

The "Battle of Karánsebes": Friendly Fire and Chaos in the Austrian Army

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? September 17, 1788

It was the year 1788, during the Austro-Turkish War, when the Austrian Empire found itself locked in a fierce struggle against the mighty Ottoman Empire. The Austrian army, led by the valiant General Josias of Saxe-Coburg-Saalfeld, was marching through the rugged terrain of present-day Romania, seeking to reinforce their positions against the impending Ottoman assault. ????

However, chaos was lurking just around the corner, ready to turn this serene pause into a debacle of epic proportions. It all began when the soldiers' long and arduous march made them desperate for refreshment. Spotting a nearby group of Roma traders, the army eagerly approached them in search of one thing: alcohol. ??

The Roma traders, sensing an opportunity to make a quick buck, were more than willing to oblige. Barrels of delicious spirits were laid out before the soldiers, who started to indulge themselves enthusiastically. As the night wore on, the soldiers' revelry grew louder and more raucous, their laughter echoing through the darkened village. ??

Amidst the merriment, tragedy began to unfold. A group of Austrian infantrymen, who were guarding the alcohol supplies, became increasingly paranoid that they would miss out on their share. Desperate to secure their portion, they got into a heated argument. ?

The argument quickly escalated, and one soldier ended up firing his musket into the air as a warning shot. Chaos erupted as the deafening bang caused soldiers to panic, believing they were under attack from the approaching Ottoman forces. ??

Pandemonium ensued. Soldiers started shouting "Turks!" and "The enemy is here!" in a desperate attempt to alert their comrades. In their disarray, they turned their weapons on each other, firing blindly into the night. The scene was reminiscent of a theater of the absurd, as soldiers stumbled over each other, trying to escape the imaginary enemy. ?????

The following morning, as the sun rose over the smoldering battlefield, the true extent of the disaster became apparent. Hundreds of Austrian soldiers had perished, not at the hands of the enemy, but at the hands of their own comrades. Shock and disbelief rippled through the ranks as commanders tried to make sense of the chaos that had unfolded. ??

