

Combat of 1 August, to the west of Beresteczko

maps #1 and #2

A. Information on the enemy

At this time, the 1st CD, which had just been organised, had almost no precise information on the enemy. It was known that in the region of the Styr [river], Budienny had at least 4 divisions of cavalry and 2 or 3 of infantry. On the 30th, there was fighting against enemy elements who held the Styr near Grzymalowka; the river was forced by the 6th Brigade but the success could not be exploited as the 3rd Brigade had not rejoined. On the west bank of the Styr, the enemy had repulsed the 4th Brigade to the north of the Sydolowka [river]. It was shelled and machine-gunned from both sides, without causing serious losses.

During 31 July the information received was vague and contradictory.

The reconnaissances sent by the 4th Brigade indicated that on the west bank of the Styr the enemy was in retreat to the south, and that a 10 kilometre zone to the south of the Sydolowka was free.

On the other hand, during the night, other reconnaissance parties sent by the 3rd Brigade indicated that on the same west bank some Bolshevik cavalry columns were marching from south to north in the direction of Burkaczy, Mikolajow and Skryholow, that these villages were already occupied and that patrols operated already to the north of Sydolowka.

Some small detachments of cavalry were signaled in the woods south of Beresteczko.

B. Situation of the 1st CD, night of 31 July

The night of 31 July, the division's situation was:

- HQ at Beresteczko
- 3rd and 6th Brigades grouped in the region of Beresteczko, Pieski and Solmiewo
- 4th Brigade well dispersed in the region of Smolawa, Lubaczewka and Lipa

In the area of Beresteczko there was also some elements of the 6th ID, in contact with detachments of the Bolshevik 14th CD in a region some 8 kilometres south-east of the village.

C. Intention of the 1st Division's colonel

The colonel commanding the division, who had almost complete liberty of action, decided to attack during the day of the 1 August the enemy indicated to the west of the Styr around Burkaczy, Mikolajow and Skryholow, whilst the 6th ID would attack south-east, flanked to the left by the 1st Legion ID.

D. Manoeuvre plan

To fix the enemy with an attack on the front Mikolajow to Skryholow and attack his right flank, in the direction Strzemilcze to Mikolajow.

E. Execution

The 4th Brigade would hold the enemy by making strong demonstrations and attacking it if it looked to move northwards.

The 3rd and 6th Brigades would attack the flank.

Departure of the 3rd and 6th Brigades: 0600.

F. Events (map #2)

The column left Beresteczko a little after the indicated time, and traveled to Strzemilcze via Merwa.

The vanguard bumped into some dismantled cavalry at Strzemilcze, engaged them on foot, easily took the village and moved west.

A squadron of the 12th Uhlans went to Bukaczy, which it seized with some losses.

The remainder of the 3rd Brigade headed for Mikolajow, which was taken after a hard fight.

After the taking of Strzemilcze, the colonel commanding the 1st CD wished to send the 6th CB to the south in the direction of Smarzew; but at this moment he learnt, from the 4th CB, that some enemy elements were moving north of the Sydolowka [river] in the direction of Lubaczewka; he recalled the 6th CB and launched it on the left of the 3rd CB, in the direction of Maryanka, which was taken on horseback, despite machine-guns.

It is not known what the bulk of the 4th CB did; one of the squadrons attacked Mikolajow from the north. At about 1000, the enemy was fleeing to the south; a column which tried to cross the Styr near Szczurowice and Grzymalowka was welcomed by rifle-shots from elements of the 6th ID and was obliged to go off further south.

The 6th CB was launched in pursuit of the enemy in the direction of Zawidcze, whilst the 3rd CB rallied in order to continue the action.

Some Bolshevik prisoners were taken, but there were heavy enough losses in the 1st CD. Some 20 Poles, whose horses had been killed attacking on horseback the woods to the west of Maryanka, were taken by the Bolsheviks, stripped of their effects and hideously massacred. Their mutilated bodies, lined side by side, formed a horrible spectacle.

In the afternoon, General Sawicki, who was taking command of the Cavalry Corps that was going to include the 1st and 2nd CDs, gave the order to suspend the action. En route, he told the 4th CB to go in the direction of Zawidcze, to try to cut the enemy's retreat.

– HQ Smarzewo

– 3rd CB Szczurowice

– 6th CB Grzymalowka

– 4th CB pushed up to Lopatyn and took some Bolshevik convoys.

Observations

There was a lack of precise information about the enemy. Despite the contradictions of the 31st, the division's commander did not make the decision to order reconnaissances on the important points in dispute. He left this requirement to his subordinates, who were not up to date with the general situation. Therefore, almost nothing was known about the enemy when the attack started.

In the operation's orders, there was no attack time for the 4th CB. That brigade was told to hold the enemy by making demonstrations and attacking if it tried to march north; it was forgotten that to hold the enemy, it is basically necessary to attack. Moreover, if this attack had taken place, it would have been into the void, because the commander of the brigade had no accurate information on the enemy; that which he gave during the course of the action was later found to be false.

The division commander did not keep a reserve at the start of the operation, even though he was completely in the unknown; then he launched his two brigades to the attack, making it impossible to deal with any accident that might happen, or to intervene to exploit success; the direction of combat escaped him completely.

The artillery did not intervene as a body, but by gun or platoon; it did not prepare the attack and shot randomly. The passage of Strzemilcze was made without any artillery preparation.

From when the Styr was crossed, there was open space in front (the terrain was true cavalry terrain), the attack was made on horseback, in skirmish or dense formations, without worrying about enemy machine-guns.

In the woods east of Maryanka, the enemy machine-guns resisted stubbornly; they had a good field of fire, and 600 or 700 metres in front of them were the trenches of the Great War. The Polish cavalry attacked nonetheless on horse, with no idea of manoeuvre, came up against the obstacle, and suffered serious losses. These losses would certainly have been avoided by fighting on foot.

When the enemy retired, there was no vigorous pursuit; it had all the time it needed to pull itself back together, and reposition himself elsewhere in the terrain.

The rallying of the units of the 3rd CB was done hopelessly slowly and even done on the crests, in good view of everyone, whilst the terrain was a series of crests and small valleys, allowing easy concealment.

The attacks were led with enormous energy and bravery by all; they cost dearly and no-one knew how to profit from the initial success in order to obtain others more grand; there was no exploitation.

This operation, despite its imperfections, in the course of which bravery replaced the lack of tactical knowledge, nevertheless had a good result. It stopped, for several days, the initiative of Budienny's operations which, in place of its triumphal march west in the direction of Lwow or Lublin and Warsaw, wandered around the two banks of the Styr. Thus, it had permitted the Polish command to execute certain preparatory movements of the grand offensive which would save Poland and destroy two-thirds of the Bolshevik army.

Operations of the Cavalry Corps about Brody - Radziwillow, 2 and 3 August

maps #1 and #3

(This will only be the operations of the 1st CD.)

a) *General information*

The night of 1 August, after the attack, the 1st CD was quartered in the following places:

HQ: Smardzowo

6th CB: Crzymalowka

3rd CB: Szczurowice

The 4th CB, reinforced by the 1st Uhlans, who had received orders to quarter in Zawidce, pushed during the night up to Lopatyn where it captured some enemy convoys.

A Cavalry Corps was formed with the 2nd CD, just formed itself, and placed under the orders of General Sawicki, who had at his disposition as technical advisor, General Durand, Director of Cavalry of the French Military Mission.

There was no precise information on the enemy. It was simply known that Budienny's cavalry divisions were partly on the east bank of the Styr, partly on the west and that the infantry held Brody and surrounding areas.

During the night, General Sawicki received the following orders:

At midday 2 August, an attack will be made on Brody by the 18th ID coming from the west, and by the 6th ID coming from the north.

The axis of march of the 6th ID was the road Grzymalowka to Leszniow to Brody; the movement of this division will be covered to the east by the Cavalry Corps which will try hard to reach during the day the line Radziwillow to Krupiec to Iwanie-Puste in order to cut the retreat of the enemy holding Brody.

b) *Mission of the 1st CD*

Travel to Krupiec by way of Grzymalowka, Mytnica, Redkow, Chotyn and Srybno to cover the movement east of the Plaszewka.

The 2nd CD, reserve of the corps, will follow behind the first having Barania as its ultimate objective.

The order arrived very late at the division unfortunately, probably the fault of a dispatch rider. It was meant to pass the Styr at Grzyalowka at 1000; the passage only occurred at midday.

c) *Execution*

The bulk of the division – 3rd CB and 14th Uhlans – will go to Krupiec by the indicated itinerary, whilst the 9th Uhlans will leave the column at Chotyn to take Barania, which it will occupy awaiting the arrival of the 2nd CD who has been delayed and will not be able to leave Chotyn until 1900. The movement will be covered to the east, on the Plaszewka, by a squadron which will have Iwanie-Puste as its final objective.

d) *Events*

The vanguard formed by the 14th Uhlans ran into some enemy elements, at the edge of the woods to the south of Chotyn, who offered only a weak resistance (a battalion of enemy infantry).

The march continued through the woods without incident up to Sitenka. The enemy held the bridge to the north of Srybno; the vanguard dismounted and took the passage; but the march had been very slow, it was dark and when the bulk of the division entered Srybno it was about 2100.

Some patrols sent to the south were welcomed by machine-gun fire; there was also fighting on the edge of Barania.

In these conditions, the division's commander hesitated to continue the prescribed movement; there was a discussion with the brigade and regiment commanders and, finally, everyone wandered around until late into the night.

Day of the 3rd map #3 – At the start of the day, the 3rd CB traveled to Barania and Krepiec, whilst the 14th Uhlans directed themselves to Michalowka. At this moment, the situation became confused and it is impossible to know what happened. The units were completely dispersed; the staff of the division moved itself constantly to try to get information, it was absolutely incapable of directing anything at all. The whole cavalry division was at the mercy of the least enemy counter-attack.

During the morning, contact was made in Barania with the 2nd CD which had arrived at midnight.

The two commanders of the cavalry divisions agreed to mount an attack on Radziwillow. But, at 0800, an order arrived to retire immediately to the north to hold the line of the Styr, from Brody (exclusive) to Grzymalowka (inclusive) and destroy Budienny's units which were still to the west of the Styr.

But, again, the discussions between the staffs of the Cavalry Corps and the division commanders were not finished. They considered whether it was better to attack Radziwillow and Brody between returning north. Canons could still be heard around Radziwillow: it was some armoured trains firing.

Finally, at 11:30 it was decided to retire north; the 2nd CD started the march, heading for the west bank of the Styr (but at Klekotow it ran into some enemy and lost its artillery and wireless).

The 1st CD units were still very dispersed around Krupiec, Michalowka and Kaspilka, and the colonel insisted again to try some action against Brody. The discussions continued and it was only at 1500 that the division started its march to region the region of Mytnica and Grzymalowka by Chotyn and Redkow.

The movement was covered to the west by a squadron which traveled by Sestratyn, Besodnia and Polunocznoje.

But the column, which had 5 regiments of cavalry with all their carts plus the convoy of the Cavalry Corps staff, was excessively long and the march very slow.

At the moment the rear-guard left Barania, an enemy detachment, perhaps a regiment strong, arrived at the gallop from the direction of Sestratyn in order to attack the column in the rear and left.

Some disorder manifested itself in the rear-guard, who tried to take the terrain in front, but the division's colonel, with the 12th Uhlans, organised the resistance. The machine-guns and dismounted men installed in the edges of the woods to the north-east of Sestratyn slowed the enemy, while the column passed painfully [slowly]; but when the rear-guard left, the enemy followed and infiltrated the woods looking to take the flanks.

The situation was particularly critical; because with the slightest accident of a cart on that narrow route, often cut with ditches, and there would have been a huge traffic jam.

When the rear-guard left the edge of the woods to the south of Chotyn and the column marched to Redkow, the enemy filled the edge of the woods to the south of Hill 214 with machine-guns and artillery and shot over open sights at the elements of the rear-guard. At this time, the shooting of the machine-guns was intense, and the men who were being held under the fire lost their morale and fled, individually at first, then by small groups and even by entire platoons. All the energy and *sang-froid* of the division's commander, who remained permanently with the rear-guard, was needed to prevent this retreat turning in to a true disaster.

Happily, darkness fell, permitting the last units of the division to slip away.

The situation was indescribable: the cavalry division was spread everywhere, part at Grzymalowka, part at Beresteczko, some on the roads. Some artillery and cavalymen only rejoined their units the next day. The carts of the staff with the officers' baggage were only found again some days later, 80 kilometres from the start point.

e) *Observations*

These two days allow space for a quantity of criticisms.

Firstly, the operation started two hours late, unforgivable if one considered that the command post of the Cavalry Corps at Grzymalowka was only 4 kilometres from that of the division.

The whole column was put on the march without being preceded by any patrols and with no information about the enemy. Being late, nothing was done to make up for lost time. If success was desired, it was

necessary to go as fast as possible, to reach the Brody-Bubno road quickly to cut the retreat of the enemy; this necessity was not felt, the march dragged along, making frequent and long stops; thus it was impossible to reach the objective by night time.

The vanguard did not inform sufficiently about what was happening; when it took Srybno, it considered its mission accomplished and stopped without orders from the division. When it considered continuing the march forward or staying on the spot, there was too much hesitation, too many discussions; the result was that almost all the night was spent wandering around the roads and fields.

The squadron sent to protect the eastern flank gave no information.

During the day of the 3rd, the situation was no better. When action started again in the morning, there was no idea of manoeuvre, no co-ordination of movements. Each unit, regiment or brigade, operated individually, being almost incapable of finding the division HQ which moved constantly without leaving any base.

One asks why the operation stopped when the enemy's line of retreat had finally been reached, when pushing onto Kremieniec might have hoped to give greater success. There again, when a decision was needed, there was hesitation and discussion! Precious time was lost, which was not wasted by the enemy. The result was the disaster to the 2nd CD and the 1st CD put for many hours in a very difficult situation from which it was pulled through thanks to the energy of its colonel.

And, during all these stops, it was not even known what was happening at Brody and Radziwillow.

When the rear-guard finally left the northern edge of the woods to the south of Chotyn, and the enemy took the flanks more and more while shooting intensely with machine-guns, the retreat was protected by machine-guns and horsemen who remained mounted without being put into skirmish formation. Some squadrons even remained in column of platoons under fire, fortunately badly directed. It is true that it was difficult to do otherwise, because isolated men in a critical situation will flee.

There was such disorder in the column that part went to Grzymalowka and the other part to Beresteczko; at no moment afterwards was the situation of the cavalry division as confused as it was that day.

It can be stated that if the enemy had known how to manoeuvre and attack totally, that retreat could have been transformed into an utter disaster for all the Cavalry Corps.

The squadron covering the western flank had not regulated its march to that of the column; it left at the trot; the Bolsheviks had let it pass and then afterwards come behind it to attack the column without anyone being warned.

Combat at Zoltance, 19 August

maps #4 and #5

A) *General information*

After tough combats on 13 August around Cholojow, the 1st CD retired to the west in the region of Mosty, Wielki and Sielec, watching the line of the Bug from Kamionka and Strumilowa to Krystynopol, but it almost completely lost contact with the enemy because reconnaissance was not ordered to maintain it.

Was the enemy heading up for Warsaw, or was it, on the contrary, heading down to Lvov? The commander of the division did not know.

On the 17th, it was learnt that Budienny was marching to Lvov with 5 CDs (4th, 6th, 8th, 11th and 14th CDs) and some infantry, looking to encircle the town. Certain elements, coming from the Kamionka and Strumilowa region had already reached the area around Dzibulki and Zoltance.

The bulk of the Cavalry Division was still in the region of Mosty, Wielki and Sielec. On the night of the 17th, the division's commander received the order to proceed the next day (18th) in the direction of Zolkiew and to get ready to attack the enemy's right flank.

But during the 18th, the 5th ID was violently attacked in the Kulikow region and, in the afternoon, when the 1st CD arrived at Zolkiew, the order was given to immediately go to Kulikow to assist the 5th ID. This division was composed mostly of mediocre troops and could not be counted on; it had already had for two days the 1st Brigade of the division at its disposition.

It was thought that, from west to east, that the Bolsheviks units were: 14th CD, elements of the 24th ID, 4th CD, 6th CD, 11th CD. The 8th CD was already to the south of Lvov.

The cavalry division spent the night in the following places:

HQ: Smerekow

1st CB: Wiesenberg (placed back by the 5th ID under the 1st CD)

6th CB: Smerekow

7th CB: Przemyslawki

The 38th IR was put provisionally under the 1st CD.

The 5th ID held Kulikow and to the east.

C) *Day of the 19th*

a) *Mission of the 1st CD (map #5)*

Attack the right flank of the enemy: final objective Zoltance.

The attack supported by two armoured trains on the railway line Lvov to Zoltance, and by a battalion of the 5th ID who would attack Remenow.

b) *Manoeuvre plan of the 1st CD's colonel*

Fix the enemy to the west with one brigade and outflank to the north with another brigade. One brigade in reserve.

c) *Execution*

6th CB to march on Zoltance by way of Hill 306 (2 kilometres north-east of Smerekow), Dzibulki and Hill 284 (north-west of Zoltance);

7th CB to march on Zoltance by way of Przedzrymiechy-Nahorce, Artasow and Hill 240.

38th IR: a battalion to support the attack of the 6th CB on Dzibulki and to afterwards cover the left flank of the CD.

One battalion to occupy Hill 306 (north-east of Smerekow) in case of a need to retire. One battalion, Zolkiew.

Attack hour: 0400

Reserve of the CD: 1st CB, at 0600 to Smerekow where it will receive orders.

d) *Events*

The brigades easily took Dzibulki, Przedzyniechy, Nahorce, Artasow and Mohylany; but, around midday, the enemy reacted vigorously to the elements of the 7th CB to the north of Artasow and the 8th Uhlans started to retire.

To relieve his centre, the colonel of the CD decided to act more vigorously on his left; he called up to him the reserve of the cavalry from which he took two regiments, which he gave to the 6th CB, with the order to push on Zoltance by Hill 284.

The movement was made, but with appalling slowness. It was time for the “obiad”; there were thoughts of drinking tea and having a bite to eat, and the 1st Uhlans had to be given the order to continue moving forward to take the heights 4 kilometres south-east of Dzibulki three times. Whilst the 1st Uhlans took their positions for the attack, the enemy retreated eastwards; further south, other elements including armoured cars, who had occupied Zwertow and Bulowka, fled at full speed to Zoltance.

The 6th CB, marching in the tracks of the enemy, penetrated Zoltance; but the bulk stopped at the entry to the village.

At this moment, the division’s colonel decided to leave one brigade at Zoltance facing north and go with the bulk of the division in the direction of Remenow, where combat continued.

But as soon as the colonel of the 6th CB gave the orders to his regiments to execute the movements, an enemy cavalry brigade and three artillery batteries were seen descending the slopes west of Hill 285, galloping in the direction of Zoltance. The batteries were immediately put in position and opened fire on the regiments of the 6th CB together with a section of artillery stationary in open terrain to the north-west of the village. The shooting was well ranged and heavy; plus there was an element of surprise, and the regiments, a little demoralised, retired in disorder towards Dzibulki, carrying with them elements of the 7th CB which were operating further south. It was impossible to stop the units before they arrived at Dzibulki where they met the infantry who had organised the defence of the village.

The situation hardly improved overnight; however, the 12th Uhlans had on their own initiative moved forward, but without obtaining any appreciable result.

During the action a plane landed near the 7th CB close to Artasow but crashed. Around nightfall, a second plane landed in the same region, but with more success. The information it gave indicated that, during the afternoon, the enemy had started to flee precipitously to the north. However, the counter-attack had allowed it to regroup, and it still solidly held Zoltance and Hill 284.

The CD spent the night at:

HQ: Przedzyniechy

1st CB: Dzibulki

6th CB: Przedzyniechy, heights 4 km SE of Dzibulki, Nahorce

7th CB: Artasow, Mohylany

38th IR: one battalion at each of Dzibulki, Smerekow, Zolkiew

During this combat, hard enough overall, the Bolshevik 14th and 4th CDs, surprised by the flank attack had been beaten. The counter-attack had been executed by a brigade of the 6th CD.

There were no prisoners taken.

Losses on the Polish side were heavy:

- 1 artillery officer killed; 3 regimental commanders wounded; 2 other officers wounded;
- A certain number of men killed and wounded;
- Noticeable losses to the horses.

e) *Observations*

The 19th was, on the whole, a great success for the 1st CD. The attack, arriving clear into the right flank of Budienny whilst he was pushing towards Lvov, stopped him clean in his forward movement, and forced a hasty retirement to the north. Moreover, at that time he received an order to regroup to the east of the Bug to attempt a later action in the direction of Crubieszow, in the right flank of the 3rd Army.

It is not too much to say that the attack of the 19th on Zoltance by the 1st CD saved the town of Lvov.

But the success made would have been larger and more decisive if certain faults had not been committed. In place of throwing back the Bolshevik 14th and 4th CDs, they could have been destroyed, if not completely, at least in part.

Generally, it can be said that the operation was not led vigourously enough; that the command did not dare engage totally to bust the enemy line, and when the enemy left to the east of Dzibulki, it was not pursued with all the desired energy; it was watched fleeing; a few elements only gave a semblance of pursuing but the enemy appeared to extricate itself without difficulty.

When the centre bent to the north of Artasow, and the reinforced 6th CB received the order to intensify its action on the enemy's right wing, it did not execute the order immediately; three times it was needed to order a regiment to attack, intolerable given the gravity of the situation. Happily, the enemy had lost confidence and decided itself to retreat.

When the attack was finally started, it was made on horseback, in skirmish formation, without any idea of what might be found in front of it; behind these lines in skirmish other units in dense formation followed at a small distance. What would have happened if the enemy machine-gunners had not judged it prudent to flee?

As for the artillery, it was impossible to give it orders. The brigade artillery commander was not near the brigade's colonel; the batteries were dispersed at random with no information on the situation. It is vital that the commander of the artillery remain near the commander of the brigade, and that he leaves the effective command, as regards execution, to his most senior subordinate. It is necessary to demand, in a well planned operation, the use of artillery in mass.

When the 6th CB stopped near Zoltance, it took no precautions, it looked neither to cover itself nor to inform itself. This lack of fore-thought allowed the counter-attack from the brigade of the Bolshevik's 6th CD to happen with all the surprise and effectiveness that could have been desired; at that time the only artillery available to the 6th CB was 2 guns; the others remained in the rear, no-one knew where, and when the enemy artillery opened fire, over open sights, heavy and precise on the Polish section [of guns], there was only one solution to prevent destruction – a retreat.

The same situation was met by the regiments; surprised, they were incapable of organising any sort of resistance, and their only thought was to find a response in a hasty retreat during the course of which men escaped individually, a very difficult thing to limit.

As concerns security during combat, this was left to the initiative of the subordinate units who, for some incomprehensible reason, did nothing. It was indispensable to cover with patrols to the north-east in the direction of Batiatycze and Zeldec.

No-one saw the armoured trains intervene in any fashion at all; the smoke made one think that they were in action at one time, but this action had not been concerted with that of the CD. There was no liaison between the division's commander and the armoured trains.

The presence of aeroplanes during the duration of the combat had rendered great service. The two planes that had appeared and used their machine-guns had contributed to accelerate the enemy's retreat. The Bolsheviks were, indeed, vulnerable to aerial shooting. Besides, in particularly covered and cut terrain, only an aeroplane can give precise information on the enemy.

To give maximum results, a full signal code must be established between the planes and the cavalry.

As for the Bolsheviks, the counter-attack of the brigade from the 6th CD had been executed in a remarkable fashion. There was a lot of liveliness in the cavalry regiments; the artillery was deployed and opened fire very quickly. The shooting had been perfectly ranged in seconds.

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Combats of Komarow, Wolica-Sniatycka, 31 August

maps #4 and #6

A) *General information* (résumé of preceding events)

After the combats of the 19th, Budienny had received an order to retire to the north and to concentrate east of the Bug to later try an action in the direction of Grubieszow (right wing of the 3rd Army). During this time, his 24th ID had reached the area of Mosty-Wielkie, whilst further west his 44th ID was reaching Tomaszow.

Up to the 22nd, there was no contact with Budienny's cavalry; that day contact was regained at Cholojow (an offensive reconnaissance made by a regiment which captured some prisoners).

On the 23rd, an attack in the region of Mosty-Wielkie and Krystynopol completely defeated the enemy's 24th ID.

An order found in a cart allowed the situation of 3 enemy cavalry divisions to be determined:

4th CD: already to the west of the Bug around Boratyn, Sznitkow, Zabcze

6th CD: east of the Bug between Krystynopol and Dobrotwor

11th CD: east of the Bug between Dobrotwor and Kamionka

14th CD: no information

On the 25th, it seemed that there was no change in the situation of the enemy cavalry; the 24th and 44th IDs had retired to the Bug. During this time, the Polish 1st CD formed with the 13th ID a group placed under the command of General Haller, commander of the 13th ID. [NB: this is Stanisław Haller, not Józef Haller].

At this time, the situation of the Group was:

1st CD Staff: Belz

6th CB: Belz, Zuzel, Waniow

7th CB: Staff and two regiments at Rusinow

1 regiment: Mosty-Wielkie (observation of the Bug)

38th IR: Belz

The 13th ID, which had finished its disembarkment [presumably from trains] in the region of Rawa-Ruska started to concentrate in the region of Korozyn and Krzewica before then traveling north-east.

During the day of the 26th, some reconnaissance parties learnt that the enemy was evacuating the east bank of the Bug south of Krystynopol. During the day of the 27th, the enemy attacked the elements of the 6th CB which had pushed on to Chlopatyn and Mycow, but it was repulsed, and, overnight on the 27th the situation of the cavalry division was:

HQ: Worochta

6th CB: Budynin, Chlopatyn

7th CB: Worochta

38th IR: Belz, Zuzel, Waniow, Bezecow, Zabcze

On the 28th, the 13th ID's general learnt that Budienny had crossed the Bug with all his cavalry and that, marching in the direction of Zamosc and Lublin, he had already reached Tyszowce (about 35 kilometres south-east of Zamosc).

The order was given to all the Group to march the next day north-east in pursuit of Budienny.

On the 29th, the 1st CD made its movement, with Tyszowce as the objective, but pushing first to the north-east to repulse towards Sokal the enemy elements indicated to the west of the Bug.

Itinerary: Rusin, Warez, Oszczew, Dolgobyczew, Radostow, Nabroz, Tyszowce.

The weather was foul; the rain poured down, the roads were completely broken down and the bulk of the division was not able to reach Tyszowce. One regiment only was pushed out to that point, where it captured some booty.

During this time the 13th Infantry Division was carried to Siemierz by way of Laszczow. Information was received that Budienny had attacked Zamosc without success and that a part of his units were in the region of Komarow and Perespa.

B) *Situation on the night of the 30th*

On the 30th, the cavalry division continued its movement westwards to reach the following positions at night:

Staff: Wolica, Brzozowa

6th Brigade: Wolica, Brzozowa, Zubowice

7th Brigade: Komarow [on road half way between Zubowice and Labunie]

The 13th Infantry Division had reached the region Dabrowa, Janowka, Wola-Labunska. [approx Majdan Sielec]

Patrols were in contact everywhere with the enemy along the line: Labunie, north of Komarow, Sniatycze, Perespa [Labunie then basically along the line of the river]

Peasants made it known that Budienny himself had spend the night of the 29th/30th at Komarow and that, during the 30th, he had left for Dub.

The operation planned by Budienny had not succeeded; arriving at Zamosc, he ran into elements of the 10th Infantry Division, who had organised the town and who were well placed to defend it; so, from the 30th, he had started to retire towards the east, in the direction of Grubieszow, leaving his 6th division in the region south-east of Zamosc to cover his southern flank.

During the day of the 30th, the general commanding the 3rd Army gave the order to the Haller Group [ie 1st CD and 13th ID] to attack the southern flank of Budienny the next day, the enemy being placed in the region of Zamosc by the 10th ID.

C) *Day of the 31st*

The general commanding the group [ie Haller] gave the cavalry division the following orders:

Attack in the direction of Wolica-Sniatycza, Czesniki, final objective Sitno (some 10 kilometres north-east of Zamosc).

The 13th ID was to attack in the direction of Zamosc, the march axis being the Tomaszow to Zamosc road.

Attack hour: 0600.

These orders unfortunately arrived very late and the 1st CD was not able to completely co-ordinate its attack with that of the 13th ID.

a) *manoeuvre planned by the colonel commanding the CD* - was not given; he intended simply to march with the bulk of his division to the indicated objective, with a regiment covering to the East.

b) *execution* - at 0800, the colonel commanding the cavalry division sent the following order:

The bulk of the division will go immediately to Sitno, by way of Komarow, Wolica-Sniatycza, Czesniki.

Order of march: 7th Brigade, 6th Brigade.

The movement will be covered to the East by a regiment of the 6th Brigade which will travel to Hill 246 (2 km SE of Czesniki) by way of Sniatycze, Kol-Berezki.

The 13th ID will attack Zamosc, by the Tomaszow to Zamosc road.

c) *developments of the operation* - The 7th Brigade, leaving Komarow, took Wolica-Sniatycka after a tough combat on Hill 231 and carried on to Czesniki. The vanguard was already at the outskirts of the village when the enemy reacted and forced it to reply hastily to the south, losing some men prisoner.

The enemy artillery intervened actively, also causing some losses.

About 1000, the situation was:

The 7th CB held Wolica-Sniatycka; with some scouts to the north of the village.

The 6th CB was arriving to the west of Hill 231.

Some elements of the 13th ID held the woods and heights south-east of Brudek.

Combat was engaged with enemy, supported by their artillery, which held the heights and woods to the south of Czesniki.

Suddenly, in the eastern edges of the woods, to the west of Hill 246, there was spotted groups of enemy cavalry who bustled about and who then suddenly, in 2 long columns, launched a charge from the direction of Brudek, collecting on the way some scouts of the 7th CB. They were soon shot at by the 7th brigade's artillery set up to the north-east of Wolica-Sniatycka, and some pieces of the 13th ID's artillery in position to the east of Labunie. Furthermore, the infantry of the 13th ID, clinging to the terrain, did not let themselves become too worked up. In these conditions, the enemy, judged to be about a brigade, did not push for hand-to-hand combat and preferred to disappear into the woods.

But, on the other side, around Kol-Berezki, Hill 236, some other groups were seen, manoeuvring at the gallop, headed first to Sniatycze, from where they directed themselves then towards Wolica-Sniatycza, intending to attack the right flank of the 7th CB. But the elements of the 7th brigade there remained stationary; some machine-guns in position fired from the first appearance of the enemy cavalry who did not insist, and the attack did not take place. At that moment, the 7th CB fell into some disorder. The artillery and some units recrossed the river and swirled around in some panic towards Hill 231, but the situation was quickly re-established. Indeed, it was not alarming; not only did the enemy not attempt to intensify his action, but the 6th CB was ready to intervene if an accident took place.

The enemy felt that it wasn't strong enough and that things were lost for it; in those conditions, it decided on retreat. About 1100, it retired towards Czesniki and Majdan, covering its movement with rear-guards composed mostly of machine-guns and artillery. Budienny himself had been wounded in his left hand, north of Komarow, by a prematurely exploding hand grenade. It had also suffered some losses. On the body of a colonel was found an order signed by Budienny, saying that the situation was extremely critical, retreat almost cut off and that it was necessary to force a passage at all costs.

The losses were heavy for the 7th Brigade, 8 to 10 officers and forty-odd men *hors de combat*.

From this time the 7th Brigade became the reserve, and the march north restarted, the 6th Brigade leading. To the left, the 13th ID, who had learnt that it would have to move east that evening, stopped in the middle of the fight, leaving the 1st CD to continue the operation alone.

When the 6th Brigade crossed the crests of Hill 246, it found itself under intense artillery and machine-gun fire, coming from the rear-guards hidden in the woods to the west of the village of Majdan and to the south of Czesniki. It stopped, not knowing what to do; the artillery was set up on the southern slopes of Hill 246, the machine-guns were placed in order to respond to the enemies', but the decision could not be taken sufficiently quickly to attack by manoeuvring to the right, in order to prevent the enemy from continuing his movement to the east and north-east and capturing prisoners and material; there was an inclination to wait for the enemy rear-guards to themselves abandon the terrain, in order to go straight ahead.

Then, looking to the north from Hill 246, there could be seen hundreds of enemy carts on the Zamosc - Miaczyn road and on the edges of the woods to the north of Czesniki who were awaiting events, not knowing where to go. They formed a tempting and easy target for the 1st CD; but to get them, it was necessary to act quickly, and not let the moment escape. On the other hand, the enemy rear-guards, feeling that the situation was critical, resisted stubbornly, all the more stubborn as Budienny himself, wounded, was waiting anxiously in a horse-cart in Czesniki for a solution to arise. The roads were so bad that he had had to abandon his personal car, a superb brand-new Pierse, that was found the next day bogged down in a bad track.

Thus it was necessary to move rapidly, take Czesniki and traverse it to reach the cart on the Zamosc-Miaczyn road.

The colonel of the 6th Brigade decided to attack; he sent a regiment to Czesniki; whilst with the two other regiments he marched by way of Majdan and Niewirkow, forcing the enemy rear-guards to retreat. The convoys, feeling that the situation was becoming desperate for them, started to flee in all direction in small groups, and even alone, risking becoming stuck in the marshes. The 6th Brigade continued; 2 and a half regiments were in a line along the front Czesniki - Niewirkow and, within two hours, they hoped to see part of Budienny's convoys fall into their hands. Two squadrons of the 1st Uhlans were the reserve for the brigade.

On the other hand, the 7th Brigade, reserve for the division, had not yet operated since the morning's combats. It was 17:00 and from this time, it was hoped to engage this brigade to support and prolong to the east the action of the 6th. But it was well scattered and nowhere useful. The artillery of the 6th brigade did not follow its brigade, it remained without support, in position on Hill 246.

The 7th Brigade set off thus towards the east, but at the moment it arrived to the south-east of the village of Majdan, there was great excitement in the rear and to the left, in the direction of Czesniki. The sound of the 6th Brigade's artillery firing and some rifle shots could be heard.

Horsemen were seen coming back out of Czesniki towards Hill 246 and, further west, a column of enemy cavalry who, galloping on the plateau to the south-west of the village, were looking to take the woods situated to the south. But the artillery fire was precise, and horses fell; the horsemen disconcerted fled, and the column, surprised by the accurate fire, turned about; but, after some moments, doubtless on a superior order, it made a new about-turn and galloped to the woods, no doubt with the intention of attacking the artillery abandoned to itself.

The situation appeared worrying.

Immediately, the colonel of the division gave the order for the 7th Brigade to about-turn and head to Hill 246 to face the attack. The movement was executed and the 7th Brigade took its position to cover the artillery, who, with admirable calm, continued to fire on the enemy.

The column made it into the wood despite the fire, and left soon the edge. It was accompanied by a second force of about the same size (1 regiment); both being subjected to the fire of the artillery and machine-guns of the 7th Brigade. The shots were well aimed; horsemen were flung into the air, and, all of a sudden, a wavering manifested itself in one of the two columns; all the tail stopped and no longer seemed to want to follow the units ahead. However, after several seconds, it resumed its forward motion, and the two long columns by[?] platoons rushed shouting and waving their weapons towards the Polish brigade. This was in position on the southern slopes of Hill 246, half-deployed facing west, the left slightly echeloned, 8th Uhlans to the right, 9th Uhlans and 2nd Hussars echeloned to the left; in the rear, to the right, the two squadrons of the 1st Uhlans who were the reserve of the 6th Brigade. The Bolshevik columns continued their approach at a good gallop, while some Poles of one of the regiments particularly tested in the morning, silently turned their horses to the rear and left the battlefield.

The moment was particularly tragic; if at that time there was a charge; then *mêlée*, combat with cold steel and the Polish brigade, whose morale seemed a little shaken, certainly destroyed; then the retreat of the 6th Brigade was cut, all the divisional train taken; in short, complete disaster.

But when the two Bolshevik columns reached 250 metres from the Polish regiments and the shock seemed inevitable, the enemy stopped, shouting and brandishing their arms without daring to attack.

By way of imitation, the Polish horsemen started to cry "hurrah" and shake their arms, but no-one moved, and one watched this for some seconds without knowing at all what was going to happen. Suddenly, one of the Polish regiments, of which the chief had no doubt kept more of his *sang-froid* than the others, started forward at the pace, then at the trot trailing the others after. The Bolsheviks moved forward also and there was a *mêlée*. Everyone crossed each other, turned, swirled, exchanged pistol shots which felled several victims, but the mass of the horsemen forgot that they had a sabre or a lance from which the least blow can be fatal to a less well trained adversary.

Suddenly the Bolsheviks feeling that they did not have the advantage, decided to leave the battlefield to the Poles, left the *mêlée* and fled towards the woods from where they had come, pursued by the Polish horsemen,

forgetting again that they had a sabre or a lance. And during all this pursuit, the Bolshevik machine-guns installed to the west of Hill 246 shot indiscriminately into the mob, without great results fortunately. The combat was finished; the Poles remained masters of the battlefield; they thus had the victory, but they had not destroyed the Bolshevik brigade which organised itself somewhat in the shelter of the woods. There, again, it was shot at by the artillery.

At this time, a battalion of infantry in the area of Brudek and that was worried about what was happening headed north and entered the scene, but it was too late.

Night fell; during the combat the 6th Brigade had abandoned the pursuit of the Bolshevik convoys and returned to join the 7th. The cavalry division remained some time on the field to put the units back in order and transfer then to Tyszowce as it had been ordered.

Everyone congratulated themselves on the success obtained, due solely to the *sang-froid* of a single man, the commander of the 8th Uhlans.

But, during the night, Budienny managed to escape his brigade and most of the convoys. However, a certain number of carts became trapped in the marsh and the drivers burned them on the spot.

The affair ended badly enough for the Bolsheviks. It cost them a large enough number of carts, even the car of Budienny, and around 200 wounded were retrieved the next day from Czesniki; as for the dead, it was impossible to evaluate the number. The big boss, wounded himself, only escaped from the Poles by a miracle.

On the Polish side, there were few losses in men. The two squadrons of the 1st Uhlans, placed on the right wing on the battle-line and taken in the flank by the enemy machine-guns, lost a certain number of horses.

But that day, outside the material losses caused to the enemy, had been a great result; it opened the era of the failure of Budienny; it removed from him all the moral superiority that he had been able to acquire during the first combats; it faded his star which little by little extinguished completely, but which one would see relight and shine again some months later on the Crimean front.

Here again, the results would have been more decisive if there had been proof of more initiative, more vigour in the pursuit, and if the 13th ID had not been thus stopped in the middle of the battle without knowing what was happening, not only to the 1st CD but also, and above all, on the road Zamosc to Grubieszow. The cavalry division would perhaps have been able also, to say to the 13th ID: the road Zamosc to Miaczyn is filled with enemy convoys, I ask you to continue your movement to the north.

Observations: the principal faults committed were:

- lack of liaison between the 13th ID and the 1st CD.
- the order to attack arrived at least two hours late to the cavalry division, and at night the 13th ID did not know at all what was happening.
- lack of co-ordination between the action of the 7th Brigade and that of the 6th. In the morning the 7th Brigade, who attacked alone before the 6th was in place, could have been crushed by the enemy.
- lack of vigour in the pursuit.
- lack of general direction in the combat. The subordinate units did not take sufficient account of events. The commander did not seek to inform them.
- the artillery did not follow the cavalry; the liaison was not sufficiently tight; two batteries were left alone, without any support, and without any cover to the west.
- lack of decisive spirit, the *coup d'oeil* [ability to see clearly in an instant], in the evening when the Bolshevik attack was launched; at the time when the enemy columns were under artillery fire, when one of them spun and hesitated, a true cavalry chief, rapidly judging the situation, would have seized the occasion to lead all his unit to the attack and success would have been assured.

Finally, the *mêlée* which was produced demonstrated that the horsemen were not at all prepared for combat with cold steel. It was necessary to give them confidence in their arm, and make them abandon the sabre side for the point [ie try to skewer their opponent with the point of the blade, not slash him].

Combat of Tyszowce

maps #4 and #7

A) *Situation of the cavalry division*

In the night of the 31st, the cavalry division, after the combat fought with the brigade of the Bolshevik 6th CD to the north of Komarow, received the order to march immediately to Tyszowce (30 kilometres south-east of Zamosc) which it had left on the afternoon of the 30th in order to march towards Zamosc.

After a march which lasted all night, the cavalry division appeared in the morning of 1 September in front of Tyszowce, but it was found that enemy infantry had already arrived there the previous day. What had happened?

When Budienny had left the Bug to march on Zamosc, he had left on the river his two infantry divisions, the 24th and 44th. But, after the 28th, thinking success was assured, he had given them the order to march in his footsteps. In the interval, the 1st CD had been able to slip between the cavalry and the infantry of the Horse Army, completely cutting for three days the communications of the 4 cavalry divisions and capturing carts and munitions. In the evening of the 29th, it had taken in Tyszowce a sort of artillery park containing four canons, of which three had been captured two days before from the Kuban Cossack Brigade, who were fighting in the Polish ranks.

To the north of the 1st CD, the 13th ID had gone to Wakijow and Wronowice. To the south, nothing; some elements of the 10th ID were in the process of disembarking in the region of Rawa-Ruska; there was no news of the 38th IR and an artillery battery, left some days before in the area of Belz.

The situation on 1 September was:

HQ: Przewale

6th CB: Sobol

7th CB: Przewale

In the afternoon, the Kuban Cossack Brigade, of two regiments (approximately 1,000 men), was put at the disposition of the division. It was quartered in Czartowczyk and Czartowiec.

This brigade had a history not lacking in interest. The core was a brigade of cossacks of the Kuban and Terek, which had surrendered entire to the Poles, with men, arms and baggage, at the time in June when Budienny had forced the Polish lines south-west of Kiev. Around this core had grouped other cossacks who, in the course of the operations of June and August, had passed to the Polish side. All assembled at Kalisz, had been slowly armed, equipped, remounted and then sent to the front waiting for when they could be transported to Wrangel.

Around the 26th, this brigade, with a horse battery of 4 canons, came from Zamosc to the east to ensure the liaison between the 3rd Army and the Haller Group. On the 26th, it was at Tyszowce where the officers and men had such a good time that they finished up drunk; when suddenly someone spoiled the party. That someone was Budienny who, with thousands of cavalymen, fell on the unfortunate cossacks. They, in their drunkenness, were almost incapable of defending themselves, however, they courageously accepted the fight, but lost 3 canons, a certain number killed and wounded and some 50 prisoners, who were shot without pity by Budienny. The bulk of the brigade then retired to the west. Budienny gone, the brigade arrived at the 1st CD in fine form to satisfy its vengeance.

All the brigade looked fine; the men were big, strong, vigorous, newly dressed, wearing a nice Russian cap with red or orange band; the horses were in a good state, the officers were alert and vigorous and seemed perfect. All had a smile on their lips, sang, galloped and waited with impatience the time to pit themselves against the enemy. Unfortunately, they lacked many things – machine-guns, money, carts, mobile kitchens, arms for the officers.

Nevertheless, it was a magnificent unit and formed a precious force for the 1st CD.

B) Situation of the enemy

During the day of the 1st, Budienny's cavalry divisions seemed to be retiring to the vicinity of Grubieszow. The 6th CD, well-proven, seemed to be concentrated in the area of Sakryn, Modryn and Modryniec. Further south, Tysrowce was held by a battalion of infantry supported by 2 canons; further south again, Laszczow, unoccupied during the day was occupied during the night by infantry marching from east to west.

C) Mission of the CD for the day of the 2nd

The Group's general decided to attack Tysrowce in the morning of the 2nd with a brigade of infantry and the cavalry division.

The infantry brigade would fix the enemy by attacking Tysrowce from the west, whilst the 1st CD, crossing the river at Laszczow would march in a north-easterly direction to cut the line of retreat of the enemy elements.

Attack hour for the infantry: 1000. By this time, the 1st CD was to be in a position to operate to the east of Tysrowce.

D) Manoeuvre plan of the division's general

Force the river at Laszczow, attack east with another brigade, the third brigade staying in reserve for the division.

E) Execution

The division would march to Laszczow by way of Sobol and Czartowiec, in the order: 6th CB, Cossack Brigade, 7th CB. Departure 0700.

The 6th CB was told to take Laszczow and to then move on to Nabroz and Molozow to cover the right flank of the Cossack Brigade who, after crossing the river behind the 6th, were to march to Lipowiec, by Dobusek, to cut the enemy's retreat. The 7th, as reserve, was to remain at Laszczow.

F) Events

The 6th CB took weakly held Laszczow easily enough, and carried out its objectives in pushing back an enemy rear-guard. It was obliged to cover to the south with a regiment, because on the edge of Zimno enemy infantry and cavalry had been indicated.

The Cossack Brigade crossed the river behind the 6th without any difficulties and headed northwards.

As it reached Dobusek, the infantry brigade launched its attack and took Tysrowce with some losses, as the terrain was difficult. The cossacks made rapid speed north. Arriving at the northern slopes of Hill 241, they saw the Bolshevik infantry flowing out of Laszczow towards Lipowiec.

The cossacks, in "lava", launched to the attack with wild energy, stopping from time to time to shoot from horseback, while their single canon supported them. Using the terrain perfectly, they manoeuvred in little groups, and even individually, looking to cut the enemy's retreat. The enemy infantry started to try to escape, but hounded and squeezed closely by the cavalry, they did not wait for the collision; all of a sudden, they threw down their arms and equipment, and ran at full speed to the rear to get away. About 100 of them, with a machine-gun and some carts fell into the cossacks' hands who had only two men slightly wounded.

The rest of the enemy battalion succeeded in crossing the river and fled to the north in the woods.

On its side, the 6th CB had also captured some prisoners and 4 machine-guns.

All the prisoners and material belonged to a brigade of the 44th ID.

G) Observations

The 6th CB took Laszczow without the support of artillery. This was placed too far down the column, and, given the bad state of the road, was not able to get out of the column fast enough intervene. So the attack lasted for a while and the Cossack Brigade was still only at Dobusek when the infantry attack commenced.

This unit showed itself to be first-class cavalry. The march was made perfectly, lines of scouts filled the crests, behind which marched the bulk in articulated¹ formations. The bounds were clearly laid out²: the utilisation of terrain very good. At the moment of the attack, of remarkable energy, no-one let himself be impressed by the machine-guns. The men showed very good initiative, manoeuvring themselves at good speed in order to break the resistance.

Unfortunately, officers and men often used the extended trot, in place of the gallop, and in these conditions the fatigue on the horses was enormous. It is certain that the horses of this brigade, which lacked some training, would not be able to furnish such efforts for a long time³.

It was regrettable that this unit had not been allocated all the necessary material.

¹ *formations articulées* – which is “articulated formations” with articulated meaning exactly the same as in English

² Or, “the thrusts were clearly marked out”, either way, the French seems clear but I still don’t understand it

³ I’m iffy on horse stuff, but didn’t cossacks use a different, and superior, trotting technique?

Raid on Korosten, 8 to 13 October
Executed by the Cavalry Corps - 1st and 2nd CDs

map #8

A) Situation of the Cavalry Corps

On 2 October, the situation of the Cavalry Corps was:

Corps and 1st CD HQs: Jozefin (suburb of Korzec)

1st CD: 6th CB, south-east of Korzec (Deraznia region)

7th CB: north of Korzec (Jozefin, Owczdow, Golownica region)

2nd CD: One brigade western part of Nowogrod-Wolynski, around Koreckie (west of Nowogrod)

One brigade Urla (25 kilometres south of Nowogrod) having as its mission to attempt an operation on Adamowka (40 kilometres south-east of Nowogrod, on the Zytomir road)

B) Information on the enemy

The situation of the Bolsheviks was still confused; elements of the 44th ID still held the eastern part of Nowogrod, and the terrain further south. To the north of the Nowogrod to Zytomir road, elements of the 7th ID were to be found. Budienny was concentrated in the Berdyczew and Zytomir region, where he was reforming. In sum, no information of value on the enemy forces.

C) Mission of the Cavalry Corps

On 2 October, the colonel commanding the Corps received from the general commanding the Northern Group of the 6th Army (General Jendrzejewski, in Ludsk) an order to execute a raid inside the Bolshevik lines, be it on Korosten, be it Berdyczew, or be it Zytomir, but preferably the latter, which seemed the most interesting for obtaining information of what was happening in the Kiev region – the most amazing rumours were circulating about a Bolshevik evacuation of all the Kiev region, obliged to flee in front of the revolting peasant bands, in particular the Makhno's bands, and Wrangel's troops.

However, the colonel commanding the Cavalry Corps, who had been left a certain initiative, fixed his choice on Korosten which seemed to have a greater immediate interest from a military point of view. Korosten was indeed a hub of important railways, assuring the communications between Kiev, Owruetz, Sarny, Nowogrod-Wolynski and Zytomir. If this point was destroyed, the supply in rations and munitions for all the Bolshevik units which found themselves still in the region of Olewsk and Nowogrod would be considerably hampered.

D) Intention of the colonel commanding the Cavalry Corps

Before undertaking action against Korosten, the Corps' colonel was anxious to concentrate his two divisions in the Nowogrod area and clean the region occupied by the enemy to the north-east of the town. Plus it was necessary to wait for rations, munitions and explosives.

During the 3rd, the 1st CD traveled east to reach the following positions:

Staff: Koreckie (10 kilometres west of Nowogrod)

6th CB: Kol-Mariani and Wyniszczce (one regiment at Mogilnia)

7th CB: Krasilowka and Lubrowika (one regiment at Ciwilka)

The 2nd CD had:

One brigade at Philypowicze and Nowogrod;

One brigade and the division staff at Jarun, with one regiment on reconnaissance at Zytomir.

During the 4th, some enemy elements belonging to the 7th ID were noted around Huka, Fedorowka and Kropiwna, while units of the 44th ID were further south in the Romanowka region.

Aviation observed 4 armoured trains on the Nowogrod - Korosten line, around Jabloniec; it noted nothing unusual in the Berdyczew and Zytomir areas.

The colonel of the Cavalry Corps decided to undertake the next day, the 5th, an operation against the enemy infantry indicated to the north and east of Nowogrod.

During the 5th, the planned operation was led by the 1st CD in the direction of Federowka and Klara:

6th CB: objective Fedorowka by Mogilnia, Huka, Katerinowka and Wierznica.

7th CB: objective Klara by Mogilnia, Huka, Katerinowka and Staraja-Huta. This brigade leading.

A brigade of the 2nd CD would attack Tupolcy by way of Kropiwna.

The attack started and was led in good conditions. There were charges on horseback combined with machine-gun fire, all very well done, in the region of Huka and of Niemelanka.

The booty collected was nearly 800 prisoners, belonging to four different infantry regiments, and 6 machine-guns. Losses were 7 killed and 30-odd wounded.

That night, the positions were:

Corps and 1st CD HQs: Uzaczyn

1st CD: 6th CB: Uzaczyn, Fedorowka

7th CB: Zaczynskaja-Huta, Niemelanka

2nd CD: Staff and one brigade: Srtjowa, Kamany

Other brigade: Romanowka, Kropiwna

During the 6th, a large number of Bolshevik infantry surrendered. Among them, an officer, a former Tsarist army officer, stated that part of Budienny's army would cross to the Polish side, whilst the rest were retreating east.

The rations still had not arrived, the men lacked bread, sugar and coffee, but there was no revolt.

During the 7th, the presence of a Baszkir brigade was signaled in the Rohaczew region (25 kilometres south of Nowogrod), this brigade had replaced a cossack brigade that wanted to talk with the Poles.

Some elements of the 7th ID occupied Staraja-Huta, Kijanki, Simony, Andrejowicze and Usolusy.

The munitions and rations finally arrived; the action against Korosten was decided for the next day, the 8th.

The positions of units was that indicated for the 5th; no accurate information was known about the enemy, nor about the town of Korosten itself.

Execution of the raid

Day of the 8th

The action against Korosten, which is about 100 kilometres north-east of Nowogrod-Wolynski, had as goals:

- a) production of a large moral effect on the enemy;
- b) destruction of the town's important railway station and the lines that led from there;
- c) destruction of the garrison;
- d) seizure of the armoured trains on the Korosten to Nowogrod line.

This operation was a raid of great energy inside the enemy lines. There would be contact with enemy elements. In order to succeed fully, it had to be led rapidly and vigourously to try to keep the benefit of surprise.

A) Intention of the commander of the Corps

To attack before dawn, from all four sides of the town at the same time, to attempt to surprise the enemy. Then to remain the least possible time in the region and return searching to destroy the elements of the 7th ID which might still be found in the region north of Nowogrod.

In the night preceding the attack, it would be necessary to destroy the railway lines in order to cut the retreat of the armoured trains.

B) *Execution*

The approach march would take two days, the 8th and 9th. The attack was planned for the morning of the 10th.

Dispositions to realise the night of the 8th:

Corps and 1st CD HQs: Kol-Karolinowka

1st CD: 6th CB: Kol-Karolinowka, Antonowka, Kol-Majdan (by way of Federowka, Werby, Kyjanki)

7th CB: Usolusy, Seniawka (by way of Niemelanka, Simony, Baraszy, Bobrica)

2nd CD: Zubrinka, Szelnawaja, Kol-Alexandrowka, Koszelowka (via Kropiwna, Tesnowka, Soroczew, Kol-Neumanowka)

Departure: 0800.

C) *Events*

In the morning, about 0600, while the 7th CB prepared to depart, it was attacked at Niemelanka by enemy infantry. It still started the march, leaving 2 squadrons in contact with the enemy to cover its movement. Booty: 15 prisoners. Losses: 4 wounded.

It was said, for what it was worth, that the HQ of the 7th ID was in Korosten.

The 2nd CD was a little worried around Kropiwna by elements of the Baszkir brigade.

The movements were made in good conditions and, that night, the planned positions were realised without difficulty.

Days of the 9th and 10th

A) *Intention of the Corps commander*

He intended to concentrate his divisions during the night of the 9th, in the Uszomir and Cholosno region, and to attack Korosten the morning of the 10th, before sunrise.

The positions to reach for the night of the 9th were:

Corps and 1st CD HQ: Uszomir

1st CD: 6th CB: Uszomir (itinerary – Antonowka, Suchaja-Wola, Krajewszczyzna, Krasnogorka, Uszomir)

7th CB: Pukaczewka (itinerary – Sieniewka, Baranowka, Ryszewka, Pukaczewka)

2nd CD: region of Cholosno, Domotocz and Klobicz (itinerary – Ternicy, Rudnia-Szlachowaja, Ruda-Ryzywska, Rudnia-Zakomornia, Kropiwna, Lisowszczyzna, Iwanowka)

On the 10th the divisions would attack Korosten concentrically: 6th CB from the south, 7th CB from the west, one brigade of the 2nd CD from the east, the other from the north.

The first elements which entered the stations would try their utmost to render them unusable.

As well, each division was ordered to destroy during the night of 9/10th a certain number of railway lines:

1st CD: 6th CB: The line to Nowograd, around Krasnopol; the line to Zytomir, to the east of Mogilanskaja

7th CB: The line to Nowograd, around Uszyca

2nd CD: The line to Kiev, to the south of Chotynowka; the line to Owczuz, to the west of Niemerowka

B) *Events*

The units started as ordered, crossing a splendid region, scattered with high forests, meadows and enclosed fields, which as a result was heavily covered and cut. Everywhere, peasants indicated the passage of Bolshevik infantry in the previous days.

Between Krasnogorka and Uszomir, the 6th CB contacted elements of enemy infantry who retreated to north. Prisoners said that they had heard from their officers that an armistice had been signed.

At Uszomir, the 14th Uhlans captured 40 prisoners and 4 machine-guns.

It is unknown what happened to the 7th CB and the 2nd CD.

However, the 6th CB was 15 kilometres from the objective of the attack, in full contact with the enemy. So, during the night, the alert could be given to the garrison of Korosten and the armoured trains. The next morning at the attack time, there could be a surprise; a serious, organised resistance if the enemy was strong, or a completely evacuated town if it was weak. In either case, the success of the operation risked being severely compromised. In this situation, the colonel commanding the Corps decided to push immediately on to Korosten.

The order to continue the movement was transmitted to everybody; it was 1630. But the 7th CB and the 2nd CD might perhaps be far away.

All the 6th CB started immediately to march and met the enemy again around Mogilno, while night slowly fell. The vanguard pushed on to Czlowka, which it passed, but it collided with enemy infantry and machine-guns, entrenched approximately 300 metres north of the level crossing. It was close to 1900.

The men of the 14th Uhlans dismounted, and headed along the Korosten road, supported by a canon. But pinned down by the enemy fire, they were obliged to stop. The captain commanding the detachment and an under-officer were killed, many men wounded. During this, the whistles of armoured trains could be heard in the distance which seemed to be cause for alarm. But they did not intervene in the combat. A canon was set up on the line to Zytomir to receive them in case they had the intention of arriving up close. In front was the complete unknown. No-one knew what was in Korosten, nor the state of the terrain. So combat was launched completely blind.

About 2100, the 2nd CD made it known that it was very tired, that the artillery was unable to follow, and that in the conditions it would only be able to leave its quarters at midnight. That would allow it to be in front of its attack objectives at around 0400. On the other side, no news from the 7th CB. The colonel thus decided to put off the attack until the next day, at 0330. With two or three officers of his staff, he passed the night at the level crossing. From time to time the air was torn by formidable explosions which indicated the execution of the planned destructions [of the railways].

At 0330, the attack started again, led by the 14th, the 12th and three squadrons of the 1st Uhlans. It was supported by a canon. There remained, in total as reserve, at the disposition of the colonel leading the Corps, two squadrons of the 1st Uhlans. The enemy reacted with infantry and machine-gun fire and the artillery of an armoured train, which fired with a deafening noise. The infantrymen stationed to the north of the level crossing were killed, and the attack moved in the direction of Korosten, across difficult terrain which was covered and particularly cut. There was almost no losses to the attacking detachments.

Around 0530, all the southern part of the town was taken, prisoners flowed in large numbers, while many carts were seized which contained all sorts of material (rations, bicycles, archives of the 17th IB and 51st IR).

At 0700, the entire town was in the power of the 6th CB. The armoured train that had shot from the region of the station fled towards Kiev. The haul was 100 prisoners, some horses and a dozen carts. As for the 7th CB, it had made during its progress 40 prisoners, including the Chief of Staff for the 19th IB and the Chief Liaison Officer of the 7th ID who was rejoining his unit. It was only at 1900, at Pukaczewka, that it received the order to head to Korosten; at 0300 it reached the western edge of the town, but it was only able to play a weak part in the action, because the canon which supported the attack of the 6th CB, which was firing blind, had sent some shells its way.

The 2nd CD, on the contrary, had not made any contact with the enemy [on the way]; it had had a very large stage to march; it arrived tired enough in the region of Cholosno at nightfall, with the horses very tired,

principally the artillery horses, which prevented it from immediately following the road to Korosten. At midnight it set off, leaving its artillery in quarters. At 0400, its elements were in place, 8th CB to the north on the Owruicz road; 9th CB to the east.

It took an active part in the combat and had a large success, the 8th CB principally; the enemy, under the attack of the 6th CB, fled to the north, but fell into the net of the 8th CB. The 2nd CD captured 940 prisoners, 8 machine-guns, 60 horses, 40 cartloads of sugar, flour, tinned food and 5 million roubles. Unfortunately, it allowed an armoured train to escape to Kiev transporting the entire staff of the Bolshevik 17th IB.

All the booty belonged to this 17th IB, having been transported from Kiev to Korosten to be used by the 7th ID.

The last shipments had taken place on the night of the 9th, some hours before the first attack of the 6th CB. Moreover, a destruction of the line to Nowogrod by a detachment of the 7th CB around Kol-Wiesenthal had caused the derailment of an armoured train, while another destruction by a detachment of the 6th CB north-west of Krasnopol immobilised two other armoured trains and a hospital train. One of these trains was armed with a 250mm naval gun in a turret, the others with 75mm guns (5) and machine-guns, as well as containing a large amount of artillery and infantry munitions. The Bolsheviks on the trains waited until 1000, trembling with fear, for the arrival of the Poles. Seeing that they were not coming, they burnt the wagons, forgetting in their hurry to release some Bolshevik soldier prisoners, shut in a wagon, who burnt along with the material.

All the planned destructions succeeded except that of the line to Kiev, which still operated south of Chotynewka. A second destruction of that line, immediately to the east of the town, did not give absolutely complete results. To sum, for the days of the 9th and 10th the results obtained by the Cavalry Corps were:

1,100 prisoners

20-odd machine-guns

50 carts

70 horses

3 armoured trains and one hospital train destroyed

The station of Korosten was made unusable for many weeks.

The 17th IB was nearly completely destroyed.

The losses had been:

1 officer, 1 under-officer killed, some men wounded in the 1st CD

2 officers and some men wounded in the 2nd CD

The result obtained, it would have been imprudent to remain a long time in Korosten, because the commander of XII Army in Kiev, warned of what had happened, had scope to direct troops to Korosten in order to cut the retreat of the Cavalry Corps.

In this situation, the colonel ordered the evacuation of Korosten on the same morning to achieve the following positions:

Corps and 1st CD HQs: Mogilno

1st CD: 6th CB: Mogilno

7th CB: Krasnopol, Boronowica, Wyhow

2nd CD: Bieloszyca, Domotocz, Cholosno

Day of the 11th

Information given by the Chief of Staff of the 19th IB and the Chief Liaison Officer of the 7th ID made it known that all the 7th ID was assembled in the region of Jabloniec, Bielka, Suski, Baranowka and Bobrica, with the staff at Jabloniec.

With this, the colonel of the Cavalry Corps decided to return to the Nowogrod and Korzec region falling on to the rear of the 7th ID.

At night on the 10th he gave the following orders for the day of the 11th:

The Cavalry Corps will march to Nowogrod-Wolynski making the required arrangements to attack the elements of the 7th ID that we meet on the way.

Dispositions to reach by night:

Corps HQ (1st CD): Pukaczewka

1st CD: 6th CB: Pukaczewka, Santarke-Telesin

7th CB: Uszica, Sandorowka, Hulanka

2nd CD: Suszki, Baranowkaja, Rudna, Bielka

Itineraries:

6th CB (reserve of Corps) and HQ: Mogilno, Pukaczewka

7th CB: Krasnopol, Horszczyk, Uszyca

Start 0800

2nd CD: Krasnogorka, Ryszewka, Baranowskaja, Rudnia

Start 0730

Events

The march of the 1st CD was made without meeting any enemy.

The 2nd CD bumped into Bolshevik infantry of the 21st IB (7th ID) at Krasnogorka who were in the process of requisitioning carts to march to Uszomir. It attacked; the enemy retired to the east, but the cavalry pursued it, passing the quarters fixed for the night. Its initiative allowed it to capture 1,000 prisoners, 5 canons, 25 machine-guns and a certain number of carts belonging to the 21st IB. Nearly all the artillery of the 7th ID fell into its hands.

The 1st CD spent the night in its set quarters while the 2nd CD had pushed much further west, in the direction of Suski and Bielka.

Information from the prisoners showed that during the day of the 10th the commander of XII Army in Kiev had given orders to the 6th ID (Olesk region), 7th ID (the region north-east of Nowogrod), 44th ID (east of Nowogrod) and the Baszkir Brigade to march to Korosten to attack the Cavalry Corps.

The bulk of the 7th ID was near Jabloniec, Baraszy, Bobrica and Rasno.

Day of the 12th

During the night of the 11th, the Corps' colonel gave the order to continue the movement towards Nowogrod on the 12th.

Dispositions to reach by night:

Corps and 1st CD HQs: Federowka

1st CD: 6th CB: Niemelanka, Federowka

7th CB: Katerinowka, Staraja-Huta, Mogilewka

2nd CD: Tupoley, Kropiwna, Niesolow

Itinerary:

6th CB: Suski, Bielka, Baskaki, Jabloniec, Niepoznanicze, Andrzejewicze, Niemelanka, Federowka

7th CB: Sieniawka, Jabloniec, Wierowka, Kol-Niepoznianiszce, Katerinowka

The colonel to march with the 6th CB. Start 0730

2nd CD: Rasno, Niedeliszczce, Baraszy, Carew-Borck, Tupolcy

Start 0800.

Events

The 1st CD made its march without any contact with the enemy, but all the peasants stated that during the 11th the enemy had hastily fled to the north.

In the night of the 11/12th and the morning of the 12th, the 2nd CD fell on the Bolshevik 19th IB, capturing from it about 1,000 prisoners, some machine-guns and two canons.

From information received, it came out that the 2nd IB and the staff of the 7th ID, taken with panic, were fleeing at full speed to the north.

In the morning a plane, sent from Luck by General Jedrzejewski, landed near the 1st CD and brought the news that an armistice would be signed on the 14th; very welcome news which contributed to increasing the joy which beamed from all the faces, despite the fatigue. The units quartered for the night in the places specified in the orders, but as the stage of the 1st CD was very long (nearly 60 kilometres) they reached their quarters very late in the night.

Day of the 13th

During the 13th, the movement to regroup all the units in the region of Nowogrod and Korzec continued.

1st CD: Korzec region

2nd CD: Nowogrod-Wolynski region

Observations

The raid executed 100 kilometres inside enemy lines closed in magnificent fashion the series of operations undertaken by the Polish cavalry since 25 July. The results were considerable.

In five days the two divisions had traveled over 250 kilometres, captured close to 3,500 prisoners, 50 machine-guns, 14 canons (including those of the armoured trains), a large number of carts including one containing 5 million roubles, some horses and materials of all sorts.

Destroyed: 3 armoured trains, 1 hospital train, some wagons, many rail lines.

Made unusable for many weeks: the important station at Korosten.

Moreover, and a matter of capital importance, it had given it a moral ascendancy over the Bolshevik infantry which could, if the armistice had not interrupted the operation, have allowed it to entertain the greatest hopes.

The losses were insignificant:

1 officer, 1 under-officer and 3 men killed;

4 officers and approximately 30 men wounded.

The success was due in large part to the energy of the colonel of the Cavalry Corps who, during the whole operation, had led personally and been the best possible example for everyone.

Nevertheless, despite the success obtained, from the point of view of conception and execution, this brilliant operation gives rise to some criticisms which it is necessary to list in order to learn some lessons:

1) *The attack on Korosten*

a) *Manoeuvrre plan* – Had to be re-examined, before everything else, in order to obtain the maximum surprise.

In the conditions, the march had to be planned differently, either to make the attack early in the day after a night march of 30 kilometres or so, or to make the attack at night after a march of some 50 kilometres. To wish to quarter overnight at 15 kilometres from the objective and only attack the next morning was to negate completely the benefit of surprise and risk seeing the success compromised, because the enemy would be able to flee or because it would be able to organise resistance; there was even a risk of being attacked in those quarters if the enemy had been large and shown initiative.

b) *Execution* – The events had forced the attack to be rushed, but the action had presented at the start a look of disjointedness.

The hour of attack had not even been fixed in the orders.

The artillery had been employed by piece or section in place of being massed.

The destructions should have been more complete; in particular the those at Korosten station and all the liaison apparatus (telephones, telegraph etc). On this matter, it was indispensable to supply the Polish cavalry with explosive charges analogous with ours.

During the action, there was no protection, no patrol pushed along the access roads by which the enemy might arrive; and there was only 2 small squadrons in reserve for the Cavalry Corps.

No plane to assure liaison, no pigeons, no wireless able to work in good conditions.

Finally an operation of this sort executed at night must be made in the greatest silence. Well, at 300 metres from the enemy all the orders were given out loud, some whole squadrons manoeuvred in dense groups, standing up, while on the other hand the canon shot down the railway line. At this time nobody knew what was in front of him. If the enemy had been more active and enterprising, it could have, during the night, knocked over the 6th CB.

2) *Attack on the 7th ID*

a) *Manoeuvre plan* – to attack the 7th ID with success, it was necessary to look for surprise, thus to do it quickly; on the other hand, it was useless to look for accurate information on this enemy, for which no-one had knowledge of the exact positions.

b) *Execution* – During the night of the 10th and the day of the 11th no reconnaissance was sent to establish contact with the enemy. Moreover, the 1st CD was happy to travel only 20 kilometres on the 11th.

The result was the 2nd IB and the HQ of the 7th ID was allowed to escape.

It is interesting to note that the most brilliant results were obtained by the 8th CB (2nd CD) commanded by Lieutenant-colonel Skotnicki (28 years old) arrived from Saumur in September. Was it simple coincidence, or indeed the consequence of putting into practice the principal teachings of our *École de Cavalerie*?⁴

⁴ The French “Cavalry School” at Saumur - now for armour as well, but I believe they still do horse stuff.