



LUDOVIKA
MAIN BUILDING





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“As all states and orders had been discussing the defence of the nation, with their counseleth expanded to not only present but coming ages alike; and with the purpose of sons and descendants being able to fight for ancient constitution and majestic ruling house with not only force but with science as well: moved by their deep respect and admiration for His Majesty and their allegiance to the nation, they have gathered a considerable fund for the establishment of a national military academy and the development of military sciences in the country. With their strivings supported by the superb generosity of her empress and queen consort, His Holy Majesty, our most gracious king hath auspiciously granted the desire of the states and orders, and avoiding any delay in the establishment of this utter expedient institution, hath donated the former Theresa building in Vác for the location of the military academy; thus the states and orders assembling around His Majesty and expressing their grateful and reverent heart, have requested that as a record of Her Majesty’s love towards the Hungarian nation, the academy should bear the name Ludovika.”

(Act VII of 1808 on the Ludovika Military Academy)





HISTORICAL BACKGROUND



The National Assembly decided to establish the Royal Hungarian Ludovika Military Academy through Act VII of 1808. Maria Ludovika Beatrix of Austria-Este, third spouse of Francis I., donated her coronation gift of 50,000 Hungarian Forints (which at today's standards is nearly 670-830,000 Euros) to the project, a contribution honoured in the entrepreneurs by naming the institution Ludovika Academy.



The training of military officers in the Hungarian language united the entire nation. An unprecedented wave of public donations began, resulting in a sum of financial contributions that was more than four times larger than the one for the establishment of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. Altogether 995,100 Hungarian Forints were offered for this purpose which at today's standards is equivalent to about 13 million Euros. A separate legal act included the names of the 237 donators not only consisting of individuals but of religious communities and counties as well. This noble gesture was commemorated in the set of the coat of arms displayed in the quadrangle of the building. The cornerstone of the building was laid in 1830 by Archduke Joseph, Palatine of Hungary at the time whereas the constructions – based on the plans of Mihály Pollack classical architect – were finished in 1836.

However, the actual training of military officers could not begin, as the emperor's cabinet and military council continually set various barriers in the way of the Ludoviceum's operation. The building was empty for years, serving various purposes, like providing shelter for the people fleeing from the great flood of the Danube in 1838, as well as for the priceless collections of the National Museum.

Eventually, military education was first organized at Ludovika during the 1848–49 revolution and war of independence. The Hungarian Military Academy held its ceremonial opening on the 7th of January 1849 with its operation being banned 10 days later by the imperial military authorities occupying Pest-Buda, impounding the academy's equipment and turning the building into a military hospital.

The training of the officers of the Royal Hungarian Army, established in accordance with the act on defence forces, was approved after the compromise between Vienna and Pest-Buda in 1867. As a result, the Ludovika Academy began its actual operation in 1872, and was a higher educational institution equally acknowledged as the Theresian Military Academy in Wiener Neustadt, Austria. From this point on the cadets were trained by the best contemporary officers of the Hungarian armed forces.

After World War I and in accordance with the prohibitions of the Treaty of Trianon, the academy remained the single institution of officer training in Hungary. It was divided into two academic divisions, thereby separating infantry and engineer training. The Bolyai János Royal Military Engineering Academy continued its operation in Hűvösvölgy. With the training of air force officers positioned at the Horthy Miklós (after 1942 the Horthy István) Royal Air Force Academy in Kassa in 1939, the training of Hungarian professional military officers was carried out on three separate locations.

The final traditional officer (first lieutenant) inauguration ceremony at Ludovika was held on the 20th of August 1943 with the institution ending its operation on the 25th of April 1945. For decades afterwards, the building gave home to the departments of the Eötvös Loránd University's Faculty of Science as well as to the Hungarian Natural History Museum which had been scattered around various locations. In the meantime, however, the condition of the building continuously deteriorated.





BEHIND THE RENOVATION



In May 2012 the Government of Hungary decided to renovate the historical building complex at Ludovika as well as to renew the neighbouring Orczy Park with the aim of providing an integrated and worthy location for the Ludovika–University of Public Service. In order to further accelerate the constructions, the Government declared the related administrative proceedings as highly important for national economic reasons.

The Ludovika Campus Project began with the reconstruction of the classicist main building for which the Government allocated a budget of 4.5 billion Hungarian Forints. The renovations were concluded by spring 2014, and the building was inaugurated and handed over to the Ludovika–University of Public Service by Prime Minister Viktor Orbán on the 31st of March 2014. The main building is the home of the leadership and central administration of the university, as well as the Faculty of International and European Studies with the students having access to up-to-date lecture rooms, community areas, a library with hard and digital copies and a buffet. With the compelling premises such as the Assembly Hall and the University Chapel having welcomed several esteemed events, the former Royal Hungarian Military Academy has regained its long-lost shine and has become the meeting point of historical past and 21st century technologies.

Trivia

- the building has electronic wires with the total length of 200 kilometres;
- an average of 400 people a day worked on the restoration which required more than 800,000 working hours;
- the stained glass windows in the University Chapel were assembled from more than 4 kilometres of lead rails and 2,000 pieces of glass;
- the library has a storage capacity of more than 200,000 books. This means that the total length of the library shelves is more than 10 kilometres. If we pile these on top of each-other, it would be 10 times taller than the House of Parliament (which is 96 metres high);
- about 32,000 square metres – that is more than 3 acres – of plaster was used throughout the reconstruction;
- the painting of the building was done on approximately 50,000 square metres that is nearly 5 acres;
- architect Mihály Pollack used 4,813,818 pieces of bricks to build the Academy. This was equivalent to the one year production capacity of the brick factory in Buda, the other part of the capital.



FRONTISPIECE AND SENTRY BOX



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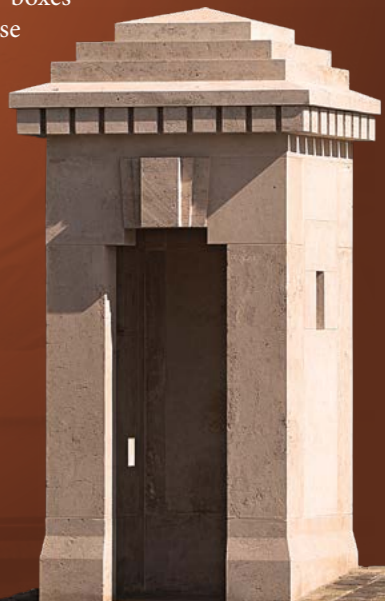
Frontispiece

All of Ludovika's original purposes are clearly symbolized in the elements of the main building's frontispiece. The classicist pillars display Mars, the god of war in Roman mythology, whereas the top of the pillars end in lion heads and war helmets. Similarly, the puttoes sitting above the windows holding swords also express the purpose of the building.

The ornaments of the frontispiece became visible again only after the building's renovation. As a result of the project, the Holy Crown regained its place on the top of the coat of arms of historical Hungary within the tympanum as well as the writing "M. K. Honvéd Ludovika Akadémia" (Royal Hungarian Ludovika Military Academy) in addition to the name of the Ludovika–University of Public Service.

Sentry Box

Archive pictures show that there had been two sentry boxes on the two sides of the building, although these components were completely missing at the beginning of the renovation. Based on the aforementioned pictures, new sentry boxes were made out of stone and will have guards of honour in them.



LUDOVIKA MEMORIAL



You are here

The memorial in the corner of the stairway used to be located in front of the main entrance commemorating the 100th year anniversary of the laying of the foundation stone. On top of the triptych-like memorial there is the bust of Maria Ludovika with a plaque in the middle in-between cadets on the left and on the right from 1848 and 1930 respectively, both of them saluting the queen consort with their guns. After 1945 the memorial was removed from the entrance and was set in its current position with the bust of Ludovika exchanged to the bust of Lajos Kossuth. The latter modification was undone during the renovation process, although the memorial remained in the corner of the stairway.



SZÉCHENYI ASSEMBLY HALL



You are here

The original blueprints of the Ludovika Academy did not include an assembly hall which was incorporated in 1872, according to the plans of architect István Linzbauer through the removal of the cover. Under the ceiling, a row of head statues of Hungarian rulers encircle the hall. Although some of them were missing before the renovation, all of them were recovered in the project. Several layers of painting were removed making the details of the statues, including the names of the respective figures visible. Archive photographs showed the chandelier, the hall's main ornament which was also missing when the renovation started. As it turned out, the chandelier had been set aside in the basement for decades and was found in horrible shape. Nevertheless, after careful restoration, the more than half a ton chandelier with its 1,7 meter breadth and more than 4,000 pieces, once again illuminates the Assembly Hall in its original place 6,5 meters high in the middle of the hall.

On the occasion of the 225th anniversary of the birthday of Count István Széchenyi, on 21 September 2016 the most compelling part of the Ludovika main building was named Széchenyi Hall. Through the generosity of the Hungarian National Museum, the institution pays tribute to the Széchenyi Family with two portraits: one depicts Ferenc Széchenyi (*Portrait of Ferenc Széchenyi by Johann Ender, 1823*) who was one of the greatest donators to the Ludovika Academy, the other portrays István Széchenyi (*Image of Count István Széchenyi by Miklós Barabás, 1867*) who was not only the Greatest Hungarian but a true public servant, a worthy idol for university citizens as well.

QUADRANGLE



You are here

Coat of arms

Standing in the quadrangle of the Ludovika Academy, the first home of Hungarian military officer training, the spectator is surrounded by the coat of arms of the former counties of Hungary. Initially, only those counties were displayed that paid their financial contribution to the constructions. Later, however, the set became all inclusive with the coat of arms of all 63 counties jointly reminding on the *donations of the public* for the *service of the public*.

Those with keen eyes for detail may discover that the coat of arms of Fiume (Rijeka) is missing from the wall. The 64th county is left out, as Fiume did not belong to Hungary during the constructions of the Ludovika Academy.



Crosses

Right before the entrance of the Hallway of Heroes, the quadrangle has a **R**sinked red memorial plaque with three cross-shaped inlays. The three crosses symbolize the places of three gallows: they commemorate the martyrs Gáspár Noszlopy, Károly Jubál and Kilián Gasparics who – after being held captive in the building's basement – were executed on the 3rd of March 1853 for plotting an assassination attempt against Emperor Franz Joseph.

ST. LADISLAUS CHAPEL



You are here

The former Catholic chapel was first consecrated in 1883. Its most glorious days, however, began in 1918 when the building was consecrated again and the chapel being provided with an organ, two large confessionals and two holy water fonts made out of marble. After 1945 the chapel was used as a library and as a storeroom for pieces of furniture while often being a place for shooting movies. Consequently, its original beauty and purpose was lost. The chapel received a full-scale restoration throughout the renovation of the building with its stained glass windows being re-manufactured according to archive pictures. The windows display King Saint Stephen and King Saint Ladislaus along with the university's motto "In service of the nation". The chapel was re-consecrated during an ecumenical worship service by the heads of the military chaplains.

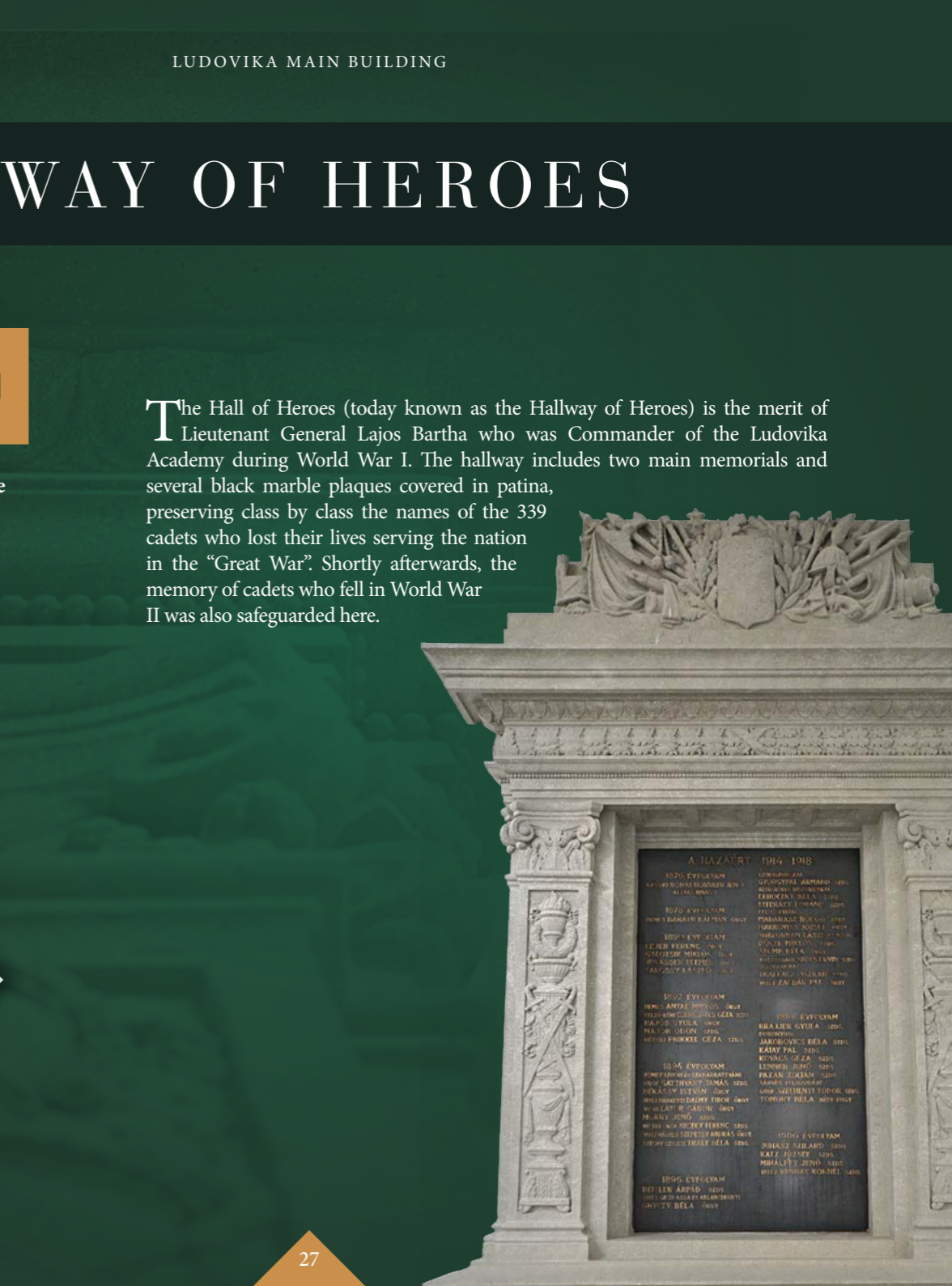


HALLWAY OF HEROES



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The Hall of Heroes (today known as the Hallway of Heroes) is the merit of Lieutenant General Lajos Bartha who was Commander of the Ludovika Academy during World War I. The hallway includes two main memorials and several black marble plaques covered in patina, preserving class by class the names of the 339 cadets who lost their lives serving the nation in the “Great War”. Shortly afterwards, the memory of cadets who fell in World War II was also safeguarded here.



MUSEUM



You are here

The southern wing of the building has a museum providing a home for an exhibition focusing on the history of the university and the Ludovika Academy. Apart from some relics of the historical Ludovika Academy and artifacts and documents of the predecessor institutions of the university, there are displayed pieces of the building that were recovered during the reconstruction and could not be fully repaired, such as the original frames of doors and windows as well as the chapel's stained glass windows that were badly damaged during World War II.



ORCZY PARK



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Behind the main building lies the Orczy Park which has always been a popular green area of the district, it is one of the largest public park in the heart of Budapest. Due to the Ludovika Campus Projekt this area have been fully renewed. The formerly 26 acre park has been enlarged with additional green areas and includes a multifunctional sport centre, a swimming pool, a shooting ground and several fields for outdoor sports. During reconstruction the historical stables have also been renovated, so a new riding hall provides an opportunity for recommencing horse training. There are also two new playgrounds, an adventure park and a boating lake in the park.





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