

COMMANDER VICTOR (NIȚĂ) VOINESCU – FROM A HERO TO AN AMERICAN AGENT

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One of the greatest figures of the Romanian Royal Navy was the commander Victor (Niță) Voinescu. First commander of the "delfin"¹ submarine, Commander Voinescu was both a moral and a professional reference for generations of navy officers. By this article, we bring him a tribute, regretting that his name is unfortunately omitted from the monumental work "The Romanian Army in the Second World War 1941-1945"².

Commander Voinescu deserves our gratitude even more since, after the installation of the communist regime, the intelligence services are constantly investigating him for his "reactionary" attitude, as you will see in a document of Security that we publish for the first time. The life of the legendary commander Voinescu should be examined by military historians in detail, because the Romanian Navy has what to be proud of.

Keywords: Commander Voinescu; Romanian Navy; american agent; Romanian Army; Ministry of War.

"A good and reliable officer at sea"

Though his life might fill up a few tomes, we are forced, due to the lack of space, to be content with a fiche made by Commander Marian Moșneagu, Chief of the Army History Service, a reputed naval historian who published the monumental "Dictionary of Romanian Mariners"³.

Voinescu, St. Victor, commander (b.: May 2/15 May 1900, Ploiești – d: ?). Parents: Eufrosina and Stefan Voinescu. Studies: He graduated primary school in his hometown, Military High School in Dealu Monastery (1918), Artillery School, Genius and Marine School (July 1, 1920), Navy School of Applications (1922), submarine specialization in the Italian fleet (1927), the Upper School of War (November 6, 1935), the Naval War School of Paris (1937), graduated as an "excellent officer" and appreciated by the commander of the High Naval Studies School and Center, the Vice Admiral Odend'hal, as a "calm and well-balanced officer, who already possesses the basic elements and has approached all the tactical problems in depth. Very good officer."

Grades: Ensign (May 1, 1920), Lieutenant (May 1, 1924), Captain (May 10, 1930), Lieutenant Commander (March 31, 1938).

Career: On August 1, 1920, he was assigned to the Canonical Division. After a brief activity in the

Danube Division, on October 13, 1921, he began the Navy School of Application, demonstrating that "he has a fair and solid reasoning based on beautiful theoretical knowledge." After graduating from the School of Application, he was assigned as an officer with torpedoes on the destroyer Mărăști and subsequently Mărășești.

On 1 June 1924, he was appointed commander of the rapid speedboat of safety no. 4 Maior Giurescu. On March 5, 1928, he was appointed to the Romanian Naval Inspection Commission of the Fiume yard, responsible for the construction of the base-ship and the submarine DELFINUL, respectively for the fitting of the tubes for torpedoes. "He promises to become an exceptional sailor and commander. It is worthwhile to choose him. He succeeded in controlling the execution of launch-torpedo tubes at the submarine. He is a very good officer and an asset to the institution.", said the chairman of the commission, Commander Gheorghe Koslinski. In November-December 1931, he worked as a member of Delfin submarine reception committee.

At the end of 1931 he returned to the country. By Note St. M. M. no. 1734/1932, at the beginning of 1932, he was appointed member of the Commission of Regulations and Manuals, which operated alongside the Navy General Inspectorate. In 1934 he was admitted to the Upper School of War, where he was rated "among the best elements in the classroom." On 25 July 1935, he was appointed to the submarine reception committee. Embarked on the base-ship Constanta, together with the

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students of the Naval School, he participated in all the submarine reception tests, returning to the country on December 5, 1935. Through the decree no. 2154 of September 19, 1935, starting with October 1, 1935, was appointed commander of the first Romanian submarine Delfinul.

In January 1936, he sailed on the base ship, along with the entire crew now under his command, to Fiume, where he conducted the facility's practical assimilation program of the submarine, helped by officers and engineers in the works supervision committee. On May 9, 1936, the solemnity of the raising the Romanian pavilion aboard the submarine Delfinul took place in Fiume harbor. In his speech, Rear Admiral Victor Schmidt, representative of the Romanian Royal Navy, said: "I entrust you this pavilion destined to wave on top of the first submarine of the Romanian Navy. You will lead it with dignity and honor to the glory of the country and the Romanian people, and when the hour of supreme sacrifice comes, you will defend it to the last drop of blood." On June 27, the submarine arrived 5 miles south of the Tuzla lighthouse, where it was greeted by the destroyer Regina Maria and Navy commander, Vice-Admiral Ioan Bălănescu.

"Captain Voinescu will be the commander of our first submarine, where there is much hope in the formation of future submarine sailors. In the reception committee, he worked intensely and with sufficient independence to prove the qualities of the submarine that he commanded", predicted the Commodore Petre Bărbuceanu, the Commander of the Great Division.

"He worked a lot with a lot of technical skill in the Reception Commission, trying to make sure that the submarine corresponds to his missions. He is a reliable commander", said the Navy commander, Vice-Admiral Ioan Bălănescu.

In 1939, he was patented as a major state officer and officer of the Romanian Military Navy. He was the Chairman of the Diesel and Electric Engines Reception Commission, bought from Germany in 1939 for the construction of the two submarines built in the Galati Shipyard. In the second half of 1939, he was sent to England as President of the Commission for the reception of the three Vosper torpedoes. On this occasion, since November 1, he received the "Whitehead" model torpedoes needed for the stars. "He puts a lot of soul into service, especially dealing with the Submarine and Rapid

Star Groups. A good and reliable officer at sea.", said the commander of the Military Navy, Vice-Admiral Petre Barbuneanu.

In the first part of the war, he was the head of the Submarine and Torpedoing Group because since on July 23, 1944, he was disciplined to move to the Țândărei Fluvial Deposits, subordinated to C.F.F.I. Between 1942 and 1943 he was the Chairman of the Commission for the reception of the torpedo stars and led the Commission for receiving the Marsuinul and Rechinul submarines, built in Galați.

Between September 13 and October 20, 1943, he was sent to Turkey to prepare the Transilvania and Basarabia motor vessels, which were to be brought to the country and to be converted into auxiliary cruisers and used on the East Front at the imperial demands of the Germans of ASM.

Whereas he delayed the operation, the German Military Mission accused him of sabotage and ordered his investigation and punishment. By a resolution of the Romanian Ministry of War, he was sent to the Honor Council, but it was found that "the measures taken against the officer as a result of this reference remain the finding that the officer's behavior was wrong."

Distinctions / decorations: "The Crown of Romania" in the rank of knight (H. R. D No. 7306/1931), "1916-1918 Commemorative Cross", without bears (1932), Commemorative Medal "King Carol II", class II (August 15, 1936, Patent No. 68 of August 15, 1936).

By H. R. D. no. 1768 on October 3, 1944, was awarded with the Mihai Viteazul Order "Third Grade" "for the courage, the cold blood and the capacity with which he ruled the destroyer KING FERDINAND and the Torpedo Stars Group. During operations with the Speedboats Group, he attacked a submarine in the Mangalia region and, in operations against enemy naval forces blocking Odessa, he managed (against the much higher enemy force) to attack with the torpedoes and surrender to save the situation of his ships. On December 1, 1941, he comes to help the destroyer Regina Maria to repel submarine attacks and to submerge a submarine.

"On December 16, 1941, the enemy submarines counterattacked the convoy and sank a submarine through daring maneuvers and attack. During 32 missions, crossing over 7,000 miles between Constanța South-Odessa and Bosphorus, through

mined areas under the control of the enemy, faced with submarine attacks, managing by maneuverability and the impetuosity of his counterattacks to save the ship and speedboats under his command and leading to the glory the ship and the crew"²⁴.

After 23 August 1944, "anti-soviet, anti-democratic and anti-governmental activity"

Almost naturally, we could say after the Communist regime was in power, Commander Victor Voinescu came into the sight of the Romanian intelligence services controlled by the Soviets. We publish below a document from the Commander's Tracking (Informative) File.

Dos. S.S.I. 0145 Tabs 4, 5 and 6⁴

April 21, 1948

"Commander Voinescu Victor, born on 15.05.1900 in Ploiesti, son of Ștefan and Eufrosina, residing in Craiova.

Married to Ecaterina Paula, of Greek ethnicity; they have no children.

He studied the Upper School of War in France and Upper School of Submarine in Italy.

Class of July 1, 1920, "Good" qualification upon the graduation diploma.

The right to become state officer was obtained in France.

He was part of the following units and had the functions shown below:

Command. Of Naval Forces – Navy General Staff

Department of Transportation – General Staff Officer

Upper School of War – Subdirector

Commander of the Destroyer King Ferdinand I

Commander of the Submarines and Torpedoes Training Center

Major Division – Chief of Staff

Commander of the Submarines and Torpedoes Speedboats

Maritime Forces Command – Chief of Staff

From a professional point of view, he is qualified as a good navy officer, good shipmaster and good organizer.

In terms of morality, he has certain drawbacks which may impede on his professional value.

For the way he exploited a vegetable garden of the Maritime warehouse, he was punished with a disciplinary move and 30 days of arrest.

He is bawdy, taking great care generally speaking because he cares much about what can be said about his person.

He has the desire for high functions, it makes him use any possible means, only to be in a good situation. He is the indifferent type, the sort of man who does not care too much about nature and who does not care much about the affairs of the service, either.

In the eastern campaign, he took part in Black Sea naval operations as shipmaster (destroyer) for which he was rewarded by the Germans with the German Eagle Cls. I and the Iron Cross Cls. I and II.

Regarding his political ideas, Commander Voinescu had the cult of good relations with all political parties."

After August 23, 1944, he conducted a reactionary activity based on the influence he had on the Officers and especially on the young ones, being a good orator with the gift of persuasion. He is a member of the group C. Admiral Roman August, C-Dor Niculaescu C-tin, C-Dor Eng. Dimitriu Traian and Commander Mocanu Gheorghe, who, for their anti-soviet, antidemocratic and anti-governmental activity, were all put on unlimited leave on 25.10.1945 by the Minister of War. From the date of leave, Voinescu went even more actively to action, seeking by various warnings to intimidate officers who started on a democratic line.

He is part of the Romanian Royal Club Yacht together with the entire group above, seeking to polarize as many Navy officers as civilians and officers from other branches. On June 14, 1946, several Navy officers, including Voinescu Victor, for their antidemocratic beliefs, made propaganda statements among young officers, asserting that the Royal Navy will receive war vessels from Anglo-Americans and those who want to oppose the current spirit of today's naval command, will receive ship orders and other promises in the future. On June 17, 1946, Col. Voinescu V. went on with his propaganda in Constanta, where he has his agents and he contacted C-dor Ghezzo Eduard, formerly involved in the vegetables garden business of the Command and material storehouses, in whose house Commander C. Hristu, C-dor Simionescu Gh. and Lieutenant Marghilotu lived and were also contacted.

He has frequent meetings at his home, where he invites the navy officers and especially the young ones to whom he recommends continued

resistance, dividing them into new ministries, and telling them that soon the war will start and the country will be saved from the Soviet corps and the traitor government. On July 6, 1946, he visited the Martial Court Military Prosecutor's Office, where he presented his case at S. S. of the Navy on May 20, 1946, and asked the instructor prosecutor, with a commanding air, to let him see the people involved referring to them with the words "my boys".

He is also active in the meetings of the Academy of Sciences (Negreanu Amphitheater), at Military Sciences Department, where, on November 27, 1946, he held a conference seeking to show the enormous damage suffered by England due to the German submarines. Her Royal Highness Ileana also participated in this conference.

On February 1, 1947, The C-dor Voinescu from C.D., had a dinner party in his apartment at the School of War, attended by navy officers in C. D. known as notorious reactionaries. The next day, Voinescu, speaking to the War School officers, brought insults and threats to the current leadership of the Army Command, saying: "Their days are counted."

On March 23, 1947, he was in charge of setting up the foundation and organizing the headquarters of "AMEROM" Transportation Society, in the recruitment of the sailors who will serve the ships of this society. Commander Voinescu took care to choose those who militate in the political parties of the opposition. To this goal, he organized an unauthorized syndicate of C. D. sailors, where he maintained a strong reaction focal point.

He has connections with big industrialists and capitalists. He supports and promotes their interests. For ex.: Furnurache, Tudor and Caranfil Factory (Anonymous Society).

On March 26, 1947, it was reported that Victor Voinescu worked with some navy officers along with several officers from the American Red Cross in helping Moldova and other various issues. They wanted to help the famished population.

It is noteworthy that both the leadership and members of this committee are military officers from C. D., known as notorious reactionaries, some even militants in the NLA⁷⁵.

Suspected by "espionage in favor of the US", the Commander Victor Voinescu will be pursued steadily until 1958, according to a marauder entering the Securitate's ill-minded mentality. All allegations proved to be incorrect. The Commander Victor Voinescu was only a navy officer who loved his profession and country.

Commander Victor (Nita) Voinescu from a hero to an American agent

Commander Victor (Nita) Voinescu was one of the emblematic figures of the Romanian Navy. After the glory in the Second World War the communist seizure of power meant his being non-stop followed by the secret police. Suspected of "spying for the US" – according to an unhealthy mentality Marot entered the Securitate, Commander Victor Voinescu will be pursued assiduously until 1958. All allegations proved to be false. Commander Victor Voinescu was only a naval officer who loved his profession and country.

NOTES:

1 Florian Bichir, *The forgotten corsairs of the depths. Dolphin, Shark, Marsuin*, Military Publishing House, Bucharest, 2014.

2 Alexandru Duțu, Florica Dobre, Leonida Loghin, *The Romanian Army in the Second World War 1941-1945*, Encyclopedia Publishing House, Bucharest, 1999.

3 Marian Moșneagu, *Dictionary of Romanian Mariners*, Military Publishing House, Bucharest, pp. 503-505.

4 *Ibidem*.

5 CNSAS Archive (ACNSAS) – Information Fund, File I 549747, two volumes.

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