

JOB OFFER
PhD candidate with a Master in History (M/F/X)
Department of Conflict Studies/Military History
Project BRAVE

Publication: 14 Aug – 05 Sep 25

PROJECT

We are looking for a **full-time PhD researcher with a master's degree in History**.

You work within the department of Conflict Studies (Chair of History) of the Faculty of Social and Military Sciences of the RMA and in close collaboration with Professor [Tom Simoens](#) (LtCol). You conduct scientific research at university level on a project entitled 'BRAVE - Belgian Officers and Resistance Effectiveness in Word War II'. BRAVE is a collaboration between the RMA and the VUB (Prof. [Nel de Mûelenaere](#) and Mr. Dany Neudt – [Traces of Resistance](#)). This project explores the impact of Belgian officers on the World War II resistance through a combination of quantitative analysis of selected military units and detailed case studies on military resistance members. It seeks to understand the extent of their participation and impact: did these officers enhance the resistance's effectiveness and efficiency? The duration of the project is 48 months.

CONTEXT

The [Royal Military Academy](#) is fully recognized as a university, fulfilling the same criteria as civilian universities. The RMA is also conducting scientific research at university level for projects funded by the Belgian Defense department or external sources.

We value diversity and equal opportunities. Whether you are a man, a woman or X, or come from any background, we firmly believe that diversity enriches our community, and we encourage all qualified candidates to apply.

MAIN TASKS

- To create a theoretical framework on effectiveness and efficiency of military organizations and resistance movements based on existing literature.
- To conduct a quantitative analysis on the number of officers who were involved in the resistance, based on historical archives.
- To carry out a qualitative analysis on the trajectory of a limited number of officers, based on more historical archives (many of which still have to be identified).
- To produce the required deliverables (such as publications, PhD thesis etc.) as mentioned in the research proposal.
- To prepare, write and defend a joint PhD thesis (RMA and VUB).

SKILLS AND EXPERIENCE:

Degree required: Master's degree in history (attention: at the moment of recruitment, probably around October or November 2025), preferably with excellent grades.

This position is open for junior profiles and experienced profiles. However, young graduates are also encouraged to apply.

“MUST HAVE” skills:

- You are proficient in standard office software such as Microsoft Word, Excel, and PowerPoint (or equivalent tools).
- You are capable of independently planning, organizing, and managing your research activities.
- You have experience with academic writing, and can produce clear, structured, and well-argued texts.
- You possess strong analytical skills and are able to efficiently process large amounts of information, identifying what is relevant and discarding what is not.
- You are able to communicate your results clearly to both academic peers and non-specialist audiences.

“NICE TO HAVE” skills:

- You have previously done research on Belgian military history of the Second World War or have previously worked on the Belgian resistance during the First or Second World War.
- Relevant experience in academic research projects related to history is considered an asset.
- You have previously published articles, book chapters, or books on 20th-century history or military history.

Personal skills:

- You conduct scientific research in an independent way within multidisciplinary environments.
- You communicate your results in a clear, concise and precise manner.
- You are persistent and dedicated to your work, consistently aiming for high-quality results.
- You take initiative in your professional development, regularly evaluating your work and identifying areas for growth, and proactively working to improve your skills.
- You work well both independently and as part of a team, and you actively welcome feedback through peer review to improve the quality of your work.

Other skills/experience:

- Your mother tongue is preferably Dutch or French.
- You have a good command of the second national language and of English, enabling you to read and interpret documents in Dutch, French, and English.
- You are open to working in both a military and an academic environment.
- You are committed to actively engaging with the research community of the Department of Conflict Studies (RMA) and the history department at the VUB and to contribute to departmental activities when appropriate.

SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS

- The researcher may be exposed to classified information and will therefore have to obtain the required security clearance. The candidate must consent with the background check required to obtain this clearance, which will be executed by Belgian Defense.
- Working for the Patrimony requires living in Belgium for the duration of the study.

APPLICATION

Please send by email:

- a CV with a motivational letter
- your most recent grade overview (Bachelor 3 or Master).

to Mr Tom Simoens (tom.simoens@mil.be) and to erm-deao-rsw@mil.be

Please mention clearly the reference of the project: “BRAVE”.

Application deadline: **05 Sep 25**.

The recruitment will take place in two phases. At first, all applicants will be invited to take **part in a written assignment** at the RMA (Brussels) on **Wednesday 17 Sep 25**. After this written assignment, a selection of applicants will be invited to the Royal Military Academy, Hobbemastraat 8, 1000 Brussels for an interview. The interviews will take place **on Tuesday 23 Sep 25 (PM) and on Wednesday 24 Sep 25 (AM)**.

CONTRACT

- **Probable date of recruitment: Oct or Nov 2025**, in consultation with the applicant.
- **Status: Full-time employment based on an open-ended contract** with the Patrimony of the Royal Military Academy (you will not be a civil servant).
 - Please note that your contract will be open-ended, but the financing of the contract will be tied to the funding project, which is guaranteed for 4 years. There is a high chance for the project to be prolonged after this initial period, depending on the availability of new funding.
- **Wage scale: class A1**. RMA-Patrimony applies a merit-based research career track, allowing researchers to advance in wage scale based upon annual evaluations.
- Holiday pay.

EXTRA LEGAL BENEFITS

- Possibility to benefit from a bilingualism allowance (Dutch/French) following a SELOR test;
- End-of-year bonus;
- Free DKV hospitalization insurance. Possibility of additional affiliation for one or more persons living under the same roof: spouse, child(ren) (50% of the price per additional member);
- Bike allowance / Free public transport (home-work commute);
- Meal vouchers (6€ / day);
- Digital allowance (15€ / month)
- Free access to campus sports facilities outside working hours;
- On-campus restaurant and cafeteria with democratic prices (discount on the daily menu);
- Flexible working hours within the 38-hour week;
- Teleworking possible with allowance (2 days / week max);
- Holidays:
 - 29 days holiday / year from the 1st year of contract (then from 45 years: +1 day holiday every 5 years)

- 1 week OFF every year between Christmas and New year's Eve (independent of the annual balance of holidays).
- Advantages and interesting offers thanks to the Benefits@work card (discounts, vouchers...);
- Entitlement to services offered by the 'Office Central d'Action Sociale et Culturelle de la Défense' (OCASC): among others holiday centres, discount on travel organised by the tour operator...;
- Possibility to benefit from the nursery funded by Belgian Defence (subject to availability).

WORKPLACE

Royal Military Academy, Avenue de la Renaissance 30, 1000 Brussels. Homework is possible in coordination with the supervisor (maximum two days per week).

Occasional travels inside Belgium or abroad for research activities or scientific conferences, etc.