

January 31, 1949

The Minister of Defense's Confidential Order of the Day, No. 1

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Summary:

Minister of Defense Mihaly Farkas writes to commanders of the Army Border Guard concerning the duties of border guards in the Republic of Hungary. He dispenses orders for the punishment of deserters from the Army's 26th squadron.

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Original Scan

War History Archives, Budapest, Hungary

**THE MINISTER OF DEFENSE'S
Confidential Order of the Day Number 1**

To every command of the Army's Border Guard and to every individual border guard:

Brothers-in-Arms!

1. The mission of the Border Guard is to protect the borders of the Republic of Hungary against the enemies of the people. Its task is to prevent political criminals, imperialist agents and their local stooges, as well as criminals, smugglers and their accomplices, from illegally crossing our borders. The border guards' service is of extraordinarily high significance for the quiet, peaceful life and creative work of the Hungarian workers, the political and economic development of the Hungarian people's democracy, the uninterrupted building of socialism. The service of the border guards (especially on our western and southern borders), compared to the peacetime service of all forces of the Hungarian Army, is the most difficult, but the most important and the best also: active service in peacetime also.

In this struggle it is the obligation of every honorable border guard to fulfill his patriotic commitments.

2. Since the establishment of the democratic Army Border Guards some three years ago, up until now was it in the forefront among the Army forces in the area of political consciousness, discipline, and performance of duty. During the initial difficulties accompanying the currency inflation and the development of the Army, the border guards heroically stayed at their post while being ragged, hungry, poorly equipped, and poorly armed; and, as material conditions improved, they more and more effectively guarded the border. With this they became worthy of recognition by their superiors and the esteem and love of the people.

3. Recently, however, an increase in disturbing incidents show that discipline and order has become slack in the Border Guard, political consciousness and sense of obligation has been lowered, and as a result of all of this the performance of duties and the surveillance of the border has slackened. Among individual border guard companies and at outposts a scandalous state of affairs rules in the areas of discipline, orderliness [*belrend*], cleanliness, internal policing, and obligatory secrecy; commanders, officers, and warrant officers neglect supervising and training the troops, are not concerned about the military and political education of their subordinates or teaching them vigilance, which leads to a steep decline in [political] consciousness, and opens a wide gap among the ranks of the border guards for the planned, subversive activities of the enemy. As a result of this, especially on the western and southern borders, desertions have taken place recently.

This month, on the night of the 25-26th, five border guards from the 9th Nagykánizsa battalion, 26th squadron, 119th outpost at Somogyudvarhely, deserted over the border, as did two border guards from the the 120th outpost at Vizvár.

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On the night of the 28 and 29th two border guards from the Kiskunhalas 11th battalion, 32nd squadron, 142nd outpost at Kunbaja fled over the border.

The successful mass desertion of these miserable traitors and the increase in their numbers, and the circumstance that no one observed and reported the preparations of the conspirators for deserting shows the first stages of the degradation of the individual units in the Border Guard. That danger threatens the Border Guard, further degrades its value, and it cannot carry out the tasks prescribed by our working people.

These indefensible conditions must be radically liquidated!.

4.a) For the mass desertions that turned up in the Army's 26th squadron I call the guilty to account:

For serious offenses, I order the arrest of and start court martial proceedings against

**Major Béla Bence Szabó, 9th Army battalion command,
Staff Sergeant János Szabó, 20/119 Army outpost commander,
Gyula Dani and Gábor Varga, 20/119 Army outpost soldiers.**

**For negligently performing duties as commanders, for not rendering the necessary supervision, and for not maintaining discipline, I order
Captain István Horváth, former commander, Army 26th Squadron,
Captain Imre Gál, current commander, Army 26th Squadron,
to serve 30 (thirty) days confinement to quarters as punishment.**

**Because he negligently carried out his duties, I relieve
Lieutenant György Vencel, the 9th Army Battalion, Office D,
him from his post, place him in a lower rank, and punish him with 30
(thirty) days confinement to quarters; finally**

**For weak demeanor toward his subordinates I order
József Badacsonyi, battalion sergeant-major, the 20/120 Army Outposts,
to be punished with 30 days confinement to quarters.**

The Border Guard Headquarters will carry out the punishments.

**The prison sentences will be served on the premises of the Budapest
VAP prison facilities.**

b) As a punishment I shamefully disband the 26th Army Squadron.

This is the squadron which brought up traitors and deserters in its ranks and in this fashion brought embarrassment to the entire army and, in its present composition, is not worthy to continue to remain as a squadron.

I ORDER that those officers, warrant officers, non-commissioned officers, line-officers, and troops of the 26th Army Squadron be dispersed among the other battalions of the Border Guard.

c) From every officer, warrant officer, non-commissioned officer, and soldier of the 26th Army Squadron I am taking away the border guard insignia.

The Border Guard Command will gather and store the insignia.

I reserve the right to possibly reissue the insignia to those concerned.

The Border Guard Command can make a proposal concerning this no earlier than in six months' time for those who, with excellent service in their new positions and with exemplary conduct, prove worthy.

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d) Private First Class Imre Borbács, on the other hand, for faithfully carrying out his duties and, overcoming every obstacle, for immediately reporting the deserters to the post commander, is accorded the praise of the Minister of Defense, and I promote him to corporal and accord him a bounty.

I ORDER every officer, warrant officer, non-commissioned officer, and soldier of the Border Guard, through joint effort, to reestablish the discipline, order, and the good morale of the Border Guard.

I ORDER every Border Guard commander and political officer, with increased, continual, and thorough supervision; with increased vigilance, with the consistent exposure of mistakes, with militant-minded education, and with praise and with disciplinary action, to train subordinates as conscientious soldiers, faithful to the free Hungarian homeland, and, with their own comportment, set a good example.

I ORDER every border guard to exercise his duties honorably.

I offer every possible human and material support to the Border Guard; likewise, I will avenge without mercy every irregularity, every lack of discipline.

I expect border guards to carry out my order precisely, without any hesitation, and in the shortest time again earn the recognition of their superiors and the esteem of the people.

6. The Border Guard General Headquarters must, in a ceremonious and instructive way, promulgate this order in front of all subordinates on February 2nd.

Distribution: Border Guards (including border posts)

Budapest, January 31, 1949

Mibály Farkas
Minister of Defense

Confidential Order of the Day No. 1, of January 1, 1949, deals with lax discipline and illegal flight abroad among border guards. Reel H-1, MN 1949/T, 1/1, Secretariat, Ministry of Defense, Miscellaneous Matters.