. Carol left with his mistress and a train-load of valuables.

King Mihai had very limited options. Backing off from the German deal would have been folly. He appointed a respected WWI commander, General Ion Antonescu (see *Who's In Command?*, p. 5), as his Prime Minister, but with such sweeping power that he actually was a dictator. Within two months, the Romanian economy was bound to Germany's, the Tripartite Pact was signed (letting Romania into a basically anti-Soviet alliance), and the first German units were arriving.

The German "military mission" was initially and officially tasked with training the Romanian armed forces, but it was actually there to garrison the country against both a *fait accompli* by the Soviets and against any change of mind by the Romanian government. The Nazis would also guard the oilfields and, most importantly, prepare for the Southern prong of the looming Operation Barbarossa. By early 1941, more than 300,000 German troops were stationed in Romania.



This did not go down well with the xenophobic *Garda de Fier*, which hated *all* foreign meddling. Antonescu had a few leaders of the movement in his cabinet. But this wasn't enough for St. Michael's men, who returned to their usual methods: political assassinations and sideshow pogroms. On January 21, their bid for total power bloodily failed. Antonescu could rely on the Army, and the Guardsmen were turned from hunters to prey (though they found time to customarily vent their rage against the Jews).

Hitler at one time had sympathy for the Iron Guard's anti-Semitic stance (and Himmler had supplied them with guns), but he had also met Antonescu at the end of 1940, and found him dependable. For the time being, the surviving Iron Guard leaders would be kept as reserves, as the general was the best card for the grand game that was about to begin.

# A LEAP IN THE DARK

*The road to Transylvania goes through Russia.*

– Marshal Ion Antonescu

Operation Barbarossa began on June 22, 1941. This was to be the largest land campaign in the war, and Romania would play a significant role in its southern end.

## LOW-TECH BARBAROSSA

Romania attacked the Soviet Union in close coordination with the Wehrmacht's 11th Army. The Romanians had one armored division, some truck-borne elements in some cavalry units, and no motorized infantry save for some makeshift arrangements within one division, the 6th. These point elements would engage in relatively quick advances, together with German units, carrying out a Romanian-style Blitzkrieg. However, most of the operations resembled the Russian Civil War, with infantry and artillery slugging it out, with some limited air support, and cavalry as the main mobile force.

### Free Bessarabia

At the end of June, 1941, the Germans initially took the lead. The Romanian Army participated in some border skirmishes, during which the Soviets even established a small bridgehead across the Prut near Falcu. But the Romanian offensive began in earnest on July 2, 1941. Minor thrusts were aimed at freeing the mountains of Bukovina in the north and crossing the Danube delta in the south; the main effort was to push across Bessarabia and establish a bridgehead across the river that was its eastern boundary, the *Nistru* (Dniester). The Romanian Cavalry Corps (which pooled together the most mechanized forces available – the 1st Armored Division, the 5th and 6th Cavalry Brigades and the 6th Infantry Division) spearheaded that attack, and by July 12 it had blitzed the Dniester.

The Guards Division and other infantry units had much tougher going across the Prut and through its muddy valley, with the Soviets launching all-out counterattacks and sometimes delaying a successful advance by the sheer power of massed artillery. More than once,

the close air support by the *Gruparea Aeriana de Lupta* (Air Combat Group, see p. 18) eased the pressure.

The Soviets also attacked in force the Romanian Navy in its bases, with a combined action that involved air bombings and shore bombardments against Constanta. The Soviet raiders were spotted by the one Romanian submarine (see p. 18) and ambushed; they withdrew with casualties.

In this southern end of Barbarossa, the Soviets fought with determination and did not simply try to trade ground for time, but in the end they were not well enough prepared, and the Romanians were out for their own country. *Chisinau* (Kisinev) was liberated on July 16, and by August there were no Soviets west of the Dniester. Bessarabia was free. This was a costly (22,000 casualties) but swift success, and the end of the direct interests of Romania in the war against the USSR. The Soviet losses amounted to some 130,000, including tens of thousands of prisoners.

## The Meat-Grinder

Hitler now promised Antonescu a new territory: Transnistria (the region across the Dniester whose capital was Odessa, on the Black Sea). This was a sort of indemnification for the loss of Northern Transylvania, which the *Conducator* kept nagging the *Führer* about. No Romanians lived there, but Antonescu convinced himself that he had to outperform the Hungarians; if he pleased Hitler, Northern Transylvania might be the real prize.

In August, 1941, the Romanians grimly set out to lay siege to Odessa, a key waypoint to the north and east, as well as an important seaport. The encirclement went well, but the closer to the city, the stiffer the Soviet defense; soon, it became a WWI-style trench warfare meat-grinder. The Romanians employed short artillery barrages and bayonet charges, with their small armor contingent quickly worn down. The Soviets were determined to exact a heavy price. They reinforced their infantry garrison with cavalry, naval infantry, and NKVD troops.

The Romanians slowly gained ground, through the hilly terrain around the city, and then across the trenches, but at an ever-increasing cost. General Nicolae Ciuperca, commander of the 4th Army, sent in a candid report about the casualties, and was replaced within a week.

On September 21 the Soviets landed the 3rd Naval Infantry Brigade at Grigorievka, carried out a full counterattack that pushed back the Romanians, and even launched paratroops. More and more Axis troops had to be sent in, including German engineers and heavy artillery. The Romanian 5th Corps captured Fontanka, across the harbor, and from there they could keep the Odessa port under artillery fire.

Meanwhile, German and Romanian troops were advancing in the Crimean peninsula (see below), which provided the base for resupplying and reinforcing the Odessa garrison. The enemy couldn't hold out; the battle ended on October 16. It had cost 94,000 Romanian casualties. The Soviets had lost some 45,000 men over and above the 12,000 prisoners that weren't evacuated in time. Raw, younger recruits had to be hastily trained, on both sides; but Romania could only lose such an endurance match.

## Further East

While Odessa was being besieged, the 3rd Romanian Army and the 11th German Army were pushing further east. Their objectives were the next great river, the Dnieper, covering the southern flank of the German troops advancing into the heart of the USSR. The next stop would be the Crimean Peninsula and the most important Black Sea port, Sevastopol.

The advance was spearheaded by the Romanian Cavalry Corps. It was, again, the most motorized Romanian units, with each of its three cavalry brigades fielding one motorized regiment. The Soviets launched counterattacks and offered resistance, but they were pushed back – at a price.

By August 10, 1941, the Romanian vanguard had crossed the Bug. With the immense distances involved in advancing through Ukraine, they were forced to adopt the German *Schnellabteilung* (fast detachment) concept, and they pooled together the motorized regiments in the *Detasamentul Korne* (Korne being the commanding officer of this Detachment). This, of course, left the understrength, unmotorized parent formations to cope as they could.

Nevertheless, by the end of August Krivoy Rog had been taken and the 3rd Army had forded the Dnieper. Now the Romanians switched to a defensive task north of the Azov Sea, providing flank security to the German 11th Army that was entering Crimea through its narrow isthmus. The Soviets launched a devastating assault, aimed at relieving the pressure on Crimea, and, possibly, at playing the encirclement trick against the Axis. Twelve rifle divisions with tank and air support attacked the three cavalry brigades and three mountain brigades of the Romanian Corps, and the two German infantry divisions supporting it. The meager Axis forces were predictably pushed back with heavy losses, but the Germans sent in reinforcements, including the *Leibstandarte Adolf Hitler* SS unit, and the onslaught was contained.

The Romanians took part in the Crimean battles, too, that would only end with the fall of Sevastopol. This was a small, vicious war within the war.

The Romanians got a taste of anti-partisan warfare in the mountains, their first Soviet winter, and attacks against beachheads as the Black Sea Fleet exploited its



superiority with regimental-sized landings in the area of Kerch. This is also where the Germans began shifting the blame for delayed responses onto the Romanians (see *Mishandled, Trounced, and Blamed*, below).

The final assault (beginning on June 2) on the heavily fortified port of Sevastopol involved the highest artillery density ever fielded by the Axis, with 60 guns per mile of frontage, including the 600mm and 800mm monsters *Thor*, *Karl*, and *Dora*. It also involved, once more after Odessa, WWI-style assaults.

When the Romanians hoisted their flag on the Crimean War monument on July 4, 1942, this campaign had cost them some 21,000 casualties.

## THE ROAD TO STALINGRAD

The much weakened Romanian army kept on fighting, in German-led operations, throughout 1942, with troops even headed for the Caucasus and committed all the way to Novorossiysk. Casualties were mounting again, the Romanian soldiers' were terribly far from the homeland they had gone to war for, and their morale began to falter. Meanwhile, the relationship with the Germans deteriorated further.

### With Reason, the Weak Link

By September 1942, the Romanian 3rd and 4th armies began deploying to new positions on the long Axis front line around Stalingrad. By November, they guarded both flanks of the German 6th Army, committed to what was possibly the most vicious urban fighting in the war. The Romanian forces were stretched impossibly thin, with a division typically holding some 18 miles. The units were depleted, too, most of them at a mere 60% of their official strength. They had very little in the way of mobile reserves, the only safeguard against deep breakthroughs.

The Romanian 3rd Army was attacked by the Soviet 21st Army and 5th Tank Army on November 19. The Romanian 4th Army faced the assault of the Soviet 51st and 57th Armies, with the 13th Tank Corps. The Soviet offensive cut through them as a gigantic wave of steel. In the first two days, they achieved breaches that were 10 miles wide and up to 20 miles deep.

The Romanians didn't just lay down; they fought back, delayed the enemy infantry's first wave or stopped it in places, tried to withdraw, counterattacked – but to no avail. A sizable chunk of the 3rd Army was soon encircled.

By November 23, the Soviet pincers met in Kalach, trapping an immense number of Axis troops in Stalingrad – including many Romanian infantry and cavalry.

The front had moved behind the Chir river, but the enemy kept up the pressure and continued the attacks throughout December. The river line was abandoned by the end of the month, with additional casualties.

Operation Wintergewitter (winter tempest) was hastily organized, in an attempt to free the German 6th Army from its trap. The Romanians dutifully took part in the relief effort, which was once again a failure.

The Soviet winter campaign continued through December, 1942 and January, 1943, with the Italian and Hungarian troops being in turn overrun and surrounded or routed. Stalingrad fell on February 2. The Romanian Army fared the worst in this disaster, losing 164,000 men in three months, roughly half of all their forces. It was a killing blow.

## MISHANDLED, TROUNCED, AND BLAMED

When things began to go badly for the Axis, the German commanders started looking for scapegoats. The Romanians often fit the bill.

Already during the first winter in Crimea, von Manstein began complaining that the allies were slow to react – foot soldiers who had been marching and fighting for days in murderous temperatures weren't fast enough for him. This became a recurring pattern. German commanders expected too much from the non-motorized, insufficiently trained Romanian infantry, and then blamed them if their plans failed to work.

In the wake of the Soviet offensive that encircled Stalingrad, the Romanian 1st Armored Division counterattacked in concert with the 22nd Panzer Division. A liaison failure made it unaware of the developments of the situation; so it attacked as ordered, was thoroughly thrashed, and then blamed by the Nazis for that defeat.

The Germans could never be bothered to provide effective liaison channels, and the language was a major problem. As the war drew on, the fact that the Romanian units were thoroughly integrated into the German deployments, by itself a plus for joint operations, became a distinct disadvantage for the Romanians. The Wehrmacht officers broke down the Romanian sub-units, depriving them of cohesion and worsening their morale, and increasingly issued them "stand and die" orders.

## The Caucasus Detour

Throughout 1943, the Axis forces in the southeastern tip of the occupied Soviet territory would stay on the defensive. On both sides, the high command's attention was being drawn to the Kursk battle line. While armored formations began shifting towards that cauldron, the Soviets still had enough superiority in the Caucasus to keep pushing, and launched no fewer than six offensives in 1943, beginning with the liberation of Krasnodar in February. Often the Romanian troops managed to contain the Soviets, and sometimes could stop them cold in their tracks, but eventually they had their backs to the Black Sea at the Taman beachhead. Once there, the Romanian and German troops were supplied from Crimea; the Romanians were now deployed for coastal defense or anti-partisan duty, as their morale was shaky. In the continuous fighting, experienced units such as the 19th Infantry or the 3rd Mountain Divisions were whittled down, and then brought up to strength with green recruits.

By September, 1943, the Soviet pressure around Novorossiysk became unbearable. The Romanian and German units withdrew in good order, and managed to cross the straits to Kerch, taking few casualties. The Caucasus detour had ended, and the Axis was retreating everywhere.

## Fortress Crimea

The Soviets wanted a rematch of the Crimean battles of 1941. They first lopped off the isthmus, but this was too narrow and easily defended. They resorted again to small landing operations and partisan activity in the mountains of the Crimean peninsula. The Romanians had to deal with these in the murderous 1943-44 winter; the 6th Cavalry Division successfully eradicated a regiment-sized landing near Kerch, and the 3rd Mountain Division had to carry out nasty anti-partisan sweeps.

Meanwhile, the larger war went on and on – west and west. By early 1944, the Soviets had crossed the Dnieper everywhere. In January, they won another winter offensive in the area, destroying the whole German front there. The Romanians were struggling to keep troops in line.

The Axis troops in Crimea would fight in another of Hitler's *Festung* (Fortress) operations. These strong-points could not be abandoned (see p. W:IC25). They were to keep the enemy occupied at the task of reducing them for as long as possible. In theory, counterattacks could relieve them; in practice, it was a net loss. This applied no less to Crimea. On April 8, 1944, the main Soviet offensive was launched from both the isthmus and from the beachhead at Kerch. Part of the garrisoning force was belatedly evacuated by sea, and Sebastopol was abandoned on May 10.

## THE TICKET FOR THE WINNER'S BANDWAGON

The summer of 1944 gave Romania more of the same: defeats in Hitler's war. By then, the enemy was retaking what Antonescu had dreamed of annexing to his "Greater Romania." By mid-August, Southern Bessarabia was still weakly held by German and Romanian units, but the Soviets had a salient close to Iasi and were now coming south.

While the troops' morale was low in late 1943, it was now stiffening as the soldiers saw they would soon have to defend the homeland; but morale alone could not win. Soviet numbers and strategy would.

## Smoke and Mirrors

It was time to switch sides. Italy and Finland had already done that (see pp. W:GL11, W:FH22), and the timing had been set by the Allies' knocking at their doors – what was now happening to Romania. Even Antonescu was considering negotiations, but he hoped to be able to do it from a position of strength, something that was made impossible by the continuing Soviet offensive.

The coup against Antonescu was a palace conspiracy, skillfully executed by the young King Mihai; but the Romanian people were also clearly tired of the war and of the Germans, and opposition parties were in on the coup. Secret negotiations were carried out through the Romanian Communist Party, who participated in the planning; Stalin was willing to let the Romanians take back Transylvania, but wanted Bessarabia and a military commitment against the Axis. The Germans were suspicious but unable to act.

The *Conducator* was arrested, and replaced by another general, Constantin Stanescu. The replacement was announced on August 23, 1944. The Soviets pushed their tank vanguards to the limit, and by the end of the month they had reached both Ploesti and Bucharest, having covered 250 miles in less than two weeks. Bulgaria followed suit, and the whole southeastern continental frontline that Germany was trying to hold . . . disappeared.

Romania would field, until the end of the war, 539,000 troops against Germany – the fourth allied army in Europe.

## The Backlash

The Germans had little to react with. Most of their troops had been deployed in the Bessarabian salient, some 20 understrength divisions, and were now completely cut off; they soon surrendered. About 40,000 Germans were still in western Romania (9,000 of them

in the capital and 15,000 around the oilfields), but they belonged to rear-echelon, administrative units. Others had AA training, and the few actual garrisons were third-rate troops. The Romanians had created a “shadow army” of Training Divisions; they lacked heavy equipment, manpower and transport, but could be fielded anyway.

Small, confused rearguard actions erupted throughout the country, though here and there the German columns were not attacked, provided they just went away. The streets of Bucharest also saw some combat.

A much weakened Luftwaffe bombed the palaces in the capital in token retaliation, and made an attempt at landing troops, but could not gain control of the airfields its Romanian trainees were now defending. A whole special-ops Brandenburg battalion (see p. W:HS14) was destroyed by AA fire in its Me 323 giant transports (see p. W:MP82).

The Germans had no choice but to withdraw to the next natural barrier: the Carpathian mountains. The Transylvanian passes were guarded by the Hungarians. Good roads were rare in the region, and the terrain difficult. The weak spot was the Danube Valley.

## New Enemies, New Allies

Romania was now fighting a new enemy, Germany, and an old one, Hungary. Their new ally was the Soviet Union. Soviet generals, among them Marshal Rodion Malinovskij, saw the Romanian troops as expendable and did not trust Royal Army officers. While the USA and Great Britain supplied minor Western allies with their own weapons and equipment, the Soviets sometimes cut off supplies to Romanian units.

Nevertheless, the Romanians were at the forefront of this part of the war, engaging the Hungarians in hard-fought mountain actions in Transylvania and opening the Focsani Gate (a system of fortifications that linked the Carpathian range to the Danube at Galati). They then helped force open the Danube Valley, which allowed the Soviet motorized vanguards to reach Timisoara on September 19. From there, a few days later, a mixed Soviet-Romanian force engaged Hungarians and Germans at Arad – the Transylvanian front was being outflanked to the west.

The Romanian troops kept on fighting. The Axis forces were eradicated from Cluj, finally reuniting Transylvania with the Romanian homeland. Hitler developed a fixation on Budapest as the key to the Balkans, and, while eastern Germany was falling prey to the Soviets, he dispatched some elite armored and cavalry units to fight for the Hungarian capital (see p. W:IC25). The harsh winter fighting involved Romanian infantrymen, who surrounded the city by the end of December, 1944. Budapest finally fell on February 13, 1945.

The spring of that year saw more Romanian blood shed farther and farther west, away from the Romanian borders, in an unsettling replay of the 1941-1943 endless and costly advances east. Michael’s men were

## WHAT IF...?

The first alternate-history Romanian scenario might take off in 1938, supposing that the Czechs make a stand and the only immediate help is the Soviets’ – who have to cross Romanian territory. Do Romanians allow that? Will Hitler back off or start the war in 1938? And most importantly, once the Soviets are in, will they also move out?

A similar situation may happen in 1939, with Poland (see p. W:DWE15). If the Soviets sit on the fence and the Poles hang on, the Western Allies will try to have Romania acting as a supply channel, but the Germans wouldn’t have any of that.

1940 is the year of fateful decisions, with options that run the whole gamut. On the one hand, King Carol could order to fight the Soviets out of sheer orneriness. This would give Stalin an excuse to drive toward the oilfields, but the Germans would intervene – possibly the Hungarians too – and even a small British landing force can’t be ruled out, in a free-for-all whose final outcome is difficult to foresee. At the other extreme, Romania could opt for a maimed neutrality – giving up everything its avid neighbors wanted and selling petroleum to everyone. This might make it weak but rich, and a playing field for foreigners (diplomats, spies, wealthy refugees), local agitators, and coup plotters.

Antonescu could refuse to cross the Dniester, being content with Bessarabia. This would mean forfeiting Transylvania for the time being, but what happens when the Soviets begin to win? Romania still has a small but hardened and intact army, and Antonescu can offer Stalin Bessarabia back, in exchange for an armistice and help with retaking Transylvania, from a much stronger position and with much less bad blood between them. While many historians believe the Ploesti oil was too important for a “Finlandization” of Romania, this might just come to pass.

Finally, if Churchill has it his way and the Western Allies do land in the Balkans, King Mihai can try to negotiate a deal with the British instead of with the Soviets – but “Uncle Joe” won’t like this one bit.

committed to mopping up Hungary, to another round of mountain clashes in Slovakia, and to the initial moves into Austria.

In less than a year of fighting under their new allies, the Romanians suffered some 166,000 casualties.

## DEFEAT IN VICTORY

On March 6, 1945, King Mihai was forced to appoint a new government; his cabinet was dominated by Communists. This was an unmistakable sign of what the post-war era would be like for Romania. Ending the war in a costly but victorious campaign on the Allies' side would not be enough to buy a happy peace.

In four years of war, the armed forces had suffered some 797,000 casualties (killed and wounded), and the

civilian deaths totaled some 470,000. The economy was a shambles and whatever remained was vulnerable to Soviet "requisition." Romania was even denied the co-belligerent status that the Allies had granted to Italy. The King went in exile, and one of the worst Communist dictatorships of Eastern Europe set in. Anti-Communist partisans hopelessly fought on until the late 1950s.

Transylvania was indeed retrieved, and to this day, even after the end of the Soviet regime, its Hungarian minority remains somewhat restless. Northern Bukovina and the coast of Bessarabia were lost forever to Ukraine; the rest of Bessarabia became the Soviet Socialist Republic of Moldova. Today it is an independent state.





# 2. THE ROMANIAN ARMED FORCES

*I have already shown what could and could not be expected of Romanian troops in various situations. But they were still our best allies and did fight bravely in many places.*

– Field Marshal Erich von  
Manstein

This chapter describes the units, tactics, and assets the Romanians could rely on in their desperate struggle.

## MICHAEL'S TROOPS

In the 1930s, the wars of the previous decades were still very fresh in the Romanian collective memory. Sharing borders with several unfriendly countries (see p. 13), Romania kept up its guard; by the end of the decade, it launched a sizable program of rearmament. The suppliers were its most reliable allies, Czechoslovakia and France. The former supplied modern infantry weapons, and both contributed to the small Romanian armored program. Some cavalry regiments began the slow process of motorization.

All of this did not hide the fact that King Michael's troops were a peasant army of a struggling nation. It could compare favorably to other Balkan forces, like the Hungarians or Bulgarians, but not to the Soviets, and certainly not the Germans. The peasant recruits were tough and patriotic, but their education was sorely lacking; the same applied to NCOs. Junior officers were eager and their skills improved over time, though too many of them got themselves killed while leading assaults. Some of the senior officers were appointed for political reasons, and most were very conservative, even if Antonescu did promote capable generals. Corruption was a problem in certain barracks.

The *Conducator* tried to make up with numbers what he lacked in technology and education. In 1939, as the international situation was quickly deteriorating, the army began beefing up the ranks. By 1941, even though no less than three divisions had been disbanded because their recruitment pools were gone, the Romanians were fielding a large army. This unfortunately meant they were trying to muster up more men than they had rifles, uniforms, or boots for, which resulted in poor training, too. Most riflemen in some regiments were Green (see pp. W71). On June 22, 1941, the Army had mobilized 686,000 men, and could rely on a potential mobilization pool of about 2 million, though not all of these were fully trained.

## STANDARD UNITS

The Romanian infantry squad (*grupa*) was large, with 17 men; it included a squad leader, two 5-man rifle sections (*echipa*), and a 6-man LMG section, with one

LMG. Three such squads made up a platoon (*pluton*), together with a 5-man HQ. The company (*compania*) had three platoons, a small HQ with runners and medical teams, but no additional support weapons. Thus, by 1941 standards, the platoon was large but had little automatic firepower, and the company even more so.

A battalion (*batalion*) had three companies, its HQ, a MG company with anything from eight to 12 and later 16 MMGs, and a platoon with six 60mm mortars that were usually farmed out to the companies (especially after 1941). The regiment (*regimentul*) fielded three battalions, plus its HQ, services, and a support weapons company: six 37mm antitank guns, six 47mm antitank guns, and six 81mm mortars. By late 1941, a small pioneer company and a mixed cavalry/infantry recon company were added.

The division (*divizia*) had three infantry regiments, and a small, under-gunned artillery regiment (two light



battalions with a total of 24 75mm guns, and one heavy battalion with eight 100mm pieces). It also fielded a pioneer battalion, an anti-aircraft MG company (variously equipped with 13.2mm MGs or 20mm or 25mm autocannons, see p. 25), and a divisional antitank company (with 12 47mm antitank guns, sometimes towed by Renault-Malaxa tractors, see p. 26). The division also had a recon battalion mixing motorcycles and horses, and, finally, its HQ, supply troops, and military police. It totaled 17,500 men.

In 1942, the infantry divisions were reorganized for “less manpower, more firepower.” Each platoon got four smaller 10-man squads and a 60mm mortar; regiments were gradually reduced from three to two battalions, plus an additional 120mm mortar battery. The artillery organization changed to two smaller regiments per division, each with one 75mm and one 100mm battalion (having 12 guns each). By October 1942, greater antitank punch was added in the form of a new antitank gun battery with German guns, usually the 75mm

Schneider PaK 97/38, a makeshift conversion of obsolescent Mle 1897 field guns (pp. HT122, W:DWE31). Throughout 1943, the infantry divisions suffered from manpower shortages and varied their equipment as they were withdrawn for refitting.

## CAVALRY UNITS

A cavalry platoon had 41 troopers and three LMGs, while a saber squadron (*escadron*) fielded four such platoons. A cavalry battalion (*divizion*; not to be confused with *divizia*, division) had two squadrons, while a cavalry regiment had two battalions, plus its own HQ and services. It is worth noting that out of the four squadrons in a regiment, three had 12 LMGs each, but the fourth had 24 LMGs. By mid-1942 the regiment added a heavy squadron with 12 MMGs, some mortars (60mm or 81mm), and four antitank guns (either 37mm or 47mm). A cavalry brigade (later division) had three regiments. The brigade was completed by a horse-drawn artillery regiment (24 75mm guns) and four specialized companies: pioneers, MMG, 81mm mortars, recon (with motorcycles, truck-borne troopers and six R-1 tanks) and antitank/anti-aircraft (with a mix of up to 12 37mm antitank guns and up to eight MGs on anti-aircraft mounts). All of these specialized units were motorized.

By mid-1941, three of the cavalry brigades (5th, 6th, 8th) had two horse regiments and one motorized cavalry regiment. Apart from trucks to ride in, this also had more firepower. Three of its squadrons had the double LMG allotment (24 guns) plus two 60mm mortars, the fourth was the heavy squadron with 8 MMGs, 4 13.2mm anti-aircraft MGs, and 6 37mm antitank guns. The regimental HQ included significant motorized signals assets (which provided much more flexibility) and a flamethrower platoon.

## ARMORED UNITS

Romania began the war with one armored division, and later put together the embryo of a second. These units seldom fought as a whole. The 1st Tank Regiment (equipped with R-2 tanks) had two battalions, three companies per battalion, five 3-tank platoons per company. The 2nd (riding French R-35s, see p. W:MP47) was similar, but only had three platoons per company.



The division was completed with fully motorized and well outfitted troops: a truck-borne regiment with more than enough support weapons, a strong artillery regiment (that is, strong for the Romanian standards, with an array of 12 75mm, 12 100mm and 12 105mm guns), a motorcycle battalion, a recon group (more motorcycles, MGs, two antitank guns), pioneers, and an anti-tank unit (with 12 47mm guns).

Unfortunately, this outfit was soon broken up and used in small detachments to shore up the other units and, in particular, the motorized cavalry. Later in the war the unit was given the title *Romania Mare* (Great Romania).

## SPECIAL UNITS

The *Graniceri* can be considered special units and are described in the template (see p. 20).

The assault groups employed in the sieges of Odessa and Sevastopol were small platoons (about 20 experienced and brave men) made up of specialized 3-man teams. They were armed to the teeth with SMGs, hand grenades, smoke grenades, and wire cutters; each team also carried the weaponry for its specific task: pole charges (for obstacles), satchel charges (for pillboxes), flamethrowers (for bunkers), and LMGs (for

covering fire). They were similar to late-WWI *Stosstruppen* (storm troopers).

## OPERATIONS AND TACTICS

By 1941, the Romanians had had time to learn from the Germans and they carried out small *Blitzkrieg* operations – but with just one armored division and their cavalry (some of which was partially motorized). Such initiatives were successful, but limited by the fact that most of their army was still marching. Later on, they were engaged in sieges and static defense, and finally in skirmishes, confused battles, and rearguard actions throughout Romania and in Transylvania.

Tactically, the Romanian army followed French doctrine until 1940. Then, the German trainers arrived and steered the recruits towards their methods (see p. W50). During the sieges, the Romanians returned to WWI staples: artillery barrages, bayonet charges, surprise assaults, and tanks used in the infantry support role.

## FIGHTING IN THE SHALLOWS

The small Romanian Navy (*Marina Regala Romana*) was constrained by budget limitations, but also tailored to the environment it had to defend: the low coastlines and shallow waters, the maze of channels and swamps in the Danube delta, and, last but not least, the huge river itself. Indeed, the Navy was organized into two departments, the Sea Fleet and the Danube Fleet.

In theory, the Black Sea could have provided an opportunity for daring, strategic-level landing operations far behind enemy lines, by either side. In practice, both lacked proper landing ships and, while the Soviet Black Sea Fleet was stronger than the Axis forces deployed there, neither side had a clear superiority.



This did not prevent coastal actions, on a small scale but no less intense for it: raids against the coastal traffic, minelaying, shore bombardments, resupply of coastal land units, and regimental-level landings carried out with small landing craft, barges, and pontoons. Most of the time, the Romanian sailors were on the defensive, reacting against Soviet initiatives; nevertheless, they were quite effective at that, and whittled away at the enemy's superiority in numbers. Throughout the war, the Soviets seemed willing to expend their vessels, especially when supporting their land forces, while the Romanian Navy had to husband its meager resources.

Romanian ships were involved in evacuation operations once the Axis began its long retreat. In the end, when Romania changed sides, its major vessels were withdrawn from action under Soviet custody, but the river gunboats took part in the final campaign against the Germans, prowling the Danube. The regiment-sized Marine force also was committed on the river.

The mobilized force of the Romanian Navy in 1941 was about 15,000 men.

## AN ERSATZ LUFTWAFFE

The Romanians had established a *Corpul Aerian* (Air Corps) already in WWI. After 1918, they quickly developed this new arm and even established a fledgling air industry. However, this had to rely on licenses and imports. In an attempt to hedge its bets, the *Fortelor Aeronautica Regala Romana* (Royal Romanian Air Force) procured small batches from several foreign producers and tested them. They could not afford large numbers, anyway.

Unfortunately, when the war came, not only this variety made maintenance difficult; also, some of the models were already obsolete. Numerically, the Air Force could stand its skies against the Balkan neighbors, but nothing more. The ranks were bolstered with an unexpected gift that came from Poland, as that country crumbled under the German offensive. Polish pilots sought internment in Romania, and their airplanes were seized and pressed into service.

The order of battle (see p. 18) of the Air Force in 1941 was, as a result, of mixed parentage. Soon it suffered attrition from operating out of forward airfields, and from limited stocks of spare parts. A German advisory mission had arrived in 1940, and while the number of Luftwaffe instructors steadily grew, it became apparent that the Romanians needed new aircraft. The Germans initially supplied them in only small numbers, but

by 1943 it was clear local industry couldn't keep up with the losses.

The *Aeronautica* was reorganized several times, in an effort to assign the aging Polish, English and Italian aircraft to second-line duties. Modern German fighters, however, were needed both on the front lines and over the vital target of Ploesti (see p. 39). Throughout the war, the units' strength varied considerably. An *escadri-la* (squadron) might be comprised of anywhere from 8 to 20 airplanes; a *grupul* (group) normally was all of two squadrons, sometimes three. This force was served by about 41,000 men of all ranks.

In September, 1944, the Nazis attempted to airlift troops to Bucharest, but the Romanian Air Force had complete control over the needed airports, and the idea was abandoned. The Romanian pilots also participated to the Transylvanian campaign alongside the Soviets.

## JOINING BARBA- ROSSA

On June 22, 1941, the Romanian armed forces had reached their peak combat readiness. As to numbers, they grew slightly for a few months after that date, then took a steady downturn as the horrific losses mounted and new recruits couldn't replace them fast enough.

## THE ARMY

Notwithstanding Antonescu's and the German advisors' efforts, quality was not the same throughout the Army. The Guards Division and some of the units with more professional cadres and better-trained men (such as the 5th, 6th and 13th Divisions) were one step above the others; the same applied to specialized troops.

The average regiments were roughly on par with their Soviet opponents; the Reserve Divisions that would be mustered in the second half of 1941 were not nearly as effective.

For their part in Operation Barbarossa, the Romanians initially fielded 18 infantry divisions, numbered 1st to 21st (the 12th, 16<sup>th</sup>, and 17th were disbanded after the loss of the regions they were recruited from), plus the Guards Division. The infantry also counted the 1st Mountain Brigade and the 1st Frontier Guard Brigade (later Division). The cavalry had six cavalry brigades (later renamed divisions), three of which were

partially motorized. The 1st Armored Division was the only fully mechanized asset at the time.

## THE NAVY

On June 22, 1941, the Sea Fleet had the following ships:

Four destroyers: *Regele Ferdinand*, *Regina Maria*; *Marasti*, *Marasesti*. The first two were the most recent class, built in 1929.

Three corvettes: *Naluca*, *Sborul*, *Smeul*.

Three torpedo boats: *Viscolul*, *Viforul*, *Vijelia*.

One submarine: *Delfinul*.

Three gunboats, one mine-layer, and auxiliary craft.

The Danube Fleet had seven monitors, four torpedo boats, two gunships and five patrol boats.

The Navy also included a Marine Regiment, coastal batteries around Costanta, and a Seaplane Group (three understrength Squadrons flying Italian seaplanes such as the S.55A).

## THE AIR FORCE

In 1941, the Romanian Air Force was divided into three main sections: the Combat Air Grouping (*Gruparea Aeriana de Lupta*), the units directly charged with cooperation with the Army, and the home Air Regions.

The Combat Air Grouping was to carry out offensive operations against the Soviet Union; it included the best, first-line pilots and aircraft. It counted the following units (in parentheses the aircraft totals by model).

Eight fighter squadrons: three with the Bf 109E (59), two with the He 112B (30) and three with the new IAR 80A (36).

Eleven bomber squadrons: three with the He 111H (32), two with the S.79B (22), two with the ex-Polish P.37B (21), two with the Potez 633B2 (25), one with the MB.210B (10), and one with the IAR 37 light bomber (12).

One long-range reconnaissance squadron with the Blenheim Mk. I (12).

Four observation squadrons with the IAR 38 and the IAR 39.

The units assigned to the Army were two long-range reconnaissance squadrons with the Blenheim Mk. I, two liaison squadrons, and five observation squadrons flying the IAR 39. In a remarkable show of advanced Blitzkrieg thinking, one of the latter was directly assigned to the one Romanian armored division.

The home Air Regions were assigned fighters for air defense, trainers, liaison, observation, and seaplane squadrons; they also had reserve bombers. These forces

included six fighter squadrons with the P.11F, two with the P.24E and one with the Hurricane Mk. I.

# AT THE ELEVENTH HOUR

By September, 1944, the Romanian armed forces were a shadow of their former self, and yet, in purely numerical terms, their contribution to their new cause cannot be overlooked. During 1943, several infantry divisions had to be disbanded in the wake of the Stalingrad disaster, while others were merged together. However, 19 new divisions were planned, although the average *Divizia Instructie* (Training Division) was short on manpower and artillery.

Once the spate of new mergers was over (when possible, the survivors of a veteran unit were added to the boys of a Training Division), no fewer than 20 divisions were fighting the Germans and their Hungarian allies. However, the equipment shortages were crippling them, and the Soviets, while expecting the Romanians to fight, did little to help. By early 1945, just 15 Romanian infantry divisions were fighting in Czechoslovakia. This doesn't include the division under direct Soviet control. There was also a small armored unit, the *Detasamentul Niculescu* (Niculescu Detachment), built on the remains of the 1st Armored Division, out of training units and the 2nd Armored Regiment. It acquitted itself creditably, although equipped with a bewildering assortment that included obsolete R-35s (see p. W:MP47), TACAM R-2s (see p. 27), SdKfz 222 armored cars (see p. W:IC75), ancient FT-17s (see p. W:MP46), and, fortunately, a score of T-4s (see p. 28) and StuG IIIs (see p. W:FH38), too.



# 3. ROMANIAN SOLDIERS

Romanians needed to muster all their strength, resolve, and skills to face the war they found themselves committed to. Roleplaying Romanian soldiers can be a difficult challenge, with the stack decked them at every turn.

## CREATING A ROMANIAN CHARACTER

*GURPS WWII* and the other books in the line have many templates for creating characters. The following information is presented in the corebook format, and the guidelines on pp. W68-85 should be followed. Treat Romanian soldiers as Soviets for rank-based Wealth (p. W63). Romanian officers often will have better Wealth than that mandated by their rank; however, promising and ambitious cadets of peasant origins could make it to the middle cadres and then be propelled further up the career ladder by the fortunes of war.

## FEMALE CHARACTERS

Romanian society had very traditional ideas about a woman's role – she was expected to stay home and be a good mother. Besides, Romania was slow to reach a total-war footing; women were not as needed to replace men in the workplace as they were elsewhere. The most notable exception was in the countryside, where peasant women increasingly found themselves forced to run things in the absence of their husbands or fathers.

In the early war years, the most interesting female roles would be reserved for

noblewomen, and wives (or even mistresses), of important politicians. This might be an intriguing position, though such characters would have to act indirectly, through their men. Later on, when war reached Romania, women more often had to fend for themselves, but their plight worsened, too. They weren't as systematically at risk as German women when the Soviets arrived, but the threat existed.

## Romanian Advantages:

Purchase Military Rank and resulting Wealth, with remaining points spent among: +1 to HT [10]; Acute Senses (p. B19) [2/level]; Combat Reflexes (p. B20) [15]; Common Sense (p. B20) [10]; Extra Fatigue (p. CI24) [3/level]; Fearlessness (p. CI25) [2/level]; High Pain Threshold (p. B20) [10]; Patron (Iron Guard) (p. B24) [varies]; Pitiably (p. CI29) [5]; Reputation from medals (p. W63) or good conduct (p. B17) [varies]; Strong Will (p. B23) [4/level]; Toughness 1 (p. B23) [10].

## ROMANIAN MILITARY RANKS

MR	Army/Air Force	Navy
8	<i>Maresal al Romaniei</i>	-
8	<i>General de armata</i>	<i>Amiral de flota</i>
8	<i>General colonel (de corp)</i>	<i>Amiral</i>
7	<i>General locotenent (de divizie)</i>	<i>Viceamiral</i>
7	<i>General major (de brigada)</i>	<i>Contraamiral</i>
6	<i>Colonel</i>	<i>Comandor</i>
5	<i>Locotenent colonel</i>	<i>Capitan-comandor</i>
4	<i>Major</i>	<i>Locotenent-comandor</i>
4	<i>Capitan</i>	<i>Capitan</i>
3	<i>Locotenent major</i>	<i>Locotenent</i>
3	<i>Locotenent</i>	-
3	<i>Sub-locotenent</i>	<i>Aspirant</i>
2	<i>Plutonier major</i>	<i>Maistru Principal</i>
2	<i>Plutonier</i>	<i>Maistru Clasa I</i>
2	<i>Sergent major</i>	<i>Maistru Clasa II</i>
2	-	<i>Maistru Clasa III</i>
1	-	<i>Submaistru</i>
1	<i>Sergent</i>	<i>Sergent</i>
1	<i>Caporal</i>	<i>Caporal</i>
0	<i>Soldat-fruntas</i>	<i>Fruntas</i>
0	<i>Soldat</i>	<i>Marinar</i>

## Romanian Disadvantages:

A stereotypical set: Intolerance (p. B34) [-10], Poverty (Poor) (p. W63) [-15], and Semi-Literacy (p. CI94) [-5]. Substitute among: Bad Sight (p. B27) [-10 or -25]; Bloodlust (p. B31) [-10]; Callous (p. CI86) [-6]; Code of Honor (p. W64) [varies]; Chummy (p. CI87) [-5]; Fanaticism (Greater Romania) (p. B33) [-15]; Greed (p. B33) [-15]; Overconfidence (p. B34) [-10]; Secret (Jew, Communist) (p. CI78) [-20/-30]; Sense of Duty (p. B39) (Comrades in arms) [-5] or (Country) [-10]; Social Stigma (Ethnic Minority) (p. B27) [-10]; Stubbornness (p. B37) [-5]; Illiteracy (p. B33) may substitute Semi-Literacy [from -5 to -10]; this requires taking Uneducated (p. CI79) [-5].

## BACKGROUND SKILLS

Technical skills are rare among rank-and-file Romanian personnel, with skills like Agronomy, Animal Handling, Riding, Naturalist, and Teamster being more common.

## CUSTOMIZATION NOTES

When using the templates on pp. W71-85, note the following modifications: Romania had token green Marine and Paratrooper units, and there were a few Snipers (the best of them serving with the Frontier Guards). With the exception of a few above-average units, Riflemen were green initially, average after Bessarabia, and the survivors of Odessa and the Crimean campaign were at least seasoned; but the bulk of the infantry deteriorated to green and even raw as the losses mounted. Frontier Guards were seasoned, Cavalrymen average to seasoned.



# NEW TEMPLATE

This template covers a specialization not covered in the core rulebook. It uses the same rules as all other templates (see p. W68).

## **GRANICER** **(FRONTIER GUARD)** **65 POINTS**

*Granicer* means the same as *Grenzer* (in German) and *granicar* (in Slavic languages): “borderer,” the irregular light infantryman who stood guard in the Balkan wilderness against incessant border raids. In the Romanian army, cavalrymen were more glamorous, but career NCOs and experienced soldiers went to the Frontier Guards. These units also selected men from the border territories (including the lost ones) on a regional basis. The *graniceri*, therefore, were seasoned soldiers with the skills of recon troopers and irregular fighters. They distinguished themselves in Romania’s offensives, though they were most effective when fighting on their own turf and/or in broken terrain. The Frontier Guard Brigade (later Division) proved its mettle on the battlefield countless times. The *graniceri* were organized like the infantry, although with lighter and older armament.

The template assumes a seasoned serviceman (p. W71). It could be used for frontier guards of other nations.

**Attributes:** ST 11 [10]; DX 11 [10]; IQ 12 [20]; HT 11 [10].

**Advantages:** Fit [5] and 25 points in *National Advantages*.

**Disadvantages:** Extremely Hazardous Duty [-20] and -30 points in *National Disadvantages*.

**Basic Skills:** Area Knowledge (Region) (M/E) IQ+1 [2]-13; Camouflage (M/E) IQ [1]-12; Climbing (P/A) DX-1 [1]-10; First Aid (M/E) IQ-1 [1/2]-11; Guns (Light Auto) (P/E) DX+2 [1]-13\*; Guns (Rifle) (P/E) DX+3 [2]-14\*; Hiking (P/A – HT) HT [2]-11; Jumping (P/E) DX-1 [1/2]-10; Knife (P/E) DX [1]-11; Soldier (M/A) IQ+2 [6]-14; Spear (P/A) DX-1 [1]-10; Stealth (P/A) DX [2]-11; Throwing (P/H) DX-2 [1]-9; Traps (M/A) IQ-1 [1]-11.

**Secondary Skills:** Armoury (Small Arms) (M/A) IQ-1 [1]-11; Brawling (P/E) DX+1 [2]-12; Demolition (M/A) IQ-2 [1/2]-10; Engineer (Combat) (M/H) IQ-3 [1/2]-9; Gunner (MG) (P/A) DX [1]-12\*; NBC Warfare (M/A) IQ-2 [1/2]-10; Orienteering (M/A) IQ [1]-11; Scrounging (M/E) IQ-1 [1/2]-11; Survival (any) (M/A) IQ-1 [1]-11.

**Optional Skills:** Spend 5 points on any of Bicycling, Guns (Pistol), Swimming (all P/E); Boating, Dri-

## THE ARCHANGEL'S NEST

Romanian characters may easily be members of a *cuib* (nest) of the Legion of St. Michael (see p. 5). This is mainly a collection of Disadvantages, as they'll have a Duty [-5] to the organization, and normally also Fanaticism (Patriotism or Greater Romania) [-15]. Intolerance, either against Jews [-5] or any foreigner [-10], would be very common. Xenophobia [-15] would be a possibility.

Rank-and-file members can't take the Iron Guard as a Patron; however, they would be entitled to have Contacts and/or a limited Claim of Hospitality. On the other hand, important members of the movement may also have it as a Patron. It's a reasonably powerful organization, appearing not very often [8]. With such a position, a Reputation is often a mixed blessing (+2 from followers and sympathizers, but -2 from opponents, many officials, and members of the persecuted groups), with a net value of [0]. Enemies [vary] are always possible.

## UNLUCKY AND STATELESS

Jews were always looked on suspiciously as foreigners in Romania. Indeed, many of them had come from Czarist Russia, fleeing the pogroms. After WWI, they became Romanian citizens, but between 1937 and 1940, following the resurgence of anti-Semitism that was spreading throughout Eastern Europe, nearly all Romanian Jews were stripped of their citizenship. Not belonging to any other country, they became stateless: non-citizens. In 1940, even more severe anti-Semitic laws were passed.

The Jews' situation worsened the further east you traveled. In Bucharest, Jews who had been citizens of Romania before 1918 could be harassed and were subjected to random violence; but in Bessarabia, bloody deportations took place, and further east, mass murders were committed. Jews were the preferred targets when reprisals were ordered.

By mid-1943, with the turning of the war's tide, the situation changed again, and a wealthy Jew could often buy his own safety, and possibly even a way out of the country (towards Bulgaria, and then possibly on to Turkey).

Jews who managed to keep their citizenship have Social Stigma (Minority Group) [-10], and their citizen status doesn't protect them against the Intolerance of fanatics. Bessarabian or Ukrainian Jews must also take the state as an Enemy (9 or less) [-40]. They are allowed to exceed the usual -40-point limit. All of them may easily lose Status. For most of them their native tongue would be Yiddish (M/A), though they would also know the local language.

ving (Automobile), Gunner (Cannon, Mortar), Riding (all P/A); Carousing (P/A – HT); Cooking, Savoir-Faire (Military), Telegraphy (all M/E); Administration, Electronics Operation (Communications), Forward Observer, Gambling, Intimidation, Streetwise, Teamster, Tracking (all M/A); Animal Handling, Explosive Ordnance Disposal, Packing (all M/H).

\* Includes +2 from IQ.

# 4. THE ROMANIAN ARMOURY

The Romanian military was relatively poorly equipped, much of the materiel being outdated surplus from its pre-war Allies. Motorization was very limited, and many weapon systems were poorly suited for the savage campaigning that was in store for the Romanian troops – to say nothing of the clothing, rations, and other necessities.

During the course of the war, Germany supplied better weapons and vehicles, but never of the latest quality and never in sufficient numbers.

## PERSONAL EQUIPMENT

The Romanian rifleman was equipped with a field uniform, steel helmet, gas mask, load-bearing equipment, bayonet, entrenching tool, canteen, breadbag, and backpack with rolled blanket and mess kit.

The combat uniform was the khaki-colored md. 1939 or 1941. The cotton summer tunic paled faster than the woolen trousers, giving a two-tone appearance. The soldiers often wore distinctive armbands.

The standard steel helmet was the md. 1938, the Dutch M.23/27 pattern imported from the Netherlands (PD 2, DR 3). Reserve units had the md. 1915 (the French Adrian Mle 15, see p. HT90). Later, the German md. 1935 (see pp. W87, W:IC57) was imported.

The Romanian traditional winter headgear, the *caciula*, was also issued; made of white or black lamb's wool, it had a distinctive tall shape.

Several types of gas masks were in service; the md. 1932 was a Romanian-made copy of the Polish wz. 32, while the SAROGAZ md. 1935 and md. 1939, along with their typical round metal carrying containers, were German-designed (see p. W87).

A rifleman wore two leather pouches with five 5-round rifle clips each (50 rounds). (Light-colored pouches and harness could mean a green soldier, as

they darkened with use.) An additional 50 rounds were carried in the backpack or breadbag. Machine gunners carried two pouches of four 20-round LMG magazines each (160 rounds), plus a holster for a Steyr md. 1912 pistol and spare magazine.

The entrenching tool was a short spade closely resembling the German one (see p. W88). During assaults, it was sometimes tucked in the waist belt, with the blade over the heart – as improvised armor (PD 2, DR 3 for hits to area 18).

The canteen had a capacity of 1.05 quarts (see p. W87).

The breadbag md. 1933 was patterned after the Polish wz. 33 (see p. W:DWE29).

The backpack md. 1939 was a canvas rucksack (see p. W87).

The tent sheet md. 1937 could be used as a rain poncho (see p. W88).

## FOOD

**Field Ration:** The Romanian field ration (theoretically) consisted of a quart of hot soup, 0.5 lbs. of fresh wheat or corn bread (alternatively *mamaliga*, corn cereals), one ounce of pasta, a slice of ham, a single onion, additional vegetables (when available, typically beans), some cheese or milk (when available, which wasn't often), a caramel candy, coffee substitute, and water. A group of men usually pooled their food to cook it together. In addition, each man was supposed to receive 3-5 cigarettes per day. \$0.45, 3 lbs.

Additional food was scavenged as the troops advanced, including dead cavalry horses, crows or other wild birds, etc. (see *Foraging*, p. 37).

**Combat Ration:** Combat rations (two to three a day) for front-line troops consisted of 0.5 lbs. of bread or a handful of *pesmeti*hardtack biscuits, a slice of ham, one onion, water, and some cigarettes. \$0.30, 2 lbs.

# SMALL ARMS

See pp. W91-99 for more information.

## WEAPON TABLES

### Semiautomatic Pistols – use Guns (Pistol)

<i>Weapon</i>	<i>Malf</i>	<i>Dam</i>	<i>SS</i>	<i>Acc</i>	<i>1/2D</i>	<i>Max</i>	<i>Wt.</i>	<i>AWt.</i>	<i>RoF</i>	<i>Shots</i>	<i>ST</i>	<i>Rcl</i>	<i>Hld</i>	<i>Cost</i>
Steyr md. 1912, crit. 9mm Steyr		2d+2	10	3	150	1,850	2.3	0.2	3~	8	9	-1	-1	\$35

### Rifles – use Guns (Rifle)

<i>Weapon</i>	<i>Malf</i>	<i>Dam</i>	<i>SS</i>	<i>Acc</i>	<i>1/2D</i>	<i>Max</i>	<i>Wt.</i>	<i>AWt.</i>	<i>RoF</i>	<i>Shots</i>	<i>ST</i>	<i>Rcl</i>	<i>Hld</i>	<i>Cost</i>
Lebel-Berthier md. 1907/15, 8mm Lebel	crit.	6d+2	14	10	1,000	3,900	8.4	0.3	1/2	5+1	11	-3	-7	\$25
Steyr-Mannlicher md. 1893, 6.5mm Mannlicher	crit.	6d	14	10	800	3,600	9.2	0.3	1/2	5+1	11	-2	-7	\$30
Steyr-Mannlicher md. 1895, 7.92mm Mauser	crit.	7d	14	10	1,000	3,900	8.6	0.3	1/2	5+1	11	-3	-7	\$30
ZB md. 1924, 7.92mm Mauser	crit.	7d	14	10	1,000	3,900	9.3	0.3	1/2	5+1	11	-3	-6	\$30

### Submachine Guns – use Guns (Light Auto) in burst-fire and Guns (Rifle) in semiautomatic fire

<i>Weapon</i>	<i>Malf</i>	<i>Dam</i>	<i>SS</i>	<i>Acc</i>	<i>1/2D</i>	<i>Max</i>	<i>Wt.</i>	<i>AWt.</i>	<i>RoF</i>	<i>Shots</i>	<i>ST</i>	<i>Rcl</i>	<i>Hld</i>	<i>Cost</i>
CMC Orita md. 1941, 9mm Parabellum	crit.	3d-1	10	6	160	1,900	8.8	1.2	10*	25	10	-1	-5	\$60
Haenel-Schmeisser md. 1941, 9mm Parabellum	crit.	3d-1	10	6	160	1,900	9.6	1.5	8*	32	10	-1	-5	\$75

### Machine Guns – use Gunner (MG)

<i>Weapon</i>	<i>Malf</i>	<i>Dam</i>	<i>SS</i>	<i>Acc</i>	<i>1/2D</i>	<i>Max</i>	<i>Wt.</i>	<i>AWt.</i>	<i>RoF</i>	<i>Shots</i>	<i>ST</i>	<i>Rcl</i>	<i>Cost</i>
St. Étienne md. 1907, 8mm Lebel	crit.	6d+2	20	10	1,000	3,900	54/125.9	1.6	10	25	28T	-1	\$270
Steyr-Schwarzlose md. 1907/12, 7.92mm Mauser	crit.	7d	20	10	1,000	3,900	69/131	16	8	250	33T	-1	\$275
ZB md. 1930, 7.92mm Mauser	crit.	7d	17	10	1,000	3,900	23	1.8	10*	20	12B	-2	\$120
ZB md. 1937, 7.92mm Mauser	crit.	7d	20	12	1,000	3,900	49.3/87.8	7.5	8/11*	100	26T	-1	\$400

### Hand Grenades – use Throwing

<i>Weapon</i>	<i>Malf</i>	<i>Damage</i>	<i>Wt.</i>	<i>Fuse</i>	<i>Hld</i>	<i>Cost</i>
Kyser md. 1934	crit.	2d+2	0.8	0	-1	\$10
Kyser md. 1938	crit.	1d+2 [2d]	1	4-5	-1	\$10
MAN Ofensiva md. 1939	crit.	4d	0.6	4-5	-1	\$10
MAN Defensiva md. 1939	crit.	1d+2 [2d]	1.5	4-5	-1	\$10

## Mortars – use Gunner (Mortar)

Weapon	Malf	Dam	SS	Acc	Min	Ind	Wt.	AWt.	RoF	Cost
Voina-Brandt md. 1939, 60mm	crit.	5d [6d]	20	5	50	1,870	39.2	3	1/3	\$300
Voina-Brandt md. 1939, 81mm	crit.	6d×2 [6d]	20	6	200	3,135	131.2	7.8	1/4	\$400

## Flamethrowers – use Gunner (Flamethrower)

Weapon	Malf	Dam	SS	Acc	Max	Wt.	RoF	Shots	Cost
Pignone md. 1937	crit.	3d/second	14	7	25	57.2	1	20	\$220

## WEAPON DESCRIPTIONS

See pp. W94-99 for additional weapon descriptions; many more German weapons are described in *GURPS WWII: Iron Cross*.

### Hand Weapons

Hand weapons included the *baioneta md. 1924* (bayonet, p. W193) and the *sabie md. 1906* (cavalry sabre, p. W193).

### Pistols

The small Italian *Beretta Pistol md. 1934* (see p. W94) was the usual officer's sidearm.

**Steyr Pistol md. 1912 (1912):** This Austrian pistol (see p. W:IC62) was the standard sidearm of the army and police, issued to machine gunners, vehicle crews, etc.

### Rifles

Captured Russian *Mosin-Nagant Pusca md. 1891* and *md. 1891/30* rifles (see p. W95) were used in large numbers by second-line and reserve units. Frontline units liked the sniper variant with 3.5× scope, since only very few of the standard ZB md. 1924 rifles were prepared to mount a German 4× scope from 1943.

**Lebel-Berthier Pusca md. 1907/15 (1916):** Some artillery crews and reserve units still had the French 8×50mmR Lebel-Berthier Mle 07/15 (see pp. HT114, W:RH37).

**Steyr-Mannlicher Pusca md. 1893 (1893):** This Austrian-made bolt-action rifle in 6.5×54mmR Mannlicher had been the standard Romanian rifle prior to and during WWI; by the 1930s, it was mainly confined to cavalry, marines, and border guards.

**Steyr-Mannlicher Pusca md. 1895 (1916):** This Austrian bolt-action rifle was the second most common infantry rifle, in use with reserve units. Most had been captured during WWI, and many had been converted from 8×50mmR Mannlicher to 7.92×57mm Mauser.

**ZB-Mauser Pusca md. 1924 (1935):** The standard Romanian infantry rifle was the Czechoslovakian ZB vz. 24 short rifle. Commonly just called the ZB, some 445,000 were available in 1941. It was a licensed Mauser-type similar in appearance and performance to the German Kar 98k (see p. W95). The latter was supplied directly from Germany starting in 1943.

### Submachine Guns

In 1941, the Romanian standard submachine gun was the *Beretta Pistol-mitraliera md. 1938* (see p. W96), which had been introduced in 1939. It was supplemented with the *Beretta Pistol-mitraliera md. 1938/42* (see p. W:GL27) from 1943/44. The *Mauser Pistol-mitraliera md. 1932*, a machine pistol variant of the C96 (see pp. HT70, 108, and W94), was shortly used by the paratroops until replaced by the ERMA MP 40.

**CMC-Orita Pistol-mitraliera md. 1941 (1942):** Designed by a Czech engineer called Orita but made in Romania, only some 4,000 were produced. The Orita did not reach the troops in any numbers before 1943, and the Beretta md. 1938 remained the standard submachine gun.

**Haenel-Schmeisser Pistol-mitraliera md. 1941 (1943):** Known as the MP 41 in Germany, this was a modification of the ERMA MP 40 by Hugo Schmeisser; basically, it used the mechanism and magazine of the MP 40 and the wooden shoulderstock and selective-fire trigger of Schmeisser's MP 28/II (see p. W:IC63). The Iron Guard had a small stock in 1941, secretly provided by the Germans (presumably through the SD).

### Machine Guns

**St. Étienne Mitraliera md. 1907 (1916):** This French air-cooled medium machine gun (see p. HT118) was in use with those second-line units still armed with the Lebel-Berthier md. 1907/15 rifle.

**Steyr-Schwarzlose Mitraliera md. 1907/12 (1916):** This Austrian water-cooled weapon (see pp. HT118, W:IC64) was the standard Romanian medium machine gun until superseded by the ZB md. 1937. Some 1,000 had been converted from 8×50mmR Mannlicher to fire the 7.92×57mm Mauser round.



Marines and border guard units armed with Steyr-Mannlicher md. 1893 rifle had the same weapon chambered for the 6.5×54mmR Mannlicher round; Dam 6d, 1/2D 800, Max 3,600.

**ZB Pusca-mitraliera md. 1930 (1933):** This was the Czechoslovakian ZB30 light machine gun (see pp. HT119, W97), of which 17,131 were acquired in 1933-1937; additional 5,000 were made in Romania by Copsa Mica Cugir.

**ZB Mitraliera md. 1937 (1937):** This was the Czechoslovakian ZB53 air-cooled medium machine gun (see p. W:IC64), of which 8,000 were eventually received.

## MODERN WEAPONS FROM GERMANY

From 1943, Romanian frontline units largely re-equipped with German weapons, including Luger P 08 (pp. HT108, W94), Walther P 38 (p. W94), and Walther PP and PPK (pp. HT108, W94) pistols; ERMA MP 40 (pp. HT116, W96) and Haenel-Schmeisser MP 41 (p. 00) submachine guns; Mauser Kar 98k (p. W95), ZB G 33/40 (p. W:IC63), and Walther G 43 (p. W95) rifles; Haenel StG 44 assault rifles (p. W95); Rheinmetall MG 34 and MG 42 general-purpose machine guns (pp. HT119, W97); various hand grenades (pp. HT117, W98, and W:IC65); various HASAG Panzerfaust models (pp. HT122, W98); HASAG RPzB 54 rocket launchers (pp. HT122, W98); 50mm Rheinmetall PaK 38 antitank guns; 75mm Schneider PaK 97/38 antitank guns; 75mm Rheinmetall PaK 40 antitank guns; 88mm Krupp FlaK 36 antiaircraft guns (p. W:IC71); etc.

## Hand Grenades

**Kyser Grenade de mana ofensiva md. 1934 (1934):** This was the Czechoslovakian-made RG vz. 34 blast grenade (see p. W98).

**Kyser Grenade de mana multifunctionala md. 1938 (1938):** A Czechoslovakian-made multi-purpose grenade (Dam 1d+2 and Wt. 1 without the fragmentation sleeve).

**MAN Grenade de mana ofensiva md. 1939 (1939):** A Romanian-made copy of the Polish wz. 33 blast grenade (see p. W:DWE30), in turn copied from the French OF Mle 15.

**MAN Grenade de mana defensiva md. 1939 (1939):** A Romanian-made copy of the Polish wz. 33 “pineapple” fragmentation grenade (see p. W:DWE30), in turn copied from the French DF Mle 15 (see p. HT117).

## Mortars

Romania produced the 120mm *Resita Aruncator md. 1942*, a direct copy of the Soviet 120-PM-38 (pp. HT121, W97).

**Voina-Brandt Aruncator md. 1939 (1939):** The standard platoon-level light mortar was a conventional 60mm Stokes-Brandt pattern (see pp. HT121, W97).

**Voina-Brandt Aruncator md. 1939 (1939):** The standard battalion-level medium mortar was a conventional 81mm Stokes-Brandt pattern (see p. W97).

## Flamethrowers

**Pignone Aruncator de flacari md. 1937 (1937):** This Italian backpack flamethrower was the standard flamethrowing equipment of the Romanian army. It had a filler of 3.2 gallons of thickened fuel, sufficient for 20 one-second bursts.

# ARTILLERY

Artillery weapons in service with the Romanian army included the 25mm Puteaux md. 1937 antitank gun; 37mm Bofors md. 1936 antitank gun (see p. W:FH36); 37mm Rheinmetall md. 1939 antitank gun (see p. W101); 47mm Böhler md. 1935 antitank gun (see p. W:GL30); 47mm Breda md. 1935 antitank gun; 47mm Concordia-Schneider md. 1936/39 antitank gun; 75mm Resita md. 1943 antitank gun; 13.2mm Hotchkiss md. 1931 antiaircraft machine gun (see p. W:RH38); 20mm Oerlikon md. 1928 antiaircraft autocannon; 20mm Rheinmetall md. 1938 antiaircraft autocannon; 25mm Hotchkiss md. 1939 antiaircraft autocannon; 37mm Rheinmetall md. 1939 antiaircraft gun; 40mm Star-Bofors md. 1936 antiaircraft autocannon (see p. W:MP25); 75mm Voina-Vickers md. 1936 antiaircraft gun; 75mm Skoda md. 1915 mountain gun; 75mm Schneider md. 1897 field gun (see pp. HT122, W:DWE31); 75mm Krupp md. 1907/12 field gun; 105mm Schneider md. 1936 field gun; 105mm Skoda md. 1936 mountain howitzer; and 149mm Skoda md. 1934 howitzer.



# THE GARAGE

In 1941, vehicles used by the Romanian army included the BMW R 75 motorcycle (below); Zündapp KS 600 motorcycle; Tempo G1200 4x4 utility car; Tatra T-92 2.2-ton truck; Ford Romana G-198ST 3-ton truck; Praga T-IVR tracked artillery tractor; Tatra T-72 armored car; Renault-Malaxa UE tankette (below); Praga R-1 tankette; Skoda R-2 light tank (p. 27); Renault FT-17 light tank (see p. W:MP46); and Renault R-35 light tank (see p. W:MP47).

In November 1942, Germany provided 11 T-3 light tanks (PzKpfw III Ausf N, see p. W:IC79) and 11 T-4 tanks (PzKpfw IV Ausf F1, p. 28).

## BMW R 75

This heavy motorcycle was specifically designed to be used with a sidecar; the sidecar's wheel was powered by the bike's engine, and there was even a reverse gear, highly unusual on a motorcycle. This was introduced since backing up a sidecar rig without such a gear is rather difficult.

It was produced between 1940 and 1944, some 16,510 being made. Romania received a number in the early 1940s as part of substantial deliveries of materiel by the Germans.

The BMW R 75 burns 0.9 gallons of gasoline per hour of routine use. A full tank of gas costs \$0.95.

**Subassemblies:** Motorcycle chassis +0; Motorcycle sidecar +0; 3xheavy wheels -1.

**Powertrain:** 19-kW standard gas engine with 19-kW wheeled transmission and 6.3-gallon light tank.

**Occ:** 1 MCS Body, 1 XPS Sidecar **Cargo:** 0 Body, 0 Sidecar

Armor	F	RL	B	T	U
Body:	2/4	0/0	2/4	0/0	2/4
Sidecar:	2/3	2/3	2/3	0/0	2/3
Wheels:	3/5	3/5	3/5	3/5	3/5

### Statistics

**Size:** 8'x6'x3' **Payload:** 550 lbs. **Lwt.:** 0.7 tons  
**Volume:** 4.8 **Maint.:** 555 hours **Price:** \$130

**HT:** 8. **HPs:** 20 Body, 20 Sidecar, 10 each Wheel.

**gSpeed:** 57; **gAccel:** 4; **gDecel:** 10; **gMR:** 1.25; **gSR:** 2  
**Ground Pressure High.** 1/6 Off-road Speed.

## Design Notes

The body is slightly too small for the powerful engine and transmission, but this has been handwaved. Designed with 6-gallon fuel tanks. The 151-kWs battery was subsumed under body weight. Since all three wheels were the same size, the wheel HPs of the two chassis were combined and then divided by 3. gSpeed was reduced from designed 81 mph to the historical maximum of 57, which was mainly a result of the built-in speed governor.

## MALAXA UE

The Renault UE was a small tracked cargo carrier introduced by the French army as the *Chenillette de Ravitaillement Infanterie Renault UE* in 1937. Several French manufacturers built huge numbers of the nimble little carrier, at least 5,200 being in service when the Germans attacked.

Although armored, the UE was not armed, the "infantry resupply tankette" not being considered a combat vehicle but rather a support vehicle allowing transport of supplies to the front lines. (Of course, as soon as the fighting started, combat troops often added a light machine gun and a few sand sacks on the deck.) Clearly inspired in design and role by the British Carden-Loyd Mk VI, it could also tow a small 0.85-ton trailer with a 0.65-ton capacity.

Romania acquired a license to make the vehicle, and produced 126 carriers as the *Senileta Malaxa Tip UE* (Malaxa tankette type UE) between late 1939 and early 1941 at the Malaxa factory in Bucharest. Production ceased after the invasion of France, since many parts were imported from Renault.

In the Romanian army, it was used for towing the 47mm Concordia-Schneider md. 1936/39 antitank gun in the antitank companies and for transporting fuel and ammo in the motorised cavalry regiments. These suffered heavy losses during the campaign in Russia, and by 1943, 33 of the remaining 50 vehicles were reassigned to training duties. Seventeen were modified to allow towing the German 50mm Rheinmetall PaK 38 antitank gun. These were used against the Soviets on the Moldavian front in 1944.

The driver and commander are seated on either side of the engine in the body; each has a rounded dome covering the head with a vision slit to the front. The domes pivot back on hinges when the covering is not required. Panels of the top armor fold back for the crew to enter and leave their seats.

There is an open cargo stowage box to the rear of the crew, able to carry 770 lbs. of supplies.

The UE burns 1.2 gallons of gasoline per hour at routine usage. A full load of fuel costs \$3.

## Senileta Malaxa Tip UE

**Subassemblies:** Very Small Tank chassis with Light option +2; tracks +2.

**Powertrain:** 26-kW standard gasoline engine with 26-kW tracked transmission and 24-gallon standard tanks [Body]; 4,000-kWs batteries.

**Occ:** 2 CS Body      **Cargo:** 5.3 Body

Armor	F	RL	B	T	U
Body:	4/25	4/25	4/15	4/25	4/15
Tracks:	4/20	4/20	4/20	4/20	4/20

### Equipment

**Body:** 5-cf cargo hold (10-cf exposed cargo).

### Statistics

**Size:** 9'×6'×4'    **Payld.:** 0.6 tons    **Lwt.:** 2.9 tons  
**Volume:** 32      **Maint.:** 168      **Cost:** \$1,425

**HT:** 8. **HPs:** 100 Body, 35 each Track.

**gSpeed:** 30      **gAccel:** 2      **gDecel:** 20  
**gMR:** 0.25      **gSR:** 4

**Ground Pressure** Very Low. 4/5 Off-road Speed.

### Design Notes

Designed with the Light option (see p. W:MP10). Track armor was reduced.

## MODERN VEHICLES FROM GERMANY

From 1943, the Romanian army received large numbers of German ground vehicles, including motorcycles; VW Kübelwagen (p. W:IC72); VW Schwimmwagen (p. W:MP30); Opel-Blitz trucks (p. W:IC73); SdKfz 7 halftracks (p. W:IC74); Steyr RSO/01 tracked artillery tractors (p. W:MP30); SdKfz 222 armored cars (p. W:IC75); SdKfz 250/1, 2, 6 and 9 armored halftracks (p. W108); SdKfz 251/1 armored halftracks (p. W:IC75); PzKpfw 38(t) light tanks (p. W:MP48); PzKpfw IV Ausf C, H and J tanks (p. W103); StuG III Ausf G assault guns (p. W:FH38); and 15 cm sPzH Hummel armored howitzers (p. W:MP51). A few SPA-Ansaldo AB 41 armored cars were handed over by the Germans after Italy had joined the Allies.

## TANC R-2

In 1935, the Czechoslovakian army adopted the Skoda S-IIa light tank as the *Lehky Tank vz. 35* (later to be confiscated by the German army). This was an effective design at the time, well-armed, decently armored, and featuring both a radio and advanced transmission. Romania decided to purchase a total of 126, which entered service as the *Tanc R-2* from 1936. The R-2 equipped the 1st Armored Regiment, seeing service in Bessarabia and at Stalingrad.

Unfortunately, the tank was maintenance intensive. In addition, the pneumatically controlled gear, which made it easy to drive, proved unreliable during winter, frequently freezing solid. This was aggravated by the lack of a hand starter for the engine, meaning the tank had to be kept warm at all times – sometimes by starting a fire under it!

The main armament consists of a 37.2mm Skoda md. 1934 tank gun, with a coaxial 7.92mm ZB md. 1937 machine gun (RoF 8/11\*). The turret seats the commander, who fires the main gun and MG. It is manually rotated at 3° per second. The driver and hull machine gunner/radio operator are seated in the body.

The R-2 burns 4 gallons of gasoline per hour at routine usage. A full load of fuel and ammo costs \$280.

## Tanc R-2

**Subassemblies:** Small Tank chassis +3; full-rotation Large Weapon turret [Body:T] +2; tracks +2.

**Powertrain:** 90-kW gas engine with 90-kW tracked transmission and 40-gallon standard tanks; 12,000-kWs batteries.

**Occ:** 2 CS Body, 1 CS Tur      **Cargo:** 3.5 Body, 4.2 Tur

Armor	F	RL	B	T	U
Body:	4/100	4/60	4/60	4/30	4/30
Tracks:	4/30	4/30	4/30	4/30	4/30
Tur:	4/100	4/60	4/60	4/30	-

### Weaponry

**Ground LMG/md. 1937 [Body:F]** (1,800 rounds).  
**37mm Medium Tank Gun/md. 1934 [Tur:F]** (78 rounds).\*

**Ground LMG/md. 1937 [Tur:F]** (900 rounds).\*

\* Linked.

### Equipment

**Body:** Medium radio receiver and transmitter.

### Statistics

**Size:** 16'×7'×8'    **Payld.:** 0.6 tons    **Lwt.:** 11.6 tons  
**Volume:** 58      **Maint.:** 79      **Cost:** \$6,340

HT: 9. HP: 800 Body, 270 each Track, 120 Tur.

*gSpeed*: 25, *gAccel*: 2, *gDecel*: 20, *gMR*: 0.25, *gSR*: 5.

Ground Pressure Low. 2/3 Off-road Speed.

### Design Notes

Designed with 39-gallon tanks, 90×37.2mm, and 2,500×7.92mm rounds. The commander is half in turret, half in body. HT was artificially reduced from 12 to 9 to reflect low reliability. Lwt. was increased by 6% to the historical figure.

### Variants

In service with the Germans, the *PzKpfw 35(t)* (1939) carried an additional loader in the turret, but less ammo: 72×37.2mm and 1,800×7.92mm rounds. The Wehrmacht used 218, mainly with the 1. *Leichte Division* against Poland, with the 6. *Panzer-Division* in both the West and the East, and later with the 22. *Panzer-Division* in Russia.

The *TACAM R-2* (1944), or *Tun Anticar cu Afet Mobil R-2* (mobile antitank gun on R-2) was basically the chassis of the R-2 with the turret replaced by an open superstructure mounting a Soviet 76.2mm ZiS-3 (75mm Long Tank Gun) with 30 rounds; Lwt. 12.65 tons, *gSpeed* 21. Armor plates from T-26 (see p. W:FH37) or T-60 light tanks were fitted to the superstructure front and rear (DR 50). The crew of three had a single ZB md. 1930 machine gun (p. 25) for local protection. Only 20 were converted.

## TANC T-4

In October 1942, the 1st Tank Regiment of the 1st Romanian Armored Division received 11 T-4 tanks from Germany: these were *Panzerkampfwagen IV Ausf F1 SdKfz 161* models with the short-barreled “Stummelkanone” (also see p. W103). Ten of these were lost in combat against the Russians during the battle of Don’s Bend.

In 1943-1944, the Germans delivered 110 more T-4s, of various marks, including the Ausf F, G, H and J. Most of these were second-hand. They formed the main armor might of the Mixed Armored Group “Cantemir,” the Fast Armored Detachment, and the 1st Regiment of the 1st Armored Division, seeing extensive service in Moldavia and later against the Germans.

Compared to earlier models, the *Panzer IV Ausf F1* featured improved armor, wider tracks, and minor equipment changes. Some 437 were made between early 1941 and early 1942, until superseded in production by the Ausf F2 with longer gun, and eventually the Ausf G.

The driver and radio operator/hull machine gunner sit in the body. The turret accommodates the commander, gunner, and loader. It mounts a 75mm Rhein-

metall KwK 37 tank gun and coaxial 7.92mm Rheinmetall MG 34 machine gun (see pp. HT119, W96). The turret is hydraulically powered and rotates at roughly 20° per second, or 1° per second if manually turned by the gunner.

The T-4 burns 10.1 gallons of gasoline. Fuel and ammo cost \$745.

## Tanc T-4

**Subassemblies:** Medium Tank chassis +3; full-rotation Large AFV turret with Medium slope [Body:T] +3; tracks +3.

**Powertrain:** 224-kW standard gas engine with 224-kW tracked transmission and 124-gallon standard tanks; 6-kW standard gas auxiliary engine; 20,000-kWs batteries.

**Occ:** 2 CS Body, 3 CS Tur      **Cargo:** 0 Body, 0 Tur

Armor	F	RL	B	T	U
Body:	4/195	4/115	4/115	4/45	4/40
Tracks:	4/40	4/40	4/40	4/40	4/40
Tur:	4/195	5/165	4/115	4/40	-

### Weaponry

Ground LMG/MG 34 [Body:F] (1,500 rounds).

75mm Short Tank Gun/KwK 37 [Tur:F] (80 rounds).\*

Ground LMG/MG 34 [Tur:F] (1,650 rounds).\*

\* Linked.

### Equipment

Body: Fire extinguisher; medium radio receiver and transmitter; 4.5-kW traversing gear for turret.

### Statistics

*Size*: 19’×9’×9’ *Payld.*: 1.6 tons *Lwt.*: 24.5 tons

*Volume*: 113 *Maint.*: 47 hrs. *Price*: \$18,450

HT: 11. HPs: 1,500 Body, 540 each Track, 225 Tur.

*gSpeed*: 24      *gAccel*: 2      *gDecel*: 20

*gMR*: 0.25      *gSR*: 5

Ground Pressure Low. 2/3 Off-road Speed.

### Design Notes

Designed with 123-gallon tanks and 3,000×7.92mm rounds. The turret crew is half in body, half in turret. Some 0.9 VSPs are missing in the body and turret; these were handwaved in order to avoid buying an overly large turret. Lwt. was increased by 15%, *gSpeed* decreased by 20% to the historical figures.

# THE HANGAR

In 1941, Romanian aircraft included the PZL P.11F fighter (see p. W:MP98); PZL P.24E fighter (see p. W:MP98); Heinkel He 112B-0 and B-1 fighter (p. 30); Messerschmitt Bf 109E-3, E-4 and E-7 fighter (see p. W111); Hawker Hurricane I fighter (see p. W:AKM77); IAR 80 and IAR 81 fighter (below); Bristol Blenheim I bomber (see p. W:MP85); Heinkel He 111H-3 and H-6 bomber; IAR 37, IAR 38, and IAR 39 reconnaissance plane (p. 32); Potez 633-B2 bomber; PZL P.23A/B bomber (see p. W:DWE37); PZL P.37A/B bomber (p. W:DWE38); Savoia-Marchetti SM.79B bomber (see p. W:MP91); Savoia-Marchetti S.62bis seaplane; Junkers Ju 52/3m transport (see p. W:IC86); and Fiesler Fi 156Ca-3 liaison aircraft (see p. W:MP75).

## IAR 80

The IAR 80 was Romania's best native-designed fighter, meant to replace various aging Polish aircraft. It entered service in 1941 and remained in front-line use for the remainder of the war. It was produced by Industria Aeronautica Romana (IAR), based on that company's work with various aircraft built under license. It used major parts (such as the tail and nose assemblies) of the Polish PZL P.24 (see p. W:MP98), with a license-made French Gnôme-Rhône engine and Belgian guns.

Together with the P.24 and the Bf 109 (p. 31), the IAR 80-series planes were the main fighters of the *Fortelor Aeronautica Regala Romana* (Royal Romanian Air Force), and saw considerable use both in the attack against the Soviet Union and defending Romania against the U.S. attempts to destroy the oil refineries near Ploesti. Allied bomber crews operating over Romania sometimes mistook it for the Fw 190 (see p. W:IC85).

The main production version was the IAR 80A, which entered service in 1941. Some 90 were built.

It is armed with six 7.92mm FN-Browning machine guns (RoF 25) in the wings.

The engine burns 38.2 gallons of aviation gas per hour of routine usage. Fuel and ammo cost \$50.

## IAR 80A

**Subassemblies:** Medium Fighter chassis +3;

Light Fighter wings +2; 3×retractable wheels +0.

**Powertrain:** 764-kW aerial turbocharged engine with 764-kW prop and 120-gallon standard tanks [Body]; 2,000-kWs batteries.

**Occ:** 1 CS Body      **Cargo:** 2.3 Body, 1.7 Wings

Armor	F	RL	B	T	U
Body:	2/3	2/3	2/3	2/3	2/3
Wings:	2/3	2/3	2/3	2/3	2/3
Cockpit:	0/+15	0/+0	0/+30	0/+0	0/+0

## Weaponry

6×Aircraft LMG/FN-Browning [Wings:F] (400 rds. ea.).\*

\* Linked.

## Equipment

**Body:** Autopilot; 0.1-man/day life support; navigation instruments; medium radio receiver and transmitter.

## Statistics

**Size:** 31'×30'×12'      **Payload:** 0.7 tons

**Lwt.:** 3 tons

**Volume:** 200      **Maint.:** 54 hours **Cost:** \$13,605

**HT:** 9. **HP:** 120 Body, 70 each Wing, 12 each Wheel.

**aSpeed:** 316, **aAccel:** 8, **aDecel:** 16, **aMR:** 4, **aSR:** 2  
**Stall Speed:** 79.

**gSpeed:** 232, **gAccel:** 11, **gDecel:** 10, **gMR:** 0.5, **gSR:** 2

**Ground Pressure:** Very High. 1/8 Off-Road Speed.

## Design Notes

Designed with 2,500×7.92mm rounds. Lwt. was increased by 10%. The historical 172-sf wing area was used for performance calculations.

## Variants

The original *IAR 80* (1941) had a 716-kW engine and four LMGs with 600 rounds each in the wings; Lwt. 2.7 tons. 50 built.

The *IAR 80B* (1942) had four LMGs with 400 rounds each and two 13.2mm FN-Browning (Long Aircraft HMG) with 150 rounds each; Lwt. 3.1 tons. 31 built.

The *IAR 81* dive bomber variant (1941) used the same frame as the IAR 80A, but added an underfuselage hardpoint for one 550-lb. bomb or two 110-lb. bombs, and hardpoints for 110-lb. bombs or 26-gallon drop tanks under the wings; Lwt. 3.4 tons. 50 built.

The *IAR 81A* (1942) had the same guns as the IAR 80B, but added the wing hardpoints of the IAR 81; Lwt. 3.5 tons. 29 built.

The *IAR 81B* (1942) had four LMGs with 400 rounds each and two 20mm Ikaria-Oerlikon MG FF/M cannon (20mm Short Aircraft AC) with 60 rounds each;

Lwt. 3.2 tons. It also received wing hardpoints, self-sealing tanks, and better cockpit armor. 50 built.

The *IAR 81C* (1942) mounted two LMGs with 700 rounds each and two 20mm Mauser MG 151/20 cannon (20mm Medium Aircraft AC) with 175 rounds each; Lwt. 3.3 tons. 38 built.

## HEINKEL HE 112

The Heinkel He 112 evolved out of the same 1934 program that eventually led to the Messerschmitt Bf 109 (p. 31). However, it was the losing competitor, and despite considerable export activities, comparatively few were built.

One of its main users was Romania, which acquired 30 of the much modified series production models in 1939. The Romanian Air Force quickly found it inferior to the indigenous IAR 80 fighter (p. 29) and indeed the Bf 109, which Romania both imported and built locally under license. Problems cited by Romanian pilots included mediocre maneuverability, slow acceleration, and lack of protection. While the armament (including the capability to carry a few bombs) was considered satisfactory, the lack of AP projectiles was seen as a severe disadvantage.

Consequently, no further purchases were made, but the aircraft already bought were issued to two fighter squadrons. These were initially assigned to the defense of Bucharest, and later took part in border incidents and airspace violations with Hungary in 1940. In 1941, they were sent against the Soviets, principally in ground attack missions. Losses were heavy, largely since they weren't receiving the required maintenance due to being airborne most of the time . . . In late 1941, the remaining single squadron was moved to Odessa, performing coastal protection duties. By 1943, those aircraft still in flying condition were used as trainers for the Bf 109.

The He 112B-1 is armed with twin synchronized 7.92mm Rheinmetall MG 17 machine guns in the fuselage and two 20mm Ikaria-Oerlikon MG FF autocannons in the wings. Hardpoints under the wings could carry 22-lb. bombs.

The engine burns 23.5 gallons of aviation gas per hour of routine usage. Fuel and ammo (including six bombs) cost \$325. The historical cost was 163,000 Reichsmark (\$38,810).

### Heinkel He 112B-1

**Subassemblies:** Medium Fighter chassis +3;

Light Fighter wings +2; 3×retractable wheels +1.

**Powertrain:** 522-kW aerial turbocharged gas engine with 522-kW prop and 90-gallon self-sealing tanks [Body] and 30-gallon [Wings]; 2,000-kWs batteries.

**Occ:** 1 CS Body      **Cargo:** 6.9 Body, 2.6 Wings

Armor	F	RL	B	T	U
<i>Body:</i>	2/3	2/3	2/3	2/3	2/3
<i>Wheels:</i>	2/3	2/3	2/3	2/3	2/3
<i>Wings:</i>	2/3	2/3	2/3	2/3	2/3

### Weaponry

2×Aircraft LMG/MG 17 [Body:F] (500 rounds each).\*

2×20mm Short Aircraft AC/MG FF [Wings:F] (60 rds. ea.).\*

\* Linked in pairs. Third link fires all four at once.

### Equipment

*Body:* Autopilot; navigation instruments; medium radio receiver and transmitter. *Wings:* 3×22-lb.hardpoints each [Wings:U].

### Statistics

*Size:* 31'×30'×12'      *Payload:* 0.7 tons

*Lwt.:* 2.5 tons

*Volume:* 200      *Maint.:* 60 hours *Cost:* \$11,210

*HT:* 10. *HP:* 120 Body, 70 each Wing, 12 each Wheel.

*aSpeed:* 317, *aAccel:* 6, *aDecel:* 20, *aMR:* 5, *aSR:* 2  
Stall Speed: 70. -8 aSpeed with loaded hardpoints.

*gSpeed:* 210, *gAccel:* 10, *gDecel:* 10, *gMR:* 0.5, *gSR:* 2

Ground Pressure Very High. 1/8 Off-Road Speed.

### Design Notes

The historical 183-sf wing area was used for performance calculations. Lwt. was increased by 4%, aSpeed was increased by 21% to the historical figures.

The 22-lb. bombs (0.1 VSP, 22 lbs., \$45) do 6d×20 [10d] damage.

### Variants

The *He 112A-0* (1937) had an open cockpit, 507-kW engine; aSpeed 303. Its armament consisted of three MG 17 machine guns in the nose.

A single prototype was armed with a 20mm Rheinmetall C/30L cannon (20mm Long Ground AC) with 100 rounds. This was extensively used for ground attack by Legion Condor pilots during the Spanish Civil War. Spain eventually acquired 17 production samples in 1938, which were in service during the last months of the Civil War. During most of WWII, they were stationed in Spanish Morocco, where they intercepted Allied aircraft that lost their way.

The Japanese navy received 30 He 112B-0 by early 1938, which were called A7He1 in that service. The

Japanese pilots thought little of it due to its inferior maneuverability compared to their own designs; they valued agility over everything else. The planes were used for training and eventually destroyed.

Hungary bought three and intended to make it under license, but that never happened.

Even the Luftwaffe used it in combat: During the invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1938, it was so short of aircraft, that it commandeered 12 of the fighters intended for Japan and based them on occupied Czech territory. They were soon replaced by Bf 109Cs, returned to Heinkel, refurbished, and shipped to Japan.

## MESSERSCHMITT Bf 109

The G-series was the most common of the famous Messerschmitt Bf 109 fighter (p. W111), making up about 70% of the total number produced. It was produced starting in late 1942, a time when the basic design was already past its prime, clearly inferior to some of the latest Allied designs. Although maneuverable, the Bf 109 had always been a difficult plane on the controls, and this didn't improve when the newer models got faster and heavier. The G-series was a handful for experienced pilots, but almost dangerous to Green pilots.

So while Germany's leading fighter units flew the Focke-Wulf Fw 190 (p. W:IC85), the Bf 109 was exported in large numbers to Axis members and neutral countries, including Bulgaria, Croatia, Finland, Hungary, Slovakia, Spain, and Switzerland.

Romania received more than 200 G-series fighters (including the G-2, G-4, and G-6), which entered combat service in March 1943. They replaced older E-series fighters in front-line squadrons fighting alongside the German Luftwaffe in Russia. In the summer of 1944, when Romania joined the Allies, the Bf 109 pilots turned against their former comrades-in-arms. The first engagement between German-piloted Bf 109Gs and Romanian-piloted Bf 109Gs occurred on 18 September 1944. On that day, the Germans had the upper hand.

Most Romanian aces flew the Bf 109G.

In 1945, IAR also built 15 Bf 109Ga-4 and 60 Bf 109Ga-6 fighters, mainly from German-made components.

The Bf 109G-6 is armed with twin synchronized 13mm Rheinmetall MG 131 machine guns in the engine cowling and a 20mm Mauser MG 151/20 autocannon firing through the propeller spinner. The hardpoint under the fuselage could carry a 1,100-lb. or 550-lb. bomb.

The engine burns 55 gallons of aviation gas per hour of routine usage. Fuel and ammo (not including optional bomb load) cost \$70.

## MODERN AIRCRAFT FROM GERMANY

In 1943, the Romanian air force received hundreds of German aircraft, including Messerschmitt Bf 109G-2, G-4, and G-6 fighters; Messerschmitt Bf 110G-4 fighters (p. W:IC88); Junkers Ju 87D-3 and D-5 ground attack fighters (p. W114); Henschel Hs 129B-2 ground attack fighters (p. W:MP80); Junkers Ju 88A-4 and D-1 ground attack bombers (p. W:IC87); Heinkel He 114B-2, B-3, and C-1 seaplanes; Heinkel He 111E-3 transports; Junkers Ju 86E-5 transports; and DFS 230B-1 gliders (p. W:HS26).

### Messerschmitt Bf 109G-6

**Subassemblies:** Medium Fighter chassis +3;

Light Fighter wings +2; 3×retractable wheels +1.

**Powertrain:** 1,100-kW aerial turbo/supercharged HP gas engine with MW50 feed, 1,343-kW prop, 105-gallon self-sealing fuel tank, and 31-gallon self-sealing MW50 tank [Body]; 2,000-kWs batteries.

**Occ:** 1 CS Body      **Cargo:** 2.8 Body, 2.8 Wings

Armor	F	RL	B	T	U
<i>Body:</i>	2/3	2/3	2/3	2/3	2/3
<i>Wheels:</i>	2/3	2/3	2/3	2/3	2/3
<i>Wings:</i>	2/3	2/3	2/3	2/3	2/3
<i>Cockpit:</i>	0/+20	0/+0	0/+35	0/+0	0/+0

### Weaponry

2×Medium Aircraft HMG/MG 131 [Body:F] (300 rds. ea.).\*

20mm Medium Aircraft AC/MG 151/20 [Body:F] (180 rds.).

\* Linked. Second link fires all three at once.

### Equipment

**Body:** Autopilot; 1,100-lb. hardpoint [Body:U]; IFF; navigation instruments; medium radio receiver and transmitter.

### Statistics

**Size:** 30'×33'×12'      **Payload:** 0.8 tons

**Lwt.:** 3.7 tons

**Volume:** 200      **Maint.:** 34 hours **Cost:** \$34,620

**HT:** 8. **HP:** 120 Body, 70 each Wing, 12 each Wheel.

**aSpeed:** 348, **aAccel:** 9, **aDecel:** 14, **aMR:** 3.5, **aSR:** 2

Stall Speed: 88. -2 aSpeed with loaded hardpoint.  
gSpeed: 251, gAccel: 12, gDecel: 10, gMR: 0.5, gSR: 2  
Ground Pressure Very High. 1/8 Off-Road Speed.

### Design Notes

Designed with 30-gallon MW tanks, the historical figure is listed. With the MW50 system (see pp. W:IC65, W:MP13) engaged, the engine produces 1,343 kW, which results in aSpeed 385 and aAccel 11. As designed, the methanol-water lasts for 82 minutes, 55 seconds, but this should probably reduce to a more realistic 8 minutes. The tank could be alternatively filled with fuel for increased range.

The historical 173-sf wing area was used for performance calculations. Lwt. was increased by 24%, aSpeed was increased by 28% to the historical figures.

### Variants

The *Bf 109G-2* (1942) is armed with twin 7.92mm Rheinmetall MG 17 machine guns (Aircraft LMG) with 500 rounds each and a single 20mm Mauser MG 151/20 autocannon. It can optionally carry a single 1,100-lb. bomb under the fuselage (G-2/R1 fighter-bomber) or two more MG 151/20 cannon with 125 rounds each in streamlined underwing pods (G-2/R6 destroyer). The *Bf 109G-2* has only a short-range radio.

The *Bf 109G-4* (1942) is armed like the G-2; a 550-lb. bomb is optional.

## IAR 39

The IAR 39 was a medium-sized biplane with fixed landing gear and enclosed cockpit, the final version of a series of reconnaissance aircraft made by Industria Aeronautica Romana (IAR) of Bucharest. It entered production in 1940.

It was used for reconnaissance and for cooperation with ground troops, capable of carrying a light bomb load.

A squadron of modified IAR 39s was also used to tow DFS 230A-1 gliders (see p. W:HS26) transporting airborne troops.

Besides the pilot, the crew includes two observers/gunners, which have large glazed panels in the side and underside of the fuselage. The IAR 39 is armed with twin synchronized 7.92mm PWU-Browning machine guns (RoF 16) in the wings, one 7.92mm PWU-Browning machine gun in a flexible ventral position, and one 7.92mm Rheinmetall MG 15 machine gun in a flexible dorsal position.

The engine burns 30.2 gallons of aviation gas per hour of routine usage. Fuel and ammo (including four 100-lb. bombs) cost \$850.

## IAR 39

**Subassemblies:** Light Fighter-Bomber chassis  
+3; Medium Fighter wings with Biplane option  
+2; 3×fixed wheels +1.

**Powertrain:** 671-kW aerial turbocharged engine with 671-kW prop and 142-gallon self-sealing tanks [Body]; 4,000-kWs batteries.

**Occ:** 3 CS Body      **Cargo:** 7.2 Body, 3 Wings

Armor	F	RL	B	T	U
Body:	2/3	2/3	2/3	2/3	2/3
Wheels:	2/3	2/3	2/3	2/3	2/3
Wings:	2/3	2/3	2/3	2/3	2/3

### Weaponry

2×Aircraft LMG/PWU-Browning [Wings:F] (340 rds. ea).\*

Aircraft LMG/ PWU -Browning [Body:B] (400 rounds).

Aircraft LMG/MG 15 [Body:B] (675 rounds).

\* Linked.

### Equipment

**Body:** Navigation instruments; medium radio receiver and transmitter. **Wings:** 320-lb. hardpoints each [Wings:U].

### Statistics

**Size:** 31'×43'×13'      **Payload:** 1 ton    **Lwt.:** 3.4 tons

**Volume:** 312      **Maint.:** 51 hours **Cost:** \$15,570

**HT:** 12. **HP:** 260 Body, 160 each Wing, 15 each Wheel.

**aSpeed:** 208, **aAccel:** 6, **aDecel:** 16, **aMR:** 4, **aSR:** 2  
Stall Speed: 54. -2 aSpeed with loaded hardpoints.  
**gSpeed:** 204, **gAccel:** 10, **gDecel:** 10, **gMR:** 0.5, **gSR:** 2

Ground Pressure Very High. 1/8 Off-Road Speed.

### Design Notes

Designed with 141-gallon fuel tanks and 2,000×7.92mm rounds, the historical figures are listed. The historical 434-sf wing area was used for performance calculations. Lwt. was decreased by 8%, aSpeed was increased by 40% to the historical figures.

It could be fitted with additional 66-gallon internal fuel tanks.

### Variants

The *IAR 37* (1937) has a 648-kW Gnôme-Rhône engine. Instead of the Rheinmetall MG 15, it is armed with a 7.92mm PWU-Browning machine gun with 600 rounds in the dorsal position. It could carry 24 26.4-lb. bombs. 50 built.

The *IAR 38* (1939) has a 522-kW BMW engine and is armed like the *IAR 37*. 50 built.



# 5. ON THE FRONT

*I saw things that made me proud of my country, and I saw things that made me ashamed of some comrades. Thanks to my faith in God, I never did anything to feel guilty about, myself, and that's the best thing I can say about the war.*

– Private Nicolae Popescu

This chapter follows the Romanian soldiers from the barracks to the front line. It also provides some sample campaign units, and ideas for Romanian roleplaying adventures.

## SOLDIERING

Romanian soldiers suffered greatly and died in droves in every campaign they took part in. Yet they were eager to fight, as long as the lost provinces (Bessarabia, or, later, Transylvania) were at stake.

## BASIC TRAINING

In the interwar period, the Romanian system was akin to the French one (see p. W:RH17). These methods were badly outdated by 1939, and in Romania the problem was worsened by a shortage of good NCOs. The peacetime army was a creaky machine, and rife with corruption to boot.

Things changed in 1940, with the arrival of German advisors. Joint training schools were established for all arms and specializations, and the Romanian trainers were themselves drilled by their German counterparts.

In wartime, recruits would undergo two months of basic training mainly meant to instill blind obedience; corporal punishment was common. Then, depending upon the needs of frontline units, they would receive more advanced training according to German practice (see pp. W48, W:IC34). This would last two more months for the infantrymen, if they were lucky.

## SERVICE CULTURE

The 1930s had generated a siege mentality in the Romanian armed forces. All officers were nationalists, some were Iron Guard members, and most regarded the service as the only bulwark between Romania and chaos. Unsurprisingly, the Crown would turn to generals in emergencies. The officer corps thought their army was the best among the Balkan countries, but they were well aware of Soviet (and German) might.

Enlisted men's living conditions went from poor to terrible with the war. They moved from gloomy barracks to muddy trenches, with heads shaven against lice and awful food (if any) in their bellies; even after training, they could still be subject to corporal punishment on occasion. There was a deep divide between them and their officers, but their shared deeply felt national values could often bridge it.

Until late 1942, German comments about Romanian soldiers were good. They were seen as disciplined, dependable, and aggressive (sometimes even showing a streak of ferocity!).

While they fought on the Axis side, care had to be taken not to deploy Romanians close to Hungarian troops. Off-duty servicemen would brawl; fully operational units might well do worse.

## Commendations

The top award referred to yet another Michael: it was the Order *Mihai Viteazul* (Michael the Brave). It came in three classes with different distinctions, ranging from +3 to +4 as awarded to officers. It was more often awarded to whole units (+1 all members; the troopers of the 6th Cavalry Division will soon deserve this). No more than 1,700 in all were issued in WWII, much more frequently to units than to individuals.

The Order *Steaua Romaniei* (Star of Romania) was also reserved to officers, in six classes (+1 to +3).

The Medal for Hardiness and Loyalty was for other ranks, in three classes (+1 to +2). The Medal for Bravery was similar, but rarer (+2 to +3).

The Medal for the Crusade against Communism was actually a campaign distinction; multiple bars (multiple campaigns in the East) give a +1 bonus.

The numbers are Reputation bonuses, see p. W63.

# MICHAEL'S UNITS

The following sample campaign units will offer adventure ideas suitable for different gaming styles.

## REGULAR IONS

The Regular Joes of Ion Antonescu's army were the run-of-the-mill infantry divisions. Some would become battle-hardened crack units . . . until the losses were replenished with raw recruits.

### 4th Infantry Division

This unit's war record was varied. The *Divizia 4 Infanterie* had garrison duties throughout 1941, moving to the Odessa region. In 1942 it took part in the advances through Ukraine, was overrun by Soviet tanks once, and fought on with German armored support. Annihilated in December, only a few veterans survived. In April 1943 it was rebuilt and merged with the 1st Frontier Guard Division, thus providing an opportunity for roleplaying interaction with different characters. The unit fought the Soviets in Bessarabia in 1944 with defensive successes. It was committed against the Hungarians, and brought up to strength with the attachment of a penal battalion. Deployed on an 18-mile frontage South of Szolnok, it was attacked from multiple sides and destroyed once again in October.

### 1st Security Division

The *Divizia 1 Paza* was formed in 1942 with security duties in Northern Transnistria. It was therefore committed to the hide-and-seek game against the partisans. It had just one regular infantry regiment, scant artillery, and three weakly armed security battalions. Its mounted troopers and bicycle infantrymen patrolled the countryside and the roads. It was disbanded in April, 1943 in order to bring up to strength other infantry units, allowing characters to meet frontline veterans and green replacements.

### 1st Tudor Vladimirescu Volunteer Division

This unit was formed by the USSR with Romanian POWs as privates. Officers and NCOs were Communist Romanians with Soviet advisors. The equipment and organization was that of a standard Soviet rifle division. The volunteers were, of course, traitors, but the death rates in the camps they came from go a long way toward explaining their treason. Characters in this unit may well be torn between contrasting loyalties, but

their choice would be somewhat vindicated by their own country's shift in August 1944. The unit was committed in Romania that summer, but the Soviets fielded it only against German troops. The division also participated in the Hungarian campaign, earning the *Debreccen* honor for taking that city. By the end of the war, it was thoroughly faithful to the USSR and it was upgraded to armored status.

## TOP NOTCHES

A few Romanian units were a notch or two above the average. This applied to the Guards among the infantry, but especially to the few mobile units.

### 6th Cavalry Division

The *Brigada 6 Cavalerie* (reorganized as a division in February 1942) was one of the partially motorized cavalry units. As such, its name comes up often in the history of the Romanian offensives. The Division was always in the lead. It was one of the most-awarded units in the war. It made a specialization of anti-landing service, containing or destroying half a dozen Soviet beachheads. Evacuated by sea from Crimea to Constanta in 1944, it was trusted enough to be moved to the capital for security duty at the end of August. Maybe for this very reason, it was then disbanded. Romanian trooper characters may become veterans in this unit and fight on in other divisions.

### 1st Rumania Mare Armored Division

The *Divizia 1 Blindata*, later given the honor title of *Rumania Mare* (Great Romania), is the unit for Romanian tankers, who definitely were trained better than the average infantryman. As with all high-tech units, they also had more opportunities for contact with Germans. Since Romania was forced to parcel armor out, characters in this unit can find themselves engaged almost anywhere, in battalion, company or even platoon strength.

## THE BEST OF THE BEST

While Romanian cavalymen, or the few paratroopers, may have been flashy and well trained, the Frontier Guards (*Graniceri*, see p. 20) had the true nonsense, professional soldiers. They are suitable for a varied and even cinematic campaign.

## 5th Frontier Guard Regiment

This unit had been guarding the border with the Soviet Union, and it was in the forefront in the advances through Bessarabia and towards Odessa, taking losses but repeatedly defeating the enemy. Withdrawn in 1942, its men returned for about a year to the relative peace of their usual border posts, where they could experience the Germans' airs and the Hungarians' continuing hostility. In 1943, they were merged with the 4th Infantry Division, providing it with much needed experience.

# THE ROMANIAN EASTERN FRONT

The Eastern Front was the largest ground theater in the war, with the longest continuous fighting and the most extreme conditions for the soldiers serving there. It was also the front where the Romanians spent most of their war effort.

## BESSARABIA IS OURS

The campaign to free Bessarabia was the reason for Romania being involved in Operation Barbarossa at all. The Romanian soldiers' morale was very high and boosted even further by their early successes. Troopers belonging to the few mobile forces experienced fights but also breakthroughs and fast advances, while the others first traveled by train to the front line. Then they began the first of weeks and months spent marching. They quickly wore down their low-quality boots, marching through the muddy plains and into infantry/artillery battles.

The enemy offered a tough resistance, counterattacked and bombarded, but Romanian officers noticed these efforts, though determined, were often disorganized. Their units needed to handle large numbers of POWs.

As to the civilians, villagers donned traditional sheepskin garb to welcome the soldiers. Troops moving through Iasi at the beginning of the campaign witnessed less idyllic scenes, as most Jews were herded out of

their neighborhood and shoved into cattle railcars, where many of them would die.

When Chisinau was freed, grand celebrations were held.

## BLACK DEATH ON THE BLACK SEA

The siege of Odessa would set the tone for the Crimean battles that would follow: costly WWI-style warfare. The Romanians did use their few tanks in an infantry support role, but in so doing they lost them at an alarming rate. Similarly, the Odessa workers transformed a handful of tractors into makeshift tanks, and on occasion these succeeded in panicking second-echelon Romanian troops. Fright Checks (p. W197) could be required for poorly trained characters the first time they saw a tank, but they would benefit from the +5 bonus if rolling when already committed in the fight. Even the 5th Frontier Guard Regiment was stymied by these vehicles once, when unexpectedly attacked from the flank.

Once the encirclement was completed, the troops were faced with the best enemy defenses: fortifications, antitank ditches, minefields, but also daring counterattacks, naval infantry reinforcements by the sea and even paratroops from the air. The battle could be as impersonal as an earth-shattering artillery barrage, or as down and dirty as bayonet work. Romanian infantry regiments attacked relentlessly, advanced maybe 500 meters on a good day, but took fearsome losses every day.

Nevertheless, the soldiers fought on and, after surviving to the next railway embankment, the next foxhole, the next day, those survivors finally broke the resistance. The enemy evacuated Odessa, which was later awarded by the Soviets the title of "heroic city," one of only four in the war.

## POINTLESS ADVANCES

The Romanians kept marching on. Sebastopol featured the same kind of bloody warfare as Odessa, the Crimean peninsula saw more Soviet naval infantry landings, and the poor Romanian infantry still marched, until the roles were gradually reversed. A realistic depiction of the fighting in Sebastopol could use the rules for artillery barrages on p. W:D99.

The Romanian offensives normally took place in the practicable months; this ruled out the winter. But the spring thaw meant a sea of thick mud, and the rules for vehicles *Getting Stuck* (p. W153) should be used; roads were bad, and heavy military traffic soon rutted them. Even foot movement could be slowed as the mud

sucked in a soldier's boots with every step, and it was certainly more fatiguing.

Summer could be hot on the Black Sea, and finding clean water to drink could become a problem. When not wearing down their boots in a march, nor fighting for their lives, Romanian soldiers would man a line. This involved improving the earthworks, staying alert against enemy night raids (or carrying out their own), and some time for relaxation. The men used to play cards, drink or smoke if they had the means, or just sleep. Some scoured the countryside and nearby villages, in an attempt to add to their rations (see *A Make-Do Army*, p. 37).

Throughout these battles, the Romanians' determination was slowly whittled down. The soldiers were still disciplined, but they were fighting out of a grim sense of duty, failing to see the point of fighting so far from home.

## THE TURNING POINT

The southern Russian climate could be a tad less cold than north of Moscow, but temperatures could still plummet to -50°F, which gives a -5 penalty to HT or Survival (Arctic) rolls (see p. B130), not taking into account the wind chill factor. Frostbite and sheer exhaustion took its toll; guns and vehicles became unreliable, as lubricants solidified, metal became brittle, and batteries lost their charge. Yet if Romanian generals thought that the Russian winter was unsuitable for attacking, the Soviets disagreed.

The Stalingrad offensive (see pp. 00 W:IC18-19) was a blow from which the Romanians never recovered, neither in terms of morale nor in terms of the armed forces the country could still support.

Withdrawing from the fringes of the disaster would be challenging enough, what with the forbidding weather, marauding Cossacks, partisan ambushes, and armored thrusts from Soviet tank columns. But assorted Romanian units also remained trapped inside Stalingrad, though it did provide an opportunity for more city fighting, such as hammering at a Soviet tank with a maul like a junior officer did once (the tankers probably thought the clanks were hits from an AT weapon, and withdrew). However, such characters would have very slim chances to escape. They may still come back into play, though, in the *Tudor Vladimirescu* Rifle Division.



# FIGHTING IN THEIR OWN BACKYARD

The Romanians also had to deal with the occupied territories and, later on, war in their own homeland.

The Romanian administration of Transnistria compared favorably with what the Germans were doing in the Soviet lands they controlled, and the local population fared better. So while there was partisan activity, it was somewhat less intense than elsewhere; the Romanians were able to recruit local police and an unarmed "labor army" (*Armata Muncii*) of some 15,000 men. This picture was marred by a glaring exception: the treatment of Jews. The Romanians set out to persecute them in a less organized, but just as ruthless way as the Germans. On October 22, 1941, partisans blew up the 10th Division's HQ in Odessa. Antonescu personally ordered disproportionate reprisals, and on that occasion alone at least 10,000 Jews were killed.

## THE HOME FRONT

Romania was a poor country before the war; the fighting, death, and destruction certainly wasn't going to make it any richer. The capital and the industrial and mining districts, however, experienced an improvement in the standard of living during the first two years of the war, due to the increases in production, the mobilization for war, and the arrival of the Germans. The Germans were tight-fisted compared to the Americans in the United Kingdom, but they still had more money than the average Romanian. They remarked that court life could be pleasurable for the officers, and that other ranks could easily find all the women they wanted in the streets of Bucharest. Cinemas and theaters were open and the curfew was short. For roughly the same period, the Romanians enthusiastically supported the war: retaking Bessarabia was a popular cause.

Rationing was never terribly hard, but shortages could happen in the cities; much less so in the countryside. The prices of foodstuffs went steadily up during the first year of war, doubling every few weeks. Curfew and blackout regulations became stricter as the war went on. Some of the anti-Semitic laws, including the compulsory Star of David, were not regularly enforced in the pre-war counties.

# A MAKE-DO ARMY

The Romanian war experience is ideally suited for a “War is Hell!” campaign (see p. W158). It was very common, even in the best conditions, for a unit to be low on ammo, fuel, food, or equipment – or all four! In 1941, the strain to outfit the rapidly-growing army was terrible for a country that could only build 10 trucks a day. Some uniforms were of such poor quality that their fabric lasted only one month in the rain and trench mud. Soldiers in sandals were a common sight.

When in the field, a soldier could rely on receiving only meager rations (see p. 22). On the actual front line, though, even those meals couldn’t be counted on.

These shortages, and other special circumstances, may provide adventure ideas.

## Foraging

Whenever possible, the soldiers would try to improve their lot. The foraging rules (see p. B128) can be used for scouring the countryside, but an area can quickly be stripped clean by soldiers (see p. W158). Villages can be searched (Scrounging rolls); if they aren’t abandoned, this will lead to tense confrontations with civilians, as well as to possible moral dilemmas. Romanian soldiers would also sneak behind the lines and try stealing from the enemy – who were often as bad off as they were. A final, no less dangerous option was stealing from their usually well-supplied German allies.

## Assaults

The Odessa and Sevastopol sieges provide the ideal setting for detailed small-scale tactical actions, where the purpose of the adventure is just taking a pillbox, a fortified building, the next trench . . . and surviving. The rules for bunkers and fortifications (see pp. W:D100-101, 106-107) will come in handy. Hand-to-hand combat, grenades, flamethrowers, fieldcraft, urban survival, and critical First-Aid rolls will make such adventures hair-raising.

## The Way of the Saber

While Romanian cavalrymen normally engaged the enemy on foot, they also patrolled on horseback and occasionally engaged in mounted fights. In a famous action in Crimea, two platoons of cavalry captured a whole Soviet cavalry regiment lined up for a road march, outmaneuvering it and attacking it simultaneously from the front and back.

## Deserting and Draft-dodging

Up until August, 1944, thousands of sentences were issued for draft-dodging and desertion as Romanian peasant boys chose not to join the army in ever-increasing numbers. Living off the land in a region they knew well still provided a significant challenge in war-torn, heavily patrolled Romania. They’d have a chance to clean their slate in September, 1944, and rejoin a new Romanian army that was part of the Allied forces marching on Berlin.

## Joining the Germans

Romanian *Volksdeutsche* could freely volunteer for a foreign, though allied, army only after late 1942. Even then, highly skilled specialists were forbidden from doing so. Many of these ethnic Germans were well educated and a distinct loss to the Romanian army when they chose to join the Germans. Some 54,000 men of German origin joined the SS, though there never was a Romanian SS division. Others served with the Heer or the Todt work service. While many would balk at the idea of roleplaying such characters, it should be mentioned that some of these volunteers had no political motivation and simply sought a better organization, higher pay, and newer equipment.

## Turmoil in Bucharest

If tired of straight war stories, a Romanian character would find much more in the capital city of Bucharest in September 1940, January 1941, or August 1944. There would be political intrigue, divided loyalties, and street fights with either true military units or armed militias and mobs.

The war became less and less popular as the body count reached staggering levels at the end of 1942; for a small country like Romania, the losses meant that virtually no family was spared, and the boys were dying very far from the country's borders. The Allied bombing missions brought war to the homeland, too. The peasants began hiding their produce; the population became disillusioned. The Communist propaganda had little success throughout most of the war, but in 1944 leaflets were passed around among workers.

While there never was a Romanian resistance movement, the number of draft-dodgers increased (see *A Make-Do Army*, p. 37); the Danube Delta marshlands were a sanctuary both for them and for bandits (some of these gangs weren't of Romanian stock). Remnants of the Iron Guard kept simmering and hoping for a return of Sima (see p. 5).

## AGAINST THE GERMANS

Switching sides could cause moral dilemmas for individual soldiers (especially for Romanian *Volksdeutsche*), but the overwhelming majority saw where their country's interests were, and put them well before the alliance. The separation could only take place if neither side had a clear superiority, under an unspoken hold-fire agreement while the Germans simply went away. More commonly, hostilities broke out. Extricating one's own unit from yesterday's allies could be a

daunting prospect, particularly at the front; in rear areas, the skirmishes could be confused and their outcome see-saw for a while, as other troops join in on both sides. Handfuls of patriotic insurgents might also show up, especially in Bucharest, but with their lack of training and political indoctrination they'd be a mixed blessing at best.

Sooner or later, the new friends had to be welcomed. The Soviets were rather friendly on that first meeting. However, chances were that a few days later they'd confiscate heavy artillery, trucks (if the Romanian unit still had any), or other valuable equipment. Finding ways to hide and keep what one captured from the enemy would soon be very useful. Just as the Germans had used to issue no-withdrawal orders, the Soviets would demand frontal assaults.

The Germans, in fact, were far from defeated, and Romanian characters could put knowledge of their tactics and way of thinking to good use. It was an endurance match with the enemy scraping the bottom of the barrel, but with the Romanian soldiers in no better shape as the Soviets now controlled what remained of the rail system and industries. One would never know what to expect from the Third Reich's death throes: a platoon of Tigers (see p. W104) or a third-rate security battalion; SS cavalry, or an armored train (see pp. W:MP56-58). The Germans also put together two understrength Romanian regiments, but these immediately proved unreliable against the Soviets and were employed for labor duties.

And then there were the Hungarians.



## AGAINST THE HUNGARIANS

Whatever little qualms the Romanians had about turning against the Germans, fighting the Hungarians over Transylvania was exactly what they wanted. Typically, throughout their fighting against the Soviets, both countries had kept sizable just-in-case forces along their disputed border. The first skirmishes that took place in the mountainous region and involved the Frontier Guards and reserve units were Hungarian attacks; the Axis wanted to secure the best positions before the Soviets arrived there.

Soon, however, the Romanians switched to the offensive. Some very hard-fought actions saw them climbing up difficult terrain to dislodge the enemy from fortifications. Frontier Guards and mountain troops were in the forefront.

Both the Germans and the Soviets began bolstering their respective allies in these battles. Romanian characters might thus face the Wehrmacht with grudging respect, the *Honvéd* with unbridled hate, all the while watching their backs when dealing with the Russians. At this time, Romanian infantrymen would wear an armband in the national colors (blue, yellow, and red) in order not to be mistaken for the similarly khaki-clad Hungarians, just as when fighting on the Eastern front they had sometimes used a white armband, as a distinction from the Soviets' uniform.

The climax of this conflict was the battle for Budapest. Fought in the bitter winter of 1944-45, in a precarious logistical situation, the encirclement was already bad enough. The Hungarians put up a hard fight for their capital, and the Soviets pushed their allies forward. The Romanian units had to fight building by building, though they did their best to exploit open areas that became small battlefields on their own, such as the Racecourse, the horse market, parks, and cemeteries.

## SEAMEN AND PILOTS

### COASTAL SKIRMISHES

Long ocean-going missions weren't for the small, outgunned Romanian Navy, but its seamen had a varied

## THE PLOESTI RAIDS

In 1939, the Germans imported from abroad 90% of the oil they needed. But the Romanian oilfields of Ploesti, with their 7,000,000 tons a year, would cover more than half of the projected wartime demand. That was probably the main reason why Hitler wanted Romania in the Axis.

That was also a good reason for the Allies to bomb those most vulnerable installations: oil refineries. The first, surprise attack was Operation Tidal Wave, a nerve-wracking low-level bombing mission launched from African bases on August 1, 1943. Flying at the height of smokestacks (and into billowing black smoke clouds), the B-24s did inflict heavy damage on the complex, but they took 35% losses from flak.

Starting in April, 1944, Ploesti was regularly bombed by the 15th U.S. Air Force and by British bombers from their bases in Italy. The Romanian Air Force and the Luftwaffe had to redeploy fighter groups in order to face this threat; Ploesti became the third most defended target in Axis-occupied Europe.

While the antiaircraft units alone were credited with downing over 100 Allied bombers in the area, this did not deter the planners, and the raids continued until August, 1944. Air bombardments would never shut off the plants as effectively as the Soviet occupation that month, but they certainly helped that Soviet offensive (as well as the Allied war effort in general) by creating fuel shortages for the Axis, by diverting air defenses away from the front, and, in all likelihood, by prodding King Mihai toward the choice he finally made.

Handfuls of downed American airmen ended the war as POWs in Romania, being treated "like princes" – compared to Soviet POWs, of course. The Romanian Air Force repaired a crash-landed Liberator and flew it so that its pilots could practice attack drills.

and challenging war experience all along the Black Sea coast. The pre-war navy was bulked up by adding two new submarines and six torpedo boats, and by pressing into service all kinds of civilian craft and captured minor vessels. At all times, there would be at least one convoy out, dodging mines, air attacks, and the superior enemy fleet. It would either be resupplying an advancing corps or evacuating a shrinking beachhead, and it would be a smorgasbord of assorted vessels.

More aggressive characters could seek postings on one of the small, fast torpedo boats.

Fighting such a coastal war, Romanian seamen would also have a chance of fighting on land. Landing parties could find themselves under Soviet attack, or threatened by land batteries, or an unsuspecting ship could reach a port only to find it taken by an enemy naval infantry force.

The Marine Regiment was deployed briefly to the Danube Delta in 1941; then it was a second-line unit for most of the rest of the war. In 1944 it engaged in quick succession first Soviet vanguards, and then and German rearguards. Likewise, patrolling the Danube would usually be boring, though Yugoslav partisans and the occasional air-dropped mine could provide some excitement. At the end of 1944 the River Fleet received its final orders, and was committed against the Germans for the duration.

## CROWDED AIRSPACES

The experience of Romanian airmen in Operation Barbarossa would initially resemble that of their German counterparts (see pp. W:IC48, 116). The pilots were trained well by their German instructors; they had the best chance of direct interaction with these allies, and they'd normally learn some German.

The Romanian Air Force wasn't prepared for the attrition of their quick advance, in the harsh Russian winter to boot. The airmen also faced spells of inactivity in dreary forward airfields, while planes were being repaired or waited for spare parts.

As the Allied bombing campaign increased its pressure, more and more fighter groups were withdrawn to defend the oilfields. Unlike Germany, Romania for all practical purposes only had one important target – the Allies did not bother with diversionary tactics. The enemy mostly came in daylight and in good weather. There were plenty of targets, and the air was full of tracers; the airspace was crowded indeed. Also, Romanian pilots had to avoid coming too close to Ploesti, because friendly fire was almost a certainty. Diving into the defensive crossfire of a “box” of U.S. bombers took a brave pilot; most preferred hunting stragglers that had lost their formation on their way back.



## THE TRANSYLVANIAN CONNECTION

In a weird war setting, one wonders whether the squabble over Transylvania was actually about the region, or about some gloomy castles . . . and cemeteries. After all, Vlad “Tepes” Dracul (see p. W:WW99) – a less-than-nice fellow, as his nickname means Impaler – also was a Romanian patriot who fought against invading hordes. If still around, he'd surely fight for Romania – but at what price? Could a vampiric outbreak cause a dramatic shifting of alliances (see pp. W:WW7, 19)? Maybe the Hungarians have their own less-than-alive troops to recruit in that region, too. However, is it really a matter of life or un-death? Why was that family called *Dracul* - Dragon? It is said to be just a reference to a Christian chivalric order, but what if it hints to even more arcane powers?

Was the Iron Guard just a Fascist party? What about the much-rumored blood-drinking initiation rituals? How is it that its leader, Codreanu, was repeatedly reported as “coming back” after he had been killed? Maybe the organization was a black-hat front for a Cabalist lodge (see p. CB30). Is the connection with St. Michael more important than it seems, suggesting a link with the *Fraternitas Sancti Leonis* (see p. CB22)? Or are they tools of the Carthaginian Solution (see p. Mliii37), whose secret interest in Transylvania is to cauterize the place before it's too late?

As to Transylvania, other organizations might also think they have a stake – an ash-wood one. Among these would certainly be the British Paranormal Society and its successor, the Bureau of Paranormal Research and Defense (see p. HB78). In their feverish hunt for mystic powers and ancient magic, the Nazis, notably *Sonderkommando H* (see p. W:WW44), might also come to Romania in the search for more than oil.

However, it is noteworthy that the historic Count didn't actually rule in Transylvania, but neighboring Walachia . . . perhaps everybody is looking in the wrong place?

Notwithstanding their close relationship with the Germans, Romanian airmen eagerly served against them after September, 1944.



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