

# Echo from the War: Preserving the Memory of the Bulgarian Veterans from WWII

## The Project

The project *Echo from the War* aims at gathering and preserving the oral memory of the Bulgarian Army veterans that took part in the Second World War. It started in 2008 and it is still active, although the last year the data collecting process has been hampered by the ongoing COVID19 Pandemic, which is especially dangerous for the respondents. The members of the team aim at the creation of a database of oral history interviews for the Second World War in Bulgaria on national scale. Currently the database consists of digital records of more than 300 separate stories.



## The Team

Initially the team was formed by few students from Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski" and through the years included many new members, mostly students and young researchers from Sofia University and the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences.



## Methodology and Data Collection

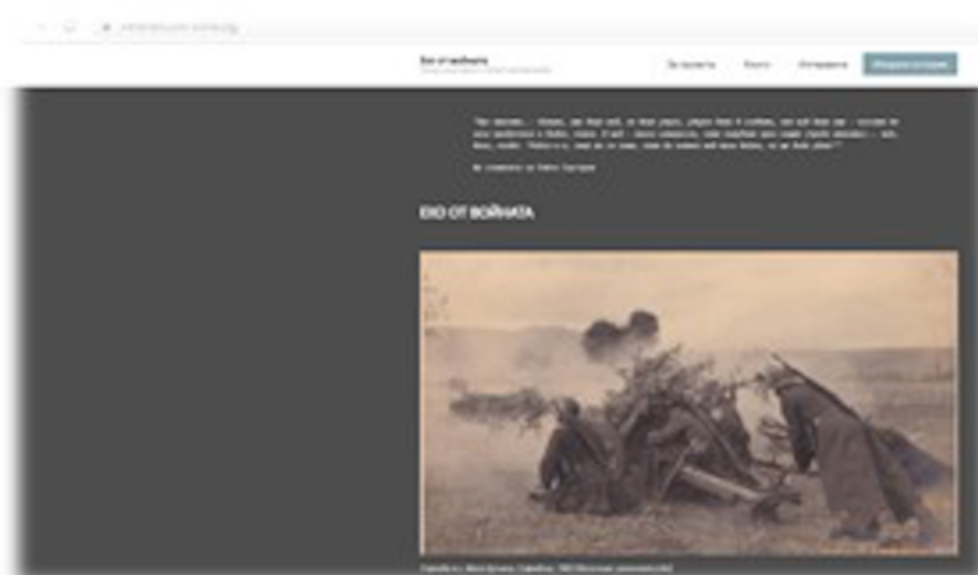
The target group of possible respondents includes veterans from the Bulgarian Army who served in the years 1941–1945. Due to the large time span between the events and the beginning of the data collection process the possible respondents include only junior officers and rank and file soldiers. All of them have been interviewed through a general questionnaire that addresses not only their military experience, but also their social background and biography after the war. Specific questions are added according to the course of each particular story.

The respondents have been contacted on a territorial basis, according to their current residency. The team have worked consistently in each of the 28 administrative regions of Bulgaria, visiting large cities, towns and small villages. Representatives of most of the ethnic and confessional minorities in the country have also been included, as well as female veterans.



## The Results

Currently the database is organized according to the administrative regions of Bulgaria. The most interesting stories have been typed as texts and published in two volumes, as well as on the website of the project <https://veterani.uni-sofia.bg/>. A third volume of oral history interviews is under preparation.



## Digital Challenges

There is still large amount of information that has not been typed and is only preserved as a voice record. The aim of the team is to type all the interviews and to prepare a database with indices of place names, events and persons. Yet that aim can only be achieved with the help of digital tools and currently the members of the team are trying

to identify the most suitable tool of this kind. A complication may arise from the fact that some of the interviews are recorded on local dialects.



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