

ROMANIA
MEDAL FOR MANHOOD AND FAITH
(Medalia Barbatie si Credinta)

The Medal for Manhood and Faith (Medalia Barbatie si Credinta) is a Romanian medal established by Royal Decree No.2812 of the 3rd November 1903 and amended by High Royal Decree No.2523 of the 12th October 1904, which was conferred on police officers and agents, who have shown manhood and faith in the performance of their duties or any civil servant or private person who has contributed to the maintenance or restoration of public order and safety, important police services, the life or property of a person in danger or an act of manhood or faith.

The medal was established in three classes: 1st Class – Gold; 2nd Class – Silver and 3rd Class – Bronze. The medal is oval, in shape with a vertical diameter of 35mm and a horizontal diameter of 27mm. On the obverse in relief is the effigy of King Carol I, facing left surrounded by the words ‘CAROL I. REGE AL ROMANIEI’ (Carol I King of Romania). The reverse is inscribed in relief with the motto ‘BĂRBĂȚIE ȘI CREDINȚĂ’ (Manhood and Faith) with a laurel leaf at the lower left and a ribbon tied at the end. Suspension is by means of pierced loop and ring with two laurel branches and a horizontal bar through



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which the ribbon is attached. The 30mm wide ribbon is made of ripped silk with a central yellow band 18mm wide and blue and red bands 3mm wide on each edge.

A distinctive bar was added in December 1913 to the medal to reward the soldiers who had taken part in the 1913 Balkan War. It consists of a 5mm wide bar, in the same metal as the medal inscribed “CAMPAIGN 1913”.

In 1916, by the Law on the establishment of the “Mihai Viteazul” Military order, the conditions for granting the medal to participants in Military campaigns – Medal of Manhood

and Faith with war insignia – were modified. Crossed Swords were added above the top of the oval medal and between the two laurel branches for meritorious conduct by soldiers and non-commissioned officers. During the First World War, when Romania was on the Allied side, the medal was awarded to British NCOs for acts of bravery in the Eastern theatre of War.

The medal was not awarded after 1947. In 2020, by law No.29/2000 regarding the national decoration system of Romania, the Medal of Manhood and Faith with signs of peace and war was reinstated. The granting conditions were specified in Law No.528/2003 on the medal of the Manhood and Faith and the Regulation of 11th December 2003 on the description and method of awarding the Medal of Manhood and Faith.

The new medal, which retains the three classes but differentiates one medal for civilians and one for the military, is made of tombac and is oval, in shape with a vertical diameter of 35mm and a horizontal diameter of 22mm. The obverse is stamped with the coat of arms of Romania. The reverse is inscribed centrally in relief in 3mm high characters, 1903 / MAN / AND / FAITH / 2000 and for the war medal 1916 / MAN / AND / FAITH / 2000. The peace medal is surmounted, for the military by a half-crown formed of laurel leaves branches, with the ends of the half-crown joined by a bar, through which the ribbon passes.



Medal For Manhood & Faith ~ Obverse

For civilians, a sphere with a diameter of 5mm with a 20mm diameter ring. The ribbon retains the original colours. For female civilian recipients, the ribbon is folded into a bow which has a length of 100mm.

The war insignia of the medal, existing only in the military version are represented by the presence of two crossed swords, 15mm in length, with the points pointing upwards between the medal and the semi-crown, and an inscribed text of the reverse.

KING CAROL I OF ROMANIA

Prince Karl Eitel Friedrich Zephyrinus Ludwig of Hohenzollern-Sigmaringen was born on the 20th April 1839 in Sigmaringen, the second son of Prince Karl Anton of Hohenzollern-Sigmaringen and his wife Princess Josephine of Baden. Sigmaringen is a town in Southern Germany in the state of Baden-Württemberg. It is particularly well-known for its castle the Schloss Sigmaringen which was the seat of the principality of Sigmaringen until the mid-19th Century and is owned by the Hohenzollern family.

After completing his early education, the young Prince Karl entered the Cadet School in Munster and later the Artillery School in Berlin. As a Prussian officer he participated in the Second Schleswig War of 1864. Although of moderate height and described by some as frail, he was healthy and a disciplined soldier. He spoke several European languages and had politically liberal opinions. His family were related to the Bonaparte family and had a close relationship with Napoleon III of France.

Alexandru Iacon Cuza¹ (1820-1873) had been expelled in February 1866 as Domnitor – official title of the ruler of Romania 1862-1881 – plunging the country into political chaos. Seeking a



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replacement, Romanian politicians initially asked Philip of Flanders, who they considered could stabilise and unify their country. However, he refused the offer. Napoleon III who supported Romanian independence proposed Prince Karl. An envoy was sent to discuss with Prince Karl and his family the circumstances under which the prince would accept ascending the throne of Romania. Prince Karl was persuaded and accepted the envoys proposals.

Because of political mistrust between Prussia and the Austrian Empire, Prince Karl travelled in disguise to Switzerland where he obtained a Swiss passport using the name Karl Hettingen. He

entered Romania and was welcomed by a leading politician Ion C. Brătianu² – later Prime Minister – and on the 20th April 1866, Prince Karl was duly elected as the ‘Reigning Prince’ – Domnitor. The following month he arrived in Bucharest and was greeted by a large gathering of the population. At his crowning he swore an oath in French: ‘I swear to guard the laws of Romania, to maintain the rights of its people and the integrity of its territory’, as he did not speak Romanian. To cement his relationship with the people of Romania, he learnt their language and adopted the Romanian spelling of his name, Carol.

The Romanian parliament established the 1866 Constitution of Romania in June of that year which Carol signed into law. It was considered, to be a modern constitution guaranteeing the freedom of the press, freedom of speech, property rights and abolished the death penalty in times of peace. It provided the opportunity for the further development and modernisation of Romania and ignored the suzerainty of the Ottoman Empire, preparing the way for Romanian independence. The new modern and liberal constitution did not allow non-Christians to obtain citizenship. Article, 82 enshrined the throne as a hereditary office for Carol’s descendants through the right of the first born, to be brought up in the Eastern Orthodox Religion but excluded perpetually females and their descendants. Carol had executive powers, but he was not politically able to enforce them. His acts only became valid when countersigned by the appropriate minister.

On the 15th November 1869, Carol married Princess Elisabeth of Wied at Neuwied. She was a writer who used the literary name Carmen Sylva. They had one daughter Princess Maria who was born in 1870 and died four years later. The marriage was not a happy one, as Princess Elisabeth never fully recovered from the tragic loss of her daughter. Towards the end of Carol’s life, the couple had a reconciliation.

Romania did not participate in the Franco-Prussian War of 1870-1871. However, it did cast a shadow over Carol’s early reign. Romania historically had Francophile connections and as Carol was of German descent there were concerns about him as he was not accepted as Romanian by some elements in the political establishment. Attempts were made by republicans and radical liberals to pressurise Carol to abdicate. On the 8th August 1870, radical liberals in city of Ploiesti began a revolt and attempted a coup d’etat which was crushed within twenty-four hours. The majority, of the population remained loyal to Carol and when Iacon C. Brătianu became Prime Minister in 1876 the liberal support for him was reinforced.

Between 1875 and 1877 social unrest and revolts spread throughout Balkan countries under Ottoman rule. The latter’s reprisals were severe particularly in Bulgaria where massacres took

place. Russia considered itself to be the protector of the Orthodox Christians and reacted by instigating international negotiations to resolve the troubles, without success. On the 24th April 1877 Russia declared war on the Ottoman Empire instigating the Russo-Turkish War. For the Romanians the war became a War of Independence. Carol gave permission against the advice of his ministers to allow Russian troops to travel through Romania towards Bulgaria. The Ottomans responded by bombarding Romanian towns along the Danube. Romania declared itself independent from Ottoman influence on the 10th May 1877. Russia was not favourably disposed to allow Romania to enter the war. At the city of Plevna, in northern Bulgaria the Russians suffered a setback and requested military help from Romania.

Carol took command of Russian and Romanian troops surrounding Plevna. After intense fighting and laying siege to the town, the Ottoman's surrendered on the 28th November 1877. The Romanians continued to participate in the war and fought in the Battles of Smârdan and Vidin. By early March 1878 the Ottoman's were facing defeat and signed the Treaty of San Stefano which recognised the independence of Romania, Serbia, Montenegro, and the autonomy of Bulgaria. With the war at an end, the independence of Romania, was recognised by The Treaty of Berlin on the 13th July 1878 and Carol was hailed as a hero and granted the title of Royal Highness.

Three years later in 1881, Romania's constitution was amended and was henceforth to be known as a Kingdom. Carol was crowned on the 10th May and became King Carol I of Romania. His steel crown³ was made from the steel of an Ottoman cannon captured at Plevna.

King Carol ruled for 48 years as a constitutional monarch and helped Romania gain independence, raised its reputation, helped to balance the economy, and established a dynasty. He commissioned the building in 1873 of Peles Castle, near Sinaia, in the Carpathian Mountains. The Romanian parliament granted King Carol and his successors, large estates making him a significant landowner. To ensure there was a successor to the Romanian throne on Carol's death his brother Leopold in 1880, and his oldest son William in 1886, renounced their rights. Leopold's second son Ferdinand was named Prince of Romania and heir-presumptive in 1886

In 1883, the King Carol personally made a secret alliance with the Central Powers without the knowledge of parliament or anyone else other than a few trusted advisors. When it was renewed in 1892, he had to reveal the alliance to the prime minister and foreign minister. It was not until the outbreak of the First World War that it was disclosed to parliament and the citizens of Romania. A proposal in 1886-1887 was strongly advocated by the Regent of

Bulgaria and others to install King Carol I of Romania as ruler of Bulgaria. Although the King was interested, he declined due to strong Russian objections.

When the secret alliance with the Central Powers was revealed at the beginning of the First World War the members of the Romanian Crown Council had concerns about the terms of the alliance and chose neutrality and peace under the terms of the Treaty of Bucharest. In mitigation, King Carol considered that he had a moral duty to support his cousin, Kaiser Wilhelm II. When King Carol died in October 1914 his successor King Ferdinand I, (1865-1927) was aware that the majority of Romanians were still predominantly Francophile and Romania joined the Triple Entente in 1916.

King Carol I of Romania died on the 10th October 1914 aged 75 and his wife two years later on the 2nd March 1916. Both were interred in the 16th century Cathedral of Curtea des Arges. During the Communist era, King Carol and other monarchists became targets for derision as money hungry foreigners and enemies of the people. Following the collapse of Communism in 1989 the monarchy was rehabilitated and King Carol viewed as a figure of national unity, founder of modern Romania and a revered individual. Romanian Television broadcast in 2006 the 100 Greatest Romanians and King Carol I was voted the second greatest Romanian who had ever lived, after Stephen the Great,

The Romanian historian Lucian Boia writing about King Carol I recorded: *'His long reign (of forty-eight years, one more than Stephen the Great) allowed the myth to come to fruition even within his lifetime. The image of the sovereign, mediocre at first, took on a powerful brilliance in the last years of the century. An educational poster of around 1900 presents "the four pillars of the Romanian people", along with other heroes of Wallachian history. The four are Trajan and Decebalus, Cuza and Carol I. Even Michael the Brave becomes a secondary figure by comparison. Carol appears organically rooted in Romanian history; he represents a new beginning, of course, but a beginning based on much older foundations.'*

The Carol I National Defence University and the Central University in Bucharest and the Carol I National College in Craiova are named in his honour.

¹ Alexandru Ioan Cuza (20th March 1820 – 15th May 1873) was the first Domnitor (Ruler) of the Romanian Principalities through his double election as Prince of Moldavia on the 5th January 1859 and Prince of Wallachia on the 24th January 1859. He initiated reforms that contributed to the modernization of Romania. However, his reforms alienated many conservatives and radical liberals who owned land and businesses. Unable to get a formal agreement with prosperous peasant class he began to face increasing opposition, which culminated in a coup d'état. In the early hours of the 11th February 1866 a group of military personnel forced Cuza to sign his abdication. The following day he was escorted to the border and into a life of exile.

² Iacon C. Brătianu held the office as Prime Minister on two occasions 24th July 1876 – 9th April 1881 & 9th June 1881 – 20th March 1889.

³ Now depicted on the Romanian coats of arms since 2016.

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Sources

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