

In 1989 about 77,000 troops served in the ground forces (commonly referred to as the army), and about 45,000 of them were conscripts. As in other Warsaw Pact armed forces, the army was by far the largest service.

The reorganization of the HPA, still under way in 1989, attempted to transform its overall structure from one army and one corps possessing one tank and five motorized rifle divisions into three corps with a combined total of five tank brigades and ten motorized rifle brigades. This reorganization set the HPA apart from the other armies of the Warsaw Pact, which were still primarily divided into divisions and regiments. The leadership of the HPA believed the reorganization would make the armed forces more efficient by reducing the number of commands by about one-third .

In the late 1980s, the central headquarters of the HPA was in Szekesfehervar, with the three corps headquartered in Tata, Kaposvar, and Cegled, respectively. Each

corps consisted of five brigades subdivided into battalions, including an independent artillery battalion and an engineering battalion. The largest corps, centered in Tata, possessed three tank brigades and two motorized rifle brigades. The two other corps each had one tank brigade and four motorized rifle brigades. The corps stationed in Cegled was a skeleton unit. The three corps together possessed three SA-6 surface-to-air missile (SAM) regiments.

In addition to the three corps and fifteen tank and motorized rifle brigades, the HPA possessed independent artillery and Scud surface-to-surface missile brigades, as well as an airborne battalion (the thirty-seventh, stationed in Szolnok). An antitank regiment, an anti-aircraft artillery regiment, and an SA-4 SAM regiment were still likewise army, and not corps, troops. Independent engineering battalions were used for rail and roadway repairs, construction projects, and maintenance and repair of telephone and power lines.

In 1988 the Danube Flotilla, incorporated into the army in 1968, consisted of 700 men and eighty-two vessels, including ten Nestin MSI (riverine) boats. During wartime its chief functions would be to clear the Danube and Tisza rivers of mines and to assist the army and its materiel in river crossings.

In 1988 the army possessed 1,200 T-54 and T-55 battle tanks. The Soviet Union has been producing these tanks since 1945, but some have been built as recently as 1979, and many have been upgraded with infrared night-vision systems and laser rangefinders . The HPA also had about 100 T-72s, a model that appeared in Soviet units in the early 1970s and began to be seen in Warsaw Pact armies about 1980. Hungary also possessed about 100 PT-76 light tanks.

The HPA's artillery inventory in 1988 included 225 M-1938 (122mm) and 50 M-1943 or D-1 (152mm) howitzers and 100 D-20 (152mm) gun howitzers. It also included 90 2S1 (122mm) and 20 2S3 (152mm) self-

propelled guns and 100 M-43 (120mm) mortars. The HPA had fifty BM-21 (122mm) multiple-rocket launchers and twenty-four Frog-7 and Frog-9 Scud surface-to-surface missile launchers. Antitank defense consisted of 100 AT-3 Sagger (including BRDM-2 self-propelled) and 100 AT-4 Spigot antitank guided weapons, 125 SPG-9 (73mm) recoilless launchers, and 100 D-44 (85mm) and 50 D12 (100mm) antitank guns. Air defense weaponry consisted of 80 S60 (57mm) towed anti-aircraft guns, 50 ZSU-4 SP (23mm) self-propelled anti-aircraft guns; and 30 SA-4, 60 SA-6, 350 SA-7, and 50 SA-9 SAMs.

Reconnaissance units in the HPA possessed an estimated 300 BRDM-2 and 400 Hungarian-produced FUG-65 (OT-65) scout vehicles. Motorized infantry units were equipped with 350 BMP-1 infantry combat vehicles and 1,000 Hungarian-produced PSz-H-IV (FUG-70) armored personnel carriers. The PSz-H-IV had been in service since 1983, but production was discontinued; it was to be replaced by

Soviet BMP-1 tracked mechanized infantry combat vehicles.

In the late 1980s, the HPA used as its standard infantry weapon the Kalashnikov 7.62mm AKM assault rifle and its 7.62mm AMD-65 version with a folding stock. The 7.62mm RPK and RPD light machine guns were also in service. As of mid-1988, the armed forces planned to convert to the new standard Soviet 5.45mm weapons, but the actual conversion had not yet begun.

The HPA imported most of its ground forces weaponry from the Soviet Union. Domestic industry supplied only a small portion of the army's needs, such as small-caliber weapons (pistols, rifles, and machine guns), some types of artillery pieces, and ammunition.

In 1988 the HPA's stock of road transport vehicles consisted mostly of Hungarian-produced heavy-duty D-566 trucks, Soviet GAS69 and UAZ-69 trucks, and East German Robur LO-1800 trucks. Soviet Ural-

355 and ZIL-131 trucks had just been introduced into service.

Engineering equipment included PMP heavy pontoon bridges, GSP ferries, K-61 and PTS amphibious vehicles, T-54 MTUs, MT55s, and TMM truck-mounted bridging units to build shorter spans. Hungary built bridging equipment under license from the Soviet Union, Czechoslovakia, and East Germany. Signal troops used Hungarianmade and Soviet-made equipment.

The HPA's engineering and construction corps were considered top notch among the Warsaw Pact countries for their excellent support of amphibious operations. Even Western analysts have called this contribution Hungary's most important one to Warsaw Pact defense. If engineering was the strongest component of the HPA, logistics was its weakest. Only the regular army was trained in logistics and provided with means of transportation. In a war, the underequipped units would have few

logisticians and an insufficient number of vehicles.

In August 1989, the Ministry of Defense disbanded an armored brigade of about 2,000 officers and enlisted men stationed in Szabadszallas in Bacs-Kiskun County as part of a planned 9 percent reduction of troops and arms in the army scheduled for 1989 and 1990. Most of the heavy weaponry at the site was scheduled to be melted down.

*Data as of September 1989*

NOTE: The information regarding Hungary on this page is re-published from The Library of Congress Country Studies and the CIA World Factbook. No claims are made regarding the accuracy of Hungary Ground Forces information contained here. All suggestions for corrections of any errors about Hungary Ground Forces should be addressed to the Library of Congress and the CIA.