

GENERAL OF THE MILITARY MEDICAL SERVICE PROF. MUDr. KAREL FRANZ

Doc. PhDr. František DOHNAL, CSc.
Purkyně Military Medical Academy, Hradec Králové
(Rector: Col. prof. MUDr. J. Fusek, DrSc.)

The General of the Military Medical Service, Prof. MUDr. Karel Franz was the founder of the journal "Vojenské zdravotnické listy" and its first "chief" editor. Let's present this character of the Czechoslovak Military Medical Service in more details. He was called "a brilliant example of a military doctor, a doctor charitable to all in need, a man whose the good and the beautiful was the reflection of his soul".

Karel Franz was born in Rosice in Moravia on March 18, 1864. From 1874 to 1882 he attended the Czech grammar school in Brno and then in 1888 he graduated from the Charles University, Czech Medical Faculty in Prague.



He started his military service as a one-year volunteer in the Garrison Hospital number 11 in Prague from 1885 to 1886. He decided to be a military doctor and his chosen career brought him to many different places in the Austrian-Hungarian Monarchy. From 1888 to 1889 he served as the First Lieutenant of the Military Medical Service and the houseman in the Garrison Hospital number 22 in Sibiň. From 1889 to 1894 he worked first as the Head Physician in the Hussar's Regiment number 13 in Budapest and then in the Infantry Regiment in Keckemeth. He also managed to take part in a study stay (1892) in the Bacteriological Institute of the University in Budapest (Professor Petrlik).

He began to move more and more toward scientific work. From 1894 to 1895 he took part in a short term attachment, already with the rank of the Captain of the Military Medical Service in the Clinic of Internal Diseases at Professor Neusser's in Vienna. From 1895 to 1897 he worked as the Head Physician at the Division Hospital in Plzeň.

From 1897 to 1912 he lived in Vienna. He was awarded the Commander of the Department for Internal and Infectious Diseases in the Garrison Hospital number 1. In 1907 he was appointed a regular member of the Military Medical Service. During his stay in Vienna, he took part in number of courses in different branches of internal medicine at the Medical Faculty there, and he was also able to take part in study stays in foreign clinics in Berlin, Leipzig, Jena, Curych, Paris, Rome, Stockholm and Uppsala. He was specialized in the problem of tuberculosis and he also took part in short term attachments in many sanatoria for lung diseases (since 1908 he was a corresponding member of the International TBC Conference).

In 1912 the Colonel of the Military Medical Service, MUDr. Karel Franz returned to Prague and he worked there as the Commander of the Garrison Hospital number 11 till March 1915. He managed the mobilization of the field medical facilities as well as other things there, and at the same time he organized the building up of military and field hospitals due to the increasing number of transportation of wounded from the front line.

In the spring of 1915, he was appointed the Head of the Military Medical Service to the Territorial Military Headquarters in Prague and a year later he was named the Official in Charge for Tuberculosis in the Ministry of War in Vienna. At that time (November 1, 1916), he was promoted to the rank of the General of the Military Medical Service. In spite of that, he resigned in July 1918, as an expression of his antimonarchical mood. He never hid his patriotism and when the Czechoslovak Republic came into existence, he immediately registered himself to active service in the forming Army. He became one of the founders of the Czechoslovak Military Medical Service, a representative and a pioneer of science in army conditions.

Immediately in November 1918 he was awarded the Head of the Military Medical Service for Bohemia (the separate Heads of the Military Medical Service were named for Bohemia, Moravia and Silesia - the Colonel of the Military Medical Service, MUDr. Eduard Stehlik and for Slovakia - the General of the Military Medical Service, MUDr. Jan Červíček because of the postrevolutionary many times chaotic situation and the armed actions of the Czechoslovak Army from 1918 to 1919). At the end of 1919 he was appointed the Official in Charge for Tuberculosis to the Ministry of National Defence in the duty of supervisor over the medical activity of the appropriate institutes. He also treated patients in the out-patient department for lung diseases in Prague Division Hospital number 1. Around the same time, as a well known specialist, he was named the Associate Professor for Internal Diseases in the Medical Faculty of the Charles University. In 1922 he was entrusted with the post of the Chairman of the Military Medical Advisory Board and he remained in this post till 1927 when he retired at the age of 63. He returned to the post of the Chairman of the

Military Medical Advisory Board for a short time from 1928 to 1929 when he was called back to the service due to the critical shortage of people working in the Military Medical Service. He finally retired on March 1, 1929.

The Colonel of the Military Medical Service K. Franz was not only the editor of the journal "Vojenské zdravotnické listy", but he was its frequent contributor as well. He benefited mainly from his rich scientific work (author of more than 20 essential scientific articles). The peak in his research of tuberculosis and lung diseases is represented by two publications "The Recognition of the Lung Tuberculosis from Other Diseases" (1925) and "An Early Diagnosis of Tuberculosis" (1926). In this connection, it is important to mention his merit to establish stations for lung diseases in selected division hospitals.

He was a frequent and active participant in medical congresses and symposia at home and abroad. He was awarded the Order of Austrian Republic "Pro patria et humanité" of the 1st class and the Officer's Cross of the French Legion of Honour.

The life of the General of the Military Medical Service, Prof. MUDr. K. Franz passed away on December 9, 1933, when he had to leave his second love - music. The significant character of the Czechoslovak Military Medical Service who influenced its beginning, formation and international respect, left. The 70th anniversary of the existence of the journal "Vojenské zdravotnické listy", foundation and formation of which he influenced, is a possibility to remember words from his obituary: "The name of the General of the Military Medical Service, Prof. MUDr. Karel Franz remains written on the first pages of the history of our Military Medical Service for ever".