

• **NEMESCSOI IGNÁC TÖRÖK**
General.

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Nemescsói Ignác Török

Sine praeteritis nulla futura!
(No past, no future!)

Preface.

To the memory of those unforgettable beautiful years in which I was lucky enough to serve in a battalion named after Nemescsói Ignác Török, and not insignificantly through my current position, I once again have close ties to the service with the battalion which enabled me to write about my comrade, showing my feelings of gratitude, by writing the biography of this martyr for freedom and at the same time give my teammates this modest memory of its namesake.

I ask all those who read this autobiography to do so with similar love that I took in researching it conscientiously while gathering the details of his life.

I also thought it useful to write the story of not only the biography of this hero, but also to take the opportunity when presented to discuss the events of the age and discuss some, especially the military-technical interests.

Thus, the reader will get a more colourful picture of this era and at the same time enhance the personality and quality of General Török.

It is my duty to say thank you to all those who, at the time of compiling the biography, gave me advice, encouragement and provided data.

I am convinced that, after reading this little book about the unsullied life of General Nemescsói Ignác Török and his indefatigable heroics and martyrdom for his homeland, that he is truly entered in the gold book of Hungarian history forever!

Székesfehérvár, 1941.

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I. Chapter.

Origin of Nemescsói Török family.
Ignác Török childhood and early learning.

In 1795, Ignác, the eldest son of an administrator also called Ignác, was born in the city of Gödöllő which was in the estate of the prince of Grassalkovich. From modest circumstances he became a noble general in the struggle for freedom and after a lifetime of tireless labour, he suffered martyrdom for Hungarian independence.

The adolescent's childhood was at a time when the blood-thirsty Napoleonic war was coming to an end in Europe: the spirit of great adventures inspired the little Ignác Török, to want to be a soldier, the father was blessed with many children by then, and worked as the Brudern Baron family's commodity manager and did not oppose this decision. He was admitted to the finest military education institute of his age, the Viennese Emperors Royal Engineering Academy.

The small Hungarian boy studied diligently here, and though none of his 60 classmates achieved historical significance his teachers found it worthwhile to allow him to go for higher military training.

He became an officer; he performed well wherever they placed him: twenty-four years in the most diverse army engineering positions, and seven years as the instructor of the Noble Hungarian Bodyguards. When his nation's liberty called for his participation Ignác Török did not hesitate for a moment, grabbed a gun and offered his sword and knowledge to his homeland to his last breath.

When our brave soldier laid down his weapon having been defeated by the overwhelming power the victor retaliated and with the thirteen heroes of 'Golgotha' Arad now wears the crown of martyrdom on his forehead.

His precious ashes are nowadays in conquered lands turning to dust in an unmarked grave. His grateful nation did not forget its great son.

Our highest military leader in 1930 ordered that the 2nd battalion of our army wear his name on its flag as a mark of honour.

The community of the city of Komárom, remembering the glory of holding the castle in 1848/1849 against the enemy was largely due to the skills of Ignác Török, instituted in 1933, the "Ignác Török Memorial Trophy" to reward those serving in the 2 Division of the army for the highest engineering achievers in water fortifications.

The citizens of Gödöllő, the birthplace of the martyr, keeps asking questions about the return of his ashes to his home, and in October 1935 they unveiled a statue in his honour.

In the roots of his native origin, in the Nemescsó country the Török family's memory today is now identified by a building with columns amongst the village cottages known as the "Török-kuria", as well as the three headstones in the cemetery, he is descendant from the family of Mihály Török I, the graves of János (John) died in 1812, Pál (Paul) died in 1879 and Anna Neumeister-Török, who died in 1916.

Anyone who is searching with love among the memories of the past in the yellowed annals of the Lutheran congregation will find a list of entries in which the name Nemescsói Török appears related to family data, litigation and many other aspects. (2)

Some of the inhabitants of Nemescsó had noble rights in the beginning of the XVII century: the oldest data found about the Török family dated back to 1685.

In this year, a land owner of Nemescsó Kissomlyói János Simon granted a 100-forint loan to the villagers and among the warrants of the debtors there were several Nemescsói gentlemen, one was Mihály Török. (3)

Whether this Mihály Török is the same as the one who, according to the data of the family tree in 1720, won the Nemescsói letter of respect or his father, I was not able to verify.

Most of Nemescsó's population in the XVIII century, followed the Lutheran religion, but the Török family was Roman Catholic. Since the village was at this time an 'ecumenical' place the Török family records were in the Roman Catholic parish records.

As I mentioned, a certain Mihály Török in 1720, with several noble families, were granted donations of parts of this place by King Károly III. (4)

Mihály Török's descendant was Ignác Török, whose family tree is included in the Annex 1. (5)

Mihály Török's son György (George) was a simple farmer but his eldest József was an educated man who lived in the nearby town of Kőszeg as an administrator.

Here, on February 8, 1767, he married Klára the daughter of Muraszombati János Koczor, the royal notary of the Duna district in Kőszeg.

From this marriage was born in August 1769 (I) Ignác, whom his father gave careful education to: In the 1781-1785 years he was a student of the Kőszeg Gymnasium under the leadership of the Jesuits leaving in 1785 with honours.

Ignác I at this time came from weaker circumstances but soon entered employment with Antal Grassalkovich III where he initially served as manager of the estate's grains (frumentarius) then as estate manager (rationalista dominialis) and finally as the treasurer (cassae perceptor dominialis) (8).

From there, in 1809, he was the property manager (Präfekt) of the Brudern Baron family from Hevesmegye.

Was probably married in 1794 his wife was Franciska Khorherr from a family from Pest.

Their first child was Ignác II born 1795, June 23 in Gödöllő.

About this birth, in the Catholic Parish Registry of Gödöllő, there is the following entry:

„1795. junius 23.

Nomen: Joannes, Ignatius.

Parentes: Ignatius Török. Francisca Khorherr.

Religio: catholica.

Conditio: frumentarius.

Levantes: Stephanus Mórícz, Barbara Adonyi.

Minister : Pater Auxentius.

Locus: Gödöllő (9).

(In Hungarian: Name: Ignác. The parents: Ignác Török, Franciscan Khorherr. Religion: Catholic
Occupation: Manager Grains, God Parents: István Moricz, Borbála Adonyi. Priest Baptizing: Pater
Auxentius. Location: Gödöllő.)

Ignác I. Török had seven children from his marriage to Khorherr Franciska. (10)

The little Ignác's first studies were at the elementary school of Gödöllő under the leadership of Pater Protasius. The mysteries of languages were introduced by József Niczky, a teacher who taught at this school from 1789 to 1816. (11)

No further records have been kept of this period.

The lower classes of the grammar school were probably carried out by Török Ignác in Gödöllő, as was customary at that time, under the guidance of a Latin teacher.

However, in the academic year 1807 / 1808, Török Ignác was a student at the Catholic High School in Buda (currently the Catholic Gymnasium in the 2nd District) in IV class.

These were some of the notes from this date:

13 years old, father estate manager (nobilis preceptor) for Principle Grassalkovich, lives in Gödöllő. The student's language skills are Hungarian, German and Latin. He lives in the Disztér number 72 in a house of lord Rischl.

Progress in the first semester:

Behaviour: first class.

Philosophy arguments learnt between 12 prominent and 6-minor.

Going to school: diligent.

Scholarship: none

In the 2nd half of the year: the same, with reference amongst 23 students he was 3rd.

This year, Antal Török, who was 11 also attended the same grammar school.

In the autumn of 1808 Ignác Török changed school and was admitted into the Piarist Fathers High School in Pest.

The director of this school was then Aigl Glicer and Török's class teacher was Ignác Horváth a Piarist father.

He was a first class student of "humanities", which corresponds to the V class of today's high school. Török was ranked among the best students where he occupied the 11th place amongst 89 companions.

According to the school records he lived at 520 Salértom Street maybe with relatives and had a private tutor a certain Antal Lilien who received accommodation for his teaching.

The II semester entry: Ignatius Török semester was interrupted "(12).

This year, his father moved to Hevesmegye and became an employee of the Barron Brudern family and his children changed schools.

We meet the name of the Török family in Gödöllő for the last time in the year 1809: in May 16th Ignác Török is recorded in the Catholic Parish registry of Gödöllő as a godfather (13).

In the spring of the year 1809 Ignác Török was in the "humanitas" first class at the high school in Gyöngyös under the order of St. Francis. The first group showing the awards issued at the end of the school year bears the name "Eminentes". In this section the following note appears when referring to him: 2 Ignác Török. s. t. p., "ie" subiiit tentamen publicum, in Hungarian "endorsed as a public examination"

The second, narrower column heading is: "Ex D. R." Here is the entry for Ignác Török "e. 3." This is explained by "Ex doctrina Romana" i.e. "Catholic". Indeed, at this time religion among all the subjects taught was specially emphasized in the ranking of merit in that the students were ranked separately.

In 1809 Ignác Török completed the "humanitas" second class in Gyöngyös. His entries are as follows: in the "Eminentes (distinguished)" box, Ignác Török s. t. p. "the "Ex D.C." heading in the narrower box, "e. 1."

Thus, Ignác Török in his second class of "humanitas", which corresponds to today's V and VI high school he was always in second place in religion, he was third in the first year and in the second year the first (14).

In this year, Ignác Török completed his high school studies. In the first half of the next year, his biographical data are missing, but in the autumn his heart's desire was fulfilled in that on September 26, 1811 he was admitted to the Royal Emperor's Engineering Academy.

II. Chapter.

The Emperor's Royal Engineering Academy.
Ignác Török's study years

III. Chapter.

Ignác Török's service as a military Engineer.
The years as a guard.

IV. Chapter.

The beginning of the freedom fight.
Ignác Török at Komárom as director in fortifying the castle.
Events leading to completion of fortification

V. Chapter.

Conditions in the castle. Ignác Török becomes commander.
The leaders' assessment of Ignác Török.

VI. Chapter.

The siege of Komárom. The Austrian efforts.
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VII. Chapter.

General Török as chief of Defence Engineers.
Activities in Buda, Esztergom, Szeged and Arad.

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When our Heroic Army laid down their arms on 13th of August, Ignác Török, along with the other generals, was captured by the Russians who initially treated the heroes with respect. This was expressed, among other things, by the fact that our leaders, including Ignác Török were dinner guests of Cavalry General Rüdiger at Kisjenő, on August 14. However, this distinguishing trust did not last long because the Russians were shortly forced to hand the prisoners over to their Austrian counterparts.

VIII. Chapter.

In the Arad Castle prison. The military tribunal, process and verdict.
Ignác Török's martyr death at the 'Golgotha' of Arad.

The Russians took the freedom fighter prisoners from Kisjenő to Békés Ggyula, where they were handed over to the Austrians who in turn took them to Arad.

Here most of the officers were placed in the castle's chambers, but the generals were placed in the castle's guard towers. General Török was placed in rooms numbered 63-64.

On the order of Baron Haynau the Camp Major, the army court proceedings against the leaders of the War of Independence were divided into three groups. General Török was allotted to the third group.

The head of the Military Tribunal was Chief Justice Ernst who was responsible for the conduct of the trial.

The accusation against all the generals was high treason and disloyalty; in the case against General Török the charges included the reinforcement and defence of Komárom, and the construction of the ramparts in Esztergom and Szeged.

His actions of remaining in the service of the 'mutineers' even after the declaration of independence strengthened the charges against him.

General Török's first interrogation took place on 26th August and 14th September.

Just like his life - noble, simple and unselfish - so was his confession before the army court.

He did not protect himself, did not embellish his actions but accepted his decisions emphasizing that as a Hungarian man he could not have acted differently until his last breath.

With this confession, his fate which might have been already decided by Windischgratz's order on March 13, and which could only have been overturned by a betrayal of the freedom fight was permanently sealed.

The prosecution's written case made by the chief army Justice Ernst confirmed all the actions described above.

On the basis of the accusation, the General Court on Sept. 26 brought a verdict which included losing his rank in the Emperor's Royal Army, losing his pension and worldly possessions and culminating by his death by rope. (94)

According to one of his biographers, when he wanted to have a say in the fate of his small possessions Zimmer Chief Judge cried out "he cannot even have a say of what will become of his body."

When the General wanted to talk, on the command of the Army Judge, "a soldier hit the elderly hero in the back with such force that he collapsed" (95).

The Haynau-approved the death sentence and this was relayed to the Arad Castle on October 4th and was proclaimed the next day in front of all the heroic generals.

The generals who were sentenced to death were however were not denied the last consoling of their souls. On October 5th, Eusztách Szujánszky a Minorita (Franciscan) priest came to Ignác Török to prepare the heroic martyr for his last journey.

When the modest monk entered the transformed sorrowful prison room, Ignác Török was reading calmly the work of Vauban, (French military engineer), the father of fortifications.

"Have you heard any news from Komárom?" - this was his first question from the spiritual father - and when he heard that Hungary's last hope was on the verge of conquest, he sighed:

"Well, then I fortified it in vain" (96).

Our Heroes spent the night of October 5 and the dawn of the 6th in their makeshift prison rooms.

Mercy they do not expect - what they did was in full awareness of their responsibilities. They already knew that death was waiting for them, but they also knew that there is a resurrection from every death, and the nation will sooner or later rise from its death...

On the day before the execution, the hearts of the judges softened and they allowed the heroes to say goodbye to their loved ones.

But nobody came to Ignác Török.

He was alone with his thoughts; this is how he said goodbye to his life, devoted to his work.

At this time, the past flashes across his mind's eye and sees once more: the enthusiastic young Hungarian boy who enters the Austrian army and creates a good career there, an army engineer and a Hungarian patriot who resigns from this future in the Emperor's Royal Army because his homeland is more sacred to him than his oath to the emperor.

He remembers his work in Komárom and feels that, besides the strength of the present commander of the castle, General Klapka and the courage of the defence, it is largely to his merit that the fortification works of this castle had made it possible to endure resistance for so long.

This is how the day of the 6th day of October broke.

In the early hours of the dawn, Sándor Bardócz Minorita priest appeared, with whom he eagerly made his last reconciliation and received Holy Communion.

The general spoke little to Bardócz: he told him that his brother was living in Buda asked that his watch and letter be given to him for remembrance.

On a Saturday overcast autumn morning the heroes started towards their fateful place. General Ignác Török was accompanied by Sándor Bardócz on his last trip.

At the Hungarian Golgotha, in a matter of a few tragic minutes the last struggle of our nation was concluded.

Ignác Török became the second, amongst nine of his comrades, to stand under the beech tree, to take his last testimony of the unbreakable love for his homeland with the death of his martyrdom. His cold body hung there on the beech tree together with his companions till evening and was buried on the spot. Unfortunately, the exact place where their glorious corpses were laid to rest is no longer detectable. (98)

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Summary by Author

I have thus completed the account of General Török's life.

I just want to say that a number of biographies have already been written but they have only been very brief and rather focused on externalities on which I did not elaborate.

According to these, Ignác Török was tall, friendly with a winning manner with excellent military expertise who, however, did not have the necessary physical strength to be able to stand out in times of physical crisis like that experienced in Komárom castle in the years 1848-1849.

It may have been that some of the papers amongst the many documents about the War of Independence had excerpts that were not always absolutist in a historical sense.

Let us not forget that "the history of the Hungarian nation has hardly had any epoch and outstanding event, that did not have so many falsehoods, inaccuracy and untruthfulness like our 1848-49 year Hungarian War of Independence. The historical documents that came to light have convincingly proved that the early writings about the 1848 War of Independence were, in a good part by those who continued to benefit from the Empire." (99).

This is how it may have happened that some of the chronicles sometimes wrote superficially and in a one-sided manner about the role of Ignác Török.

However, we can testify that in every aspect of Ignác Török's life he performed in an exemplary manner.

As a high school student and as a student of the engineering academy he was always ranked among the best.

As an officer of the Army Engineering Corps and a member of the Hungarian Noble Bodyguard, who later became Chief Executive under General Lord János, he was well suited in every position and earned the satisfaction of his superiors at all times.

As far as his freedom fight actions are concerned, I can safely say that although I did not hide any facts I discovered I managed to investigate some that were biased and able to show that General Ignác Török, when his homeland called for his sword and his technical knowledge he honourably carried out his duty.

He did not win battles, did not fight as a lion as other generals of the War of Independence, but as commander of Komárom's castle, although, according to the concept of that time, he was an army engineer and only secondly a soldier he stood his ground successfully.

He proudly rejected all temptations and reproaches made by those who wanted him to ignore his feelings for his Hungarian Homeland: he was everywhere he was needed, he responded outstandingly where his threatened homeland needed an army engineer.

But his greatest and ambitious work was on the Komárom Castle, which was made impregnable and contributed with pride to the inscription on the castle which was "Nec arte, nec marte" (Without tricks but with strength) and which was validated throughout our struggle for freedom.

Ignác Török was a model of the ideal Hungarian officer in peace and war, who finally sealed his faithful attachment to his country with his own death as a martyr.

We honour his great name, which is now inscribed with non-erasable letters in the golden book of the history of the Hungarian nation.



"Nec arte, nec marte"

Nemescsói Török Ignác családfája.

