

## Battle of Równe : 2 – 9 July 1920

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### Pygmy Wars Introduction

Biernacki served as a Lieutenant in the 8th Lancer Regiment in the Ukrainian campaign. After the war he served several terms at the Historical Office of the General Staff, which is when he wrote this, so had access to all relevant documents and participants. He eventually was head of the Historical Office, and reached Major by the start of WWII.

The original was published in two parts in *Bellona* magazine in 1925. Digital copies are available at <https://jbc.bj.uj.edu.pl/>. Written fairly soon after the war it may well contain errors of fact. Some of it is also confusing in the timelines of the narrative, not being in a formally edited book.

I have left the original footnotes. Any I have added are in serif font.

I have left the place names in the Polish, although all are now in the Ukraine, as it makes it easier to follow both the original and contemporary maps (since it was in inter-war Poland). However Poles at the time often used variants of place names (see some below). I have used the names on the topographic maps I obtained from [igrek.amzp.pl](http://igrek.amzp.pl) because they tend to be more like the modern Ukrainian spellings (it helps to recognise that the Polish “ów” is basically pronounced “iv”, szcz = shch, cz = kh, ź = zh, ica = itsa, g = h etc)

To help readers, I have taken the maps from [igrek.amzp.pl](http://igrek.amzp.pl) and circled the names that appear in the text. Then in small font to the right alongside the text, I indicate which map a reader should be looking at when trying to find the smaller places.

The following list gives places with alternative names or where the Ukrainian is particularly hard to tell from the Polish.

| Polish       | Alternative Polish | Modern Ukrainian                         |
|--------------|--------------------|--|
| Annopol      |                    | Hannopil'                                |
| Aleksin      | Wieńky             | Oleksin Wieńky Velykyi Oleksyn           |
| Aristowo     | Arestów            | Orestiv                                  |
| Begień       | Behenia            | northern Karajevychi                     |
| Berezne      | Bereźno            | Berezne                                  |
| Chocin       |                    | Khotyn                                   |
| Czerniaczów  |                    | Chernyakhiv                              |
| Hołyszówka   |                    | Holychivka                               |
| Hryców       |                    | Hrytsiv                                  |
| Kołodzianka  | Kołodienka         | Kolodenka                                |
| Korzec       |                    | Korets'                                  |
| Lewacze      |                    | between modern Sivky and Mochulyanka     |
| Łuck         |                    | Lutsk                                    |
| Ludwipol     |                    | Sosnowe                                  |
| Michałpol    |                    | Mykhailivka                              |
| Radaczówka   |                    | Radukhivka                               |
| Rudnia-Stryi |                    | just north of modern Mochulyanka         |
| Siedliszcze  | Seliszczce         | was Male Selyshcha, now no longer exists |
| Simonowo     | Symonów            | Symoniv                                  |
| Zabarskie    | Zabara             | Zabara                                   |
| Zastaw       |                    | Izyaslav                                 |



## General situation in Ukraine at the end of June 1920

As a result of the situation created in early June by the breakthrough of the Russian Horse Army to the deep rear of the Polish front, the Polish Supreme Command ordered the westwards withdrawal of the Polish 3rd and 6th Armies operating at the time in Ukraine.

The Polish units retreated in stages, in continuous combat with the Horse Army, reaching the line of the Uborć, Słucz and Horyń Rivers at the end of June. From there they extended their front through Lubar and Chmielnik to the Dniester.

The resulting grouping of Polish forces left a large gap in the centre, poorly manned by units of the 2nd Army, occupying the line of the Horyń in its middle reaches. The two remaining Armies, on the other hand, were some tens of kilometres further east, holding back the advance of the Russian 12th and 14th Armies.

In that gap was the Horse Army, resting after exhausting marches and battles. On 29 June it was in the area of Korzec.

The Ukrainian Front commander, under whose orders all the Polish armies operating in Ukraine were subordinate, wishing to take advantage of this considerable advance by the enemy cavalry, decided to attack it from the north, west and south.

However, due to the uncoordinated efforts of the individual divisions, which were part of all three Armies and scattered over a vast area, right from the start the operation did not produce the desired results. The Soviet 4th Cavalry Division, which was covering the Horse Army's grouping to the north, repulsed the isolated blows of individual Polish divisions on 1 July and Budënný's cavalry, after a three-day rest, was again capable of further operations, which the commander of the Soviet South-Western Front ordered it to begin immediately.

The general position of the two sides was as follows on the evening of 1 July:

### *Poles*

- 1) The 3rd Army (about three infantry divisions and a cavalry brigade, about 16,000 men<sup>1</sup>) occupied a front along the Uborć River, with the 1st Legion Infantry Division concentrated on its right wing in the Zabarskie – Hołyszówka area.
- 2) The 2nd Army (about three infantry divisions and a cavalry division, over 14,000 men) with the 3rd Legion Infantry Division and Cavalry Division was on the Horyń River between Tuczyn and Ostróg; the left wing of the 6th Infantry Division, advanced to the Ludwipól area, and the right wing of the 10th Infantry Brigade and the 1st Reserve Brigade, in the Ostróg – Zasław area.
- 3) The 6th Army (three infantry divisions and the Ukrainian Army, equal to one Polish division, about 27,000 men) was on the front from Hryców (north of Starokonstantynów), where the left wing of the 13th Infantry Division reached, through Latyczów – Bar to the Dniester.

### *The Russians*

- 1) 12th Army (five infantry divisions and a cavalry brigade, about 24,000 men) was on the east bank of the Uborć River, having the left wing of the 44th Rifle Division in the Horodnica area.
- 2) The Horse Army (four cavalry divisions, two cavalry brigades and an infantry division, about 3,000 bayonets and 10,000 sabres<sup>2</sup>) was resting in the Korzec area grouped as follows:
  - (a) 4th Cavalry Division: Rzeczki – Korzec – Międzyrzec Korecki;

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<sup>1</sup> The figures quoted here for both Polish and Russian units are only approximate, as the absence of documents from the time has made it impossible to ascertain them accurately. They refer to the combat strengths, not the "eaters".

<sup>2</sup> The considerable decrease in the numbers in the Horse Army is to be explained by the losses caused by the series of battles and the incessant forced marches in which the Army was almost continuously engaged in from 26 May to 28 June, without receiving any reinforcements during that period.



- (b) 6th Cavalry Division: Kryłów – Kilikijów;
- (c) 11th Cavalry Division: Berezdów – Mirutyn;
- (d) 14th Cavalry Division: Pravutyn – Krasnystaw;
- (e) Reserve Brigade: Zwiahel – Susły;
- (f) Field staff: Zwiahel;
- (g) 45th Rifle Division: Korczyk – Połonne – Szepetówka, with the Kotovski cavalry brigade assigned to it near Lubar.

3) The 14th Army (three infantry divisions and a cavalry division, about 17,000 men) along the entire front in contact with the Polish 6th Army from Lubar to the Dniester.

### 1. Intentions and decisions.

#### *Poles*

Not knowing of the failure of the offensive launched on 1 July against the Horse Army, or rather its right wing, nor the withdrawal of his units behind the Horyń River or to Ludwipol, the commander of the Ukrainian Front, basing himself on an erroneous report about the passage of the 1st Legion ID across the Słucz near Horodnica taking place that day, ordered that evening to continue the offensive towards Korzec in the following manner:

The present situation of own troops is unknown. Whether the 6th ID has remained at Korzec, or whether it has moved a little to the north, is not known to the Front.

In any case, the 6th ID and the 1st Legion ID will move at dawn on July 2 from the Starożewo region to attack Korzec or Zwiahel.

Budëny had, up to 18:00 on 1 July, the intention of crossing the Horyń River at night on 2 July and seizing Równe on 3 July.

Whether, in view of the actions of the 6th and 1st Legion Divisions, this intention will change, cannot yet be predicted.

Unless there is an attack on the Horyń during the night of 1/2 July or at dawn on 2 July, the 3rd Legion Division and the Cavalry Division will on 2 July join the attack of Captain Wolf's group in order to protect the right wing of those fighting at Korzec. Regardless of fatigue, the bulk of the 3rd Legion Division should be directed to the area of Korzec and Kilikijów; the Cavalry Division through Annopol to Berezdów. The crossings at Horyń must be insured with small forces just in case.

The failure of the bulk of the 3rd Legion Division, no less than the 2nd Infantry Regiment, and the Cavalry Division to join the action of the 1st and 6th Divisions will greatly weaken this action.

This is not a matter of making a demonstration, but of the most vigorous attack, even if it is carried out with the last of our strength. Delaying would be dangerous for us.

To transport the troops to Korzec the Front staff will arrange an auto column, at the disposal of the 3rd Legion Division, at Babin.

The Front command draws attention to the unconditional need to maintain communication between the operating groups during the action.

The 6th Division should be informed of its objectives as soon as possible.

The commander of the 2nd Army will be at dawn on 2 July at the 3rd Legion Division's staging area and will direct the 2nd Army's action personally.

So the Front commander expected to pre-empt the possible start of an attack by the Horse Army.



He probably also counted on the fact that, as the action developed, the 6th Army would be able to strike Budënyy's left flank from the north, as it had been earlier ordered to do.

### *Russians*

The commander of the South-Western Front, to whom all Russian units operating in the Ukraine were subordinate, issued new directives at the end of June regarding the further conduct of offensive operations.

According to those orders, the 12th Army was to force its way across the Słucz in the Berezne – Ludwipol area, and then, by the evening of 3 July, take the Kostopol – Równe area, co-operating with the Horse Army in capturing the latter. It was to further develop its operations to Stepań – Czartoryjsk.

Simultaneously with the 12th Army's advance, the Horse Army, following the retreating enemy, was to launch a general assault and, with the 12th Army's assistance, capture the city of Równe, including the local railway junction, by the evening of 3 July.

The 14th Army, meanwhile, was given the task of seizing the Starokonstantynów – Płoskirów area at the same time and, acting further on the offensive, smash the Polish 6th Army.

In order to carry out the tasks entrusted to him, the commander of the Horse Army immediately ordered a general assault on the Równe region.

The main attack was to be made by the three cavalry divisions – the 6th, 11th, and 14th, advancing through Ostróg on Równe.

Having seized the starting base in the Annopol – Marszewka area during the night of 1/2 July, the group was to cross the Horyń River on the morning of 2 July, and having captured the railway bridge near Mohylany with units of the 6th Cavalry Division, by the evening of that day it was to position all three divisions on the Ożenin – Michałpol – Międzyrzecz line. At dawn of the following day, the main force of the Horse Army was to launch a general attack on Równe, flanking it from the west with the 6th Cavalry Division, and with the 11th and 14th Cavalry Divisions simultaneously striking from the south and southeast. This main effort was to be supported from the morning of 2 July by a supporting attack by the 4th Cavalry Division, reinforced by an Army heavy artillery *division*.

To assist this, the 4th Division should advance its main forces to the Błudow – Tudorów area, capturing the Horyń River crossings in the Tuczyn – Hoszcza – Symonów section with its front units. On 3 July the 4th Division was to continue the attack in the direction of Równe.

The 45th Rifle Division was entrusted with the task of insuring the Horse Army's operations while attacking Równe against a possible counter-attack from the south, which the Horse Army commander was particularly concerned about. To this end it was given the task of making a vigorous assault towards Dubno, which it was to capture by 4 July.

At the same time the Army's supply base was ordered to move to the Zviahel area.

Thus, the idea of the Horse Army commander's manoeuvre was to take advantage of the moment when the majority of the Polish forces that were to attack him were scattered over a wide area, to tie up the 3rd Legion Infantry Division with a secondary attack near Hoszcza, and to direct the main effort towards the poorly garrisoned Ostróg area. In the second phase of the operation, it was to act quickly on the flank and rear of the Polish units tied up on the front along the Horyń River, to beat them to Równe, or to surround and destroy them where there were.

## **2. The Fighting for the Horyń River Line**

The offensive operations which began early in the morning, in accordance with the orders of the Ukrainian Front, ended in complete failure, despite the fact that they were directed mainly against a single Russian cavalry division.

The advance of two infantry regiments of the 3rd Legion Infantry Division, supported by five batteries, was very soon surprised by strong fire from the Russian artillery. At the same time enemy cavalry units,



anticipating the advance of our infantry, managed to advance on the Błudow – Tudorów – Majków line at dawn. Several Polish battalions, transported along the road on trucks, had to unload under heavy Russian artillery fire, suffering heavy losses.

Having then advanced, they seized the Wiłków – Terentjów line, but could advance no further.

Meanwhile, the Russians, taking advantage of the inactivity of the 6th ID, which did not receive the order to co-operate with the 3rd Legion ID's action until the following day, concentrated all available forces against the regiments of the 3rd Legion ID advancing on them, leaving only weak cover to the north.

Seeing the impossibility of defeating the enemy in such conditions, and fearing that the mobile Russian cavalry might seize the river crossings with an outflanking manoeuvre, in the afternoon the commander of the 3rd Legion ID ordered the withdrawal of the entire group to its initial positions, that is, on the western bank of the Horyń.

However, the retreat took place in very difficult conditions, as the Russian artillery took a heavy toll on the retreating Polish columns and then concentrated their fire on the bridge at Hoszcza. Despite these difficulties, both regiments managed to retreat across the river and occupy its western bank from Drozdowo to Buhryń. This sector was occupied during the day by the 8th Legion IR, which had not taken part in the expedition.

Russian troops, advancing almost directly behind the retreating Polish infantry, approached the Horyń River near Hoszcza and Symonów in the evening, while the main forces of the 4th Cavalry Division stopped in the Sieniów – Błudow – Tudorów area.

At the same time as the 3rd Legion ID advanced, co-operating in that action, the cavalry division crossed the Horyń further south near Czerniachów in the morning and advanced with its main forces towards Annopol.

However, before reaching that village its troops were met by the right wing of the main forces of the Horse Army, marching towards Ostróg.

Unable to resist the numerical superiority of the enemy, the Polish cavalry units withdrew in fierce fighting to their initial positions.

Here, however, despite fierce enemy attacks, they managed to hold an extensive bridgehead near Mohylany and Czerniachów.

The Russian divisions, after unsuccessful attempts to force their way across the river, stopped for the night around Wielbownó and Wołoskowce. Only the 14th Cavalry Division succeeded in forcing the Horyń River, south of the town of Krzywín, and drove back the remnants of the regiments of the 1st Reserve Brigade located there towards Ostróg and Międzyrzecz. The darkness of the night, however, did not allow them to pursue, and the division halted in the area of the Hrycków – Nityszyn farmstead.

South of that village, the Horyń line was still manned by Polish units, namely the 105th Infantry Regiment and the 10th Infantry Brigade, which had successfully repulsed the attacks of the 45th Russian Rifle Division near Zastaw.

Thus, after a day's fighting, the main forces of the 2nd Army found themselves once again on the Horyń, facing an overwhelming enemy.

The most dangerous position was around Ostróg – poorly garrisoned by the regiments of the 1st Reserve Brigade, who had already been broken and demoralised several times<sup>3</sup> – where the main attacks of the Horse Army were directed.

In the situation, the Ukrainian Front commander decided to follow up on his previous decision and carry out a concentric action against the Horse Army, this time not in the direction of Korzec, but Równie. In

<sup>3</sup> Reserve infantry units in general were of lower quality than the ordinary infantry, being much newer and with far less experienced officers. They performed particularly poorly against Budenny's cavalry. They can be recognised by their regimental numbers being in the 100s.



order to do that, he made use of the considerable eastward advance of the 3rd and 6th Armies, with the 6th Division and the 10th Infantry Brigade, ordering late in the evening of 2 July his subordinate Armies as follows:

3) The 2nd Army, to which the 1st Cavalry Brigade is subordinated, will defend the Horyń on its present lines, resolutely protecting the Równe region.

4) The 3rd Army will remain as long as possible on its present lines, except that the 1st Legion Division is to be moved to the area of Lewacze – Rudnia-Stryi and to establish communication with the 6th Division at Ludwipol. The purpose of this move is to form an initial grouping to strike, not in the direction of Korzec, but in the direction of Równe.

*Ludwipol*

5) The 6th Army remains on its present lines, striking with the 18th Division in the direction of Slawuta,<sup>4</sup> thus protecting its left wing.

6) General Szymański's group is to co-operate, linking up with the divisions of the 2nd Army.

The operation conceived had every prospect of success, provided that it was possible to hold the Horyń until the arrival of both those groups at their starting bases. However, in view of the long distances they had to cover,<sup>5</sup> the time needed should have been calculated as at least two to three days, i.e. until 5 or 6 July.

But in the meantime the Ukrainian Front had to hold off the entire Horse Army, concentrated in the Horyń sector, with just one infantry division and a numerically weak cavalry division, not counting the broken regiments of the 1st Reserve Brigade, who presented almost no combat strength.

Its only reserves in the area were an infantry battalion and a cavalry brigade, unloading at the time, which it had already decided to immediately engage.

This is why, when at dawn on 3 July the main Russian cavalry forces without great difficulty pushed through the Horyń near Wielbownó and took Ostróg, poorly defended by the remnants of the 101st and 106th Infantry Regiments and a weak cavalry detachment, neither the Ukrainian Front commander nor the 2nd Army commander were able to counteract the enemy's further advance. Both the 101st and 106th IRs retreated hurriedly in the direction of Mizocz – Warkowicze, putting up no resistance.

*Ostróg*

*Misocz*

Even earlier, units of the Cavalry Division, defending their bridgehead on the Horyń, were attacked by units of the Russian 6th Cavalry Division. After a battle of several hours, fought on foot and mounted, they were forced to retreat behind the Horyń River, still trying to defend the crossing with fire from rifles, machine guns and artillery. But stronger and stronger Russian attacks, as well as the threat of flanking from the south, forced the Cavalry Division's commander to bend his right wing to the line of Koleśniki to Nowosiółki.

*Ostróg*

Thus, the Polish front on the Horyń was broken for more than 30 km. The important road junction of Ostróg fell into the hands of the Russians and the way to Równe was open.

Three divisions of the Horse Army – the 6th, 11th, and 14th – entered that gap, initially pursuing the retreating remnants of the regiments of the 1st Reserve Brigade. They then turned north-west west past Zdołbica and Iwacków, threatening the Polish units remaining on the Horyń.

*Misocz*

Those troops, meanwhile, had successfully repulsed all attempts made during the day by the 4th Russian CD to cross the river on the Tuczyn – Hoszcza section.

*Tuczyn*

In view of the situation, the 2nd Army commander, being without any reserves that would allow him to organise any counterattack, ordered the beginning of a general retreat in the afternoon.

He ordered the 3rd Legion ID, which is still garrisoning the Horyń River, to retreat to a line of Horodyszczce – Biała-Krynica – Kołodzianka, paying particular attention to closing off the Równe Road. The 2nd Army's

*Tuczyn  
and  
Równe*

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<sup>4</sup> The 18th ID was by this time concentrating in the Starokonstantynów area, in line with the 6th Army commander's intention to throw it into battle with Budëny.

<sup>5</sup> 60 km for the 18th ID, 70 km for the 1st Legion ID, and 30 km for the 6th ID.



commander intended to defend that line with all his might, ordering the division's units to be arranged in such a way that, should the new front be broken anywhere by enemy troops, he could immediately launch a counterattack on their flank.

At the same time the cavalry division was also to withdraw, maintaining constant contact with the 3rd Legion ID, and, on completing its retreat, concentrate on the right wing of that division in the Tajkury – Mylsk Nowy area with its command in Komin.

This entire retreat was to be executed at sunset "in as much order as possible and without attracting the attention of the enemy".

At the same time, in order to secure the right wing of the Cavalry Division, the 1st Cavalry Brigade, consisting of two regiments with artillery, which had recently been unloaded in Zdołbunów, was sent to the Mylsk Nowy – Zdołbica area. The 11th Lancer Regiment, also belonging to that brigade, was sent to Żytyn Mały with the task of insuring the left wing of the 3rd Legion Infantry Division.

The commander of the 2nd Army, supposing that he would be able to hold on to the new positions for some time, ordered the 6th Infantry Division to move immediately with two regiments to the Seliszcze<sup>6</sup> area, and from there to Aleksandria in order to operate on the enemy's flank.

*Kostopol  
Tuczyn*

Because of the late receipt of the orders, the 6th Infantry Division was still in Ludwipol.

*Ludwipol  
and  
Kostopol*

At the same time, the 12th Infantry Regiment, belonging to that division, was sent to Kostopol, where it was to form the Army's reserve.

While preparing for the battle with the Horse Army in the defence of Równie, the 2nd Army commander still hoped that on the following day, that is 4 July, the 18th Infantry Division would also be able to strike from Zasław towards Ostróg.<sup>7</sup>

He therefore ordered the 10th Infantry Brigade to co-operate with that action.

The retreat began at nightfall and was carried out in order, almost without hindrance from the enemy, who had been advancing quite slowly and cautiously and so had not yet managed to cut the roads to Równie, and had not even reached the railway line by that time. The Russian 4th CD also failed to follow the Polish troops leaving the Horyń, as it had to turn its attention to its flank and rear, alerted by reports of enemy offensive actions developing from around Ludwipol.<sup>8</sup>

The 3rd Legion ID reached the prescribed line during the night, and the cavalry division reached the area of Tajkury, also in the evening, where it stayed overnight.

On the evening of 3 July the position of the two sides was as follows.

#### *Poles*

(a) The 1st Legion ID, of the 3rd Army, was still in the Zabarskie area.

(b) Almost the whole of the 2nd Army was on the march to their newly designated positions:

- 1) The 6th Infantry Division from Ludwipol to Seliszcze, and the 12th IR to Kostopol,

*Kostopol  
Tuczyn*

<sup>6</sup> This appears to be an alternative name for Małe Siedliszcze, which no longer exists. It is not to be confused with Wielki Siedliszcze (basically modern Sosnowe) or the other various Selishche's in the region.

<sup>7</sup> In reality the concentration of the 18th ID (missing a few battalions) was only just completed on 3 July and the division could only then start its march from the area of Hryców – Starokonstantynów to Zasław in accordance with the orders of the 6th Army Commander. Those were to conduct "a vigorous action to resolve the battle of the Horyń River in our favour, starting from Zasław".

As can be seen, it was impossible to carry out that task, as the Battle of the Horyń River was already lost to us by that time, and the retreat caused by it distanced the left wing of the 2nd Army from the 18th ID to such a distance that it could not, under any circumstances, influence the course of the Battle of Równie salient on 4 July.

<sup>8</sup> The 6th Infantry Division, after withdrawing on 2 July to Ludwipol, had received on the morning of 3 July a belated order from the Front (of 1 July) to attack once again in the direction of Korzec. But having set out at noon, a few hours later it again withdrew to the Ludwipol area, from where it was finally directed to Równie.



- 2) The 3rd Legion Infantry Division to the Horodyszczce – Kołodzianka line,
  - 3) The 11th Lancer Regiment was covering its northern wing, having already occupied Żytyn Mały,
  - 4) The Cavalry Division was concentrated in the village of Tajkury,
  - 5) A cavalry brigade, of two regiments with two horse batteries was in the area of Zdołbunów – Mysłk Nowy, reinforced with an infantry battalion and two armoured trains,
  - 6) Further south the remnants of 101st and 106th Infantry Regiments from the 1st Reserve Brigade, together with a cavalry unit, were retreating towards Dubno, having completely lost communication with the Army command,
  - 7) The 10th Infantry Brigade, along with a detachment of the 105th Infantry Regiment from the 1st Reserve Brigade, was near Zaslów and to the south of that village.
- (c) The 18th Infantry Division, of the 6th Army, was meanwhile marching from the Hryców area to Zaslów – Ostróg.

#### *The Russians*

- 1) The left wing of the 12th Army, that is the 44th Rifle Division, had reached Horodnica – Dubniki with part of its forces;
- 2) The Horse Army, aiming at Równe, had its units in three groups:
  - (a) The 4th Cavalry Division had its main forces on the east bank of the Horyń River between Tuczyn and Hoszcza, having weak cover to the north at Dywen – Kolowerta;
  - (b) Its main forces, the 6th, 11th, and 14th Cavalry Divisions, had stopped for the night in the area of Iwaczków – Korostowo – Kol. Witoldowka;
  - (c) The 45th Rifle Division, which was covering the Horse Army's operations to the south, was in the area of Szepetówka – Zaslów and more to the south with Kotowski's cavalry brigade near Medvedówka;
  - (d) The field headquarters of the Army remained at Korzec, and the heavy stock at Zwiahel;
- 3) Further south was the 14th Army.

### **3. The defence of Równe and the Retreat to the Alexandria Area**

In spite of the situation and the impossibility of holding at the Horyń, the Ukrainian Front commander persisted with his previous intentions of breaking up the Horse Army by tying it up from the front while attacking both its wings, and of rebuilding the existing front line in its entirety by closing the gap caused by Budënný's breach of it at Równe.

In an operational order, issued at 23:00 on 3 July to the 3rd Army commander, he outlined the manner of implementing this decision as follows:

- 3) The Front command intends to ruthlessly defend the Równe area, thus tying up Budënný's Horse Army at least until the arrival of the 1st and 18th divisions, not allowing the 3rd Army front to collapse.
- 4) The 3rd and 6th Armies are to remain as long as possible at their present lines. The 3rd Army will direct the 1st Legion Division by forced marches through Ludwipól to Tuczyn and Równe, with the general task of striking at the flanks of the attacking cavalry.

For this purpose, the 1st Legion Infantry Division was temporarily subordinated to the commander of the 2nd Army.

The execution of these orders, however, had little prospect of success, for the same reasons as before. The vast distances that both flanking divisions had to cover, with the 18th ID forced to fight the enemy on the way, made their arrival at the appointed time very optimistic.





As well, the 2nd Army had at the decisive point near Równe only the tired 3rd Legion Infantry Division and a badly strained Cavalry Division, together with the small 1st Cavalry Brigade and an infantry battalion as its entire reserve, so could not count on success in any further resistance. This was especially so, because the expected 6th Infantry Division could not arrive in the Alexandria area in less than 36 hours, having to cross a vast wooded area almost completely devoid of suitable roads.

At 05:00 on 4 July the 3rd Legion Infantry Division reached the designated sector with its units, with the 9th Legion Infantry Regiment in the Horodyszcze area, the 8th Legion Infantry Regiment blocking the road near Biała-Krynica, and the 7th Legion Infantry Regiment occupying the section of Kołodzianka to Nowy Dwór.

*Tuczyn  
Równe*

Meanwhile, the Russian 14th Cavalry Division set off before dawn from the Iwaczków – Korostowo area and, taking advantage of the darkness, made a surprise attack on the Cavalry Division sleeping in Tajkury.

*Misocz  
Ostróg  
Równe*

At almost the same time the Russian 11th Cavalry Division advanced with its right wing along the railway line and at around 04:00 occupied Zdołbunów, then continued northwards up to Kol. Kwasiłów.

The confusion created among some units of the Cavalry Division by the unexpected enemy attack was quickly overcome. The entire division immediately advanced into combat, to the south-west and west of the village of Tajkury. Further west this front should have been extended by the 1st Cavalry Brigade. However, the attack by the Russian cavalry on Zdołbunów had already forced that brigade's units occupying Aristowo and Ilpen to retreat quickly to the north.

From dawn, a fierce battle developed across the Polish lines.

The Russian cavalry, supported by heavy artillery fire, attacked the entire front of our cavalry division and the 7th Legion Infantry Regiment, on foot and mounted, for several hours, but without success.

At about 10:00 a Polish counterattack began in the direction of Zdołbunów, supported by an armoured train, against a brigade of the Russian 11th CD, which was already near to Kwasiłów. After a short battle, the Russians were completely almost smashed and fled to Mylsk Nowy.

At around 11:00, the situation appeared to be quite favourable. All the enemy's attacks had been repulsed, the positions along almost the entire line had held, losses were small, and the entire 3rd Legion Infantry Division had hardly entered the battle yet.

In reality, however, the situation was quite different, as the enemy had not yet put the majority of its forces in combat and could manoeuvre them freely. The Russian 6th Cavalry Division had been directed to the west of Tynne and by this time was almost level with Kwasiłów.

At the same time the 11th Cavalry Division was advancing to its right.

In this way the manoeuvre already employed the previous day crossing the Horyń River was repeated, so to speak, only in a smaller space.

The actions of the Russian cavalry had developed as they had been directed.

So at 12:30 the 2nd Army commander, not yet aware of those enemy movements, ordered the cavalry division to continue vigorous resistance to the enemy around Mylsk Nowy and, maintaining constant communication with the 3rd Legion Infantry Division and the 1st Cavalry Brigade, to close the road coming from the south in the Basów-Kut – Kwasiłów area.

The cavalry division completely fulfilled that task, further thwarting all attempts by the Russians to break through to Zdołbunów again and to outflank the advanced regiments of the division.

In view of such positive news, the 2nd Army commander an hour later ordered the Division and the 1st Cavalry Brigade to move to the counter-attack and then, if successful, to begin pursuit.

However, since in the meantime reports had already arrived of the appearance of enemy cavalry units south of Tynne, the counter-attack of the 1st Cavalry Brigade – which was to be reinforced by the 11th



Lancer Regiment with a horse battery,<sup>9</sup> two infantry companies of the 3rd Podhale Rifle Regiment, six tanks, and three armoured trains – was no longer directed to the south, but against the newly established enemy forces.

The 3rd Legion Infantry Division, on the other hand, was to remain in the positions it had occupied, retreating only those troops from near Biała-Krynica to Równe.

However, the situations of the Cavalry Division and the 3rd Legion Infantry Division, which had been good up to that point, had undergone major changes even before these two orders were issued, about which the 2nd Army commander was probably not sufficiently informed at the time.

Around noon the Russian 14th Cavalry Division had finally managed to break through to Kołodzianka and further north, outflanking the left of the Cavalry Division and threatening the right wing of the 3rd Legion Infantry Division.

In view of this, the commander ordered the immediate withdrawal of all his troops to the vicinity of Równe and to take up positions on the edge of the city.

By afternoon, the entire division was in retreat, repelling a number of enemy attacks at the last minute.

Meanwhile the position of the 1st Cavalry Brigade had started to become even more dangerous.

At 13:00 it was attacked on the Omelana – Tynne line by a superior force of Russian cavalry, deployed across a wide front. At the same time further units of enemy cavalry were breaking through to the west. This was the 6th Division, tasked with attacking Równe from the south-west.

After several hours of fierce fighting, at 16:00 the entire brigade retreated to near the town, stopping at the Bojarka farmstead. At this point the enemy occupied the Klewań road and took a number of wagons on it.

Continuing fierce fighting against cavalry and armoured cars, the brigade retreated through Równe to Zołotyjów and then to Aleksin Wiełky.

Even earlier, having seen the grave situation the 1st Cavalry Brigade was facing, at 16:00 the 2nd Army Commander had ordered the Cavalry Division commander to leave only one regiment in the area of Kołodzianka and with the remaining forces – that is, six cavalry regiments<sup>10</sup> – to strike immediately through Tynne to the rear of the Russian cavalry brigade advancing on the retreating Polish brigade.

At the same time, that brigade, for its part, was to strike at Obarów, where our information indicated a larger enemy force was located.

That order, which was received late, could not be carried out in its entirety in view of the extremely rapidly developing situation.

In spite of this, the Cavalry Division immediately began its march towards Basów-Kut – Tynne, shelled by enemy artillery on the way.

However, it had barely arrived at those towns when Russian cavalry appeared from the Zdołbunów area, advancing along the railway track.

Threatened by this, the cavalry division could not carry out with all its strength the attack ordered from Tynne, which was anyway mostly too late, and was forced to turn against the enemy heading to its flank. By about 19:00 the Russians had already managed to garrison the cemetery south of the village of Basów-Kut. On seeing that, the division commander immediately ordered a counter-attack.

The fighting for the cemetery continued until midnight, fought by the division's dismounted squadrons, supported by fire from armoured trains. As a result, the enemy was driven back to the south.

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<sup>9</sup> Which, as a result of the general retreat, had been directed via Równe to Obarów.

<sup>10</sup> During the fighting at Równe, the Cavalry Division had only seven regiments, as the 14th Lancer Regiment and the 2nd Light Cavalry had remained with the 6th Infantry Division.



But that success was of local importance and had no influence on the final outcome of the battle. The fate of Równe was already a foregone conclusion, as a result of the situation that had in the meantime formed on the rest of the front.

Even a few hours before the cavalry division began its march to Tynne, the 3rd Legion ID, as already mentioned, had retreated to Równe.

After marching for over two hours, fighting fierce battles with the following Russian cavalry squadrons, the division's regiments reached the sectors assigned to them and immediately began to man them.

The 9th Legion IR occupied the eastern edge of the city from the road to Szpanów to the Uscie River at the southern end of Równe. The 8th Legion IR was from the railway track to past the Klewań road, sealing the roads leading to the south and west. The division's reserve was the 7th Legion IR, concentrated in the barracks and brickyard on the western side of the town.

Before the manning of the new positions was completed, the Russian divisions had already managed to throw back the 1st Cavalry Brigade from near Bojarka to Równe, as well as to break through at Kołodzianka and strike the south-eastern part of the city, defended by the 9th Legion IR.

Particularly fierce fighting developed along the sector of the 8th Legion IR, where two brigades of the Russian 11th CD, supported by both their artillery and that of the 6th Cavalry Division, charged repeatedly.

The 6th CD by this time, as already indicated, had crossed the Klewań road and was advancing on Zołotyjów. At the same time the 14th CD launched a series of attacks on Równe from the east.

However, all these charges failed in the face of rifle and machine gun fire. The Russian cavalry retreated, keeping up only a fire fight, responding with incessant *taczanka* machine-gun fire and shelling on Równe, from the west, south and east.

The strong enemy pressure, and the danger of the Polish units fighting at Równe being cut off from the rest of his units, forced the 2nd Army commander to give the order to retreat to Alexandria during the night.

*Tuczyn*

The retreat took place through a narrow passage protected to the west by the swampy Uscie River, and to the east by the 9th Legion IR, still deployed at the edge of the city and so forming a flank guard for the division.

The 7th Legion IR marched in the lead, followed by the artillery, and then the 8th Legion IR, leaving their positions as individual battalions up to 22:00.

Only after the entire division had passed through Równe, and when its tail reached Tiutkowicze, did the 9th Legion Infantry Regiment leave its positions and march as the rear guard.

*Równe*

The tanks, which had been in the city, were loaded onto lorries and, together with armoured trains, set off for Alexandria.

The withdrawal from Równe was accomplished without drawing the attention of the enemy, thanks in particular to the excellent defence by the units of the 8th Legion IR, which repulsed the fierce attacks of the Russian cavalry until the last moment.

For some time after the last Polish units had left, the enemy artillery shelled the edge of the town, and it was not until around midnight that Równe was garrisoned by Budëny's cavalry, which immediately advanced further to the north and north-west.

A few hours later, the cavalry division also left the Basów-Kut area and marched cross-country towards Łuck.

This ended the first period of the Battle of Równe.

Its result is evident. The Horse Army had completely fulfilled the tasks entrusted to it, capturing an important communication node. It had previously crossed the Horyń River, tearing apart the Polish front



for 80 km from Alexandria to Zasław, which success had caused the commander of the Ukrainian Front to doubt his ability to eliminate that break, and so caused him to withdraw his armies 100 km to the west.

The roads to Łuck and Kowel, as well as to the wing and rear of the 6th Army, was open, and the 2nd Army was pushed away from its lines of communication and thrown into the wooded and swampy area north of the Horyń. This could easily have put it in a critical position, as a result of its inability to organise supply quickly, which might have proved extremely difficult.

However, the position of the Horse Army, in spite of its many successes, was also not so favourable.

Its enemy was retreating, but not broken. Two infantry divisions were coming to their aid from the north – the 6th ID was already in the Seliszcz area on the evening of 4 July, while the 1st Legion ID was at that time reaching the village of Mokre Budy (over 20 km northeast of Ludwipol<sup>11</sup>), having already received orders to move quickly through Ludwipol – Tuczyn and strike in the direction of Równe.

*Kostopol  
Ludwipol*

At the same time, the 18th ID was marching swiftly from the south, and on that day, having thrown back the troops of the Russian 45th Rifle Division, it merged at Zasław with the 10th Infantry Brigade.

Thus the Horse Army, exhausted by three days' fighting and a 150 km march, with empty magazines and wagons, had to prepare for a new battle against superior enemy forces in the near future.

It could not count on rapid assistance from the neighbouring armies, which were more than 70 km away.

Fully appreciating the plight of the Horse Army, the commander of the South-Western Front, in order to eliminate the danger threatening on both its wings, decided to urge on the progress of the 12th and 14th Armies. He immediately issued general directives ordering these armies to vigorously attack the Polish 3rd and 6th Armies, in order to divert their attention from the Równe area, and so prevent concentric action from the north and south on Budëny's cavalry located there.

The Front commander was particularly disturbed by the actions of the Polish 18th ID and, considering it very dangerous, demanded in those directives that the commander of the 14th Army take immediate action to capture Starokonstantynów.

The commander of the South-Western Front did this so as to take advantage of Budëny's gains so far, and at the same time advance the other armies which were behind it. Due to their low combat value, they were incapable of independent action and had been advancing since the beginning of the offensive only thanks to the successes won by the Horse Army.

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<sup>11</sup> There was a Mokre north-east of Ludwipol, but it was about 12 km away.



## Part 2

### 4. Concentration of the 2nd Army on the Horyń River and further plans for offensive operations

Retreating behind the Horyń River, the 2nd Army commander intended to group his main forces, the 3rd Legion ID and the 6th ID, between Rzeszyca and Kol. Mariendorf, covering them with cavalry units on the wings, extended as far as Susk and Antonowka, from where communications with the incoming 1st Legion Infantry Division was to be established.

*Tuczyn  
Derażne*

That division, recently assigned to the 2nd Army, was at that time approaching Hruszówka (north of Berezne). Intending to take offensive action as soon as possible, the Army commander ordered the 6th ID to establish a bridgehead near Aleksandria on the south bank of the Horyń River.

*Tuczyn*

Meanwhile, after leaving Równe, units of the 3rd Legion ID marched through the night on the Sarny road. Before dawn even broke on 5 July, after a hard march along sandy roads, clogged with the retreating army's troops and wagons, the column of the 3rd ID had reached Szpanów, and before 08:00, having crossed the Horyń River, it arrived in the Aleksandria area.

Immediately the 7th Legion IR was directed westward to Rzeszyca with the task of garrisoning the riverbank in the area. The 8th Infantry Regiment following it, stopped for the night at Kol. Czerepasznik, while the 9th IR, the rearguard, went as the division's reserve to Lubomirka Station.

*Kostopol*

At the same time as the 3rd Legion IR was repositioning, the 6th Infantry Division, consisting of only two regiments, the 20th and 65th, was arriving in the area east of Alexandria, as the 12th Infantry Regiment was still in Kostopol as the division's reserve.

*Tuczyn*

The task of the 6th Infantry Division was to garrison the north bank of the Horyń River east of Alexandria and the bridgehead.

Therefore immediately after it arrived, at 12:00 on 5 July, the 20th IR crossed the Horyń River, and organised that bridgehead, manning it with one battalion, and concentrating its main forces in the forest northeast of Alexandria. Further east along the Horyń River was the 65th IR.

Some weak assaults by Russian troops on the bridgehead, conducted during the afternoon, were easily repulsed, and the garrison reinforced with companies of the 65th Infantry Regiment.

At the same time, the 1st Cavalry Brigade, which the previous day had withdrawn through Chocin to the north bank of the river, was extending the occupied area as far as Nakoty and Berestowce, insuring the right wing of the army and conducting reconnaissance on Derażne and Susk. The 11th Lancer Regiment, left as ordered for Antonówka.

*Równe  
Derażne*

*Kostopol*

By the evening of 5 July, all the Army units were in their assigned areas.

Meanwhile the Polish Ukrainian Front had been deprived of communication with the 2nd Army, due to its rapid turn to the north, and also had no news on its further movements or those of the enemy. Fearing that Budëny would head towards Łuck and Kowel, or to Brody and Lviv – towards which it had a completely open road – abandoned its previous concept of concentric action against the Horse Army.

The Front commander intended to build a new continuous front from the Polesie to the Dniester as quickly as possible, using all available means. So he issued orders on 5 July relating to the start of a general retreat.

The 3rd Army was to retreat to the Sarny region, and the 6th Army to the Zbrucz River line, with the following:

The 18th Infantry Division should be turned from heading to Równe and directed to secure the Brody to Lwów railway line.

After reaching the new front line in that matter it would simultaneously adequately secure the northern flank and rear of the 6th Army.

The 2nd Army commander, on the other hand, was ordered:



Using all forces and means, and using all available cavalry, move between Buděny's army and Kowel and tie him up, and thus stop any march of the Horse Army in that direction. The execution must take place in the shortest possible time, or the 2nd Army will not complete its operational task.

It is likely, however, that the late receipt of this order resulted in the corresponding orders going to the units of the 2nd Army not being issued until the following day at noon, i.e. 6 July. However, in the orders issued at midnight on 5 July, the commander of the 2nd Army announced the start of offensive operations for 7 July.

On the Russian side, no major action was taken during the whole day either. It was spent concentrating the whole Horse Army in the Równe region, bringing the 4th Cavalry Division there. That division, alerted to the approach of the 6th Infantry Division to its rear from the Ludwipol area, had spent the entire previous day, i.e. 4 July, on operations in that direction. However, having not met the enemy anywhere, the division had crossed the Horyń River in the morning of 5 July and taken up positions at the river's bend near Tuczyn.

The rest of the Army rested all day in Równe and the immediate vicinity, conducting only reconnaissance in the north, west and north-west.

While both opponents were concentrating their main forces near Równe, fierce fighting was taking place south of it.

Firstly, the Cavalry Division, which had left the Basów Kut area at 02:00, had headed for Łuck. Passing to the rear of the Horse Army, it met an enemy cavalry regiment near Działkowicze, probably sent as cover in the direction of Dubno.

At first the Russians tried to stop a charge of the 9th and 12th Lancer Regiments with fire-power. But soon they were soon forced to flee, abandoning almost all their rolling stock in the village. The Cavalry Division continued its march without any contact with the enemy, and on 6 July reached the Łuck area, having completely lost contact with the 2nd Army.

And near Zaslów, units of the 18th Division and the 10th Infantry Brigade fought off fierce attacks by the 45th Russian Rifle Division until late at night, forcing it to retreat to the southeast.

Towards evening fear grew in the Ukrainian Front HQ that the 2nd Army, having waited for the arrival of the 1st Legion Infantry Division before commencing operations, might find itself in a critical situation regarding supply and, as a result of the considerable delay, would no longer have time to pre-empt Buděny by taking up positions between him and Kowel.

At 19:50 the following order was therefore sent to the 2nd Army:

The Front command is under the impression that the capture of the Klewań area is possible without the cooperation of the 1st Legion Division; taking into account that any delay in the execution of this move makes it increasingly difficult, and an inability to supply the 2nd Army with food and ammunition may result from that, the Front command orders the immediately taking of the railway from Równe to Kowel. The commander of the 2nd Army will report the time of commencement for this action.

The following day, 6 July, was also generally calm. Several weak assaults on the bridgehead near Alexandria were easily repulsed by units of the 6th Infantry Division.

On the right wing of the army, the 1st Cavalry Brigade conducted vigorous reconnaissance to the south and towards Klewań from early morning, finding that the enemy had directed numerous units everywhere.

The scouts sent to Begerń reported that the town was garrisoned by a 200-strong detachment of enemy cavalry.

From the morning of that day the units of the 2nd Army replenished their supplies from the supply station in Kostopol, in preparation for the offensive action announced for the following day.

*Równe*



However, while the day of 6 July brought almost no change in the position of both armies, it is interesting due to a number of decisions made and orders issued, by both us and the enemy.

First of all – probably as a result of the 5 July order of the Ukrainian Front to the 2nd Army to place itself between Buděny's army and Kowel and to tie it up, in order to stop a Soviet march westwards – the 2nd Army commander issued a general operational order

Based on the belief that the main forces of the Horse Army were advancing through Klewań on Łuck and Kowel, to its units on the Horyń River:

They do not betray decisive offensive intentions.

And instructed:

Immediately after replenishing provisions, fodder and ammunition, proceed to offensive action on the flank and rear of Buděny in the general direction of Łuck.

Thus the commander of the 2nd Army deviated in the solution of the task given to him from the guiding thought of the Front commander, aiming to hinder the Horse Army in its march westwards and to take up a position between it and Kowel, at the same time deciding to act offensively.

In order to carry out his intention, he decided to cross the Horyń with his right wing at Begeń and with his main force at Alexandria, and then advance westwards. He therefore ordered the 1st Cavalry Brigade to concentrate immediately at the first of those places, with the task of holding the bridge there until the arrival of the 12th Infantry Regiment, which was to set out from Kostopol at the same time.

The 3rd Legion Infantry Division was also to send all its technical troops to Begeń, under the cover of an infantry battalion, to repair and reinforce the said bridge.

Once these preparations were completed, a march behind Buděny's cavalry was to begin upon a special order.

In order to accomplish this task, the 1st Cavalry Brigade, which constituted the right wing of the army, was to march through Karajewicze – Jadwipol – Peresopnitsa to Olitsa, reconnoitring along the line of march, as well as to the southwest.

The 1st Cavalry Brigade was to be followed by the 3rd Legion ID across the Horyń River, then advancing through Karajewicze to Klewań, to man the crossings there.

At the same time, the 6th Legion Infantry Division, without the 12th Infantry Regiment, was to cross the Horyń River near Aleksandria and, covering its left flank with the 11th Lancer Regiment, advance through Kustyń – Szpanów – Obarów – Kol. Jadwipol to the Peresopnica – Bielów area, where it was ordered to garrison the western bank of the Stubła River by the evening.

The 1st Legion Infantry Division was to follow the 6th Infantry Division across the Horyń River near Aleksandria, and then, forming the army reserve, march on through Kustyń – Chocin – Karajewicze – Broniki, with the task of making reaching the Klewań area by evening.

After the last troops had passed, the bridges over the Horyń River were to be blown up.

All the army's services and rolling stock, together with the stage units and the battalion of the 3rd IR were directed to Kostopol.

In this way, the 2nd Army commander intended, having begun offensive operations to the rear of the Horse Army, to make a stand on the Stubła River within a day, closing off the enemy's retreat routes to Równe.

This would have forced Buděny either to accept a battle in an unfavourable position, with the front reversed, or to make a difficult retreat either to the north or south-east.

But in reality, the enemy's position was quite different from that on which the above plan was built.

The Horse Army remained all day on 6 July in the Równe area, awaiting further orders from the South-Western Front. In the meantime, its commander managed to gather quite accurate information on the

*Tuczyn  
Równe*



Polish movements and positions, and accordingly ordered the immediate regrouping of his units, ordering first of all to maintain the strong occupied region, and to carry out intensive reconnaissance.

To this end, guarding Równe to the north was entrusted to two divisions, of which the 4th was to hold the crossing at Tuczyn, and the 6th was to place a guard on the Stubła River. The main forces of those divisions would remain on the Horyń from Begeń to Tuczyn.

The 11th and 14th Cavalry Divisions, on the other hand, were to be advanced further south to cover the directions of Dubno and Ostróg, with the former going to the Hruszwica – Ulbarów area and the latter to Iwaszków and Korostowa. Those divisions were to advance their outposts to the Stubła River – Mizocz – Wilya River line.

At the same time, the 45th Rifle Division was ordered to liquidate the enemy group operating in the Starokonstantynów – Ostropol area as quickly as possible.

However whether such a grouping under the conditions of the time was appropriate is questionable. In the event of an unexpected attack by superior enemy forces, in most cases each division could not be quickly supported by the remaining units, which were 30 to 50 km away. In those positions units of the Horse Army could easily have been defeated, or even destroyed.

The scattering of Budëny's divisions was to increase on the following day as a result of orders received from the South-Western Front.

Throughout the day, the Horse Army's front was almost completely calm, and its divisions carried out the ordered regrouping without hindrance by the evening of 6 July.

Only on the 4th Cavalry Division's sector near Tuczyn, did a fierce battle break out in the morning with the 1st Legion Infantry Division, approaching from Hruszówka. After combats at Leonówka and Zalenka, the Russian cavalry units, operating on foot and on horseback, were forced to retreat.

*Kostopol  
Tuczyn*

In the evening of the same day, the entire 1st Legion Infantry Division marched towards Tuczyn. The first attempt by the Russians to halt its advance was defeated, and around 23:00 the Polish infantry units advanced to the southern edge of the forest near Rzeczyca, and captured Kol. Amelin.

The falling darkness finally put an end to further fighting. The division halted for the night where it was.

Meanwhile, the 18th Infantry Division, in spite of the 6th Army commander's orders turning it from the direction of Równe westwards, in order to cover Lwów from the area of Krzemieniec and Dubno, on the own initiative of its commander headed from Zasław on a night march to Ostróg.

During the day of 6 July, after Budëny had issued the orders above, as the individual divisions were in the process of executing the regrouping ordered for them, unexpected directives arrived at the field headquarters in Równe from the South-Western Front commander concerning the preparation for further offensive actions.

The Horse Army has been given new tasks, namely,

- 1) man the Styr and Ikwa River crossings in the Łuck – Dubno – Targowica area with reconnaissance units;
- 2) continue to eliminate the enemy with its left-wing units in the area of Starokonstantynów – Ostropol;<sup>12</sup>
- 3) co-operate with the 12th Army by immediately sending one cavalry division to the Berezne – Kostopol area;
- 4) keep the main forces concentrated in the Równe region, at the same time taking into account the Łuck – Włodzimierz Wołyński – Hrubieszów line as a further direction of offensive operations, expected to begin no later than on 11 July;

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<sup>12</sup> That is, the 18th ID.





5) bring rolling stock and services closer without delay, regulate the matter of supplies and carry out the necessary re-shoeing of horses.

The directives received, while ordering a certain scattering of some of the Horse Army's units over a larger area, nevertheless indicated the necessity of keeping its main forces concentrated in one area.

Budenny, on the other hand, went even further, and sent his divisions scattering in various directions, leaving himself with only two brigades of the 6th Cavalry Division in Równe.

However, due to the fierce battle at Tuczyn, the 4th Cavalry Division was unable to advance on Berezne, and it was only due to this coincidence that almost half of the Horse Army's forces remained at Równe.

*Kostopol*

But the 11th Cavalry Division was ordered to march immediately on Dubno, with the task of capturing that town. At the same time the 6th Cavalry Division was to advance one regiment to the Radaczówka area, and the 14th Cavalry Division was thrown towards Ostróg to support the 45th Rifle Division, which was fighting the enemy "Starokonstantynów group" there.

## 5. Recapture of Równe

Still on 6 July, the Ukrainian Front commander, not having any information about the decisions taken by the 2nd Army to start offensive actions in the near future, nor the orders issued in that regard, nor a response to the appropriate reminder sent in the night of 5 July, sent a new order in the afternoon demanding:

Report immediately why order No. 1265/III has not yet been executed.

The 2nd Army will proceed without delay to carry out the task entrusted to it, regardless of the fatigue of the troops. The Army commander must fulfil this order.

Thus the Ukrainian Front was still under the impression that the enemy would continue to advance west and that any delay in the order to move the 2nd Army "between Budienny and Kowel" made on 5 July might result in the impossibility of rebuilding a fresh front on the newly chosen line. In reality, however, the position of the Horse Army was quite different. The 2nd Army commander, on the basis of information received at the time, had correctly assessed it when he stated that the main forces of the Horse Army were still in the Równe region, advancing only single units to the west and south.

In view of this, he changed the previously chosen direction of the attack to a more southerly one and set as the operation's main objectives the defeat of the Horse Army, the recapture of Równe, and the restoration of the rail link to the north-west.

Shortly after receiving the above orders from the Ukrainian Front, the 2nd Army commander gave orders to seize the starting bases and to launch a general attack at dawn on 8 July. Namely:

I. According to air reconnaissance, the enemy, having sent about one division of cavalry from Równe through Bielów to Łuck, has concentrated the majority of the Horse Army in the Równe area, positioning large units in Klewań and securing the Horyń from Tuczyn to Susk.

II. By order of the Ukrainian Front, the 2nd Army will attack the bulk of Budenny's forces with the task of destroying them and recapturing the Równe – Kowel railway line.

The 1st Legion Division is in the vicinity of Tuczyn – Rzeczyca, where it fought a brigade of the enemy 4th Cavalry Division, and has already established permanent communication with the Army command.

According to a message from the Ukrainian Front (sent 23:20 on 6 July), Ostróg was to be attacked on 6 July by the 18th ID, from where the 18th ID's will attack towards Równe.

III. In order to carry out the intentions of the directive I order:

1) The 3rd ID, after immediately concentrating, will march today (7 July) to the vicinity of Begeń, securing firmly the crossing of the Horyń River to the south.



2) The 6th ID will slightly extend the bridgehead south of Alexandria.

3) The 1st Legion Division will concentrate today in the Kotów – Mariendorf area, securing it from the east and along the Horyń River;

*Tuczyn*

4) The 1st Cavalry Brigade, remaining in place near Begeń, will today begin vigorous reconnaissance in the direction of Klewań; to Ołyka via Bielów; to Dolhoszyje via Peresopnica, then to the bridge on the Stubła River (south-east of Satyjów) via Działkowicze; to Młynów via Bożkiewicze; and to Kryłów (between Równe and Dubno) via Działkowicze;

*Równe*

5) The 11th Lancer Regiment is directly subordinate to the Army command and will establish direct communication with it;

6) The 12th IR will remain in the area south of Begeń.

After completing the ordered movements the army will proceed to execute the attack.

IV. Grouping and execution of the attack.

From the concentration points ordered above will set off from Begeń in the following order:

1) 1st Cavalry Brigade of at 03:00 on 8 July via Karajewicze – Karpiówka to Jadwipol, with the task of conducting the above-ordered reconnaissance from that last village and securing the western flank of the attacking army, possibly attacking and disturbing the enemy west of Równe.

2) The 3rd Legion Division will march out of Begeń at 04:00 and attack Równe via Karajewicze – Ponebel – Obarów with two regiments, leaving one infantry regiment on the Karajewicze – Karpiówka line to cover the right flank of the army from Klewań.

3) The 12th Infantry Regiment will march at 03:00 on 8 July from Begeń to Chocin, from where it will establish communications with the right wing of the 6th ID as soon as possible, advancing with it in the direction of Żołotjów via Aleksin Wiełky. It is a reserve for the 6th Infantry Division, starting from Chocin, to which it is directly subordinate.

4) The 6th Infantry Division, will set out at 02:00 on July 8 from Alexandria heading via Kustyń – Szpanów – Tiutkiewicze to Równe. In Kustyń it will stop until the front of the 1st Legion Division reaches Zaborol, and only then it will begin a further attack.

*Tuczyn  
and  
Równe*

5) The 1st Legion Division, with the exception of one infantry regiment and one battery of a field artillery regiment, will set out at 03:00 on July 8 from Alexandria via Zaborol – Żytyn Mały – Barmaki and attack Równe from the east. One regiment of the division plus one field battery will remain in Alexandria as a immediate reserve of the 2nd Army.

6) The 11th Lancer regiment will cross the Horyń River at Alexandria at 03:30 on 8 July and march eastwards from Zaborol Żytyn Wielki, from where it will cover the left wing of the attacking army from the east, accompanying it as the attack progresses.

7) The armoured trains *Grozny* and *Strzelec Kresowy* are to go to the railway bridge in Alexandria. From 02:00 on 8 July they will accompany the attack of the 6th Infantry Division, carrying out reconnaissance in the direction to Równe.

V. It is noted that further supply of ammunition and provisions will be possible only via the Równe to Sarny railway line from the moment the action begins.

VI. The staff of the 2nd Army will be stationed until 02:00 on 8 July at Lubomirsk Station. From the commencement of the attack it will move to Alexandria Manor, and then it will advance in the footsteps of the 6th Infantry Division.

*Kostopol  
Tuczyn*

VII. The intention of the army command is, after capturing Równe, to establish rail communications with Kowel as soon as possible and to secure that line.

After the successful attack, the quarters will be:



6th Infantry Division: the area of Szpanów – Alexin Wiełki,

1st Legion Division: Równe,

3rd Legion Division: Obarów – Stawki – Ponebel.

VIII. The 11th Lancer Regiment will try tomorrow to establish, by means of an officer patrol, communication with the 18th Infantry Division, marching from Ostróg to Równe.

The regrouping of the units of the 2nd Army began before dawn on 7 July, in order to occupy the ordered starting points.

However, on the right wing near Begeń, enemy resistance was immediately encountered. As before, about one cavalry regiment occupied the village, and with machine-gun fire forced the 12th Infantry Regiment, arriving there from Kostopol, to halt in the woods north of Kol. Marjanówka.

The 1st Cavalry Brigade also failed to push out the enemy and complete its assigned task.

In the afternoon a sapper company of the 3rd Legion Infantry Division arrived at Begeń, and under the cover of the 1st Battalion of the 9th Legion IR and fire from a battery that had arrived there earlier, attempted to repair the partially destroyed bridge over the Horyń.

But even then the Russian cavalry succeeded in thwarting that action and prevented the crossing from being captured.

At the same time, during the day the remaining units of the 3rd Legion Infantry Division and the 6th Infantry Division regrouped, and by the evening all were at their assigned starting bases.

In the evening of 7 July the position of the units of the 2nd Army was as follows:

- 1) Rubcze: 8th Legion IR;
- 2) Metków: two battalions of the 9th Legion IR;
- 3) Near Begeń itself, on the northern bank of the Horyń River, the 1st Battalion of the 9th Legion IR with a sapper company of the 3rd Legion ID, attempting to capture the river crossing;
- 4) North of Begeń, in the area of Pawłowka, was the 1st Cavalry Brigade, composed of the 7th Lancer Regiment and 1st Light Horse, with two batteries of the 1st Horse Artillery *Divizion*;
- 5) In the forest north of Kol. Marjanowka was the 12th IR and three batteries of the 6th Field Artillery Regiment;
- 6) Further east along the Horyń River was the 7th Legion IR;
- 7) On both sides of the railway track was the 20th IR;
- 8) Near Alexandria and on the bridgehead over the road bridge was the 65th IR;
- 9) Still further north-east was the 11th Lancer Regiment.

Tuczyn

Meanwhile a fierce battle again raged from the early morning between the 1st Legion ID and the Russian 4th Cavalry Division near Tuczyn.

On a very hot day, the Russians attacked the units of the 1st and 5th Legion IRs, which had been holding out since the previous day in Kol. Amelin, Zalanka, and Niespodzianka. Attempts to outflank these towns by manoeuvring to the east failed. Frontal assaults were also repulsed.

Tuczyn  
and  
Kostopol

In the afternoon, the battle seems to lose intensity, being limited to a lively exchange of shots.



However, having received reinforcements, in the form of a brigade of the 6th Cavalry Division, the Russians once again launched an attack from the south and east, attempting to repeat the flanking attempt, which was again thwarted.

Despite the successes achieved, and the prospects of further success, the division commander attempted to break off from the fighting and retreat as quickly as possible to Alexandria to carry out the order of the 2nd Army commander and occupy the area assigned to him.

However, the constant attacks of the Russian cavalry tied up the Polish units to such an extent that it was only late at night before they finally managed to break away from the enemy and, marching via Ryświanka and Antonówka, head towards Alexandria. But the lateness of the hour and the fatigue of the troops did not allow them to reach the prescribed area that day. It was not until the following day, considerably delayed, that the division reached its starting points.

*Kostopol*

While the Polish troops were preparing to take offensive action, the commander of the Horse Army received a repetition of previous orders from the South-Western Front, once again requiring close cooperation with the 12th and 14th Armies in order to facilitate their offensive actions. In particular, the Horse Army was to assist the right wing of the 14th Army with destroying the so-called "Starokonstantynów Group" by capturing the Kulczyn – Rozalja area as quickly as possible.

This task for the Horse Army therefore required its commander, at the decisive moment, to disperse his divisions – already scattered over a vast area between the Słucz and the Horyń – even wider.

However, disregarding the danger of such an operation, Budienny ordered as early as dawn on 7 July to commence operations simultaneously in both directions, as directed.

To that end, the 4th Cavalry Division was initially to attack the Polish troops occupying the Alexandria area, to assist the 44th Rifle Division in taking Ludwipol. Having kept only the 6th Cavalry Division in the Równe region, the Horse Army commander ordered the remaining units to take concentric action against the enemy "Starokonstantynów group". In order to carry out that task, the 11th Cavalry Division, leaving one brigade in the Dubno area, was to move with its main forces to Obgów in order to close off the Poles' retreat routes to the west. At the same time the 14th Cavalry Division, having left one brigade at Ostróg, was to pursue and attack the enemy advancing towards Dubno from the rear.

Thus, at the moment when the decisive attack on the Równe by the Polish 2nd Army was about to begin, Budienny not only failed to draw all available forces together for that battle, but on the contrary ordered them to spread even further, leaving just two cavalry divisions against three infantry divisions and the 1st Cavalry Brigade.

Such a ratio of forces threatened complete annihilation for half of the Horse Army, especially as its commander emphasised in almost all his orders the need to hold the Równe area.

However, he had barely managed to issue those orders when, at dawn on 8 July, under cover of dense fog, the attack of the 2nd Polish Army began along the entire front.

After several hours of fighting, the Polish units reached the following positions around 09:00.

At Begeń we finally succeeded in forcing the Horyń and creating a bridgehead, which was manned by the battalions of the 9th Legion IR and 12th IR.

*Równe*

Under their protection, the partially destroyed bridge was quickly rebuilt, while the main forces of the 3rd Legion ID and the 1st Cavalry Brigade, concentrated on the north bank, awaited the completion of this work.

Further to the east, on either side of the railway track, the 6th Infantry Division deployed for the attack; the enemy were defending a line from Szpanów Manor to Szpanów Fort. Still further east, the 11th

*Tuczyn*



Lancer Regiment, which was providing cover for the left wing of the army, reached the village of Zaborol, vigorously reconnoitring to the east and south – and finding enemy cavalry units almost everywhere.

The 1st Legion Infantry Division was approaching Alexandria, having broken away from the enemy in the evening of the previous day. Despite marching through the night to its designated starting base, it reached it with a delay of several hours.

It was now that the commander of the 2nd Army received a report by plane, relaying the news that the main forces of the Horse Army had left earlier from the Równe area for Łuck via Klewań and Kiwerce. On the basis of that news – which was completely wrong regarding the actual position of the Russian troops – the Army commander immediately changed from his previous intention, namely to attack Równe concentrically, and returned to his previous concept of striking at the flank and rear of the Horse Army as it was marching westward.

In order to appropriately change the directions of the divisions already developed for the attack, he issued before noon on 8 July a new operational order with the following content:

I. The enemy (the bulk of Budëny's forces) marched out yesterday from the Równe area in the general direction through Klewań to Łuck and Kiwerce. The crossing of the 3rd Legion Division at Begeń is being resisted quite strongly by the enemy.

II. The 2nd Army will begin a pursuit of the enemy.

III. To this end it is ordered:

1) The 1st Cavalry Brigade will set out immediately on receipt of these orders from Begeń through Karajewicze – Kol. Michałówka – Bielów in the direction of Ołyka, carrying out reconnaissance: through Klewań on Berezne – Derażne; through Klewań along the road in the direction of Łuck; through Peresopnica to Dolhoszyje; and through the Dziatkowicze and the bridge on the Stubła River (south-east of Satyów) to Młynów.

*Równe*

2) The 3rd Legion Infantry Division will march out of Begeń today, one hour after the departure of the 1st Cavalry Brigade, through Karajewicze – Broniki – Klewań with the task of capturing and securing both bridges, rail and road, over the Stubła River, attacking to the west.

3) The 12th Infantry Regiment will march immediately behind the 3rd Legion Division through Karajewicze to Ponebel, where it will join the 6th Infantry Division.

4) The 6th Infantry Division (without the 12th Infantry Regiment) will march immediately upon receipt of this order through Kustyń – Szpanów – Obarów – Karpiłówka – Michałówka to Bielów – Stary Żuków, with the task of capturing the Stubła River crossings at Bielów and Peresopnica, attacking to the west.

5) The 11th Lancer Regiment will immediately march through Zaborol – Żytyn Mały – Równe – Jasienowicze – Krywicze – Peresopnica to the village of Suchowce, with the task of securing the southern flank of the 2nd Army.

*Tuczyn  
Równe*

6) The 1st Legion Division will march immediately through Zaborol – Żytyn Mały – Szpanów – Żołotjów – Obarów – the Klewań road in the direction of Klewań, placing at the disposal of the 2nd Army command one infantry regiment with one battery as a reserve for the Army.

7) One infantry regiment plus one battery from the 1st Legion Division will be placed at the disposal of the Army Headquarters in Alexandria. It will follow the 6th Infantry Division to Ponebel, and then take the road to Klewań.



- 8) The task of the 1st Cavalry Brigade, like the 6th Infantry Division, will also be to support the 1st Legion Division from the south towards Hołyszów, should the 1st Legion Division face too much resistance in the Klewań area.
- 9) The 1st Legion Division will march its left wing through Równe to clear it of any remaining enemy forces.
- 10) The armoured trains *Strzelec Kresowy* and *Podhalanin* will accompany the attack of the 2nd Army to Równe, after which they will withdraw to Sarny.
- 11) In the event that the air report is mistaken and the bulk of Budëny's forces are in the Równe area after all, the divisions nearest to Równe will attack Równe with their entire forces, and will be reinforced by the Army's reserve and the nearest parts of the 6th Infantry Division.
- 12) The headquarters of the 2nd Army, until the completion of the crossing of the bridge in Alexandria, is with the 1st Legion Division in Alexandria, then on the march line of the 6th Infantry Division as it moves to Ponebel, and then along the road to Klewań.
- 13) The combat rolling stock should be kept close to the combat units. Heavy rolling stock should be diverted to the north-west, as decided by the division commanders.
- 14) All divisions shall maintain constant communication with each other under the personal responsibility of division and group commanders.

All divisions shall attack and march in staggered formations.

(-) Raszewski

Lieutenant-General and Army commander.

In the meantime, however, the fighting north of Równe was intensifying further. Awaiting the arrival of the 1st Legion Infantry Division, so that they could jointly carry out a further attack to the south, the 6th Infantry Division attempted to take up more convenient defensive positions on the hills in front of Szpanów. To this end, the 20th Infantry Regiment advanced along the railway track, strongly supported by artillery fire and the armoured trains.

The Russian cavalry initially retreated to the hills between the manor and the Szpanów fort, where it put up a fierce resistance.

This forced the division commander to bring up the 65th Infantry Regiment, which advanced further east, into the fight.

The Russians, however, continued to try to stop the division's advance, charging several times across its front. It was only after a long battle, reaching into the evening, that their resistance was broken and the infantry of the 6th Division captured the positions near Szpanów, now with the assistance of the right wing of the 1st Legion Infantry Division. Even earlier though, that division had captured Zaborol, reinforced on the left wing by the 11th Lancer Regiment arriving through Karłów, and then took Żytyn Mały with the 1st Legion IR and Żytyn Wielki with the 5th IR, having rejected the fierce counterattacks of the Russian cavalry, both on foot and mounted with strong artillery support.

*Tuczyn*

By nightfall, these troops had already reached the road to Równe, and the 6th Infantry Division finally captured Szpanów.

*Równe*

While both divisions were engaged in fierce fighting, advancing slowly towards Równe, the Polish troops completed the repair of the bridge at Begeń around 14:00, and a few hours later the entire 3rd Legion



Infantry Division, together with the 12th Infantry Regiment and the cavalry brigade, advanced towards Karajewicze, adjusting their rate of march to the conditions of the general advance.

Meanwhile, the commander of the Horse Army, seeing the difficulty his units were in, barely resisting the superior Polish forces, ordered at nightfall that the 4th Cavalry Division was to withdraw to the east and the 6th Cavalry Division was to cover the retreat, holding Równe as long as possible, and then to depart in the general direction of the south-west.

By the time the cavalry divisions managed to carry out this order, the Polish troops had already occupied starting positions for an assault on Równe.

Late in the evening the position of both sides was as follows:

The 1st Cavalry Brigade had reached the Karajewicze area, where it stopped for the night. Part of the 3rd Legion Infantry Division was also there, with other battalions in Gródek and Rohaczów.

Both of these units halted their further march, waiting for the left wing of the army to move further southwest.

The 12th Infantry Regiment, meanwhile, had reached the mill near the village of Gródek and was preparing to advance on Ponebel.

The 6th Division (only two infantry regiments with artillery) was concentrating in the Szpanów area, where it was to remain overnight, and then, after the 1st Legion Infantry Division had captured Równe, move west.

In turn, the 1st Legion Infantry Division, to the strength of an infantry brigade with artillery, organised itself for the attack on Równe, directing the 1st Legion Infantry Regiment through Szpanów, and the 5th Regiment through Barmaki.

The 11th Lancer Regiment continued to cover the left wing of the army, occupying the Karlów Manor.

The units of the Horse Army, following the orders of their commander, began to retreat at this time.

The 4th Cavalry Division withdrew hurriedly in the direction of Horyńgrad and the 6th CD held back the Polish attacks on the Ponebel – Tiutkiewiczze line.

*Tuczyn  
Równe*

It was after 21:00 that the general attack on Równe began. But at the same moment an unusually strong storm with a heavy downpour broke. Rapid darkness fell, made worse by the approaching night, so that even at close range it was almost impossible to see.

These circumstances made it very difficult for the troops to advance in quite difficult and unfamiliar terrain. In spite of these adversities, the Polish troops continued to move forward. One battalion of the 12th Infantry Regiment struck at Ponebel, and initially captured the northern part of the village with the mill, while the Russians continued to hold on to the southern part. The next attack, by the entire regiment, led to the capture of the village, with the Russians losing a large number of wagons, one cannon and four heavy machine guns.

Simultaneously with the action of the 12th Infantry Regiment, the attack on Równe began. Moving very slowly and with difficulty along muddy roads in the pouring rain and the darkness of the night, compounded by a raging storm, the troops of the 1st Legion Infantry Division threw back the weak rear guards of the Russian 6th Cavalry Division south of Szpanów, and then near Żołtjów, and finally in the morning reached the northern edge of the city.

Here, still before dawn, the Russian cavalry squadrons attempted to resist the advance of the 1st Legion Regiment. Rebuffed after a short battle, they attempted to retreat into the city while it was still dark.



However it soon lightened, and the units of the 1st Legion Regiment advancing along the road saw columns of Russian cavalry, mixed with wagons and artillery, galloping towards the town on both sides of the road. Immediately opening of fire with rifles and machine-guns, they inflicted heavy losses on the Russian cavalry, who were moving without any cover in open terrain. This caused complete confusion and panic, during which the enemy abandoned three guns and most of its rolling stock.

The Russian defeat was further compounded when both columns tried to cross the narrow causeway and bridge over the Uscie River, located right at the entrance to the town, in order to stay ahead of the Polish infantry. Using that narrow passage-way under heavy fire, the Russians abandoned the remainder of their fleet as well as five heavy machine guns and a great deal of equipment.

Leaving over 100 dead and wounded on the road while retreating, Budëny's squadrons finally managed to hide in the narrow streets of the town and escape further shelling. Having quickly passed through Równe, the units of the Russian 6th Cavalry Division departed for Tynne.

At the same time their 4th Cavalry Division occupied the Horodyszczce region with its main forces, preparing for a counter-attack.

*Tuczyn*

Around 05:00 on 9 July the 1st Legion Infantry Division entered the now empty streets of Równe and immediately occupied the hills to the east and northeast, and then the southern and western edges of the city.

Early in the morning of 9 July the right wing of the 2nd Army, in accordance with the orders of the previous day, marched further west.

Firstly, the 1st Cavalry Brigade set off for Krzywicze via Karpiłówka and Jadwipol. Not entering that village, where it only found the enemy's vehicles, it headed for Bielów.

*Równe*

At about the same time, the 6th Infantry Division left Szpanów and, having joined up in the Ponebel area with the 12th Infantry Regiment, marched through Karpiłówka, Michałówka and Bielów to Otyka.

Further north, the 3rd Legion Infantry Division advanced along the road towards Klewań.

During this move, the units of the 6th Infantry Division and Cavalry Brigade fought a number of battles with the enemy cavalry, which set out in pursuit of the 2nd Army. They also encountered on their way a regiment of the 6th Cavalry Division, sent a few days before to the Stubła River as cover to the west. The whole march was covered to the east by the 1st Legion Infantry Division, tying up around Równe almost all the Horse Army forces that Budëny had at his disposal that day.

At around noon, the Russian 4th Cavalry Division launched a counterattack on Równe from the Horodyszczce area. After a strong artillery preparation, the Russian brigades attacked the northeastern end of the city.

*Tuczyn*

While initially several attacks were repulsed, after a prolonged battle the Russians managed to get close to the Polish positions, holding them despite heavy artillery fire.

A little later, units of the 6th Cavalry Division attacked from the Tynne area and quickly succeeded in reaching the edge of the town.

*Równe*

The position of the 1st Legion Infantry Division in Równe became increasingly difficult. All available forces were used to garrison the outskirts of the city, which were vast in relation to their numbers, and so there were no reserves. However, the number of men was still insufficient, and some sectors were incapable of prolonged defence.

In the situation, the commander of the division, seeing the impossibility of defending the city further, and at the same time acting in accordance with the Army commander's orders, decided to leave Równe





at around 15:00, especially as the 6th Infantry Division and the 3rd Legion Infantry Division were now much further to the west.

The execution of that decision, however, immediately encountered great difficulties, as the increasingly persistent Russian assaults entirely tied up all the Polish infantry units.

Between 16:00 and 17:00 the Russian artillery fire reached a very heavy level, and immediately afterwards a general advance began.

Despite the capture of the Żytyn area by units of the 4th Russian Cavalry Division, from where they threatened the city from the north, and a simultaneous assault from the east, as well as an attack by a brigade of the 6th Cavalry Division from the south, the Polish units managed to hold their positions.

*Tuczyn*

The Russians could not get anywhere close to an assault distance, so as to be able to advance at a charge, and almost everywhere they had to limit themselves to a firefight, often under extreme pressure.

Finally, late in the evening, the Polish units managed to begin an undetected retreat from their positions and left Równe before midnight on 9 July.

In line with the Army commander's order, the 1st Legion Infantry Division departed that night for Klewań, from where it was to proceed to the Kołki area, returning to the 3rd Army.

*Równe*

In view of the failure of the day-long assaults and the heavy losses sustained in them, the Russians abandoned further attacks on Równe in the evening. The Horse Army commander, not noticing that the Polish troops had already departed, sent an order on the night of 9 July to the 14th Division, to come immediately by forced march from around Ostróg. He intended to launch a concentrated attack with three divisions on the Polish forces in the city on the morning of 10 July.

As a result of this lack of data in the enemy's actions and insufficient reconnaissance, the attack was in vain on 10 July and, more importantly, delayed the pursuit. There were only the weak units of the 6th Cavalry Division, sent a few days ago to the Stubła River, to follow the Poles. Obviously, they could not prevent the 2nd Army from executing its move to Łuck, and still on the evening of 9 July its divisions reached, or rather crossed to, the western bank of the Stubła.

During the following day, after some rearguard fighting at Ołyka and Klewań, all the 2nd Army reached its assigned sector on the Styr River and reunited with the Cavalry Division that had arrived there several days before. This ended a nearly ten-day period of fighting for possession of the Równe region.

It resulted in the retreat of the entire Ukrainian Front by over 100 km to the west and the loss of a number of defensible positions and important lines of communication, which in our south-eastern theatre of war were by no means abundant. Above all, several opportunities to defeat the Horse Army were missed. Moreover, the Horse Army's new successes had a great moral impact, both on the Polish command and on the units subordinate to it, who once again saw that, despite temporary victories, the destruction of Budëny's cavalry could not be achieved – and that fighting against it ended in retreat every time.

## **6. Action in the Dubno– Ostróg area**

In describing the Battle of Równe, it is difficult to ignore the action taking place at the same time in the area south of that town, namely at Ostróg and Dubno, which had a large indirect effect on the course of that operation.

As already indicated, the position of the Polish troops south of Równe on 6 July was as follows:



The 18th Division and the 10th Infantry Brigade – having previously thrown back the advance of the units of the Russian 45th Rifle Division near Zasław, which together with Kotovski's cavalry brigade were part of the Horse Army – marched towards Ostróg in the evening of that day.

In Dubno there was a weak garrison, consisting of a reserve battalion of the 50th Border Rifle Division and 9th Border Rifle Division, numbering only a few hundred men, and an artillery unit.

Further south, in the area of Starokonstantynów, there was still the left wing of the 6th Army, the 13th Infantry Division. Its units were fighting the 45th Rifle Division advancing on the south wing, Kotovski's cavalry brigade, and the "Composite" Division, now part of the 14th Army.

As described above, the commander of the Horse Army, following orders from the South-Western Front, ordered two divisions (the 11th and 14th) to move to Ostróg and Dubno, in order to eliminate the 18th Infantry Division and garrison the Ikwa River crossings.

On the afternoon of 7 July, Dubno was temporarily occupied by the advance of the 11th Cavalry Division. However, Polish troops arriving from Fort Zahorce quickly recaptured the town and destroyed its bridges over the Ikwa. Meanwhile after a day's march, the 18th Infantry Division hit Ostróg in the morning of 7 July and, after a short battle with weak enemy forces, took the city.

However, on the previous day the 18th Infantry Division commander had received an order from the 6th Army that, in view of the changed situation in the Równe region, he should direct his forces no longer to the north-west. He was to head west, that is to Dubno and Krzemieniec, with the task of defending the way to Brody.

Having sent the 10th Infantry Brigade to the Krzemieniec area by the nearest road to Shumsk, the division's main forces nevertheless marched a longer way through Ostróg, in the hope of drawing away some of the Horse Army forces from near Równe, which would greatly facilitate the operations of the 2nd and 6th Armies.

This intention was almost entirely successful. Fearing a blow to the rear of the Russian troops fighting at Równe, the move of that division north-westwards forced the commander of the Horse Army, as well as the commander of the South-Western Front, to send the 14th Cavalry Division to Ostróg. That unit was then missing on the day of the decisive battle, that is 8 July.

A few hours after capturing Ostróg, the Polish troops resting there were attacked by the Russian cavalry division arriving from Równe. Fierce fighting ensued until late in the evening. Despite the persistence of the enemy cavalry's attacks, which were made on foot and mounted, they ended in its failure.

Meanwhile, the commander of the 18th Infantry Division, deeming his action against the Horse Army complete, decided to set off immediately for Dubno, in compliance with the orders of the 6th Army. The sounds of cannon fire coming from the direction of Równe did not change this decision, because the 18th ID commander thought that they might be caused by fighting between Russian troops and Ukrainian insurgents.

But an exit from Ostróg had yet to be won. With a bold assault on the Russian cavalry, the 18th ID opened the road to Kuniew and Luczyn late in the evening of 7 July.

Having marched all night and in the morning of the following day through sandy wilderness and forest tracks, the units of the 18th Infantry Division arrived at Buderaż around noon, without encountering the enemy along the way.

Thus the 18th ID group, which initially consisted of two divisions, but was already significantly weakened by the sending of the 10th Infantry Brigade from Zasław to Shumsk, finally turned to the south-west. It moved away from the Horse Army at the decisive moment of the Battle of Równe, when the goal of its



ten days of marches and battles was so close to being reached. If it had not been directed away from its previous course, the next day (8 July) the long-prepared-for concentric strike against the Horse Army could have finally taken place.

Meanwhile, as I have already mentioned, on 8 July Budënyy ordered both divisions sent earlier to Dubno and Ostróg to strike from the east and west at the enemy "Starokonstantynów group" on the march between those two towns. But this order was only obeyed by the 14th Cavalry Division, which immediately on receiving it set off in pursuit of the 18th Infantry Division. So, a few hours after their arrival at Buderaż, the Polish troops were attacked by the Russian cavalry. However, after fighting lasting only a couple of hours they victoriously repelled the enemy. Waiting for the cooperation of the 11th Cavalry Division, which was approaching from the west, the Russians ceased further fighting late in the evening and remained in the vicinity of Buderaż, taking Palcza.

On the following day before dawn the 18th Infantry Division left, heading towards Dubno. Unable to prevent the Poles from leaving Buderaż, the 14th Cavalry Division followed them, still awaiting the arrival of the 11th Cavalry Division from the opposite direction. That came true just a few hours after leaving the village.

The commander of the 11th Cavalry Division, who the previous day had been unable to reach the enemy due to the delayed start of his march, finally reached them in the morning of 9 July in the Moszczanica area. It closed off the further advance of the 18th Infantry Division, attacking it from the front, while at the same time the 14th Cavalry Division caught up with the column from the east, striking at its rear.

But the Polish troops emerged victorious from that difficult position, repulsing the enemy's attacks. Then, in view of the new situation, they stopped heading for Dubno and moved instead to Krzemieniec, where the 10th Infantry Brigade had arrived in the meantime.

So, just as at Równie, the Russian cavalry had failed to destroy the Polish forces here as well, nor had it prevented him from carrying out his plan. The 18th Infantry Division stood unhindered in the area north of Krzemieniec the following day, 10 July.

