



Call for Papers

Military Welfare History Network Conference 2026

Civil Society, Civic Engagement and Its Impact on Military Welfare

Thurs 18 to Sat 20 June 2026 – Babeş-Bolyai University in Cluj-Napoca, Romania

Overview

The 5th International Conference of the Military Welfare History Network will be hosted by [Babeş-Bolyai University in Cluj-Napoca](#), in Summer 2026 (Thurs 18 to Sat 20 June 2026).

Centring on the theme of “Civil Society, Civic Engagement and Its Impact on Military Welfare”, the conference seeks to explore the transformative influence of civil society (in its institutionalised form), as well as of various other types of civic engagement on the development and evolution of military welfare. This event aims to bring together scholars from history, sociology, military studies, social policy, and related fields to examine how civil society shaped—and was shaped by—the changing practices of welfare within military institutions across different countries and contexts. The main focus will be directed towards the complex and dynamic interactions between civilian organizations, philanthropic initiatives, reformers, public opinion, and state-supported initiatives (including the legal background) and actors in redefining the care, support, and rights provided to serving soldiers, veterans, and their families.

We look forward to papers analysing how shifting societal values, the rise of voluntary associations, advocacy movements, and growing public engagement affected military welfare reform—ranging from healthcare and pensions to education, housing, and psychological support. Proposals engaging critically with the less studied or more troubling aspects of military welfare, including but not limited to the entanglement of veteran support systems with radical nationalism, eugenics, and biopolitical projects are also of interest. We particularly welcome contributions using innovative sources or methodologies and encourage early-career researchers and postgraduate students to apply.

Suggested topics (not limited to)

- The role of philanthropic and charitable organizations in shaping military welfare systems
- Case studies of key reforms influenced or initiated by civil society actors
- Biographies of civic actors involved with the field, with emphasize on their work's impact on the topic
- Public campaigns and their impacts on legislative or institutional change in military welfare
- Comparative analyses of military welfare in different national, colonial, or imperial contexts
- The interplay between state and non-state actors in providing support to veterans and military families
- The transformation of military welfare in response to war, demobilization, and post-conflict periods
- Gender, race, ethnicity or class dynamics in the advocacy for and benefits from military welfare reform
- The legacy of 18th–20th century civil society interventions on contemporary military welfare policies

Submission Guidelines:

Abstracts: Please submit an abstract of 250 words outlining your proposed paper's theme, approach, and sources.

Bio: Include a brief biographical note (max 50 words) with your institutional affiliation and contact details.

Submission email: militarywelfarehistory@gmail.com

Deadline: 14 March 2026

Notification of acceptance will be provided by early April 2026.

Conference Details

Organisers: Dr Vlad Popovici and Dr Paul Huddie (MWHN Coordinator)

Date: Thurs 18 to Sat 20 June 2026

Location: Babeş-Bolyai University Cluj-Napoca, Faculty of History and Philosophy (Cluj-Napoca, Romania, 11 Napoca str.)

Format: Individual presentations (20 minutes) followed by Q&A (10 minutes).

This event is free to attend.

Conference Publication

It is also planned that an edited volume will be produced from a selection of the submitted papers. Prospective speakers are invited to express their interest in being considered for the planned volume when submitting their abstract.

Funding & Support

We gratefully acknowledge the financial support for this event has been provided by UEFISCDI Romania through the project *Intricate Entanglements: Associational life, Nation-building and Democracy in Transylvania. The Romanian Case (18th Century to 1920s)*. This event is also kindly supported by: Babeş-Bolyai University Cluj-Napoca; the Faculty of History and Philosophy at UBB; the History, Civilization and Culture Doctoral School, at UBB; the Divisional Command of the 4th Infantry Division “Gemina” and the National Military Museum “King Ferdinand I”.



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We look forward to your submissions and to a stimulating exchange on the historical impact of civil society on military welfare.