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The attempt to introduce specialist military training in Vilnius in the last years of the 18th century

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Abstract: *The beginnings of a stable system of technical troops in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth date back to the second half of the 18th century, and the key role in this process was played by the artillery general Alois Friedrich von Brühl. The first specialist technical schools were established in Warsaw and Vilnius. General Brühl gathered a team of eminent specialists, thus guaranteeing the highest professional standard of the future graduates. The Aim of the Article is to present attempts at introducing specialist military education in Vilnius in the last years of the 18th century.*

Key words: History; Vilnius; Artillery School; School of Military Engineering; technical schools

Introduction

The development of military art in Europe caused major changes in education, which caused schools of chivalry to appear as early as in the 16th century to flourish only in the next century.¹ In 17th century Western Europe schools of chivalry became fashionable as they prepared students not only for the military profession but also provided them with a certain body of general knowledge and savoir-vivre. From the second half of the 17th century, a tendency to emphasise military skills, knowledge and practice as well as technical knowledge in the curriculum became noticeable. For example, the Turin Academy taught drawing, arithmetic, geometry and fortifications construction, as well as discussing the latest war events.²

Apart from academies of chivalry, military schools were established on their basis, with some appearing as early as the 16th and 17th centuries, but gaining real

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¹ PUCHOWSKI, 2007: 84-87; PIŁATOWICZ, 2015: 107-130.

² PUCHOWSKI, 2004: 24-25.

popularity in the 18th century, mostly in the former empires: Russia, France, England, Austria and Prussia. The development of these two types of schools was connected with the development of the army, military know-how and technology. Those schools tended to reduce the humanities in favour of military skills, knowledge and training. As military technology grew more sophisticated, specialized schools started to appear.³

The situation in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth was different. Although in the 16th and 17th centuries, the country was a considerable military power, the first school for officers was established only in the latter half of the 18th century. Historians seek the reasons for that in the privileged position of the nobility and their mentality. The privilege of birth meant that the nobility had no rivals on their way to a military career. They finished their collegium with a rhetoric class, believing that military knowledge could only be acquired and perfected in direct confrontation with an enemy. Only the sons of rich nobility and magnates completed their military education during educational journeys. The nobility's conservatism is emphasised, which opposed all signs of modernity, including novel solutions in the acquisition of technical know-how, increasingly indispensable in the art of war.⁴

In the 18th century Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, the best organized formation in the Crown and the Lithuanian army was artillery.

The establishment of the Mute Sejm of 1717, includes an artillery company of volunteers of 150 portions. It remained unchanged until the reforms of the Great Sejm.⁵ In the Crown, the artillery owed its level of training to Alojzy Fryderyk Brühl, who was appointed the General of the Crown Army in 1763, and engaged in reforming this formation, which was heading for collapse.⁶ Alojzy Fryderyk Brühl made the Crown artillery the best formation in the whole Commonwealth's army. In 1777, the establishment of the corps of horse artillery amounted to 126 heads divided by staffs, cannoner and grenadier's company. In April 1770, the size of artillery increased to 580 heads (compared to the establishment of 1064 heads), and in February 1792 – to 1022 soldiers, including the school of artillery and cannon foundry.⁷

One of the reforms of the Great Sejm was preparation of one hundred-head army establishment, in which it was planned to form a Crown army of 66 thousand heads, including 3326 artillerymen. In the Lithuanian army, it was planned to form 10-company corps of artillery with the engineers corps. A decision was also made to establish new military schools: The School of Artillery Corps in Warsaw, The School of Engineering Corps in Kalisz and a technical military school in Vilnius. In January 1790, due to financial difficulties, the Sejm decided to decrease the establishment from one hundred thousand to a temporary size of 65 thousand, with 45 thousand heads

³ GIERGIELEWICZ, 1933: 71.

⁴ RYŚ, 2004: 485.

⁵ MACHYNIA, RAKUTIS, SRZEDNICKI, 1999: 264.

⁶ MACHYNIA, SRZEDNICKI, 1999: 1.

⁷ MACHYNIA, RAKUTIS, SRZEDNICKI, 1999: 264.

in the Crown and 20 thousand heads in Lithuania. The number of artillerymen was limited to 3564 in the Crown and Lithuania. The cavalry was subject to the smallest restrictions, while greater restrictions affected the infantry and artillery, i.e. units of key strategic importance in the battle. The structure of the army was becoming anachronistic again.⁸

On 18th May 1792, war between the Commonwealth and Russia began, and on 22nd May 1792, so called war establishment, which joined Lithuanian and Crown artillery, was enacted. New artillery of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth was to have 5220 soldiers forming a staff, three regiments comprising 12 companies of 139 heads each, three schools of artillery, three arsenals and a cannon foundry. New regiments were formed: in the Crown – the 1st Greater Poland regiment, and the 2nd Lesser Poland regiment, and in Lithuania – the 3rd Lithuanian regiment. The war ended soon, and after the takeover of power by the Targowica Confederation, the reforms in the army were not continued. In September 1792, Lithuanian artillery amounted to 910 soldiers, while the establishment was 1137 heads.⁹

In the 18th century, in the Crown and in Lithuania, the artillery and engineering schools began to be organized. These schools were attached to artillery and engineers corps, with teachers recruiting from the corps. Schools attached to both Crown technical military forces corps (artillery and engineering) were established in 1775. The artillery school obtained the establishment immediately, while the engineering school remained a dependent school without the establishment for a long time.¹⁰

The beginnings of a stable system of technical troops in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth date back to the second half of the 18th century, and the key role in this process was played by the artillery general Alois Friedrich von Brühl.¹¹ In 1776, General Brühl founded the first artillery school in Poland, which throughout its operation educated a total of about 400 officers. The artillery general gathered a team of eminent specialists, thus guaranteeing the highest professional standard of the future graduates. Brühl put a great deal of emphasis on self-education of the military staff.¹²

The first specialist technical schools were established in Warsaw and Vilnius. In Warsaw they were: the Main Artillery School (Artillery School at the Crown Artillery Corps), School of Crown Engineers, School of Engineer Pontooneers, founded in 1780.¹³

The very serious problem is an incomplete archival resource concerning the subject. There are no sources describing the details of everyday functioning of the schools. Published lists of officers are available. In the inter-war period

⁸ NOWAK, WIMMER, 1981: 586-588.

⁹ MACHYNIA, RAKUTIS, SRZEDNICKI, 1999: 264.

¹⁰ GDAŃSKI, MACHYNIA, 2003: 84.

¹¹ PIŁATOWICZ, 2018: 277-290.

¹² DUDZIAK, 2010: 225, 226.

¹³ PIŁATOWICZ, 2018: 281-302.

the archives concerning military education were already very incomplete. The documents on engineering schools had been seized by the Russian authorities and conveyed to the Library of the General Staff in St. Petersburg.¹⁴ Archives became much less accessible in the wake of the damage wreaked by World War II, so the history of individual schools can be traced only partially. Bearing that in mind, we used the archives published in *Volumina Legum* and No. 12.

The Artillery School and the School of Military Engineering in Vilnius

Professor Henryk Mościcki traced the beginning of military education to 1787 and underscored the king's initiative in this regard: "Around 1787, on the initiative of the King, a proposal to organise a separate system of military education in Lithuania, similar to one already existing in the Crown."¹⁵

In 1789, two schools were established in Vilnius: The Artillery School and the School of Military Engineering, staffed by the same lecturers; for this reason, authors often treat those schools as a single institution. In the literature on the subject we find various dates of their foundation. Even more recent studies give different dates for the establishment of the Main Artillery School, such as 1776.¹⁶ Those studies might rely on pre-war studies by Antoni Hniłko, who reported that the school was established in 1776 and educated 400 officers.¹⁷ The list of officers of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth from the final years of its existence provides an even earlier date: "Schools with both crown corps of technical troops (artillery and engineers) were established in 1775. While the artillery school immediately became an autonomous institution, whose status was confirmed several times later on, the engineering school was for a long time a dependent unit without a separate statute."¹⁸ This postulate was not always implemented. The establishment of an autonomous status did not mean the actual commencement of operation. The oft-quoted date of 1775 or 1776.¹⁹ when the schools were established, perhaps stem from the belief that they were called into being together with the engineering corps. Studies also suggest other dates of their creation, for example 1780 or 1781.²⁰

¹⁴ GIERGIELEWICZ, 1929a: 130.

¹⁵ MOŚCICKI, 1911: 146.

¹⁶ TOMCZAK, WYSZYŃSKI, PONICHTERA, 1992: 21.

¹⁷ HNIŁKO, 1926: 204.

¹⁸ GDAŃSKI. MACHYNIA, 2003: 84, 86.

¹⁹ WALTER-JANKE, 1999: 50; ŁOŚ, 2001: 67.

²⁰ LEVITTOUX, 1923: 222-223; JAKLEWICZ, 1930: 100-101; KNOT, 1938: 61-62.

Research objects and chronological limits

The subject of the research is artillery-related schools towards the end of the 18th century, i.e. the functioning of the Artillery School and the School of Military Engineering in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania towards the end of the 18th century.

It seems that we should favour the date advocated by Giergielewicz, who used numerous archival materials existing in the inter-war period. Drawing on them, he claims the following²¹:

“The schools of the Corps of the Crown and Lithuanian engineering troops, as separate academic institutions, were not established until 1789, rather than around 1780, as claimed by Korzon and Mościcki. We cannot consider as a school of artillery the so-called department of engineering corps, established with the artillery school, organized thanks to the efforts and help of General Brühl in late 1778 or early 1779, counting only several non-commissioned officers and cadets... In connection with the new organization of the armed forces, enacted in 1789, military engineering and artillery schools were established in the Crown and Lithuania.”

King Stanisław August Poniatowski, probably on the recommendation of the Lithuanian artillery General Kazimierz Sapieha, appointed in early 1789 Lieutenant Colonel Jakub Jasinski²² and Engineering Captain Michał Sokolnicki as heads of the schools.²³ The latter becoming a professor of building construction and practical geometry, called “land surveying”. Appointments might have been influenced by their acquaintance and common experience of their time at the Knights’ School – the following men studied here: Kazimierz Nestor Sapieha, Jakub Jasiński and Michał Sokolnicki.²⁴

Mościcki extolled the King’s right choice: “The choice was more than proper, because they both, being talented and solidly educated, in their earnest wished to improve their professional skills in the army, which would be best attained by establishing a new military school.”²⁵

The formal superior of the schools was Kazimierz Sapieha, from 15 January 1790 appointed head of the Lithuanian artillery and the engineering corps. He surely possessed substantial knowledge having graduated from the Knights’ School to continue his education at the Turin Military Academy, where he got acquainted

²¹ GIERGIELEWICZ, 1933: 72.

²² GIERGIELEWICZ, 1939: 99 – here he uses the name Corps of Engineers of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania; LEVITTOUX, 1924: 8 – according to him, Jasiński modelled himself on the existing engineering and artillery schools in Warsaw.

²³ GIERGIELEWICZ, 1939: 122-139.

²⁴ SOKOLNICKI, 1912: 6.

²⁵ MOŚCICKI, 1911: 146.

with the construction of fortifications and artillery functioning. During his travels across France in 1774, he was interested in sluices and canals. In Paris he studied chemistry, physics, mathematics, civil architecture and mechanics. In Strasbourg he explored artillery, fortifications, tactics and mathematics. His involvement in the Poland's national politics made Sapieha only the titular head of the schools; he would appear in Vilnius only for important ceremonies. For example, on 8 May 1791, he was in Vilnius heading the Corps during the promulgation ceremony of the 3 May Constitution and the celebration of King Stanisław August Poniatowski's name day. It was then that Kazimierz Sapieha was bestowed the honorary citizenship of Vilnius. He commanded the Corps until April 1793, after which he resigned as general of the Lithuanian artillery, coerced by the Targowica Confederation supporters and Russian ambassador Jakob Johann Sievers; on 9 May 1793, he issued his last order to the Lithuanian artillery corps.²⁶

The only thing we know about the Artillery School is that in April 1790 the teaching staff comprised three professors (Mikołaj Spensberger was probably one of them; according to Mariusz Machynia, from May 1790 the school was headed by Franciszek Mehler),²⁷ and in 1792, seven professors, whose names are not known – though it can be assumed that they were ones who taught at the Lithuanian School of Engineers Corps.²⁸ At this point, we should mention that Walerian Kalinka claimed that no artillery school existed: “The Crown's arsenal was in good order, it had 120 ready cannons, and there was an artillery school, perfectly organised by Brühl and maintained by Szczyński with no less effort. Things were different in Lithuania, where there was no artillery school, nor did the arsenal have any supply.”²⁹

We have more information on the School of the Lithuanian Engineering Corps. The army's staffing schedule, drawn up in October 1789, accounted for the posts of director (elected from among distinguished officers) and 6 professors: mathematics, artillery, ‘hand drawings and situation analysis, fire arms and other elements’, ‘geographical and topographical maps’, ‘fortifications and civil architecture’. For the maintenance of the school, a sum of 5 thousand zloty was allocated, that is to purchase instruments, paper, paints, pencils, heating fuel, such a sum being the salary of the director, while professors could expect from 3,000 to 1,750 zloty. The professor teaching about fire arms would earn the least.³⁰

Jasiński and Sokolnicki were commissioned on 15 January 1790.³¹ In recognition of Jasiński's achievements in the formation of the Lithuanian engineering corps and the school, on 13 January 1792, he was promoted by King

²⁶ KĄDZIELA, 1994: 52-53.

²⁷ MACHYNIA, 2002: 70.

²⁸ LIEBFELD, 1964: 23.

²⁹ KALINKA, 1991 (reprint 1895): 425.

³⁰ *Etat wojska obojga narodow. Octobris 1789*, 130.

³¹ MOŚCICKI, 1911: 146.

Stanisław August to the rank of colonel, as reported in the press at the time: “The colonelship in the Lithuanian Engineering Corps of the Army of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, falling to Mr Jakub Jasiński on account of the enlarged size of the army of that corps, was conferred on him on 13 January with His Majesty's commission”.³²

From the corps of Lithuanian engineers, Sokolnicki was sent abroad in 1791 to study hydrography and military engineering. After his return to Poland next year, he submitted an extensive memorandum, which included papers on the organisation and training of technical armies in the West, including ones on the Saxon artillery and engineering schools.³³ In this memorandum, Sokolnicki presented a proposal for the foundation and organisation of a school of road and bridge construction. This report was highly appreciated by the authorities, the king rewarded the author with a complete set of measuring instruments, and the Military Commission presented him with a laudatory diploma and a promotion to the rank of Lieutenant Colonel of Engineers.³⁴ During Sokolnicki's trip abroad, the duties of Jasiński's deputy were discharged by Captain Szymon Górski, who delivered so well that Jasiński began to prefer him over Sokolnicki; the former even presented Górski for promotion to lieutenant colonel.³⁵ However, when Jasiński was leaving for Warsaw at the end of July 1792, he handed over the command of the engineering corps to Captain Michał Sokolnicki.³⁶

Other than Jasiński and Sokolnicki, the School's teaching staff included Karol Hube (son of the educational director of the Warsaw Knights' School Jan Michał), a professor of mathematics. The curriculum offered both theoretical and practical classes, such as: mathematics, tactics, artillery, fortifications, architecture, pyrotechnics, drawing, military geography, and topography. Drawings and topography were taught by Henry de Saint-Urbain, who was recruited from the Austrian army and appointed on 19 January 1790 professor of ‘geographical and topographical maps’. However, due to his riotous and wasteful lifestyle, he was probably useless by not contributing much to the knowledge of the cadets; yet he kept his teaching position as the school had no other candidate for the job.³⁷

The students performed surveying works using measuring tools and specific engineering tasks. The school operated in very difficult conditions because it did not

³² ‘Officerowie awansowani na szarże i rangi aktualne w Woysku W. X. Lit. od początku roku 1792’, *Gazeta Narodowa y Obca*, 1792, No. XIII (of 15th February), p. 74.

³³ GIERGIELEWICZ, 1933: 69-70.

³⁴ SOKOLNICKI, 1912: 15-17.

³⁵ ZACHMACZ, 1995: 17.

³⁶ Jasiński returned to Vilnius in January 1793 and after a nearly six-month break took over again the command of the corps of engineers; ŻYTKOWICZ, 1938: 172-173.

³⁷ BUNIEWICZÓWNA, 1937: 332.

have a suitable building or a library despite Jasiński's repeated appeals to the authorities for funds for a small library for essential books.³⁸

The state of training of the Lithuanian corps was much worse compared to that in Warsaw. The Commonwealth army was made up of the Crown and the Lithuanian (the Grand Duchy of Lithuania) armies. Giergielewicz had the following opinion³⁹:

“It should be assumed, however, that the state of training of the Lithuanian engineering corps left much to be desired, since the head of the corps Father Sapieha, on 14 April 1792, which was shortly before the Polish-Russian war of 1792 started, when the training of the corps was to be complete, asked the Military Commission to give the corps of artillery and engineers a «uniform course of artillery and fortifications», garrison and camp service rules, and to assign tasks to both the artillery and engineers.”

The role of the Corps was to give the cadets some general military training and theoretical, technical background. Strong emphasis was placed on the practical demonstration of the work and duties of military engineers to the cadets. The short time and inadequate equipment of the Corps made it impossible to prepare a sufficient number of military engineers, a disadvantage which was felt during the war of 1792 and the Kościuszko Uprising. In his report of 30 April 1792 Jasiński complained that the Corps did not have proper maps.⁴⁰ Jasiński returned to this subject in January 1793, when he asked Hetman Szymon Kossakowski to allocate appropriate funds for renting some premises and to purchase a book collection needed for didactics.⁴¹

On the recommendation of the Targowica Confederation, Franciszek Sapieha, a distant relative of Kazimierz Nestor Sapieha assumed the function of artillery general and head of the Corps on 1 May 1793 to determine the future of the schools: “one of the earliest decisions taken by Sapieha when he became head of the Lithuanian Artillery and Engineering Corps was to merge (on 10th July of this year) [i.e. 1793 – Author's note] the two schools, as they were struggling with great financial problems.”⁴² According to authors of officer lists from the late eighteenth century, who drew on an article written by Janina Buniewiczówna, the joining was effected by Hetman Szymon Kossakowski by on order of 15 July 1793. However, the date in that article is 15 June and no other July date refers to 15th July.⁴³ Based on correspondence between Jasiński, Cronemann and Kossakowski and Sapieha, it can be assumed that the final decision was approved by the latter (Franciszek Sapieha). Nevertheless,

³⁸ GIERGIELEWICZ, 1933: 76; LEVITTOUX, 1923: 224; JAKLEWICZ, 1930: 100-101; MOŚCICKI, 1948: 57-58.

³⁹ GIERGIELEWICZ, 1929b: 169-170 (435-436 – double pagination).

⁴⁰ MOŚCICKI, 1917: 59-60.

⁴¹ ZACHMACZ, 1995: 23.

⁴² KĄDZIELA, 1992: 606.

⁴³ GDAŃSKI, MACHYNIA, 2003: 95.

the incentive came in the form of the alarming memorandum by Jasiński on the engineering school submitted to Kossakowski in the spring of 1793. Jasiński complained about the lack of his own premises and therefore the need to rent space for classes, while the officers, for lack of apartments, occupied premises in the arsenal and the school had no ‘stock of books’.⁴⁴

Friedrich Wilhelm Cronemann, in his memorandum of 3 June 1793, addressed to Kossakowski, presented a similar view of the situation the artillery corps school was in the work of Buniewiczówna, who had access to this document in the 1930s, conveyed his main idea like this⁴⁵:

“The Lithuanian artillery general [Cronemann], taking care to raise the level of military knowledge in Lithuanian artillery, wanted to resume lectures in the school. However, he encountered difficulties because the teaching aids and school equipment were already worn out or taken away by Russian soldiers. Besides, the scattered body of engineers should be gathered and placed in the quarters near the arsenal. Those reports prompted Cronemann to merge the two schools on 3 June for reasons of economy and better supervision. He ordered that the artillery school be moved to the arsenal. He appointed Jasiński, the colonel of the Lithuanian engineers, as the director of both schools.”

Jasiński assumed this position on 15 July 1793, and the schools were located in the Vilnius arsenal.⁴⁶ In the summer, both schools were reorganized and classes started early in October 1793.⁴⁷

In addition to the staff mentioned above, there were: Wawrzyniec Gucewicz, who taught architecture, topography and cartography from 1793 to 1794.⁴⁸ Captain Szymon Górski, a graduate of the School of the Corps of Crown Engineers, and Lieutenant Karol (or Kajetan) Hryniewicz, a graduate of the Warsaw Knights’ School. The others on the teaching staff were 4 second lieutenants, 4 ‘conductors’, 7 non-commissioned officers, a feldsher, and 17 miners, including a carpenter and a brass smith. The corps sported a seal depicting the Pogoń and the coat of arms of Kazimierz Sapieha with the Fox.⁴⁹

We do not know when the Vilnius school ceased operation, but we can assume that it happened upon the outbreak of the Kościuszko Uprising, in which a large number of the lecturers and cadets participated. It seems to me that Mościcki’s opinion that the school stopped its operation in May 1791 is too pessimistic⁵⁰:

⁴⁴ ŻYTKOWICZ, 1938: 173.

⁴⁵ BUNIEWICZÓWNA, 1937: 331-332.

⁴⁶ ZACHMACZ, 1995: 66.

⁴⁷ ŻYTKOWICZ, 1938: 174.

⁴⁸ PIŁATOWICZ, 2018: 309.

⁴⁹ MOŚCICKI, 1917: 71-73, 115.

⁵⁰ MOŚCICKI, 1911: 147.

“Alas, the school in Lithuania, as many other useful enterprises, ceased to exist soon for lack of funding. The last national ceremony with the participation of the Engineering and Artillery Corps was probably the promulgation of the Governmental Law of the 3rd of May; in Vilnius it was announced by Marshal Sapieha, who solemnly celebrated King Stanisław August’s name day at the head of the cadets.”

The fact that the school existed until the outbreak of the Kościuszko Uprising is confirmed by the correspondence of Jakub Jasiński, who as a member of the Provisional Lithuanian Military Commission refused to leave for Grodno in late September 1793, excusing himself with the classes he had to run at the School of the Engineering Corps.⁵¹

The lecturers and cadets took part in the Kościuszko Uprising, the leading figure in Vilnius was Jasiński,⁵² with Gucewicz as one of the most active fighters,⁵³ a lecturer at the School, one of the closest associates of the former. Gucewicz was one of the organizers of the Kościuszko Uprising in Vilnius (22-23 April 1794) and a member of the Lithuanian National Supreme Council with a representative security body called *Deputacja Bezpieczeństwa*. Gucewicz took part in its work and drafted a proposal for the organisation of the Vilnius Municipal Guard; nominated by the Council as its commander, he managed to fit it out well with uniforms and equip it with rifles, pikes, pistols, axes and berdiches, and “sporting national cockades, which consisted of two colours, blue meaning stability and green meaning hope, «to signify the two nations, the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and the Polish Crown, eternally unified, and the two colours, when taken together, have the meaning of a defeated superstition»”.⁵⁴

Another lecturer of the Corps, Karol Hube, gave lectures for ‘selected bombardiers and sergeants’ of artillery in Jasiński’s apartment. In Vilnius, a cannon foundry was opened, where cannons were cast according to the drawings of General Cronemann.⁵⁵ His son, also Frederick William (1773-1792), joined the Lithuanian artillery in 1783 as a cadet, took part in the 1792 campaign and the Kościuszko Uprising; defending Vilnius in the trenches at the Gate of Dawn (Pol. *Ostra Brama*), he died on 19 July 1792 as Senior Lieutenant of the Lithuanian artillery.⁵⁶

⁵¹ HERBST, LIBERA, 1964: 42.

⁵² See an anonymous memoir about his role and the course of events in Vilnius in 1794. ‘Ustęp z dziejów narodowych. Przez naoczego świadka, porucznika z 1812 z gwardii narodowej batalionu Igo, kompanii 1ej grenadierów’, *Ruch Literacki* [Lviv] 1876, No. 23, pp. 367-369, No. 24, pp. 384-386, No. 25, pp. 399-400.

⁵³ PIŁATOWICZ, 2015: 149-150.

⁵⁴ MOŚCICKI, 1917: 164.

⁵⁵ MOŚCICKI, 1917: 165-166; MOŚCICKI, 1948: 59-60.

⁵⁶ BUNIEWICZÓWNA, 1938: 106.

Conclusions

The problem of poor financing of schools was noticed by Karol Sierakowski in regard of crown schools, who also mentioned practical activities that cadets conducted or could conduct⁵⁷:

“The sum of 6,000 zloty allocated for the maintenance of the engineering school in the Crown is barely enough to provide adequate learning experience. Every year we have to show practically how to build sconces, approaches, sappes, or how to make a small mine, etc. I say small because if we want to experiment with a globe of compression and dig underground galleries, the whole sum of 6,000 will not suffice (for 3,600 pounds of powder alone is needed for that).”

In the case of the School of Lithuanian Engineering Corps, the amount was even less, only 5,000 zloty.

Only when an increased budget for the ‘Armed Forces of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth’ was adopted on 22 May 1792, it became possible to almost double the expenditure on the school, which made it possible to enrich the curriculum and possibly employ more teachers.

The modest financial resources made it impossible to train more technical cadets in engineering. That is why these schools did not achieve the expected purpose, as Giergielewicz rightly stressed⁵⁸:

“Initially, due to defective organization and especially for lack of material resources, these schools could not fulfil their purpose and were not of great use to the developing army, training an insufficient number of engineering officers, which soon had severe consequences in the war of 1792 and the Kościuszko Uprising.”

On the one hand, there was a shortage of technical troops and their training was not adequate, but on the other, their superiors-commanders were unable to take advantage of their technical knowledge appropriately, often giving them tasks that were not related to their training.

Despite a considerable effort of a modest group of enlightened officers and a small number of teaching staff, the above-mentioned schools did not achieve their goals or bring the expected results. There were many reasons for that. First of all, the decline of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth was full of political and military events involving staff and cadets, especially in armed conflicts. The state of political

⁵⁷ GIERGIELEWICZ, 1933: 73.

⁵⁸ GIERGIELEWICZ, 1933: 73.

and military turmoil, for obvious reasons, did not favour peaceful organisation of schools, the drafting of curricula and training of the teaching staff at a sufficient level. Technical military education was a novelty, so the organizers and teachers could and did make mistakes; they had to gain experience, have time for own learning, and study solutions used in other countries. The time of political tensions and war conflicts did not favour this form of schooling.

Additionally, technical troops were a novelty, which initially were not appreciated, and that could be seen in relatively insignificant outlays on this type of troops and their education. The allocated means were also capped by the overall military expenditure, which was little anyway. As a result, only some practical activities could be conducted.

Tadeusz Korzon, an expert on the reign of Stanisław August Poniatowski, summed up the activity of military schools and their graduates' career in the army in the following way⁵⁹:

“These facilities probably did not bring much benefit to the army in the making because of the curriculum which was very poor, or because of their short existence. Probably, little was known about higher military science, the strategy of the Commission and in the military. When the campaign was to commence in 1792, engineers were dispatched to «explore the area and draw plans of places where warehouses could be erected surrounded with sconces,» that is, to perform tasks that were typically done by the quartermaster's soldiers.”

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