

The Battle on the Outskirts of Warsaw in August 1920

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Chief Editor : Major Bolesław Waligóra

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Pygmy Wars Introduction

The original text is a seriously detailed look at the 1st Army's defence of the city of Warsaw – a key moment in the Pygmy Wars. It is not really a history – being without any introduction, conclusions, and indeed barely even any commentary at all – but is simply a study of what was ordered and what then happened.

The immense detail means that the book is long, so this translation is a quick pass through the text and should not be relied upon for any details – I don't know Polish.

The original writing was very formal, stilted and contained a lot of redundant passages. I have taken liberties to make it more readable to a modern eye. That includes removing sentences like, "this is what the division command, and the troops and establishments directly subordinate to it, looked like," or, "in the course of the operations we saw the concerted cooperation of the commands, which exerted their forces to complete the task." I have rearranged some paragraphs slightly, and sometimes removed small paragraphs of material which is repeated more than once.

I have removed all order numbers and citations to references or texts, which includes most of the original footnotes – if you can read them then you won't be reading this in English. A few quotes from original memoirs or reference books or clarifications in the footnotes have been moved into the text. All footnotes are therefore mine unless clearly indicated as an original.

The text came with a lot of maps and pictures inside the text, which I have left there. Some were originally of quite poor quality and reducing them to fit has not helped that.

There are also some Appendices:

- 1) A guide to the Polish symbols, terms and abbreviations in the text and maps, and how I have translated them.
- 2) Orders of Battle and numbers for the Polish units, which sometimes can be quite helpful to be viewed separately when reading the text.
- 3) Some larger maps, best printed in A3, and enable readers to see the bigger picture of the events.
- 4) Some "panoramic" pictures and sketches of the battlefields, best viewed on a monitor.
- 5) The bibliography.

Place names have been left in the text's original Polish except for those which have common English variants, namely: Warsaw, Moscow, Brest (Brest-Litovsk), Kaunas, and the Vistula. However Polish regiments named after a particular town get the Polish version of the name (so Kowno for Kaunas, Wilno for Vilnius).

The spelling of place names at the time was quite erratic – and many have since changed spelling – so expect small variants in the maps from the text.

A lot of the action takes place around big country houses. The text uses *folwark* for some of these, which I have translated as "manor", but the term really means the farm itself, so the context implies a considerable number of outbuildings as part of a large farm, a grange. Some other buildings are termed *dwór*, which I have translated as "house", but there was a lot of overlap and many *dwór* were in the centre of a farm, with associated outbuildings. For *majątek* I have used "estate". For *starostwo*, which is where the local subprefect (*starosta*) had his administration, I have used "administration building", which was a large solid building.



Military Terminology

Most Polish infantry divisions were given a number and then formed from numbered infantry regiments, but:

- The 10th Infantry Division was sometimes referred to as the “Kaniów Rifle Division” and its regiments Kaniów Rifle Regiments. However period reports generally used “infantry” rather than “rifle” and the text does likewise.
- The 11th Infantry Division (11th ID) was made up of Border Rifle Regiments (though also sometimes also called infantry regiments in writing of the period).
- The low numbered Border Rifle Regiments were composed of “squadrons” rather than “companies” because they were conceived of as cavalry, even though many were mostly infantry.
- The 1st Lithuanian-Belarusian Rifle Division (1st Lit-Bel) had named rather than numbered rifle regiments. It was formally called the 19th Infantry Division at the time, albeit briefly, and usage in the text does alternate.

I tried to be consistent with the most common terminology of the time, even when strictly speaking incorrect and to the extent of correcting direct quotes, to avoid confusion with multiple names.

Using the Appendix 2 with the orders of battle can help track the various units.

All the Soviet infantry units of 1920 were termed “rifle” regiments, brigades etc, but the Poles had a tendency to call them “infantry”. Again I have gone with the correct term. They also referred to nearly all Soviet cavalry as “Cossacks”, which I have only retained for direct quotes.

Conversely, the text is very thorough about always giving the full ranks of Poles. Although it may not look like it, in fact I have taken out or reduced many such references – there is only so many times anyone wants to read “Lt-Colonel of the General Staff Thomme”, for instance, or be reminded for the 10th time that General Żeligowski commanded the 10th ID.

The text always gives the Russians their command in full, so for brevity I have sometimes used the Soviet notation: so *KomDiv-4* for “commander of the 4th Division”.

Russians and Poles both used the word *divizion* for an artillery or cavalry unit of two or three batteries or squadrons, several *divizioni* making a regiment. English often uses battalion for artillery but has no good equivalent for cavalry, so I have retained the original.

The text, like most Polish works of the time, names machine-guns using the WWI German terminology. So a “heavy machine-gun” is a Russian Maxim or MG-08, being water-cooled on a tripod. A “light machine-gun” is a MG-08/15 or other bipod gun firing a belt, no matter how heavy it was in practice. I have used “automatic rifle” for what the Poles termed a “hand machine-gun”, which is any light bipod weapon, such as a Madsen, Lewis or Chauchat, firing a magazine (occasionally called an LMG in English).

I have given all artillery in mm calibres. The original text had the French guns in mm, the Russian in inches (3” = 76-mm, 6” = 152-mm) or lines (48 line = 122-mm) and the German and Austrian guns in cm.



Chapter I

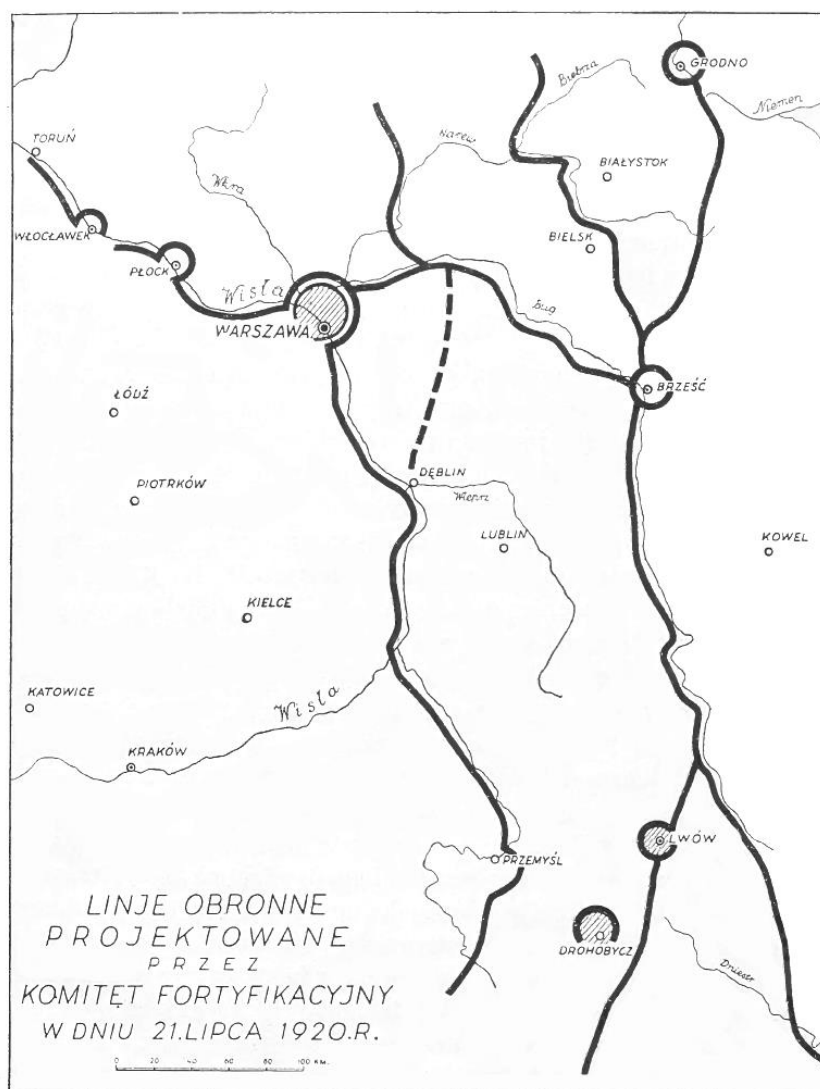
Preparations for the Defence of the Modlin – Zegrze – Warsaw Triangle

In mid-July 1920 – before the battles on the Niemen and Szczara had even been fought – General Sosnkowski, then Deputy Minister of Military Affairs, became concerned with the preparation of the fortifications in the interior, which might need to serve as an aid for the armies in case of further failures. With that in mind on 15 July he set a “Fortification Committee”, which was to submit designs for the fortifications.

The first meeting of the Committee’s members took place on 21 July, attended by Lt-General de Henning-Michaelis as Chairman; Major-General Malczewski – Head of the 2nd Department; Major-General Wroczyński – appointed on 17 July as Inspector of Fortification Works; Colonel Prich – Head of the 1st Branch of the Ministry Staff; Major Wzacny – representative of the 3rd Branch of the Supreme Command; and Major Okulicz – Deputy Chief of Staff of the Volunteer Army.

That committee selected three defensive belts which we can see in Sketch 1, and put forward the following principle:

Having neither sufficient troops to occupy continuous defensive lines nor time to build them – we shall fortify the gaps between natural obstacles (rivers, marshes, etc), and in the open sectors build defensive nodes, giving an opportunity to pass to the counter-attack. The positions thus prepared will be the skeleton of a general system of fortifications, which will be finished – according to the forces, means and time – by the army occupying them.



Sketch 1: Projected Fortification lines of the Committee, 21 July 1920



At the same time, the Committee deemed it “most urgent” to undertake work to fortify the defensive triangle of Warsaw – Modlin – Zegrze due to “the possibility of enemy cavalry raids”.

We will now take a closer look at the Modlin – Zegrze – Warsaw triangle, which is of particular interest to us. There are fortresses at the vertices of the triangle, while two of its sides run along the Vistula and Narew Rivers. It acquires strategic significance as soon as hostilities move into the interior of Poland. Even in the Napoleonic wars, the value of the then newly created Modlin fortress (1807-09) became apparent, which – together with Serock and the fortifications of Praga¹ – formed a strategic triangle. Its importance lay in the defence of the Vistula crossing in the event of the loss of Warsaw.

The importance of those areas and the permanent fortifications that were constructed did not diminish in later periods.

At the end of the 19th Century, Russia, in connection with defensive plans on the Narew and Vistula lines, proceeded to create the fortified area of Warsaw – Modlin – Zegrze. Of particular importance was the Modlin Fortress, located at the mouth of the Narew to the Vistula.

In the course of the development of defence works on the Narew and Vistula lines, the necessity of fortifying the eastern wall of the M – Z – W fortified area arose, due to the possibility of the enemy crossing the Narew and Bug Rivers above Zegrze, and so threatening the fortified area from the northeast.

In view of this, it was planned to build forts on the line of wooded hills stretching from Zielonka through Pustelnik and Benjaminów to Borki. The line of those forts was to be supported to the north by Zegrze, and to the south by the Wawer and Kawęczyn Forts, which were again linked to the permanent fortifications of Praga. A little later, the construction of forts was designed to defend the Narew crossings between Zegrze and Modlin, and around 1904 the construction of the Fort Dębe began.

Russian work associated with the M – Z – W fortified area resulted in the construction of a rich network of paved and asphalt roads, many of which were to serve military needs. However, the Russian projects were not completely realised. Indeed, after the Russo-Japanese War, the Russians changed their plans and decided to move the concentration of their armies away to the Kaunas – Grodno – Brest fortress line. For these reasons, the destruction of the forts on the Vistula and Narew lines was ordered, with the exception of the forts of the Modlin area.

In the last years before the Great War the Russians destroyed the forts surrounding Warsaw and Praga and blew up the Wawer and Kawęczyn Forts and others on the Narew and Vistula lines. However, the forts of Benjaminów and Zegrze remained intact. It should be added that just before the war, Russia partially returned to the old plans, although this did not affect the state of the permanent fortifications of the Modlin – Zegrze – Warsaw fortified area.

In 1915, after occupying Warsaw, the Germans and Austrians went on the offensive and pushed the Russians out of Congress Poland. Soon the German-Austrian front stopped far away in Belarus, Polesie and Volhynia. Shortly after the front had been established in the east, the Germans and Austrians began to build field positions along the Biebrza, Narew and Vistula Rivers, with the link between the Narew and Vistula fortifications to be a bridgehead established by the Germans.

The division and manning of these sectors by the Germans is shown in Sketch 2, below. We see that the northern wing was based on East Prussia and occupied a flanking position in relation to the middle course of the Bug River and the Warsaw bridgehead.

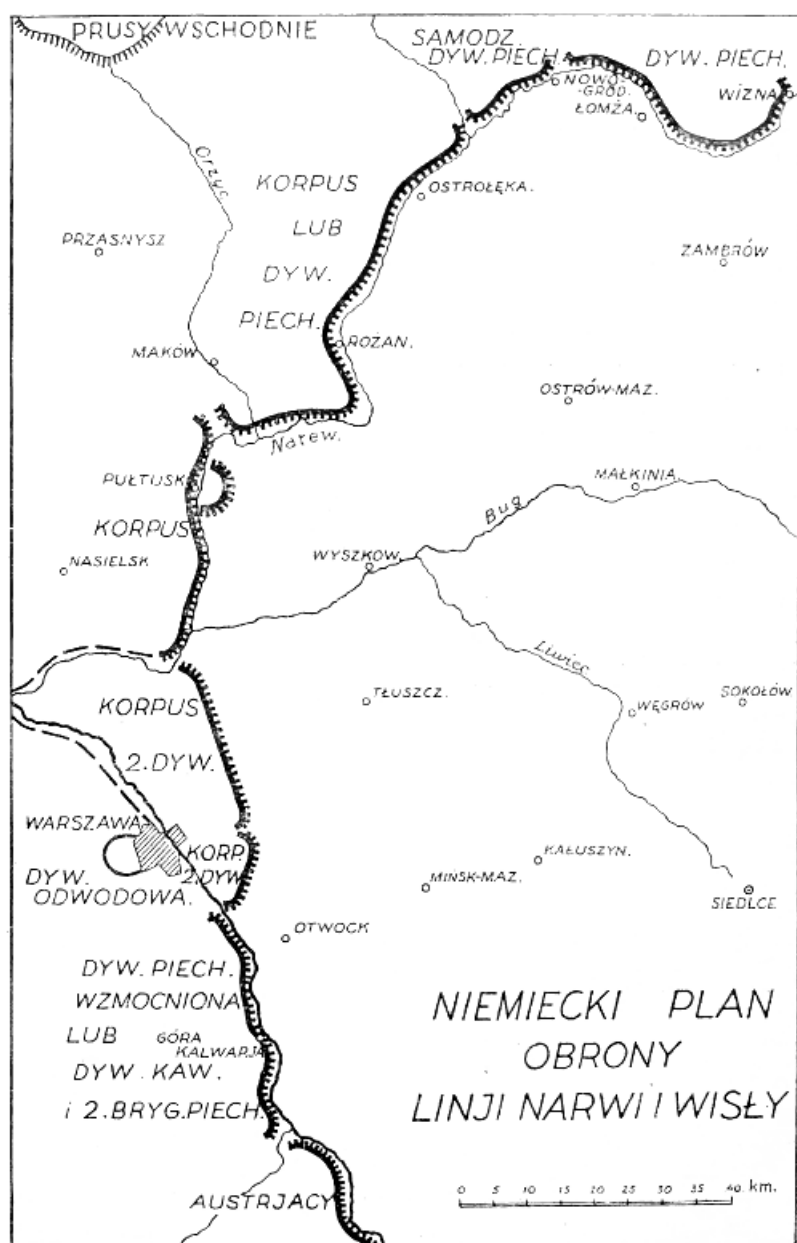
The German bridgehead of Warsaw had a limited role in defence plans, and in the event of its collapse, further defence was to be undertaken on the right bank of the Narew and the left bank of the Vistula.²

At that time, the permanent fortifications of Zegrze, Modlin and Warsaw gained in importance. We will dwell a little longer on the organisation and plan for the garrison of the German bridgehead of Warsaw.

¹ Praga was the then small suburb of Warsaw city to the east of the Vistula, now well inside the city.

² River banks are determined looking in the direction of flow. The right bank of the Narew – which flows north-south, and the left bank of the Vistula, which flows south-north, are therefore both the western banks in the Warsaw area.





Sketch 2 : German fortified line of Narew and Vistula

The bridgehead was to be manned by two German corps with four infantry divisions inside the positions and one division in reserve in Warsaw. In the north the garrison of the bridgehead was to link up with the corps garrisoning the Narew line from Zegrze to the mouth of the Pełta River.

South of Warsaw the Germans planned to garrison the Vistula with one reinforced infantry division (three brigades), or with two infantry brigades and a cavalry division.

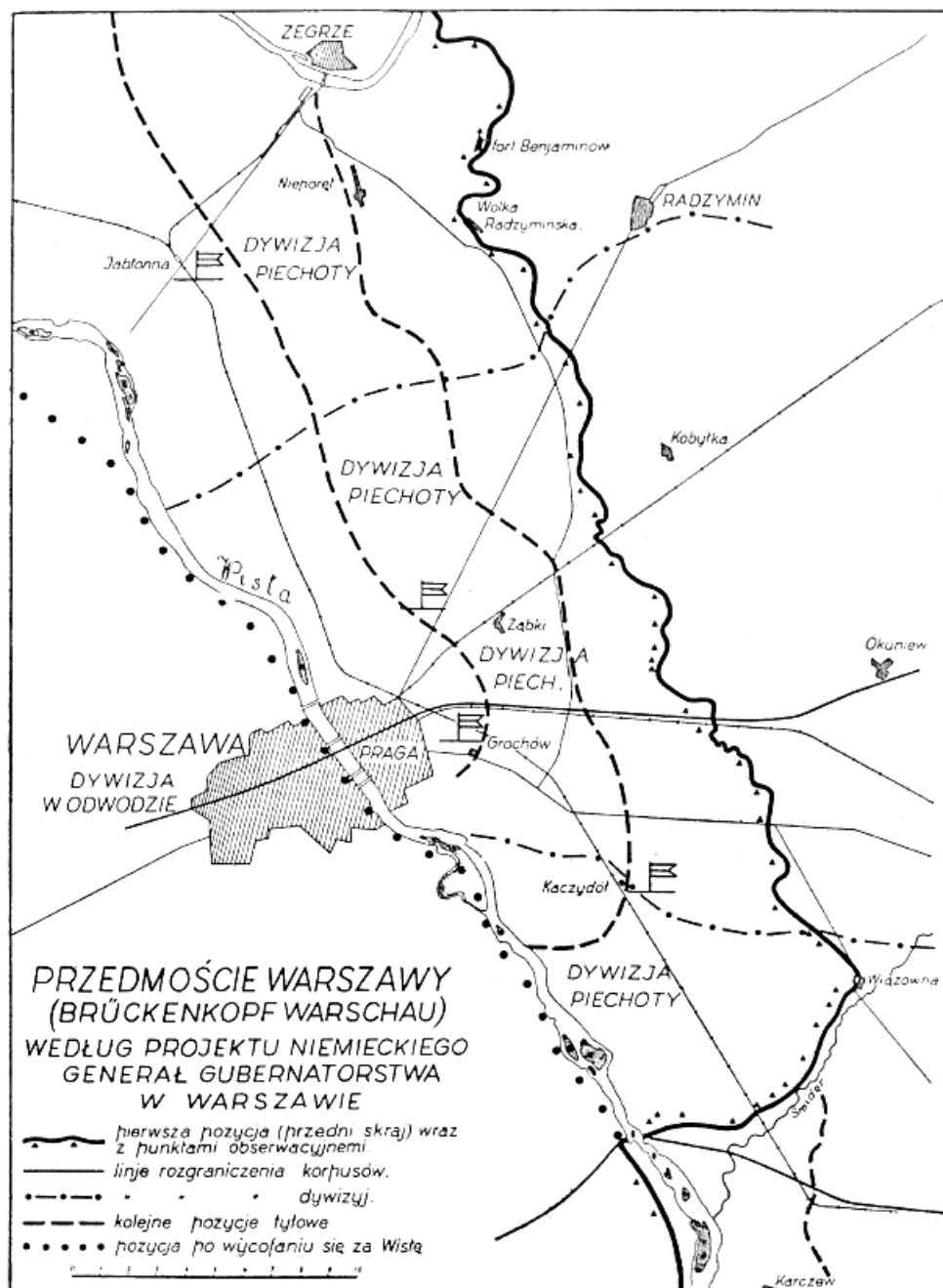
In addition, bridgeheads at Pułtusk, Serock and Karczew were planned, which were to facilitate and secure the crossing of troops retreating from the east. However, the units in these bridgeheads would not be tasked with conducting a prolonged battle.

On the other hand, the garrison of the Warsaw bridgehead was to put up a fierce and long-lasting resistance to enable an offensive with considerable forces. The bridgehead was divided into two sectors: north and south, each manned by a corps, of two infantry divisions. The line of demarcation inside the bridgehead ran along the Warsaw – Rembertów railway to Okuniew.

The northern sector ran from the railway track (near Rembertów) to Rynia on the Narew, passing through wooded hills.



When evaluating the positions in their defence plan, the Germans noted that they had good observation and fields of fire, as well as allowing flanking fire due to appropriate breaks in the line. The terrain to the rear of the positions was wooded, which facilitated the movement of troops, while the road network was sufficient.



Sketch 3 : German Plans for the Warsaw Bridgehead

The Germans' assessment of the terrain led them to conclude that an enemy would have unfavourable attack conditions in that sector. According to their terrain assessment, they also anticipated that the enemy would primarily threaten the northern flank (north of Fort Benjaminów), where the woods facilitated an approach. Countering such a move would require the cooperation of the neighbouring corps on the Narew River, which could flank the attacking enemy. These considerations resulted in a strengthened manning of the left wing in the Benjaminów area.

An enemy attack towards Okuniew, on the right wing of the corps, was also expected – although in this area the enemy had greater terrain difficulties to overcome.



The southern sector stretched from the Vistula River through Wiązowna to the Rembertów Road. In that sector more attention was paid to flanking fire when choosing the line of the positions, as the terrain was worse here than in the northern sector. Although the positions mostly ran through wooded hills, some points in the line were placed unfavourably, as the enemy had a view inside them. Some of the forward positions were difficult, especially on the right wing (from Świder to Wiązowna). However, the terrain to the rear of the positions was wooded, giving concealment to any reserves and facilitating troop movements.

In the southern sector an enemy had, according to the German assessment, favourable conditions for an attack, as the terrain facilitated an approach. The enemy could support an attack with the fire from his artillery, which had convenient firing positions and observation points. The protrusion of the position near Wiązowna was particularly vulnerable to the enemy's attack, which forced the Germans to build several positions behind that village.

The German defence plan established the composition, grouping and use of the artillery of the bridgehead, which was to have a new tactical association of light and heavy artillery. Depending on the task, three to five batteries were grouped together to form an artillery subgroup, with three subgroups forming an artillery group. In addition, each division had an artillery commander, while the Army command received an artillery general.

It should be added that the German defensive plan for the Warsaw bridgehead had it richly equipped with concrete shelters and observatories and provided with several rows of barbed wire obstacles.

However, we know that the German bridgehead would not pass muster in combat. When evaluating the plan, we can see that the intended defence was confined to too shallow a zone and any battle would be fought mainly at the front edge of the positions.

However, it can be assumed that the Germans would have solved those issues in the following years, making use of the experiences of 1916-17. Already by mid-1917 we see a new project drawn up that included, in addition to the first positions, two others situated behind them, as interim positions before the final withdrawal to the line of the Narew and Vistula.

After the revolution in Russia, the danger to the east disappeared, which also affected the fate of the Warsaw bridgehead positions. In 1918 the Germans began destroying the positions, selling the ferro-concrete shelters and other equipment of the positions to private entrepreneurs for demolition.

After the Polish expulsion of the occupying forces, the Russian fortresses and German field fortifications were taken care of by the "Fortress Board of the General District of Warsaw", which in the winter of 1918-1919 carried out an inspection of the preserved structures on its own initiative. This was:

... not only because of the valuable material they contained, but also because it was convinced of the defensive value of those lines in the event of failure in the east. For this reason the Fortress Board decided to take steps to maintain the Vistula – Narew fortifications in the best possible condition.

In January 1919 the Supreme Command halted the dismantling of the bridgehead positions, which had begun during the occupation, and also ordered that those positions were to be protected by setting up military posts.

The military authorities, to whom matters of permanent and field fortifications belonged, had for a long time spoken in favour of maintaining them in their state at the time. In September 1919, in connection with the project for the construction of a Serock – Zegrze railway, a request was made to the Inspector of Engineers and Sappers for an opinion, with the head of the railway section of the 3rd Department claiming "that in view of the insignificant fortification value of Zegrze Fort, there should be no difficulties." However, the inspector did not agree with this project and did not share the opinion.

Unfortunately, however, the fate of the German field positions was decided otherwise in the autumn of 1919 – it was decided to dismantle them, because there were not enough forces to protect the positions



from looting by the local population. Relating to that, the Engineering and Sapper Section of D.O.G.³ Warsaw submitted an extensive letter, noting that:

- on the sector from the Vistula River to the Karczew railway line the trenches were filled in, the barbed wire entanglements had disappeared altogether, and the shelters had been dismantled, leaving only the ferro-concrete shelters;
- on the sector from the Karczew line to Majdan, the shelters and the barbed wire entanglements (in two rows) still survived;
- on the sector from Majdan to the mouth of the Mienia River, there were missing trenches, and some destruction of the obstacles and shelters was noted;
- in the sector from Majdan to Rembertów the barbed wire obstacles were still preserved, but some shelters had already been destroyed;
- on the sector from the Białystok – Warsaw rail line to Benjaminów, most of the shelters had already been sold and demolished during the occupation, while the rest had been looted by the local population; the barbed wire obstacles remained.

The above report ended with a general characterisation of the positions of the Warsaw bridgehead:

The positions were carefully selected, mostly on hills with an exposed foreground, almost always having perfect lines of fire. Were it not for the plundering by the local population, who use the wood for their own purposes or trade, this line could be maintained as a fighting line. Assuming that at the present time it is impossible to provide military protection to such an extensive line, and given the conditions in which it is situated, with the onset of cold weather it will be completely plundered by the peasants of the surrounding villages as fuel. We ask for permission to begin its demolition in the nearest future, on condition that the concrete buildings remain in their present state.

In view of the above, as early as September 1919 a contract was concluded with a private company for the complete demolition of the German positions around Warsaw. The only part excluded from that demolition was the Rembertów – Zielonka sector, which was to be used as an assault training ground.

Progress on the demolition work was soon quite considerable. Already by October the company had managed to collect 90 tons of barbed wire, not counting the iron from the demolished shelters.

By 1920 the fortifications of the German positions on the outskirts of Warsaw no longer existed. Only a few concrete shelters (in the southern sector) and barbed-wire enclosures protecting the bridges remained.

We have emphasised the importance of the Modlin – Zegrze – Warsaw area both in previous centuries and during the World War, highlighting in particular the value of the German Warsaw bridgehead. The strategic importance of those areas did not diminish in independent Poland, but rather increased, as Warsaw had become the capital of the state. There is no doubt that any enemy whose victories led deep into Poland would seek to capture the Polish capital, together with the Vistula crossings. The loss of Warsaw to the Russians or Germans in WWI would not have been as momentous as it would be to an independent Poland.

The Terrain

The area enclosed to the north by the course of the Narew and Bug, and to the west by the Vistula, is a plain, sloping from south-east to north-west. Hence it belongs to the Bug – Narew basin and not to the Vistula basin (that river receives no inflow from its right bank past the mouth of the Świder).

³ Dowództwo Okręgu Generalnego or the Command of the General District. These were the Ministry of Military Affairs bodies tasked with administrative, economic, mobilisation, garrison and public order functions around major cities.



The Vistula is quite an obstacle to traffic, being 600 to 1,000 metres wide and with an average depth of 1.25 metres. The main crossings on the Vistula were in Warsaw, where there were two iron bridges. In addition, there was a ford near Góra Kalwaria and convenient bridge sites near Karczew, Jabłonna, Tarchomin and Warsaw (next to the destroyed Poniatowski Bridge⁴).

The Narew River had two crossings in the Zegrze – Modlin area: at Zegrze was a bridge built next to one destroyed in the World War and at Dębe there was a wooden bridge. There were also bridges over the Narew at Modlin and at Wierzbica. The right bank of the Narew is much higher than the left bank, which is low and mostly muddy.

While the area is a plain, nevertheless there are a lot of low hills and hillocks. The range of hills that stretches from Zielonka, through Pustelnik and Wólka Radzyńska to Benjaminów is particularly prominent. These hills were used in the delineation of the German bridgehead positions. A similar chain of hills, although lower, can be seen along the western side of the Brudnowski Canal.

The soil of the area is made up of thick sedimentary deposits (sands, gravels and clays), covered until recently by primeval forest. Natural bodies of water formed in the forests, which gave rise to numerous small streams, marshes and lakes. When the trees were felled these rivers and lakes gradually disappeared. Most of the remaining waters originate in the vicinity of Mińsk Mazowiecki and Kałuszyn. Among them are the Rządza and Cienka Rivers, which in their further course become the Markowski or Nowy Canal, which after it joins with the Czarna River becomes the Królewski Canal, and finally the Brudnowski Canal, which draws water from the forests and fields of the Praga area.

The Rządza, Cienka and Czarna do not hinder the movement of infantry. They often dry up in summer, but sometimes in spring they rise quickly and, emerging from their not very deep banks, flood widely.

In the construction of field fortifications, the sandiness of the soil facilitates the digging of trenches, but the walls need to be supported.

While the area is heavily settled, forests remain in a few compact areas, not counting smaller woods and groves. Of major importance are the forests stretching back from the rear of the German positions, which the Germans emphasised in their defence plans.

The communication network of this areas is exceptionally rich. We have already mentioned previously that the development of that network was influenced by the Russian plans for the Modlin – Zegrze – Warsaw fortified area.

The main transport hub is Warsaw, from where railway lines run in various directions. The left (western) bank of the Vistula, however, has fewer railways than the right, and there is no direct connection on the left bank of the Vistula between Warsaw and Modlin or Dęblin.

On the right bank of the Vistula we see the following railways:⁵ a standard gauge from Praga via Jabłonna and Modlin to Mława with a branch to Zegrze; a narrow gauge from Praga Bridge⁶ to Jabłonna; a narrow gauge from Praga Stałowa⁷ to Pustelnik and Radzymin; a standard gauge from, Warszawa Wileńska to Wołomin and Białystok; a standard gauge from Warszawa Wschodnia⁸ to Mińsk Mazowiecki and Siedlce; a standard gauge from Warszawa Wschodnia to Dęblin; and a narrow gauge from Praga Bridge to Falenica.

Such a rich rail network made it possible to quickly move troops from the centre in all directions.

The network of paved roads is also quite dense; let us mention here the following roads: Warsaw – Jabłonna – Modlin, Warsaw – Radzymin – Wyszaków, Warsaw – Wawer – Mińsk Mazowiecki and, finally,

⁴ Finished in 1914, the retreating Russian army blew up four of the spans in 1915 to slow down the pursuing Germans. The bridge was hastily rebuilt, only to burn down in an accident soon afterwards.

⁵ The different gauges arose because the Russian parts of partitioned Poland used a narrow gauge, and the Germans and Austrians a standard European one – and the occupying Germans had not had time to convert them all.

⁶ Now Warsaw Zoo Station.

⁷ Now Warszawa Praga Station.

⁸ That is, Eastern Warsaw Station.



roads built by Russia in connection with war plans such as: Jabłonna – Zegrze – Serock, Jabłonna – Józefów – Stanisławów – Pustelnik, and Nieporęt – Benjaminów.

In addition to the described network of rail lines and sealed roads, there was a fairly dense network of field and forest roads. The condition of those roads depended on the weather, and they were always troublesome for the movement of artillery and rolling stock.

First Preparatory Works

We mentioned at the outset that in mid-July General Sosnkowski took up the matter of preparing fortifications in the interior. By late July the general had issued a number of orders with the aim of manning those positions whose fortification was deemed to be urgent. In agreement with the Supreme Command, volunteer and reserve divisions were formed and sent to the front to fortify the Grajewo – Narew – Bielsk Podlaski – Brest line.

On 27 July General Sosnkowski ordered the construction and garrisoning of bridgeheads on the Vistula (Toruń, Włocławek, Płock, Wyszogród), entrusting this task to the D.O.G.s. By the same order, General Sosnkowski entrusted General Gąsiecki (Deputy Commander of D.O.G. Warsaw) with strengthening the Modlin – Zegrze – Warsaw triangle, as well as organising its defence.

In the days that followed, it was decided to undertake preparations in the M-Z-W triangle in broad terms, and these aspirations were expressed in the following 27 July order from the Ministry of Military Affairs.

Ministry of Military Affairs

27/7/20

Bridgeheads on the Vistula

It is hereby ordered:

The manning of the right-bank bridge areas of Toruń, Włocławek, Płock, and Wyszogród, for which technical orders will be issued separately, will be arranged by the respective D.O.G.s from local garrisons.

The Reserve Battalion of the 83rd IR in Łomża is directed to garrison Wyszogród.

The garrison commanders will take charge of the technical management, the construction of the above-mentioned bridgeheads, as well as their organisation and defence, having at their disposal the troops stationed in the garrison in question.

The management of the fortifications of the Modlin – Zegrze – Warsaw triangle, as well as the organisation of its defence, will be entrusted to the deputy commander of D.O.G. Warsaw.

Technical directives concerning the fortifications will be given to the deputy commander D.O.G. by the inspector of fortifications, Lt-General Wroczyński, and directives concerning the organisation of garrison and defence will come from D. O. G. Warsaw, to who he will report.

For compliance

Deputy Minister of Military Affairs

Stachiewicz

Sosnkowski

Lt-Colonel of the General Staff

Lt-General

Follow up orders arose following consultations held on 27-29 July. The date of 29 July should be regarded as the day on which the fundamental orders for the organisation of defence undertaken by the Ministry of Military Affairs were issued. The order read :

Ministry of Military Affairs

Warsaw 29/7/1920

Triangle: Modlin – Zegrze – Warsaw

Following the order ... of 27 July 1920, which gave general directives concerning the defence of the bridgeheads on the Vistula, guidelines are hereby given for the manning and defence of the Modlin – Zegrze – Warsaw triangle, namely:



1) The M-Z-W triangle is delineated in particular by the following outer line: Modlin (inclusive), along the Narew to Zegrze (with a bridgehead at Dębe), Rynia, Kępiste Manor, Wólka Radzymińska, along the road to Zielonka Manor, Poligonny Gorodok,⁹ Grzybowa, Szkopówka Manor, Miłosna (incl.), Wiązowna, (excl.), Emów, Rycice, along the Świder stream to the Vistula, and along the Vistula to Góra Kalwaria (incl.), and Świdry Wielkie (excl.).

2) Within the delimited external line the centres are to be fortified and prepared for an independent defence: with Modlin, Zegrze, and Warsaw as sealed bridgeheads.

The main centre of the whole M-Z-W triangle is Warsaw, and therefore orders for its garrison and defence must be issued on the basis of that assumption.

3) Defence should be organised in such a way that it can be conducted:

A. on the outer line of the triangle given in paragraph 1).

B. in the individual centres separately (Modlin, Zegrze, Warsaw), in case of a break in the external line indicated in paragraph 1).

4) Technical work on fortifications and manning should be immediately planned so that the outer line of the triangle will be ready as soon as possible to repel, at least initially, possible cavalry attacks, which can be expected at any time.

To that end, all approach roads to the triangle's centres and the Warsaw – Praga centre (node) should be immediately manned in the outer line zone.

5) At the same time it is necessary to intensively fortify all the defensive facilities in the outer line as well as the defensive centres in order to prepare them as quickly as possible for an all-arms attack in case of need.

6) The most probable approach of enemy troops may be expected from the north-eastern direction, namely along the roads from Ostrołęka, Ostrów and Węgrów.

7. The garrison will be divided into:

A. Left wing group (commander Colonel Malewicz), protecting the northern wing Modlin (incl.) to Zegrze (incl.).

B. Frontal group (commander Colonel Jaźwiński), protecting the line Zegrze (excl.) to the Vistula (Góra Kalwaria) with its centre at Warsaw – Praga.

8) The effective defence of Modlin is of great importance due to the danger of a flank attack reaching Warsaw to the rear if it is forced.

The same applies to Góra Kalwaria, and therefore it should be sufficiently garrisoned to prevent the enemy from fording the Vistula in that area.

9) In terms of defence orders and local garrison service, the units in the triangle are subject to the following:

A. The entire garrison of Modlin and Zegrze and the garrison of the northern wing – to the head of the left wing group, Colonel Malewicz.

B. The troops to be deployed on the line from Zegrze to the Vistula, and the troops intended as a reserve for this sector, as well as the garrisons of Góra Kalwaria and the garrison of the Warsaw centre – to the commander of the frontal group, Colonel Jaźwiński.

10) Command of the whole defence is assumed by the Military Governor of Warsaw, to whom D.O.G. Warsaw is temporarily subordinate. The military governor of Warsaw also commands

⁹ The "Polygon" was an old military training area, used especially for artillery. It is generally named after Rembertów or just labelled *Poligon Artyleryjskiej*. I do not understand the reference to Gorodok.



the chief engineer of the M-Z-W triangle field fortifications and the Wkra River fortifications, as well as to the above-mentioned sector commanders.

11) The following are appointed as garrison of the M-Z-W triangle for the time being:

A. Left wing group:

(a) Modlin:

1st Battalion, 131st Infantry Regiment (from Łódź)
Reserve Battalion, 13th IR (in place),
1st Battery, 21st Field Artillery Regiment (coming from Kraków),
Reserve Battery, 18th FAR,
Reserve Battery, 1st Heavy Artillery Regiment,
4th Company, 14th Sapper Battalion (from Poznań),
3rd Reserve Sapper Company (on the way),
Bridge Battalion (in place),
Company of Special Railway Troops (in place),
1st Reserve Gendarmerie Squadron (in place).
In addition, one Reserve battalion will be transported as of 1 August.

(b) Zegrze:

6th Border Rifle Regiment (from Biedrusk) until the arrival of the telegraph school battalion.

B. Frontal group and Warsaw.

1/3rd Guard Battalion (in place),
5/4th Guard Battalion (from Łódź),
4/7th Guard Battalion with one MG company (in place),
Half of 2nd Stage Battalion (in place),
1st Battalion, 109th Reserve Infantry Regiment (in place),
205th Volunteer Infantry Regiment (in place),
1st Manoeuvre Battalion, 142nd IR (in Rembertów),
Reserve Battalion, 5th IR (in place),
Reserve Battalion, 21st IR (in place),
Reserve Battalion, 32nd IR (in place),
Reserve Battalion, 36th IR (in place),
203rd Volunteer Cavalry Regiment (arriving 1 August),
Reserve Squadron, 1st Light Horse Regiment (in place),
Reserve Battery, 1st FAR (in place),
4th Battery, 1st Mountain Artillery Regiment (in place),
7th and 8th Batteries, 16th FAR (are in formation locally),
1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th Batteries, 2nd Lit-Bel FAR (near Warsaw in formation),
2nd *Divizion*, 1st HAR, (2 batteries) directed to Grodzisk for training and refit (in place),
Manoeuvre Battalion, 42nd IR (in Rembertów),



Three technical infantry companies,

Four Reserve Battalions are expected to arrive by 1 August.

1st Fighter Squadron.

Góra Kalwaria:

9th Border Rifle Regiment, on foot, in poor condition (from Lublin)

Reserve Battery, 1st Horse Artillery *Divizion* (in place).

C. As a further reserve for the M-Z-W triangle, the Siberian Brigade in Skierniewice will be sent on 6 August.

12) The Military Governor of Warsaw will immediately draw up a battle plan for the whole area, taking into account the emergency of the situation, and will order the coordination of local and garrison units in the triangle.

13) Attention is also drawn to the necessity of establishing close telephone contact with the garrisons lying to the north and north-east of the M-Z-W triangle, in order to avoid any surprise from enemy approaches.

In addition, a patrol service from reserve squadrons (1st Light Horse Regiment and the 11th Lancer Regiment) should be organised along the following roads: Warsaw – Pułtusk to Ostrołęka, Warsaw – Radzymin – Wyszaków to Ostrów, Warsaw – Łochów to Małkinia Górna, Modlin – Nasielsk to Pułtusk.

The military governor will order periodic transmission of situation reports by the garrisons of the D.O.G.s.

It is also a matter of high importance to ensure mutual communication between the individual units of the triangle's garrison, as well as sufficient protection of the good condition of roads and bridges. To this end, the military governor of Warsaw will order the thorough inspection and the necessary repair of bridges and will order them to be secured as strongly as possible by guard posts. Orientation boards are to be placed at road intersections. The 2nd Department will immediately organise a motorbike squad for the triangle, in accordance with order No. 7016/org. This squad is to be ready and placed at the disposal of the Warsaw governor by 31 July.

The 2nd Department will immediately issue orders to enable vehicle and pedestrian traffic on one of the railway bridges in Warsaw (the lower bridge) and will also construct, in the shortest possible time, a pontoon bridge on the Vistula in Warsaw, near the Poniatowski Bridge and, if possible, a second one at Modlin (possibly a ferry). In addition, crossings at Jabłonna and Góra Kalwaria should be organised.

In addition, an appropriate number of transport vehicles (heavy motor vehicles) should be prepared for the supply of ammunition, food and reserves¹⁰ to the outer line or defence centres. Necessary automobile columns will be supplied by the governor of Warsaw – the 2nd Department of the Ministry of Military Affairs.

The Armaments Department of the Ministry of Military Affairs will supply, in the most intensive manner possible, the armaments and ammunition for the units of the triangle's garrison, as requested by the military governor of Warsaw, taking into account the needs of D. O. G. Warsaw, which should be implemented without delay.

14) In order to regulate the movement of columns and troops coming into Warsaw from the east, the governor of Warsaw will establish officers with an appropriate number of auxiliary personnel (posts), without delay, on all roads running into Warsaw from an eastern, north-

¹⁰ I don't know what was used for the food and ammunition, but the transport of the reserves was often done by requisitioned Warsaw city buses, as we shall see.



eastern and northern direction and on all bridges. Those posts are to indicate to the columns and troops the designated street routes of Praga and Warsaw to avoid street congestion.

15) The issuing of further detailed orders on the basis of the above guidelines is entrusted to the military governor of Warsaw, who will report the content of his orders in this respect to the Ministry of Military Affairs. Insofar as it is possible and necessary, it will regulate any further possible supplementation of troops to reinforce the triangle's garrison.

16) The Decree of the Government of the Polish People's Republic of 20 May 1920 on the subordination of administrative and civil authorities to the orders of military authorities concerning the safeguarding and maintenance of public order and peace, as well as orders and prohibitions aimed at maintaining security extends to the entire area of D.O.G. Warsaw.

The relevant decrees of the Minister of Military Affairs and the Minister of the Interior will be sent separately.

17) In connection with the above orders, crossings on the Wkra River from Modlin to the former border should also be manned in order to catch possible deserters and to repel enemy patrols. These posts are to reinforce the manned crossings without delay.

18) *The armament and equipment of the reserve and volunteer troops stationed in Warsaw and in the territory of D. O. G. Warsaw, must be completed without delay.*

19) Lt-General Latinik is appointed Military Governor of Warsaw, with the rights of a commander of an Army.

For compliance

Stachiewicz

Lt-Colonel of the General Staff

Deputy Minister of Military Affairs

Sosnkowski

Lt-General

Some similarities can be seen in this defensive organisation to the older plans. The Russians classified the Modlin – Zegrze – Warsaw triangle as a fortified region and, according to pre-war concepts, each fortified region was to consist of three to four strongholds, located at some distance from each other, while the region should have one central fortress constituting the internal centre of defence.

In the 29 July order, an external line of field fortifications was defined, encircling the M – Z – W triangle from the north and east, with the note that the “centres” of Modlin, Zegrze and Warsaw were to be fortified as “sealed” zones and prepared for independent defence, with Warsaw being the main centre of the whole triangle.

The northern wall of the triangle, linking Zegrze and Modlin, was based on the Narew River with bridgeheads at Dębe and Zegrze. The eastern wall of the triangle, i.e. the line of external field fortifications, was based on the positions of the German bridgehead of Warsaw.

However, changes occurred quite quickly. On 29 July it was decided to move the line from the German positions to the Miłosna – Okuniew – Radzymin – Rynia line. This was the first deviation from the original plan. Later we will give further changes in the determination of the outer positions of the triangle.

On 29 and 30 July, General Sosnkowski issued additional orders connected with the above order, which were mostly carried out and enabled the formation of what was later called the “security garrison” of the Governorate. It should be noted that some of the troops mentioned in the order did not end up forming a part of the garrison, while other units not listed were to arrive.

On 29 July the Ministry of Military Affairs ordered the commanders of the D.O.G.s to form emergency units¹¹ from each reserve battalion, regardless of the formation of marching companies and reserve battalions. The D.O.G. Warsaw was to form these units on 30 July.

¹¹ In the crisis of mid-1920 the Poles formed a bewildering array of *ad hoc* units. Many pose significant issues of translation, as they do not tie up to standard English military terminology. See Appendix 1 for how I have chosen to translate the varying different units.



On the same day, the First Department ordered the formation of reserve battalions, which were to arrive in Warsaw on August 1st "as emergency military assistance."

It should be noted that orders had been issued by that time by the Supreme Command ordering the withdrawal of worn-out infantry units. As a result, the 11th Infantry Division and the 7th Reserve Brigade were withdrawn from the front and on 27 July were ordered to march into the interior, to be reorganised by the Ministry of Military Affairs.

On 3 August the 11th Infantry Division, having incorporated into its ranks some 2,000 fugitives and scattered soldiers (from the 1st Army's holding camp), marched from Ostrów Mazowiecka to the Marki area, while the 7th Reserve Brigade was directed to the Jabłonna area. These two units were handed over by the Ministry to the Governor, with a note that they were not to be used to garrison the bridgehead, but were to be kept in reserve as long as possible to enable reorganisation. Thus we see that in these few days a relatively large number of infantry units were assembled.

At the same time as the infantry was being formed, artillery was being organised for the garrison of the M-Z-W triangle. General Sosnkowski's order listed several units that were in place and were mostly in an organising stage. Not mentioned was the 201st Volunteer Field Artillery Regiment, which was being formed in Warsaw, and which was to report its readiness to march on 1 August. It had four light batteries (77-mm guns) and two heavy batteries (105-mm guns). That regiment was placed under the order of General Latinik. It should be added that on 1 August D.O.G. Warsaw ordered subordinate reserve batteries to form field batteries, which were to be placed at the disposal of the governor.

On 2 August, on the orders of the Inspector of Military Communications, units of communications troops were formed, which were placed at the disposal of General Latinik. The telegraph company in Modlin formed a detachment under Lieutenant Czarnecki, the telegraph company in Zegrze a detachment under Lieutenant Przygocki and the company in Rembertów a detachment under Lieutenant Winiarski.

We have met the Fortification Committee and its resolutions, but in practice its effect was extremely limited and we only know of one meeting in August. But we do see some activity by General Wroczyński, "Inspector of Fortifications", on the interior defensive lines.

On 28 July General Wroczyński issued an order to fortify the line of the Wkra from Modlin to the Prussian border and to fortify the bridgeheads in Wyszogród, Włocławek and Płock. On the same day he addressed Colonel Malewicz, commander of the Modlin Fortress, with an order to begin fortification work on the line of the Modlin forts.

The construction of the fortified outposts on the outskirts of Warsaw was entrusted to Colonel Navratil, commander of 8th Fortification Group, while the organisation of positions in Zegrze and in the section between Zegrze and Modlin went to Military Official¹² Odrowąż-Pieniążek.

Meanwhile the General Inspector of Technical Forces, Lt-General Wejtko, volunteered to do the fortification work himself and began to strengthen the Praga positions. But his contribution should not be overstated, as was only the appointment of managers for the fortification works and nothing more.

In the following days though, work by the inspectorate of fortifications stopped, as General Wroczyński left for the front on 31 July, to take command of an operational group. The burden of leadership then fell on the 2nd Department, and Colonel Rybiński was appointed Field Head of Engineering and Sappers of the Supreme Command.

The construction of the bridges on the Vistula was entrusted to Major Jastrzębski.

The first work in the M-Z-W triangle was organised by D.O.G. Warsaw, as General Latinik – who only arrived in Warsaw on 29 July – was not yet sufficiently familiar with the situation and did not yet have any staff at his command. It was only on 5 August that his first orders as military governor of Warsaw appeared.

¹² The rank formally "Military Official 9th Grade" (urzędnik wojskowy IX rangi), which was an administrative rank in the Polish army, equivalent to Captain.



During his first days, General Latinik, in an effort to familiarise himself with the state of affairs, had to confer with those authorities who were already carrying out the work. Important questions immediately arose that required decisions. One such important issue was the supply of ammunition for the garrison and artillery in the M-Z-W triangle. This matter was urgent, as at the time the Ordnance Department was evacuating ammunition depots and warehouses in the Warsaw area. In view of that, General Kaczyński, Head of the Ordnance Department, asked General Latinik to accelerate his requests for ammunition. However, General Latinik, not yet knowing how many guns he would ultimately receive, did not submit a requisition, and merely informed General Kaczyński (on 31 July) that he would need 28 batteries for the defence of Warsaw, which he considered to be tantamount to an ammunition requirement. Generals Latinik and Kaczyński discussed the matter on several occasions; with the head of the Ordnance Department insisting that the requirements for guns and ammunition be submitted as soon as possible, stressing that he could not wait long and that everything would eventually be taken out of Warsaw.

In the end, the requisition was not made, as General Latinik maintained that as long as he did not know how many batteries he would receive, he could not submit a request. In the course of these discussions and exchanges, the evacuation of the Ordnance Department's depots and warehouses came to an end.

Assessing the first orders for the defence preparations in general, we see in them quite often a lack of agreement between the work of the various authorities, which meant that instead of being planned and developing according to General Sosnkowski's basic order, the work was more often improvised. What prevailed in this first work was feverish haste, which can be explained by the conviction that the danger threatening Warsaw was imminent. The French officers of the mission also were strongly of that mind, and so for example General Henrys submitted a note as early as 23 July in which – recently impressed by the setbacks on the Nieman and Szczara – he wrote that they had created, "a tragic situation that could soon result in a serious threat to Warsaw."

There is also no doubt that a factor contributing to the haste and feverishness of preparations was the conviction that the resilience of the frontline troops was breaking down. A reflection of that mood can be found in the work of Marshal Piłsudski, who recalls :

When I returned from Chełm to Warsaw on 2 August, I found it – as I have already mentioned – in a very fearful state. I felt the immediate pressure of the whole war on me to start giving new decisions while our capital was threatened. For at that time there was no exceptions to the idea that Warsaw, and not something else, was the target of Comrade Tukhachevski's operations.

The Commander-in-Chief, Marshal Piłsudski, announced his counter-attack plan on 6 August 1920.

Manning the Positions of the Modlin – Zegrze – Warsaw Triangle and the First Fortification Works

Above we indicated that the first organisational work fell to the staff of D.O.G. Warsaw, which directed the preparations for the defence until General Latinik took actual command.

On 29 July Lt-Colonel Ścierżyński, D.O.G. Chief of Staff, summoned the commanders of the forces mentioned in General Sosnkowski's order to a briefing and issued detailed instructions on the posting of "forward points", which were then included in a operational order from D.O.G. Warsaw. Among other things, this order stated:

I. Situation:

Small detachments may get through to our rear in the Warsaw area, riding up to the city to cause panic there. Deserters and civilian fugitives may cause the same. The enemy may appear in the region of Myszyniec, Ostrołęka or Ostrów.

II. Our intentions:

In order to prevent any panic occurring, a line of forward posts is to be established east of Warsaw on 30 July at 16:00. The left wing of the forward posts is to be formed at Pustelnik



Station at the junction of the Wawer – Zegrze road and the Warsaw – Radzymin rail line. The right wing is to be at the fork of the road from Warsaw towards Mińsk and Garwolin, east of Miłosna.

This line of “forward posts” was therefore a cordon, with a rather limited task.

The frontal group, which was to place outposts on the former positions of the German bridgehead, was divided into two parts (sectors). The right was manned by Captain Kolbusz, with the 1st Warsaw Stage Battalion, a dismounted cavalry squadron, a horse platoon of the Wagon Cadet School and one tank. The left sector was manned by Captain Dojan-Surowka, who had at his disposal the 1st Battalion of the 109th Infantry Regiment, two companies of the Infantry Cadet School, a half-squadron of cavalry and one tank. The reserve was the 4th Company of the 7th Guard Battalion and the 5th MG Company of the 157th IR.

During these first days, the troops previously announced arrived in Warsaw, namely: the 1st Battalion of the 120th IR, the 3rd Battalion of the 109th IR, the 6th Border Rifle Regiment, the 4th Tank Company and other smaller units. For the time being they were directly subordinate to the General Staff of D.O.G. Warsaw. It was not until 3 August that the first order went out to Colonel Jaźwiński (formerly head of the Military Geographical Institute), who was appointed commander of the frontal group. Lt-Colonel Lichtarowicz was appointed the group’s chief of staff.

Colonel Jaźwiński’s first work was the assigning of sectors, the regulation of supplies and in orders regarding communications. The field telegraph company of 2nd-Lieutenant Winiarski was assigned and given the task of adapting the existing wire network to the needs of the group.

The left wing group was to man the sector from Radzymin through Serock, Dębe, Orzechowo, Modlin, Wyszogród to Płock. Colonel Malevich, previously Modlin Fort commander, was appointed to lead the group. He had quite a difficult task as he had only a small force with which to man such a large sector.

The outer line of the Modlin forts was manned by five infantry companies (about 1,000 men) with four batteries, while the sector from Fort 10 to Wyszogród was held by the 4th Lwów Stage Battalion.

The Wyszogród bridgehead was manned by a march battalion of the Wilno Rifle Regiment, under Captain Żelichowski. However, the section from Wyszogród to Płock had not yet been garrisoned due to a lack of forces. These first actions, as we can see, were rather modest, and it is clear that the garrison was at most a security cordon at the time. For this reason we cannot take the group commander’s order literally when he stated that the outposts of the 4th Lwów Stage Battalion had the task of, “driving away small units of enemy cavalry from the Vistula crossings.”

The task of organising the defence on the right wing of the group (Radzymin – Załubice – Dębe – Orzechowo – Modlin Fort 15) was entrusted by Colonel Malevich to Captain Rymaszewicz, commander of the Zegrze garrison. The captain ordered a set of outposts, which were manned by the 6th Border Rifle Regiment, while branches of the Zegrze garrison, such as the Telegraph School Battalion and the Communications School cadets, were given the task of building telephone connections.

The task of building field fortifications, as we indicated at the outset, was one of the most important, so we will devote more space to the first fortification works. Primarily this is the works on the outskirts of Warsaw and in Zegrze, as in the remaining sectors of the left-wing group, fortification work was quite limited and largely confined to the construction of fortifications around Modlin.

The construction of the field fortifications in the Warsaw bridgehead was entrusted to Colonel Navratil, the head of the 8th Fortification Group, who was simultaneously appointed the governor’s Head of Engineering and Sappers. His group was only in its formative stages at that time and therefore had neither men to work with nor managerial staff.

As haste was of the essence at the time, the spotlight march companies and the machine-gun school battalion in Warsaw were disbanded and the soldiers from those units were given to Colonel Nawratil. These privates, like their officers, were not trained in field fortification.



Two fortification companies were formed in this way, under the command of Lieutenants Formulewicz and Szwanke, each consisting of three officers, ten NCOs and 110 privates, and sent to the sectors. The rest of the men of the machine-gun battalion remained under the direct orders of the group. On the morning of 28 July, the companies set out for the designated areas and set to work with means found on the spot.

In the following days Colonel Navratil was to receive three technical companies from the 7th Reserve Brigade, the 15th Sapper Battalion and the 2nd Company of the 18th Sapper Battalion.

The bridgehead was divided into four sectors: Colonel Butler, commander of the 15th Sapper Battalion, was in charge of the works in Sector 1 (Wiązowna); Lt-Colonel Stefanowicz had Sector 2 (Okuniew); Lt-Colonel Salecki had Sector 3; and we have already seen that Military Official Odrowąż-Pieniążek was in Sector 4 (Zegrze).

The group leadership was still gradually organising itself and was therefore was unable to cope with the tasks presented, so the cooperation of the French Military Mission, which placed particular emphasis on the preparation of field fortifications inside the country, and especially on the outskirts of Warsaw, was of great significance at the time. These early days saw considerable activity on the part of General Charriou, then Chief of Engineering for the Mission, and Colonel Pacton, who, judging from various documents, collaborated in the selection of the general line of the positions, prepared some of the sketches of the sectors and gave directions for the execution of the work. Some of the work supervisors were given work breakdown boards with French and Polish text.

As well as cooperation at the managerial level, the French Military Mission was also helpful in executing the work. French officers were assigned to the sectors as technical advisors, and so, for example, Captain Coppe assisted in the Radzymin sector and Lieutenant Neopert in the Wiązowna sector.

Although the material relating to this issue is incomplete, it allows us to be sure that neither the Polish command nor the cooperating French officers planned the construction of continuous positions. On the contrary, we find a sentence about a position consisting of resistance points 400 metres away from each other. The French officers emphasised a plan for MG and automatic rifle fire, and hence the necessity to have suitable positions for that, flanking the barbed wire obstacles.

There were, however, differences between the French officers and the organisers in the field of the various sectors. Colonel Pacton thought 400 metres depth of fire was sufficient, while the Polish officers mostly sought a long and wide field of fire, which the French felt made the works longer and consumed more manpower.

Prominent in the minds of the French officers was the desire to save as much human effort as possible, by taking advantage of the terrain and natural obstacles and by creating artificial obstacles. However, the implementation of these principles depended on how they were understood by the head of fortification for each sector and the degree of training of the men involved. As we mentioned earlier, the troops used for the construction of the fortifications were not at all prepared for such work and this applied not only to the privates but also to the officers.

So the first results were modest, as the enthusiasm of the machine-gun battalion soldiers could not replace professional training. This meant that the incoming sapper detachments had to start work by correcting trenches that had not been well made.

Improvisation undertaken in a feverish rush, without any organisational basis, will only produce poor results.

Initially only soldiers did the work. Later that the local population was called in, when it became apparent that a considerable number of civilian labourers would be required to complete it.

The shortcomings in the organisation of the work did not escape the attention of the head of the French Military Mission, who, in a letter of 4 August, stressed the insufficient number of workers in the sectors of the positions being organised. We have already mentioned that French officers exerted particular pressure



on the preparation of defensive positions inside the country and in this case it is significant to include the letter of General Henrys, who stated :

If this work of preparing defensive lines is carried out in this way in the army's zone, it is easy to understand why the troops would not be enthusiastic.

We must stir the people of Poland to create defensive positions that will break the enemy's attacks. This is a sacred duty of every able-bodied Pole who has not already enlisted under the flag and the importance of that duty should be felt and understood by everyone.

But due to a lack of previous preparation and inadequate leadership, insurmountable difficulties arose. Although thousands of civilians were assembled in Warsaw for the work, it was not possible to organise their use, as those men had to be sent to the correct sectors, given tools for the work, given supervisors and instructors, and finally fed and housed.

The management of the fortification group sometimes had no idea where and what kind of working men they had. Commanders might receive work parties of up to 1,000 men, which they then sent back because they had nothing to feed them, as although the group was sent that food, sometimes it did not reach its destination or returned to Warsaw. Sometimes thousands of people would gather in the streets of Warsaw, only to not be sent to the works and so disperse to their homes. Sometimes on the march to the positions, the civilians would sneak back to Warsaw. These were the main issues for the leadership with its limited organisational apparatus. There is no doubt that much effort and energy was expended, but the results were mediocre. The situation would only change for the better with the arrival of sappers from the front.

The first order of works was given on 4 August by Colonel Nawratil, as the commander of the 8th Fortification Group. By then the line of positions in the Radzymin area had already been shifted – the left wing of the bridgehead was ordered to be moved to the Siwek – Wolica – Frydmanów line (in fact in the end the shift did not take place), while the right wing was to be the Rycice – Karczew – Vistula line.

In that order Colonel Nawratil kept the previous division into sectors, determined the management and personnel carrying out work in those sectors, the barbed wire depots and organised the supply issues.

In those early days there was a lack of senior leadership which would have facilitated Colonel Nawratil's task. Later this would be done by Colonel Rybiński, Field Head of Engineering and Sappers for the Supreme Command.

On 1 August the 2nd Department had divided up its stock of wire for the construction of obstacles. The left wing group (Modlin – Wyszogród – Płock – Włocławek) had 250 tonnes held in Modlin. For the Zegrze – Modlin sector 150 tons were allocated, half of which were in Zegrze. For the construction of the obstacles of the first line of positions, 300 tons were allocated: 150 tons were already in Benjaminów; 10 tons in Falenica; 6 tons in Wawer; 30 tons were sent to each of Wołomin, Miłosna and Radzymin; and the missing 44 tons were to come from Łódź. There was also 260 tons of wire (including 100 tons of plain wire) to be sent from Łódź and Kielce for the construction of barriers along the German positions in front of Warsaw. Finally, 120 tonnes of wire, which were to come from Kielce, were allocated for the construction of obstacles in the fortifications of Praga and Warsaw.

In the allocation of wire stocks, the 2nd Department indicated that “no further allocations can be counted on, except for small amounts.”

Development of Fortification Works in the Bridgehead

Sector 1 – Wiązowna. Lt-Colonel Butler arrived on 2-4 August in the Warsaw area, with the 1st and 3rd Companies of the 15th Sapper Battalion, and took charge of the works in that sector. He was given the task of constructing trench fortifications in the Wiązowna sector with the help of a company of the 15th Battalion and the troops of the machine-gun battalion. He was to send his other company to Góra Kalwaria with the task of building positions in that area.

The first job of the 15th Battalion's Sappers was to repair the fortifications already in place, performed ineptly by a detachment from the machine-gun battalion, and then to proceed with a speedy execution of



further expansion. The organisation of the work and its execution did not cause any particular issues, as the officers and privates of the 15th Sapper Battalion were highly experienced. Immediately upon arrival, a detailed order was issued, allocating the units and the method of execution, with each company being allocated work squads averaging 440 men. The battalion HQ was at Wiązowna House, while the wire depots were located in Falenica, Otwock and Miłosna.

Sector 2 – Okuniew. This sector was taken over by Lt-Colonel Stefanowicz, initially using only of troops from the machine-gun battalion. Upon taking command Stefanowicz familiarised himself with the state of works in the sector, concluding that their layout up to that point, as well as the manner of execution, left much to be desired. He was primarily concerned with the layout of the works and with changing the line of the positions, which, in his opinion, did not correspond well to the terrain.

Originally, the position ran along the Żąza River, on which a dam had been to raise the water level. However, it turned out that the river had little water and the idea of using it as an obstacle was misguided. Lt-Colonel Stefanowicz and Lt-Colonel Kaufer (who was assisting in the sector) came to the conclusion that it would be disadvantageous for the defence if the line of hills stretching from Okuniew to Leśniakowizna was left in the foreground; they thought that the enemy, by occupying those hills, would gain an excellent view of the Rembertów training ground and, therefore, decided to advance the line to those hills.

During these first days the route of the position was marked out, but the actual work had not yet begun due to a lack of manpower. It was not until around 6 August that a technical company of the 155th Regiment arrived, along with some civilian labourers, which were used to construct the positions.

Sector 3 – Radzymin. We will devote more space to the work done in this section than in others, due to the later events that took place in the area.

The Radzymin sector stretched from the mouth of the Rządza River on the Narew up to Wołomin. On 28 July the 2nd Fortification Company of Lieutenant Engineer Szwanke (from the machine-gun battalion) arrived in Radzymin and was divided into three sub-sectors. The right sub-sector was entrusted to Lieutenant Schachtmajer, while the middle sub-sector was retained by Lieutenant Szwanke. On the second day after their arrival, they set about digging the trenches for the firing positions, running from Wołomin through Czarna Stara and the northern edge of Radzymin towards Benjaminów. It is worth pointing out that, apart from short sapper's shovels, the company had no tools for the job and, as a result, equipment had to be requisitioned from the area. With these meagre resources, they set to work, and it was only a few hours into the job that Lieutenant Szwanke became convinced that he couldn't even dream of doing it (which he had encountered for the first time) with only soldiers doing the work. As a result, he asked his superiors to allow the local population to join him in the work.

Overall leadership of the while Radzymin sector was in fact exercised by Captain Coppe in the early days.

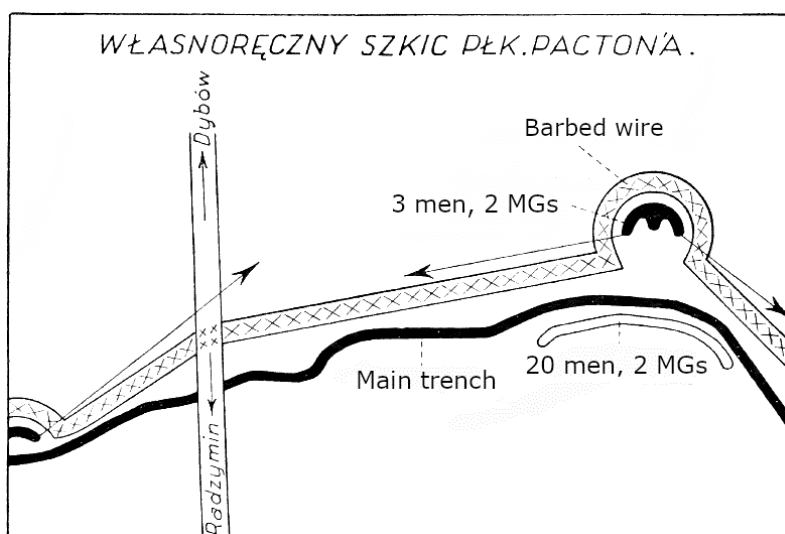
Colonel Pacton arrived in Radzymin on 2 August, together with Captain Coppe, and the work managers of the sub-sectors. After a briefing, Colonel Pacton went to the sector and, assessing the progress of the work, noted that there would not be enough time to complete its construction. Seeing defects in the work, Colonel Pacton gave directions to the contractors and, among others, to Lieutenant Engineer Szwanke, according one account, it went:

However, in order to stop an attack by Budienny's cavalry, which was all the talk, Colonel Pacton felt that it was necessary to build at least one line of barbed wire entanglements. Taking a notebook out of his pocket, and sketching with coloured pencils, the colonel explained to me how the barbed wire fence was to be constructed. Namely, just two rows of stakes were to be driven into the ground and wired up. Behind the barbed wire fence, a trench was to be dug for three soldiers with two machine-guns. This trench was to be built in such a place from which it would be possible to fire along the barbed wire line (Trench No. 1).

Beyond that resistance point was to be dug Trench No. 2 for a crew of 20 men and two machine-guns, which was to serve solely as protection and reserve for Trench No. 1. If the crew was killed or the guns jammed in the advanced defence point, the crew of the second point was to immediately replace those killed, together with the machine-guns. The manning of these two points should consist of very brave and determined men. And the distance



between these defence points along the barbed wire enclosure should be, depending on the terrain, between 250 to 300 metres.



Sketch 4 : Szwanke's notes on Pacton's sketch

These instructions are quite interesting. They testify to the fact that, both among the officers of the mission and in the Polish commanders, the idea of the necessity of preparing the defence against the enemy's cavalry still prevailed.

The right sub-sector was strengthened by Lieutenant Schachtmajer (assigned from the 1st Reserve Sapper Company), who received three NCOs and thirty privates from the machine-gun battalion. Like many others doing the work, after several days of it Schachtmajer also experienced disappointment, having become convinced of the impossibility of completing the work on time. On 3 August he stated that the work:

... was going disastrously slowly for lack of manpower, because apart from the thirty privates of the machine-gun battalion, there was no manpower other than that of the local people – who were losing spirits with each passing day and only came to work under the escort of my soldiers. We particularly felt the lack of wagons to deliver the wire and strong boys to drive the piles.

With such limited resources, Lieutenant Schachtmajer nevertheless managed by 3 August to drive two rows of stakes, lined with barbed wire, from Wiktorów through Helenów to the Czarna River. He also constructed machine-gun positions and, in some places, shooting trenches in bends on the route. In addition, a dam was built on the river below Czarna Stara to raise the water level and flood the river valley. Barbed wire obstacles and some firing trenches were constructed along the rest of the river, up to Wołomin Station.

On the other parts of the Radzymin sector (left wing), work was carried out in similar conditions. Everywhere there was a lack of expert managers, trained personnel, tools, wire, and manpower.

We have mentioned elsewhere that the Radzymin sector was subordinate to Lt-Colonel Salecki, but he was unable to provide any works management and in general his influence on the progress of the works was small. For these reasons the sub-sector leaders received instructions on how to conduct the work from Captain Coppe, while in matters of material they turned to the command of the machine-gun battalion or directly to Colonel Navratil.

On 3 August there was an upturn in the work, as more barbed wire and new work squads were received. Lieutenant Szwanke received 300 men, while Lieutenant Schachtmajer received a technical company of the 167th Regiment and a party of Łódź workers (about 1,000 men). The left sector was also reinforced with a large group of civilian workers.

Sector 4 – Zegrze. In this sector fortification work was carried out from 30 July by Military Official Odrowąż-Pieniążek. His task was to build fortifications that would link the Warsaw bridgehead with Modlin. He was to supplement the existing fortifications on the Zegrze bridgehead and, using the Narew River as an obstacle, was to organise defensive positions between Zegrze and Modlin (left bank).



Odrowąż-Pieniążek received a plan drawn up by French officers, together with technical instructions and a division of labour table (in Polish and French). The idea on which the plan was based was generally in line with General Wroczyński's order of 30 July.

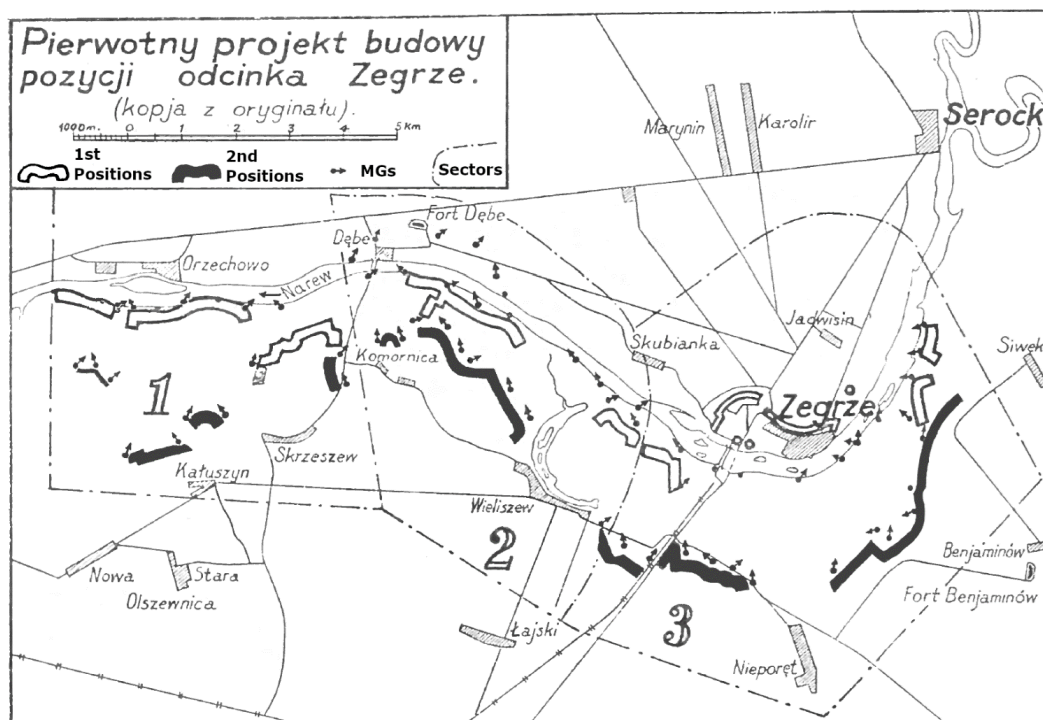
However, on arrival at the site, Odrowąż-Pieniążek assessed the field conditions differently, and reported to Colonel Nawratil:

The plan and instructions given to me for the fortification of this area were absolutely detrimental to an effective defence, as they place in enemy possession positions from which it could attack with the greatest ease, without being exposed to attack and effective counter-attack on our part.

In view of the above, Colonel Nawratil went to the sector around 6 August with a French officer and, after viewing the area, they agreed to include the former German trenches in the Zegrze forward positions, while they rejected the project of advancing the positions two to three kilometres into the Zegrze foreground and one to one and a half kilometres in the Fort Dębe foreground. There is no doubt that this decision was influenced by the French officers who, at that time and later, were opposed to advancing the positions on the right bank of the Narew into the approaches to Zegrze and Dębe.

However on 7 August General Latinik, after arriving on the site, decided to build fortifications on the right bank of the Narew on the approaches, connecting the Zegrze and Dębe bridgeheads.

During these days, the progress of the work was limited. The reasons for this lay in the failure to agree on a work plan, and the lack of funds, tools and forces to work with.



Sketch 5 : First plans for the works around Zegrze.



Chapter II

Organisation of the Military Governorate of Warsaw and its Activities from 5 to 7 August

As preparations were made for defence in the Modlin – Zegrze – Warsaw triangle, consideration was given to selecting the future military governor of Warsaw. The choice finally fell on General Latinik, who until mid-July had been the government representative to the international plebiscite commission in Cieszyn.¹³ On 28 July General Latinik was summoned to Warsaw. It was also anticipated that the general would be given command of the 1st Army. General Kuliński, then Deputy Chief of the General Staff, who had taken command of the 1st Army at the time, had indicated in an order that he was acting as a substitute until General Latinik took over. However General Latinik was to remain solely as military governor, and the 1st Army was commanded by General Jędrzejewski after the departure of General Kuliński on 31 July.

General Latinik was given wide-ranging powers: all the military and civilian authorities of the area, both state and local government, were subordinate to him. However in matters of defence he was subordinate to the commander of D.O.G. Warsaw and the head of the Department of Maritime Affairs.

Initially his work was difficult, and he recalled:

I was given a large, honourable and responsible field of work, but without any executive apparatus – as I was assigned no chief of staff nor adjutants, indeed no staff or premises at all. I was told that I could use the staff of the D.O.G., and I was allowed to draw the necessary number of officers and commanders from the officer pool in Warsaw.

However these difficulties should not be overstated, as in fact General Latinik could easily select colleagues from among the officers then in Warsaw. Several senior officers, disregarding the ranks and positions they held, immediately turned up to work. These included General Wejtka, General Inspector of the Technical Forces, and Colonel Stefanowicz, head of the Construction Department.

The decisive factor in his work was General Sosnkowski, then Deputy Minister of Military Affairs,¹⁴ who organised the preparations for defence inside the country. General Latinik had ample opportunities to turn his intentions into reality.

In the first few days in his post Latinik held several meetings and discussions with those who, in accordance with General Sosnkowski's prime order, had already undertaken and were conducting preparations for the defence. Serious issues immediately arose that required decisions, such as the issue of ammunition supply.

General Latinik's assumption of command of the troops of the Modlin – Zegrze – Warsaw triangle took place on 5 August, with his first order as Governor. We know that initially the burden of work fell on D.O.G. Warsaw, and until his staff was organised, operational matters were handled by Captain Horak, head of the 1st Department of the D.O.G.

On 6 August the governor's operational branch was set up. Its head was Major Mysłowski, who came from the staff of the 11th ID, and Lt-Colonel Bobicki was appointed Chief of Staff. Lt-Colonel Renoux was assigned as liaison officer from the French Mission, and when the Governorate's artillery command was established, the French technical adviser was Colonel Bancelhon.

Before describing the Governor's work further, we will pause a moment to look at the views and assessments of the enemy's intentions at the time. General Latinik, being in Warsaw, was in direct contact with the General Staff. He received orders from the Supreme Command, and in particular communiqués from the 2nd Department of the General Staff, giving the enemy's situation.

The basic premise at the time was the conviction that a decisive showdown near Warsaw would undoubtedly take place in the coming days.

¹³ This was working to fix the border with Czechoslovakia in Silesia, which had been the source of some minor fighting and much bitterness.

¹⁴ On 9 July he became Minister of Military Affairs.



On 4 August the 2nd Department of the General Staff analysed in detail in an extensive paper the enemy's positions and intentions, considering them from the point of view of a Russian attack on the Vistula and Warsaw. At the time it was assumed that the primary task of the Russian Western Front was to capture the Vistula line, together with the fortified points of Modlin, Dębe, Benjaminów, Dęblin and Warsaw.

It was also expected that the enemy, should the frontal assault fail, would be forced to bypass Warsaw and Modlin, and – seeking to capture those areas – would force his way across the Vistula upstream and strike from the west.

In view that, it was assumed that the Russian 4th Army would march westwards, developing operations between Modlin and the Prussian border, while the 3rd and 15th Armies would advance on Modlin and Warsaw, with the 3rd Army attacking the Warsaw bridgehead directly, and the 16th Army advancing towards Dęblin to its left. In the following days, new information was collated, seeking confirmation of the suppositions made.

On 7 August it was still maintained that the direction of operations for the 15th Army was via Pułtusk towards Modlin, while that of the 3rd Army was in the general direction of Warsaw. However, assumptions regarding the 16th Army had changed – it was now attributed with the intention of capturing the railway junctions of Siedlce and Łuków. These days were remembered by the Commander-in-Chief, Marshal Piłsudski:

I observed the movement of the Soviet troops, approaching towards Warsaw from all directions. Knowing the great importance of any capital in a war, I assumed that Comrade Tukhachevsky would try to concentrate his forces to break our resistance and seize Warsaw.

These assessments of the enemy were known to General Latinik. In the light of them, the importance of preparations for a defence became apparent.

One must also take into account the assessment of the Polish fighting forces at the time, and in particular the 1st Army. Generally speaking, the conviction prevailed that the army was weak in combat. General Latinik recalls that, when reviewing the Governorate's troops:

There was no lack of good will and enthusiasm in the soldiers, and that the spirit of the ancients was in the veins of the young volunteers,

and:

However he had concerns and was worried as to whether it would be possible to transplant that spirit into the over-tired and constantly retreating, demoralised troops of the 1st Army when they came to the Warsaw bridgehead – where the main battle was to be expected and the greatest effort was to be demanded.

These statements testify to the convictions of the time, and General Latinik not only assessed it that way, but also made his subordinates aware of it. Colonel Stefanowicz recalls one meeting at which, according to his account, General Latinik expressed:

Since our retreating units cannot withstand even weak enemy strikes and have already gotten used to starting to retreat after the first shots, there is a fear that our units, if pressed by the enemy, will leave their positions and retreat directly to the edge of Warsaw.

In that case, the Warsaw Governorate garrison on the outskirts needs to be able to hold back the enemy troops until our troops have reorganised, put themselves in order and properly manned their positions.

In the above, a lack of trust in the morale of the troops fighting at the front clearly shines through. This is also quite strongly emphasised in a note by Colonel Renoux, who wrote on 3 August that it was better not to count on the help of the retreating 1st and 4th Armies who – unaware of the defensive lines under construction – might cause some confusion in Warsaw.

Thus, the basic aim of the defence preparations was to organise units of the various arms capable of resisting in the positions prepared in advance. This was the source of the great effort expended in



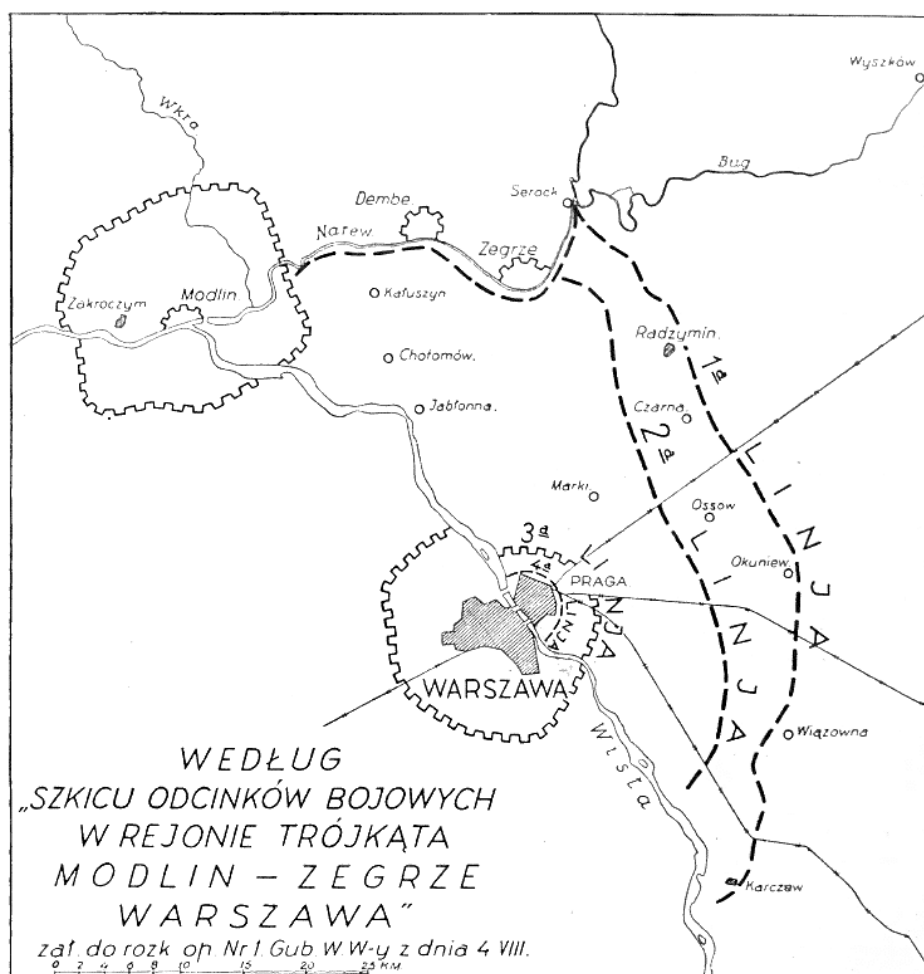
organising the headquarters of the commands of the various groups and divisions, as well as improvisation in various areas of military life.

In the course of this work, frequent changes were made to the original ideas, and these were most evident in the preparation of the field fortifications. The main basis for this was an order from General Sosnkowski, who ordered the preparation of the defence of the triangle ("nodes") of Modlin, Zegrze, and Warsaw, which was based on the line of the Narew River to the north, and on the positions of the German bridgehead to the east.

We know, however, that on the very day the order was issued there was a deviation from the original plan, and the foreground positions were moved forward. This decision is attributed by General Latinik to himself:

Having toured the area of the defensive zone, I found that the outer line of the triangle, designated for defence by [General Sosnkowski's] order, did not meet my intentions of a mobile defence for a number of tactical reasons and had easy approaches to the foreground covered by woods. This line was tight by the Vistula River, on which were the bridges necessary for the transport of ammunition, food and other needs of the fighting forces. I therefore had to move the outer battle line to the east to improve the tactical positions, and also to protect the bridges over the Vistula and the capital from enemy artillery fire.

In the following days we encounter further changes – already in Colonel Navratil's order of 4 August we read about the advance of the right wing in the Karczew area. It is possible that this change was influenced by German ideas, as the Governorate had the German plans for the bridgehead. There was also an expansion of the bridgeheads at Dębe and Zegrze, which merged into one, and finally the positions were moved forward in the areas of Radzymin and Okuniew.



Sketch 6 : The Governorate's sketch map of 4 August for the M – Z – W triangle

Of course the extension in the size of the positions entailed larger forces to man them, and in the meantime the Poles could only count on the limited number of units in the Governorate's garrison. As we



have seen, General Latinik was given a heady mix of troops: there were reserve battalions, volunteer formations, emergency troops, and finally guard and stage units.

After a great deal of preparatory work, on 5 August General Latinik issued his first order, an operational one, incorporating the orders issued so far:

Military Governor for Warsaw

Warsaw, 5 August 1920

SECRET

directly from the commander

Operational Order No. 1.

I. Our 1st and 4th Armies are engaged in stubborn fighting against superior enemy forces.

The Red Army forces are already overstretched, but their superiority in numbers forces us, defending every square metre of our homeland, to move closer to Warsaw. The defence of the capital is becoming a matter of urgency and requires all our troops to be concentrated in order to thwart the enemy's attempts to capture Warsaw.

The strained enemy must be broken by the bravery and heroic resistance of the Polish soldiers and volunteers, and by thorough and systematic preparation for a serious action.

II. For the defence of the capital, I order the defence of the Modlin – Zegrze – Warsaw triangle.

I designate the outer line of defence as: Płock, Wyszogród, Modlin, along the Narew, the bridgehead at Dębe, the bridgehead at Zegrze, passing to the left bank of the Narew near Serock, Radzymin, Okuniew, Wiązowna, Karczew (inclusive). Until the construction of the defensive line from Wiązowna to Karczew, the line runs from Wiązowna: Emów, Rycice, along the Świder stream to the Vistula, and along the Vistula to Góra Kalwaria (inclusive).

III. I organize the defence of these sectors as follows:

A) "Warsaw Group" in Sectors 1 to 4.

Commander: Colonel Jaźwiński.

Men:

(a) Infantry:

1st Combined Regiment (3 battalions):

4/4th Guard Battalion

Falenica

Battalion of Kowno IR

Wiązowna

1st Battalion, 142nd IR

D. Miłosna

2nd Combined Regiment (4 battalions):

1/1st Guard Battalion

Kobyłka

1st Battalion, 104th IR

Czarna Stara

1st Battalion, 109th IR

Radzymin

1st Battalion, 120th IR

Borki

6th Border Rifle Regiment (2 battalions)

Zegrze

(b) Artillery (all batteries have 4 guns):

1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th Batteries, 1st Lit-Bel FAR

75 mm

1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th Batteries, 201st FAR

75 mm

7th and 8th Batteries, 16th FAR

75 mm

Reserve Battery, 1st FAR

75 mm

1st Battery, 4th MAR

75 mm

Battery A

75 mm

Battery B

155 mm

2nd Battery, 4th HAR

155 mm

Reserve Battery, 18th FAR

[missing]

1st, 2nd, 3rd Batteries, 18th HAR

120 mm



(c) Cavalry:

Combined half-squadron 1st Light Horse Radzymin

Total "Warsaw Group": 9 battalions, 80 guns, ½ cavalry squadron

Boundaries of the sector for the defensive line run from the Vistula to Karczew (inclusive) and to Orzechowo west of Dębe (exclusive).

B) "Modlin Group": Sector 5 and along the Vistula from Wyszogród to Płock inclusive.

Commander - Colonel Malewicz – command post in Modlin Fortified Area.

Men:

(a) Infantry:

3rd Combined Regiment (effectively four battalions)

1st Battalion, 131st IR	Modlin
4/1st Guard Stage Battalion	Pomiechówek
Half Emergency Battalion Z, 13th IR	
Emergency Company Z, 31st IR	
Emergency Company Z, 41st IR	
Emergency Company Z, 42nd IR	Wyszogród
Two companies of Wilno IR	Wyszogród
Battalion, Officer Training School	Modlin
Reserve Squadron of Gendarmerie	Modlin
Half Emergency Battalion, 9th Legion IR	Płock
Half Emergency Battalion, 10th IR	Płock
Half Emergency Battalion, 37th IR	

(b) Artillery (all batteries of 4 guns):

Reserve Battery, 1st HAR	
Two Lit-Bel Batteries	48 mm
1st Battery, 2nd FAR	75 mm
Wyszogród Reserve Battery	120 mm
Positional guns (number given later)	

Total for the group: 6.5 battalions, 20 guns (plus some fortress guns)

Boundary of the sector, the defensive line from Orzechowo west of Dębe (inclusive) to Płock (inclusive).

C) Warsaw Centre (node), Sector 6.

Commander: Lt-General Zawadzki

Men:

(a) Infantry:

D. O. G. Warsaw Emergency Regiment (two battalions)	
4th Combined Regiment (three battalions)	
2/1st Guard Battalion	Warsaw
4/1st Guard Battalion	
Łódź Guard and Stage Battalion	
Escort Company 1/8	
Women's Volunteer Legion (one battalion)	

Total of 6 battalions.

In addition there were subordinate police squads and civic guards.

Task: Defence of the "node" of Warsaw – Praga, and maintaining security in Warsaw city.



D) "Kalwaria Group", Sector 7.

I entrust the direct leadership of the organisation of this group to my deputy, Lt-General Żabczyński.

(a) Infantry:

1st Battalion, 168th IR
One company of the 9th BRR

(b) Artillery:

5th and 6th Batteries, 201st FAR	75 mm
1st Battery Horse Artillery	3 inch

Total for Gora Kalwaria Group: 1.25 battalions and 12 guns

Task: Defence of the sector of the Vistula from Karczew (exclusive) to Gora Kalwaria (inclusive). Preventing any crossing of the Vistula especially at the ford near Gora Kalwaria.

E) Reserve: Lt-General Ledóchowski.

IV. The 11th Infantry Division will be in the area Radzymin – Pustelnik.

V. Man the outer line immediately to repel possible attacks by enemy cavalry.

VI. Colonel Breza has been appointed Artillery Commander of the Military Governorate.

VII. Colonel Navratil, Head Engineer of the Military Governorship of Warsaw, takes over the general direction of fortification works and the construction of crossings over the Vistula, to whom all demands should be reported.

I draw your attention to the fact that the preparation of machine-gun positions and the construction of barbed wire obstacles constitute the most urgent works.

VIII. Communications: a communications scheme is attached. The head of communications will assign a field telephone platoon to each to the commands of the Warsaw and Modlin groups.

IX. Supply of all kinds will be via D. O. G. Warsaw.

a) Ammunition: 120 rounds per rifle, 120 rounds per field cannon, 160 rounds per heavy cannon and the same quantity at the rail heads, organized by D. O. G. Warsaw.

(b) Food: from the warehouse in Praga.

X. Medical: the sick and wounded are to be sent to the assembly station for that purpose in Warsaw.

The two groups and independent sectors will send timely reports to the Military Governor's Command post in Warsaw, 7 Saski Square, at 19:00.

XI. I appoint Lt-General Żabczyński as my deputy, to whom, in addition to organising the defence of the Góra Kalwaria sector, I entrust the supervision of securing the crossings of the Vistula at Jabłonna, Warsaw and Góra Kalwaria.

For compliance

Bobicki
Lt-Colonel
Chief of Staff of the Warsaw Governorate

Latinik
Lt-General
Governor of Warsaw

On the basis of this Order No. 1, the first determination of the composition and placement within the groups now took place.



On 5 August Colonel Malevich ordered a new division of forces and determined the composition of the command.

He entrusted Sector 1 (from Stare Orzechów to Smoszków) to Colonel Zaniewski, who received about eight infantry companies, several sapper companies and 26 guns. His task was to “defend the approach to the fortress, securing the crossings of the Vistula.”

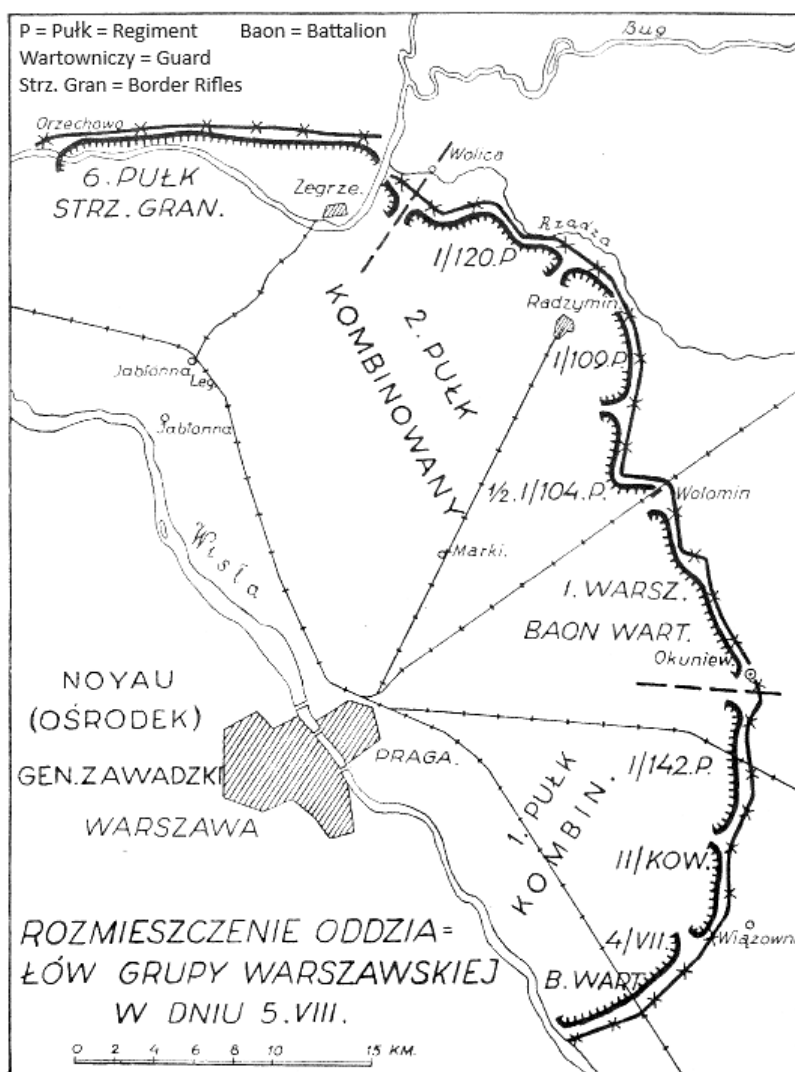
Sector 2 (from Smoszków to Wyszogród) was held by Captain Tomaszewski, who, with two companies of the 4th Lwów Stage Battalion, was to “defend the approach to the Vistula and obstruct the enemy’s crossing.”

Sector 3 was the bridgehead at Wyszogród, which was to be defended by Captain Żelichowski’s march battalion, taken from the Reserve Battalion of the Wilno Regiment.

Sector 4 (from Wyszogród to Płock) was given to the Tartar Cavalry Regiment

Sector 5 covered the outskirts of Płock, where the task of defence was given to various Reserve units.

After this rearrangement, Colonel Malevich was left with very few forces in reserve, and they were a mixture of different origins and weapons.



Sketch 7 : Unit positions on 5 August

Colonel Malevich was under no illusions as to the value of the defence organised. In fact, he reported that he had garrisoned a sector of 100 km in a straight line with eight battalions. He was therefore clear that with such forces he could fight off only small enemy raids at best.

On the other hand, the Warsaw group was in a better position, for understandable reasons. On 6 August the group’s commander, Colonel Jaźwiński, gave an order for the manning of his sectors, and the troops were in position by that day. The command of the group’s artillery was taken over by Colonel Szpręglewski,



who divided the batteries in his possession into five subgroups. The 1st and 2nd subgroups formed a group under Colonel Hulanicki (commander of the Rembertów Training Ground), while the 3rd and 4th¹⁵ subgroups formed a group under Colonel Ładziński (commander of the 201st Field Artillery Regiment). In this way, each “Combined Regiment” of the bridgehead had an artillery group in its sector. The 5th Artillery Subgroup (in Zegrze) was taken over by Lt-Colonel Podonowski.

However, that organisation did not last even 24 hours. The 2nd “Combined Regiment” was given a commander, Lt-Colonel Krzywobłocki, who managed to issue a single daily order and convene an officers’ briefing – and that was the end of his activity as commander of the regiment. This was because a new order from the Governor introduced further changes.

The organisation of the defence in the Zegrze sector was also in a fluid state. Admittedly, Rear Admiral Porębski, the sector commander, in his first order of 6 August, directed the unit’s positions in the sector. But no changes were actually made and the sector continued to be garrisoned by the 6th BRR, because the 7th Reserve Brigade, given in the scheme, had not yet completed its reorganisation.

Finally, it should be mentioned that on 6 August General Zawadzki, the Warsaw City Commander, issued his first order, detailing three companies of the State Police to take up positions in the Praga district. Their task was not only to protect warehouses, catch fugitives and maintain communications, but also to “take up arms ruthlessly against all enemy patrols that might approach the centre’s zone.”

On 7 August, General Latinik ordered new grouping for his forces in the garrison of the Modlin – Zegrze – Warsaw triangle and, in connection with this, a reorganisation of the command structure.

However, the fundamental premises on which the Governor’s preparations were based had already changed due to the Commander-in-Chief’s historic decision of 6 August¹⁶ – of which General Latinik had not yet been sufficiently informed. So his 7 August order was not related to the performance of the new tasks set for the Battle of Warsaw. This is confirmed by the fact that on that day General Weygand wrote to General Rozwadowski, among others:

I have just been working with General Latinik, but not much has come of it, for he still knew little about the units he is to receive, and was not able to prepare his sectors for that reason.

The fundamental change introduced in the arrangements by General Latinik’s order of 7 August was the abolition of the existing Warsaw group, and the formation from its units of three new sectors: Miłosna, Radzymin and Zegrze. These forces were reinforced by the 11th Infantry Division, which garrisoned the Radzymin sector and was to absorb the troops remaining in that sector.

It is difficult to find a guiding idea in this arrangement, and we have already pointed out that the order was never executed, due to the Supreme Commander’s decision of 6 August. Admittedly, General Latinik mentions in his work the concept of defence, which implied the use of the 11th Infantry Division as the garrison of the first line, but we have found no confirmation of this in documents, and so this concept seems to be his thoughts after the battle.

General Latinik states that he did not want the 11th ID to be left in reserve, as “less brave”, where it would have to be ready to execute counter-attacks, but called for it to be used to man the first defensive line. He recalled that he had reported this to General Rozwadowski, remarking that:

It would be less of a problem if it did not hold out in defence than were it to fail when a decisive counter-attack was required.

On the other hand, when considering the question of why the 11th ID was assigned the Radzymin sector and not another, we can accept General Latinik’s account that he decided that “due to its previous location”, as it was “easy for it to arrange itself on the battle line and prepare for the defence.”

¹⁵ The original has “2nd and 3rd” subgroups, but this must be wrong.

¹⁶ This is the publication of the plan for the assembly of a strike group behind the Wieprz River, which involved a radical regrouping of all Polish forces on all fronts, and would eventually lead to the Polish victory.



The “Radzymin” sector, stretching from Leśniakowizna up to and including the mouth of the Rządza River on the Narew, was entrusted to Colonel Jaźwiński, who was appointed commander of the 11th Division.

After reinforcing the 11th Division with troops from the Governorate garrison, Colonel Jaźwiński had about ten infantry battalions and 2.5 cavalry squadrons at his disposal. Colonel Ładziński was the artillery commander for this sector, with 41 guns, including four heavy ones.

On the right flank of the bridgehead, the “Miłosna” sector was formed, with General Falewicz in command. Lt-Colonel Lichtarowicz was appointed his Chief of Staff, and Lt-Colonel Eyraud was appointed Technical Advisor.

That sector had four infantry battalions and four squadrons of the 11th Border Rifle Regiment. The artillery commander of the sector remained Colonel Hulanicki, who was to command 34 guns. This was stated in the order, and that was how many guns were listed by General Latinik in his work: however most of these guns remained solely on paper, as there was a shortage of the necessary parts and ammunition, which made them impossible to use.

On the other sectors, at Zegrze and Modlin, generally little changed. The 7th Reserve Brigade had arrived in the Zegrze sector, but had not yet taken positions. The sector in Góra Kalwaria had an infantry battalion and four batteries.

In addition to those sectors, one should take into account General Zawadzki’s “centre” (node), which received three guard battalions, a detachment of the Women’s Volunteer Legion, a volunteer battalion, a company of anti-aircraft guns, a detachment of civil guards (about 3,500 men) and the state police.

To conclude, it should be mentioned that further organisational work to form new units was going on at the same time. Among others, the organisation of the “First Volunteer Regiment for the Defence of Warsaw” under the command of Major Kaliński had begun. This regiment was being formed near Warsaw, and consisted mostly of volunteers from members of the Polish Socialist Party.

At the same time, formed batteries were arriving from outside Warsaw, while military units formed by the Łódź police (a squadron and a company) were due to arrive from Łódź.

The work to date to form the various units of the Governorate’s garrison rested with the reserve divisions of D.O.G. Warsaw, which by 7 August, working at a feverish pace, had formed everything in their power.

Finally, on 7 August, at the Governor’s request, the Ministry of Military Affairs ordered the evacuation of the reserve troops into the interior of the country.

In that way, the ties that bound the troops and commands of the Governorate to the non-frontline authorities were severed. Warsaw, to which a state of siege had been declared, and its environs, increasingly resembled a large war camp.

In those crucial days, many institutions were grouped together in the capital, called upon by the need of the moment to cooperate in defence of the country. The framework and nature of this study does not allow us to dwell on the matter at any length or to highlight the efforts of the people of the country and the capital during this period. It will be recalled, however, that it was on 5 August that the Warsaw City Council unanimously resolved to

... elect a Council for the Defence of the Capital, composed of 15 people, with a view to coordinating the activities of the city’s population and carrying out services and orders for the benefit of the army and defence of the country.

That was how preparations for the defence of the capital looked like even before the fundamental decision to fight the Battle of Warsaw.



Chapter III

The Warsaw Bridgehead in the Commander-in-Chief's Plan for the Battle of Warsaw

On August 6 the Commander-in-Chief, Marshal Józef Piłsudski, made his historic order. It contained a regrouping, "to move the North-eastern Front to the Vistula, with the simultaneous acceptance of a great battle at Warsaw."

The existing Northeastern Front, under the command of General Haller, was renamed the Northern Front, made up of the 1st and 5th Armies. The latter was to be formed from units of the left wing of the 1st Army. The Northern Front was to fight a defensive battle on a line running from East Prussia along the Orzyc and Narew Rivers to the Warsaw bridgehead. Meanwhile the 4th Army and part of the 3rd, of which the Commander-in-Chief would ultimately take command, were to strike at the rear and flanks of the enemy advancing on Warsaw, after regrouping behind the Wieprz River.

In this way the established bridgehead of Warsaw became part of the Northern Front. It was here that the 1st Army was to protect Warsaw after completing its retreat. Its task was defined in the order as:

From Serock (inclusive) to Karczew (inclusive), the Warsaw bridgehead is a subdivision of the 1st Army under the command of Lt-General Latinik, the current governor of Warsaw. Task: to deflect attacks on Warsaw and to inflict on the attacker as much loss as possible in order to weaken his combat resistance.

The 1st Army on the outskirts was to include divisions from the previous 1st Army plus the 15th Infantry Division, the left wing of the 4th Army. It was to add the 11th Infantry Division, 7th Reserve Brigade, 18th Infantry Division and the other units organised by the Ministry of Military Affairs already under Latinik's orders. The order to regroup stressed that

... the new zones, especially the lines of the Warsaw bridgehead, should be manned on time and in order.

The units of the Warsaw bridgehead were given a important task in the decisive battle. It was anticipated that the battle would be fought there against the majority of the forces of the Soviet Western Front, under the walls of Warsaw. Then, on the appointed day, a decisive blow would fall on the enemy facing Warsaw, from the banks of the Wieprz River.

The order for the Battle of Warsaw clearly stated:

Our troops in the positions of the Warsaw bridgehead must repel all enemy attacks until the concentration of the 4th Army, south of the Wieprz River, is complete, i.e. around 16 August.

Marshal Piłsudski wrote about this historic decision in his work *Year 1920*, where he stated that he condemned Warsaw in advance to a passive role, to withstand the pressure heading for it. However, he did not want to tie the vast majority of his forces – ten divisions of the Northern Front – to a passive role. He feared that a reduction in the strength of the defence could cause their weak morale to drop and with that a lack of confidence in the ability to defend. He wrote:

I have shifted endlessly the intended manning of Warsaw and Modlin. Thanks to the extraordinary energy that General Sosnkowski had brought to Warsaw, huge artillery numbers, previously unknown in our war, became immediately apparent. It came much closer to the ideal which was experienced in the World War. So the artillery could deploy and unleash a veritable hurricane of fire – not the one I was so often fed in reports. So again it seemed possible to me, according to the rules of war, the nature of tactics, to replace at least part of the human infantry forces, able to manoeuvre, with the increased firepower of our artillery.

No matter how many times I tried to convince myself of the necessity of not ordering such obvious nonsense, no matter how many times I drew back from the decision, I was crushed by my responsibility for the state and its capital. I could not bring myself to trust the morale strength of the army and the inhabitants, nor have confidence of the commanders of both.



Marshal Piłsudski highlighted in his work the strong impact that a battle fought under Warsaw's walls would have on Warsaw and, conversely, the city's impact on the soldier. He emphasised it in these words:

I knew well from historical observation of Lwów what a great city means when a battle is fought on its periphery and when in its streets. As was then the case in Warsaw, elements of the immediate rear of the units in battle wander in all directions. The soldier then has to live in common with the city, and every twitch in one direction or another of the city's soul breaks or sustains the soldier's strength. I remembered well that most of my forces, gathered in Warsaw, were coming to the capital after a long series of defeats, after long continuous failures. To reduce them numerically, to throw out the units that were already there, seemed to me to be dangerous.

On 6 August a delegation arrived at the Belvedere,¹⁷ consisting of the city representatives: Artur Sliwinski, deputy mayor and chairman of the Capital Defence Council; Ignacy Balinski, president of the city council; Drzewiecki, mayor of the city; and Kowerski, representative of the Civic Executive Committee. The delegation presented the Marshal with the results of its activities to date. After listening to the report, Marshal Piłsudski, for his part, raised

The great importance possessed by the lively interaction of the entire population with security and possible defence. Warsaw, as an enormous concentration of people, by its very attitude, its will, its submission to military orders, and finally by its assistance, can play a serious and highly positive role in the event of an enemy approaching Warsaw.

The delegates then made inquiries about the defence of Warsaw, and Marshal Piłsudski declared:

The capital of the country will be defended to the death, and authorized the delegates to make that statement public.

After receiving the 6 August order, the subordinate commands issued their own orders, elaborating in detail on the execution of the task. The Commander-in-Chief's basic idea persisted until the end of the battle – only the details of its execution changed, especially on the northern wing of the Northern Front. That was because it was not possible to form the 5th Army and prepare for a defence on the Orzyc and Narew Rivers in time, as the units that were to become part of the 5th Army were retreating southwest under enemy pressure. Those events, and therefore the new task of the 5th Army, also affected the final grouping and composition of the 1st Army.

On 8 August an order was signed by Generals Rozwadowski and Sosnkowski which elaborated changes to the defence of the Warsaw area, now in line with the Supreme Command's order of 6 August. This assigned lines of retirement for the divisions, namely: the 10th ID from Wyszaków through Serock to Zegrze; the 8th ID through Niegów, Radzymin to Marki; the 1st Lit-Bel ID through Pniewnik and Stanisławów to Okuniew; and finally the 15th ID through Kałuszyn and Mińsk Mazowiecki to Miłosna. The remaining units of the 1st Army, such as the 17th ID and 35th, 41st and 201st IRs, were to go to the 5th Army, while the 4th Legion Infantry Brigade went to the 2nd Army.

In connection with this, the order gave instructions for the withdrawal of the troops and their wagons. It required that the subordinate commands should place emphasis on the activity of the rearguard, which was to gain time for the rest of their division to properly garrison their positions and position themselves on the outskirts of Warsaw, even at the cost of sacrificing themselves.

The order established the manning of the Warsaw first line was as follows: the 15th and 1st Lit-Bel IDs were to garrison the Miłosna sector (i.e. the southern part of the bridgehead); the 8th ID was to remain as the 1st Army's reserve in the area of Pustelnik and Marki; the 10th ID was also assigned to the 1st Army's reserve, but with the proviso that it could be directed to Modlin if necessary; the 18th ID, arriving from the Southern Front, was to be used "as a reserve or to garrison the most important sector of Radzymin"; while the Siberian Brigade was to be the general reserve for the army.

¹⁷ Polish *Belweder*, the palace in Warsaw where Piłsudski resided.



The order also stated that all troops of the governorate were to be disbanded and incorporated into the 1st Army divisions as soon as they took over the sectors. If there was not enough time, the battalions were to be assigned to individual infantry regiments until the opportunity for disbanding arose.

Attention was also given to the regulation of the movement of wagons, particularly during the crossing of the Vistula.

Finally, it was indicated that General Latinik would take command of the 1st Army as soon as the divisions arrived at the bridgehead, i.e. on 12 August, with the proviso that the Governor would be subordinated to the Supreme Command as early as 8 August.

On 8 August, the Front issued new orders, in which it repeated the details from the order of Generals Rozwadowski and Sosnkowski. However, it decided to use the 18th ID and the 11th ID to garrison the Radzymin sector, while the 10th ID was directed to Modlin as the Front's reserve.

The preparation of the fortifications in Warsaw's bridgehead remained a very important matter. We have already mentioned several times that the results of this work up to that point were poor. As soon as the order was given for the Battle of Warsaw, work was to be accelerated so that the fortifications would be ready on 12 August, i.e. by the day the retreat of the 1st Army was to be completed. For these reasons, the Supreme Command ordered on 8 August that all divisions heading to the bridgehead should send their sapper units there as quickly as possible. On the same day that order reached (through the Northern Front HQ) the 1st Army HQ, which on 8 August ordered the immediate departure of the 1st and 3rd Companies of the 19th Sapper Battalion to Wiązowna; the 3rd Sapper Company and the 9th Sapper Battalion to Ossów; the 1st and 3rd Companies of the 10th Sapper Battalion and a company of the 17th Sapper Battalion to Radzymin. The 15th Sapper Battalion and the 11th Sapper Battalion were already working on the bridgehead. In addition to these, the 14th Sapper Battalion was due to arrive. The arrangement of these companies generally corresponded to the assigned areas of the divisions to which they belonged.

However, for various reasons, some of the units did not turn up at their designated time or place, and failed to make contact with those who were to manage them.

On 9 August an order went out from the Head of Communications of the Supreme Command, connected with the regrouping for the battle of Warsaw.

Lt-Colonel Jawor, then Head of Communications of the Supreme Command, issued directives regulating the issue of communications in the final days of the retreat. He demanded that, despite the regrouping and change of command, there should be no break in communications. He also recommended that during the period of the retreat, the permanent network of wire connections be used as much as possible and that as little as possible be built by cable. By the time the retreat was completed, communications required for the final groupings for the battle were to be already prepared.

The Head of Communications of the Supreme Command was to designate fixed-route wires for the communications of the higher commands, while the Front heads of communications were to designate wires for the Armies and their directly subordinate divisions, in consultation with the post and telegraph directorates.

The same order established the commanders and the composition of the communications troops in the commands. The head of communications for the 1st Army remained Lieutenant Domejko, with Lieutenant Wołowski as his head of radio-telegraphy and Lieutenant Kłys as the telegraph officer. The 1st Army retained the Heavy Telegraphic Company No. 1, the Park Telegraphic Company No. 1, the Construction Field Company No. 4, and the Telegraphic Construction Platoon No. 3/1. Moreover, from the moment the 1st Army arrived at the bridgehead, the communication units formed by the governor, as well as Radio Telegraph Station No. 8 and three automobile radiotelegraph stations, passed into the hands of the head of communications.



Two days later, on 11 August, the Supreme Command addressed the Governor of Warsaw, ordering the immediate preparation of a certain reserve of fixed equipment in Modlin, Zegrze, Marki, Rembertów and Góra Kalwaria, with a view to facilitating the work of the frontline troops on their arrival at the bridgehead.

These were the basic orders in the field of the preparation of technical communications.

On 11 August, the Head of Aviation of the Supreme Command assigned to the 1st Army the 8th Reconnaissance Squadron, the 19th Fighter Squadron and the Toruń Squadron. Lt-Colonel Serebnicki was appointed Head of Aviation of the 1st Army and Captain Peret was appointed technical advisor.

On 7 August, an order was issued by the Supreme Command regarding supplies, signed by the Head Quartermaster, Lt-General Norwid-Neugebauer. At the beginning of the order, he emphasised the importance of the preparations in these words:

The success of the ordered regrouping and offensive action will certainly depend, in the first instance, on the proper material preparation and ordering of the deployed units and their material requirement:

To this end, the Supreme Command expects all the forces of the supply units, and especially those of the food, munitions and sanitary units, to exert themselves fully.

This order also directed the evacuation of plant and equipment that was unnecessarily burdening the army to so-called "evacuation centres", with the 1st Army to evacuate to the Łowicz – Łódź – Kutno area. After regrouping, the army was to base itself (as a supply base) on the Łódź area, with a forward base in Warsaw, while the line of communication, i.e. inflow and outflow, was to be the Łódź to Warsaw line.

This order was followed on 8 August by an order from the Quartermaster-General, which stipulated that the army's basic ammunition reserve was to be five divisional stocks for each division, and a division's reserve to be three divisional stocks. Divisions were to have a normal stock.

At this point we must review the rules of ammunition supply, which were established on 3 August in an order from General Norwid-Neugebauer.

This order specified a "day of fire" for a rifle at 40 rounds, for a heavy machine-gun at 2,000 rounds, for a light machine-gun at 500 rounds and for an automatic rifle at 200 rounds. A "day of fire" for the artillery was: 60 rounds for a field cannon, 40 for a field howitzer, 40 for a long-range cannon and 24 for a heavy howitzer.

By those figures, a divisional stock (1 day's fire) should be (for a full division combat strength¹⁸): 288,000 rounds for 7,200 rifles, 256,000 rounds for 128 heavy machine-guns, 48,000 rounds for 96 light machine-guns and 57,000 rounds for 288 automatic rifles. The rounded total is 600,000 rounds, which equated to 20 tonnes (two rail wagons).

In this calculation, the reasoning highlighted in the order should be taken into account:

A 'day of fire' admittedly does not correspond to the actual consumption of ammunition. ...

The individual combat units will, in different phases of battle, have a greater or lesser consumption of ammunition. The 'day of fire', however, is the amount of ammunition found by experience to date and with statistical calculations to correspond to the average consumption of ammunition within a whole division, calculated per rifle of combat status in the course of a single day of heavy combat.

The division's artillery supply was: for a light artillery regiment of nine batteries equal to 2,160 shells (two wagons); and for a heavy artillery *division* (two heavy howitzer batteries and a long-range cannon battery) equal to 352 shells (two wagons). So the entire tonnage of a division was calculated at six wagons.

¹⁸ See Appendix 2 for the formal structure of a division.



During the Battle of Warsaw, as well as in the other periods of the 1919-20 War, the French Military Mission cooperated with the Polish military authorities. According to the agreement concluded at the beginning of 1919, it was to cooperate with the Supreme Command in the organisation, training and command of the army. In practice, however, the cooperation expressed itself most strongly in the organisation and training of the army.

The Mission was headed by General Henrys with General Billote as his Chief of Staff. On 25 July General Weygand, who was to act as an adviser to the Chief of the General Staff during the Battle of Warsaw, arrived in Poland as the French military delegate to the Anglo-French Mission. At the time of the battle, the essence of the co-operation between the officers of the Mission, in accordance with the 1919 agreement, had not changed in general outline. Point IV of the agreement clearly stated:

*Les officiers français sont conseillers techniques des autorités militaires polonaises, près desquelles ils sont placés. Ils ne reçoivent pas d'ordre des officiers polonais et ne leur en donnent pas.*¹⁹

This state of affairs did not change in spite of a strong campaign, led by some Polish political parties, calling for the surrender of command to the French officers.

Nevertheless, during the period of the Battle of Warsaw, the cooperation of the officers from the French Mission became more pronounced than ever. We have already had the opportunity to emphasise the cooperation of General Charriou, Colonel Pacton and others in the construction of the fortifications of the Warsaw bridgehead. Colonel Renoux was assigned to the Governorate and, as he could speak Polish, he could usefully cooperate. In addition, Colonel Bancelhon was assigned as technical adviser to the governor's artillery commander, and in that position he was particularly active, especially in the preparation of instructions and guidelines for the artillery.

In addition to the officers mentioned above, we find technical advisors to the lower commands, namely Lt-Colonel Eyraud at the HQ of the Miłosna group, Major Boulanger and Captain Foglierini at the 11th ID, and Major Aurisse, Major Leroy and Captain Lelaquet at the HQ of the Zegrze sector (from 12 July). Captain Metier (Zegrze), Captain Coppe (Radzymin) and Lieutenant Neoport (Wiązowna) remained as advisers in the construction of the fortifications of the bridgehead. Finally, in the days preceding the battle, the following were appointed: Colonel Mara as a tank technical advisor; and Captain Peret as advisor to the Head of Aviation for the 1st Army. General Spire remained at the HQ of the Northern Front.

The officers of the Mission showed a strong desire to extract the maximum technical advantage in the preparations for the defence. The head of the Mission, in particular, emphasised the deficiencies in the fortification of the positions.

General Henrys also drew attention to the great importance that tanks might have in a defensive battle, and in view of this he proposed in a letter of 8 August that all tanks be taken from the country and from the front and placed at General Latinik's disposal. Finally, it must be added that General Henrys interested himself in the reorganisation of units withdrawn from the front. On 5 August he had personally visited the 11th ID, having already had information about it from General Mourreau, who on 2 August became acquainted with the state of that division at Ostrów Mazowiecka. General Henrys became personally convinced of the validity of those observations, stating in a letter to General Rozwadowski and General Sosnkowski that the division's mental and material condition was bad.

General Latinik issued his own orders in accordance with those from his higher commanders, but the positioning and grouping of the units within the 1st Army was determined by those higher commands. This shows the great importance attached to the defence, but on the other hand it limited General Latinik's personal scope for decision-making.

However the orders generally were to General Latinik's liking, as evidenced by his words:

¹⁹ That is: "The French officers are technical advisers to the Polish military authorities, with whom they were placed. They do not receive orders from the Polish officers and do not give them."



In this case, I did not need to seek any change to those orders, because they corresponded to my own intentions anyway. I did not even expect to be given such a large force.

However, a decrease in the 1st Army soon followed, as the 18th ID was given to the 5th Army. On 9 August General Latinik included in the garrison of the southern part of the bridgehead General Rządkowski's group, consisting of the 15th and 1st Lit-Bel IDs; and in the northern sector Colonel Jaźwiński's group, with the existing composition. The 8th ID and other smaller units remained in reserve. In addition, General Latinik still regarded the 17th Division as his reserve, while noting that it had been given a different task at that time.

In the following days there were further changes, which resulted in new allocations and positions, which we will discuss later. In any case, the units and their tasks were fluid almost until the last moment before the battle, which was reflected in the state of readiness of the defence.

As the artillery grew in numbers, it was given increasing weight in considerations regarding the battle that was to take place in front of Warsaw.

The Commander-in-Chief, in the crucial moments of making his decision, was already aware that the Warsaw bridgehead was richly equipped with artillery. Gradually, the conviction grew that such a large amount of artillery would play a pre-eminent role, and it was in the artillery that the strength of the defence would lie. This is mentioned by General Latinik in his work and reflected in various documents.

We know from the preceding paragraphs that the Governor's artillery command was entrusted to General Rodziewicz, while the previous commander, Colonel Brzoza-Brzezina, remained his deputy. Co-operating with General Rodziewicz, as technical adviser, was Colonel Bancelhon, who at this time drafted most of the instructions and guidelines for the artillery. As early as 8 August, 'Instructions for the employment of the batteries' were issued, containing detailed instructions for the batteries' tasks in defence.

On 9 August, General Rodziewicz ordered General Ledóchowski to take command of an artillery group, consisting of the Modlin and Zegrze artillery, with Modlin as the location of his HQ. Colonel Szpręglewski, previously commander of the Warsaw artillery group (for a few days he was commander of all the artillery in the bridgehead) was appointed as commander of the artillery in the Radzymin sector.

In Order No. 5 of 9 August General Rodziewicz changed the previous arrangement of the artillery as follows:

- Group I in Modlin and Group II in Zegrze (32 guns) remained under the command of General Ledóchowski, who was to move his staging area to Jabłonna and remain with the command of General Żeligowski's group.
- Group III in Radzymin, consisting of 59 guns (some batteries were yet to arrive), was entrusted to Colonel Szpręglewski.
- Group IV in Miłosna continued to be commanded by Colonel Hulanicki.
- A new Group V was added, with eight anti-aircraft guns.
- The reserve artillery, consisting of batteries that were just arriving in Warsaw.

Finally, for the first time in the order, the number of divisional artillery pieces of the 1st Army was given, namely: about twenty-five light artillery batteries (mostly three guns per battery), five 105-mm batteries, two 100-mm Austrian howitzer batteries, five 155-mm batteries and eight [Russian] 76-mm batteries.

Basically, the artillery of the bridgehead was to be the artillery of the Governorate, while the artillery of the incoming 1st Army divisions was termed "reinforcement batteries." Those batteries were to be divided up among the various groups in due course, and the artillery group commanders were therefore instructed to carry out reconnaissance in the field, taking into account the possibility of introducing ten light batteries and five heavy batteries into their sector.

However, the final artillery grouping depended on the planned deployments on the bridgehead, which, as we have seen, was still subject to change.



At that time orders were issued for the creation of a very heavy artillery group, which would undoubtedly be useful in the defence. At that time, six 210-mm Italian mortars and six 149-mm Italian tractor-drawn cannons were in our possession. However, for various reasons, these guns were not used in the defence of the Warsaw bridgehead.

On the other hand, the creation of anti-aircraft artillery was easier, and a *division* was formed during July and early August.

The 1st Anti-Aircraft Battery, with a platoon of searchlights, was stationed near Gdańsk Railway Station, tasked with protecting the bridges over the Vistula River against air attack. The 2nd Battery was set up at Mokotów Airfield, with the task of defending the airfield. By 9 August, two more AA batteries were in position: the 3rd Battery next to the 2nd, and 4th Battery next to the 1st. All the batteries had French 75-mm guns.

There was not much improvement regarding the management of the construction of the defensive positions. Until 5 August the governor's Head of Engineers and Sappers was Colonel Navratil. General Wroczyński arrived from the front that day, after commanding the operational group for two days, and the next day was sent to General Latinik for disposal. He was given the task of directing the construction of the fortifications in the Warsaw bridgehead. At the same time Colonel Rybiński was appointed Field Chief of the Supreme Command, and was thus General Wroczyński's superior.

On 9 August, General Wroczyński issued an order, in which – noting the poor progress of the work up to that point – he demanded that the construction be speeded up, so that in two days' time the positions would be completed, provided with at least two to three rows of barbed wire barriers. In the evening of 9 August, Marshal Piłsudski arrived at the Governor's HQ, and remained there in a conference until 00:30. General Wroczyński was present at that conference, but having neither reports on the state of the works nor action plans, he was unable to report to the Commander-in-Chief. It is clear from this that General Wroczyński failed to take effective command. On 11 August General Wroczyński left for another post, and the overall management of the construction of the fortifications remained with Colonel Rybiński. Then on 12 August that task was taken over by Lt-Colonel Griebisch, Head of Engineering and Sappers for the 1st Army.

So it is difficult to talk of unified management of the work on the Warsaw bridgehead. On top of this, the troops sent from the front to work on the bridgehead were not always on time or at their destination. For example, the 10th Sapper Battalion arrived in Radzymin on 10 August, after a considerable delay, and then, searching for Colonel Berezowski's fortification group, went to Nieporęt on 11 August. Only on its return did it start work (under whose orders is uncertain) on the German positions. On 10 August the 19th Sapper Battalion arrived at the bridgehead and set to work on its southern wing. On 11 August the 14th Sapper Battalion, the 3rd Company of the 9th Sapper Battalion and the 2nd Sapper Battalion marched into Okuniew.

During this period we have rather scanty information about the work of the governor's head of communications, but, inferring from the surviving material, it can be concluded that his activity was limited. In one of the Governor's orders we do find mention of the fact that the telephone stations in Falenica, Rembertów, Zegrze and Modlin had so far been manned, some of which had inter-station connections.

At that time, the communications units were working in particular sectors, so that of 2nd-Lieutenant Przygodzki in Zegrze, and that of 2nd-Lieutenant Winiarski in the Radzymin sector. On 8 August, Winiarski handed over the work to the Head of Communications of the 11th ID, while he himself marched off with his detachment to the Miłosna sector, where he took up the functions of Head of Communications.

On 9 August, an addendum to the Governor's order was issued by Lt-Colonel Rouppert, the Head of Medical Services of D.O.G. Warsaw). It appointed Heads of Medical Services to the individual group commands, and established the main evacuation routes from the sectors.



We have mentioned before the matter of the supply of ammunition to the units of the M-Z-W triangle, but stopped at indicating that no agreement had been reached between the Governor's Office and the Ordnance Department by 5 August, and that the Governor's Office had not yet submitted its requirements by that time. The Head of the Department, General Kaczyński, addressed the following letter to the Governor's Office:

Ministry of Military Affairs

Immediate. SECRET

Department of Armaments

Warsaw, 5 August, 14:25

To the Chief of Staff of the Military Governor, Warsaw

In view of the continuing removal of cannon ammunition from the local depots, you are requested immediately today to order a replenishment of the stocks of cannon ammunition for the artillery formations intended for the defence of M-Z-W subordinate to the Military Governor of Warsaw, to the standards specified by the Vice-Minister:

for light cannons: 240 shells per gun,

for 105 mm cannons and howitzers: 160 shells per gun,

for heavy howitzers: 120 shells per gun.

For late receipt and failure to supply the batteries with ammunition, the 5th Department will not take any responsibility.

For compliance

Head of Dept.

Żuk

Kaczyński

Lt-Colonel

Lt-General

Immediately on receipt of that letter Lt-Colonel Bobicki ordered its execution. But it was not possible to make the requisitions within a few hours, as it was only on that day that the first operational order went out, in which the number of units in the bridgehead was established. Moreover, the order of battle changed from day to day, depending on what else the Ministry had given to the Governor.

It was not until the Governor's artillery command had been organised, on 5 and 6 August, that lists were to be presented, and until then the supply was handled by D.O.G. Warsaw.

Since the Governor's Office did not present a requisition on 5 August, the head of the 5th Department, General Kaczyński, took the initiative on his own, of which he reported after the battle as follows:

Unable to meet the demand, and seeing that it was urgent, on 6 August the 5th Department, spontaneously – insofar as it was aware of the situation – issued orders for cannon ammunition to be brought to Warsaw immediately, as the Department had calculated (almost blindly) what would be needed for the batteries defending Warsaw, while there was either no more ammunition in stock, or only a small amount.

On this basis it must be concluded, without going into the reasons for it, that the evacuation of the Ordnance Department's warehouses was carried out without taking into account the needs of the garrison of the M-Z-W triangle.

On 5 August the Department issued orders to send ammunition from: the ordnance department of D.O.G. Kraków (Austrian shells and 30,000 rounds for French 75-mm), the Fifth Department in Poznań (mostly German shells), and the ordnance department of D.O.G. Kielce (French shells, including 42,000 rounds for French 75-mm).

Although that order stressed that the transportations should be sent with the greatest possible speed, most of them did not arrive until 16 August.

On 6 August the Governor's Office submitted an ammunition requisition to the Ordnance Department, which was generally in line with the number of guns detailed in the order from the Governor's Office of 7 August.



That order established the ammunition stocks required as 120 rounds per field gun, 80 for medium, and 60 for heavy. For rifles it was 120 rounds per soldier and 4,000 for machine-guns. That was calculating for three infantry divisions, of 10,000 men each, and 29 batteries. So for the artillery it requested:

for German guns	77-mm		$16 \times 120 = 1920$
	105-mm	M 98/09	$4 \times 80 = 320$
	105-mm	M 16	$4 \times 80 = 320$
for French guns	75-mm	M 97	$40 \times 120 = 4800$
	120-mm	M 1878	$8 \times 80 = 640$
	155-mm	M 17	$28 \times 60 = 1680$
for Austrian guns	100-mm Mountain	16	$4 \times 120 = 480$
for Russian guns	76-mm	M 02	$8 \times 120 = 960$
	122-mm		$8 \times 120 = 960$

Having received that request, General Kaczyński turned to General Sosnkowski, and demanded that the Governor justify it, as he expressed it, "had no justification whatsoever." During the day of 6 August and until the afternoon of 7 August, conversations took place between Lt-Colonel Żuk (clerk of the supply section of the 5th Department) and the ordnance clerk of D.O.G. Warsaw, Major Berger, and Lieutenant Rakowski. The D.O.G. officers reported (according to General Kaczyński) that they had received as supply guidelines that one grant would be with the units, a second with the unit's rolling stock, a third at the depots on the right bank of the Vistula, and a fourth on the left bank of the Vistula.

Eventually, the 5th Department agreed to the above principles and issued the appropriate orders for ammunition to be sent from Kraków and Poznań to Warsaw, and simultaneously from those cities to Kielce and Łódź, where forward depots of the Ordnance Department had been set up to replenish, if necessary, the frontline depots of Warsaw. These orders were issued on 8 August.

On that day, the Governorate requested: for the Radzymin sector: 3,000 shells of 75-mm and 1,000 of 77-mm; for Zegrze: 4,600 shells of 75-mm and 32 of 105-mm. Then on 9 August it requested 1,500 shells of 75-mm, 296 of 155-mm and 320 of 77-mm.

On those days and in the following ones, the Ordnance Department – not having ammunition on site – started sending it to Warsaw and to the front depots, ordering it to be done quickly.

It was clear from this that the matter of ammunition supply, while being resolved, hid a potential disaster. Meanwhile, the Commander-in-Chief, on the basis of the reports presented to him, anticipated that the artillery in the bridgehead would be,

... able to deploy and unleash a veritable hurricane of fire, not the one I was so often fed in reports.

These shortcomings were ascertained after the battle by the Chief Quartermaster of the General Staff of the Supreme Command, General Norwid-Neugebauer, in a letter of 24 August, in which, among other things, he noted:

I. As of the date the bridgehead came under the authority of the Supreme Command the artillery guns prepared by the Governorate were supplied as follows:



Guns	Calibre	Rounds at the depots						
		Central	Pustel- nik	Jabłon- na	Rem- bertów	Wawer	Modlin	Total
58	French 75-mm	–	3 000	4600	–	–	2 640	10 240
28	French 155-mm	–	1 120	–	–	–	8 000	9 120
16	French 120-mm	1 308	–	–	–	–	6 620	7 928
8	French 105-mm	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
8	Russian 76-mm	600	–	–	–	–	1 088	1 688
12	Russian 122-mm	–	–	–	–	–	1 914	1 914
10	Russian 152-mm	4 000	–	–	–	–	–	4 000
4	German 105-mm 98/09	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
4	German 105-mm M16	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
16	German 77-mm M16	–	1 000	–	–	–	–	1 000
4	Austrian 100-mm howitzer	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
6	Italian 149 A cannon	–	–	–	–	–	5 600	5 600
6	Italian 210 A mortar	–	–	–	–	–	6 260	6 260

The above summary shows:

- (a) The Wawer and Rembertów depots were not supplied with ammunition at all.
- (b) The supply, with the exception of 156-mm, French 120-mm and Italian 149 A and 210 A, was inadequate.
- (c) For several types – 105-mm German, 100-mm, and Austrian M14 howitzers – there was no ammunition available at all.

Thus, in spite of the powers granted to the Governor of the capital city of Warsaw, the projected supply remained solely on paper.

II. Volunteer and reserve troops going to the so-called 'Ministry of Military Affairs Front', as well as those forming the garrison of the City of Warsaw, were not properly supplied with ammunition ...

Summarising the above shortcomings, the Commander-in-Chief concludes that the preparation of the Warsaw - Modlin - Zegrze bridgehead in terms of armaments and ammunition is inadequate and threatens disaster.

Between 5 and 11 August the Governorate issued a number of orders containing instructions for the organisation of the defence by infantry and artillery. These should have been considered within the framework of an overall defence plan, which would indicate the positions of the units and the manner in which their tasks would be carried out. But while the orders of the Supreme Command, building on the Commander-in-Chief's 6 August order, clearly and emphatically defined the task of the 1st Army, the composition of that army and its positions changed several times, so that we cannot speak of a defence plan at that time.

General Latinik wrote in his memoirs that while preparing the defence at the bridgehead he intended to change from, "the previous cordon system to one of deploying in depth, as only that would make it possible to destroy the enemy", and that he was preparing for "a flexible manoeuvre defence." However, we find no indication of that in his orders.



In his work, General Latinik summarised some sentences from his orders of 7 August. They are reminiscent of phrases and platitudes too often misused during the period of retreat, at a time when the reality of combat all too often contradicted the content of these words. On 7 August General Latinik stated:

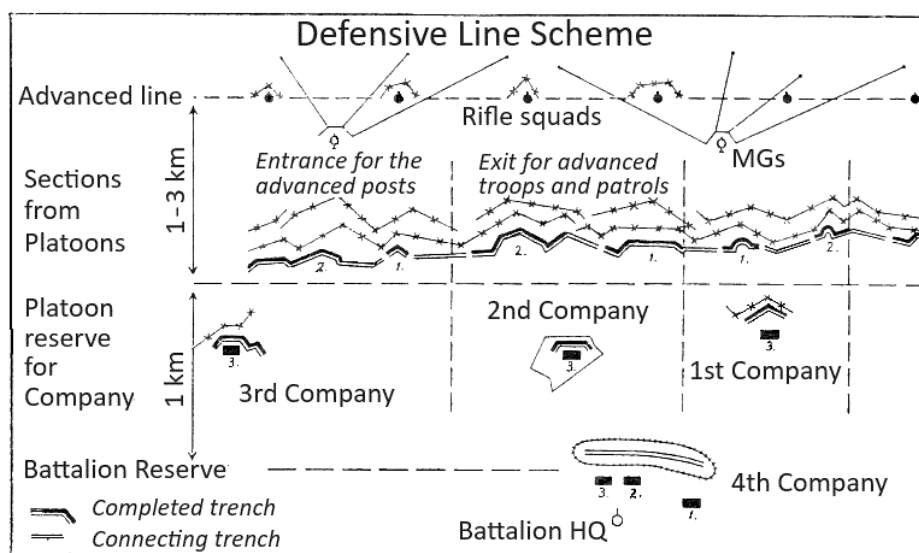
You are to man the outer line immediately in order to repel possible attacks by enemy cavalry. As the basis for organising a defensive action, it is necessary to allocate the largest possible reserves to enable an active defence, which alone can be effective.

All enemy attacks must fail on the indicated outer line, as its technical equipment and artillery endowment are extremely strong, while the deployment of reserves guarantees that the enemy will be repulsed by a counter-attack should he break into our position. For this reason I do not allow anyone under the responsibility of the Commanders to retreat backwards, while those guilty of wilfully leaving the defensive line will be court-martialled. As soon as the front is broken, the troops are to retake their positions.

In the light of the state of affairs at the time, it was hard to speak of unusually strong technical equipment on the line, and the remaining statements also give rise to reservations.

Of greatest importance in the further preparations for the defence was General Latinik's idea to use three lines in the infantry defence, namely: an outpost line, a "machine-gun line" and a defensive line, which was the main position.

We lack General Latinik's written instructions, but a hand-drawn sketch by him has been preserved in a note by Lt-Colonel Bobicki. The rules of defence were as follows:



Sketch 8 : Scheme for the defence

The infantry was to organise a strong line of outposts, which it should defend stubbornly. For this reason, an order from the 11th Division command specified that each outpost was to form a point of resistance for itself. Some of the infantry's machine-guns were to be extended in front of the barbed wire obstacles, forming an "MG line." Undoubtedly, under pressure from the higher commanders, this principle was understood in such a way that a considerable number of machine-guns, and sometimes all of them, were advanced into the foreground.

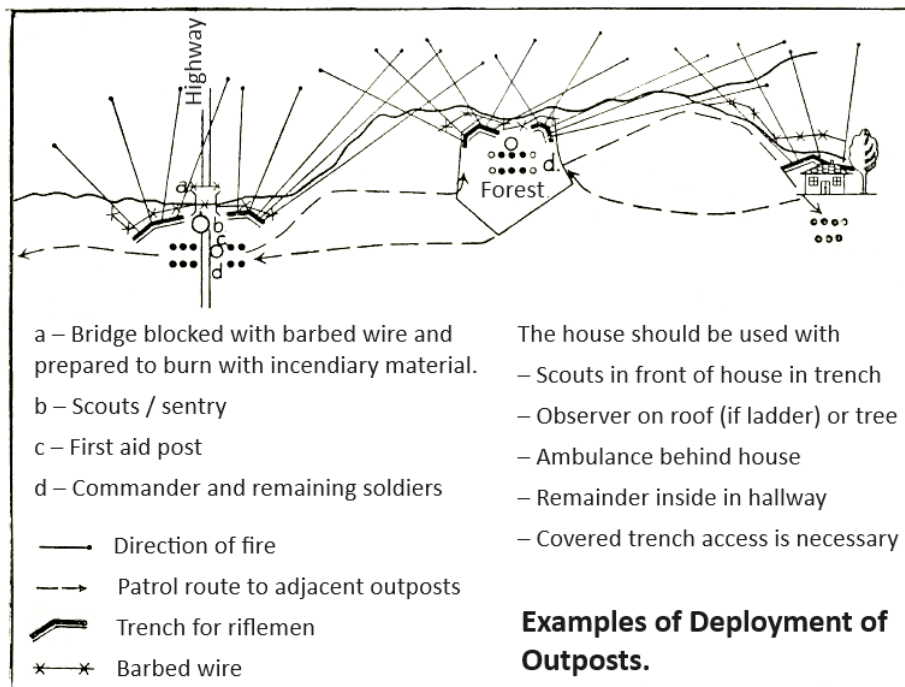
The principle of organising a strong line of outposts with the task of persistent defence and the establishment of a line of machine-guns affected the division of forces. Indeed, these lines absorbed most of the firepower and manpower at their disposal. On the other hand, each commander, from the company upwards, was to keep a quarter of his forces in reserve for counter-attacks.

To what extent these principles could be reconciled will be seen in the battle. At the same time, the higher commanders ordered every point of the organised position to be defended at all costs, so "the garrison of the outposts will defend itself to the last," proclaimed the instructions of the 11th Division, and threatened a field court for any withdrawal. "Each post is to hold its trench even in the event of being flanked," said the

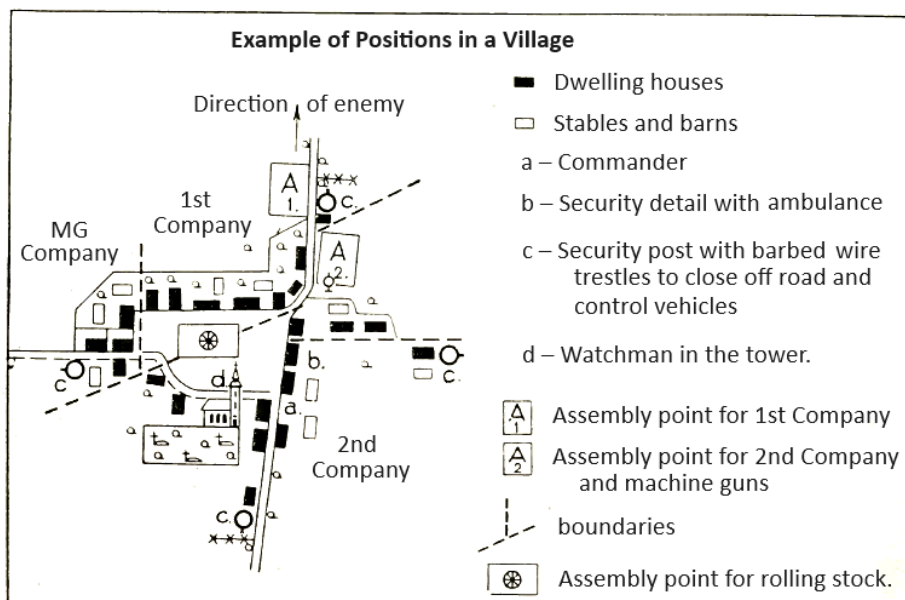


regulations, issued as a supplement to a 13 August order of the 1st Army, and to facilitate that task it should, "surround itself on all sides with obstacles."

It is clear to us that many of these principles came from the experience of positional fighting in the World War. However, we will see to what extent these principles were put into practice on the outskirts of Warsaw, given the given density of the terrain at that time with manpower and firepower, in the chapters on the organisation of the defence in the divisional sectors.



Sketch 9



Sketch 10

The greatest hopes and expectations, however, were placed on the artillery in the forward areas, which was to work actively and support the defence significantly.

For these reasons, it was decided to create the post of Governorate Artillery Commander to ensure that artillery was used as well as possible. This artillery command had a separate telephone exchange, which in time was to receive a direct link with the artillery group commands. In this way, the Governorate artillery command, and later that of the 1st Army, was able to reach the artillery groups directly.



However the centralisation of the artillery command was not as far-reaching as it seems on paper. In the first period of preparation, there was a quite strong desire for centralisation, for understandable reasons. Colonel Szpręglewski had been initially the commander of all the artillery in the Radzymin and Miłosna sectors, but after a few days that command was dissolved, and he was given command of the Radzymin artillery group, reporting to Colonel Jaźwiński. On 7 August General Rodziewicz expressly stated that:

Commanders of the artillery groups are subordinate to the commanders of their given sectors.

By contrast, within the groups and divisions, artillery command was to be centralised. But even that principle had certain deviations. The Governorate Artillery Command on 11 August stated:

Each group commander should remain in close communication with the infantry. He may place one or several batteries at the full disposal of an infantry unit (e.g. a regiment) for a certain specified operation, and immediately after its completion he shall again take command of those batteries.

Two alternative principles emerged when placing the artillery in the front lines. Some commanders wanted to use the artillery fire as far forward as possible, and therefore asked that its positions be placed as close as possible to the first defensive line, even that some of the guns be placed in the trenches. Others were in favour of deepening the defence by placing the batteries in several rows.

In the end the artillery was grouped quite deeply, and some of the batteries even found themselves out of range (that is, they could not reach in front of the first line). An order from the Governorate Artillery Command of 11 August emphasised that, "the artillery should be placed in depth."

Between 7 and 11 August, the artillery command issued several instructions and directions for the artillery. Most of these were drafted by French officers (Colonel Bancelhon) and contained a sort of general summary of the rules and regulations for artillery in defensive operations.

An order of 8 August contained "instructions for the commencement of the activities of the battery", which was limited to a discussion of the first work in a position, i.e. conducting reconnaissance, setting up the position and observation post, and preparing to fire.

On 11 August another order was issued, which elaborated on some of the principles of interaction between artillery and infantry in defence. In points 4, 5 and 6 this order stated:

Each battery and each command post will create a point of resistance, with trenches, barbed wire or entanglements and shelters for men from bullets and shell fragments.

The battery will retreat only when ordered to do so. When surrounded, it will defend itself and fight with all the means at its disposal. When it is deprived of its cannons, its personnel shall muster and, with their officers, fight alongside the infantry.

Following these rules, the artillery will form a series of islands of resistance, that delay the enemy's advance and facilitate counter-attacks.

Each artillery group was to designate batteries to fire on moving targets, which would be authorised to commence observed fire without special order. All other batteries were to fire, "in principle only on the order of the group commander." Nevertheless, they were always to comply with infantry requests and then report back to the artillery group commander. Attention was also given to maintaining communications with the infantry.

Finally, fire concentrations were ordered to be prepared, numbered and their call signals established. For each concentration, the number of shots per gun had to be determined. Finally, the order stated that the amount of artillery and its ammunition supply:

... does not permit the use of barrage fire along the entire length of the front. The only way to remedy this deficiency is to study the terrain in detail, to know the probable attack zones and to train the batteries along the entire length of the front so they have the ability to change targets quickly.



We have already pointed out that the artillery was ordered to be grouped in depth. It was also requested that spare positions be prepared, as well as positions at the rear of the second position in front of Warsaw.

On August 10, with an addendum the next day, orders were issued to co-operate with the infantry in establishing contact with the enemy. The artillery command, taking into account the difficulties that might arise during the arrival of the 1st Army troops into the bridgehead, ordered the bridgehead artillery units to send out liaison units. Those troops were to be sent forward, "as soon as the 1st Army troops approached our first line of fortifications." This order was intended to avoid either a premature or a delayed start to artillery fire.

Once contact was made with the enemy, the furthest advanced platoons and cannons were to fire, forcing the enemy to deploy as far as possible from the Polish positions. Those advanced guns and platoons were to hold their positions as long as possible and only retreat when the enemy troops moved too close and dug in.

Then the rest of the artillery would come to the fore:

During this period the heavy artillery should be used against the enemy artillery. The light artillery is to be used for barrage fire, using flanking fire wherever possible.

However not all of these orders were complied with. In particular, looking forward we will see that guns were not moved up to the first line.



Chapter IV

Organisation of the Defence on the Outskirts Of Warsaw

Zegrze Sector

In the previous chapters we mentioned the projects related to the defence of the Zegrze – Modlin sector. The original concept, laid out in General Sosnkowski's order of 29 July, based the position on the left bank of the Narew River with the bridgeheads at Dębe and Zegrze. A special role was to be played by Zegrze, which, as a sealed bridgehead, was intended to be prepared for an independent defence.

In this section, we will discuss the organisation of the defence of that area, but we warn you in advance that it went through many changes before the final outline of the positions and defensive plan was established. Right at the start the plan we have just mentioned was changed, as General Latinik decided to extend the forward areas of Zegrze and Dębe, advancing the positions to the north.

The Zegrze sector, manned by the 6th Border Rifle Regiment, had previously been subordinate to Colonel Malewicz. On 5 August, by order of the governor, it was placed under Colonel Jaźwiński, commander of the Warsaw group. The sector reached west to Stare Orzechów (exclusive) and east to Wolica (on the left bank of the Narew). The position was to run from Wolica to Serock and then through Stasilas and Fort Dębe to the Narew around Stare Orzechowo.

During those first days, the garrison of the sector did not change much: some artillery arrived, with Lt-Colonel Podonowski taking command. However, the actions up to that point were so modest that it would be an exaggeration to call them an organisation of a defence, as the Zegrze sector was occupied solely by the 6th BRR, which could only post pickets over such a vast distance. That regiment was formed at the beginning of 1920, and has previously served on the German-Polish border. It had eight squadrons, which together gave a total of 25 officers and some 1,300 men. The regiment was armed with Austrian rifles and also had six Maxim machine-guns.

On 6 August there were changes in command, and the sector was entrusted to Rear Admiral Porębski. On 7 August, there was a new arrangement of the Governor's units and from that point onwards the Zegrze sector was directly subordinate to the Governorate. Its boundaries remained unchanged, except for a minor shift in the line of demarcation from Wolica to Arciechów. However, the sector was now reinforced, as Rear Admiral Porębski was given the 7th Reserve Brigade and some artillery, consisting of 16 light guns and 8 heavy guns.

However, the 7th Reserve Brigade had not yet completed its reorganisation, and could not deploy at that time. It was anticipated that by 10 August one regiment of the brigade would be able to take up positions. Aware of this, Porębski issued his first order on 6 August, in which he divided the sector into two sub-sectors. He entrusted the right to Colonel Bogucki, commander of the 6th BRR, with his regiment and a stage battalion. That sub-sector was supported by artillery under the command of Major Trzos, being the 7th and 8th Batteries of the 16th FAR, a platoon of the 5th Battery of the 15th HAR (with 155-mm guns) and a platoon of 152-mm Russian guns. The left sub-sector was manned by the 167th IR, under Lt-Colonel Langner, supported by the 4th and 5th Batteries of the 1st HAR (75-mm guns) and four 152-mm guns, under the overall command of Captain Jankowski. The reserve for the sector remained the 155th IR, a sapper company, and a telegraph company, all under the command of Lt-Colonel Zenkteler, commander of the 7th Reserve Brigade. Until the arrival of the 167th Regiment, the entire sector was to be manned by the 6th BRR, with the stage battalion securing the Narew crossing near Wierzbica.

Thus we can see that in the Zegrze sector, work on the preparation of the defence and the reorganisation of the troops happened simultaneously. This also applied to the artillery, which was also still forming.

On 6 August Lt-Colonel Podonowski, the sector's artillery commander, had *Divizion* 3/16 FAR, (the 7th and 8th Batteries) and the 2nd *Divizion* of the 1st HAR (the 4th and 5th Batteries and 152-mm guns) but only the 3rd *Divizion* was able to take up positions, as the 4th and 5th Batteries did not yet have horses, while placing the 152-mm guns of Lieutenant Dąbrowski Leon posed great difficulties. It should be explained that the officers were only just getting acquainted with these new cannons, and they were relatively late in getting into position around the bridge on the left bank of the Narew (Sketch 11 does not show this).



On 9 August Lt-Colonel Podonowski received the 3rd Battery of the 2nd HAR (75-mm guns) and the 6th Battery of the 15th HAR (75-mm guns), which were in position.

In the Zegrze sector, as we have seen, fortification work was carried out by the Military Official Odrowąż-Pieniążek. We noted that he had lost some time in the previous days due to changes in the route of the positions. However, these changes were not final, as there were still fluctuations in their selection and establishment between 7 and 10 August. On 8 August Rear Admiral Porębski came to the sector and ordered the positions to be moved to the line Wierzbica – Piekietko – Wola Smolana – Fort Dębe.

As a result Odrowąż-Pieniążek interrupted his work on the previous positions, and on 9 August began work in the new one. Meanwhile, on the same day Lt-Colonel Berezowski arrived and ordered the construction of the old positions to resume. Not surprisingly, this double change not only caused a waste of valuable time, but also caused dissatisfaction among the soldiers.

At this time the construction of fortifications in the Zegrze sector was subordinated to Lt-Colonel Berezowski, Head of the 12th Fortification Group, who had been given the task of carrying out further construction in the Modlin – Dębe– Zegrze – Radzymin areas. Berezowski left the existing work managers in Zegrze and Radzymin, adding only an insignificant number of personnel to them. In the end his activity was limited mainly to carrying out works in the Modlin – Orzechowo sector and in Modlin. It is clear that with such an extensive sector, there could be no other solution.

In line with Lt-Colonel Berezowski's order, Military Official Pieniążek took up his old position, assigning the left sector (Orzechowo – Ludwinowo) to Lieutenant Łepkowski, the middle sector to Lieutenant Nowak and the right sector (from the Serock – Zegrze road to the Narew) to Lieutenant Staniszewski. Those officers each received half a company of sappers (Lieutenant Staniszewski half a technical company of the 159th Regiment) and groups of civilian workers.

The progress of the work and the value of the fortifications made was mediocre – there were many difficulties, especially as some of the officers did not know how to do such work efficiently. In addition, there was a shortage of tools and food for the civilian workers. Finally, many of the civilian workers were of little use – brought in their thousands, taken directly from the streets, a lot of them were hungry and unable to do useful physical work, making it impossible to use them as a workforce. Around 12 August, some changes took place, as the leadership of the fortification group left for another sector (past the Warsaw bridgehead). From that point on the construction of fortifications in the Zegrze sector was directly subordinate to the Head of Engineering and Sappers of the 1st Army. On 12 August, new forces were received: the 1st Company of the 8th Sapper Battalion and the 2nd Company of the 21st Battalion arrived, and were used to work on the left sector.

In these last days the burden of work had already fallen mainly on the infantry units, as by this time the troops of the 7th Brigade had taken positions in the sector. Before we now move on to look at the further organisation of the defence, we will become more familiar with that unit.

The 7th Reserve Brigade had been formed at the beginning of 1920. Most of it was made up of Greater Poland²⁰ formations from the former People's Guards, while one regiment was made up of the former Bytom Rifle Regiment. The brigade had three regiments, namely: 155th, 159th and 167th.

It took part in the fighting on the North-eastern Front, initially as part of the Reserve Army and later as part of the 1st Army. After three weeks of retreat, which ruined the brigade, it was withdrawn from the front at the end of July as a worn-out unit.

On 5 August the 7th Brigade arrived in the vicinity of Jabłonna and was quartered in Chotomów, Łajski and Zegrze. It was subordinated to the Governor, with the proviso that it was to remain in reserve for as long as possible during the reorganisation.

That day the Ministry of Military Affairs ordered the 7th Brigade to be reformed into a two-regiment brigade, while the third regiment, the 159th, was ordered to be disbanded. The 155th and 167th Regiments

²⁰ Greater Poland (*Wielkopolska*) is the area around Poznań, Kalisz, Konin, Piła, Ostrów, and Leszno.



remained in the brigade. The 167th regiment was kept due to the fact that it had volunteers from Upper Silesia.

On 10 August, the 7th Brigade command issued a daily order establishing the new composition of the brigade. The 155th Regiment was to receive five march companies as reinforcements into the ranks. The 167th Regiment was to have three battalions: the 1st from the remains of the 167th IR, the 2nd from the 3rd Battalion of the 109th Regiment (which had arrived from Lublin under the command of Lieutenant Laliczyński), and the 3rd from the remains of the disbanded 159th Regiment.

In addition, the brigade had the 7th Reserve Telegraph Company, the 5th Battery of the 15th HAR and other minor staff troops.

After the incorporation of these considerable additions, the brigade was a mixture of different elements in terms of origin, combat value and especially armaments. The brigade's commander, was Lt-Colonel Zenkteler and his chief of staff was Major Borzęcki.

Finally, in the last days before the battle, the 4th Battalion of the 157th Regiment (Major Marszałek), which had previously been operating as part of General Żeligowski's group, arrived at the Zegrze sector having remained intact through the retreat. That battalion remained as the reserve for the sector.

On 10 August, the commander of the 7th Reserve Brigade issued orders directing Lt-Colonel Langner to garrison the section from Wójtostwo (exclusive) to Ludwinowo Zegrzyńskie (exclusive). The 155th IR, on the other hand, was to remain as the reserve, but on 11 August was ordered to carry out a reconnaissance of the Border Rifle positions (Ludwinowo Zegrzyńskie – Rynia).

In execution of the above order the 167th Regiment left Chotomów and arrived at the sector in the evening. The regimental commander had left with the battalion commanders earlier and, having familiarised himself with the positions, issued a battle order the same day.

Lt-Colonel Langner's task was quite difficult. Originally the Dębe bridgehead was to form a separate defensive node, defending the Narew crossing. However, when the Dębe and especially Zegrze bridgeheads were extended and joined together on the right bank of the Narew, the new sector was formed from the left wing of the extended Zegrze bridgeheads. The fundamental task – the defence of the crossing at Dębe, simple as that – remained unchanged.

Langner, taking into account the huge size of the sector and the difficulties of the terrain, divided his forces accordingly. He ordered the left wing to be garrisoned by the 2nd Battalion (Wójtostwo – Fort Dębe), while two companies were to remain as the battalion's reserve in Dębe. The right wing was garrisoned by Lieutenant Lisowski's 3rd Battalion (from the Izbica – Wola Smolana road to Ludwinowo Zegrzyńskie). In the middle of the sector was Lieutenant Peszek's 1st Battalion, which had one company in the fort, while the other garrisoned the section passing through the woods. Two companies of that battalion remained in Dębe as the regiment's reserve. The regimental commander ordered the 1st and 3rd Battalions to build entrenchments, which on the right wing were to bend through the Izbica Manor to the Narew.

During the day of 11 August, the 167th Regiment manned the positions and energetically proceeded to complete the fortifications and organise the defence. There were major problems but Lt-Colonel Langner solved them, trying by all means to get the necessary resources to organise the defence.

Around noon on 11 August, Rear Admiral Porębski gave an order forming a group consisting of four squadrons of border riflemen and a battery, which was to garrison the bridgehead in Wierzbica. The stage battalion, which had so far remained in Wierzbica, was to become part of that group. We will write more about the activities of this group later, but here we will point out that it was given the task of maintaining the bridgehead in Wierzbica and guarding the section between Wierzbica and Strzyżyny.

In connection with this, the commander of the 7th Brigade received the task of manning, with a part of the 155th Regiment, the positions previously occupied by the Border Rifles.

Finally, on 12 August, Rear Admiral Porębski issued another order in which he established the deployments and manning of the sector. This order was probably written with the cooperation of the French officers who



arrived in Zegrze that day as technical advisors. These were Lt-Colonel Aurisse, Major Leroy and Captain Lelaquet.

The staff officers of the sector were from very varied backgrounds. The commander and Lieutenant Rychłowski, of the operations unit, were sailors. The technical advisors were French. The rest of the staff officers, especially in the materiel department, were from of the local Zegrze garrison. Finally, we know that the positions were built by the energetic and forward-thinking Military Official Odrowąż-Pieniążek. The desire of those mentioned above to do the work cannot be denied, but it was understandable that the team could not cope with the task. In the conditions the work was inevitably improvised, and this was evident even in the form of the orders. However, we must point out that Rear Admiral Porębski's deployments ordered on 12 August survived until the end of the battle.

The order also stated that the group's task was to:

To resist all enemy attacks aimed at forcing the Narew River and to continually cover the roads to Dębe, Zegrze and Jabłonna.

Point III of the order, titled "Manoeuvres", laid down the principles of defence, although it was given in such a form that one might think it was a distorted translation from a French text. It stated the following:

The cavalry, keeping in contact with the enemy, will stop his attacks by bringing the attacking forces to the line of resistance held by the infantry, deployed in depth. The cavalry and infantry should maintain communication on the flanks in such a way that the enemy wherever he appears will fall under rifle and machine-gun fire.

Finally, the order established the positions: the first line, already known from the previous description, and the second, which was the positions of the closed bridgeheads of Zegrze and Dębe. After the withdrawal of the Border Rifles from Wierzbica, the regiments of the Reserve Brigade were to receive two squadrons on foot and one on horseback each. The rest of the Riflemen were to remain as the sector reserve, while all the infantry in the sector were to be commanded by Lt-Colonel Zenkteler.

On the morning of 13th August the commander of the 155th Regiment, Major Namysł, garrisoned his portion of the line, reaching Wola Kielpińska on the left wing and Ryni village on the right. The 1st and 3rd Battalions remained where they were, along with the rest in reserve in Borowa Góra, where the regimental command was also positioned. The 9th Company and the 1st and 2nd Rifle Squadrons were in the vicinity of Rynia.

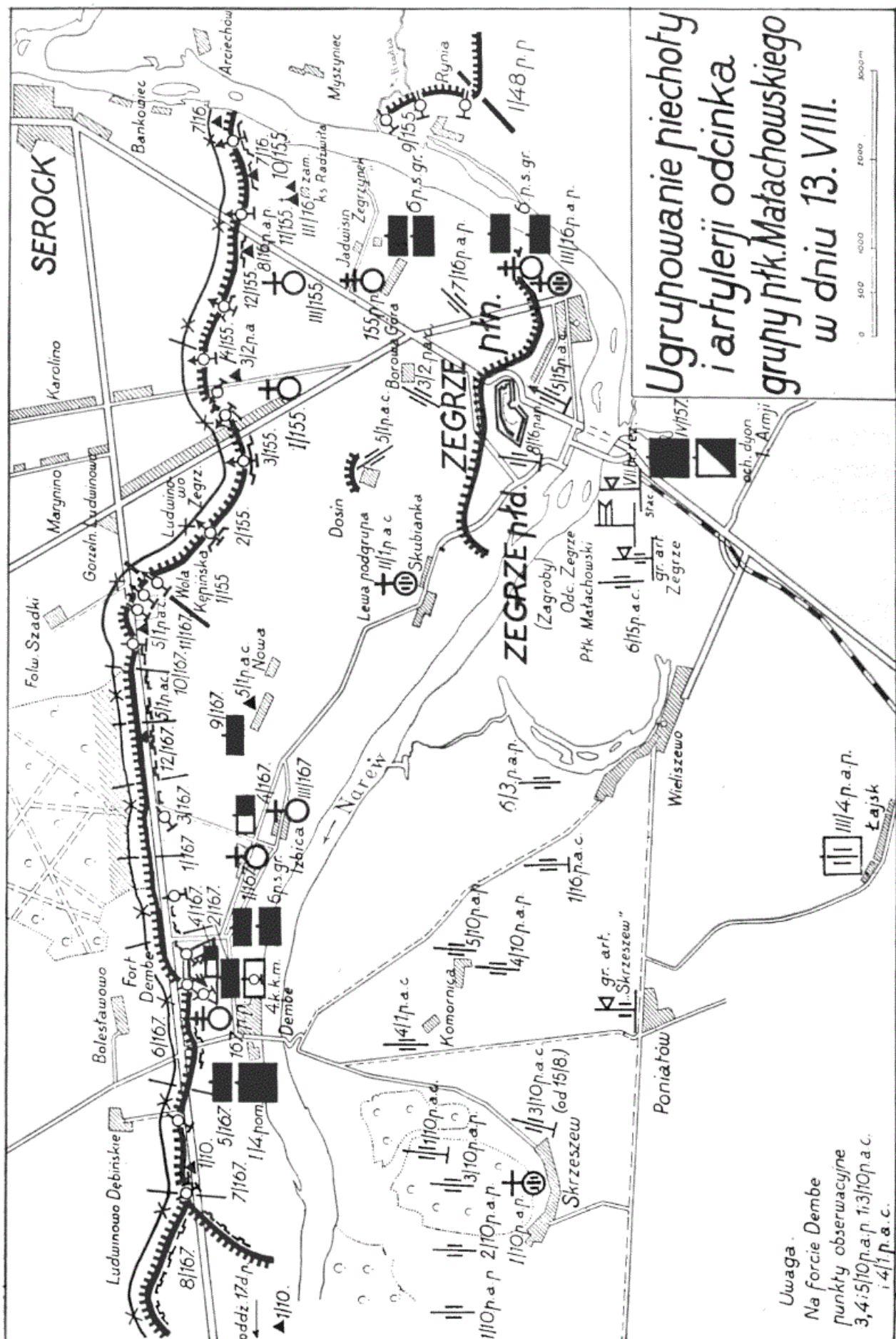
As a result of the change in the demarcation line, the 167th Regiment's section was reduced, which allowed Lt-Colonel Langner to thicken the line of the most dangerous portion, running through the woods. At this time the 1st Battalion of Captain Klementowski's Pomeranian Regiment joined the 167th Regiment, and was used as a reserve behind the left wing of the section. On 12 August, Lt-Colonel Langner received two companies of sappers to complete the construction of positions and, at his request, to prepare the bridge for burning. The final positions of the 7th Brigade are shown in Sketch 11.

The artillery of the Zegrze section organised itself and increased gradually; the previously mentioned batteries generally remained at their positions.

On 12 August, the 1st Army artillery command ordered the artillery of the 10th Division and other batteries to take up positions in the Zegrze section, forming the Skrzyszew Artillery Group. However, not all the batteries that the order enumerated arrived in the sector, as some were used elsewhere. In the end, the Skrzyszew Artillery Group, constituting the artillery in direct support of the 167th regiment, consisted of the 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th and 5th Batteries of the 10th FAR (the 2nd Battery had only three guns, and the 4th only two), the 1st Battery of the 10th HAR (105-mm guns) and the 3rd Battery of the HAR (155-mm guns).

In addition to those mentioned, the 1st Battery of the 16th HAR (105-mm guns) had arrived earlier. The location of the battery positions and observation posts is shown in Sketch 11.





Sketch 11: Deployment of Małachowski Group on 13 August (Some place names are in the German forms)



Originally General Ledóchowski was to command both the Modlin and Zegrze artillery groups, with his HQ being in Modlin, and then later Jabłonna. In the end, however, the Army Artillery command ordered General Ledóchowski to take command of the Zegrze sector artillery (the Skrzyszew and Zegrze Artillery Groups), and he was to receive instructions from the new commander of the sector, Colonel Małachowski. In fact, General Ledóchowski arrived in Zegrze rather late, on 14 August, and so it is difficult to speak of him commanding the whole of the Zegrze sector's artillery.

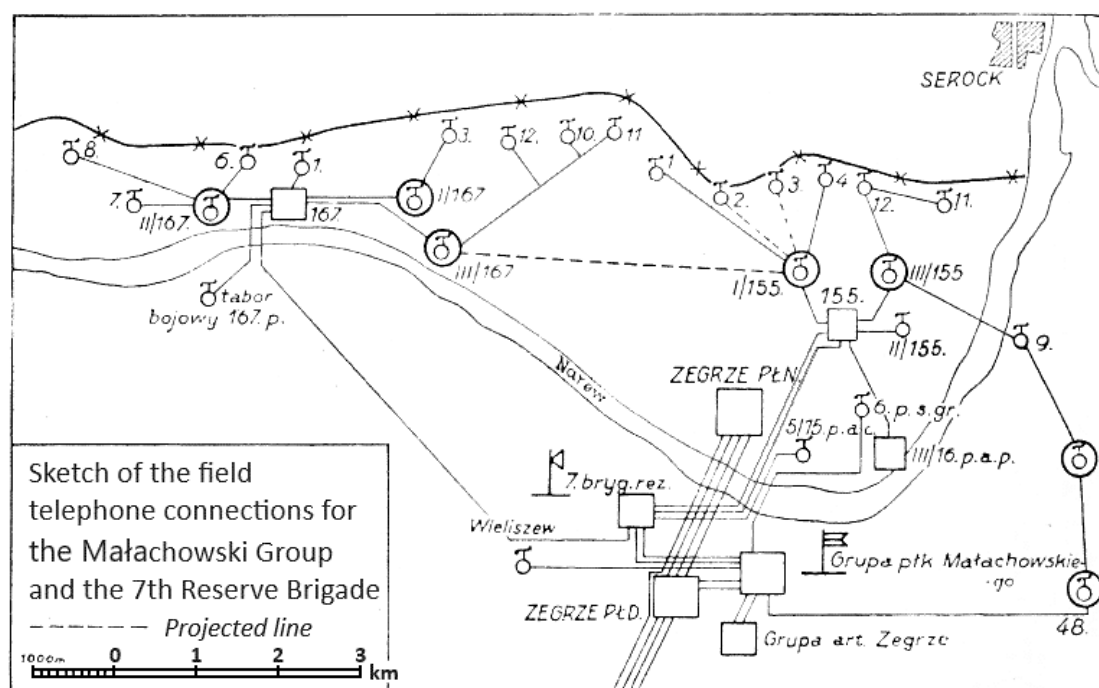
On 13 August Rear Admiral Porębski left, and command was taken over by Colonel Małachowski, who had recently served as commander of the 10th Division. Lt-Colonel Lichtarowicz was appointed his chief of staff.

Zegrze was a communications training centre, and we have previously noted that the Zegrze garrison consisted of the 1st Telegraph School Battalion and the Communications Cadet School. On 1 August those units were given the task of extending and maintaining the existing network of fixed connections in connection with the organisation of the defence. They did work on the following lines: Radzymin – Fort Benjaminów – Zegrze, Benjaminów – Żałubice, Orzechowo – Dębe – Serock and Wierzbica – Serock.

On 4 August, Zegrze had the following connections: Zegrze North – Serock (two wires), Zegrze South – Benjaminów (two wires), Zegrze – Jadwisin – Serock (1 wire), Zegrze – Dębe, and Modlin – Dębe – Serock and Benjaminów – Rynia.

This was the skeleton of the later network of the Zegrze sector, based on a route of fixed links, supplemented in some places by new lines. However, one should not look for any guiding thought in this network, related to the concept of the defence plan, as we know that was organised much later. Soon, however, due to the ordered evacuation, the communications troops departed into the country and further work was carried out by 2nd-Lieutenant Przygodzki's unit, formed from the local Zegrze telegraph company, which had two officers, 18 NCOs and 161 privates.

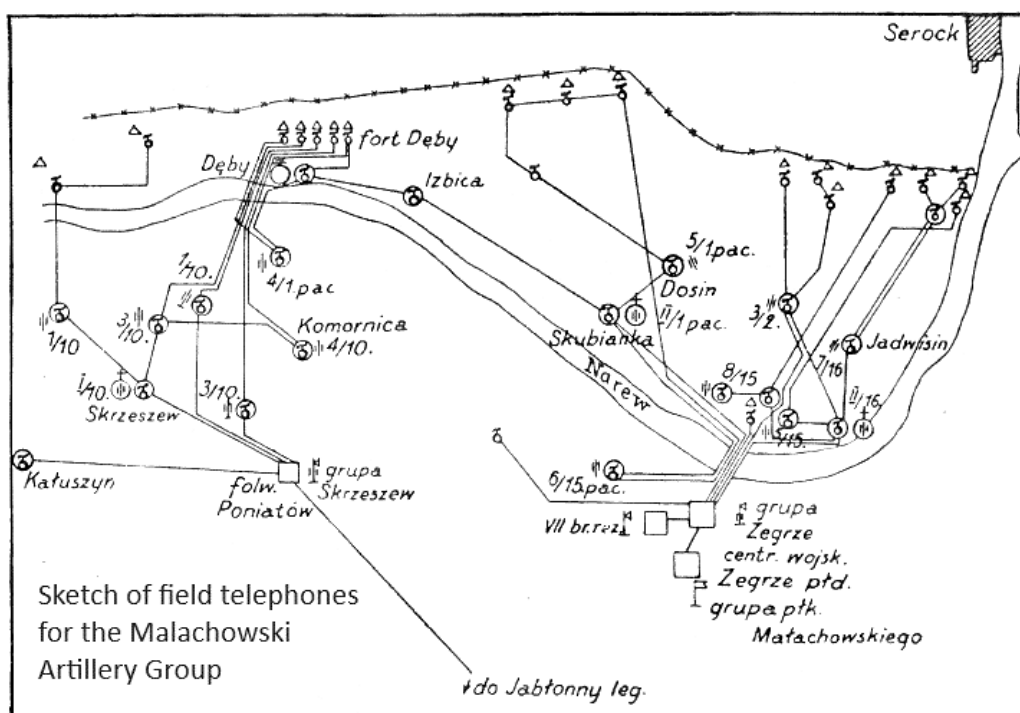
On 6 August, 2nd-Lieutenant Przygodzki took over as head of communications of the Zegrze sector. On the same day, he ordered the connection of all the lines to the military headquarters in Zegrze South. A few days later, the 7th Reserve Telegraph Company, which was building connections for its brigade, began work in the sector. 2nd-Lieutenant Przygodzki had a Morse apparatus at the HQ, operated by a civilian clerk, and on 13 August he set up a Hughes apparatus.²¹ The command and combat and artillery networks are shown in Sketches 12 and 13.



Sketch 12

²¹ The Hughes was an early form of teleprinter, which used a telegraph network.





Sketch 13

Radzymin Sector

The 11th Infantry Division was a reformation of the 2nd Polish Rifle Division of General Haller's Army.²² After reorganisation the Division consisted of three regiments, but the 21st Brigade command was more or less the divisional infantry command. It was made up of the 46th, 47th and 48th Border Rifle Regiments, originally the 4th, 5th and 6th Polish Rifle Regiments. The division also included the 2nd *Divizion* of the 4th Horse Rifle Regiment, previously the 2nd *Divizion* of the 1st Light Horse Rifle Regiment, later to become the 2nd *Divizion* of the 4th Dragoon Regiment, as well as the 11th Sapper Battalion and the 11th Telegraph Company.

During the Russian offensive in May 1920 the division went to the Northeastern front and participated in the June counter-attack, receiving commendations from higher commands. In mid-June, the division completed the demobilisation of its oldest men, which resulted in a significant reduction in the fighting value of the troops, as the reinforcements from the reserve battalions (mostly conscripts) had not yet been sufficiently seasoned.

In that form the division shared the fate of the other units of the 1st Army, which were hit by the blow of the three Russian Armies on 4 July. From that time on the division lost its combat value, wearing out rapidly in every respect, and by the end of July it was mentally and physically broken, causing it to be withdrawn from the front.

On its arrival at Ostrów Mazowiecki, the division's mustered strength on 1 August was: 175 officers and 4,524 privates, while the combat contingent was: 75 officers, 1,959 privates and 69 cavalry. It should be noted that a large number of soldiers from the camp for fugitives and deserters from the 1st Army were incorporated into the ranks at that time.

The division also included the staff of the 21st IB, the staff of the 11th Artillery Brigade and the 11th Field Artillery Regiment, the staff of the 1st *Divizion*²³ of the 11th FAR, with the 2nd and 3rd Batteries. The 11th Sapper Battalion had the battalion command and one company. On 1 August the division's strength was

²² From the French Army in WWI, the so-called "Blue" Army.

²³ The text has 2nd *Divizion* here, but that contradicts the battery numbers and the attached order of battle.



decreased as the 1st Battalion of the 46th Regiment was sent to General Wroczyński's group, remaining away from the division for about a month.

On 5 August, the division arrived near Warsaw and lodged in the area of Nieporęt – Kąty Grodziskie – Brzeziny. On the same day, the division was visited by General Henrys and then on 6 August by General Latinik, who announced that the troops would soon deploy to the Warsaw bridgehead.

The poor state of the division must have made a strong impression on the generals, as was evidenced by the letter of General Henrys and the account of General Latinik, who states:

Upon my review I found it to be of low value, because depression and doubt were evident in the lower officers and privates. The middle and higher ranks were not up to their tasks and the staff were unable to repair these relationships.

This led to a number of fundamental changes in command. The previous commander of the division, General Ledóchowski, handed over command to Colonel Jaźwiński.²⁴ Lt-Colonel Kohutnicki became Chief of Staff, replacing Lt-Colonel Bobkowski, while on 4 August General Latinik took Major Mysłowski, head of the division's Operations and Information Branch to the Governorate.

There were also changes in the regimental and brigade commanders. The previous brigade commander, Colonel Łukoski, returned to his former command of the 48th Regiment, and he was replaced by Colonel Wędziagolski, a brigade commander from the shattered 2nd Lit-Bel Division. The 46th Regiment was taken over by Colonel Krzywobłocki and the 47th Regiment by Lieutenant Colonel Szczepan. Major Wolk-Laniewski and Captain Krzyżewicz were assigned as battalion commanders.

These changes of command were made on the recommendations of the former division commanders Generals Ledóchowski and Gąsiecki, but the choice of new commanders was also rather random, as there were officers among them who had come from other worn-out units, and also those who had not yet been on the Polish front. These changes were aimed at extracting the appropriate combat value from the division. Colonel Jaźwiński stated in later reports that he had tried to break the defensive mood of the division, but claimed (after the battle) that this was impossible, as "there were officers left in the regiments who constantly retreated with their units."

Colonel Jaźwiński, after taking over the division, referred rather harshly to the old officers and at one of his briefings threatened them with reprisals if they, as he said at the time, "continued to run away." This statement by the new commander had a depressing effect on many of the officers.

During the period of reorganisation, the division received quite a large influx: from 1 to 13 August a total of 49 officers and 4,786 privates arrived. This was, by the standards of the time, a substantial complement – one that that few divisions received. Most of these additions were volunteer, march, reserve or emergency companies. Some were incorporated into the division as entire units, namely: the 1st Battalion of the 120th Regiment, which went to the 48th Regiment; the 1st Battalion of the 104th Regiment and the 1st Battalion of the 109th Regiment, which went to the 46th Regiment; and the 1st Warsaw Guard Battalion, which went to the 47th Regiment. However, two of those battalions were to leave the division on 10 August.

The value of these reinforcements in terms of training and morale varied, as besides the march companies – with one week's training – there were also units composed of veterans or trained volunteers.

It had weapons brought from France in 1919, namely French rifles, cannons and machine-guns. During the period of the retreat the division had lost quite a lot of its machine-guns and, by the time of its arrival near Warsaw, it also had many other shortages in armament, which was worsened with the incorporation of replacements who were inadequately equipped with weapons. Not all the shortages were covered, as is evidenced by the fact that about a thousand bayonets were still missing. In the process of making up for the shortage of arms there was a shuffling of rifles of various origins in the division. The division had French and English rifles (in the sentry battalion), while machine-guns were Hotchkiss, Maxim and a few Schwarzlose. It also had five 37-mm cannons and ammunition for them – but these could not always be

²⁴ General Ledóchowski was appointed commander of the artillery group.



fired as the sights were damaged or missing. Eventually sufficient arms were given to the division to make up for the shortfalls, but the variety made the matter of ammunition supply difficult.

The division's wagons were in three columns, Nos. 614, 116 and 140, and a veterinary unit. These were sent to the left bank of the Vistula on 10 August. They did not take part in supplying the division, as they remained in Skierniewice and Łowicz after the retreat.

Of the hospital formations, the division had only the 604th hospital unit, as the field hospital was out of action, having lost all its equipment during the retreat. The head of the hospital unit (at Pustelnik) was Lieutenant Dr Jan Rybicki.

Before relinquishing his command, General Ledóchowski issued two orders on 6 August. One was more of a proclamation to the troops, exhorting them to realise the importance of the battles of the upcoming days. He wrote:

Soldiers! I call upon you for the last time – come to your senses. Do not stain the fame of the once great division, famous for their excellent offensive in Ukraine in 1919 and the June offensive on Polotsk.

The second order contained various details, repeated from the Governor's order, and so the actual orders for defence were given by Colonel Jaźwiński.

Colonel Jaźwiński had favourable working conditions, if only due to the fact that he had participated from the very start in the preparations for the defence on the outskirts of Warsaw, and thus had the opportunity to study the issues at hand. He had once been commander of the engineer regiment of the First Corps East, so he could make use of his experience in the construction of fortifications – all the more so as the manager of works in his sector had recently been his subordinate as head of the Military Geographical Institute. Colonel Szpręglewski, commander of the sector's artillery, had cooperated with Colonel Jaźwiński since the first days on the bridgehead, and was known to him from the First Corps East. Finally, it should be added that Colonel Jaźwiński had commanded a brigade at the front in 1919.

After taking command of the division, Jaźwiński issued an order on 7 August, in which he established the division's deployment in the sector. The organisation of the command was based on the French model, as all of the infantry was given to the commander of the 21st Brigade, while all of the artillery, centralised within the division, was initially commanded by Colonel Ładziński and eventually by Colonel Szpręglewski.

We see no clear guiding idea in the positioning, as all the regiments were all placed in the line, each with a more or less equal sized section to defend. On the other hand, Colonel Jaźwiński's orders establish some principles of defence with a strong influence from General Latinik's ideas, discussed before. We find a reflection of these principles and an elaboration of them in the divisional "Instructions for the defence and manner of defending the lines of resistance", which stated:

I. *Observation*. Rule: 3/4 in the first line and 1/4 in the reserves. The reserves for each company – battalion – regiment are to carry out independent counter-attacks if the main line is broken. The command post is to be with the reserve.

II. *Defence Method*: a) Outposts are to be placed at a distance of 1,000-1,200 paces from the main line of defence.

Each outpost is to be strongly dug in and hard-wired – providing a point of resistance by itself – positioned so that:

(i) the crew can see both neighbouring outposts – visual communication by day – patrols by night,

(ii) can support both neighbouring outposts (left and right) at night. The men of the outpost line will defend it to the last. Any outpost commander who retreats, driven more by fear than necessity, will be subjected to a field court.

Crew displaced from the outpost line will retire to the MG line – thus strengthening the latter.



(b) A machine-gun line will be at 400-600 paces from the main line.

Single machine-gun are to be in dug in positions 400-600 paces between two outposts – covering the retreat of the crew from the outpost line – and defending the access to the main defensive line – reinforced by the displaced crew from the outpost line.

(c) The main line of defence will be manned as point I. Counter-attacks are carried out by the commander in reserve – without waiting for an order to do so.

The objectives of (i) and (ii) – in cooperation with the artillery – are to:

1) Obstruct the enemy's approach to the main defensive line for as long as possible.

2) To force the enemy to deploy, and thus to show his forces and intentions – which will facilitate the preparation of a possible counter-attack.

The implementation of these principles varied and we will look at them later, but in any case, the principle of maintaining the outpost line as the first defensive position was highlighted. The battle was to be fought on the three lines mentioned. Colonel Jaźwiński highlighted this in a later report in these words:

I ordered that the defence on the outpost line and the reserve line should be fierce on our part, reinforcing the strength of the soldiers' resistance with the belief that the division's reserves would eventually counter-attack to repel the advancing enemy.

The basic order on the basis of which the organisation of the defence proceeded was as follows :

Command of the 11th Infantry Division
Operations Branch

7 August 1920

Operational Order No. 51.

Part I.

I. Combat activity continues on the whole of the North-eastern Front. In the area of Brest-Litovsk a vigorous counter-attack forced the enemy out of Terespol, after which our troops seized the railway bridge over the Bug River. From Brest to the mouth of the Nurzec, a successful counter-attack to regain the Bug line is developing. North of Janów the enemy was driven back to the northern bank of the Bug. Partial success was achieved by the enemy by driving our units from Seroczyn in the direction of Sokołów. On the section between the Bug and Narew Rivers the enemy has harassed the bridgehead at Małkinia with reconnaissance units. Strong attacks on Ostrołęka were successfully repulsed.

II. For the defence of the capital, the Radzymin Sector has been ordered to be garrisoned by the 11th Infantry under the command of Colonel Jaźwiński in Marki. The line runs from Leśniakowizna through Wołomin – Wiktorów – Dybów – Ruda to Arciechów (exclusive). On the right wing it borders the Miłosna Sector under the command of General Falewicz with his HQ in Rembertów. On the left wing it meets the Zegrze Sector under the command of Rear Admiral Porębski with his HQ in Zegrze.

III. In execution of the above order:

The division's sector is divided into 3 subdivisions:

(a) The right subsector (Kobyłka) from Leśniakowizna (inclusive) to Helenów will be manned by the 47th Border Rifle Regiment, with the subsector command in Kobyłka.

b) The middle subsector (Radzymin) from Helenów up to and including Łoś (exclusive), will be manned by the 46th BRR, with its HQ at Radzymin Station.

c) The left subsector (Benjaminów), from Łoś (inclusive) to Arciechów, will be garrisoned by the 48th BRR, with its HQ in Fort Benjaminów.

The commander of the 21st IB will take command of the entire infantry in the sector of the 11th ID with his HQ at Struga Station.



IV. Cavalry: The command of the 2nd *Division*, 4th Horse Rifle Regiment will on 8 August send one platoon to each of the 46th, 47th, and 48th BRRs of the 21st IR, as messengers. The rest of the squadron will be placed at the disposal of the divisional command at Marki.

The Combined half-squadron of the 1st Light Horse Regiment will continue reconnaissance in the direction of Wyszków, with the aim of establishing contact with the enemy, then maintaining it without interruption, reporting to the division command.

V. Artillery: Nine light batteries and two heavy, under the command of Colonel Szpręglewski, in Marki, will be sent a separate order.

VI. Divisional reserve: One battalion of the 47th BRR and the 11th Sapper Battalion are in reserve near the Struga Railway Station. One battalion of the 47th BRR will be in Wólka Radzyńska.

VII. Line of demarcation of subsectors:

(a) Between Miłosna and Kobyłka subsectors: the localities of Kolno, Majdan, Leśniakowizna, Ossów, Kobyłka, Ząbki, Elznerów. All for Kobyłka inclusive.

(b) Between Kobyłka and Radzymin subsectors: the localities of Dobczyn, Helenów, Janków Nowy, Pułko, Pustelnik. All for Radzymin inclusive.

(c) Between Radzymin and Benjamin subsectors: the localities of Teodorów, Łoś, Aleksandrów, Zabłocie. All for Benjaminów inclusive.

(d) Between Benjaminów and the Zegrze subsector: the localities of Stawinoga, Arciechów, Rynia, Białobrzegi, Nieporęt, Kąty, Nowo-Dwory. All for Zegrze inclusive.

VIII. Man the inner line immediately, in order to repel possible attacks by enemy cavalry. As the basis for organising the defence, allocate the largest possible reserves to enable active defence, which is the only effective form. All attacks must fail on the indicated outer line, as its technical equipment and artillery endowment are exceptionally strong, while the deployment of reserves guarantees the enemy's repulse by counter-attack in case of his incursion into our position. For this reason I do not allow anyone under the level of Commander to retreat, while those guilty of wilfully leaving the defensive line will be court-martialled. In the event of a breakthrough of the front, the troops will, in principle, retake their positions.

IX. Communications: The head of the communications service, together with the communications officers of the 21st IB, will establish communications links from the 21st IB to the subsector commands and the divisional reserve. In addition they will run from the subsector commands to the battalions in the first line.

X. Due to the fact that the work still leaves much to be desired in the first line in terms of technical means, it is necessary to use all manpower to prepare it for defence immediately after taking your stations, at the same time preparing the positions for the reserves. Exact sketches of the positions of units, as well as a detailed report on the state of the technical works at the moment the sector is manned, will be submitted to the Division Headquarters by 0900 on 11 August.

XI. Situation reports containing changes in: 1) the enemy situation, 2) your situation (major changes in tactical formation and order of battle, changes in numbers and staffing of higher commands), 3) the morale and physical condition of the men, 4) the material and communication situation, 5) the condition of the roads, weather and miscellaneous, should be sent by the units to the Division Headquarters at 17:00 daily.

Part II.

I. Ammunition: For each battery 120 rounds per field gun, 80 per medium gun and 60 per heavy gun.

For rifles, 120 rounds per soldier: for MGs, 4,000. Ammunition depot is Pustelnik Station.



II. The food warehouse for the Radzymin sector is at C. U. G. Praga. The food depot will be organised in a separate order.

III. The forward hospital is at Marki School. Evacuation of the sick and wounded will be through the sorting office for the wounded and sick at the Brest railway station. The Hospital is in Górczewska Street.

IV. Attached to this order is "Instructions as to manning and the method of defence" with two diagrams.

Chief of Staff

Bobkowski

Lt-Colonel of the General Staff

Jaźwiński

Colonel and Division Commander

The above order was repeated verbatim by the commander of the 21st Brigade on 8 August, except there was a change in the division and brigade reserves. The 47th Regiment was to send one and a half battalions to the Struga area, the 48th Regiment was to assign a battalion to Wólka Radzyńska, and finally one and a half battalions and two companies of the 47th were to be the brigade's reserve in the area north of Pustelnik (Triangle Road).

Thus we see that quite strong divisional and brigade reserves were created, and they were placed in a central position so that they could be used in any direction. The disposition of the reserves, even though all the regiments were in the line, was not a problem as the division had received four security battalions from the Governor, which were retained in their entirety.

However, not many hours elapsed before major changes occurred, caused by the loss of the 1st Battalion of the 120th IR and the 1st Battalion of the 109th IR. Colonel Jaźwiński's natural impulse was to send a request that the Governor address the matter with the Ministry of Military Affairs, which had issued the order. In the end, however, even with the support of the Front commander, the order was not changed, as other divisions also had to be replenished.

However, the withdrawal of the two battalions had a strong impact on the organisation of the defence. Firstly Colonel Jaźwiński had to give Battalion 1/104 to the 46th BRR, and he ordered it to be used to garrison the positions vacated by Battalion 1/109. To replace Battalion 1/104, the brigade commander was given Battalion 2/47, which was to be stationed at Struga. After these changes had been made, one and a half battalions remained as the division's reserve, while a battalion remained as the brigade's reserve. The anticipated use of these battalions was limited to the indication of their probable directions of counter-attacks, namely: the battalion from Wólka Radzyńska would be used in the areas of Dybów – Ruda – Siwek, while the troops from Struga would be used in the areas of Leśniakowizna – Wołomin – Helenów. Apart from these rather vague indications, no more details have been found in the documents and reports.

However, Colonel Jaźwiński hoped that he would eventually receive reinforcements that would make it possible to create stronger reserves. He addressed the Army command about that, which promised that one of the arriving divisions would relieve a regiment of the 11th Division. It is very possible that Colonel Jaźwiński, relying on this, decided to reduce his reserve, as on 13 August he gave the 48th Regiment its 3rd Battalion, which had been the division reserve, leaving only a battalion in brigade reserve and two companies in division reserve.

The details given represent the entire work of the 11th ID command in preparing the defence. In the final days before the battle, the division issued two more orders, which changed nothing fundamental. It is difficult to speak of a defence plan, since the division commander stated in a later report that, as a result of the two battalions being taken away from him, his defence plan had been "ruined." The greater evil, however, was the division commander's expectation that he would receive reinforcements.

The Radzymin Artillery Group was organised by Colonel Ładziński (201st FAR commander), to whom the artillery commander of the Warsaw group subordinated the batteries of the 3rd and 4th Artillery Sectors.



The 3rd Sector had the 4th Battery of the 20th FAR, the Emergency Battery of the 1st Legion FAR, the 155-mm positional battery and the 1st and 2nd Batteries of the 201st FAR, under Major Rómmel.

The 4th Sector received the 1st, 2nd and 3rd Batteries of the 20th FAR and a 120-mm battery, commanded by Colonel Maluszycki. These batteries formed the nucleus of an artillery group, which initially operated in the sector of the "Combined" Regiment and then in the sector of the 11th Division.

Colonel Ładziński organised himself a modest staff, which included Lieutenants Łobanowski, Godlewski and Hettlinger.

On 7 August, changes took place due to the new arrangement of the Governorate artillery, and Colonel Ładziński took command of the 3rd Radzymin Artillery Group, consisting of the batteries listed above, as well as the 2nd and 3rd Batteries of the 11th FAR. The Radzymin and Miłosna Artillery Groups were subordinate to Colonel Szpręglewski, who was to command the whole of the artillery in the Warsaw bridgehead.

In this line-up, Colonel Ładziński's batteries found themselves in the sector of the 11th Division, which had manned its positions on 8 August, and so, in view of the new infantry grouping, there were changes in the artillery positions.

On 8 August Colonel Ładziński issued an order forming artillery subgroups, whose areas of operation coincided with those of the infantry regiments.

The artillery command within the 11th Division was centralised – all artillery was subordinate to the group commander, who gave orders to the subgroup commanders. The subgroup commanders were ordered to work with the relevant infantry regiments, and we note in advance that this co-operation encountered no difficulties.

The Left Artillery Subgroup (Benjaminów) was given to Colonel Maluszycki, previously commander of the 4th Artillery Sector, retaining the batteries he had. The Middle Subgroup was commanded by Major Rómmel, former commander of the 3rd Sector, who surrendered the 1st and 2nd Batteries of the 201st FAR to the newly created Right Artillery Subgroup. That last subgroup was taken over by Captain Osmólski, who initially had the batteries of the 201st FAR, and soon after the 2nd and 3rd Batteries of the 11th FAR.

The order from Colonel Ładziński also established the positions and firing directions of the batteries, which generally remained unchanged until the start of the battle.

Looking at the Radzymin Artillery Group, it is noticeable that it included the artillery commands of the 11th Division, namely the 11th Artillery Brigade and 11th FAR. The commander of the 11th Artillery Brigade, Colonel Mansch, was put under the command of Colonel Szpręglewski, and when Szpręglewski took command of the Radzymin Artillery Group Mansch left for the Governorate artillery command, where he prepared plans for the use of artillery in the Praga positions. The command of the 11th FAR was also not fully utilised. In the meantime, however, Colonel Ładziński's sparse staff had to put in a lot of effort to cope with their task, especially in organising technical communications. Colonel Ładziński was mostly in the field, personally inspecting the work of the battery commanders, and would rectify any deficiencies noted by verbal or written orders.

On 9 August the Governorate artillery command disbanded Colonel Szpręglewski's "operational command", moving him to become commander of the Radzymin Artillery Group. On 10 August, Colonel Szpręglewski arrived with his staff and took command, but until 12 August Colonel Ładziński remained as Szpręglewski's deputy, and gave orders as if he were the commander. There was a certain division of labour, as Colonel Ładziński dealt with the batteries that were already in position, while Colonel Szpręglewski's staff carried out further organisational work. Szpręglewski's staff consisted of several officers, namely: operations officer Lieutenant Kreutz, communications officer Cadet Zoll, and Lieutenants Masłowski and Wozniak. The command was stationed in an old thread factory in Marki.

Colonel Szpręglewski's co-operation with Colonel Jaźwiński did not present any difficulties: Colonel Szpręglewski clearly stated that there was no difference of opinion between him and Colonel Jaźwiński regarding the use of the artillery.



But in spite of the division of responsibilities, it was not possible to completely overcome the difficulties that arose, especially in the last days of the preparations for the defence.

During 10-12 August, Colonel Ładziński issued a number of orders, sent out instructions issued by the Governorate artillery command to the commanders, and sent the subgroups lists of targets for individual batteries.

At the same time he reinforced the Right Artillery Subgroup with the 2nd and 3rd Batteries of the 11th Heavy Artillery *Divizion* and the 7th Battery of the 11th FAR. On 10 August an order was issued to determine the composition of the subgroups, as well as the positions and firing directions of the batteries.

In the evening of 12 August, Colonel Ładziński, having received news that the enemy was approaching the zone of the 46th Regiment, ordered the batteries to be on alert. This was one of his last orders, as the next day he took command of the Right Subgroup.

The days of 12 and 13 August were a critical moment in the artillery preparations. The battle had already begun and the artillery should have commenced vigorous activity, as the orders stated. However at the time the Radzymin Artillery Group staff was crushed by the burden of organisational work. In addition, it received the artillery of the 1st Lit-Bel Division,²⁵ which it had to deploy into position. The execution of this task should not have presented great difficulties since, as we know from the previous chapters, the Governorate artillery command had ordered a survey of positions for the batteries of the 1st Army. In reality, however, the opposite was the case.

On 13 August, i.e. on the first day of the battle, an order from the command of the 3rd Radzymin Artillery Group, signed by Colonel Szpręglewski, went out distributed the arriving batteries.

- The Left Subgroup received Batteries 5/9 FAR, 6/9 FAR, 8/1 Lit-Bel FAR and 2/13th HAR.
- The Middle Subgroup received Batteries 1/1 Lit-Bel, 2/1 Lit-Bel, 3/1 Lit-Bel, and 7/1 Lit-Bel.
- The Right Subgroup received Battery 3/13 HAR.

In addition, Colonel Szpręglewski announced the positions of other expected batteries, which were to be positioned behind the second line:

- The Left Subgroup was to receive Battery 1/8 HAR and 8/4 FAR;
- the Middle Subgroup was to get Battery 3/8 HAR and 10/13 FAR;
- the Right Subgroup was to have Battery 9/4 FAR, and 5/201 and 6/201 FAR.

The Radzymin Artillery Group therefore had thirteen batteries already in position, nine on their way to take up positions on 13 August, and seven more expected.

In the arrangement of the positions, a strong tendency to group the artillery in several echelons became apparent. The earliest batteries were assigned to the defence of the first defensive line. Some of the Lit-Bel batteries had already been placed (in the Left Subgroup) in front of the second line, while the command of Battery 2/13 HAR was reserved for the group commander. Theoretically speaking, this second echelon should have been available for general action artillery, while the batteries in front would supply direct support. Finally, the seven extra expected batteries were assigned to positions at the rear of the second line, and the commander would normally expect to form a proper general action group from those batteries.

But when considering the final positions of the guns, we need to remember that unfortunately many of the orders were not carried out. In practice the Radzymin Artillery Group entered the battle still unorganised. No emphasis was placed on the need to hurry the Lit-Bel artillery to take its positions, then some of the batteries did not go to the planned positions, and most of the expected batteries did not arrive at all. As a result only thirteen batteries were ready to fire on 13 August.

²⁵ The batteries of the 1st Lit-Bel FAR are noted as 19 p.a.p. on the maps, using its formal name.



List of battery targets for Group 3 Radzymin

Number 1

Number	Name of Objective	Batteries									
		1/20 FAR	2/20 FAR	3/20 FAR	A/120	1 Emerg.	B/155	4/20 FAR	1/201 FAR	2/201 FAR	2/11 FAR
1	Myszyniec	1	1								
2	Wincentów	1	1		1						
3	Załużbice east	1	1		1						
4	Załużbice west	1	1		1						
5	Wolice	1	1								
6	Trzciana	1	1		1						
7	Teresin	1	1		1						
8	Sokołówek	1	1	1	1						
9	Cisie		1	1	1						
10	Teodorów	1		1	1						
11	Łoś			1	1	1					
31	Forest Road	1		1	1						
32	Końaków			1	1						
33	Guzowatka			1	1	1					
34	Zawady			1	1	1					
35	Bridge			1	1	1					
36	Jaktory (Manor, near Chajęty)			1	1						
37	Bridge					1	1	1			
38	Dybow					1	1	1			
39	Bridge					1	1	1			
40	Zwierzyniec				1	1	1	1			
41	Gajówka			1	1		1	1			
42	Forest edge					1	1	1			
43	Rasztów					1	1	1			
44	Kraszew					1	1	1			
45	Wola Rasztowska						1				
60	Dobczyn						1	1	1		
61	Zagościniec						1		1		
62	Rail bridge						1		1		
63	Lipinki						1		1	1	



64	Railway Embankment						1		1	1	
65	Nowa Wieś								1		
66	Lipiny								1	1	1
67	Mostówka								1	1	1
68	Majdan									1	1
69	Leśniakowizna									1	1
70	Duczki						1		1	1	1
71	Bridge						1		1	1	1
67	Height 99 m						1				

The list, which specified the targets to be fired on in the first line, was as follows:

List of targets of Group 3 Radzymin.

Number 2

Number	Name of Objective	Batteries									
		1/20 FAR	2/20 FAR	3/20 FAR	A/120	1 Emerg.	B/155	4/20 FAR	1/201 FAR	2/201 FAR	2/11 FAR
12	Rynia										
13	Siwek	1									
14	Borki	1			1						
15	Ruda	1	1		1						
16	Forest between Ruda and Łoś		1	1	1						
49	Mokre		1	1		1					
50	Radzymin					1					
51	Wiktorów					1	1	1			
52	Kraszew Dzielny						1	1			
53	Helenów						1		1		
72	Czarna Struga										
73	Wołomin								1	1	

There were also shortcomings in terms of command, as on 13 August Colonel Aleksandrowicz, acting commander of the 1st Lit-Bel Division artillery, was still to take command of the Middle Subgroup, while the Right Subgroup had only just been taken over by Colonel Ładziński.

There were also material difficulties, mainly in the supply of ammunition, as the guns were of multiple origins and calibres.

In the conditions it is hardly surprising that the recently formed artillery staff, deprived of resources and personnel, could not fully cope with their tasks. And it was a job that was, “immensely onerous and annoying”, as Lieutenant Kreutz recalls. In his account, he emphasises the hectic nature of the work, the criss-crossing and often contradictory orders, saying that the officers hardly slept at the time, “and yet the work went badly, bearing all the marks of improvisation, and as a result could not be fruitful.”



On the day the 11th Division manned its sector, the condition of the fortifications and the progress of their construction was still not satisfactory. There were a number of reasons for this, mainly the inadequate management of the works. That work was led by Lt-Colonel Salecki, subordinate to Colonel Navratil, as commander of Fortification Group No. 8 and then the Governorate Head of Engineering and Sappers. From 6 to 12 August, the Radzymin section was subordinate to Lt-Colonel Berezowski, commander of Fortification Group No. 12, who was to construct positions from Modlin inclusive through Zegrze and Radzymin to Wołomin. Berezowski, having such an extensive sector, placed more emphasis on the construction of certain sections and his influence on the work in the Radzymin area was limited. He did supply the Radzymin sector with a handful of expert personnel, such as Lieutenant Zaleski and 2nd-Lieutenant Strokołowski, who were used to build the second line.

Another reason for the shortage was poor leadership of the 1st and 3rd Companies of the 10th Sapper Battalion, which were quite late in getting to work, as well as the non-arrival of other announced units. Finally, there was an acute shortage of wire, which at one point caused Lt-Colonel Salecki to report to the Governorate that if the barbed wire did not arrive he would have to halt the works. Between 7 and 9 August that crisis was somewhat alleviated as he received one and a half wagons of wire, brought in on carts.

The state of the position after the 11th Division took it over is illustrated for us by the situation report of the 21st Brigade of 9 August which reads:

The situation in the section of the 46th IR is as follows: from Łoś (exclusive) to Dybów (inclusive) there are ditches 0.85 m deep and wire entanglements in two rows – these ditches are to be joined during the day. Posts dug in on the Dybów – Helenów section have no wire entanglements – it is a poorly fortified position.

On the section from Helenów to Leśniakowizna (47th IR) there are dug-in outposts along the entire length. The central part of this sector is in extremely unfavourable terrain conditions. The buildings and orchards do not allow fire. This sector, or rather the line of positions, is unfortunate in the opinion of its commander. The foreground allows the enemy a covered approach. The wire is badly laid. The regiments are busy constructing trenches.

After the 11th Division had manned the positions, the 11th Sapper Battalion, commanded by Lt-Colonel Lipski, was used to construct the fortifications, while the company from the MG Battalion left for Warsaw. The 11th Sapper Battalion had only its 1st Company, which was rather small, and despite the enlistment of 70 recruits amounted to only 110 privates. Another detachment of 40 privates was taken from the sapper transport column.

Late in the evening of 7 August Lt-Colonel Lipski went with his platoon commander, 2nd-Lieutenant Fress, to a briefing called by the Head of Engineers and Sappers, Colonel Rybiński, which was attended by Lt-Colonel Salecki, Lt-Colonel Griebisch (1st Army Head of Engineers and Sappers), Captain Coppe and others. At the briefing it was decided to move the positions on the Radzymin sector and build them on the Mokre – Dybów – Wiktorów line. The previous Radzymin – Wiktorów – Czarna Stara positions now took on the character of transitional positions. Having received this task, the 11th Battalion set to work.

On 8 and 9 August the 1st Sapper Company constructed firing trenches, machine-gun positions and barbed wire obstacles on the Dybów – Mokre section, with the help of civilian workers. On 10 August the company worked on the Dybów – Wiktorów section, while on 11 August two platoons returned to the previously fortified sector to complete its construction and two platoons with 2nd-Lieutenant Fress worked on the Dybów – Wiktorów section.

At the same time Lieutenant Szachtmajer was still working on the right portion of the 11th Division's sector. Seeing the work delayed in the Wołomin area, he moved a party of Łódź workers there. The Technical Company of the 167th Regiment was finishing the obstacles on the Czarna Nowa – Sławek line, while Szachtmajer and the rest of the men were finishing the construction of the dam on the Czarna River.

From this we can see that no work had been undertaken so far to fortify the position from Dybów to Helenów. It is true that, as elsewhere, there were infantry who dug foxholes and trenches for themselves, but this cannot be called the construction of a position, given the lack of tools, resources and professional



leadership. In contrast, in the sector of the 48th BRR, the infantry almost completed the construction of the fortifications of the 1st line position by themselves.

The reason for neglecting the Dybów – Helenów sector was undoubtedly the conviction that the Dybów – Mokre sector was more important and therefore the works there were more urgent.

Finally, in the evening of 11 August, Fress received an order from the company commander to start work on the Dybów – Helenów stretch. The next day he arrived there and began the construction of the fortifications, which by that evening were already being carried out in the face of the enemy.

During the day on the Dybów – Wiktorów section the following were built:

Some firing trenches, with one row of barbed wire obstacles, and in some places two rows; there were places where there were almost no obstacles at all, as for example from Wiktorów to Helenów. Then a few advanced posts were made for the outposts on the Dybów – Wiktorów sector.

Assessing the results of the work in the 11th Division's sector, we must unfortunately conclude that they were generally mediocre, and in some portions inadequate. Those deficiencies were not so strongly felt in those places where the infantry had deployed its forces and, using the means at its disposal, fortified its own sector. In the other places, though, the deficiencies were to prove costly.

While manning the Radzymin bridgehead positions the 11th Division found the telegraph unit of 2nd-Lieutenant Winiarski, who had been working in the area since 6 August. The following fixed route wires of the sector ran: Warsaw – Marki, Warsaw – Pustelnik, and Warsaw – Wyszaków. Those wires ran along the Warsaw – Marki – Pustelnik – Wyszaków road. However, there was no direct connection from that route to Zegrze and Rembertów. So Winiarski's first job was to start the construction of permanent Marki – Rembertów and Pustelnik – Aleksandrów lines on 6 August. The following day he undertook the renovation of the Marki – Pustelnik fixed route and, on the same day, began the construction of the Radzymin – Benjaminów line. In the end he only partially completed the lines, with only the poles being erected – except for the Pustelnik to Aleksandrów line, which had 10 kilometres of double conductor.

On 9 August Winiarski's unit left the Radzymin sector for the Miłosna Group. Further work now fell to the 11th Telegraph Company, commanded by Lieutenant Krulisz (also Head of Communications for the 11th Division). The company's strength on 15 August was five officers and 232 privates. It had a Hughes apparatus and three Morse apparatuses (Russian, German and French). The Hughes apparatus was operated by two civilians.

As noted above, an order of 8 August directed Lieutenant Krulisz to build a command network the next day, including telephone connections to the division's reserve, to the brigade HQ, and from the brigade staff to the regimental commands.

This was a rather exorbitant demand, with no regard for time or resources, as the division lacked sufficient trained personnel and, most importantly, equipment, especially cable. The 11th Company and the regiments' communications platoons had suffered considerable losses in equipment during the retreat. So it was not able to complete the assigned task so quickly.

In the first days after the 11th Division took over their sector, the telegraph company worked hard, but could not satisfy the commanders, who were annoyed by the shortcomings of technical communications. Particularly exasperated reports were sent several times by the commander of the 21st Brigade.

On 11 August the state of communications was as follows:

The divisional HQ, in Marki, had four route wires which connected to Warsaw. Three of them had not yet been switched on and communications with the Army HQ, or rather with the Governorate, were received through the Warsaw central HQ. Of the four wires, two were reserved for the HQ of the 1st Lit-Bel Division, which was due to arrive in Marki.



The division HQ also served as the artillery group HQ and had telephone connections with the 21st Brigade HQ in Struga, and with the 47th Regiment in Kobyłka.

The Brigade HQ had a telephone connection with the 47th Regiment in Kobyłka, and the 46th in Radzymin. There was no direct connection for the time being with the command of the 48th Regiment, and the brigade had to communicate with it through the HQ of the Left Artillery Subgroup in Dąbkowizna or through the 46th Regiment in Radzymin.

Thus we see that not only was Winiarski's work not finished, but even the connections to the regiments were not complete.

On the last day before the battle, 12 August, a permanent one-wire Struga – Benjaminów line and a two-wire Struga – Dąbkowizna line were being built. In addition, a Morse apparatus was set up in Struga for a telegraph connection with Marki, and a Hughes apparatus was set up in Marki.

The next day, the first day of the battle, the Struga – Dąbkowizna (single-wire), Struga – Benjaminów and Struga – Kobyłka (double-wire) lines were completed. However, a direct connection to Zegrze had still not been achieved, and there was only a connection from Marki to Izabelin, which was yet to be extended to Nieporęt. There was also no direct connection to Żąbki, to the 8th Division's HQ.

The brigade command demanded that telephones should reach as far as the companies, while communication with neighbouring units was to be maintained by mounted and foot messengers, but the lack of equipment, or its wear and tear, and insufficient cable were a major issue. This was reported several times by the commanders, as it did not always work. The lack of cable, for example, forced Battalion 4/47 to replace telephone wire with ordinary iron wire or even barbed wire, which was hung on poles and insulated with paper – it goes without saying that the value of such a line was negligible or non-existent.

The construction of telephone links between the artillery group HQ and its subordinate subgroup HQs also encountered considerable difficulties due to the lack of personnel and equipment. But the artillery had arrived at its post earlier than the 11th Division, and so had time to make changes relating to the new plans, adapting the network under construction to the new requirements. Those changes affected the progress of the work. As both Colonel Ładziński's and then Colonel Szpręglewski's staff were organised on an *ad hoc* basis and did not have the resources and personnel that a full-time command was entitled to, the work of the communications officers, Lieutenant Godlewski then Cadet Zoll, was indeed thankless.

The construction of the connections to the group's HQs was carried out by the 11th Telegraph Company, with which the artillery communications officers cooperated. By 13 August the group HQ had received a telephone connection via Struga with the Left Subgroup in Dąbkowizna and via the 11th FAR HQ with the Right Subgroup in Kobyłka. But there was still no direct communication with the Middle Subgroup and so the connection between the 21st Brigade HQ and the 46th BRR in Radzymin was used.

The state of the equipment within the artillery group was not good. Most of the batteries had been recently formed, so the telephonists were not always well-trained, and some of the batteries were insufficiently equipped. Officially each battery was supposed to have a buzzer, six telephones and 20 km of cable. Generally there was no shortage of apparatus, but most of them only had an average of 10 km of cable.

The division established a code for light signals with rockets, which were to be used to call in artillery fire in case the telephone lines were broken, but in the end the troops did not receive any rockets, even to simply light the area. The lack of rockets could not be replaced by General Latinik's instructions, which he gave when visiting a section of the 46th BRR. He ordered that the approach of the enemy, its attack and the retreat of the outposts, should be signalled by lighting straw torches.



Sector of the 46th BRR

On 8 August Major Liwacz, the commander of the 46th BRR, issued an order before the march to Radzymin outlining the positions designated for the regiment, taking into account the regiment's composition: the 2nd, 3rd and 4th Battalions (ex Battalion 1/109) and two companies from Battalion 1/104. The section from Helenów to the Radzymin – Zawady road was to be covered by the 4th Battalion. Two companies of the 3rd Battalion were to occupy the section from the Radzymin – Zawady road to Łoś. Two companies of the 3rd Battalion, the 4th MG Company and the Assault Company of the 4th Battalion were the regiment's reserve, while the 2nd Battalion and the two companies of Battalion 1/104 were to leave for the brigade reserve. Each detachment in the first line was to allocate a fourth of its forces as its own reserve. Concluding his order, Major Liwacz emphasised (repeating the orders from higher commands) :

All enemy attacks must fail on the indicated outer line, as its technical equipment and artillery endowment are extremely strong.

In the afternoon of 8 August the regiment marched to Radzymin from its previous place of accommodation. At about 12:30 Major Liwacz, overtaking the regiment, arrived in Radzymin in order to communicate in advance with the commander of Battalion 1/109, which was already in the sector. Meanwhile, in Radzymin, Major Liwacz met Colonel Krzywobłocki (commander of the 2nd "Combined Regiment"), who announced that he was taking command of the 46th BRR.

Major Liwacz, surprised by this, questioned the division's command about it, from which he received a confirmatory reply. Ignoring any ill feeling, he tried to work as loyally as possible for the benefit of the new commander. So he acquainted Colonel Krzywobłocki with the orders issued, and upon the regiment's arrival in the city he gathered the officers and introduced them to the new commander.

The change of commander did affect the unit's mood however, especially as the 53-year-old new commander gave the impression of being an old man. During the further work of preparing for the defence, as the accounts of his subordinates testify, confidence in his effective command of the regiment was lost.

An adjutant of the regiment, who inevitably worked a lot with Colonel Krzywobłocki, described him as:

He was an older man. His appearance and first questions betraying uncertainty and a lack of energy. The phrase he used all the time was: "A bullet to the head, dear sir."

We shall not repeat the many anecdotal details written and told by the participants, but on the other hand, in Colonel Jaźwiński's opinion, Krzywobłocki was a good patriot.

In those conditions the 46th BRR undertook the organisation of the defence in its section of the line and on 9 August the manning of the positions was completed and the construction of fortifications commenced. That day its command reported that in the section from Łoś to Dybów it had a double-row of entanglements and separate firing trenches to be connected, while in the section from Dybów to Helenów there were still no entanglements and only trenches for the outposts.

On 10 August the 2nd Battalion manned from Łoś (excl.) to Dybów (incl.), while the right-hand portion was held by the 4th Battalion. The 3rd Battalion was the regiment's reserve and Battalion 1/109 was the brigade reserve in Cegielnia. However, the following day there were changes, caused by the departure of Battalion 1/109. In that battalion's place came Battalion 1/104, made up of three companies, and it manned the section from Helenów up to but excluding Dybów, while the 2nd Battalion was reinforced with a company of the 3rd Battalion.

What is striking in the organisation of the defence by the 46th BRR is the handicap faced by the 1st Battalion. Although we know that the regiment's commander had predetermined the use of that battalion in the Dybów – Helenów section, it was far too big for three companies. The 2nd Battalion, on the other hand, was given a smaller section, reinforced at the same time by one company from the reserve, and more attention had been paid to the fortification of that section of the line.

This was explained by an assessment of the terrain at the time – it was thought that the battalion blocking the roads leading from Wyszków to Radzymin had to be stronger. However, that assessment should not have had so much weight as to leave the 1st Battalion without a reserve and to undertake the construction



of its positions on the last day. A second reason may be found in foolish regimental selfishness, which led to indifference to the needs of a battalion only recently assigned to the regiment.

On 11 August the 1st Battalion (formerly 1/104) swapped with Battalion 1/109 and manned its section.

The 2nd Company, 2nd-Lieutenant Rodziewicz-Bielewicz, together with two machine-guns, held from Rżyska to Helenów. This was the least fortified section in the regiment, with only one row (fence) of barbed wire. Rodziewicz-Bielewicz recalled the positions had, "one continuous, loose line with outposts in front." Machine-guns were advanced between the main position and the line of outposts.

The 4th Company, 2nd-Lieutenant Usiekiewicz (reinforced with 4 machine-guns) was assigned from the Kraszew – Radzymin road to Rżyska (exclusive). The machine-guns were placed in front of the barbed wire fences. The company's section was poorly fortified.

The 1st Company, 2nd-Lieutenant Klótz, manned the left wing of the battalion up to Dybów (exclusive). Initially the battalion had no reserve at all, as it was awaiting the arrival of the 3rd Company, which was outside Warsaw.

Second-Lieutenant Fleischman's 1st MG Company had four Hotchkiss and one Russian Maxim machine-guns. It also received four French St. Etienne MGs, but without spare parts, and also had no crew for them – the required crew had to be trained within several hours. The machine-guns were distributed: three with the 1st Company, four with the 4th Company, and two with the 2nd Company.

The battalion HQ was in the administration building at the eastern end of Radzymin, having a telephone connection with the regimental HQ and the companies. The battalion was initially commanded by Major Wołk-Łaniewski, and then on 12 August Captain Dorociński, who had arrived with the staff of Battalion 1/104, took command. As we can see, this was a battalion completely out of harmony with its fellows and was performing for the first time at the front. Its number of officers and NCOs was small.

On 10 August, the 2nd Battalion was in position from Mokre (excl.) to Dybów (incl.), under the command of Major Kwiatkowski.

Although the battalion was given a section that was not yet properly fortified, the works were much further advanced than on the 1st Battalion's section. Nevertheless, the commander described the fortifications as:

... carelessly prepared, with the firing trenches being too deep ... The stakes were barely stuck in the ground, so that they could easily be pulled out with one hand.

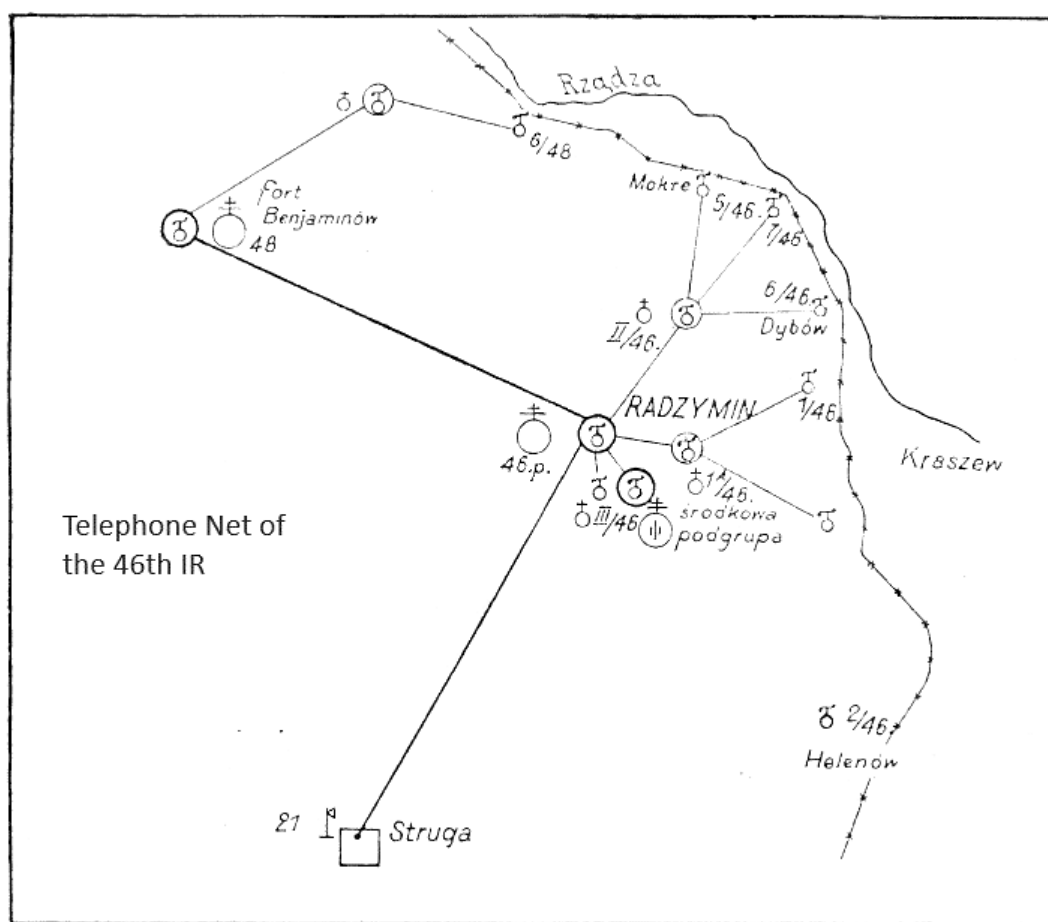
This part of the line appears to have been considered more important, and for this reason the sappers worked primarily there. On 11 August, the regimental commander reinforced the battalion with 2nd-Lieutenant Nawrotek's 11th Company.

The detailed grouping of the battalion is shown in Map 3 of Appendix 3. The organisation of the defence also used the idea of three lines with the machine-guns extended in front of the main position. The battalion commander had telephone communication with the regimental command and the companies.

The regiment's reserve was the 3rd Battalion, the Staff Company, and the 4th Machine-gun Company. The 3rd Battalion, of Major Wołk-Łaniewski, was located in Radzymin House near the station. The 4th MG Company of Lieutenant Bishop and the regimental Staff Company of Lieutenant Laube were next to the regimental HQ.

The telephone platoon, of Senior Sergeant Lozinski, was small and lacked sufficient materiel. It managed to build connections between the battalions, but did worse in terms of linking up the regiment with the brigade and division HQs. Although the fixed wires of the Radzymin – Marki line were used, the Middle Artillery Subgroup also used the same line (the subgroup's HQ were located next to it), which made the work much more difficult. The communications diagram is shown on sketch 14.





Sketch 14

The regimental physician and at the same time the 3rd Battalion physician was Captain Dr Brończyk, who managed to train two sanitary patrols per company during the reorganisation period. These patrols were provided with complete and good equipment. The location of the dressing points is shown in Map 3.

Middle Artillery Subgroup

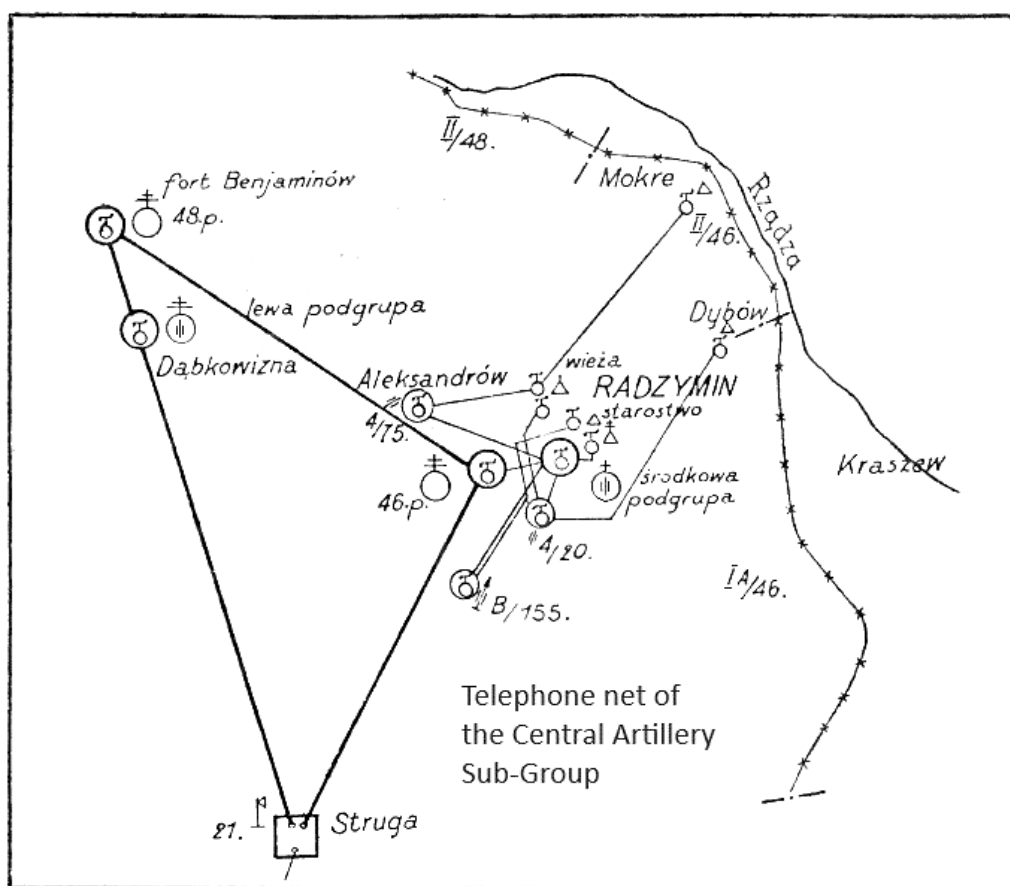
The commander of the Middle Artillery Subgroup was Major Włodzimierz Rómmel, commander of the 2nd *Divizion* of the 20th FAR, which had formed at Kawęczyn. The *divizion* consisted at the time of the 3rd and 4th Batteries, rearmed on 3 August from Russian 76-mm guns to French 75-mm. On arrival at the sector, the 3rd Battery left to become part of the Left Subgroup, leaving Major Rómmel with the 4th Battery of the 20th FAR, an Emergency Battery of the 1st Legion FAR, a 155-mm battery and two batteries of the 201st FAR, which later left to become part of the Right Subgroup.

Between 6 and 10 August the batteries set up positions and observation posts and hastily completed the training of their crews. There were a lot of material shortages, and especially a lack of horses. The staff of the subgroup command was small: the adjutant was 2nd-Lieutenant Antoni Żabko-Potopowicz and the reconnaissance officer was Lieutenant Mikołaj Szmurło. Both officers had recently arrived in the regiment, having volunteered for the front.

On 9 August the command was moved from Struga to Radzymin. The HQ was placed in a wooden hut next to the Jewish cemetery and was connected by a double line to the batteries and the command observation post. Many difficulties were encountered in setting up the telephone network, not only because of the lack of material, but also because of the insufficient training of the telephone operators.

The command's observation point was at the eastern end of Radzymin, in a house next to the administration building.





Sketch 15

Battery 4/20 FAR, of Captain Cezary Czajkowski, took up a position in a field between Ciemne and Radzymin (a kilometre south of Radzymin), having an observation point in the attic of the administration building. A liaison patrol was sent to Dybów. The battery's main area of operation lay between Zawady and Kraszew.

The 155-mm battery, of Lieutenant Witold Kamiński (who had come from Toruń with a school unit), had untrained personnel and was organised on an improvised basis over several days. The battery officer, Lieutenant Czesław Niedzielski, who had volunteered for the front, was unfamiliar with the 155-mm guns (being a former officer in the Russian Army) and had to quickly learn how to use them. The battery was stationed at the Kronenberg brickyard and the observation post was on a roof in Radzymin.

The Emergency Battery of the 1st FAR, of Lieutenant Zdzisław Adamczyk, was formed from a training battery (a reserve battery of the 1st Legion FAR) and had received damaged guns, used only for training. The training and morale of the battery was very good. The battery had quite a large number of officers (2nd-Lieutenant Andrzej Molenda, 2nd-Lieutenant Roman Lichtenbaum, Cadet Julian Adamowicz, and then on 13 August Lieutenant Ireneusz Kobielski). It took up position in Aleksandrów, having an observation point on the church tower in Radzymin. On 13 August 2nd-Lieutenant Molenda was sent to the infantry line with Battalion 1/46.

Sector of the 48th BRR

The 48th Regiment, after replenishment and rest, was given a zone on the left wing of the division. It was numerically the weakest regiment of the division, of three battalions, each with three rifle and one machine-gun companies.

On 8 August Captain Matarewicz, who was deputising for the regimental commander (until Colonel Łukoski returned to the regiment), gave the order to man the section. Captain Majewski's 3rd Battalion left for the divisional reserve in Wólka Radzyńska. This left six rifle and three MG companies. The 1st Battalion occupied from Arciechów (excl.) to Borki and the 2nd Battalion from Borki to Łoś. The battalions were to send half a company each as the regiment's reserve in Fort Benjaminów.



Upon its arrival on 8 August, Battalion 1/120 was to join the regiment as its 4th Battalion. As a result the previous arrangement was changed, so that the 1st Battalion was to garrison from Rynia up to and including Siwek, half of the 4th Battalion from Siwek up to and including Ruda, and the 2nd Battalion from Ruda up to and including Łoś. Two companies of the 4th Battalion were to remain in the reserve, instead of the half companies of the 1st and 2nd Battalions, which returned to their units.

However Battalion 1/120 left the 48th BRR on 11 August, and so the 1st and 2nd Battalions had to man the regiment's entire sector. Only the technical company and the 4th MG Company remained as the regiment's reserve. This left the 48th BRR without a reserve, which was reported to Division HQ.

The principles of defence applied in the sector were in accordance with the division's instructions and orders. Thus a line of outposts was organised, an "MG line" and the main position. This was very clearly done in the 1st Battalion's section, where the outposts were advanced quite far out, while in the 2nd Battalion's section, due to terrain conditions, all those lines merged into one. The machine-guns were placed in front of the barbed wire obstacles (Appendix Map 3).

The condition of the fortifications that the regiment found was not satisfactory, but it was nevertheless the best fortified section in the division. Despite this, the 48th Regiment's command reported on 12 August that the entanglements constructed presented no value as obstacles. From 8 to 12 August the regiment carried out further work with its own forces, while a detachment that arrived from the 1st Reserve Sapper Company undertook the construction of the entrenched position from Fort Benjaminów to Borki. The deployment of many outposts in the foreground, the organisation of separate nests in front of the main position, plus an "MG line" resulted in a dispersion of forces which – given the scarcity of bayonets manning the section – in the end left few soldiers to man the main line.

By 12 August its officers were foundering: the regiment's commander reporting to the brigade that, "there are no regimental reserves, battalion reserves or company reserves." The 48th BRR's reports display little confidence in the effectiveness of the defence, although as much had been done as possible to prepare it, and they should be regarded as bringing pressure on the higher commands to obtain reinforcements.

Captain Stanisław Grodzicki's 2nd Battalion manned the right wing with the 5th, 6th and 7th Companies and a MG company. The main position was based on the northern edge of the woods, concealing the reserves, and the outposts were extended over the river. The battalion commander remained at a road junction in the woods (Appendix Map 3).

The outstanding feature of the 2nd Battalion's defence was its shallowness. At the same time, the proximity of the outposts and the ease of approach for the enemy made it possible to surprise the main position.

Initially only the 5th and 6th Companies were stationed in the front line, but as it was found that was too weak, the 7th Company was brought into the centre of the section. The battalion commander was thus left without a reserve.

Second-Lieutenant Żak's 5th Company posted three outposts and an "MG line" of two machine-guns to the rear of Outpost 2, which was to, as the company commander recalls, "support the outposts with fire." The company's reserve of twenty men stood on the north-eastern tip of the forest opposite Ruda (the main position).

The middle part of the section was manned by Lieutenant Ignacy Gorski's 7th Company.

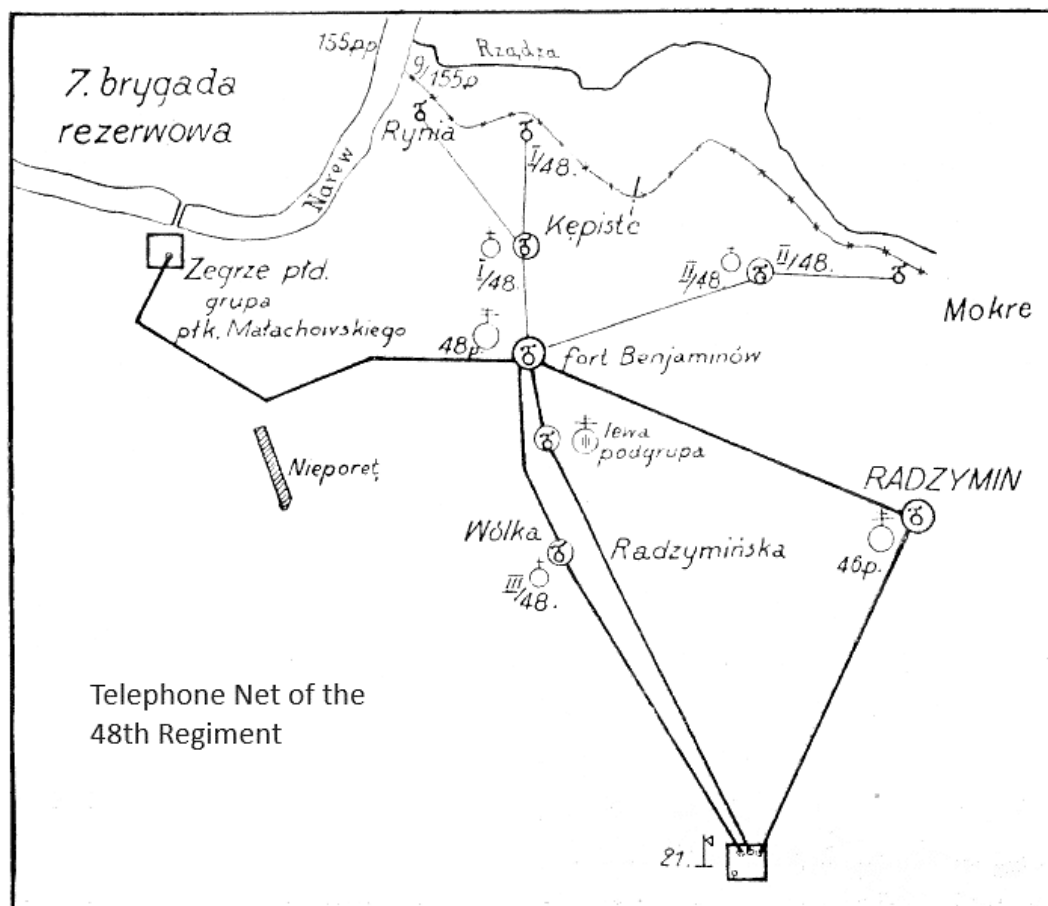
The right wing, which connected with the 46th BRR in Mokre, was taken by Lieutenant Henryk Sobolewski's 6th Company. It advanced three posts over the Rządza River and one over the bridge near Łoś. One machine-gun was to fire at the bridge and the other west of the road to Łoś.

Captain Matarewicz's 1st Battalion remained on the stretch from Rynia (excl.) to Ruda (excl.), joining to the left with the 3rd Squadron of the 6th BRR. It applied the idea of three lines throughout, especially as there were many objects in the foreground to be held and manned by outposts or advanced resistance points. The outpost line covered the northern edge of Załubice village. A machine-gun nest was organised on the Rządza line around Siwek village, and two more machine-guns were placed to the right of Siwek. In addition, outposts were set up near Teresin and Trzcianna and a machine-gun near Borki.



The battalion's section was manned by the 1st and 2nd Companies and the 3rd remained in reserve. The battalion's command was located in Kępiste Manor. The positions of the battalion are shown in Appendix Map 3.

The regiment's reserve consisted of the 4th MG Company and the technical company. The MG company surrendered its own four Hotchkiss guns to the 1st and 2nd Battalions, and in place of these received eight Maxims. From 8 August onwards the company hurriedly trained their soldiers, who had not previously been familiar with those machines. On 12 August the MG company bivouacked in the woods south of Fort Benjaminów, while the technical company remained in the fort. The regimental command was located in a cottage next to the fort. Telephone communications are shown in Sketch 16.



Sketch 16

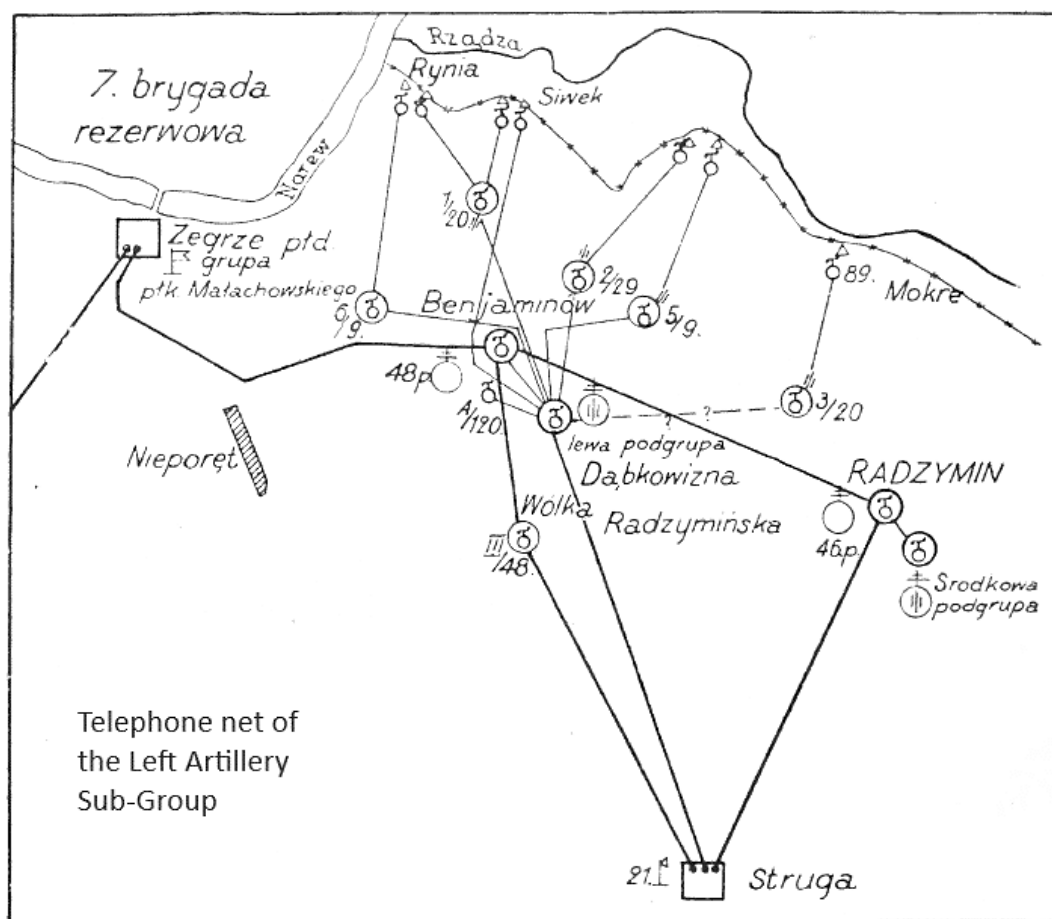
Left Artillery Subgroup

The Left Artillery Subgroup was generally formed under better conditions than the others, as its batteries remained in organised groups. The commander of the 20th FAR, Colonel Maluszycki, took command of the subgroup, having the 1st *Divizion* of the 20th FAR (1st, 2nd and 3rd Batteries), under Captain Boris Kondracki, and the A/120-mm Battery.

The 20th FAR had recently been re-armed (75-mm guns instead of Russian 76-mm ones) and, in the period from 6 to 12 August, they had to deal not only with organising the defence but also with training. The officers, according to Maluszycki's description, were, "varied and not yet united", but showed a lot of enthusiasm and good intentions. The state of training – at least according to the *divizion's* commander – was inadequate.

On 5 August, the batteries were in position on the outskirts of Warsaw. The command of the subgroup was stationed at Dąbkowizna. The *divizion* commander was not given a tactical task, but was sent with a liaison unit to the 48th BRR HQ.





Sketch 17

The 20th FAR batteries took up the following positions:

- The 1st Battery, Lieutenant Bolesław Sikorski, was near Kępiste Manor, having an observation point near Siwek,
- The 2nd Battery, Lieutenant Bolesław Jodkowski, was half a kilometre east of Benjaminów, with an observation point near Ruda.
- The 3rd Battery, Lieutenant Karol Rychter (who had arrived from the Artillery Cadet School), initially occupied a position near the forester's lodge on the road from Aleksandrów to Dąbkowizna. The positioning of the battery was done with the help of borrowed limbers from other batteries, because they did not have enough horses. An observation point was chosen on Height 89.

On 9 August, the battery was moved closer to the first line (as in Appendix Map 4), where it finally settled into position.

The 120-mm battery, which was formed from guns that were, "completely obsolete, no longer suitable for transportation or any change of location", took up a position in a clearing 500 metres south-west of Fort Benjaminów. The training and equipment of the battery was very poor.

Colonel Maluszycki also received two batteries of the 2nd *Divizion* of the 9th FAR in the following days. That unit had been withdrawn from the front during the course of the fighting on the Niemen, as the guns, horses and equipment were so damaged that the *divizion* had lost its combat value.

On 8 August it found itself in Czarna Struga, where the 5th and 6th Batteries were able to reach combat readiness in a few days, even though they still suffered many shortcomings. For these reasons, the *divizion's* command remained in Czarna Struga and dealt trying to make up the shortages, while the batteries left to join the Left Subgroup.

Battery 5/9 of Lieutenant Ezupowicz was east of Benjaminów village, having an observation point on Height 89.



On 11 August Battery 6/9 of Lieutenant Adam Dutkiewicz deployed just one platoon, at the edge of the forest near Wólka Radzyńska, then on 12 August moved to the vicinity of the barracks in Benjaminów, from where it was to flank the Narew River with fire. An observation point was chosen in Siwek and an auxiliary one in Rynia.

Difficulties were encountered in the construction and maintenance of wire communication, as the cable received was very flimsy and the untrained staff, despite their good intentions, could not repair the line.

Sector of the 47th BRR

The 47th Regiment had been withdrawn from the front in a similar condition to other regiments of the 11th Division. Its first replenishment was received at Ostrów Mazowiecka, where 772 soldiers from the 1st Army fugitive camp were incorporated. The conscription of such an element in large numbers provoked – then and later – many objections and alarming reports. Fortunately, the fears proved to be misplaced; the regimental commander, Lt-Colonel Skokowski, considered:

At first, these men seemed rather unruly – they were received into the regiment with distrust; however, it turned out that the judgement was unfair. After some minor friction with military discipline, the privates – having spoken their mind – proved morally a very worthwhile element. Physically healthy, rested, well-fed.

Some of these soldiers did flee (about 70), but probably the majority to their former regiments. The 47th Regiment kept most of the men discussed by Skokowski.

During the later period of reorganisation near Warsaw, the regiment received valuable reinforcements, especially from the Reserve Battalions of the 41st and 42nd Regiments. In addition, the 1st Warsaw Guard Battalion was incorporated into the regiment as its 4th Battalion.

Lt-Colonel Skokowski gives this characterisation of that battalion:

The external appearance of this battalion was impressive. The privates were good-looking, and well-presented. The NCOs were even better looking, flamboyant, and chatty. The officers had not been at the front at all, although there were two or three who had seen combat but assigned to the battalion as a result of wounds. The uniforms were excellent. It was armed with good English rifles and Lewis guns. External discipline and formal drill were exemplary. The battalion was technically richly equipped. However, in terms of combat training it was very poor, there had been little shooting practice and its mastery of weapons was barely adequate. The battalion called itself the “Warsaw Guards”. The old officers and privates misrepresented this and called them the “Jewish Guards”.

After a review, I felt that for the time being this battalion would not be much use in combat. It was devoid of combat traditions, and fond of a comfortable, quiet life.

On the morning of 8 August the regiment marched out from Kąty Grodzkie to Kobyłka, in order to take over the sector. The next day its commander ordered the 1st Battalion to cover the section from Height 106 up to Helenów (excl.), while the 4th Battalion was to cover the section from Leśniakowizna up to Height 106 (excl.), the 2nd Battalion went to become the division’s reserve in Struga, where half of the 3rd Battalion was also stationed, while in the regiment’s reserve remained the 10th and 11th Companies and the HQ of the 3rd Battalion.

Upon arriving at the sector, Lt-Colonel Skokowski noted the inadequacies of the position, which he listed in a report, stressing:

On reconnaissance of the sector, I noticed that the covering positions are almost non-existent. The chosen positions do not correspond at all to the task: the terrain is not exploited, there are no entrenchments or entanglements, the wire of the line is poor.

In view of this, Skokowski ordered the construction of the fortifications to be speeded up and the deficiencies identified to be rectified.



Between 8 and 12 August the 47th Regiment managed to do a lot of work and prepare for battle, and when Lt-Colonel Szczepan arrived just before the battle, Lt-Colonel Skokowski handed over to him the regiment prepared for defence. Upon change of command Skokowski remained with the regiment in an unspecified capacity, but nevertheless tried to assist the new commander.

The 1st Battalion was commanded by Lieutenant Gorczyca, one of the regiment's most senior officers. On arriving at his section of the line, he addressed the soldiers of the newly-formed battalion to make them aware of their duties. Concluding, he added (as he recalls):

As you undertake this very important task, remember that we are not alone – the whole Polish nation stands behind us. Our Commander-in-Chief, Józef Piłsudski, will surely come to our aid, at a time when we least expect it.

The battalion garrisoned its section with three companies, with the 1st Company in reserve. Machine-guns were distributed among the companies, and the 3rd MG Company gave the 1st Battalion a few machine-guns, so that a total of eight were available.

In a few days the 1st Battalion managed to complete some of the fortifications. Thanks to the foresight of the battalion's commander and adjutant, 2nd-Lieutenant Sierakowski, many difficulties were removed. To put it bluntly – they stole from wherever they could in order to obtain the necessary amount of barbed wire and ammunition.

The battalion organised its positions in the form we are familiar with, based on the instructions and orders of the higher commands – a line of outposts, MGs, then a line of trenches. However, Lieutenant Gorczyca's solutions allowed some variation – it was one of the few sections of the 11th Division whose defence was based on a plan of machine-gun fire, while taking into account terrain conditions.

On 9 August Gorczyca reported to the regimental commander that he had placed machine-guns in prepared firing positions, that barbed wire obstacles would flank their fire, and that groups of riflemen had been placed near the positions to provide cover for the machine-guns. On the other hand, those sections which, for terrain reasons, were not under machine-gun fire were manned by groups of riflemen who supplemented the advanced line.

In his solution there was a conscious effort to organise a fire plan for the defence. Breaking away from slavishly following instructions, he justified his solution in a report to the regimental commander as follows:

Adhering strictly to the sketch of the defensive line and communications given by the regimental command is impossible. Placing MGs outside the line of outposts would require felling the whole forest, or their effectiveness would be so minimal that it would not compensate for the advantage of using them in the main line. Leaving MGs outside the main line of defence is impossible as a result of the construction of the entire sector, based solely on flanking by MGs and therefore on the formation of defensive groups (*groupe de combat* – French tactics).

On 10 August Lieutenant Gorczyca handed over command of the battalion to Captain Krzyżewicz, who had arrived from the Military Geographical Institute. Gorczyca remained with the new commander until 13 August, providing him with explanations and assistance. By 12 August the organisation of the defence in the battalion's section was almost complete.

The positions of the battalion and the location of the machine-guns are shown in Appendix Map 3. It should be noted that the battalion's area of operations was not very helpful for the organisation of defence. In the middle of the sector was the "White Mud", which at that time was dry and passable for infantry. To the left of the mud was the 4th Company, which could not observe the ground in front very well (summerhouses and forest), and for this reason a strong outpost was kept on Height 109. Relatively speaking, the best fire conditions were with the 2nd Company.

The 4th Battalion (1st Warsaw Guard Battalion) had previously been a detachment of the Governorate garrison. A few days before the battle, it was taken over by Colonel Szukiewicz, who proved himself to be a brave commander during the battle. As a result of an old wound he was not completely fit for the line, but



he did not hesitate to accept the command, even though he was about 50 years old at the time. When his adjutant wondered, saying that

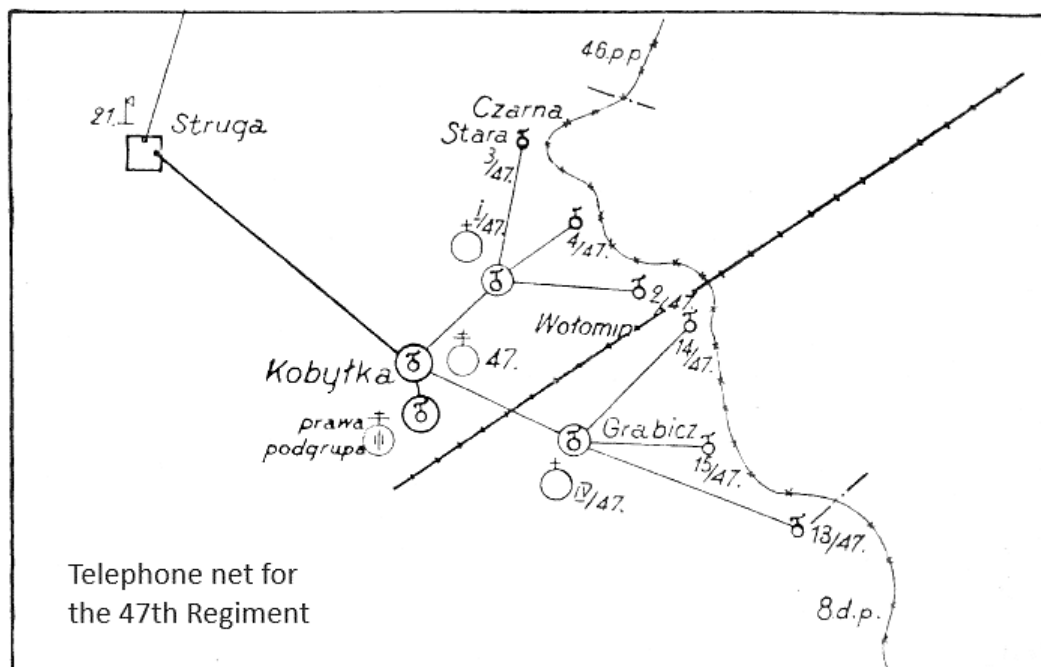
... the colonel had received a battalion command, while those younger in rank and age had received higher positions

Colonel Szukiewicz replied, that:

It doesn't matter to me, whether I command a squad or a battalion, as long as I fulfil my tasks properly.

The new battalion commander did not have much time to familiarise himself with the companies, but nevertheless concluded that the battalion was not worth much. Above all, its morale was poor, with the soldiers believing that their stay in the positions would be temporary and that they would not have to fight. They believed this to be true especially after officers from the 1st Lit-Bel Division arrived at the position on 13 August to reconnoitre it. Not all of the battalion's officers were fit for frontline service and there was even an officer with an artificial leg among them. However, Colonel Szukiewicz stressed that the mood among the officers was good. The battalion had English rifles.

The battalion's sector stretched from Height 106 to Skazówka (excl.). The construction of the position was already underway (under Colonel Stefanowicz), so the battalion helped finish it with the help of assigned sappers. The ground in front of the position was uncovered except on the left wing, where it rested on the northern edge of Wołomin. Here Lipiny Manor and Lipiny village were in the foreground. The left wing was manned by Colonel Szukiewicz with the 14th Company, which straddled the railway track. To the right of them was the 15th Company, and on the right wing was the 13th Company. The battalion's reserve was the 16th Company, which had positions at the rear of the position. The battalion's headquarters were in Grabicz, where there was also a telephone exchange, connecting it with the regiment and companies. On the left wing Colonel Szukiewicz placed three machine-guns, which could cover the railway track and nearby road. This portion was considered by the battalion commander to be the most important, however, the battalion's right wing was much less well equipped.



Sketch 18

The regiment's reserve was the 10th and 12th Companies of Lieutenant Marjan Kluska's 3rd Battalion. Those companies were quartered in Kobyłka and spent their time in combat training. The 9th and 11th Companies left to become brigade reserve in Struga. Lieutenant Kazimierz Reutt's 2nd Battalion, with 495 bayonets and six machine-guns, remained the division or brigade reserve in Pustelnik, then from 13 August in Marki. The regiment's telephone communications are shown in Sketch 18.



Right Artillery Subgroup

As we have seen, the Right Artillery Subgroup was the last to be formed, around two batteries of the 201st FAR which had left Major Rómmel's subgroup.

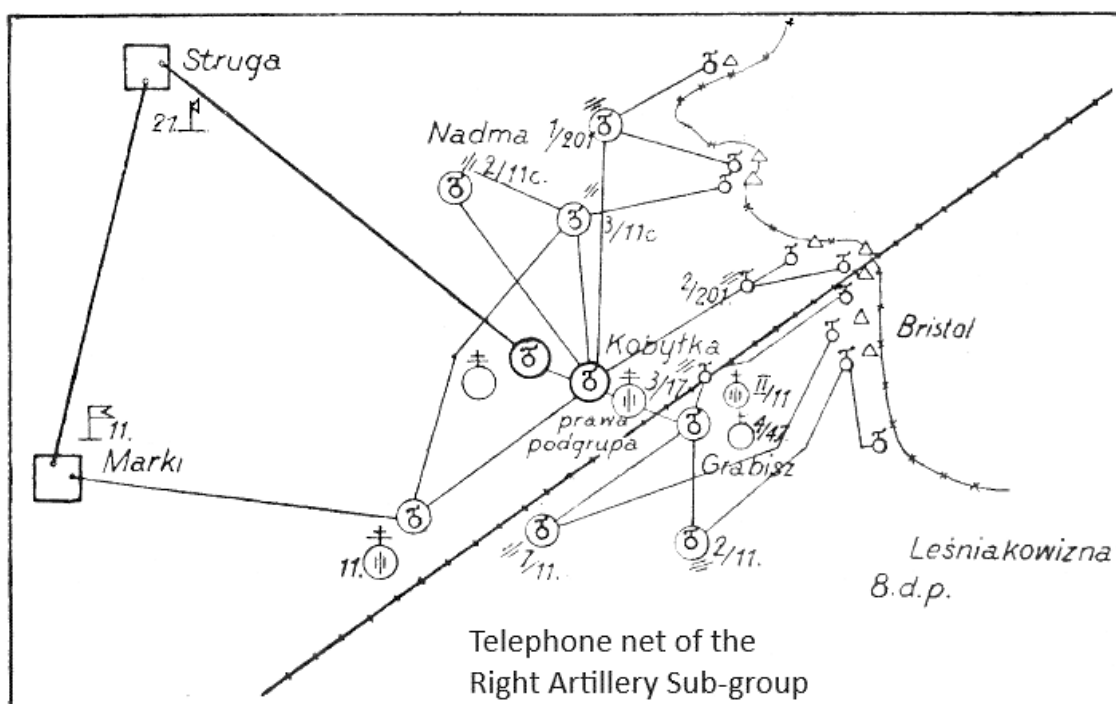
After Colonel Szpręglewski took command of the group, those batteries were placed behind the right wing and, together with the 2nd *Division* of the 11th Field Artillery Regiment, placed under the command of Colonel Suzin (commander of the 11th FAR). Soon, however, these batteries were redeployed and became part of the newly created Right Artillery Subgroup.

Thus it started with the 2nd, 3rd and 7th Batteries of the 11th FAR, the 2nd and 3rd Batteries of the 11th Heavy Artillery *Division*, and the 1st and 2nd Batteries of the 201st FAR. The command of the 11th HAR moved to Batorówka Manor (between Maciołki and Kobyłka) where it set up a telephone exchange, establishing communication with Marki, Kobyłka and, on 13 August, with the 1st Brigade of the Lit-Bel Division.

On 13 August, Colonel Ładziński took command of the subgroup, while Colonel Suzin was given the vague task of overseeing the execution of work in the southern section of the subgroup. The 11th FAR HQ remained where it was, but became more of a reporting depot, which was not really needed as the subgroup's HQ was located in the estate granary at Kobyłka. As that did not have a liaison officer, twelve apparatuses were set up around it to link up with the batteries.

As early as 12 August, Colonel Ładziński arranged the batteries into combat *divizion*s. The 2nd, 3rd and 7th Batteries of the 11th FAR formed one under Captain Zaremba; the 2nd and 3rd Batteries of the HAD formed another under Captain Müllner; and the 1st and 2nd Batteries of the 201st FAR were given to Captain Osmólski.

The telephone network of the subgroup is shown in Sketch 19.



Sketch 19

Captain Zaremba's *divizion* took up positions on 10-12 August. It was made up of two old batteries (2nd and 3rd) and the 7th Battery, newly arrived from the cadre. During its reorganisation, the crews were reinforced and material shortages fixed. There was a significant improvement in equipment, telephones and optical equipment.

The *divizion* was to operate in a zone delineated to the south by the divisional boundary line and to the north by a road parallel to the railway track, passing through Kobyłka. The batteries were also meant to operate for the benefit of their neighbours, which was difficult to do due to the unfavourable terrain. The



division was to work together in support of the 4th Battalion of the 47th BRR, whose headquarters were in Grabicz. Battery positions were designated by Colonel Ładziński.

The main observation point, from where the entire zone of the *division* could be seen, was the Villa Bristol on the eastern outskirts of Wołomin, which served as an observation point for the 2nd and 7th Batteries. The 3rd Battery chose an observation point in a three-storey house near Wołomin station. The batteries also had observers in the infantry line: the 2nd and 7th Batteries near Height 102 and the 3rd Battery in the trenches north-east of Wołomin.

The *division* HQ was in the brickyard in Grabicz, having direct communication with Battalion 4/47, Kobyłka and the batteries.

Battery 2/11 FAR, Lieutenant Jerzy Kubecki, took up a position around the junction of the Ossów – Grabicz and Nadarzyn – Leśniakowizna roads.

Battery 3/11 FAR, Lieutenant Leon Przybytko, took a position north-west of the railway track, near the Kobyłka – Wołomin road.

Battery 7/11 FAR, Lieutenant Józef Rymut, was initially in a position in the Grabicz brickyard, but on 12 August it moved to the rear, with its direction of fire towards Leśniakowizna.

Battery 9/11 FAR (only a platoon at the time) did not take up positions, as it did not get its three guns until 13 August, and even then without sights.

Captain Ferdinand Müllner's *division* (2nd and 3rd Batteries of the 11th Heavy Artillery *Division*), had arrived at the bridgehead from the country as a march formation. Müllner was actually the commander of the 3rd Battery, and his entire staff, as *division* commander, consisted of a clerk and trumpeter he had taken from his battery.

Captain Müllner's position was a kilometre south of the 3rd Battery. Here a liaison officer was positioned to link with the batteries and the subgroup command. His observation post was on Height 109.

From its name it would appear that they had heavy guns. Indeed, it used to have 155-mm guns, but shortly before it marched out they were given 75-mm guns. The mood of the artillerymen was very good; Captain Müllner mentions that:

Despite the alarming news at the time about the failures of our army, the faith in the Commander-in-Chief, in his officers, and in the final victory was resolute.

On 12 August Battery 3/11 HAD took up a position on a sand dune near Ulasek, with its direction of fire towards Lipinki. An observation point was chosen on the chimney of a brickyard on the southern edge of Wołomin. That offered a wide field of observation, except nearby where the view was obstructed by houses and trees in Wołomin. In view of this, the observation was supplemented by another point at the steam mill in Wołomin.

On 11 August Battery 2/11 HAD, Lieutenant Roman Palmi, took up a position on the southern edge of Nadma, firing in the direction of Helenów, tasked with covering the railway track and the section from Height 109 up to Radzymin. The battery pointed towards Duczki and had observation points at Czarna Stara House and Wołomin.

Captain Osmólski's *division* (1st and 2nd Batteries of the 201st FAR) were volunteer batteries, formed in the Reserve Battery of the 1st Legion FAR – the only volunteer field artillery regiment to appear in 1920. In spite of care and help from everywhere, these batteries did not reach the required level of combat readiness. It was hoped that its enthusiasm, and especially the presence of a large number of *intelligentsia*, would overcome any difficulties that would arise. There were also a large number of volunteers among the officers, and older ones at that. They were familiar with Russian guns, but in the meantime the batteries received German 77-mm guns.

The commander of the 1st *Division* of the 201st FAR was Major Tucker, who was with the staff in a different sector of the bridgehead (with the 15th ID), and it was not until 14 August that the *division's* adjutant arrived with the staff at the Right Subgroup sector. The adjutant was 2nd-Lieutenant Kazimierz Czerwiński,



who, as headmaster of a school, had recruited a teacher to the 201st FAR, together with a large handful of the school's youth. This fact sufficiently highlights the nature of the soldiers in the regiment. Nevertheless, when Captain Osmólski was entrusted with the command of the *divizion*, he, like Captain Müllner, found himself in a difficult situation due to the lack of a staff. He had only a few scouts and telephonists that he had taken from his battery. He gave command of the 1st Battery to Lieutenant Grzegorz Winnicki.

Battery 1/201 took up positions around Czarna, with a direction of fire towards the embankment of the Warsaw – Białystok railway line. The observation point was on Height 109.

Battery 2/201 was under the command of Lieutenant Tadeusz Rolkie until 13 August, and then 2nd-Lieutenant Tadeusz Skwarczyński. It took up a position around Wołomin Manor, with a direction of fire towards Mostówka. The observation point was in the mill in Wołomin and on the chimney of the brickyard in Wołomin.

The Miłosna Group

As we have seen previously, on 7 August the “Miłosna Group” was formed, consisting of the 4/7th Poznań Guard Battalion, the 2nd Battalion of the Kowno Regiment, the 1st Battalion of the 142nd IR, the 1st Warsaw Guard Battalion and the 11th Border Rifle Regiment. There were no major changes in the composition of the group until 12-13 August, that is, until the 8th and 15th Divisions arrived at the bridgehead. Since the useful organisation of the defence took place only after the arrival of those divisions, we will limit ourselves to a general description.

On 9 August the Miłosna Group command ordered the following dispositions; the 1st Warsaw Guard Battalion became the reserve (Rembertów barracks), and the section from Leśniakowizna (excl.) up to and including Konik Stare was taken by Battalion 1/142.

The 4/7th Guard Battalion surrendered its section to the 2nd Kowno Battalion, which manned the section from Nowy Konik to Emów (incl.).

The 11th BRR moved from Miłosna to Wawer and manned from Emów to the Vistula with one squadron.

The Miłosna Group HQ was in Rembertów.

On 12 August officers of the 8th and 15th Divisions arrived to familiarise themselves with the positions. The commander of the 15th ID, General Jung, was with them and left for the sector with General Falewicz, commander of the Miłosna Group. From 12 August the relief of the group began, with the previous units being largely incorporated into the arriving divisions. Almost all were taken by the 15th ID, but the 11th BRR left for Nieporęt and on 13 August was given to the Zegrze Group, and the 1st Warsaw Guard Battalion had already left for the 47th BRR. The 8th ID received only the 3rd Company of the 142nd IR.

The artillery of the Miłosna Sector, commanded by Colonel Hulanicki, consisted of the 3rd, 4th and 6th Batteries of the 1st MAR, the 1st Battery of the 4th HAR (105-mm guns), the 2nd Battery of the 4th HAR (155-mm guns), the 3rd and 6th Batteries of the 201st FAR (105-mm guns), and the 4th and 5th Batteries of the 201st FAR (77-mm guns). In addition to these batteries, there was also a 100-mm M14 howitzer positional battery, about which no further details are available.

The artillery was divided into two groups: Major Tucker (commander of the 1st *Divizion* of the 201st FAR) was to support the right side of the sector. He positioned Battery 3/201 FAR in the woods to the right of the track between Falenica and Błota, and Battery 4/1 MAR in the area of Aleksandrów. Captain Steuer (commander of the 2nd *Divizion* of the 1st MAR) had Battery 2/4 HAR east of the Miłosna station, Batteries 3/1 and 6/1 MAR north-west of Okuniew, and Battery 4/201 FAR half a kilometre west of Janówek.

Batteries 5/201 and 6/201 FAR received a special task: they were on the left bank of the Vistula River, ordered by Colonel Hulanicki on 13 August with “flanking the southern part of the Miłosna sector.” These batteries were part of the 3rd *Divizion* under the command of Major Wężyk. On 13 August they took up



positions: the 5th Battery a kilometre north of Kopyty, and 6th Battery at the southern end of Giszzyca. There was also an Emergency Battery of the 1st Horse Artillery *Divizion* in Góra Kalwaria.

On 13 August the Miłosna Artillery Group was disbanded and its batteries became part of the artillery brigades of the 8th and 15th IDs. The 8th received Batteries 3/1, 4/1 and 6/1 MAR, while the rest, i.e. Batteries 3/201, 4/201, 5/201 and 6/201 FAR (the latter two remaining on the left bank of the Vistula River), as well as a 100-mm howitzer battery, went to the 15th ID.

It has been discussed that there were two managers working on fortifying the Miłosna Sector: Lt-Colonel Butler, who was fortifying the portion later taken over by the 15th ID, and Lt-Colonel Stefanowicz, who was on the area taken by the 8th ID on 12 August.

From 6 to 10 August the 15th Sapper Battalion managed to build a position from the Mińsk – Warsaw railway track to the Vistula River (near Świdry Małe). In the following days that battalion continued to strengthen those positions, while the 19th Sapper Battalion, which arrived on 10 August, was tasked with building a position that ran from Wiązowna through Karczew to the Vistula. That section, however, was not completed.

As mentioned previously, Lt-Colonel Stefanowicz was not able to work very much at first, as there was a shortage of manpower. It was not until around 7 August that three companies of railway construction workers from Zgierz and a company of prisoners of war were received. Two companies of the workers started work on the Okuniew section, and one company of workers and the prisoners of war on the Leśniakowizna section. On the following day tools and barbed wire were received.

From that day onwards Stefanowicz received more and more sapper detachments, so that eventually there were more detachments in his sector than in the others of the bridgehead.

On 8 August the 2nd Volunteer Sapper Company of the 201st Sapper Battalion arrived. Stefanowicz also received about 1,000 workers from Warsaw, but he sent them back as he had no food, housing or tools for them.

On 11 August the 2nd and 14th Sapper Battalions arrived in Okuniew and started work on the Okuniew sector. At the same time the 3rd Company of the 9th Sapper Battalion also arrived, but after a one-day stay left for Zegrze.

On 12 August Lt-Colonel Stefanowicz finished work on the first line positions and left to build the second positions. The task of completing the construction of the first line was given to the 2nd and 14th Sapper Battalions, which were also to temporarily man the positions until the arrival of the 8th ID units.

The condition of the positions on 12 August was not satisfactory. The line, or rather its backbone, consisted of fire positions for machine-guns along with sections of shooting trenches, with some sections receiving obstacles, but mostly entanglements of tree branches supplemented by two to three rows of barbed wire.

On 9 August, 2nd-Lieutenant Winiarski arrived at the Miłosna sector with a telegraph unit and took over as the group's head of communications. His first job was to build a permanent two-wire line from Karczew to Góra Kalwaria. This line was completed on 13 August, using 34 km of conductor and 240 poles, but ultimately proved unnecessary as it was decided to abandon the position near Karczew on 13 August.

On 10 August Winiarski undertook the construction of the Rembertów – Wawer line and by 13 August had laid six conductors along that route. On 12 August the construction of the Wawer to Karczew line began.

This section had a rich network of previous fixed links, which were partly used, connecting Rembertów with Wawer by six wires.

The final expansion of the communications network in this section took place with the arrival of the 15th ID. However, we have found no trace of any work having been undertaken in that part of the Miłosna Sector which eventually fell to the 8th ID.



Chapter V

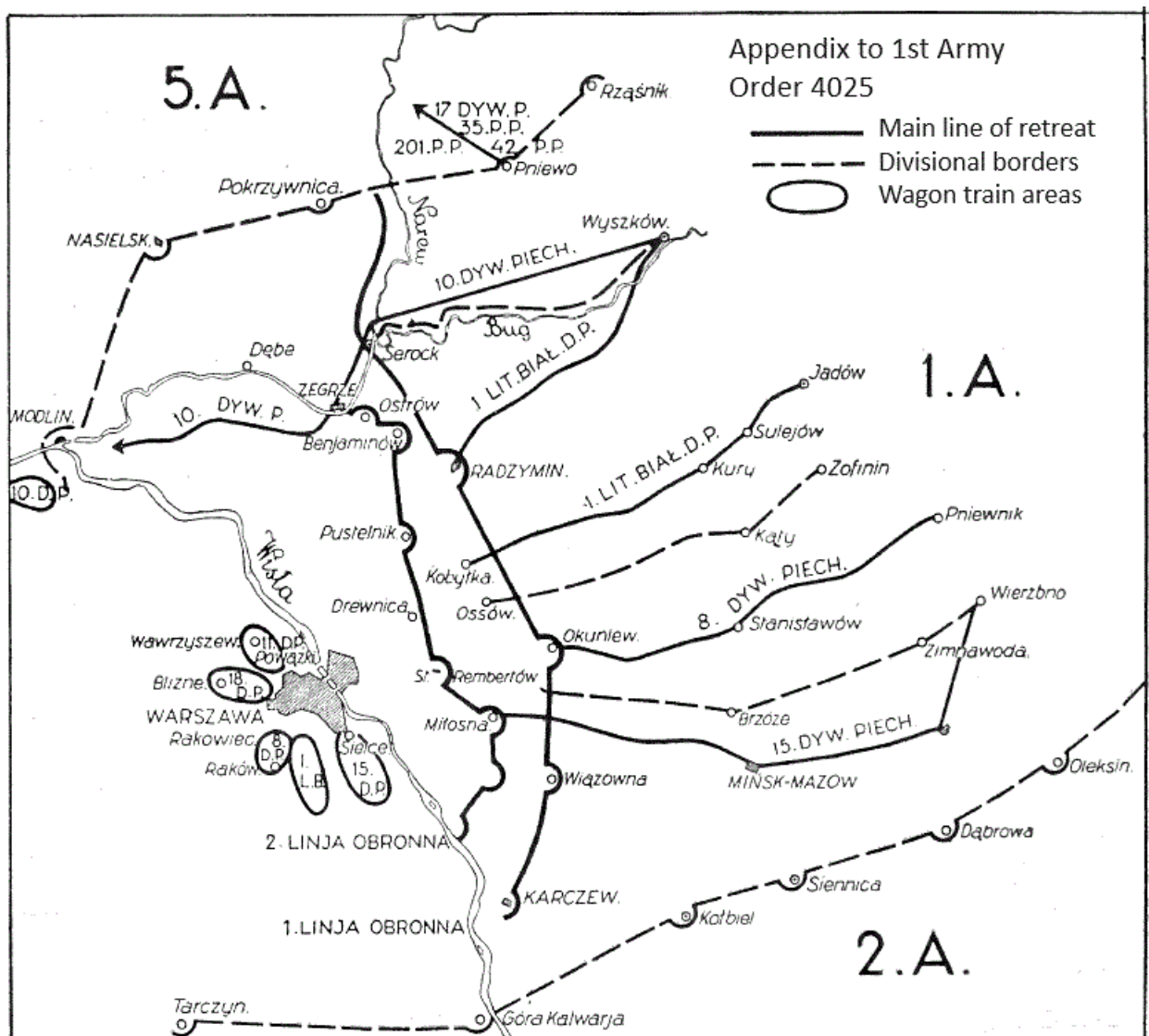
Retreat of the 1st Army to the Outskirts of Warsaw

On 6 August, the day the orders were issued for the Battle of Warsaw, the 1st Army was holding the Bug River with its right wing; the Małkinia bridgehead in the centre, which it soon abandoned, retreating to the Kosowka River due to the withdrawal of the 15th Division (the left wing of the 4th Army); while the left wing (General Żeligowski's group) was to the north of the Bug.

In the morning of 7 August the Front command issued an order as a result of the Supreme Command's 6 August plan, ordering the retreat of the 4th Army to the line Wiśniów – Siedlce – Liwów River; the 1st Army to the line Stara Wieś – Brańszczyk – Nowa Wieś – Przetycz and the Narew River to the mouth of the Orzyc River; and General Roja's group to the line of the Narew and Omulew Rivers, to the Prussian border.

The main order, regulating in detail the execution of the retreat and the positioning of the troops for the Battle of Warsaw, came out on 8 August, signed by the Chief of the General Staff and Deputy Minister of Military Affairs, General Sosnkowski.

This order took into account the troops grouped on the outskirts of Warsaw, now called the "security garrison". In particular, it was ordered that the retreat of the armies of the Northeastern Front should begin on the night of 7 August, while the left wing of the 1st Army was to hold out long enough to prevent the troops from being pushed back to the bridgehead before 12 August, i.e. to hold out at Wyszaków until the rest of the front reached the Liwiec – Siedlce – Luków – Turkawiec line.



Sketch 20



This order, regulating the retreat's lines of movement, established for each division a "primary march route towards Warsaw": for the 10th Division it was the Wyszaków – Serock – Zegrze road; for the 8th Division it was Niegów – Radzymin – Marki; for the 1st Lit-Bel Division it was Pniewnik – Stanisławów – Okuniew; and for the 15th Division via Kałuszyn – Mińsk Mazowiecki – Miłosna.

On 8 August the Northeastern Front command issued an order in which it repeated the main form of the order of the Supreme Command of 6 August, also stating in item 4.

On the 12th of this month the bulk of the forces of the Northeastern Front divisions will reach the main defensive line, making extensive use of railways, trucks and carts, leaving only guards with artillery and machine-guns on the line Kock – Żelechów – Garwolin – Tłuszcz – Wyszaków.

On 10 August, the 1st Army issued an order titled "Dispositions and fundamental modifications", which repeated and developed the orders above. It provided for the execution of the retreat in detail and the grouping on the move. Attached to the order was a sketch indicating the main axes of march for each division; the lines of demarcation between the divisions in the retreat; and the locations for the divisional wagons on the left bank of the Vistula. The axes of retreat were different from those previously indicated by the Ministry of Military Affairs and the Supreme Command, as recent changes in the plans for manning the bridgehead were now taken into account. The rules that divisions were to follow in carrying out the retreat, highlighted in previous orders from the higher commands, were also reiterated. Point 3 of the order stated:

In executing the retreat, efforts should be made to move as far away from the enemy as possible in order to continue the march without being disturbed by the enemy.

To this end, the divisions will designate rear guards consisting of infantry, MGs on carts, cavalry and artillery under the command of resolute officers. They, under the cover of numerous patrols in the designated sectors, will unconditionally secure the march and garrison the bridgehead, sacrificing themselves if necessary.

The rear guards will retreat as far as the Mińsk Mazowiecki – Stanisławów – Wyszaków line, where they will cover the manning of the bridgehead. They will be pulled back to the defensive area on the order of the Army command.

On 10 August the 1st Army staff moved to Warsaw, and from that day onwards further communications work in the field was connected with the network being prepared on the outskirts of Warsaw. However, the Army's Head of Communications on 10 and 11 August was still in charge of communications for the final days of the retreat, and it was not until 12 August that he accepted the post under the new Army commander.

In the last days of the retreat, communication used existing fixed wires, and where these were lacking, horse or car liaison (for short distances).

On 10 August the Army command established communications with the commands in Warsaw. The reporting depot in Tłuszcz (at the station) had the following connections:

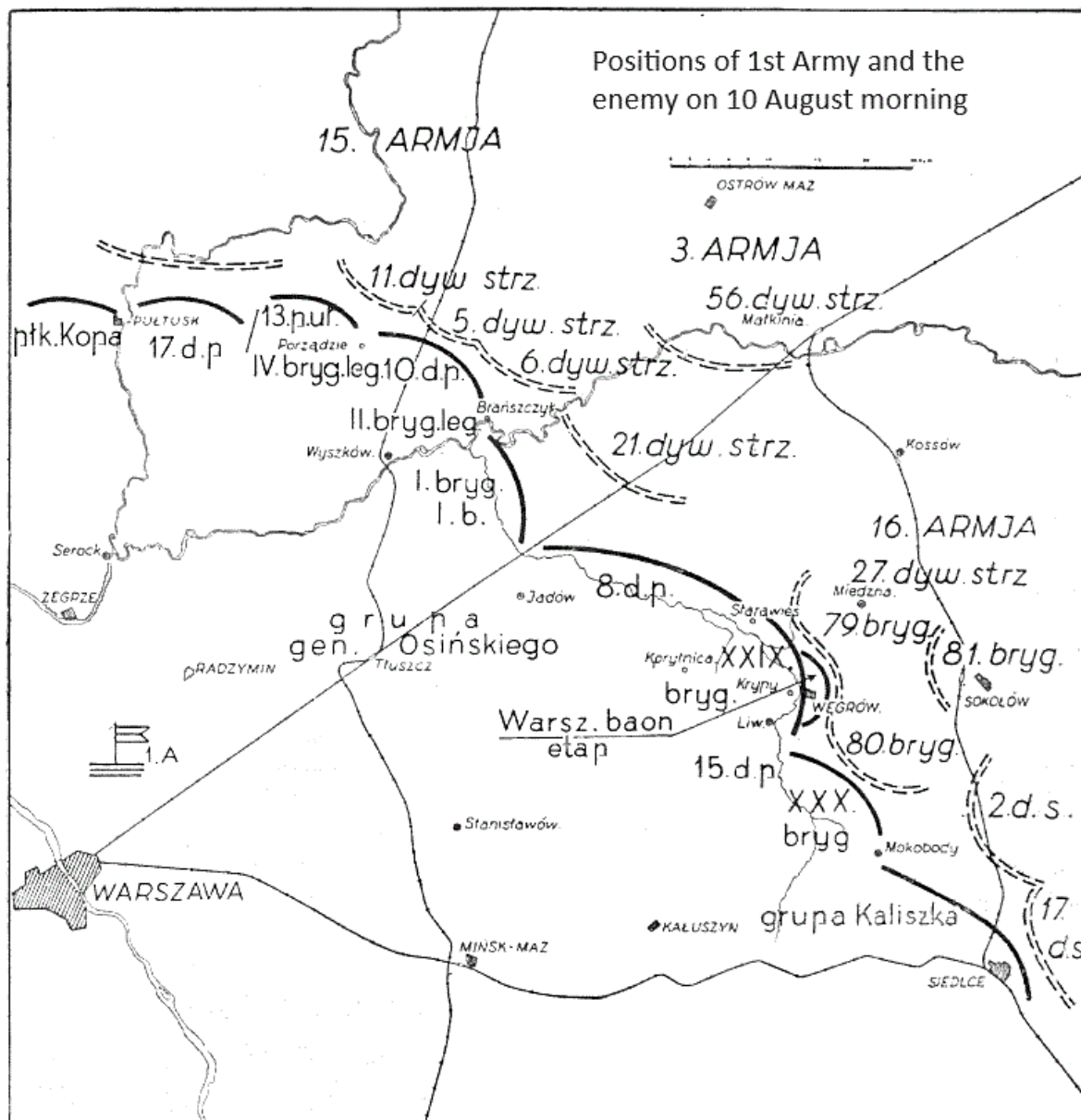
- with Warsaw – connection by telephone on fixed network Wire 110 113/197 and telegraph on Wires 53 and 46,
- with Radzymin – by telegraph on Wire 112,
- with Wyszaków – by telephone on Wire 290 and telegraph on Wire 2,
- with Łochów – by telephone Wires 110 and 112 and telegraph Wire 53.

The General Żeligowski's staff remained in Wyszaków, and that of General Osiński's in Łochów. The command of General Osiński's group had a connection with General Rządkowski's subgroup (1st Lit-Bel Division), whose staff remained in Łosiewica (telephone Wire 110) and with the 8th ID staff (Twarogi), using the telephone on the Łochów – Węgrów route. Inside the divisions horse messengers were used.



The 15th ID staff maintained communication directly with the Army using the Kałuszyn – Mińsk – Warsaw route (direct Wire 197 and indirect via Mińsk, Wire 198).

In connection with the orders for further retreat, directives were issued for the communications service. General Osiński's group was to continue to use the existing fixed wires running along the axis of the group's retreat. This network gave it a link with the Army, with General Rządkowski and with General Żeligowski. The 8th Division on the other hand, after the departure of its staff from Twarogi, could only maintain contact with the group by means of horse links, and only from Stanisławów could it use the fixed route via Mińsk Mazowiecki to Warsaw. General Żeligowski's group, after leaving Wyszaków, had the permanent Popowo – Serock line from Popowo (from Serock to Pułtusk, through Zegrze to Warsaw and with Modlin). At 21:00 on 10 August the Army's reporting station was removed from the station in Tłuszcz, and a reporting depot was opened there.



Sketch 21

The 1st Army, retiring to the bridgehead, was then divided into two groups: General Żeligowski's group and General Osiński's group.

General Żeligowski's group, consisting of the 10th ID and assigned troops (the 4th Legion Infantry Brigade, the 13th Lancer Regiment, the 4th Battalion of the 157th Regiment and the remnants of the 2nd Lit-Bel Division), occupied the section Trzcianka – Brańszczyk – Porządzie – Rządnik, linking to the north with the



17th Division, which was under the orders of the 5th Army (near Pułtusk). The line of demarcation with the 5th Army was: Pniewnik – Nasielsk.

In order to secure the further retreat of General Osiński's group, the 2nd Brigade of the 1st Lithuanian-Belorussian Division was sent to Wyszaków and in the afternoon garrisoned that town, organised the defence of its foreground and established communication with General Żeligowski's staff, still in Wyszaków.

That order was received by the 1st Army command on 10 August at 14:00 and it issued, following a further guideline of that day, a dispatch for 11 August, repeating the Front's orders. In particular, the 1st Army directed the main forces of the 15th ID and General Osiński's group to reach the line Niegów – Tłuszcz – Stanisławów – Jakubów – Cegłów, leaving on the 10 August line some rear guards with guns and infantry with rifles on carts, which were to remain until the evening of 11 August on the line Kamieńczyk – Jadów – Osowica River – Kałuszyn. The Army command put a strong emphasis on the fact that the left wing of the 1st Army should slowly retreat in communication with General Żeligowski's group, which:

This order was received by General Osiński and sent to the 1st Lit-Bel Division, which confirmed receipt on 11 August at 02:30.

Sketch 22 : 8th ID on the Liwiec

The 1st Lit-Bel ID, after battles fought in the area of Grabiny and Szyńkarzyna, departed to the south-west and manned the Liwiec River with the 1st Brigade, with the Wilno Regiment occupying the section from Świniotop to Strachów and the Mińsk Regiment from Strachów to Borzym. The 2nd Brigade marched to Wyszaków and at 16:30 occupied the Wyszaków bridgehead. Major Matczyński's battalion was on the section from Świniotop to the Bug.

The 8th Infantry Division manned the Liwiec River from Borzym to Turna. The location of the units is shown on Sketch 22. The division HQ was in Pustelnik.

In the evening of 9 August, the rear guards of the 15th ID withdrew, drawing up a few kilometres east of the Liwiec, which was garrisoned by the division's main forces. On the morning of 10 August, the division's grouping was as follows:

- The 62nd IR, from the 30th Brigade, was holding the stretch from Piegowka through Grodzisk to Height 144. In that Brigade's reserve was a battalion of the 61st Regiment (Pobratymy). To the right of the brigade was the 17th IR from Colonel Kaliszek's group.
- The 29th Brigade, consisting of the 59th and 60th IRs, were positioned from Height 144 to Turna, with communications to the left with the 15th Brigade. The Warsaw Stage Battalion was on the outskirts of Węgrów.
- The division's reserve was two battalions of the 61st Infantry Regiment (Raguszyn Stary) and a battalion of the 233rd IR (Czerwonka).

The division staff was aware of the enemy's intentions, as it had intercepted a Soviet radio dispatch ordering the 27th Rifle Division to occupy the line of the Liwiec. By midday on 10 August, the rearguard had withdrawn to the west bank of the river; the Warsaw stage battalion left Węgrów for Czerwonka and Zawady. During the day battles were fought in the vicinity of Kropy, which were not successful for the enemy.

At noon, the brigade commanders were notified of the order to retreat to the outskirts of Warsaw. The troops were acquainted with the main lines of retreat and orders were issued for the dispatch of the heavy wagons. In the afternoon of 10 August, the command of the 15th Infantry Division sent the 2nd and 3rd Battalions of the 61st Regiment from the reserve to the Pobratymy and Podsusze areas.

Retreat of the 1st Army on 11 August

The retreat of the 1st Army encountered no particular obstacles on 11 August.

General Żeligowski's group, which was to leave along the Bug in the general direction of Serock, was in a difficult situation, as it could be pressed against the river at any time if the enemy attacked it from the north. However the group's departure took place peacefully. At 06:00 the retirement started, and under the cover of the rearguard the group calmly marched off, reaching the Barcice – Ulasek – Skorki area by the evening. On the left wing was Colonel Mackiewicz's group (41st and 35th IRs) and on the right was the 10th ID together with Battalion 4/157 and units of the 2nd Lit-Bel Division. Soon, however, the group retreated (due to its position on the left wing) to the Zatory – Wielęcin line, where it stayed until dawn of 12 August, before leaving for behind the Narew.

For General Osiński's group, the retreat of the 1st Lit-Bel Division was peaceful on 11 August. The 2nd Brigade, which had garrisoned the outskirts of Wyszaków, after the rearguard of the 10th ID had left, soon met the enemy and, after an exchange of shots lasting several minutes, at 09:00 began its retreat. After burning the wooden bridge (the railway bridge was not destroyed) it departed with the temporarily assigned Battalion 3/201, Major Matczyński's battalion and a squadron of the 201st Light Horse Regiment. After completing the march the 2nd Brigade positioned the Grodno Regiment from Słopsk to Niegów, the Nowogród Regiment from Niegów via Wysychy and Pienki to Kozły. Battalion 3/201 and Major Matczyński's Battalion (Jakuszewo and Trojany) were the brigade reserve.

A little later (between 10:00 and 11:00) the 1st Brigade ordered a retreat. Around noon, the Wilno Regiment crossed the road unhindered, withdrawing to the Tłuszcz area. In the evening it placed its 1st



Battalion in the section Miąse – Tłuszcz. The 2nd and 3rd Battalions together with the regiment's staff were in reserve in Jasienica. At the same time Mińsk Regiment arrived from the Liwiec River and by evening it had its 3rd Battalion from Międzyłże to Franciszków and the 1st Battalion from Franciszków to Miąse. The 2nd Battalion remained in reserve at Dąbrowica, and the regimental staff were at Szczepanek.

The retreat of the 8th ID took place under different conditions from those of the 1st Lit-Bel Division, so we must include more details.

On 11 August the 8th Division command gave orders for a further retreat to reach the line of Łaziska – Stanisławów – Międzyłże by that day. The 16th Brigade was to leave via Strachówka for Stanisławów. The 15th Brigade was to send the 13th Regiment through Pniewnik and Dobrze to Stanisławów and the 33rd Regiment through Kąty Parysy, Kupce, Połazie, and Budki Boruszczyńskie – also to the Stanisławów region.

In the morning of 11 August the regimental commanders gave orders to march out from the banks of the Liwiec. At 11:25 the commander of the 21st Regiment ordered the 1st Battalion of the 36th IR to leave one platoon (possibly on horse-drawn carriages) in Seklak, while the rest marched through Annopol to Strachówka. The 1st and 3rd Battalions of the 21st IR were to leave their rear guards in Ruda, Zawiszyń and Borzymy, and the rest march on the road to Warmiaki.

As early as 06:00 the 36th IR staff and 3rd Battalion marched to Strachówka. So the 16th Brigade, unpressured by the enemy, gathered in the vicinity of Strachówka, then departed to Ołdakowizna, where it arrived at 20:00. However the march was hastily executed, as incidents with the 15th Brigade led to anticipation of an enemy threat to the retreat routes. The 33rd Regiment broke off and marched without pressure from the enemy. The 13th Infantry Regiment, on the other hand, had great difficulty in leaving.

Clash at Korytnica

At around 07:00 on 11 August the 13th IR noticed that the 60th IR, which was adjacent to its right, had left the Liwiec and as a result the right wing of Battalion 2/13 was exposed. The regimental commander ordered that battalion to guard its right wing with patrols, and at 10:00 ordered Lieutenant Szewczyk, the 9th Company commander, to send an observation patrol to the edge of Górki Borze. He sent the 1st Section to Height 126 (southeast of Turna), and moved the company to the northeastern edge of Górki Borze in combat readiness. However, the enemy soon appeared on the Turna – Korytnica road. Lieutenant Szewczyk, observing the march of his patrol, noticed a cavalry unit leaving a small clump of trees, and a column of infantry with artillery that was advancing right behind it. At that very moment the 13th IR doctor, Captain Nowakowski, was riding with the regimental wagons, as the regimental commander had sent him from Górki Borze via Korytnica to the rear.

It was not long before shots were fired by the 9th Company patrol. A detachment of the enemy cavalry turned on the 13th Regiment's wagons, shooting at them from their horses.

Lieutenant Szewczyk, seeing the seriousness of the situation, let the regimental commander know and asked that a machine-gun be sent. He ordered his company to advance towards the woods. Soon a NCO arrived from Górki Borze with a machine-gun, which Szewczyk ordered to be set up in a position on the right wing and to fire at the cavalry. However, at the moment of loading the gun, one of the crew was seriously wounded by rifle fire, causing panic among the men. At that point the lieutenant personally picked up the man's rifle and fired. This calmed the men down. Private Tradowski volunteered to take command of the gun and Szewczyk gave him the task of holding back the cavalry and firing on the infantry column, facilitating the company's advance through the woods. At this time the surprised wagon column reflexively turned right along a dirt road and, covered in dust, disappeared into the forest near Komory.

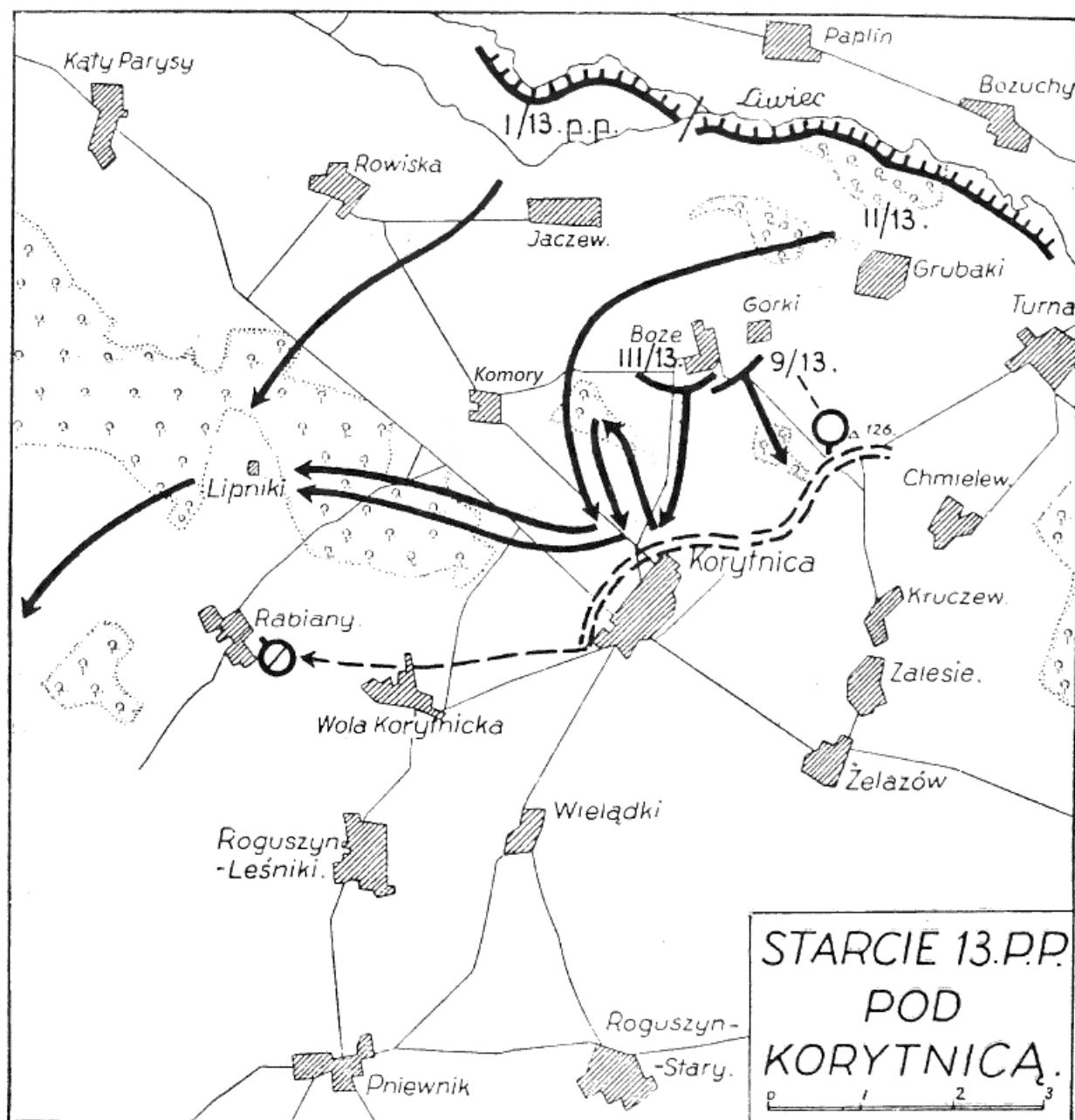
The sounds of the clash and then reports alerted the commander of the 13th IR, who gathered the rest of the 3rd Battalion and personally led them to counter-attack in the direction of Korytnica. The 1st and 2nd Battalions were ordered to leave for Górki Borze.

The attack of the 3rd Battalion, along the southern edge of Górki Borze, soon took considerable losses. The battalion commander (Lieutenant Wilhelm Remer), the commander of the 3rd MG Company (Lieutenant Witold Sujkowski), and one NCO were wounded. The 9th Company, on the other hand, threw the enemy



out of the woods and forced its column to head along the Turna – Górki Borze road. The artillery retreated to the Kruszew area. The further advance of the 9th Company was stopped by enemy machine-gun fire, inflicting casualties.

By this time the 3rd Battalion had reached the House in Korytnica, but at a distance of 400 metres it was covered by fire and thrown back. It began to retreat towards a forest between Górki Borze and Komory.



Sketch 23: Battle of the 13th IR at Korytnica

In the course of this battle the 2nd Battalion arrived, and advanced to the right of the 3rd Battalion. Together they attacked Korytnica again, reaching the south-western edge of the village. Eventually, however, the two battalions failed to fight off the resistance and withdrew towards the south-eastern edge of Komory Forest. The 1st Battalion arrived at this time and facilitated a breakaway from the enemy. The 9th Company found itself in the worst situation, not knowing the position of the rest of the regiment. It retreated to Górki Borze and Jacew, and it was only when it got to near Lipniki did it encounter the 1st Company, marching as the regiment's rearguard.

In the course of this clash at Korytnica the enemy cavalry were able to surprise wagons of the 33rd IR and other units which were still in Rabiany, and drove them off, seizing a dozen or so. A detachment of the



201st LHR moved towards Rabiany, but suffered losses and had to retreat. The 13th and 33rd IRs bypassed that village during their retreat.

Late in the evening of 11 August, units of the 8th ID manned its designated line. Battalion 3/36 occupied from Międzyłże (exclusive) up to the intersection of the Rządza River with the road. The HQ of the 36th IR was with the 1st Battalion in Wólka Dąbrowicka, which was also the location of the 16th Brigade staff, the 21st IR HQ and Battalion 3/21. Battalion 1/21 manned the section to the right of the 36th IR up to Rządza village. The 15th Brigade's section was manned by Battalions 1/13, 2/13, 1/33 and 2/33. Battalions 2/13²⁶ and 3/33 were in reserve.

After midnight on 10-11 August, the main forces of the 15th ID departed from the banks of the Liwiec, leaving a rearguard of three battalions with three artillery platoons. Colonel Wrzaliński's group, consisting of the 29th Brigade (Colonel Wrzaliński took command after Colonel Przeździecki left on 10 August), left the Liwiec River via Wierzbno for the Jakubów area. The regiments' rearguard was Battalion 3/60 with a platoon of Battery 4/15, and Battalion 1/59 with a platoon of Battery 2/15.

In the afternoon of 11 August Colonel Wrzaliński's group took up positions on the Łaziska – Jakubów – Jędrzejów line, garrisoning the Łaziska – Jakubów section with Battalion 1/60 and the Jakubów – Jędrzejów section with Battalions 2/59 and 3/59. The 29th Brigade staff was based in Niedziałka. The deployment of the artillery is shown in Sketch 24.

In the course of these operations the 60th IR had to set up a new rearguard, as its 3rd Battalion became entangled in a battle and lost communication with the regiment, retreating to Pniewnik and Dobre. So Battalion 2/60 was sent with a platoon of Battery 4/15 to guard the Turek – Chrościce line.

Colonel Galecki's group, based around the 30th Brigade, left the Liwiec via Trzebucza and Kałuszyn and garrisoned the Jędrzejów – Cegłów line. The group's HQ was in Barcza, alongside Battalions 2/61 and 3/61. A battalion of the 62nd IR (on the Kałuszyn – Grodzisk line) remained as the Brigade's rearguard. The rest of the 62nd IR garrisoned the Pełczanka River, near Pełczanka village.

Battalion 1/223 and the Warsaw Stage Battalion (Niedziałka) as well as Battalion 2/61 (Osiny) were the division reserve.

The 2nd *Divizion* of the 15th FAR departed for the outskirts of Warsaw and arrived in Falenica at 17:00.

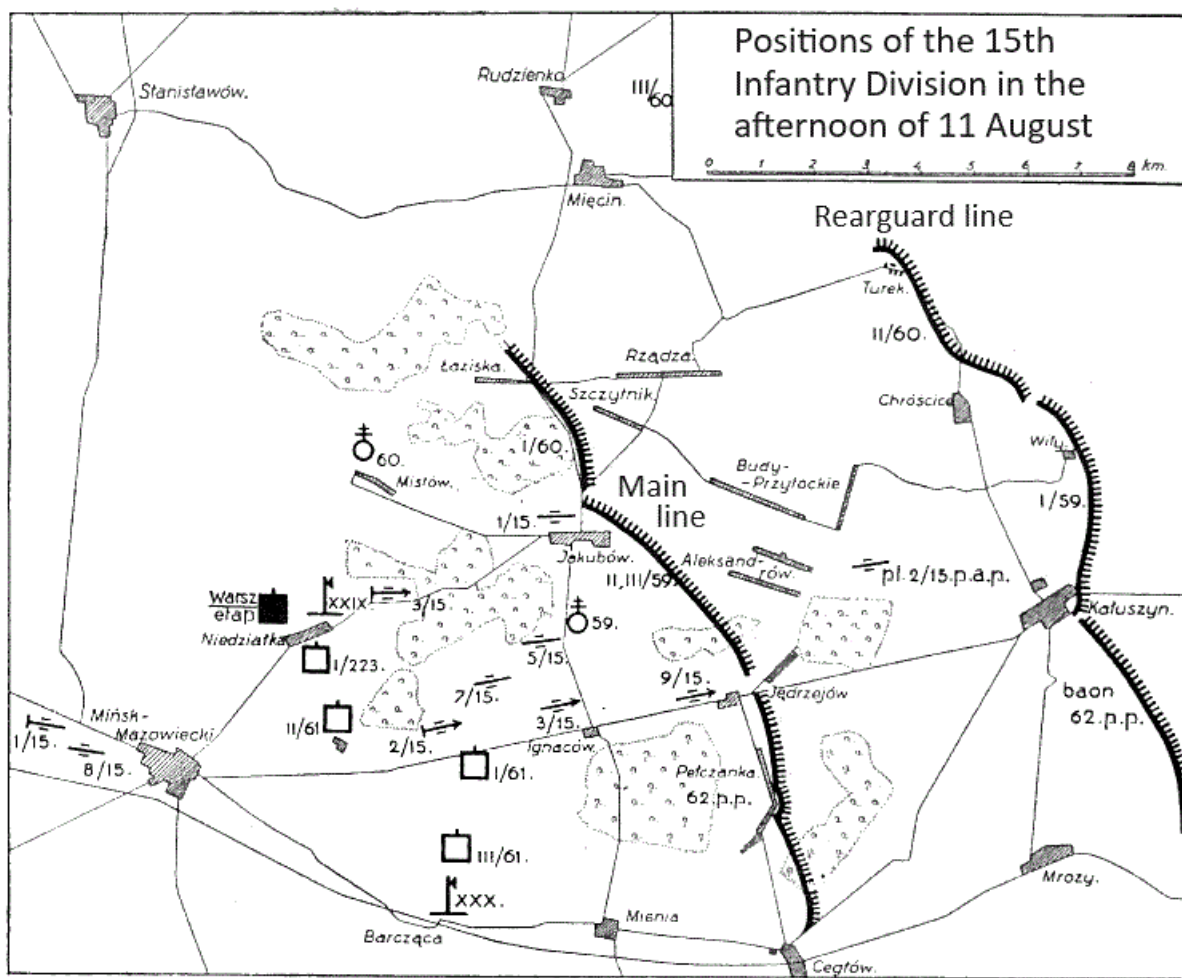
On 11 August the division's command issued an operational order in which it was communicated that the division would occupy the sector Karczew – Otwock – Wiązowna – Miłosna – Okuniew (excl.) on the outskirts of Warsaw and, in view of this, the main forces would set out at 04:00 on 12 August and regroup by 18:00 in the Izabella – Majdan – Wiązowna – Otwock area. "In order to secure the Warsaw bridgehead," the division's rearguard was to reach the Cegłów – Jędrzejów – Jakubów – Łaziska line in the morning of August 12, and:

... could only withdraw from it under enemy pressure, so that the Warsaw bridgehead was not reached until 13 of this month.

The 29th Brigade was to march with the majority of its forces to Mińsk, Dębe Wielkie and Brzeziny Manor, while the 30th Brigade was to march to Mińsk, Podrudzie, Glinianki and Świder. The 29th Brigade was to leave two battalions with two artillery platoons and a cavalry platoon in the rear guard which was to cover the line Jędrzejów – Mińsk – Dębe Wielkie. The 30th Brigade was to leave one battalion with an artillery platoon, which was to retreat towards Mińsk, Podrudzie and Glinianki. Colonel Wrzaliński also ordered the 60th IR's rearguard battalion to hold the line east of Cisie Manor to Cisie village (inclusive) until at least 05:00 on 13 August, while the 59th Regiment's rearguard was to hold the line of Kąck – Brzeziny Manor.

²⁶ Clearly either this or the previous reference to 2/13 is actually to 3/13.





1st Army Retreat on 12 August

The day of 12 August was of particular importance to the 1st Army and the results of the operations on that day would considerably affect the course of events over the next few days. The main forces of the divisions were scheduled to retire to the bridgehead positions and man them. Within a dozen or so hours the units were to absorb reinforcements, remedy material shortages and organise the defence.

On 12 August the previous operational groups were disbanded. The Governor of Warsaw, General Latinik, took command of the Army from General Jędrzejewski. At the same time a regrouping was ordered: by the evening of 11 August, General Żeligowski was to send the 2nd Legion ID to the 2nd Army, and the 35th and 41st IRs to the 5th Army. The 5th Army received the task of holding Pułtusk, while the 1st Army was still to send a detachment to the Serock area on 11 August to secure the Narew crossing. In view of this, General Żeligowski's group had an easier task, as it could leave the front with the majority of its forces for the retreat.

In the afternoon of 11 August, the 1st Army issued directives for 12 August relating to the manning of the bridgehead positions. It ordered the 4th Brigade (2nd Legion ID) to be sent by rail from Zegrze, while the 35th and 41st IRs were to leave for Pułtusk as part of the 5th Army. The 201st IR was also to leave for the 5th Army.

In order to secure the bridgehead as it was manned, the Army ordered that strong rear guards be detached, which were to move to and hold the line Ceglów – Jakubów – Tłuszcz – Dąbrówka on 12 August and withdraw from that line to the bridgehead on 13 August.

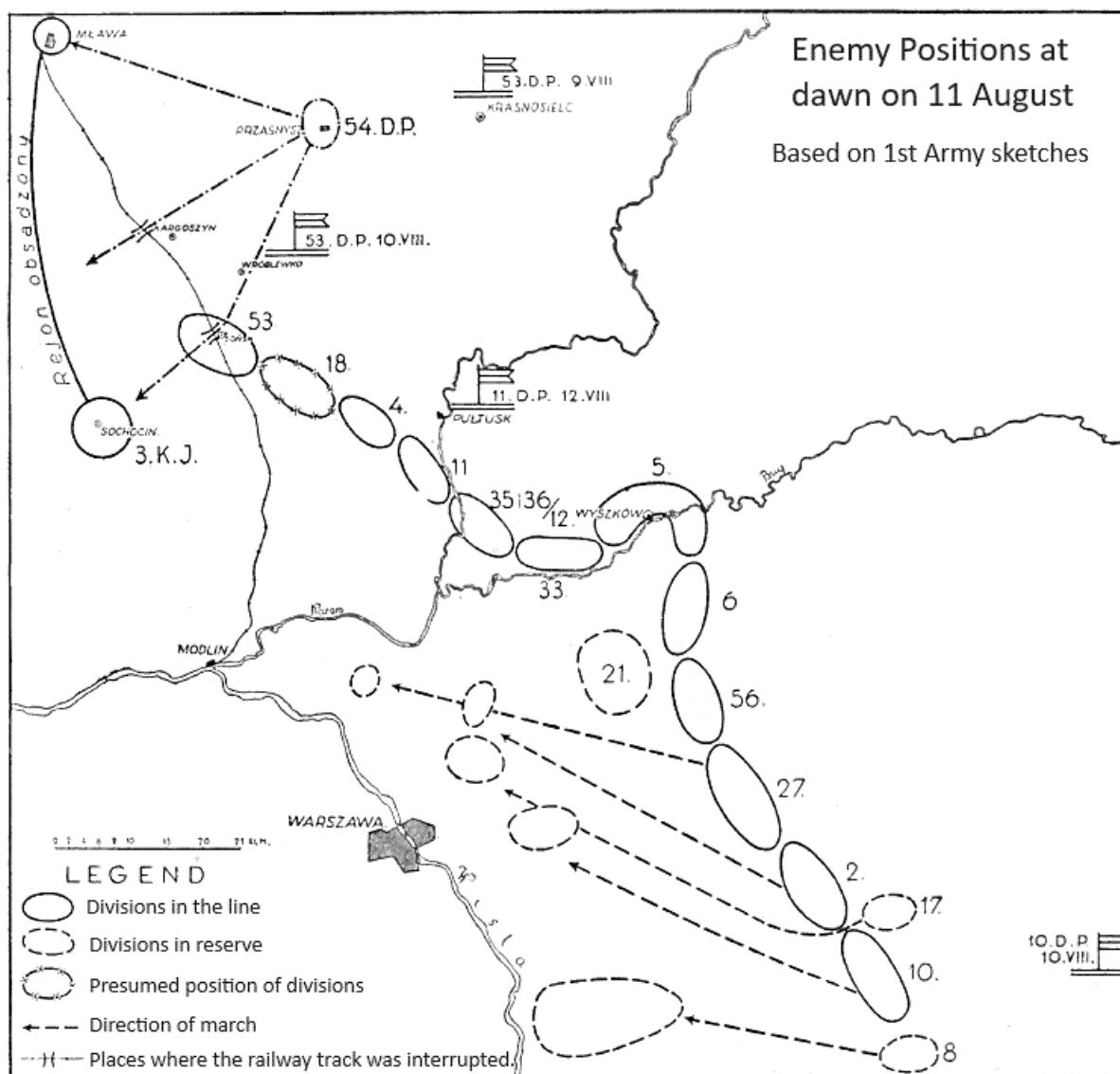
The next order also stipulated that the rearguards would withdraw in the evening of 13 August. The commander of the Zegrze sector, Rear Admiral Porebski, received orders to garrison the bridgehead of the



Serock and the Narew line from Strzyże to Serock (Strzyże being on the line of demarcation with the 5th Army).

We can see that the higher command counted on the rearguards ensuring that the bridgehead would be peaceful on 12 and 13 August.

At the time the 1st Army's 2nd Department had relatively accurate news of the enemy's positions. This information, with some revisions from the following days, was collated in reports and is shown plotted on Sketch 25.



Sketch 25

On 11 August the Army HQ in Warsaw had telephone communication with the Front staff through the D.O.G. HQ and the city HQ, and telephone and telegraph communication with the following commands: General Osiński's group (Wołomin), General Żeligowski's group (Serock) and the 11th ID command (Marki). In addition, there was telephone communication with the commands of the 15th ID (Mińsk), 8th ID (Pustelnik) and 1st Lit-Bel Division (Roszczep). The Army's reporting centre was moved from Tłuszcz to Wołomin, while the HQ was left in Tłuszcz. At 14:45 the Army activated a Hughes station.

Retreat of the Left Wing of the 1st Army and the Neighbouring Units of the 5th Army on 12 August

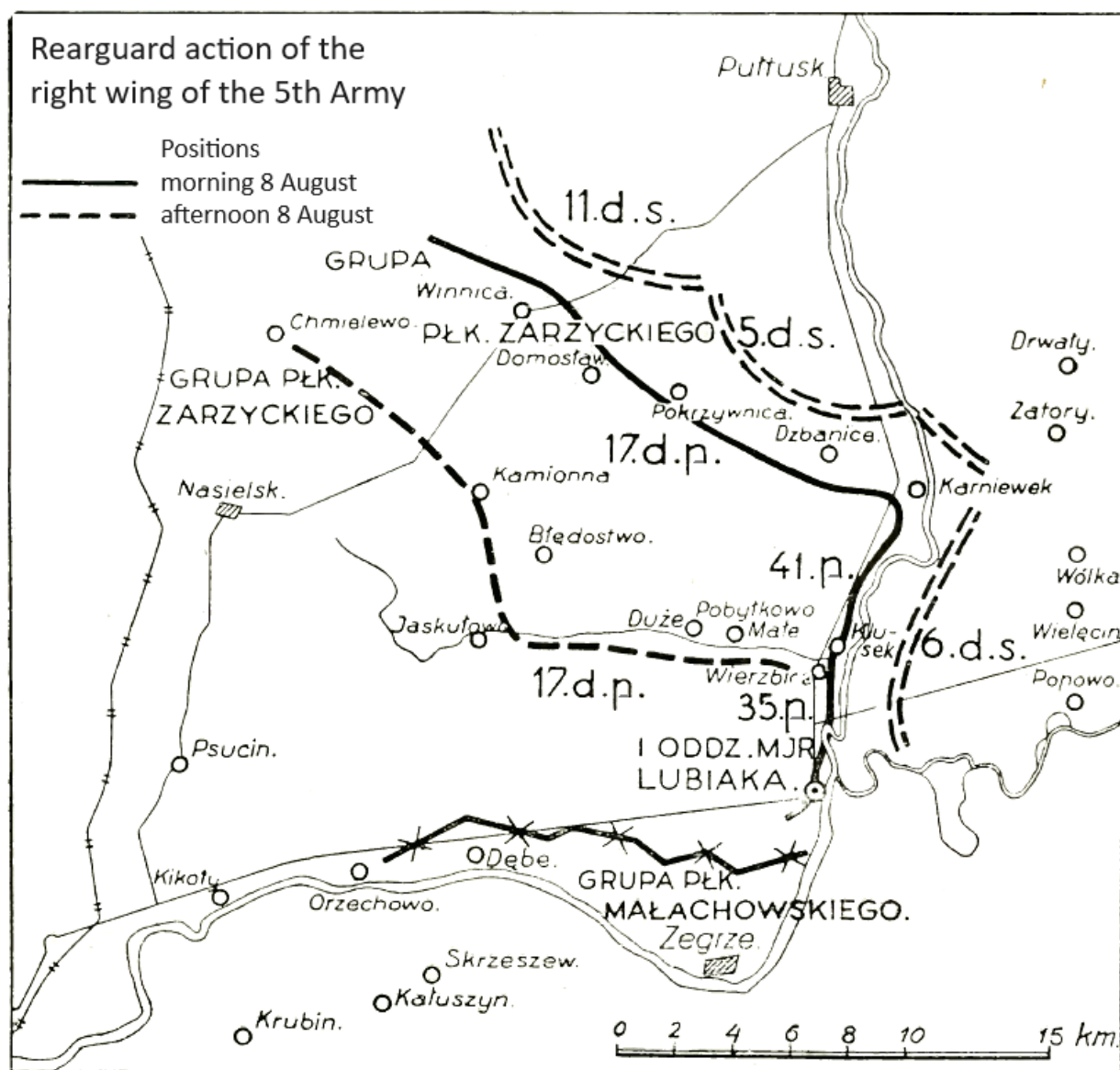
During the day of 11 August and by the morning of 12 August there had been some changes in the position on the Narew, which affected other decisions. It turned out that the units in the 5th Army had failed to hold Pułtusk and were retreating from the Narew.



As a result, the Supreme Command and the Front ordered the 5th Army to concentrate in the Modlin area and to stop the enemy advancing from Pułtusk to Gołymin Stary in order, to calmly withdraw the 17th Infantry Division and Colonel Zarzycki's group. The Front ordered the 17th ID and Colonel Zarzycki's troops to hold the currently occupied line until the evening of 12 August, and then to withdraw to the Dębe (excl.) – Nasielsk (incl.) line.

The troops of the 1st Army were to hold Serock until the evening of 12 August, after which they were to withdraw together with the 17th ID and Colonel Zarzycki's group. The above task was entrusted by Rear Admiral Porębski to Major Lubiak, who on 11 August was sent from Zegrze with a detachment consisting of four foot squadrons of the 6th BRR and half of Battery 8/16. Major Lubiak was also given the 1st Poznań Stage Battalion, which until then had been manning the bridgehead in Wierzbica.

As we have seen, during the night of 11/12 August General Żeligowski's group remained east of the Narew River: the 10th ID in the area of Popowo Kościelne – Wielecin, while Colonel Mackiewicz's group (35th and 41st IRs) were in the Drwały – Zatory – Wólka Zatorska area. Due to the 5th Army being thrown out of Pułtusk, the situation to the left of General Żeligowski's group had deteriorated. On 12 August, at about 01:00, orders were given to leave for the Narew. The 10th ID was to march through Serock to Zegrze.



Sketch 26

After withdrawing to the west bank of the Narew, Colonel Mackiewicz's group – which now came under the orders of the 5th Army – took up positions: from Klusek to Karniewek was the 41st IR, with the 1st Battalion in the line and the 2nd and 3rd Battalions in reserve (Gaik – Grabina), and from Klusek to the mouth of the



Bug on the Narew was taken over by the 35th Regiment, which put the 1st Battalion in the line and the 2nd and 3rd Battalions in reserve in Serock. Thus the line from Karniewek to Serock was quite strongly garrisoned, as Major Lubiak's detachment remained in Wierzbica, reinforced by Battery 3/10 FAR.

By now the left wing of the 1st Army had completed its retreat and General Żeligowski's group ceased to exist. However, due to the further course of events in the Zegrze sector, we must give a general outline of the course of the retreat of the troops of the 5th Army behind the Wkra.

The 17th ID, after withdrawing on 11 August from the Pułtusk area, held from Pokrzywnica to Holendry on the Narew. To the left of it, in the Winnica area, was General Baranowski's group, which had been taken over by Colonel Zarzycki.

On the morning of 12 August, the command of the 17th ID, on a verbal order from General Sikorski, ordered the 33rd Brigade to extend its left flank as far as Domosław, where it was to link up with Colonel Zarzycki's group. Thus the 33rd Brigade was given the section from Domosław to Dzbanice and the 34th Brigade from Dzbanice to Karniewek.

However, in the afternoon of 12 August Colonel Zarzycki's group found itself under strong enemy pressure (in the Winnica area) and the troops of the 17th Division, which were to garrison the Domosław region, met their neighbours already in retreat. Around 16:00 Colonel Zarzycki's group retreated to the Chmielewo – Poniaty – Kamionna line, intending to leave in the evening for Nasielsk – Chrcynno – Jaskółowo. In view of this, the 17th Division ordered the 33rd Brigade to leave at 17:30 for the Jaskółowo – Pobyłkowo Duże line, and the 34th Brigade to leave to the Pobyłkowo Duże – Wierzbica line. At the same time orders were issued for the 17th ID, 35th and 41st IRs to march to the Modlin area.

At 19:45 the commander of the 17th ID left Ciepielin and at 21:00, on the Modlin – Serock road, received an order from the 5th Army. That stated that the division was to hold its current positions until 22:00, after which it was to leave via Błędowo, Jaskółowo, and Psucin for the Krosczewo area. The division's rearguard was to hold the area of Zabłocie – Jaskółowo – Popowo Borowe until 21:00 on 13 August, and then join the division through Dębe. The 41st and 35th IRs, making up the 18th Brigade under the command of Colonel Luczynski, were to hold their section on the Narew River until 21:00, and then leave via Serock, Zegrze, and Kałuszyn to Nowy Dwór. Colonel Zarzycki's group was to withdraw with its main forces, leaving a strong detachment to, "defend the Nasielsk area at all costs throughout the day of 13 August."

However, the 17th ID did not leave a rearguard and at 23:00 its commander ordered the 34th Brigade to march through Serock, Zegrze, and Kałuszyn to the Sikora – Kępa Kikolska area, and the 33rd Brigade to march along the road through Dębe and garrison the Orzechowo – Czarnowo (excl.) sector. At the same time, the order stressed that:

The march must be carried out as quickly as possible at all costs, regardless of the exhaustion of the horses and men.

The 35th and 41st IRs did not stay in their sector either: at 20:00 the 35th IR marched past Dębe, from where it turned across the bridge to Skrzyszew, and at the same time the 41st IR arrived in the Krubin area, where it stayed overnight.

So by midnight on 12/13 August, the troops of the 5th Army had withdrawn from the area in front of the 7th Reserve Brigade. Only the 101st IR remained in Nasielsk until the morning of 13 August.

Major Lubiak's units remained on the Narew River near Wierzbica and Serock. At 20:00 Russian patrols approached the river opposite Wierzbica, and were repulsed by the fire of Battery 8/16.

At about 23:00 the 2nd Squadron of the 6th BRR (as it reported later, having had no communication with the 35th and 41st IRs) began to withdraw through Serock to Zegrze. The bridge over the Narew River, which following Rear Admiral Porębski's orders had been carefully prepared for burning, was set on fire. Battery 3/10 let it burn and then destroyed it completely.

Thus the last major units had withdrawn from in front of the lines. Only the infantry patrols of the 7th Reserve Brigade remained.



Retreat of General Osiński's Group and the 15th ID

At 20:00 on 11 August General Osiński ordered his divisions to leave at 02:00 on 12 August from the Łaziska – Stanisławów – Międzyłże – Niegów line, stressing at the same time that the outer wings of the 8th ID and 1st Lit-Bel Division should leave in close communication with each other. Each division was to leave one infantry regiment, reinforced with divisional cavalry and a battery in its rearguard. In addition, the rearguard of the Lit-Bel Division, which was to secure Tłuszcz Station, received the armoured train *Mściciel* and a platoon of tanks on rail cars. After the divisions had regrouped in the bridgehead the group was to be disbanded, and General Osiński was to leave to take command of the 17th Division.

Fighting at Tłuszcz

On 11 August, General Rządkowski (with the 1st Lit-Bel Division staff in Roszczep) issued an operational order, in which he repeated the orders from the Army and General Osiński. In addition, he gave the lines of retreat of the brigades and the regions for their grouping in the bridgehead. Lt-Colonel Adamowicz was put in charge of the rearguard, with the Mińsk Regiment, the 3rd *Division* of the 3rd Horse Rifle Regiment, the armoured train and the tank platoon. He would occupy:

... a rearguard position in the area of Tłuszcz Station, holding it until 13 August, after which it will withdraw to the Warsaw bridgehead.

From those orders it is clear that the only divisional rearguard would be the Mińsk Regiment in Tłuszcz.

The commander of the 2nd Lit-Bel Brigade received the division's orders on 12 August at 01:55, and ordered it to march off at 04:00. At 10:00 the Nowogród Regiment marched through Kraszew and then to the Nadma – Ulasek – Kobyłka area. At 11:00 the Grodno Regiment passed through Radzymin, marching to Pustelnik. The last of the 2nd Brigade to leave was Major Matczyński's battalion, which arrived at the northern edge of Radzymin at 10:20. The squadron of the 201st LHR departed for Jabłonna, and Battalion 3/201 departed for its home division. At 12:00 the staffs of the 2nd Brigade and the artillery arrived at Pustelnik. The brigade staff were stationed in a house opposite the railway station.

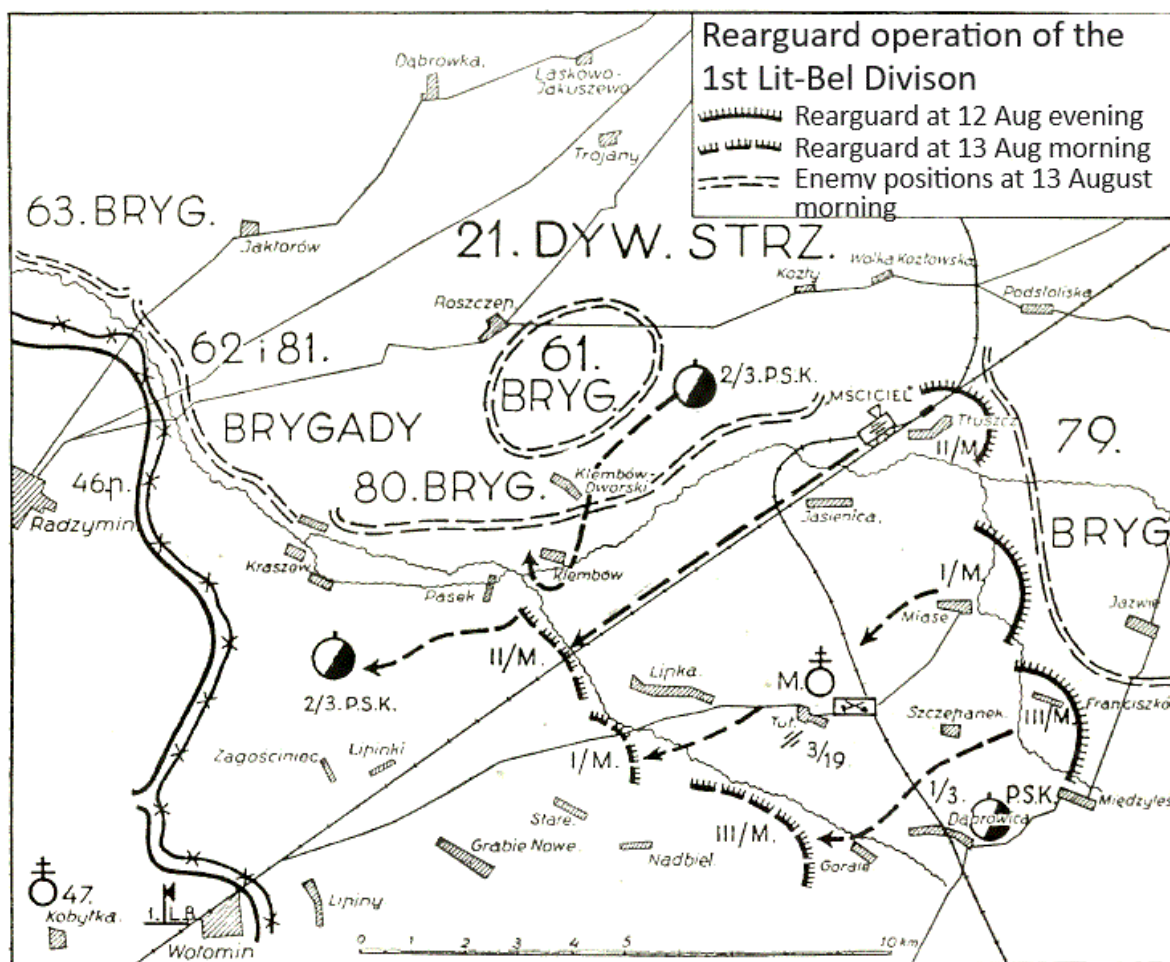
The commander of the 1st Brigade (in Tuł) gave the order to march to the bridgehead at 02:40. The Wilno Regiment assembled at 06:00 in Jasienica, marched through Tuł, Duczki and Wołomin. It halted with the regiment's HQ and staff units in Kobyłka, the 1st and 3rd Battalions were in Turów, and the 2nd Battalion in Nadarzyn.

The Mińsk Regiment, tasked with holding Tłuszcz, manned its positions in the evening of 11 August. On the right wing of the regiment was the 3rd Battalion, which garrisoned from Międzyłże up to and including Franciszków, with the 10th, 11th and 12th Companies in the line and the 9th Company in reserve in Międzyłże. The battalion was commanded by Lieutenant Edwin Bielawski. To the left of the 3rd was the 1st Battalion, commanded by Lieutenant Ciemnołonski, which had the 1st, 3rd, and 4th Companies in the line; the 2nd in reserve in Jasienica. The battalion commander was in Miąse. The regiment's reserve (in Dąbrowica) was the 2nd Battalion under the command of Lieutenant Łappa. In addition there was the 3rd Battery under the command of Lieutenant Jan Misiewski, which took up a position to the right of the road near Tuł.

The Horse Rifle *division* arrived around midnight in Krusze and at 01:40 its commander reported its arrival to Lt-Colonel Adamowicz, but he did not receive the message until 07:50. In the meantime the *division* sent out patrols to establish communication links and reconnaissance.

For unknown reasons Lt-Colonel Adamowicz was rather late in carrying out his task, and solved it in such a way that he left the battalions on the existing line, while his reserve – the 2nd Battalion – was directed to garrison Tłuszcz Station. This left only a technical company and two machine-gun platoons in the regiment's reserve. However, before the 2nd Battalion arrived at Tłuszcz, enemy patrols appeared in the vicinity. Some patrols from the 3rd Horse Rifles met them near the station – recapturing a section of the 1st Battalion from the Red cavalry's hands. The *division's* 1st Squadron found itself at 11:00 on the railway track opposite Tłuszcz when it received the news that a large cavalry column (5 minutes long) was marching from Postoliska towards Radzymin or the railway line.





Sketch 27

It was not until midday on 12 August that the 2nd Battalion arrived at Tłuszcz, driving out the few enemy patrols and garrisoned the station. After the battalion had garrisoned Tłuszcz, the 1st Horse Rifle Squadron²⁷ was ordered by Lt-Colonel Adamowicz to march through Klębów and Krusze to Międzył, where it arrived at 14:00 behind the right wing of the 3rd Battalion. That battalion was still in communication with the 8th ID rearguard and a Light Horse platoon. That platoon, according to the information available to the 3rd Battalion, was covering the left wing of the 8th Division's rearguard, set up in an outpost in Kurachy.

The 2nd Horse Rifle Squadron, under Lieutenant Stanisław Czuczeliwicz, was in the area of Krusze and Klębów.

The 2nd Battalion of the Mińsk Regiment was positioned with the 7th Company to the left of the track and the 8th, under the command of Lieutenant Placyd Wołczyński, to the right of the track behind the station's fence. The battalion had communication to the right with the 1st Battalion, while to the left it could only communicate using the patrols of the 2nd Squadron, which, was operating well behind the left wing of the 2nd Battalion. At Tłuszcz Station Lieutenant Łappo spoke by telephone with the group commander, General Osiński, and received an order (given at 12:00 to Lt-Colonel Adamowicz) which read:

²⁷ The text is confused about this unit throughout.

Here it has the 1st Squadron but the errata says that this should be changed to the 2nd. That makes no sense in the context, unless all the immediately following references between 1st and 2nd area also swapped, including on the sketch map.

Lieutenant Czuczeliwicz alternates through the text, sometimes commanding the 1st Squadron, and sometimes the 2nd Squadron.

It would appear that any reference to the 1st Squadron may well be for the second, and *vice versa*.

Moreover the Horse Rifles are even referred to as "Light Horse" for the next paragraphs in the original.



General Osiński orders the Colonel that Tłuszcz must be held by the Mińsk Regiment at all costs until tomorrow evening, i.e. 13 August.²⁸

In spite of the pressure from his superiors, whose primary intention was to hold Tłuszcz, Adamowicz did not change his formation and kept all his battalions in the line. So instead of concentrating the rearguard around Tłuszcz, only one battalion was actually there. That decision was probably influenced by reports from the battalion commanders, who reported a lack of numbers and poor communications.

Tłuszcz Station had remained completely exposed on the left wing since the morning and the 2nd Horse Rifle Squadron, operating in the Krusze – Klembów area, could not impede the enemy's movements, advancing basically along the left flank of the rearguard.

The rearguard, organised that way, could not hope to hold out for long at Tłuszcz – especially in view of the hanging left wing, as the 2nd Lit-Bel Brigade, not having clear orders to leave a rearguard at a specific time and place, had left long before on its march to the outskirts of Warsaw. The 11th Division, despite the fact that these incidents were taking place in front of it, did not conduct any further reconnaissance.

It was not until the afternoon of 12 August that it was realised that the 2nd Brigade had not been ordered to leave a rearguard in their previously held position. To effect that, General Rządkowski, supplementing previous orders, issued one from Marki on 12 August, ordering the 2nd Brigade to advance "the nearest battalion towards Dąbrówka and secure the routes out of Dąbrówka." The 1st Brigade was to send one of the squadrons already given to Lt-Colonel Adamowicz to the Dąbrówka area, which was to operate in conjunction with the 2nd Brigade's battalion. The rearguard was to hold the Dąbrówka – Tłuszcz line until 18:00 on 13 August.

That order was received by the 2nd Brigade at 16:45, and it ordered Major Matczyński's battalion to perform the task. However, Major Matczyński, who had already brought his battalion close to Radzymin, believed that the men were so tired that he would not be able to return to the Dąbrówka area by foot. So the march was to take place on horse carts, which were requisitioned in the evening and night of 12/13 August.

On 12 August the 11th ID ordered the dispatch at 14:00 of four patrols to reconnoitre the Stanisławów – Wyszaków line in the directions of 1) Dębe Male – Zabraniec – Cygów – Międzyzys, 2) along the Wołomin – Tłuszcz railway track (an officer patrol), 3) along the Radzymin – Wyszaków road and 4) Teodorów – Ostrówek and further along the Bug River (an officer patrol). These patrols were to come into contact with the enemy and, retreating to the bridgehead, maintain uninterrupted contact with it.

The patrols did not get out much past the bridgehead except in the area of the Mińsk Regiment's operations. In the evening of 12 August, the infantry and horse patrols from the 11th ID were pushed from near Zwierzyniec and Zawady beyond the line of the 46th Regiment. Meanwhile, on the afternoon of 12 August, the position of Lt-Colonel Adamowicz's troops changed markedly to their disadvantage. This was caused by the behaviour of the 8th ID's rearguard and the enemy's movement along the left flank of the Mińsk Regiment.

Colonel Prohaska, commander of the 8th Division's rearguard, received an order at 15:00 from his staff that he was to hold out until 19:00 on 13 August instead of 03:00, which he started to communicate to the commanders of the rearguards of the 1st Lit-Bel and 15th Divisions. He asked them to let him know if they had also received similar orders. Before he had time to send that message, however, he received a message at 15:30 that the 60th Regiment of the 15th ID was "retreating, without notifying why or what new line it would take." In view of this, Colonel Prohaska reported to Lt-Colonel Adamowicz: "It seems that I will move to the second defensive line – the railway from Dąbrówka to Cyganka." Indeed, the rear guard of the 8th ID withdrew, as there was a note on the report to Adamowicz (at 16:15) that the 13th IR was moving to the railway line.

²⁸ The original has 11 August, but that is clearly wrong.



The above news was received by Adamowicz at 17:40. As a result the 3rd Battalion of Mińsk Regiment soon lost communication to its right, as the Light Horse platoon, which had held an outpost in Kurachy, withdrew to Jaźwie and from there to Cygów.

The situation was captured by the 8th Division's command in a report of 07:00 on 13 August, stating that:

The rearguard, unable to establish communication with the 60th IR, left yesterday at 21:00 to the second defensive line.

The withdrawal of the 8th Division's rearguard had an effect on the Mińsk Regiment, which was still in Tłuszcz. However, the danger was largely on its left flank. As early as 15:00 Lieutenant Czuczełowicz's 2nd Squadron withdrew under enemy pressure from near Krusze to Klembów and went to a clearing near Klembów, leaving a small post at the western edge of Krusze and another at Michałowski Posiołek. At about 17:00 a platoon of the 2nd Squadron was attacked near Klembów Dworski by cavalry. Enemy infantry was found in Krusze, advancing towards Klembów, alongside the cavalry.

At 19:40 Lieutenant Czuczełowicz reported to Lt-Colonel Adamowicz that enemy infantry with machine-guns was advancing towards Klembów and was already near the manor, and that a firefight had broken out near Kraszew. Lieutenant Czuczełowicz warned:

I am leaving Kraszew for Dobczyn, in 20 minutes the railway will be cut. Our forces are too weak.

That report was received by the Lt-Colonel at 20:10.

As a result of this and the previous news, Adamowicz withdrew Lieutenant Kaminski's 1st Squadron from the right wing and directed it to the left wing with the task of maintaining communication with Lieutenant Czuczełowicz. As a result the 1st Squadron went to the railway track near Tłuszcz. Late in the evening the squadron commander received alarming news. Lieutenant Kaminski reported it at 21:40 to Lt-Colonel Adamowicz in the following report:

The situation is serious. We are all concerned. The [Soviet] 21st [Rifle] Division is marching along the railway track. The 53rd and 56th Divisions are also marching and the 27th Division in reserve. All this information is from the testimony of captured cavalry. Klembów Manor is occupied by the enemy. As reported by Cadet Sokołowski, the road from Radzymin to Dobczyn is cut. A battle is going on in outposts behind Klembów. I am manning the track at 6 km from Tłuszcz.

All this important news for the units preparing to defend themselves on the bridgehead was passed by Adamowicz on to the 1st Brigade, which reported it to the Division staff.

At 20:00 the command of the 1st Lit-Bel Brigade reported in its situation report that Postoliska was occupied by the Russian 21st Cavalry Regiment and the 185th and 186th Rifle Regiments, adding:

Since this morning Bolshevik forces have been moving from Postoliska to Krusze in the direction of Klembów and Radzymin.

The 1st Brigade HQ announced that, in view of this situation, it could not carry out the order to send the squadron back to the Dąbrówka area.

On the evening of 12 August the brigade command assessed the position of the rearguard as serious but did not issue any more orders, relying on Lt-Colonel Adamowicz's assurance that it would hold out until the morning of 13 August.

The above details were sent by General Rządowski to the attention of the 1st Army at 22:30 in his situation report. Having received the new information, the chief of staff of the 1st Lit-Bel Division, Captain Perkowicz, spoke at 23:25 on 12 August with Lieutenant Szalkiewicz of the 1st Army staff, reporting:

The bridge on the Rządza River is not protected by anything, and should the enemy manage to damage it the armoured train *Mściciel* and the tanks will be lost. Our troops are too far away to make it in time. The command of the 11th Division, asked to secure the bridge, sent only 10 horsemen – which is not enough, as at least an infantry company is needed. The 11th



Division will send that company only on the orders of the 1st Army. It is requested that an immediate order be sent to the 11th Division to help effectively, as the commander of Mińsk Regiment reports that with the present forces they can hold on to Tłuszcz until the morning. If that is the case, the task of holding out until 18:00 will be impossible.

Lt-Colonel Bobicki decided that the 11th ID would secure the bridge over the Rządza River, and the armoured train *Paderewski* was sent to it. In practice, however, the order to protect the bridge was not carried out.

At that time the Mińsk Regiment wasn't feeling any pressure to its front, but nevertheless all the officers realised that its wings were in mid-air, which made it easily possible to bypass and surround the rearguard. The 2nd Battalion, which had finally lost telephone communication with Wołomin, remained in a particularly unclear position at Tłuszcz station. The armoured train and tanks on rail cars, which during the day had supported the battalion with fire, having received news of the possibility of the railway track being cut, withdrew at 19:00 under enemy artillery fire. While withdrawing, they took with them a Polish aircraft, shot down by the enemy near Tłuszcz.

The situation, as Lieutenant Łappo recalls, was "unpleasant". Eventually, at 20:00 he lost all communication with Lieutenant Czuczełowicz, who withdrew. At nightfall, a detachment of enemy cavalry approached the 8th Company's trenches, advancing in [column of] threes, seemingly unaware of the presence of the Poles. It was allowed to approach to close range of the trenches and was suddenly fired upon by salvos. The scattered unit retreated, losing two prisoners and several horses.

From this point on the enemy did not advance. They halted at a distance of 400-500 metres, engaging in a firefight, which did little damage to the 2nd Battalion. A cavalry officer surrendered, who testified that he had been ordered to tear up the railway track near Dobczyn.

At 21:00 Lieutenant Łappo reported to the regimental commander that he would be forced to retreat in view of the threat to the rear of the left wing, but despite this report he remained where he was. The other battalions were also not feeling much pressure to the front at the time, but, with poor communication between them and extremely tired men, they did not feel comfortable. In addition, the 3rd Battalion was under threat on its right flank.

Lt-Colonel Adamowicz, having too many alarming reports emphasising the dangerous position, decided to withdraw from Tłuszcz Station before dawn. Between 22:00 and 23:00 he issued orders to retreat behind the Rządza River, with an immediate departure, notifying that he would send further orders on the way. A similar order was given to the battery, which was assigned two infantry sections with an officer as protection.

The disengagement from the enemy in the darkness of night and the retreat took a different course in each battalion. The first moment of breaking away from the enemy was decisive.

Lieutenant Łappo, commander of 2nd Battalion, after receiving the order to retreat, silently withdrew the companies between the station buildings and then – also without noise – left with the battalion along the railway track. He led the battalion in a compact column ready for close combat. Thus unhindered by the enemy, who probably did not notice the battalion's departure, he had gone a distance of 5-6 km, when he came across a group of Bolsheviks sleeping on the railway track. They were woken up and taken with them. The captives reported that their unit had gone to Warsaw and they had gone astray. Soon the battalion crossed the Rządza River and went on to join the regiment.

The retreat of the 1st Battalion took place under completely different conditions. After receiving the order to retreat, while the battalion was pulling away from its positions the enemy must have noticed, as it pressed on to the 1st and 3rd Companies. They, as the commander of the 3rd Company recalls, did not hold for the attack and partially dispersed, suffering losses. In the chaos of the night, the 2nd Company was lost, or rather, it was not known what had happened to it. The 4th Company, which had not been notified of the retreat, remained in position until the commander, 2nd-Lieutenant Sierosławski, (who had been in command only since 11 August) decided to retreat without orders.



The 3rd Battalion left its positions peacefully around midnight, but the enemy followed right on its heels and pursued it with fire.

Lieutenant Misiewski's 3rd Battery, having received the order to leave around midnight, immediately prepared to march, intending to reach Wołomin during the night. In order to avoid making any noise, the wheels were covered with straw, the shields were held down, and smoking was prohibited. However, the battery could not move quickly, as the infantry was too tired, so they left at a walk. In the vicinity of Grabie Nowe the infantry separated off and rejoined the regiment. Soon the battery was driving onto the bridge over the Czarna River, when suddenly the front of its column came under fire. It seemed to be Red cavalry patrols. Immediately, one cannon was set up in a clearing, waiting only for the command to fire on the enemy in the direction of Wołomin. After a while, however, the firing quieted down and Polish patrols reported that the road was clear. The battery set off again. Once again, near Wołomin itself, the column was fired upon – but this time clearly by their own side.

The first news that reached Lt-Colonel Adamowicz about the battalions made the worst possible impression. By 03:40 he still had no news of what had happened to the 2nd Battalion. He knew from the 1st Battalion that it had "dispersed with great losses" and that the soldiers were assembling one by one, and that the 2nd Company was missing. So far he had only heard from the commander of the 3rd Battalion that the enemy was pursuing it to Górale and that he had entered Dąbrowica. He also pointed out that, as it was dark, he had not completely manned the area and that he was anxious about the road from Dąbrowica to Cygów.

Reporting on the above situation, Adamowicz told the brigade command:

As far as I can I will man the line: Dąbrowica – Góra – Krynica – Pasek, bending the left wing on the Rządza River to the Kraszew – Dobczyn road.

By 04:00 Adamowicz had all the battalions in position: the 2nd Battalion was around the railway track, the 3rd was near Dąbrowica, and 1st was between 2nd and 3rd Battalions. Lieutenant Czuczełowicz's 2nd Squadron was on the left wing and the 1st was on the right.

The division HQ learned about these events quite late, because as late as 05:00 on 13 August the commander of the 1st Lit-Bel Division ordered the commanders of the 1st and 2nd Brigades to "withdraw the rear guards from Tłuszcz and Dąbrówka in case of final necessity", and that these guards should leave gradually, holding back the enemy, "for as long as possible, preferably until 18:00."

The rearguard of the 8th ID

After midnight on 11/12 August, the 8th Infantry Division's command issued an order, assigning a rearguard under Colonel Prohaska with the task of protecting the division as it manned its bridgehead positions. The division's main forces were to begin their march at 04:00 to 04:30, while the rear guard was to garrison and hold the Łaziska – Międzyłże line until dawn on 13 August. The following were given to Colonel Prohaska: Battalions 3/36, 1/13 and 2/13, two squadrons of the 201st Light Horse Regiment and a battery.

In the morning of 12 August the division left for the bridgehead positions: the 21st and 33rd IRs, Battalion 3/13, plus the regimental staff took the road through Pustelnik to Okuniew, while Battalion 3/36 headed towards Poświętne – Okuniew. In the afternoon of 12 August the main forces arrived at the bridgehead and began to organise the defence.

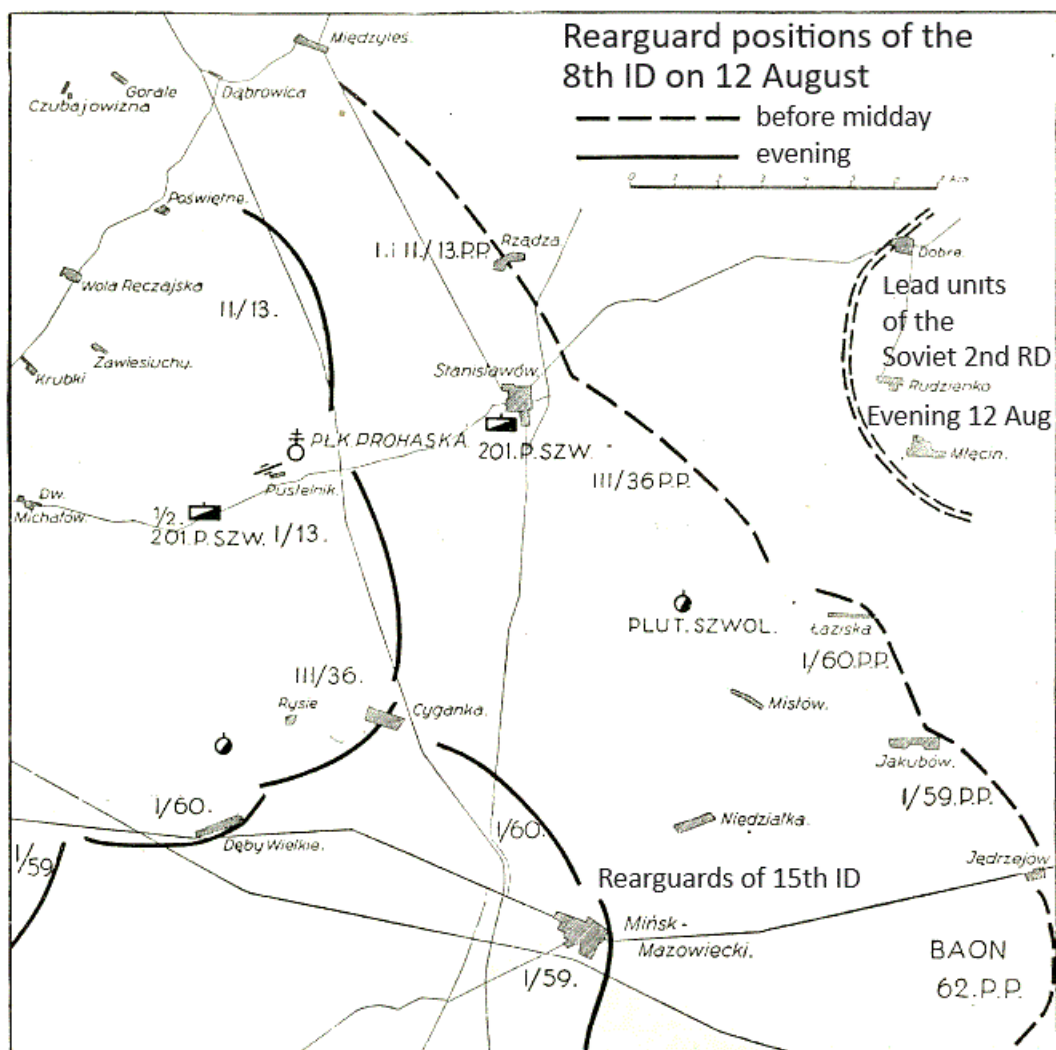
Before dawn on 12 August Colonel Prohaska organised the rearguard, splitting it into sectors. Battalion 1/13, which at 02:00 held the Czarna – Katarzynów area, at 08:00 occupied the line from Łaziska up to and including the Stanisławów – Młęczin road. Battalion 2/13 garrisoned the Rządza – Osęczyzna line up to the Rakowiec – Stanisławów road, holding its reserve in the area of Height 150. The gap between the two battalions was secured by patrols of a Light Horse squadron, which also received the task of securing the right wing of the rearguard. The rearguard's commander was in Pustelnik, with Battalion 3/36, a battery of the 8th FAR and half a squadron of the 201st LHR.



At 04:00 Colonel Prohaska ordered that strong cavalry posts be set up on the wings of the rearguard (on the left in Międzyzleś, on the right in Mistów) in order to establish communication with the neighbouring units. At 08:00 links with those units were in place.

Colonel Prohaska's aim was primarily to secure the area of the communication centre around Stanisławów, to close the Stanisławów – Okuniew area with his main forces, while also guarding the north-western edges of forests in the area of Międzyzleś.

In order to reconnoitre and establish contact with the enemy (lost since 11 August) and to establish communication with neighbouring units, Colonel Prohaska ordered horse patrols to be sent out. The 201st LHR sent out patrols along the roads: Stanisławów – Kury, Stanisławów – Katy, Stanisławów – Rynia, Stanisławów – Dobrze, Stanisławów – Młęczyn, Stanisławów – Jakubów – Kałuszyn and Stanisławów – Mińsk Mazowiecki; a total of seven patrols.



Sketch 28

Those patrols met the enemy on the line Młęczyn – Rudzienko – Dobrze – Rynia – Kąty Czernickie and, under pressure, gradually retreated to the lines manned by infantry.

At noon on 12 August, the 8th Division's command amended its previous order, detailing the division's rearguard to withdraw to the bridgehead positions only in the evening of 13 August. At 12:00 that order was communicated by the 8th ID to the 15th ID. Colonel Prohaska, on the other hand, received it at 15:00. He shared the news with other rearguard commanders, asking them to let him know if they had also received similar orders. However, even before this letter was sent to the Mińsk Regiment, news was received that the 60th IR from the 15th ID was retreating, so Colonel Prohaska notified the commander of the 1st Lit-Bel ID rearguard that he was going to move to the second defensive line, to the railway line from



Dąbrowica to Cyganka. Indeed, at about 16:00 Battalion 1/13 withdrew to Cyganka – Stanisławów Station, while Battalion 2/13 went to Stanisławów Station – Dąbrowica.

At 21:00 Colonel Prohaska confirmed the previously issued orders, ordering:

Due to the fact that communication with the 60th Regiment cannot be established, and that the maintenance of the designated line must be absolutely executed, Battalions 1/13 and 2/13 will maintain the line of the railway track according to the previous order. The 3rd Company of the 36th IR will take up positions from Cyganka to Koberne and the Mińsk – Warsaw rail line inclusive, then along the route to Ww Bschesina inclusive will be a dismounted half-squadron of the 201st Light Horse Regiment. One company on the 36th IR and a half-squadron of 201st Light Horse will be the group's reserve at the rectory in Pustelnik. Btn 2/13 will establish good communications with the Mińsk Regiment; Btn 3/36 and the half-squadron will continue to seek communication with the 60th IR. A battery of the 8th FAR will position itself in the area of Pustelnik, to be able to take fire in the area of Rządza – Stanisławów – Wólka Czarnińska – Ładzyń. In the morning of 13 August it is to find a place for one platoon, from which the area south of the Mińsk – Warsaw rail line can be taken under fire if necessary. Three cavalry patrols will remain in front of lines for the night, in the area of Międzyłes – Stanisławów – Ładzyń. Patrols have also been sent to search for the 60th IR.

Rearguard of the 15th Division

On 12 August the main forces of the 15th ID left for the bridgehead positions. The rearguards remained on the line Cegłów – Jędrzejów – Łaziska: from Łaziska to Jakubów was Battalion 1/60 with a platoon of Battery 2/15 FAR and a platoon of cavalry, from Jakubów to Jędrzejów was Battalion 1/59, and finally from Jędrzejów to Cegłów was a battalion of the 62nd IR.

Around 08:00 on 12 August the battalion of the 62nd IR withdrew from its positions. One company lost communication with the rest and joined Battalion 1/59. That battalion, threatened on its right wing, retreated to Mińsk Mazowiecki and garrisoned from Mińsk to Huta Mińsk, having a link to the left with Battalion 1/60. An enemy column was found moving on the road from Kałuszyn towards Mińsk.

Until the evening of 12 August the rearguard maintained weak combat contact with the enemy and at night they left (some earlier) for just in front of the bridgehead. Battalion 1/59 took the line of Brzeziny Manor – Kąck and Battalion 1/60 was around Dębe Wielkie.

At 22:40 the command of the 15th Division ordered its brigades to advance in the morning of 13 August to the line Sobiekursk – Dąbrówka – Ostrów – Glinianki – Dębe Wielkie – Michałów to cover the regrouping of the units of the 15th ID in the Warsaw positions. Each brigade was to advance a quarter of its forces.

However, the brigade commanders did not issue their orders until 13 August, around 03:00, by which time Battalion 1/59 had retreated further than anticipated. The commander of the 29th Brigade ordered his regiments to advance a quarter of their forces, requesting that the 59th IR take from Ostrów to Dębe Wielkie and the 60th IR from Dębe to Michałów.

In accordance with those orders the commander of the 60th IR left the 1st Battalion in the bridgehead, while the commander of the 59th IR withdrew the 1st Battalion to the bridgehead and placed the 2nd and 3rd Battalions in the line.

The 30th Brigade commander ordered that the 4/7th Guard Battalion send one company to Sobiekursk, the 61st IR its 2nd Company to Dąbrówka, and 62nd regiment its 2nd Company to Ostrów.

In the bridgehead the troops assigned to the 15th ID remained where they were, to become the reserve as soon as the rearguards left the area in front of the bridgehead.



Chapter VI

1st Army on the Outskirts of Warsaw

During the period of preparation for the Battle of Warsaw we can observe transformations in almost all areas of army life, sometimes reaching down to the organisational foundations, though mostly connected with the establishment of rules for the use of arms or services. We have already seen in previous chapters the activities of the Ministry of Military Affairs and the Supreme Command in that regard. Their ordinances laid the basic foundations for the material preparation of the future battle. However, not everything was accomplished in the days preceding the battle, and so the process continued throughout the battle and even beyond.

As far as individual issues are concerned, the most important of these were: the fixing of infantry assignments on 11 August and the replenishment of units, the introduction on 4 August of a new tank organisation in connection with the revision of the previous rules for the use of tanks, the reorganisation of the aviation units, the gradual introduction of the new health service organisation with changes to the evacuation rules, and finally the standardisation of the rules for ammunition and food supplies.

In our work, bound by the framework of the study, we shall confine ourselves only to the necessary explanation of these fundamental changes, the reflection of which can be followed inside the 1st Army.

I have removed from the text the pictorial orders of battle and the tables of numbers for the units discussed in this Chapter. They are placed together in Appendix 2, rather than scattered through the text.

Infantry Replenishment

The issue of troop replenishment was a serious one. It was made all the more difficult by the fact that during the retreat it was not easy to ascertain the numbers of troops, as the commanders usually limited themselves to giving the combat numbers. After arriving at the bridgehead, troop levels were still fluid due to the process of replenishment, regrouping and the incorporation of new units. Eventually, however, by 15 August, numbers were established on the basis of reports received, and messages gathered by officers sent to the units.

On 11 August, the 1st Department of the Supreme Command gave the following scheme for the replenishment of the troops of the 1st Army:

The 8th ID was to receive four march companies (already in Warsaw) and Battalion 1/236.

The 10th ID had already been sent four march companies, and was also to receive Battalion 1/109.

The 15th ID was to receive four march companies (already in Warsaw).

The 1st Lit-Bel ID was to receive six march companies.

The 11th ID and the 7th Reserve Brigade, on the other hand, were considered to be at quota.

On top of this, the divisions were to receive battalions from the existing Governorate as further replenishment.

That was the intention of the Supreme Command and the Ministry of Military Affairs, but its final execution now depended on the 1st Army's staff, which from then on had use of the march companies. However, the 1st Army, for reasons unknown, did not send those reinforcements to the divisions in time. Eventually, just before the battle, and more often during the battle, the divisions received the following reinforcements:

- The 8th ID received march companies from the reserve battalions of the following regiments: 1st Legion, 13th, 32nd, 36th, 39th, and 40th. Each company was about 210 privates. In addition, the 1st Battalion of the 236th IR (13 officers and 809 privates) and two companies of the 212th IR arrived. Most of these companies arrived late on 13 August, so after the battle had started.



- The 1st Lit-Bel ID, although it was the Army's reserve, did not receive its reinforcements in time. It was not until 14 and 15 August that three march companies arrived from the reserve battalions of the 19th, 53rd and 54th IRs, each of 212 privates.
- The 15th ID received four march companies from its own reserve battalions. In addition, the division added Battalion 1/168, 4/7th Guard Battalion, the 1st Warsaw Stage Battalion, Battalion 1/233, Battalion 1/142, the 2nd Battalion of the Kowno Regiment and, in the course of battle, the Commander-in-Chief's bodyguard company.
- The 10th ID received the announced march companies (an average of 212 privates each). In addition Battalion 1/109 and an Emergency half-battalion from the Reserve Battalion of the 21st IR were incorporated into the division.

The 11th and 15th IDs and the 7th Reserve Brigade were thus the most effectively reinforced.

The above numbers relate to infantry only – other arms were supplemented slightly. The artillery did not receive any replenishment of men or equipment, as the units formed by the reserve batteries were not sent to the regiments. It was from those formations that the Governorate artillery was formed, as we have seen. Replenishment of the artillery did not take place until after the battle.

Technical Support

The 1st Army was to receive exceptional equipment in armoured weapons, especially tanks. We have mentioned above that the French Military Mission exerted a great deal of pressure in this direction. General Henrys proposed that all tanks present in Poland be placed at the disposal of General Latinik. In the end, however, it was not possible to bring that many tanks to Warsaw.

At the time, Poland had a tank regiment consisting of two battalions, a repair company and a reserve company. The organisation of the regiment was based on the French model, hence each battalion had two companies, each consisting of 24 tanks. A company had three platoons (five tanks each), a reserve platoon (eight tanks), and a commander's tank.

With experience it was decided to change the previous organisation in 1920, as it not correspond to the conditions of our war – the previous units were too heavy, not very mobile nor resilient.

The new project sought to create smaller and more mobile units, which would be able to act unexpectedly, manoeuvring quickly in larger spaces despite being detached from the organisational unit. On 4 August the reorganisation projects were approved. Three battalions were to be formed, each of which was to consist of two tank companies and a platoon of four armoured cars and a mobile repair and transport park. Each company was to be two tank platoons, each five battle tanks and three reserve tanks, and a half-track²⁹ platoon.

Thus, we can see that just before the Battle of Warsaw, the tanks were undergoing reorganisation. However, the reorganisation had not been carried out by that time, nor during the battle, and, above all, it was not possible to collect and build the half-tanks and armoured cars provided for by the structure.

The earliest tanks to arrive in the capital were four which had remained in Warsaw in July in connection with the reinforced emergency preparedness. At the beginning of August the 4th Tank Company, of three tank platoons (12 tanks), arrived from Łódź.

At the same time, the 5th Tank Company was being formed. On 1 August, the company's 2nd Platoon (six tanks) arrived in Warsaw from Łódź, and the four tanks already in Warsaw were to form the 1st Platoon.

After the end of the retreat, the 1st Tank Company, which had previously been operating as part of the 1st Army (10 tanks), and the 2nd Company (16 tanks) arrived in Warsaw. Due to the destruction of its equipment, the 1st Company was sent back to Łódź.

²⁹ This is a reference to the Austin-Kegresse, a half-track version of the Austin Armoured Car. My understanding is that the Poles had three of these (captured from the Soviets) at the time of the Battle of Warsaw.



Around this time some higher commands drew attention to the inadequacies of the interaction between infantry and tanks. On 1 August the Northern Front stated:

The recent battles have shown that our infantry is completely unfamiliar with the way tanks manoeuvre and that not only does it not work efficiently with them, it even leaves them unprotected.

In order to learn from this experience, the Front ordered the permanent assignment to each tank platoon of "one tried and tested, if possible assault, infantry company", which was to form a compact unit with the platoon. Ultimately, however, this project was not realised.

At this time, the High Command also had a limited number of armoured trains at its disposal, as during the retreat – due to various reasons – many were lost. These issues were pointed out by the 2nd Department, which claimed that:

... in many cases part of the blame lies in their unprofessional use, and in leaving them without information or contact with the troops.

Most trains were improvised – converted rolling stock – which limited their operational use. The Ministry of Military Affairs sought to remedy these shortcomings with a gradual reorganisation and rearmament. It intended to equip the trains with motorised railcars to enable patrolling, and to supply the trains with radio stations. There was also a lack of instruction in the operation of armoured trains and their interaction with other arms of service. On the eve of the Battle of Warsaw, these shortcomings were realised, but to a large extent were not remedied.

The 1st Army had three armoured trains: *Mściciel*, *Paderewski* and *Danuta*.

The train *Mściciel* (*Avenger*) had been operating as part of the 1st Army for some time. On 15 August its field crew was nine officers, 35 infantrymen, 32 crew serving ten machine-guns, six crew for two infantry guns and 15 crew for three field guns. Like many others it was an improvisation of our war – it consisted of an armoured locomotive and converted railway carriages, with the assault cars covered with thick sheet metal. The train had no rotary cannons.

The train *Danuta* arrived with the 15th ID from the 4th Army. It had two machine-guns and artillery wagons, and was armed with two Russian light guns, two 37-mm cannons and 15 machine-guns.

The train *Paderewski*, on the other hand, arrived on 12 August with the 1st Army from Warsaw, where it had been undergoing reorganisation and rearmament since July. It had received new equipment, such as three armoured cars, and two assault cars in which the guns and machine-guns were placed in rotating turrets.

In the period leading up to the Battle of Warsaw, Polish aviation was undergoing a severe crisis as a result of the wear and tear on its equipment and the disorganisation of its units. For these reasons, in the first half of August, the Supreme Command sought to reorganise the units and equip them with new aircraft. In connection with the preparations for the battle, the Air Force was given tasks to perform, despite ongoing organisational work.

We have mentioned before, Lt-Colonel Serednicki was appointed the 1st Army's Head of Aviation. He was to receive the 8th Reconnaissance Squadron and the 19th Fighter Squadron, as well as the Toruń Air Squadron. Of these units, the 19th Squadron was already in Warsaw, the 8th Squadron was attached to the 1st Army's command, while the Toruń Squadron was on the Southern Front. Before arriving in Warsaw, the 19th Fighter Squadron had remained for some time in Dęblin, where it trained its personnel on Sopwith-Dolphin aircraft. On arrival in Warsaw, it was tasked with the anti-aircraft defence of the capital.

In the days preceding the battle there were quite a few squadrons at Warsaw's Mokotów airfield, as it was the base of operations not only for the 1st Army aviation, but also for the aviation of the Supreme Command and the 5th Army. In the end, however, the 1st Army received, in exchange for the Toruń



Squadron (which had gone elsewhere), the 9th Reconnaissance Squadron, which had recently been operating in the Ukraine, from where it came directly to Warsaw. In Warsaw, the 9th Squadron received ten Bristol aircraft, which it began to assemble, and in view of this, the squadron's possibilities for use were limited for some time. The 19th Fighter Squadron had four Sopwith-Dolphins, and later received three Spads. The 8th Squadron had just two operational aircraft on arriving in Warsaw. In the course of the battle, the number of aircraft increased to six. These were three Albatros, one L.V.G., and two Hannover Roland GL IIs.

In the previous chapters we have discussed the orders in connection with communications in the regroup for the Battle of Warsaw. We will now familiarise ourselves with the state of technical communications on the eve of the battle.

The 1st Army Head of Communications had the following units of communications troops: Heavy Telegraph Company No. 1, with five officers and 251 privates; Park Telegraph Company No. 1, with three officers and 117 privates; Telegraph Construction Field-company No. 4, with one officer and 77 privates; and Telegraph Construction Platoon No. 3/1, with one officer and 41 privates.

We do not have exact data on the state of equipment in those units. We have a little information on the stock of the park company. On 16 August the Army Headquarters had six Hughes apparatus (including one in repair) and seven Morse apparatus (including three in repair and two out of order).

We have already mentioned that the Head of Communications of the Supreme Command had drawn attention to the need to make up for material shortages. The state of equipment of the communications troops, for both the Army's and the divisions, was very poor. As early as 5 August, the Army Head of Communications reported that "the lack of telegraphic equipment is simply catastrophic."

We also mentioned that the Governorate had received orders from the Supreme Command to prepare a certain reserve of fixed equipment for the incoming commands. However, the Governorate did not even manage to supply the units it had itself fielded in the bridgehead with equipment. General Haller, after visiting a section of the 11th Division, talked of: "a maddening lack of telephone wire which makes it impossible to direct the artillery."

Upon arriving in Warsaw, the Army Head of Communications ordered the division heads to send in their equipment requirements, but he himself at the time did not have sufficient supplies to distribute among the divisions, and so he in turn submitted his requirements.

In the end, however, the Governorate's failure to prepare sufficient equipment and the late handling of the demands of the 1st Army's Head of Communications meant that the 1st Army's divisions did not receive resupply of their equipment shortages before the battle. On 13 August, i.e. on the first day of the battle, the Park Telegraph Company issued almost all the supplies it had, but only half satisfied the demands of the divisional heads of communications.

The condition of the equipment in the division's telegraph companies was not satisfactory. The 8th Telegraph Company had one Austrian Hughes and one Russian Morse apparatus (both in bad condition) and one Austrian Morse apparatus. The 11th Telegraph Company had one German Hughes apparatus and three Morse apparatus. The 10th Company had one Austrian Hughes apparatus and six Morse apparatus and the 15th Company had a Hughes apparatus and a Morse apparatus.

The 1st Army Communications department was, as of 12 August, responsible for communications in the defence on the bridgehead. It had already been in Warsaw since 10 August, so the Army Head of Communications had two days to familiarise himself with the state of technical communications.

Initially, he did not have all the units at his disposal, as it was only at the end of 12 August that those units that had been working under the command of Generals Żeligowski and Osiński returned to Warsaw.

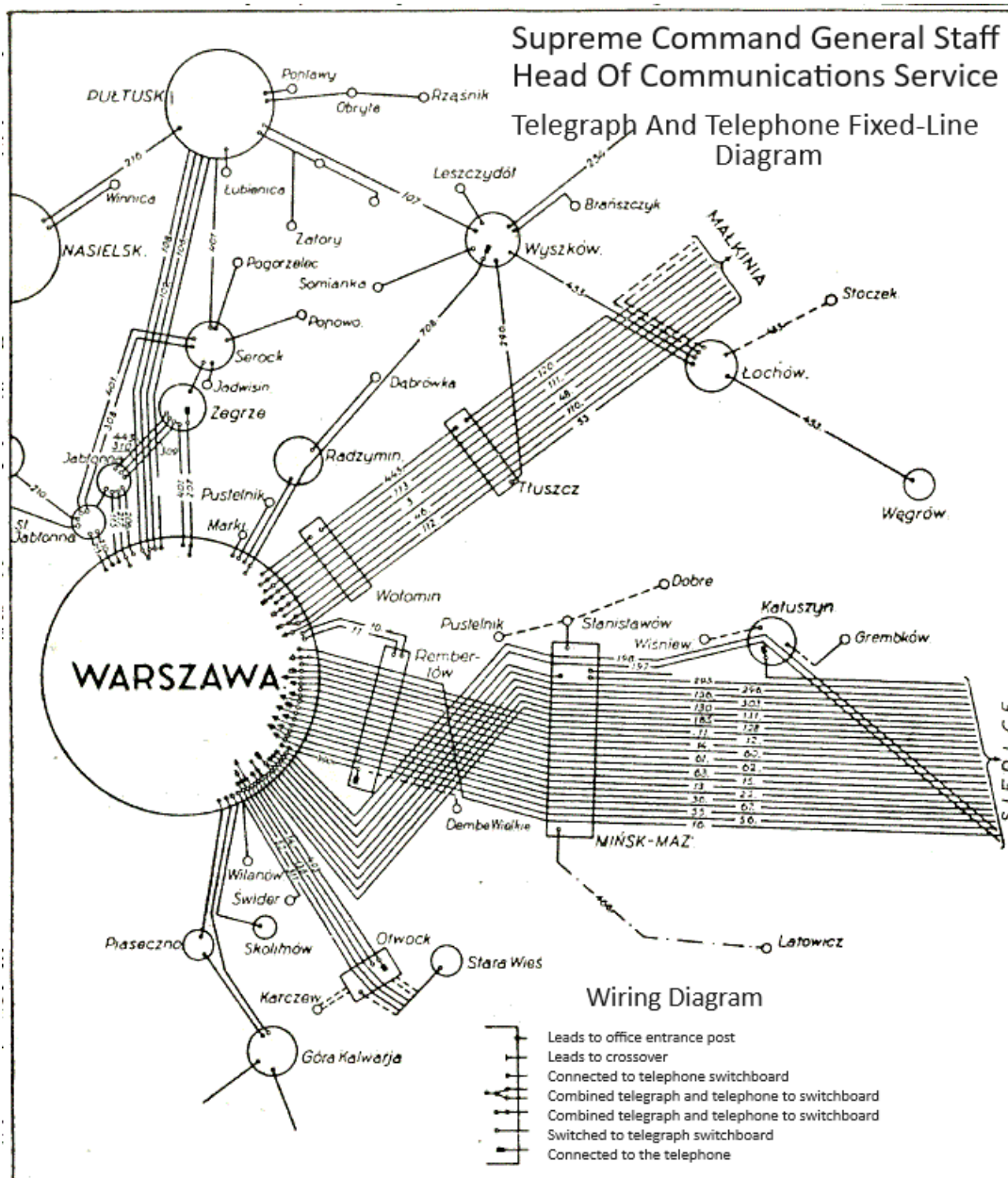
When considering the 1st Army's communications, we need to take into account the permanent communications network, a diagram of which is reproduced below. This network, as we can see, created



very favourable conditions for the expansion of the 1st Army's communications. The following observations are striking:

Zegrze had a relatively sufficient number of fixed route cables, as did Jabłonna (the 10th Division's staging area). On the other hand Marki, the position of the 11th ID HQ and about to be that of the 1st Lit-Bel ID, had relatively fewer cables.

The fixed route Warsaw-Wołomin was partly used to connect with the command of the ID, which was in Żąbki.



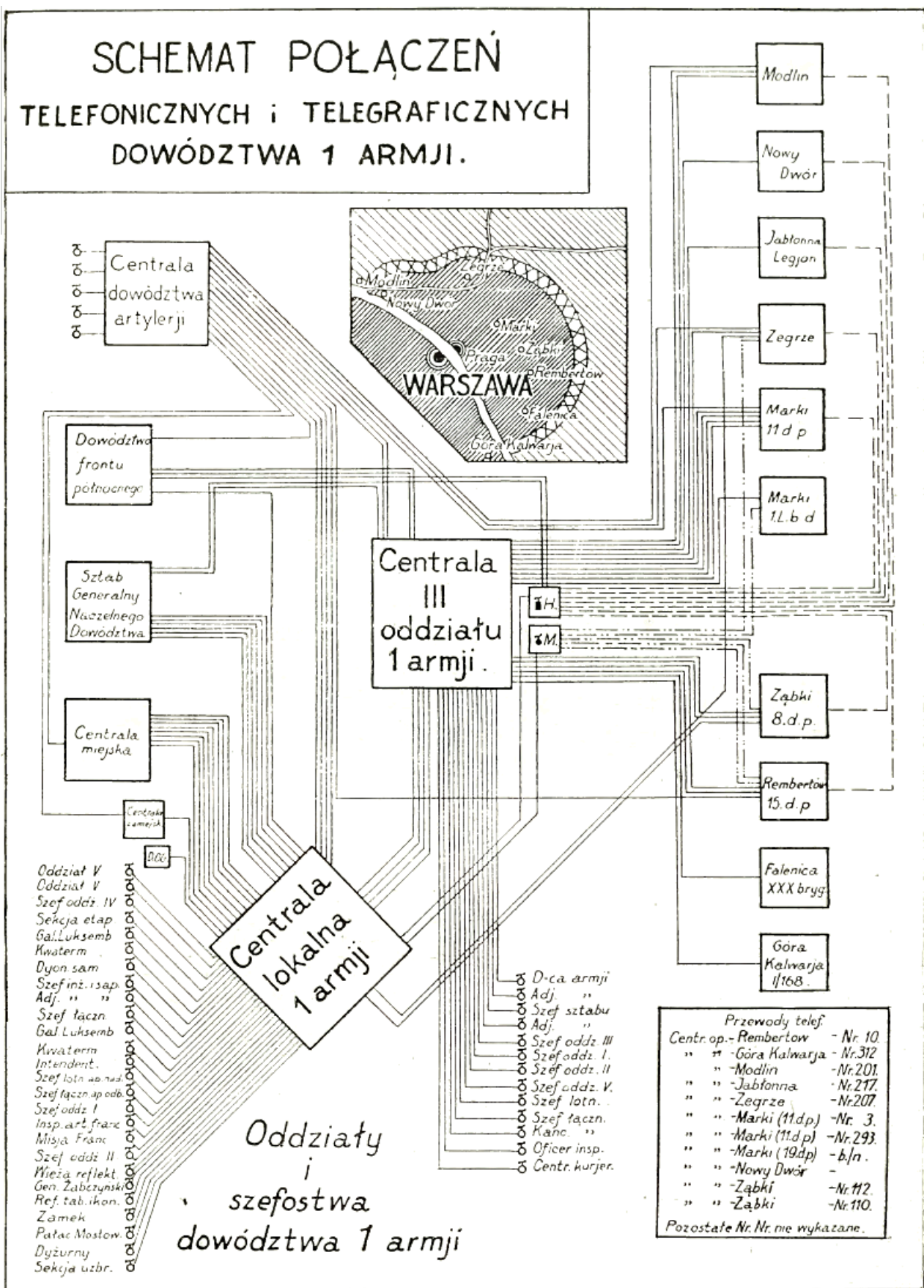
Sketch 29

However, the southern part of the bridgehead had the richest network, which was used for the connection with the staff of the 15th ID (Rembertów) and for the extension of the network within the division.

In this way the 1st Army command had very convenient conditions for wire communication with its subordinate divisions. On the other hand, there was a lack of direct connections between divisions.

Lieutenant Domejko, after taking over as Head of Communications on the bridgehead, turned his attention first and foremost to expanding the network of the 11th ID. After ascertaining that Marki did not yet have a direct link (via Nieporęt) with Zegrze, he ordered the 11th ID Head of Communications to submit a request for the necessary material and prepare for the extension of the Marki – Izabelin line to Nieporęt.





Sketch 30

On 12 August, the Army had four wires connecting Warsaw to Marki. The Head of Communications emphasised the condition of these wires and their use. In a Hughes conversation he had at 21:00 on 12 August with the Head of Communications of the 11th Division, he expressed himself quite strongly :



... it must be remembered that there will be another division on this line, please split to avoid confusion, and these lines must all be kept in working order.

The communication scheme of the Army command is shown to us in Sketch 30. We can see that the Army had three headquarters: operational, artillery and ordinary command. The HQ of the artillery had a direct connection with Modlin, Zegrze, Marki and Rembertów (with the commands of the artillery groups).

The connections shown in the diagram were not yet all ready on 12 August and were gradually built up. In general, it can be said that on 12 August both the communications of the Army Headquarters with its subordinate divisions and within the divisions were not yet complete.

On 12 August, the Army staff had telegraphic and telephone communications with the Supreme Command, the Northern Front staff, the staff of the 8th and 11th Divisions, and telephone communications with the staff of the 15th Division.

The health service of the 1st Army was at that time undergoing a major organisational transformation associated with new posts. That process was not complete before the battle, nor during the battle, so the health service was in a transitional stage at the time. In the new scheme, the Head of the Army Sanitary Service was to be in charge of an Army evacuation hospital, three railway sanitary units, four hospital trains and other sanitary establishments. Up until then the Army did not have evacuation hospitals and, to a certain extent, that role was taken by the main muster stations of the sick and wounded; however those were rather (in today's concepts) that of a distribution station rather than an evacuation hospital.

Each division was supposed to have a sanitary company, three field hospitals, a disinfection plant and a disinfection column. At that time the divisions did not have sanitary companies and they were only formed at the end of the battle.

In connection with the regrouping for the Battle of Warsaw, the health service carried out preparations in its own right, calculating that heavy losses were to be expected in battle on the outskirts, as the 1st Army had been given the task of "bloodying" the expected enemy attacks. Appropriate orders were issued in connection with that.

First and foremost, there was an order to evacuate the sick and wounded from the Warsaw hospitals. Between 8 and 10 August, six medical trains transported a total of 2,500 sick and wounded out of the capital. At the same time as the hospitals were emptied, new rooms were prepared. As a result of these preparations 8,000 beds were available in Warsaw hospitals on the eve of the battle.

In view of the preparations for defence on the outskirts of Warsaw, a system of evacuation was adopted which best suited the locations and conditions of the time.

Half of the divisional hospitals were to evacuate to railway sanitary trains, and these were to transport the wounded and sick to Warsaw. The Main Assembly Station for the sick and wounded was organised at the Wilno Station in Praga, which took them from the trains to the Warsaw hospitals. Meanwhile Kalisz Station was where the wounded in Warsaw were evacuated to the interior, namely to the hospitals of the districts of Poznań, Pomerania and Łódź.

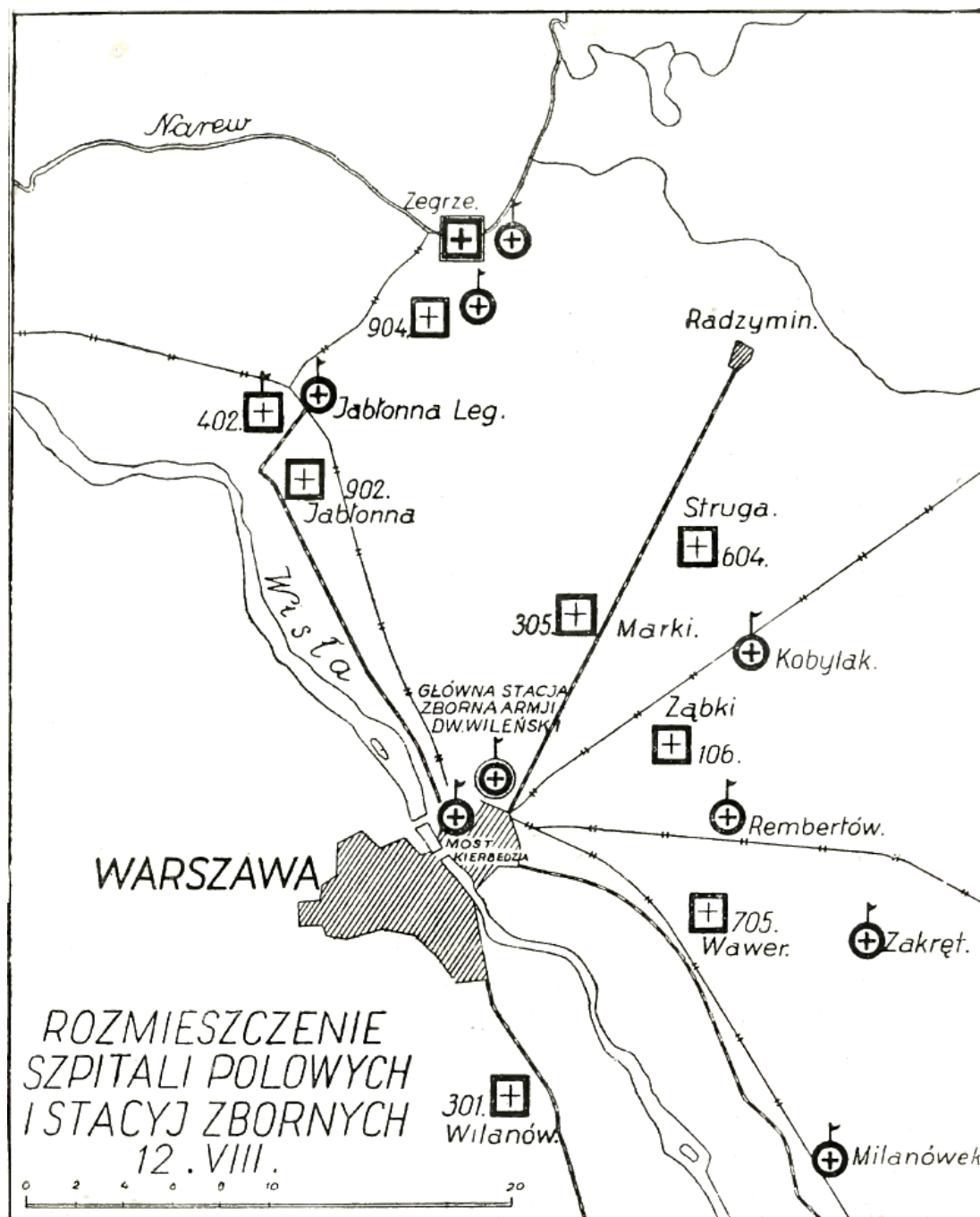
Wilno Station was then a distribution station, replacing the evacuation hospital of the 1st Army, which did not exist. This evacuation hospital was therefore all the Warsaw hospitals taken together, which then evacuated to Kalisz Station, i.e. to a regulating station.

It should be noted that the Warsaw hospitals were to serve not only the 1st Army, but the entire Northern Front. The evacuation guidelines issued emphasised the need for an efficient service to ensure the rapid transport of the wounded from the battlefield to the hospitals.

The Medical Head of the 1st Army was Lt-Colonel Dr. Pilecki. He commanded the following Field Hospitals: No. 604 in Marki, No. 106 in Żąbki, No. 705 in Wawer, No. 902 in Jabłonna, No. 903 in Michałów, No. 105 in Pustelnik, No. 301 in Wilanów, No. 704 in Błonie, No. 305 in Praga, and the military hospital in Zegrze.



On 12 August, the Army Medical Head issued evacuation instructions, ordering division heads to place field hospitals "according to the situation and field conditions." Half of the hospitals, fulfilling the task of the then non-existent sanitary companies, were to evacuate to the so-called leading rallying stations, which were actually evacuation stations, which were placed in Zegrze, Jabłonna-Legionowo, Struga and Zakręt. Further evacuation to the Main Assembly Station for the wounded and sick was to be carried out by four narrow-gauge and two normal-gauge trains, which were to be under the management of transport of the sick and wounded for the 1st Army, sending them at the request of the divisional Heads of Medicine. In addition, the transport command established its posts in Wawer, at Praga-Stalowa Station and at Kierbedź Bridge.



Sketch 31 : Positions of the Field Hospitals and Evacuation Points on 12 August

The narrow-gauge trains were made up of suburban railway carriages and supplied with appropriate sanitary staff. The following stops were taken: Otwock, Jabłonna, Radzymin and Zegrze. The Stations of Most and Praga-Stalowa were the permanent stopping points for those trains.



The normal-gauge trains were Lieutenant Slominski's improvised train, operating on the Praga-Jabłonna line, and Captain Preisman's train, operating on the Praga-Ząbki and Praga-Rembertów lines.

Finally, it should be mentioned that the Army Medical Head also had the Motor Ambulance Column No 31, which he retained in his control. It remained on standby for departure at Dąbrowski Square in Warsaw and was to send two ambulances each on the demand of the divisional sanitary chiefs in emergencies.

We have previously mentioned several times the difficulties that arose in the supply of artillery ammunition to the Governorate.

According to the material situation report of the 1st Army HQ of 13 August, the 1st Army units arriving at the Warsaw outskirts were supplied with enough ammunition to last until 17 August. The Army had a five-day supply. At the same time there was a shortage of ammunition for the Russian rifles and the heavy artillery. This did not apply to the cannons and rifles which had been up until then in the Governorate.

We have already pointed out that, as a result of the failure of the Department of Armaments to leave a sufficient supply of ammunition for the Governor's artillery during the evacuation of the depots and warehouses, it was now necessary to bring it in from the interior at short notice.

As a result, the Ordnance Department demanded that ammunition be sent by fast transports from Poznań, Kielce and Kraków. These transports were generally dispatched fairly quickly, but because of the railway congestion, especially in Warsaw, the trains were delayed at their destination. The Head of the Ordnance Department continued to defend himself concerning the emptying of the Department's warehouses, arguing that the Armies possessed huge quantities of ammunition. The simple fact was that General Kaczyński's remarks were partly correct, but it nevertheless remained an irrefutable fact that the ammunition depots were not sufficiently supplied with ammunition.

On 13 August, the 4th Department of the Supreme Command asked the Ministry of Military Affairs to immediately send to the forward depot of the 1st Army: 45 000 rounds for 75-mm guns, 1 200 for 122-mm guns, and 5 000 for 105-mm M16 guns cannons. This was to replenish the Army's stocks for up to ten days, as the magazines in the bridgehead, as 4th Department stated, were not sufficiently supplied with French ammunition by the Ministry of Military Affairs.

This demand was somewhat reduced, and on that day the Ordnance Department requested that Kielce send an extremely urgent transport to Warsaw of 22 000 rounds for 75-mm guns and that Poznań send 1 200 rounds for 122-mm guns, and 3 500 rounds for 105-mm M16 guns. Most of these transports did not arrive until during the battle and sometimes even after the battle. Incoming transports were received on the siding of the Gdansk Station by the main ammunition depot of Warsaw-Citadel.

The forward distribution points were supplied with ammunition from Warsaw by three ammunition trains, and in principle should have had two days of artillery fire and three days of infantry fire. These distribution points or, as they were also called, ammunition spearheads were located by the artillery commands, namely in Zegrze, Marki and Rembertów. The HQs of the 8th and 15th Artillery Brigades were located in Rembertów, so the ammunition train which supplied it with ammunition had a double depot. In addition, the Army command had an ammunition train in Praga with a two-day supply of ammunition, and disposed of an auto column to transport emergency supplies of ammunition.

Another of the important issues was the supply of trench weapons to the bridgehead garrison. We have seen that the higher commands had directed that guns of various types and calibres be advanced to the first positions. According to the official structure, each infantry regiment was to have six mortars (or grenade launchers or so-called "bomb throwers"). For various reasons, in the end not a single mortar, grenade launcher or thrower from the country's stocks found its way to the trenches on the outskirts of Warsaw – even though there was a lot of such equipment and ammunition in Poznań and Warsaw.

The use of flamethrowers and battle smoke were also planned. There were, in fact, 6 478 smoke screen makers in the Citadel, as well as incendiary devices. However, these projects were not realised.



It was also not possible to sufficiently supply the troops with light rockets, even though the Citadel had about 8 000 rockets with flares. Various commanders asked for these in vain but no rockets were received in time.

Finally, another matter, although no longer part of the work of the armament service. The searchlight units had been disbanded and the soldiers were used to dig ditches. After the arrival of the Sapper Detachments on the bridgehead, the MG battalion detachments were pulled off and on 10 August the 2nd Department ordered the formation of two companies of 110 cm searchlights and two companies of high-voltage lights.

On 12 August, one company, consisting of two platoons of one searchlight each, was successfully formed and handed over to the Zegrze Group. On the other hand, the High Voltage Company was formed much later, and it was only after the battle that tests were carried out on the obstacles in front of Warsaw.

When the retreat was completed, a directive of the 1st Army Railway HQ listed the 1st Company of the 3rd Railway Battalion, the staff of the 4th Battalion together with its 1st, 2nd and 3rd Companies, the 3rd and 4th Companies of the 8th Battalion and three armoured trains; *Mściciel*, *Danuta* and *Paderewski*.

On 12 August the Army Railway Office took over the direction of those sections of railways and narrow-gauge railway on the right bank of the Vistula. On the left bank it only took over the narrow-gauge railway from Warsaw to Góra Kalwaria. On the normal-gauge railways the sections of the companies started from the outbound track (semaphores) at Praga. The location of the companies on 12 August is shown in Sketch 32.

The composition of the stage troops of the 1st Army and their states are shown at the end of Appendix 2. The activities of the stage troops are not dealt with in the study because of the special conditions in which the 1st Army found itself on the lines. The immediate rear of the 1st Army was Warsaw, where, as we know, General Zawadzki's units were located, manning the fortifications of Praga and maintaining order in the city. We shall write about these units in other chapters.

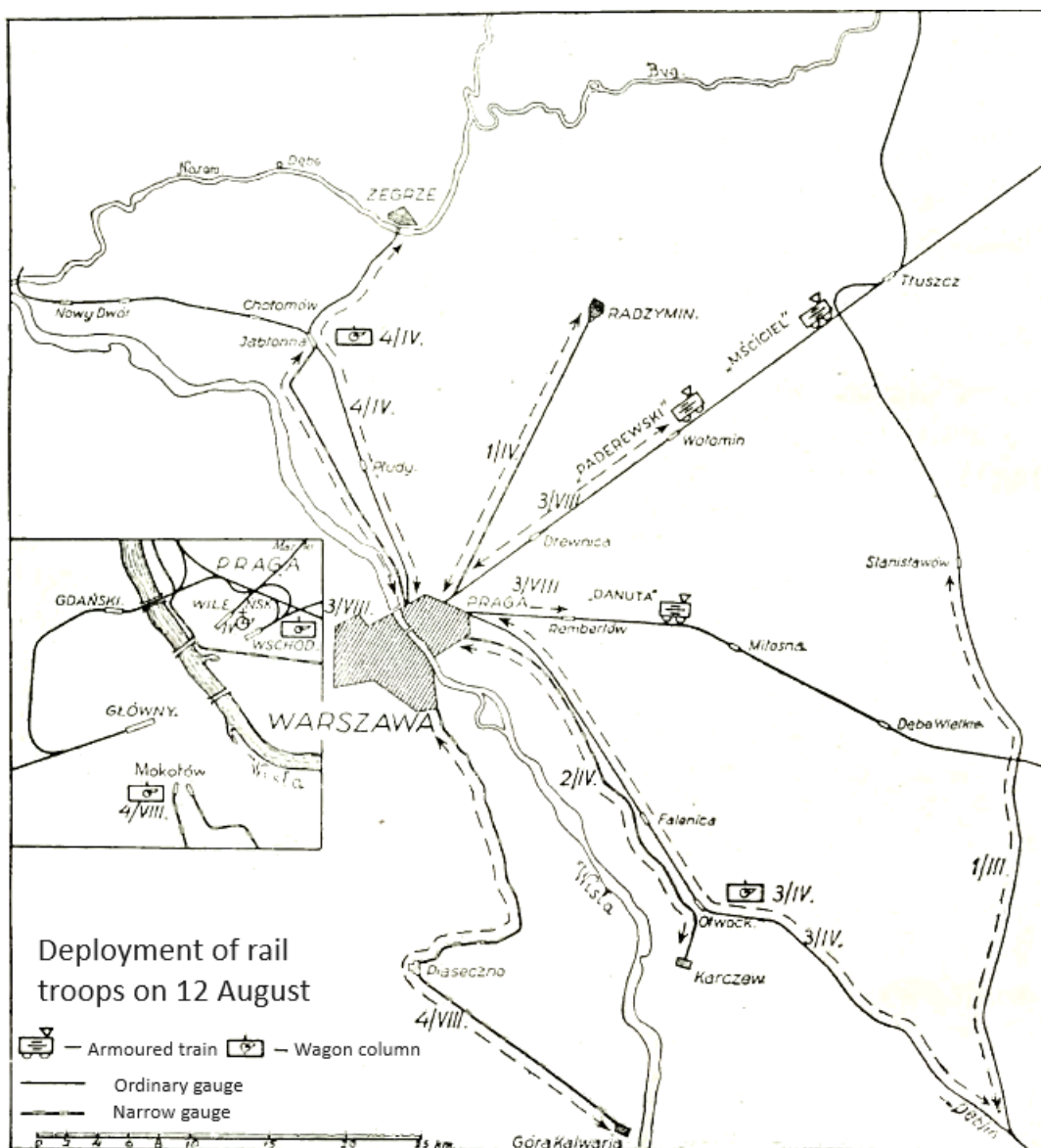
The supply of food to the troops of the 1st Army on the outskirts of Warsaw did not pose any particular difficulties due to the proximity of the central supply offices. The troops that had remained on the outskirts of the city (subordinated to the Governorate Administration) received their supplies from the central supply offices in Warsaw. This matter was regulated in an annex to a 7 August order by the Governorate, on the basis of which the divisions of the Radzymin and Miłosna groups were to obtain supplies from the Powązki branch of the Military Regional Economic Office, located at the Central Economic Office in Praga, while the divisions of the Zegrze group were to obtain supplies from the Zegrze Military Economic Office. In turn, all Warsaw branches and those outside Warsaw (on the left bank of the Vistula) drew from the Powązki District Economic Office.

So the supply of troops in the Governorate was organised at the start, but regarding the preparations for the Battle of Warsaw, the Supreme Command had to consider much wider dimensions. On 8 August the Head of Field Supplies for the Supreme Command requested that the Economic Department of the Ministry of Military Affairs to prepare a two day supply for the men and horses, periodically replenished, in the supply bases, assuming that the 1st Army would have 100 000 men and 15 000 horses. The economic base for the 1st Army was to be Warsaw or possibly Łódź. On 12 and 13 August, the units of the 1st Army arrived on the outskirts of Warsaw. From that moment on the 1st Army's food depots and its supply facilities were at work, taking advantage of the preparations of the central authorities in Warsaw. According to a report of the Front staff of 13 August, the divisions had food for a day, while the Army had food supplies for about 10 days.

On the eve of the battle the Supreme Command, in an order of 10 August, standardised the organisation of material supply in the divisions. Among other things, it ordered that a division should have two R portions of food in its reserve, one N portion in the kitchen and one N portion in the wagons. We will not repeat many of these very important and interesting regulations, but we stress that the troops found themselves



in favourable conditions at the bridgehead, and that these regulations were of great significance only when offensive action was taken, i.e. when the troops ceased to make direct use of the central institutions and establishments in Warsaw.



Sketch 32

1st Lithuanian-Belarusian Rifle Division

The 1st Lit-Bel Division was made up of regiments originally formed as self-defence organisations created at the end of 1918 in the north-eastern lands of Poland.³⁰

The Nowogród Rifle Regiment was formed much later, but was also a borderland volunteer formation.

The Division, as one of the oldest formations of the Polish Army, participated from its earliest days in the Polish-Russian War and survived the hard days of the 1920 retreat, retaining its organisational links and combat value in their entirety. The outstanding combat characteristic of the division was, above all, its perseverance. Its morale must have been strong to have withstood the test of the soldiers leaving their homelands.

³⁰ That is, inter-war Poland – the areas involved are now in Lithuania and Belarus, as the very name of the unit suggests. Wilno is modern Vilnius, and Nowogród is modern Veliky Novgorod (so Russia).



During the period of the retreat, the Division received evidence of appreciation from its superiors, and in the final days General Osiński, assessing the Division's work to date, presented a motion to award it the Cross of the Military Order of *Virtuti Militari*.

As its name indicates, it represented the aspirations of the inhabitants of the borderlands of the Republic of Poland, the former lands of Lithuania and Belarus. On the eve of the Battle of Warsaw, the Commander of the Northern Front stripped the division of its former name, and during the battle orders from higher commands referred to it as the "19th Infantry Division". However, the old name was soon restored as the Commander-in-Chief refused to approve the change.³¹

The division's commander was Lt-General Jan Rządkowski and the Chief of Staff was Captain of the General Staff Edward Perkowicz. The division commander knew his subordinate units well and knew how to exploit their combat qualities in battle.

The division's staff was well coordinated: the chief of the operational department was Lieutenant Gadoński, and of the organisational and materiel department was Lieutenant of the General Staff Władysław Powierza. In the course of operations the division staff was split.

The first line, which consisted of General Rządkowski and Lieutenants Gadoński, Majkowski and Koziejowski, was mostly in the line, in order to be aware of the situation at all times and to be able to directly influence the course of the action.

The second line, made up of the rest of the division's staff, remained with the chief of staff at the division's staging area. In addition to the officers mentioned above, Captain Marjan Morawski, the division commander's adjutant, took a prominent part in the staff work. The prominent work of the information desk officers (Cadets Kintopf and Kępiński) should be highlighted.

The division's intendant was Captain Zenon Pakowski. The state of the division in terms of uniforms and equipment was, according to him, desperate. The division had received some uniforms and equipment when it arrived near Warsaw, but there was not enough time to issue the items received before the battle.

The division's rolling stock consisted of Wagon Columns. Nos. 313, 314 and 315 and two civilian columns. The commander of the wagon columns was Captain Marjan Frydrychowicz.

The division was made up of the 1st and 2nd Brigades: the commander of the 1st Brigade was Colonel Władysław Bejnar and the 2nd Brigade was Lt-Colonel Kazimierz Rybicki.

The 1st Brigade had the Wilno and Mińsk Rifle Regiments. The Wilno regiment, prominent in the division's ranks, was commanded by Major Stanisław Bobiatyński. The battalion commanders were: 1 – Captain Ryszard Downar-Zapolski, 2 – Captain Witold Szczerbicki and 3 – Captain Leon Rapszewicz. The regiment also had a company of the NCO school (2nd-Lieutenant Jan Janikowski), a technical company (Lieutenant Karol Strumillo Pietraszkiewicz) and a communications platoon. The regiment's doctor was Lieutenant Dr Bularski.

The Mińsk Regiment, which had many outstanding battle deeds, was commanded by Lt-Colonel Adamowicz. We learned about the regiment's personnel in the previous chapter.

The 2nd Brigade did not have the same combat tradition as the 1st Brigade, and its regiments differed significantly from each other.

The Grodno regiment, originating from Grodno self-defence units, had a solid combat tradition. It was commanded by Lt-Colonel Bronisław Bohaterewicz, while the commanders of the battalions were: 1 – Lieutenant Colonel Bolesław Waśkiewicz, 2 – Lieutenant Ciechanowicz, 3 – Captain Mieczysław Kaleński-Jaśkiewicz.

The Nowogród Regiment was much newer and lacked the same cohesion. The best element of the Nowogród Regiment was made up of volunteers from 1919, grouped in the 1st Battalion, while in the other battalions were largely conscripts. The regiment's officer corps had suffered significant losses in July, and

³¹ Piłsudski refused the change because it was important to him that Poland retain much of Lithuania and Belarus. For the purposes of Żeligowski's "Mutiny" the fact that the unit was not "Polish" was very important.



their replacements had not yet bonded with the unit. Despite these shortcomings, the Nowogród Regiment distinguished itself several times during the period of retreat. Those moments were connected with Lt-Colonel Rybicki's command, either as the commander of the Nowogród Regiment or then as the brigade commander. The regiment was (for several days) commanded by Major Władysław Oziewicz, while the battalions were commanded by 1 – Lieutenant Aleksander Walczak, 2 – Lieutenant Pawliszyn (acting) and 3 – Captain Józef Kostko.

Directly subordinate to the division command were: the 3rd *Divizion* of the 3rd Horse Rifle Regiment, the 1st Lit-Bel Telegraph Company, two sapper companies and a staff company. The horse rifles were composed of volunteers, the majority of whom were from the Grodno area. For this reason it had the unofficial name of the "Grodno Lancers". The *divizion* commander was Captain Ursyn-Niemcewicz and the squadron commanders were Lieutenant Władysław Kamiński and Lieutenant Stanisław Czuczełowicz.

We have already discussed the telegraph company elsewhere. The division's Head of Communications was its commander, 2nd-Lieutenant Lempke.

The sapper companies were away from the division at the time. On 10 August those companies had merged with the command of the 19th Sapper Battalion (which had been formed in Grodno in July) and the entire battalion was used in the construction of fortifications on the southern flank of the foreground, where, according to the original plans, the division was to occupy a sector.

The ideological foundations on which the division grew were firmly established and prevented its combat value from falling. During the period of setbacks – when Wilno, Mińsk, Grodno and other borderland towns from which the division's regiments originated were lost – the recovery of the borderlands was relegated to the background, since it was now a question not only of Warsaw, but of the state's existence. However, the soldiers were sustained by a deep belief that at Warsaw they were also fighting for the fate of their native land, for their – as Marshal Piłsudski called it – wider Homeland, which for many Poles seemed to have been irretrievably lost.

If the Division's strength of spirit was great, it was matched by physical endurance. Ill dressed, barefoot and sometimes hungry, the soldiers struggled, but did not complain too much about their fate, despite the fact that the division had up to that point never had a prolonged rest. A doctor of the Wilno Regiment, Lieutenant Dr Bularski, recalled that he had no cases of "soldiers with injured and sore legs wanting to leave for a hospital in the interior." For the sake of accuracy, it should be noted that officers were also shabby, and there were some who marched not barefoot but in *łapcie*.³² The relationship between privates and officers was characterised by mutual trust. Here is how one company commander characterised his soldiers:

The soldiers of the company, most of them volunteers, were in a relatively patriotic mood; every defeat or victory raised them up and was the subject of their conversations. Hopelessness had a depressing effect on the mood of the company, but its fighting spirit was not shaken ... They were all very young men, not too concerned about the horror of the situation, seasoned in many battles, unstoppable in attack ... but extremely lacking in resilience on defence. The attitude of the soldiers towards the officers was friendly and trusting.

Soldiers' minds are always, and especially in this period, influenced by various rumours emanating from everywhere. They are not reflected in official documents, nor in the accounts of officers. It is only the accounts of privates, who in their memoirs do not critically analyse or blur details, that allow one to delve into the soul of the soldiering masses, revealing sublime but sometimes seemingly preposterous details.

One soldier of the Nowogród Regiment recalled:

We were in despair and many soldiers cried when there was a shortage of bread, clothes and shoes, but there was a great desire to defend Warsaw.

Another NCO of the Grodno Regiment wrote that he felt depressed at that time, because:

³² Traditional *bast* shoes, made from bark lining. By 1920 they were not much worn even among the peasantry, but nevertheless were quite practical. The Soviet armies also used them as standard footwear wore out.



... as was said everywhere, and loudly, the Polish army was to be transported to France after the surrender of Warsaw.

The events that were to take place in the coming days were, quite simply, the content of soldiers' conversations and deliberations. For example, one of the soldiers from the Wilno Regiment overheard and reported to his colleagues:

... how the officers were talking among themselves that the Marshal was bringing all the troops to Warsaw, and would then give a good beating to the chumps.

After the withdrawal of the division to the bridgehead, the deployment of the troops was as follows: the Nowogród Regiment had its 1st Battalion in Kobylka, the 2nd Battalion in Nadma and Ulasek, and the 3rd, together with the regimental command, in Chur Manor. The Grodno Regiment bivouacked near Pustelnik, while the Wilno Regiment was quartered in Turow, Nadarzyn and Maciołki. The division's command was in Marki, the 1st Brigade's staff in Maciołki and the 2nd Brigade's staff in Pustelnik. The Mińsk Regiment, as we have seen, was still in front of the bridgehead, while the division's artillery, as will be discussed later, was handed over to the artillery commander of the 11th Division on the morning of 13 August.

The day during which the division remained in reserve gave the troops some rest. One of the company commanders recalled:

The soldiers at last had a decent wash, slept, stretched their legs – which had marched hundreds of kilometres – and then looked at the world in a different way.

The division's task was not further defined beyond stating that it remained in reserve. Nevertheless it had received some orders, since on 13 August General Rządkowski ordered an officer to be sent to familiarise himself with the positions on the Łoś – Leśniakowizna sector of the bridgehead – which the division was intended to man on 14 August. In addition, in the preceding days, Captain Morawski had been sent from the division with several officers to familiarise himself in the Governorate with the defence plans and instructions.

On 13 August the division's artillery, consisting of two *divisions* of the 1st Lit-Bel FAR and a *division* of the 13th HAR, was handed over to the artillery commander of the 11th Division, who divided it into subgroups in an order of 13 August. Colonel Aleksandrowicz, who had up until then served as artillery commander of the 1st Lit-Bel RD, was to take command of the Middle Artillery Subgroup from Major Römmel. However, the battle spoiled those plans and on that day Colonel Aleksandrowicz and Major Römmel were in command simultaneously, neither of them being in control of the whole of the subgroup.

Colonel Aleksandrowicz intended (after giving Captain Siedlecki's 3rd *Division* to the Left Subgroup) to keep the rest of the division's artillery as a whole under the command of Lt-Colonel Górski, commander of the 1st Lit-Bel FAR. The 1st *Division* would be kept by Lieutenant Romiszewski, while the 2nd Battery of the 13th HAR together with the 9th Battery of the 1st Lit-Bel FAR would constitute Captain Baying's combat *division*. In the next order, however, Colonel Aleksandrowicz divided Major Römmel's existing subgroup, giving Battery A/75 and Battery 4/20 FAR to Lt-Colonel Górski, while Battery B/155 went to Captain Baying. It was also clear from the above order that ultimately all of Colonel Aleksandrowicz's artillery was to be divided between Lt-Colonel Górski and Captain Baying.

Unfortunately, these plans did not come into effect, with the result that not only was the command of the entire subgroup not built, but it also failed to establish control of the subgroup.

The artillery of the 1st Lit-Bel Division was a first-class fighting unit. It was very well equipped, as it did not lose any equipment in retreat. It had good combat traditions and enjoyed the praise of its commanders. The field artillery regiment, equipped with Russian 76-mm (3") guns, was commanded by Lt-Colonel Jan Górski. The 2nd *Division*, which was missing at the time, remained in Modlin together with the permanent commander of the 1st Lit-Bel Artillery Brigade, Colonel Orłowski. That *division* had heavy guns.

The 1st *Division* of the 13th Heavy Artillery Regiment, consisting of two batteries armed with 105-mm guns, also had a good combat tradition.



On 13 August, around 10:00, the commander of the 1st *Divizion* of the FAR, Lieutenant Romiszewski, received an order from the division to take up positions in the vicinity of Radzymin, although no time was given for when it was to be combat ready. The *divizion* commander summoned the battery commanders and acquainted them with the task. They were all convinced that it was just a matter of moving the batteries and did not care to hurry. It should be noted here that the *divizion*, deriving its combat traditions from General Żeligowski's division in Odessa, had very good artillery horses, which gave it great mobility. It was also well equipped materially.

After issuing the orders to march off, Romiszewski drove off in a carriage with the battery commanders to Radzymin, taking with him scouts and liaison, in order to conduct reconnaissance of the positions and observation posts. Upon arrival in Radzymin, no one gave the newcomers sufficient information, nor did they learn to whom they would be subordinate or what their tasks would be. In view of this, Romiszewski ordered the batteries to be positioned in such a way as to best defend the outskirts of Radzymin. The 1st Battery was near the Jewish cemetery on the eastern edge of Radzymin, the 2nd Battery was in the gardens of Aleksandrów Manor and the 3rd Battery was on the eastern edge of Cegielnia. The observation posts of the 1st and 2nd Batteries were placed on the eastern tower of the Radzymin church. After establishing the positions, the commanders of the 1st and 3rd Batteries took care of organising communications, while Lieutenant Romiszewski conducted intelligence for the 3rd Battery, which, as we have seen, had recently taken part in the rear guard battles.

The 1st Battery was commanded by Lieutenant Tomaszewski, who was given a zone of operations bounded to the south by the Dybów – Radzymin road and from the north by Mokre Manor. After selecting a position and an observation point, the construction of a telephone line began. At 11:30 the battery arrived, and at 13:00 firing began.

Lieutenant Edward Bagieński's 2nd Battery took up their position around noon and immediately established a telephone link with the observation post on the tower in Radzymin. The 3rd Battery arrived last and took up position in the afternoon, but Radzymin was lost before it had time to prepare.

We now turn to the activities of Captain Baying's combat *divizion*, which was also part of the Middle Subgroup.

At around 14:00 the commander of the 9th Battery, Lieutenant Witold Kitkiewicz, received an order from Captain Baying to take up a position near Ciemne, with the direction of fire towards Rasztów. Half an hour before the front broke, Kitkiewicz arrived in Ciemne, where he selected a position, then went north of Rżyska and, having selected an observation point there, ordered the construction of a telephone line. On Kitkiewicz's return from the observation post, the battery arrived at the position, but before he could report to Captain Baying on combat readiness, the front line was broken.

The 3rd Battery of the 13th HAR, commanded by Lieutenant Stanisław Monasterski, took up a position in the vicinity of Janków Nowy, with an observation point in Radzymin.

On the Left Subgroup, the commander of the 3rd *Divizion* was Captain Jan Siedlecki, with Lieutenant Jankowski having the 7th Battery, and Lieutenant Rohoziński the 8th Battery. The 3rd *Divizion* was less mobile than the 1st as it only had crews of cart horses, small and physically weak.

On the afternoon of 13 August, the *divizion* arrived in the vicinity of Benjaminów, where Captain Siedlecki received orders from Colonel Maluszycki to take up positions outside the 2nd defensive line (south of the barracks – fort road). In this way the batteries found themselves out of their cannon's range of fire, not reaching in front of the first line. Captain Siedlecki asked for this order to be changed, but Colonel Maluszycki and Colonel Jaźwiński did not agree.

The Left Subgroup also included the 2nd Battery of the 13th HAR, under Captain Jerzy Stępniewski. Between 16:00 and 18:00 the battery occupied a position around Height 92 (near the road from Stanisławów) and an observation point in the area of Aleksandrów Manor. Fire control for this battery was reserved for Colonel Szpręglewski. With the battery being placed far behind the first line, Captain Stępniewski asked for permission to move the battery forward, but received a refusal. This necessitated the construction of an unfeasibly extended telephone line from the position to the observation post. During the construction of the line, the front was interrupted.



Apart from Battery 2/13 HAR, Colonel Szpręglewski had no other batteries on 13 August whose fire he could directly control. Battery 4/3 HAR (155-mm howitzers), which had been formed in the interior, arrived, and in the evening of 13 August and then moved to the Struga area, stopping in a column near the railway station.

The 10th (Kaniów³³) Rifle Division

On 12 August General Żeligowski's group was disbanded and its units, with the exception of the 10th Division, were transferred to the 2nd and 5th Armies. General Żeligowski took back command of the 10th Division. The previous division commander, Colonel Małachowski, was to take command of the 19th Brigade, but left on 13 August to command the Zegrze Group.

The 10th Division was one of the best divisions of the 1st Army, its traditions being linked with the 4th Polish Rifle Division. In 1919, it took part in the battles in eastern Lesser Poland, and then became part of the Lithuanian-Belarusian Front. It remained for some time on the Polish-Lithuanian demarcation line, before being used in the Reserve Army counter-attack, from when it became part of the 1st Army.

The 10th Division gained a good reputation in the retreat, and managed to maintain its organisation intact. It owed a great deal to General Żeligowski, with whom most of its commanders had long been linked. General Żeligowski, when acting as a group commander, always counted on his division, but did not allow the links to loosen, and kept them during the retreat. The division thus avoided the fate of other units, which – torn apart organisationally – had to perform thankless combat tasks under new commanders. The division's fourth regiment, the 31st, had been away from the division for a long time.

During the retreat General Żeligowski distinguished himself with his operational group, and enjoyed a good opinion with his superiors.

However we should draw attention to certain aspects of General Żeligowski's command. One notable feature was the insufficient cooperation of his staff with the group or division commands, resulting from General Żeligowski's particular attitude to staff work. Usually he would communicate directly with his subordinate commanders, to whom he sometimes gave orders on the battle line. He would then give orders verbally or in writing on pages from a notebook. There were cases when those orders deviated from the official orders prepared by the Chief of Staff, which had been developed according to the orders of a higher command. It would not be an exaggeration to say that General Żeligowski's staff often worked to please higher commands when sending reports and official orders.

The characteristic features of General Żeligowski's manner of conversation, his courage and, above all, his calmness in battle had an effect on the division's soldiers, who often saw him in the line of battle. And it should be added that:

... he always wore a long, old coat and knee-high boots, with no weapons and no general's badges, so that he was no different from a private.

General Żeligowski had men such as Colonel Małachowski, Colonel Franciszek Sikorski and Lt-General Thomme working under him – whose outstanding combat work were the reason for the division's success in combat.

After arriving in Jabłonna, the division carried out the incorporation of the reinforcements it had received, remedied material shortages, and aimed to quickly harmonise the reorganised units.

The division's artillery – five batteries of the 10th FAR and a battery of the 10th HAR – left for Colonel Małachowski's sector, forming the "Skrzeszew" Artillery Subgroup. On the other hand, one battery of the 10th HAR and the 3rd *Divizion* of the 4th FAR (8th and 9th Batteries) assigned to the division remained in the Skrzyszew and Łajski area.

³³ Kaniów refers to a battle between the Polish II Corps and the German Army in May 1918, while it was still the 4th Polish Rifle Division, while trying to return to Poland from Russia.



The 10th Division remained as a reserve for the Northern Front command, and could therefore awaited an order either directing it to Modlin, as part of the 5th Army, or to the outskirts of Warsaw. Its position allowed easy movement in all the main directions, with the closest sector being Zegrze.

The simple fact was that the lower commanders could not know the basic plan of the Battle of Warsaw, and for this reason General Żeligowski tried to prepare them accordingly. On 13 August he went with his brigade and regimental commanders to the divisions in the morning:

... telling the soldiers emphatically and clearly that the Commander-in-Chief was making a counter-attack from the south, and therefore we here on the outskirts of Warsaw must persevere at all costs.

The division's Chief of Staff was Lt-Colonel Grabowski, and the Operations Department was headed by Captain Waław Łapiński. The division's staff stayed in the barracks in Jabłonna-Legionowo, alongside the command of the 29th Brigade, commanded by Lt-Colonel of the General Staff Thomme. The 20th Brigade, under Colonel Sikorski, was located in Chotomów, where his 30th Regiment was also quartered.

With the division was the 5th Squadron of the 2nd Horse Rifle Regiment, a Tatar cavalry platoon³⁴ (50 sabres) under Lieutenant Totjew and the staff company of 2nd-Lieutenant Grębocki. As we have seen, the 10th Sapper Battalion was at the time strengthening the second line positions.

On 13 August the 10th Telegraph Company organised that the division HQ was connected with the local military HQ, so getting a connection with the 1st Army HQ. In addition, the company built single-wire lines from the divisional HQ to the headquarters of the 19th Brigade (Jabłonna-Legionowo) and the 20th Brigade (Chotomów). Once this work had been done, it was time to repair the telephone and telegraph equipment and the cable. The company commander characterises the state of affairs at the time as follows:

The condition of the material, especially the cable, and the communications equipment was catastrophic. The telephone and telegraph lines and apparatus had been dismantled to the point of collapse: I had only a few pieces of equipment and one line in working order; the state of the cable was desperate.

The divisional rolling stock (which remained on the left bank of the Vistula) consisted of divisional wagon columns Nos. 413, 414, 415 and 419 and assigned columns Nos. 116, 527 and 751.

The division's head of sanitation was Lt-Colonel Dr Więkowski, who had Field Hospital No. 402 and Forward Hospitals Nos. 402 and 406.

The 28th Regiment was then commanded by Major Sobieszczak, with the 1st Battalion commanded by Lieutenant Pogonowski, the 2nd by Major Kaj and the 3rd by Lieutenant Łepkowski. The regiment also had a technical company, four machine-gun companies, a communication platoon (strong in numbers and well equipped) and a platoon of mounted scouts. The regimental physician was Captain Dr Nikodem Butrymowicz, who had a well organised health service.

The regiment was armed with German rifles, and then with the arrival of the march companies also French rifles. The machine-guns were of various systems: Schwarzlose, Russian and German Maxims. The reports to the 1st Army Headquarters stated that the regiment's machine-gun stocks were low, but in reality the regiment had quite a few. The 1st Machine-Gun Company had eight heavy machine-guns and two light machine-guns, the 2nd Company had seven heavy machine-guns and one light machine-gun, the 3rd Company had twenty-four captured machine-guns, and the 4th Company had six heavy machine-guns and one light machine-gun.

The regiment had quite strong cadres of former soldiers from the former 4th Rifle Division and Łódź volunteers, who easily absorbed the incoming elements.

The 29th Regiment, commanded by Major Walter, presented a slightly different picture. It too had similar cadres to the 28th Regiment, but had quite a number of soldiers who had been POW members. The

³⁴ The sizeable Lipka Tatar community in Poland had formed a cavalry regiment in 1919, but it was broken up after losses. This is some of the survivors.



battalion commanders were: 1st – Captain Jan Rogowski, 2nd – Lieutenant Żukowski, and 3rd – Captain Ludwik Wilczyński. The regiment also had four machine-gun companies, a communications platoon (poorly equipped and numerically weak), an assault company, which arrived with the 1st Battalion of the 109th Regiment, and a platoon of mounted scouts. The regiment's medical officer was Captain Bolesław Pawłowski.

The regiment was armed with German and French rifles, while the heavy machine-guns were Russian.

The 30th Regiment was commanded by Lt-Colonel Jacynik. The 1st Battalion was commanded by Captain Wiktor Muszyński, the 2nd by Lieutenant Wincenty Wróblewski and the 3rd by Captain Jan Chodźko Zajko. It also had four machine-gun companies, a communications platoon and a platoon of horse scouts (50 sabres).

The 31st regiment, as we have mentioned, was away from the division during the retreat as part of the 4th Army. On 11 August it arrived at Mińsk Mazowiecki and then headed to Modlin, where it had been ordered to find the 10th Division. In the evening of 11 August it stopped for the night near Kazun. The regiment was commanded by Captain Boltuć.

As previously stated, the division's battle-hardened cadres had absorbed the incoming volunteers and, after a short rest, the refreshed division was ready for a new battle. Lt-Colonel Thomme, highlighting the good mood of the division in the report, remarked that it could be put this way:

The Commander-in-Chief is planning something big, we have come here to fight, so we will do the simple thing and fight. "What would you do?", as General Żeligowski used to say.

The Morale of the Soldiers on the Outskirts of Warsaw

There is no doubt that the divisions arriving in front of Warsaw, and the entire Polish army in general, were influenced by the mood of society, which was preparing for a decisive battle without distinction of occupation or class.

The mood was most strongly manifested in the capital, which presented an unusual picture during this time: the streets were crowded with both young and old bearing the banners of the Volunteer Army, with military units marching in various directions, and more recently, long lines of military wagons hauling through the streets.

The rallies and demonstrations had an exciting effect on the mood, while proclamations and posters were widely distributed, calling for a fight for the state's existence. A number of senior commanders made public appearances, notably General Latinik, who spoke at one of the gatherings on Theatre Square, and General Haller. General Haller's speeches, however, were of a special nature, as he drew attention above all to religious factors.

A Civic Guard was active in Warsaw, numbering in the many thousands, and to some extent it relieved the work of the troops in the rear.

We shall not dwell any longer on these matters, but we will state that we should not delude ourselves into thinking that the sentiments radiating from the capital, had such a powerful effect that they caused the crisis of morale among the soldiers to be overcome. We know that until the battle started, contact with the soldiers arriving at the bridgehead was non-existent, and it was only in the course of the fighting that there was a gradual and increasingly strong bonding of the public with the front-line soldiers.

Nevertheless, the old soldiers felt the pulse and mood of the public strongly when they met the young volunteers in their ranks – inexperienced in combat but enthusiastic.

One should also not think that the crisis of morale was overcome as if by magic – in the sense that up to that point the soldiers had not wanted to fight, flinched in combat and perhaps sometimes ran away, until the "Miracle of Vistula" happened and they suddenly wanted to fight.

The broad mass of the soldiers were sore. Certainly, apathy prevailed in the ranks, caused by sheer fatigue. But that was understandable, as these barefoot, ragged soldiers had just retreated 500-600 kilometres.



The troops of the 1st Army, who had been fighting three enemy Armies for five weeks, arrived near Warsaw not at all demoralised by their retreat. Both General Jędrzejewski and General Osiński emphasised that the troops of the 1st Army had retained their combat value. For they had seen more than once that those troops – properly used and commanded – knew how to fight excellently. It was those moments that General Jędrzejewski emphasised in his order of 12 August, in which he bade farewell to the troops passing to General Latinik's command. General Jędrzejewski ended his order as follows:

I hope that you too will keep in your mind those ideas for which we serve for together, and that looking to the unsurpassed example of love of the Fatherland and perseverance with which our Commander-in-Chief is guiding us all, you will finally win victory for Poland over the enemy, with power and happiness.

Finally, it must be added that during this period quite a number of proclamations and orders were issued that were intended to influence the soldiers, but unfortunately reached them too late. These include General Haller's order of 13 August, and General Rozwadowski's of 14 August. The "Tactical Instruction for the Defensive near Warsaw", written by General Rozwadowski himself, also belongs to the number of late orders.

General Haller's order of 13 August read:

Soldiers!

After hard battles and great efforts you are now standing on the defensive line, where you are to protect the whole country and the capital of our Homeland from the enemy. This is where we must, and will, defeat the enemy, who is coming to take away from us the freedom we paid so dearly for with our soldiers' blood, to destroy all our centuries-old achievements, to threaten our homes and happiness, and the lives of our families. The Vistula line, and especially Warsaw – the heart of Poland – must become the grave of the Bolshevik invaders.

Remember that all the centuries, all our glorious past, all the dead heroes of Poland are looking at you, that the whole Nation is looking at you, and is sure that the Polish soldier will not fail the trust placed in him. Let each of you know that a grateful Homeland will provide the victorious soldier with happiness and prosperity, will surround him with even greater love and care.

Exert all your strength and soldier's courage, and let no one be frightened by the strength of the enemy, because:

What advantage over us can the slave have,
whose courage no one judges,
who dies without tears,
and when he is victorious,
all the glory is gathered by the iron hand,
which pushes him into battle,
and which is ruled, not by right,
but by pride.³⁵

We, free citizens of a free Poland, will defend with our bodies our most sacred rights and ideals, and that is why, by God's decree, we shall win. Even happy is he who falls in this battle, because his memory will never die, but will live forever in the tradition of the whole Nation.

And woe to those who will not fulfil their duty. The whole future will curse and condemn them. Full of faith in God's protection of the army and the nation, trusting in our own strength, we stand as an unbreakable wall, on which we shall break down the attack of the enemy, whom we shall drive beyond the borders of our State and force into a peace treaty, corresponding to the honour, dignity and interests of the Polish Nation.

³⁵ This is from then very famous 1886 poem, *Marathon*, by Kornel Ujejski.



Numerical Strength of the 1st Army

At the time of the battle of Warsaw, the numbers of the 1st Army were still fluid. When the retreat was completed, the staffs began to reorganise and replenish the troops – but before this was done, the battle started. Shortly before the battle, the higher commands sought to establish numbers. The 1st Department of the General Staff even sent officers to get actual numbers from the divisional commands. However, the desired results were not always achieved. For example, an officer of the 1st Lit-Bel RD (arriving on the orders of the 1st Department) said that he could not provide the number of men drawing rations, and “even if threatened with a court martial, we would answer in the same way.”

So the numbers given are problematic, even though the data is based on reports of the time found in the Military Archives. Many of the entries in the reports were filled in with approximate figures, or repeated data from a dozen or so days previously. Sometimes the numbers of machine-guns reported are questionable, because later reports and accounts testify that there were many more of them (this is because captured machine-guns that had been retained by the units were not shown).

The numbers in the column “number of combatants” are given according to calculations, and the following norms have been adopted: each heavy machine-gun is assumed to be manned by six men, and each cannon by eight. In addition, nineteen men were counted in the “combatants” column from the food supply of the artillery *divisions* and sixteen men from the artillery regiment HQ. The machine-gun crews in the individual batteries were not counted in the fighting numbers.

The table give us the following approximate numbers of the 1st Army on 15 August 1920:

	Combat strengths							
	Officers	Ranks on foot	Mounted	MGs	Infantry Guns	Light Guns	Heavy Guns	Combatants
8th ID	109	3 882	63	43	—	29	5	4 657
10th ID	138	4 905	666	75	—	—	—	6 159
11th ID	129	7 054	142	52	4	—	—	7 637
15th ID	111	6 964	100	115	—	51	12	8 365
Małachowski Group	157	5 323	832	83	—	33	16	7 291
1st Lit-Bel RD	74	2 874	159	105	—	—	—	3 737
Radzymin Artillery Group	—	—	—	—		86	23	1031
Total	718	31 002	1 362	453	4	199	56	38 877



Chapter VII

March to the Vistula of the 3rd and 16th Armies of the Russian Western Front

On 23 July the Commander-in-Chief of the Soviet Army issued a guideline for a further offensive deep into Poland, demanding a vigorous advance in the general direction of Warsaw, "with the aim of inflicting a final defeat on the enemy." Accordingly, the Western Front was to reach the Przasnysz – Modlin line by 12 August, and to advance to the Vistula River and capture Warsaw.

The events that took place in the days following the issuing of that directive indicated to the Soviets that their plans would be realised and the campaign against Poland would end in complete victory. This was evidenced by the results of their operations: in the battles on the Niemen and Szczara Rivers, the Poles suffered defeats and the Soviet armies rolled deeper into Poland.

After crossing the Bug River, Tukhachevski, commander of the Western Front, came to the conclusion that the Poles were regrouping their troops north of the Bug River, and that the main grouping of Polish forces for the decisive battle should be expected between the Bug and the border of East Prussia or on the Vistula.

On 10 August, he issued a directive which read:

The enemy continues to retreat along the whole front. I order that it be finally broken and, having crossed the Vistula, be driven back to the south-west. To this end:

- 1) the 4th Army, securing the right wing of the front, will capture the region of Jabłonowo – Grudziądz – Toruń with part of its forces and will force through the Vistula River in the region of Włocławek – Dobrzyń with the remaining forces on 15 August. One division of the front's reserve should be left in the area Ciechanów – Płońsk.
- 2) The 3rd and 15th Armies will force their way across the Vistula no later than 15 August. The commander of the 3rd Army will direct a blow in the direction of Praga from the Załubice area and will throw back from Warsaw the enemy facing the 16th Army.
- 3) The 16th Army will force its way across the Vistula River north of Warsaw on 14 August.
- 4) The Mozyr Group will capture the Kozienice – Dęblin area on 14 August. By order of the Commander-in-Chief the 58th Division is subordinated to the Mozyr Group.
- 5) The lines of demarcation are: between the 4th and 15th Armies Ojrzeń – Płock – Piątek (inclusive for the 15th), between the 15th and 3rd Armies Nasielsk – Dłutowo – Wyszogród – Sochaczew (inclusive for the 3rd), between the 3rd and 16th Armies Modlin – Błonie (inclusive for the 3rd).
- 6) The political situation requires the immediate full crushing of the enemy's active forces.

Soviet Positions up to 10 August

The Soviet 3rd Army, after fighting in the Małkinia area, mostly moved north of the Bug. The 5th and 6th RDs advanced westwards, fighting the units of General Żeligowski's group. The 21st RD was south of the Bug, between it and the line of demarcation with the 16th Army (Miedzna – Łochów – Modlin). Meanwhile the 56th RD was in reserve, moving behind the right wing of the army.

The Soviet 16th Army, after crossing the Bug, moved in a long line on the left bank of the river, with most of its forces concentrated in the Brest area. According to the orders of the Commander of the 16th Army, the 27th RD was to occupy the area of Sokolow, the 17th RD around Siedlce, the 8th ID around Łuków, while the 2nd and 10th RDs were to move in reserve behind the left wing – the 2nd RD was to reach Łosice and the 10th RD to Międzyrzecz.

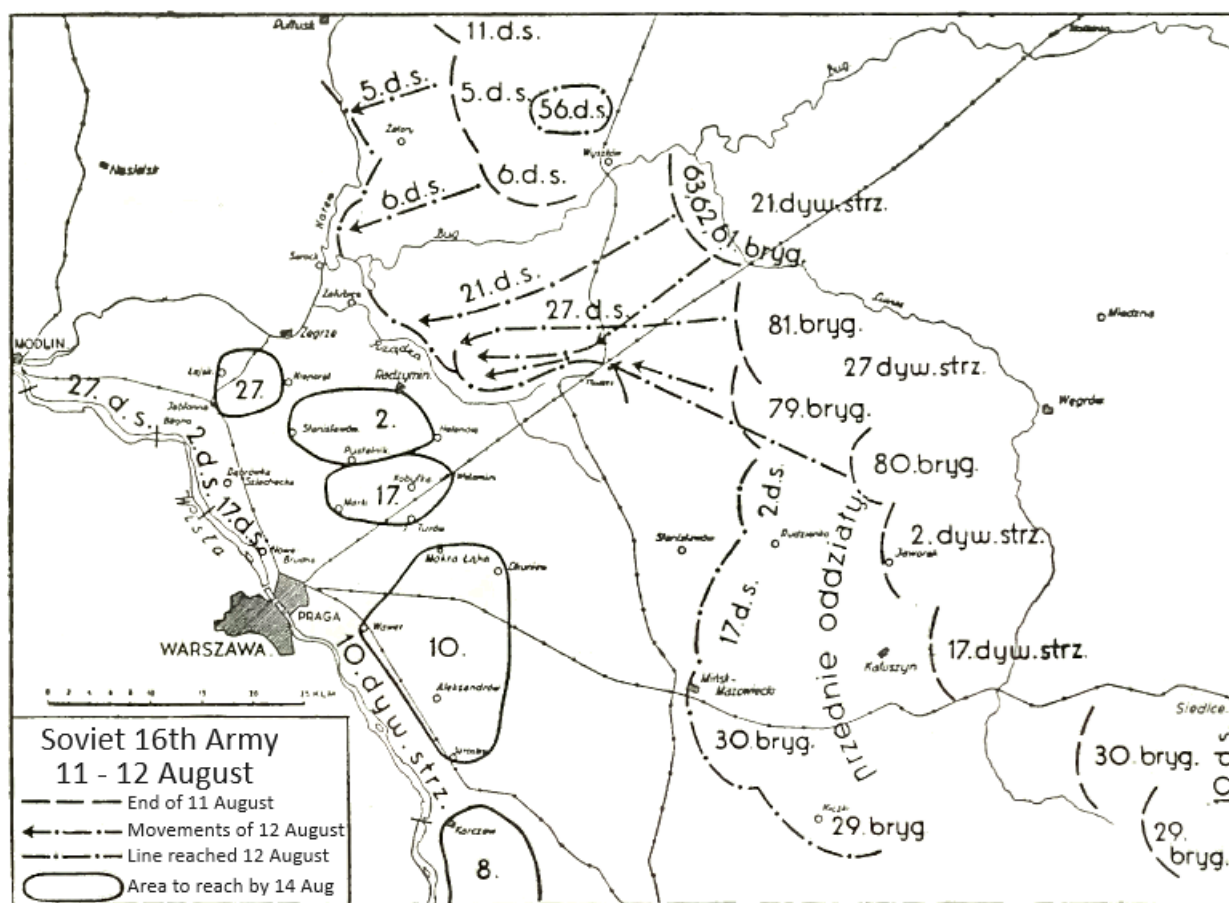
In accordance with the above order, the Soviet troops continued their offensive and on 9 August reached the areas marked on Sketch 21.

In the afternoon of that day the commander of the 16th Army ordered: the 27th RD to cross the Liwiec River and to capture the Turna – Czaple area by the evening of 10 August; the 2nd RD to reach the Kostrzyn



River line from Pobratymy to Jagodne; the 17th RD to reach the Mingosy – Trzemeszka – Czajków area; and the 10th RD the Kasiorki – Przywory area.

After the 16th Army received the Front's directive, the previous orders were changed. In line with the Front commander's concept of forcing the Vistula below Warsaw, the direction of the 16th Army's divisions' marches were now turned slightly to the north-west.



Sketch 33

At 23:35 on 11 August the commander of the 16th Army ordering the crossing of the Vistula River on 14 August, with the 27th, 2nd and 17th RDs to ford the river north of Warsaw (Modlin exclusive to Nowe Brudno exclusive), while the 10th and 8th RDs would do so on the section Nowe Brudno – Magnuszew. The sectors earmarked for each division are shown in Sketch 33.

It followed from that order that the majority of the 16th Army's forces, were heading for the Vistula downstream of Warsaw, while the regrouping for those tasks was to take place on the move, i.e. divisions were to march forward without looking at those that remained behind.

These orders stemmed from the conviction of the Soviet commanders, who did not expect much resistance from the Poles on the outskirts of Warsaw and trusted that their divisions would encounter no obstacles.

Finally, it is worth mentioning that the Russians estimated at the time that they had numerical superiority in this area of operations. On 11 August, the field staff of the Revolutionary Military Soviet reckoned that the 16th Army, with 31,655 infantry and 1,041 cavalry, would face a Polish force of 28,000 infantry and 2,600 cavalry.

Actions of the 3rd and 16th Armies

On 10 August the divisions of the 16th Army, advancing in accordance with the directive of 9 August, reached the areas we have shown on the sketch. On the same map are also indicated the areas occupied by the divisions of the 3rd Army.



On the morning of 11 August, the Soviet troops resumed their march to the west, with the 3rd Army divisions advancing significantly ahead of the right wing of the 16th Army. They reached, without encountering much resistance, the area of Pniewo – Wypych (5th RD) and Wielęcin (6th RD).

The 21st RD, the left wing of the 3rd Army, crossed the Liwiec River on 11 August and moved forward, with the 62nd and 63rd Brigades in the first line. This division maintained communication with the 27th RD, which crossed the Liwiec on the same day and then, without encountering any major obstacles, marched westwards. In the evening the 27th RD reached the area Jadów – Jadwisin – Wójtów (81st Brigade) – Równe – Kąty Czernickie (79th Brigade) – Pniewnik – Ossówno – Wierzbno (80th Brigade). The 27th Cavalry Regiment was behind the right wing, maintaining a link with the 21st RD.

On the same day, the 2nd Division reached the Jaworek area with its advanced units, the 17th Division reached the Kałuszyn area, and the 10th Division reached the area northwest of Siedlce. The 8th Division marched through Zalesie to the area of Stoczek (22nd Brigade) and through Ryżki and Tuchowicz to the area of Żelechów (24th Brigade).

As the Poles were carrying out their planned retreat there were only minor clashes during the day.

In the morning of 12 August, the units of the 3rd Army moved forward and soon encountered stronger resistance at the approach to the Narew River. The 5th RD quickly crossed the river near Łubienica and Holendry and captured the road from Pułtusk to Serock. The 6th RD, on the other hand, reached the fork of the Bug and Narew, but was stopped on the line Gąsiorowo Polskie – Łacha Niemieckie. Attempts to cross the Narew River by the 16th and 18th Brigades of that division were unsuccessful.

During the day the 3rd Army HQ arrived in Wyszaków. The 56th RD, still the Army reserve, advanced behind the right wing.

The actions of the 21st RD are of particular interest to us. That division was assigned the task of co-operating with the 16th Army and therefore, on the morning of 12 August, began to march in a south-westerly direction.

The 63rd Brigade advanced without fighting through Niegów and Dąbrówka, finding that the Poles had already begun their retreat towards Radzymin before dawn. The 62nd Brigade advanced towards Tłuszcz, while the 61st Brigade advanced as the division's reserve behind it.

Around noon on 12 August, the 62nd Brigade reached the area of Postoliska (186th Rifle Regiment) and Wólka Kozłowska (185th RR). From there horse patrols were sent out, which burst into the station at Tłuszcz and captured several soldiers of the Mińsk Regiment. Soon, however, those patrols had to abandon the station and the prisoners, as the Polish cavalry drove them out of the town.

In the afternoon of that day, units of the 81st Brigade (27th RD) began to arrive in the Postoliska area following the 63rd Brigade. The 62nd Brigade also advanced in the same direction – securing itself on the left flank, it marched along the Cienka River towards Klembów and Kraszew, while the 61st Brigade continued to follow behind.

In the evening the 63rd Brigade approached the Rządza River, where the leading units met Polish outposts: the 183rd RR in the area of Ruda, and the 187th and 188th RRs in the area of Łoś and Zawady.

At around 17:00 mounted patrols of the 63rd Brigade clashed with a Polish outpost near Zawady, and a firefight ensued. From that moment, there was continuous combat contact with the Polish troops. Soon, the rest of the brigade's units arrived in front of the Polish positions.

At the same time the 62nd Brigade arrived on the Rządza River near Emilianów – Rasztów, and at 17:00 its patrols met the Polish outposts near Dybów. During the ensuing firefight, the Poles lit the bridge over the river. The 186th RR halted at Emilianów and the 184th RR at Rasztów.

The 61st Brigade, still the division's reserve, stopped in the Rasztów – Klembów area.

The 21st Rifle Division was the first of the Soviet troops to come into contact with the garrison of the Warsaw bridgehead. Its mood was very good: it expected that the Polish troops would be easily thrown



back from the road to Warsaw, where the division was directed. Some of the units crossing the Rządza arrived at night with music that could be heard in the Polish trenches.

The 27th RD, had targets for the evening of 12 August of Wola Raszewska, Dąbrówka, and the crossings at Mokre and Dybów for the 81st Brigade; and Jasienica, Tłuszcz, and the crossings on the Rządza River at Raszów for the 80th Brigade. The 79th Brigade was the division's reserve in the Miąse – Międzyłęś – Jaźwie area.

The movement of the division's troops, especially the 81st Brigade, did not encounter any particular obstacles. That brigade marched in the wake of the 21st Division's units and did not stop on the Dąbrówka – Wola Raszewska line, but in the evening approached the Rządza River (the 243rd RR in Emilianów, the 241st RR in Raszów and the 242nd RR in Klembów), where it intermingled with the 21st RD's units.

The 80th Brigade, on the other hand, did not immediately reach its prescribed area, as it was halted near Tłuszcz until night. The 79th Brigade also failed to reach the required area by the evening, as the Polish units occupying the Tłuszcz – Miąse – Międzyłęś line obstructed its march. As the night fell, the units of the 21st and 27th RDs were in direct contact, with large clashes occurring in the Tłuszcz area, where the Poles, supported by an armoured train, defended the station.

Only after midnight, when the Poles had left on their own, did the 79th and 80th Brigades occupy the designated areas, with the 79th Brigade advancing to Banachowizna, Cygów and Turze.

On 12 August, the 2nd RD advanced unimpeded, and in the evening of that day reached the area of Rudzienko with its lead units.

The 17th RD, which reached the Kałuszyn area during the night of 11/12 August, resumed its march in the morning of 12 August and at 14:00 crossed the Jędrzejów – Jakubów – Stanisławów line.

The 10th RD, which marched through Łuków, reached the vicinity of Siodło – Kiczki with the 29th Brigade, where it stayed overnight. The 30th Brigade, marching on the right wing, advanced a long way, as at 15:00 its front units showed themselves around Krzywica, while after midnight of 12/13 August they drove the Polish rearguard out of Mińsk Mazowiecki. The 28th Brigade advanced behind the 29th.

The 8th Division, the right wing of the 16th Army, by the morning of 12 August was in the vicinity of Stoczek – Ciechomin, from where it set off to the west.

From the description so far, we can see that on 12 August the 16th Army came into contact with the garrison of the Warsaw bridgehead only with its right wing (the 27th RD). So far the Soviet command did not have sufficient information to determine whether the resistance encountered was the result of an organised defence or the action of a rearguard, which was covering the retreat of the main Polish forces to behind the Vistula River. Reconnaissance of the positions may have taken place on the Rządza River; but the results would not be available until 13 August.

With the information he had, the commander of the 16th Army issued at 03:35 a directive:

The armies of the Western Front have taken Mława – Ciechanów – Pułtusk – Wyszaków after fighting. The 21st Division was ordered on 13 August to strike from the Zegrze – Załubice line at the enemy operating in front of the right wing of our army in the direction of Praga.

I order the divisions to continue the offensive and, on the evening of 14 August to take the following areas.

27th RD: Lajski, Stary Jabłonna, Nieporęt,

2nd RD: Radzymin, Stanisławów, Pustelnik (excl.), Helenów,

17th RD: Pustelnik, Marki, Turów, Wołomin,

10th RD: Mokre Łąki, Wawer, Jarosław, Okuniew,

8th RD: Karczew, Osieck, Kołbiel.



Divisional reconnaissance should by this time have reached as far as the line of the Vistula River within the divisional sectors designated in Paragraph 1 of my Directive No. 505.

The 27th Division is to cooperate with the 21st Division in its attack on Praga.

The commander of the 10th Division should be aware that, depending on circumstances, his division may be directed towards Praga in order to force its way across the Vistula River within Warsaw's borders, which will require the concentration of one brigade in the Okuniew region.

Report receipt of this immediately.

State and Organisation of the Soviet Troops

We will take this opportunity to recall the well-known details of Soviet infantry organisation. Each rifle division had three brigades, each consisting of three rifle regiments. A regiment had three battalions.

Each rifle division had its own cavalry, which officially should have been a *divizion* (about 280 sabres), but in reality most divisions retained cavalry regiments – but which rarely numbered more sabres than the division's official cavalry strength.

The division had permanent light and heavy artillery, namely: three *divizioni* of light artillery (each *divizion* was two batteries) and a *divizion* of heavy artillery (two batteries) and howitzers.

The division's strength according to the official structure was to be about 43,500 men – with a combat strength of 15,471 bayonets, 48 guns and 470 machine-guns.

Obviously, there were significant differences between this structure and the actual numbers, even though the original figures had been reduced several times. For example, the artillery had had a reduction in the number of batteries or guns in the *divizioni*. According to the reduced structure, the division had about 30,000 men, including nearly 10,000 bayonets.

The battle formation of the division in was quite schematic: we usually saw two brigades in the first line and the third in the reserve. The rifle brigade was similarly grouped in battle.

The Russian infantry, sturdy on the march and physically tough, feeding on anything, was then very tired, but the "inertia of victory" – as Tukhachevski put it – carried it on. The Russian soldier was alive with the hope of an imminent pogrom against Poland. Their infantry regiments were numerically weak, as bayonet numbers had declined considerably during the period of Polish retreat, but a relatively large number of machine-guns were retained.

Russian commanders at the time had numerous, well-trained reconnaissance units: these included divisional cavalry, and scouts on foot and horseback.

Light artillery was in two-battery *divizioni*, which were permanently assigned to individual brigades. Brigade commanders might also assign batteries to rifle regiments, and then the light artillery *divizioni* accompanied the infantry. As a result the Russian artillery was characterised by a dispersion of firepower in action. But on the other hand, it developed considerable mobility with the batteries, which, accompanying the infantry in battle, rendered it considerable service. The supply of ammunition was particularly inadequate during the period we are studying.

The 3rd Army had only been formed in June 1920 from units of the southern group of the 15th Army. It was commanded by Lazarevich. In the previous couple of weeks the commander of the Russian Western Front was not satisfied with the actions of the 3rd Army. Tukhachevsky, when mentioning this, attributes it to Lazarevich's illness, but it seems that these shortcomings did not disappear soon, as still on 11 August the Front commander pointed out the 3rd Army's apathy with regard to the actions of the 5th and 6th Rifle Divisions.



Looking at its order of battle, the Army included four rifle divisions, which only arrived on the Polish front in the spring of 1920 and took part in the May offensive, in addition to the 21st, which entered the battle at the end of May.

The 16th Army was formed from the former Western Army, which had taken part in the war with Poland from the first days. The army was commanded by Sollohub, and his chief of staff was Batorskii.

The 27th RD was one of the oldest Russian divisions, having been formed in August 1918. It took part in battles in the Kazan area and in Siberia, from where it was transferred to the Polish front to take part in the July offensive as part of the 16th Army. The 27th Division had good soldiers and was considered one of the best in the Soviet army.

The 17th RD was the oldest unit of the 16th Army, as it had been part of it since the end of 1918. It should be mentioned that the order of battle for this division lists the artillery group of the 16th Army, which at that time remained quite some distance behind. In anticipation of misunderstandings, it should be noted that this group did not make it to the battle in time.

The 8th and 10th RDs had long been part of the 16th Army, while the latest to arrive (besides the 27th RD) was the 2nd RD, which had recently suffered in the battles on the Bug River, which affected the division's combat value. It did not have a cavalry regiment.

We need to consider the numbers for the Russians, and in doing so we encounter considerable difficulties, as the Soviet literature does not give us accurate information. We do have tables of numbers in Kakurin and Melikov's work,³⁶ which unfortunately has data for 1 August. However, in view of the fact that the Soviet divisions did not suffer major losses from then up to 12 August, we can accept them as approximate.

However, in other Russian works we come across different figures: for example, Kakurin and Melikov give the balance of the 27th RD on 1 August as 6,590 bayonets, 256 sabres, and 7,917 total combatants, while the history of that division shows that before the battle the numbers were 2,747 bayonets and 235 sabres. Then again, the commander of the division mentions that at that time it reached 3,000 bayonets with 6,000 combatants.

Looking at the 10th RD, according to Kakurin and Melikov it had 4,500 bayonets and 406 sabres on 1 August, while the commander of the division mentions that it then had 2,500 bayonets and 160 sabres.

There is no doubt that the calculations of Russian authors made after the war show a tendency to decrease their numbers, which makes it difficult to compare the two sides.

For these reasons we have decided to adopt a certain general figure for rifle divisions, namely 2,500-3,000 bayonets with 5,000-6,000 fighting men. These are the lowest figures that can be adopted. The figures for guns and machine-guns, on the other hand, are taken from Kakurin and Melikov, bearing in mind that there may be slight differences from the actual numbers. But for the 27th Division we have taken the numbers of machine-guns from the division's history, which are much lower than those shown in Kakurin and Melikov.

These calculation gives us the minimum numbers below:

3rd Army	Bayonets	Sabres	MGs	Guns	Combatants
5th RD	3 000	577	141	29	6 000
21st RD	3 000	290	122	27	6 000
6th RD	2 500	—	119	30	5 000
56th RD	2 000	103	62	24	4 000
Total	10 500	970	444	110	21 000

³⁶ *War with the White Poles 1920*. The tables from that book are available on pygmywars.com.



16th Army	Bayonets	Sabres	MGs	Guns	Combatants
27th RD	3 000	235	175	32	6 000
2nd RD	2 500	—	99	32 ³⁷	5 000
17th RD	3 000	406	143	70	6 000
10th RD	2 500	160	87	30	5 000
8th RD	2 500	200	77	26	5 000
Total	13 500	1 001	581	190	27 000

The above are much lower than Kakurin and Melikov's figures and the figures in Russian reports of the time. We have mentioned elsewhere that on 11 August the field staff of the Revolutionary Military Soviet calculated the 16th Army had 31,655 fighting infantry and 1,041 cavalry.

Political Preparations

The preceding paragraphs have given the necessary details of the enemy's actions and condition. What remains to be discussed now is the political preparations. This subject is vast and exceeds the framework of our work, so in view of this we shall confine ourselves to a few necessary remarks.

As is well known, the Soviets always accompanied military action with strong propaganda, which they turned into an excellent combat factor – one of their main weapons. In the Soviet army great attention was paid to politics and bodies were created for instruction in political thinking. Every military unit was headed by a commander and a political commissar, who held control political control and at the same time directed political work within the unit. His task was to work not only in the ranks, but also among the civilian population – as soon as new areas were occupied, the political commissars and revolutionary military soviets were the basis of the 'sovietisation' of the country.

Without dwelling any longer on the leadership of political work, we shall state that it provided excellent working conditions in the Soviet army and among the population of the conquered country. It must be added that the Soviets carried out an equally strong propaganda campaign outside their own country.

Propaganda was one of the main factors in the preparations for the Soviet offensive against Poland. The main slogan was, "by crushing the Polish army, the Russian revolution will continue its march west." It should be noted that this slogan was not coined in 1920, but much earlier, probably from the very first moment of the war with Poland. However, it took on a stronger tone in the spring of 1920 and grew in strength as the Soviets were victorious. On 5 May, Trotsky exclaimed at a gathering:

It must be remembered that White-Guard Poland puts a barrier between us and Europe.

and:

We will go west to join the European proletariat, which knows that we cannot unite except over the corpse of White-Guard Poland.

The July general offensive was preceded by an order from Tukhachevski, proclaiming that,

... over the corpse of Poland is the route to the universal conflagration.

These are the significant slogans, or rather battle cries, which accompanied the Soviet offensive and with which the ranks of the Red Army were enthused. Victory over Poland would have opened immeasurable horizons for militant communism. Tukhachevski emphasised this in these words:

³⁷ M. Volchanetskiy in "On the Approach to Warsaw (Actions of the 2nd RD artillery in the battle of 14-17 August)" in *Voyna i Revolutsia* 1/20, states that there were two 42-line (107-mm) guns, two 48-line (122-mm) guns, and three light *divizioni* for total of 27 guns (the 6th Brigade *divizion* only having seven guns).



There can be no doubt that if we had been victorious on the Vistula, the revolutionary fire would have reached across the entire European continent.

Lenin expressed it more emphatically later when he stated;

By striking at Poland, we are striking at the Entente itself; by smashing the Polish army we are smashing ... the Treaty of Versailles.

It should also be remembered that Polish Communists who were active in Russia were also pushing for the offensive deep into Poland. They hoped and asserted that as soon as the Soviet army crossed the borders of ethnic Poland, revolution would break out there.

As successes were achieved and Warsaw approached, the conviction of the certainty of Soviet victory grew and intensified. The Soviets then prepared a 'Provisional Polish Revolutionary Committee' to take over the government in Warsaw. On 31 July, this Committee began to operate in Bialystok, consisting of: Dzierżyński³⁸, Marchlewski, Kon, Pruchniak and Unslicht. It issued a manifesto to the proletariat of the towns and villages, in which it called for them to control the workplaces and co-operate with the Red Army. However, the actions of the Committee was mostly a decoration for the Soviet offensive; it had no practical significance, especially as it was formed quite late.

The Soviet press at the time, especially the front-line press, was imbued with a bellicose tone. Not surprisingly, the thought of the offensive failing was completely ruled out, especially as the end was becoming increasingly evident. Victory seemed imminent.

On 5 August, the magazine *Bolshevik* proclaimed: "Poland, Piłsudski's Poland, is nearing the end of its life," and – to reinforce this conviction in the mind of the Red Army soldier – it was added that Foch had said: "Poland is on the eve of collapse, Warsaw is on the eve of capitulation."

At the beginning of August, political agitation intensified in the ranks of the Red Army. On 5 August, the command of the Western Front issued an order directing that Russian troops be provided with banners bearing the inscriptions: 'For our freedom and yours' and 'Polish Republic of Socialist Councils'. In addition, the order contained guidelines for conducting agitation among the Polish population. At the same time, an instruction to carry out political work in Poland came out, signed by Smilga, a member of the Revolutionary Military Soviet, and by Marchlewski, a member of the Committee. The lower political bodies in the army, for their part, gave guidance and so, for example, the RMS of the 16th Army printed a pamphlet by A. Kon that was intended to orient the political commissars in the relations in Poland "in which they would have to work." The motto of this pamphlet was placed in the introduction: "For our freedom and yours."

It seemed to the members of the Provisional Polish Revolutionary Committee that all they had to do was to throw out some slogans and bring about a revolution in Poland. They exhorted the proletariat of the towns and villages to liberate political prisoners, expel the civic leaders and industrialists and seize the factories. They ordered the formation of local revolutionary committees.

Just in case, however, the Provisional Committee assured them that the Russian Red Army, driven by brotherly feeling, would help them in their struggle. Independently of issuing the above-mentioned manifesto to the towns and villages, the Provisional Committee announced on 11 August an order, addressed to the Polish soldiers, to immediately form soldiers committees everywhere. These were to seize power:

Officers loyal to the people should remain in office, while others, especially the most fierce and cruel generals, are to be imprisoned.

It is difficult to speak of the actual results of this work in the Soviet ranks, because in the reports of participants, commissars and commanders, the subsequent defeat has obscured the facts. Soviet authors wrote that political preparations for the battle in August were weaker in the ranks than for the July offensive, and that in fact instructions for political work were received at a time when the scales of victory were tipping to the side of the Poles. They pointed out that political work was going poorly in the ranks,

³⁸ This is Feliks Dzerzhinski, of Cheka fame, in the Polish spelling. He was ethnically Polish.



while the political commissars were mainly concerned with organising revolutionary committees. There is no doubt that these details would have fallen to the importance of minor faults in the event of victory.

But to avoid misunderstanding, we must point out that the Soviets were disappointed in their hopes for the outbreak of revolution in Poland. The population of the towns and villages was opposed to the Red Army entering Poland. On 8-10 August, the political commissars of the 3rd and 16th Armies reported that the population met the Soviet troops with reluctance and even hostility.



Chapter VIII

Final Orders and Preparations Before the Battle

In the days following the order for the Battle of Warsaw, the Polish Supreme Command received new information on the basis of which it was determined that the enemy was moving its forces more towards the north-west. It was thought that the main enemy attack on Warsaw would come not so much from the east and north-west, but more from the north. In that case, an enemy attack was expected on the Modlin – Zegrze sector.

On 12 August, the 2nd Department of the General Staff collated the information and, on the basis of the ascertained positions of the enemy and the directions of movement, assigned the following plan of action to the Soviet command:

The 4th Army would advance to the area of Sierpc, Płock and Płońsk and would observe Modlin from the west, or support the 15th Army's attack on Modlin. That army would also provide support for the actions of the 3rd Cavalry Corps, which would probably advance to the left bank of the Vistula River with the task of destroying the Warsaw – Toruń and Warsaw – Kraków railway lines. The 15th Army, on the other hand, after reaching the area of Nasielsk and Serock, would advance on Modlin and Zegrze. The 3rd Army would move along the Warsaw – Białystok rail line, advancing on the Radzymin – Okuniew section, or would strike in the direction of Benjaminów and Zegrze, supporting the 15th Army's attack on Modlin. The 16th Army with its right wing would attack the bridgehead in the area of Wiązowna or Okuniew, while part of its forces would be assigned the task of observing the Vistula (Góra Kalwaria to the mouth of the Pilica River). The Modlin group would move with most of its forces towards Dęblin.

The paper concluded by stating that the enemy intended to capture the bridgehead by a frontal assault, with a simultaneous demonstration by the 4th Army in the area of Płock and Płońsk. Furthermore, it was noted that:

It is not excluded, however, that at the last moment the Soviet command will direct the majority of its forces (about three armies - the 3rd, 4th, and 15th) to attack Modlin in order to, having captured the Vistula crossing there, strike at Warsaw from the west.

The enemy forces directed to the frontal assault on Warsaw were calculated at ten divisions of the 3rd and 16th Armies, which were thought to have 45,200 bayonets, 298 light guns and 65 heavy guns.

Influenced by the conviction that the enemy would be advancing on Modlin – Zegrze, more attention was paid to that sector at the last minute. This is reflected in various orders and, among others, in General Weygand's note of 11 August, in which he stated the importance of defending the Modlin – Serock section of the line. He also pointed out that the preparations for defence of that section to date had been inadequate.

We have mentioned elsewhere that the 18th Division was taken away from the 1st Army and on 11 August the Northern Front added it to the 5th Army. It ordered the front line positions to be manned as follows: from Radzymin to Serock with the 11th ID, from Radzymin to Wołomin with the 1st Lit-Bel RD, from Wołomin to the Vistula with the 15th ID. However, the above assignments were not final: for example, on 12 August General Haller planned for the 7th Reserve Brigade to relieve (on the Zegrze bridgehead) the 11th ID, and then the 11th Division would become a reserve in the Nieporęt – Łąski area, while the 10th ID was to leave for the 5th Army. This order remained in abeyance for the time being and eventually shared the fate of many other such projects.

It was clear from the above, that the aim was to strengthen the 5th Army and to ensure the defence of the northern wing of the 1st Army. On the other hand, plans for the defence of the bridgehead were subject to change; and the final arrangement were only made during the course of battle.

On 11 August, General Latinik, probably on the basis of a verbal agreement, issued an order in his capacity as Governor of Warsaw. He laid out the positions in the bridgehead, which differed considerably from the Front orders above. He ordered the 15th ID to garrison the Okuniew – Karczew sector, and the 8th ID to



occupy the Okuniew – Leśniakowizna sector with one regiment. The 11th ID remained in its sector, while the 1st Lit-Bel RD was to hold Cegielnia – Słupno – Pustelnik – Pietrówka, and the 8th ID, less one regiment (in Ossów – Turów – Maciołki) was assigned to the army's reserve.

However, this plan was not final, as drafts with new changes kept being put forward. These were connected with the growing conviction of the weakness of the defence organised by the 11th ID, which had been entrusted with too large a section of the line. As noted, the 11th ID had lost two infantry battalions and General Haller, reporting on this, noted that the division's sector was too weak. The 1st Army command, alarmed at the time by the 11th ID, decided that the 8th ID would take over the Leśniakowizna – Helenów section and relieve the 47th Regiment, which was to become the division's reserve. On 12 August, the 8th ID's staff was notified of this, but the orders that had been prepared regarding it were not issued.

So by 12 August there was still no final plan for the positions of the 1st Army.

The Commander-in-Chief, Marshal Piłsudski, was attentive to the defensive preparations until the very last moment of his stay in Warsaw. He was convinced that a very strong force of artillery, tanks and aviation had been assembled on the bridgehead, and that all available means of defence had been used. On the eve of his departure, the 1st Army's artillery command received an order from the Belvedere to determine the mobile combat capability of its batteries.

Unfortunately, we have to conclude that not all the reports made to the Commander-in-Chief corresponded to reality, and the Marshal could not personally supervise the preparations. We did see some indication that the Commander-in-Chief's was thinking of visiting the line near Radzymin.

On 12 August, the Commander-in-Chief left for Puławy to take direct command of the Central Front, which was to have a decisive task in the upcoming battle.

1st Army Before Noon on 13 August

The day of 13 August was meant to be the turning point in the operations of the 1st Army's divisions. On that day the main divisional forces, protected in the bridgehead by the rear guards, were to complete their preparations for defence. The rear guards were to remain in front until the evening. It should be noted, moreover, that the reports received by the Army command before noon confirmed the belief that the day would be peaceful in the bridgehead.

In the previous chapters we wrote about the defensive preparations in the sector of the 11th ID and the Zegrze Group and about the plans for the final positions on the Warsaw bridgehead. We noted that on 12 August the plans had not been finally determined. This was particularly to affect the 8th Division, which did not know until 13 August whether it was to garrison the Helenów – Wołomin – Leśniakowizna – Okuniew section of the line, or whether it would remain on the Leśniakowizna - Okuniew section. By the afternoon of 13 August that had still not been resolved.

There were other problems. The commander of the 15th Division was unhappy and claimed as early as 11 August that his sector was "far too large". Upon arrival at the bridgehead, the 'disappointment' of the soldiers on not finding the announced fortified positions was reported to the Army.

The Army's staff did not receive precise information about the establishment of combat contact in the sector of the 11th Division until the morning of 13 August and, on the basis of reports from the 1st Lit-Bel ID, it was sure that the division's rearguard had remained on the Dąbrówka – Tłuszcz line on 12 August. At 03:30 on 13 August the division's chief of staff asked the Army (by Hughes) whether the rearguards at Dąbrówka and Tłuszcz could be pulled back (although in fact the division had not left a rearguard at Dąbrówka – a fact unknown to the higher commands at the time). To this he received the reply that they could be withdrawn as a last resort, the idea being, however, to keep them:

... in front until the date indicated by the order, as this will give the necessary time to bring the bridgehead into order.



During the late morning of 13 August the Army received the morning situation reports from the divisions, containing the course of action of the rear guards during the previous night, the positions in the morning of 13 August and details of preparations for defence in the front line positions.

At 06:40 a report was received from the 15th ID, which stated that the division's rearguards were in contact with the enemy on the Mińsk - Kołbiel line in the afternoon of 12 August and that, in the morning of 13 August, the division had advanced some of its main forces to the area in front of the line on the Sobiekursk - Dąbrówka - Ostrów - Glinianki - Dębe Wielkie line. The report stated that the troops would:

... remain there until the enemy forces them to retreat – at least until the evening of 13/8.

At 10:00 the Army received a situation report from the 8th ID which reported that the rearguard, unable to establish communication with the 60th IR the day before, had withdrawn to the line Dąbrowicka – Stanisławów – Cyganka – Kobierne railway station, and noted that “the rearguard is to hold out until 19:00.”

Finally, around noon, the Army received a report from the 1st Lit-Bel Division, which stated that its rearguard, under strong pressure, had withdrawn to the line Lipinki – Grabie Stare – Górale, and that “in all probability the rearguard units will hold out until 18:00 in the area in front of the line.”

On the basis of these reports, the Army expected that it would not be until the evening of 13 August that the enemy's advanced troops would approach the bridgehead. However, in the course of the morning news began to arrive from the 11th ID that there was combat contact with the enemy in that division's sector. The news was not very specific and did not arouse anxiety in the division's command, as evidenced by a conversation between Lt-Colonel Bobicki and the Chief of Staff, Lt-Colonel Kohutnicki, which took place around noon. In this (Hughes) conversation Kohutnicki gave the following details:

During the night and morning the Bolsheviks, with the cooperation of their artillery, attacked the line of our outposts at Zawady – Dybów several times. Our outposts were twice knocked out and forced to retreat to the main defensive line. However, we managed to regain them with a counter-attack. The commander of the 21st Brigade sent alarming reports and asked for reinforcements. However, I believe that these reports are exaggerated, and think that the situation remains favourable.

Based on that report, the Army staff were reassured about the Radzymin sector on 13 August.

As we have seen, the preparations in the Zegrze sector so far had not been extraordinary. Rear Admiral Porębski found himself in a difficult situation and it is not surprising that he could not cope with the task. On the other hand, the news received about the enemy forced more attention to be paid to the Bug – Narew line, and at that time the need to replace the Rear Admiral with another officer was considered. Eventually, on 13 August, command of the Zegrze sector was taken over by Colonel Małachowski, who had commanded the 10th ID until 12 August.

Around 11:00 General Haller gave a verbal order to General Latinik to garrison the sector from Dębe to Modlin solely with troops of the Zegrze group, relieving the 17th Infantry Division. In connection with this, the Army ordered the Zegrze group to use a Volunteer cavalry squadron, which had been assigned to the group, to patrol the sector along the southern bank.

It should be added that in the afternoon of that day, French Colonel Renoux, as instructed by the French Military Mission, proposed the construction of fortifications of the southern bank of the Narew between Zegrze and Modlin, and the construction of an entrenched position in the section from Jabłonna to Zegrze.

On The Outskirts Of Warsaw

11th Infantry Division

The last day which can be considered a day of preparation was 13 August. Fighting began that day on the bridgehead, the pace of which would increase from day to day, or rather from hour to hour.



Before proceeding with a description of the operations, we shall try to sketch in a few sentences a general picture of the readiness of the defence in the sector of the 11th Division at the time of the fighting.

We have seen that the commander of the 11th Division believed in a successful defence of the line; and that he strove to prepare it to the best of his understanding. However, the withdrawal of two battalions from his division contributed to both the division commander and the brigade commander recognising, in the last days before the battle, that with their forces too weak, that they would not be able to cope with the task entrusted.

Colonel Jaźwiński hoped that his sector would be reduced in size, which would allow him to organise reserves. On the other hand, Colonel Wędziagolski, commander of the 21st Brigade, was very pessimistic about the possibilities for the defence, and reported that. He stressed not only the lack of reserves and fortifications, but also negatively assessed the value of the troops – especially the 47th BRR. He wrote that a lot of fugitives and deserters had been incorporated into that regiment which, according to him:

... at the moment of pressure in battle will betray us, probably deserting again, bringing disorganisation to the whole regiment.

It is probable that Colonel Jaźwiński did not share the views of his brigade commander – or he thought that under the conditions Colonel Wędziagolski would not be up to the task, since he sent a report to the brigade commander asking for Colonel Kobordo to be appointed its commander.

It will be noted here that the sources in our possession indicate (contrary to later reports) that the 47th BRR was considered the most concerning at the time, and the 46th the least. The 48th Regiment (which had one battalion in the division's reserve) returned some alarming reports at the time, as it had almost no reserves of its own.

There is no doubt that the state of readiness of the defence was not satisfactory, if only because the construction of the positions and the preparation of the artillery defence had not been completed.

We should recall that on 13 August the division had been sent the artillery of the 1st Lit-Bel RD, which was divided up, with some of the batteries being placed at the rear of the second line. Colonel Aleksandrowicz, acting commander of the Lit-Bel artillery, was to take command of the Middle Subgroup. However, in the end, for various reasons, the batteries were not in position on time, and Colonel Aleksandrowicz did not manage to take command on 13 August.

8th Infantry Division

The 8th ID was formed from regiments that came into being at the end of 1918; it therefore counted among the oldest units in the Polish Army. The 21st and 36th Regiments originated from Warsaw, the 33rd from Łomża, and the 13th Regiment was formed in Kraków. These regiments took part in battles in Eastern Małopolska, from where, in the second half of 1919, they were redeployed to the Lithuanian-Byelorussian Front and there joined the 8th Division.

During the Soviet offensive in May the 8th Division suffered considerably, but after counter-attacking as part of the Reserve Army it gained success and recognition from its superiors. On 5 June 1920 Marshal Piłsudski expressed his satisfaction with the 8th ID's behaviour, as he stated in a conversation with General Szeptycki, "I count it again among the good divisions, on which we can always rely." In the weeks that followed, the 8th Division, fighting as part of the 1st Army against the superior enemy numbers, was worn out, but persevered to the end of its retreat, keeping its organisation intact.

The fate of war did not spare it severe trials. The worst was a defeat suffered at the end of July, when it was outflanked on both sides, due to the early departure of its neighbours while retreating from the Białystok area. In this battle the division lost completely the 3rd Battalion of the 21st Regiment and the 2nd Battalion of the 36th. During the following days of the retreat, the higher command thought that the division would have to be withdrawn for a rest, but the situation did not permit it.

On 12 August, the division's troops crossed the bridgehead positions. Although the soldiers were ragged, barefoot and even hungry, they marched with eagerness and in a mood that showed that the dullness and



apathy caused by the retreat would soon disappear. A long-forgotten soldier's song sounded among the columns advancing through Okuniew.

The division's commander was Colonel of the General Staff Burhardt-Bukacki and its the chief of staff was Lt-Colonel Bagiński. The 15th Brigade was commanded by Colonel Kraus, the 16th Brigade by Colonel Kraupa and the 8th Artillery Brigade by Colonel Olgierd Pożerski.

The 15th Brigade contained the 13th and 33rd Regiments. The 13th was commanded by Colonel Prohaska, and had three battalions – each of two rifle companies and one MG company. On 10 August the regiment's strength was 435 bayonets and 17 machine-guns. The 33rd was commanded by Lt-Colonel Jerzy Sawicki and had three battalions. On 10 August it had 18 officers and 322 bayonets in its fighting strength, but only 5 machine-guns.

The 16th Brigade had the 21st and 36th regiments. Major Przyjałkowski's 21st Regiment had the 1st (missing one company) and 2nd Battalions and four machine-gun companies. Its combat strength on 10 August was 12 officers, 295 bayonets and 16 machine-guns. Colonel Krakówka's 36th regiment had only the 1st and 3rd Battalions, one company of the 2nd Battalion and four machine-gun companies. Its combat strength on 10 August was: 16 officers, 393 bayonets and 17 machine-guns.

In addition the division included the 3rd *Divizion* of the 1st Horse Rifle Regiment (1 officer, 32 sabres), the 8th Telegraph Company and some other divisional units. It did not, however, have its own battalion of sappers at this time.

In the preceding chapters, when mentioning the reinforcements to the 1st Army, we gave details of the 8th Division's march companies, noting that those replenishments unfortunately did not arrive in time. The composition of the division after its reorganisation is shown in Appendix 2.

When considering the organisation of the defence, we must warn in advance that the 8th Division was strongly affected by the delays of the higher commands in determining the plan for manning the bridgehead. Its commander only had one order from the 1st Army up to 12 August, based on which Colonel Burhardt-Bukacki ordered the 16th Brigade to garrison the sector from Leśniakowizna to Okuniew inclusive. The 15th Brigade remained in reserve, with the 33rd Regiment stationed in Ossów, and the 13th in Rembertów.

On 12 August a telephone notification was received from the Army HQ (from General Minkiewicz³⁹) that the 8th Division was to cover the sector of Okuniew – Leśniakowizna – Helenów. The division therefore ordered the XV Brigade to send officers to familiarise itself with that section. It was announced that once that brigade had received its reinforcements, it would man its entire stretch, to enable the 16th Brigade to reorganise. Then on the following day, at 14:00, that the division received the delayed Governor's Order of 11 August which demanded that the division garrison the Okuniew – Leśniakowizna sector (exclusive) with one regiment, while the rest concentrated as part of the Army's reserve in the Ossów – Turów – Maciołki – Kobyłka area.

The 8th Division's command, unsure of which task it should comply with, turned to the Army, reporting that it had positioned itself in accordance with the Army's order, and asked for a decision in connection with receiving the Governorate's orders and General Minkiewicz's orders. In the end the division remained in the Okuniew - Leśniakowizna sector and did not send any units to the Army's reserve.

The division's HQ was located in Ząbki, which was too distant from the front lines, with poor communications. Colonel Burhardt-Bukacki again appealed to the Army, but to no avail.

On 12 August the situation was: Colonel Prohaska with two battalions of the 13th Regiment, the 3rd Battalion of the 36th, two squadrons of the 201st Light Horse Regiment, and a battery was operating as the rearguard; the 21st Regiment was beginning to garrison its section; the 36th Regiment staff and its 3rd

³⁹ The Governor of Warsaw had been assigned several officers without precisely defined roles. General Minkiewicz, was one of them, and he was to deal with infantry matters.

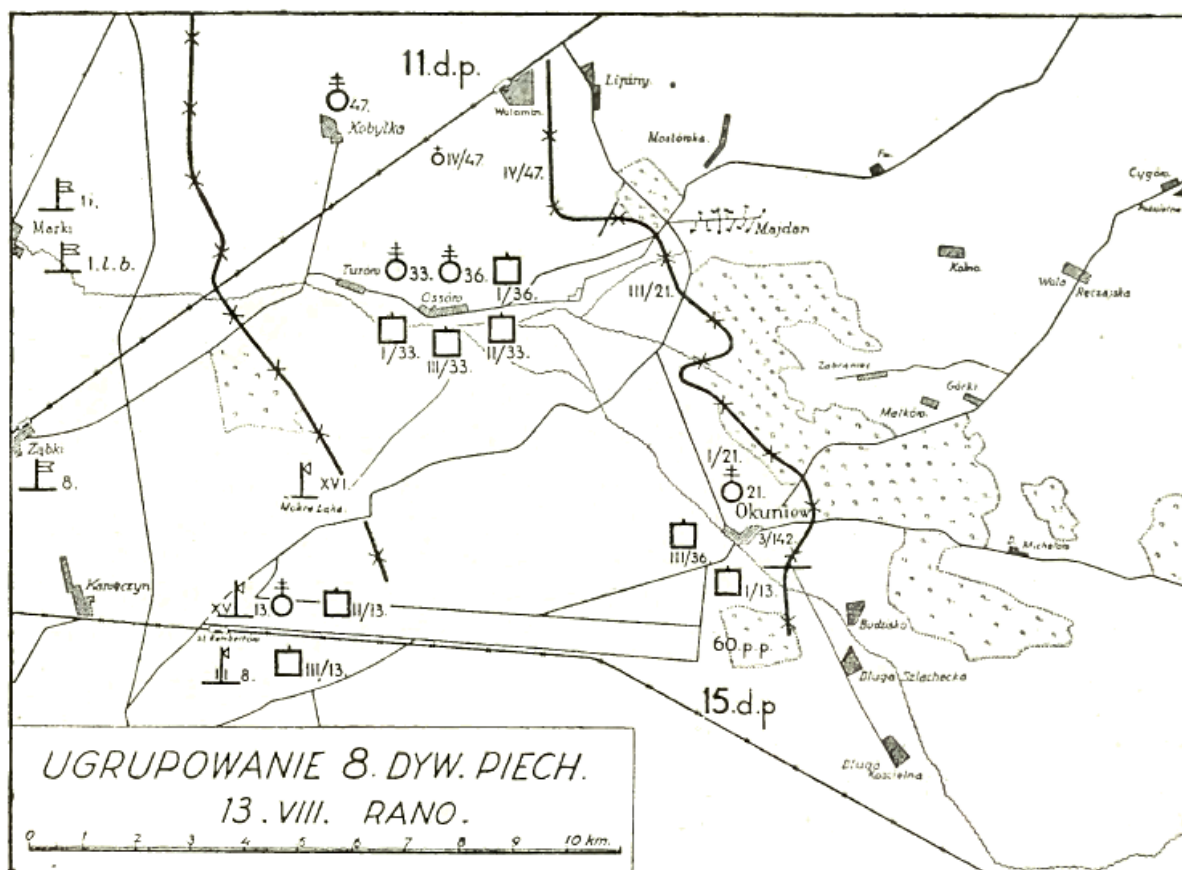


Battalion along with whole of the 33rd Regiment had arrived in Ossów; and the small unit of the 1st Horse Rifle Regiment was in Żabki.

Colonel Burhardt-Bukacki, as we have already mentioned, envisaged that the 15th Brigade would be able to replenish its units in peace, and would then relieve the 16th Brigade. The 16th Brigade would then be able to reorganise. This was in line with the directions from the higher commands.

The 8th ID's commander later recalled that, having reorganised, he intended to divide his sector between the two brigades. The Warsaw Workers Regiment, which was then forming in the city, was to be the division's reserve.

In the end, however, the arrival of the reinforcements was delayed considerably, not occurring until the start of the battle. The Colonel recalls that this thwarted his defensive plans.



Sketch 34 : Positions of the 8th ID in the morning of 13 August

After arriving at the bridgehead, the division proceeded to do further work on the positions, the condition of which was not satisfactory, despite the fact that a large number of sapper units had been working there in recent days.

On 12 August, the division commander familiarised himself with the state of readiness of the positions: he stated that they had been executed "disastrously," especially in the southern section, where the line of the positions had been projected along a ridge of hills, while the obstacles had been set in dead fields of fire. On the other hand, in the area of Leśniakowizna Burhardt-Bukacki felt the position had been better chosen, although "the obstacles were poorly made, so that the stakes could be pulled out by hand."

These shortcomings stuck in the minds of many of the participants: for example, one artilleryman recalled that the fortifications were "dog-shit", as "a kick with one's foot could knock over the whole area" of the "fence" built of barbed wire.

In an order of 12 August, Colonel Burhardt-Bukacki stated that the section was "half complete", drew attention to the shortcomings (blind spots in the positions, incompetently constructed obstacles, etc.) and ordered haste in the work. The fortifications were only partially finished, and the battle started while they were still in the process of expansion.



We mentioned earlier that the 16th Brigade was to garrison the entire sector with a single regiment. By necessity, this task was entrusted to the 21st Regiment, as the 36th has given one battalion to Colonel Prohaska (the division's rearguard).

On 12 August Major Przyjałkowski's 21st Regiment, after arriving at the bridgehead, began to organise the defence. The sector was divided between two battalions: the left one (from Height 116 up to and including Leśniakowizna) was garrisoned by the 3rd Battalion; while the right one (Height 116 up to the Stanisławów to Okuniew road) was occupied by the 1st Battalion. The right wing was then occupied by the 3rd Company of the 142nd Regiment, which from then on operated as part of the 8th Division. That company was quite large.

A detailed order from the commander of the 21st Regiment for dividing up the sector went out at 11:30. The 1st Battalion was reinforced with the 2nd MG Company and was to hold 2½ companies in the line, leaving half a company in reserve (behind the centre) of the battalion. The 3rd Battalion received the 4th MG Company. In executing that order the 1st Battalion left the 1st and 3rd Companies on the line and the 2nd in reserve. The reserve for the 3rd Battalion was the 10th Company. The regiment's HQ was in Okuniew with the technical company. That evening Battalion 1/13 went to in Okuniew (as the brigade's reserve). The 14th Sapper Battalion and the sapper companies of the division's regiments continued to work on the sector.

Assessing the value of the defence organised, it is difficult to deny the validity of Colonel Pożerski's assertion, who once recalled that, "thus far our positions amounted to no more than a thin web of patrols." The defence of the 21st Regiment was indeed weak – if we recall that it then numbered about 400 bayonets and 17 machine-guns.

The regimental and brigade commanders were aware of this state of affairs. Colonel Kraupa reported that the sector was too weakly manned and decided to reinforce the 21st Regiment with Battalion 1/36. Around noon on 13th August that battalion received the task of relieving Battalion 3/21, which was to march back to the right wing of the regiment and garrison the stretch from Okuniew Cemetery to a dirt road near Height 107. When the battalion of the 36th IR arrived at Leśniakowizna, it stopped for lunch.

After arriving at the bridgehead positions, the 8th Artillery Brigade's staff set about organising the defence, although various frictions and shortcomings were present from the outset – even though on 10 August the division had sent artillerymen to the bridgehead to familiarise themselves with the positions.

As we have seen, the artillery commander in sectors of the 8th and 15th Divisions was Colonel Hulanicki, who already had some artillery deployed in positions, and had done some preliminary work to position the arriving batteries. However, Colonel Hulanicki's ongoing role was not very clear.

After arriving at the bridgehead, Colonel Pożerski familiarised himself with the artillery positioning in the sector. Some things were not clear to him and so, as early as on 12 August, he asked the division commander to clarify who the batteries in the sector were subordinate to. Colonel Pożerski had received by this time quite a number of different orders – from the artillery command, the Governor's Office and the Army – which, he recalls, he did not even manage to read at the time. On the other hand, we know that many of these orders were late and no longer valid, so it is hardly surprising that it was not easy for the newcomers to familiarise themselves with the tasks and working conditions. This is reflected in the colonel's report of 09:00 on 13 August, in which he said :

The brigade's command is constantly receiving operational orders concerning the battery grouping, etc. from Col. Hulanicki of the 3rd Artillery Group (Miłosna sector) and also from the Artillery Group of the Governorate. Can you please explain to whose orders I am subordinate, apart from those of the 8th Division.

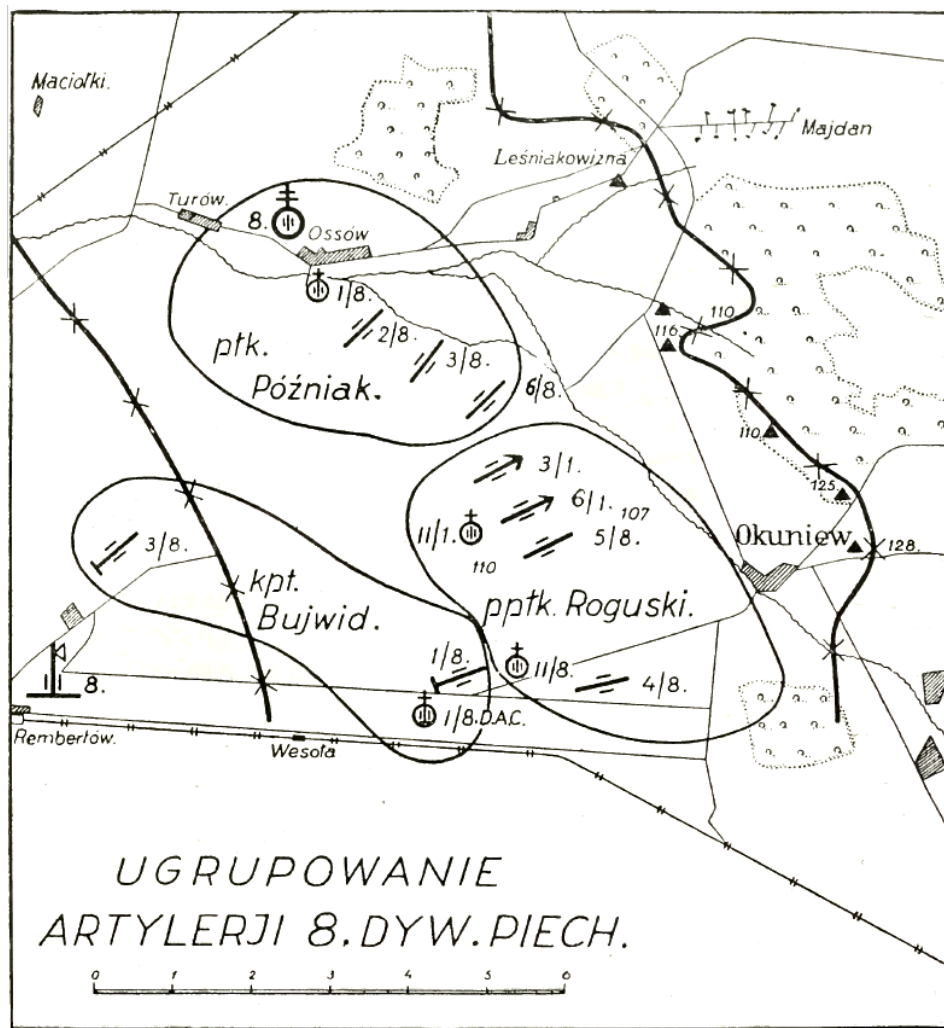
Before these matters were clarified, Colonel Pożerski led the preparations for the defence. He followed the general directives of Colonel Hulanicki, who demanded that the batteries be set up in three lines. This grouping was not yet final, as Pożerski did not know whether the 2nd *Divizion* of the 1st Mountain Artillery Regiment would be subordinated to him (this *divizion* was found in position). So he placed in the second



line only a platoon of the 9th Battery of the 6th FAR, while as far as the rest was concerned he confined himself to a reconnaissance of the positions.

On 12 August Pożerski issued an order, stressing the importance of maintaining the position "which is directly defending Warsaw."

On 12-13 August he divided all the light artillery into two groups, defined the regions of the positions, and left the 1st and 3rd Batteries of the 8th HAR, under Captain Bujwid, at his disposal as the general operations artillery. The left group was given to Colonel Pożniak, and the right to Lt-Colonel Roguski. The mountain artillery *division* went with Lt-Colonel Roguski.



Sketch 35: Positions of the Artillery Group of the 8th ID

At the time the 8th Artillery Brigade had the 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th and 6th Batteries of the 8th FAR (75-mm guns) and the 1st and 3rd Batteries of the 8th HAR (105-mm guns). The batteries were three guns each, except 2/8 and 3/8 were four guns and 3 HAC was two guns. In addition the brigade had assigned to it, a horse platoon of the 9th Battery of the 6th FAR with Austrian guns and the 2nd *Division* of the 1st MAR, with the 3rd and 6th Batteries. In the course of the battle, its 4th Battery arrived.

The mountain battery was recently formed, with Austrian howitzers, and commanded by Captain Steuer. The artillery grouping is shown Sketch 35, which does not include the horse platoon (as it left the division soon) and the 4th Mountain Battery. However, it should be borne in mind that the process of organising the artillery was not yet complete at the time of the battle, and encountered many difficulties.

The HQ of the 8th Artillery Brigade, in Remberłów, did not have a telephone connection with Ząbki on 12 August, as the construction of that line had just begun. In the meantime communication was maintained by horse messenger.

The state of technical communication on 13 August was rather poor: the brigade commander reported:



The lack of telephone supplies makes it impossible to establish communication both within the units and with the infantry.

These shortcomings were quite serious, since the division commander drew attention to them in a rather harsh manner, threatening that if the communications between artillery and infantry:

... is not satisfactorily regulated by the morning of 14 August, all the artillery will be subordinated directly to the infantry commanders.

Finally, we will point out that the influence of Colonel Hulanicki's command on the 8th Artillery Brigade was insignificant, or rather almost non-existent. We have seen that the division commander positioned his artillery without restriction.

The 8th Division staff, after arriving at the bridgehead, found itself in the worst conditions of the 1st Army divisions in terms of technical communications. We know that nothing had been prepared in this sector, and the designation of Ząbki as the division's HQ added to the difficulties, caused by its remoteness from the front lines and inconvenient location. The division command took care of wire communications quite early, as it ordered its head of communications to begin construction as early as the evening of 11 August, with troops to send telephone units to the bridgehead immediately.

On 8 August [sic] the 8th Telegraph Company arrived at Ząbki and on the same day organised the divisional headquarters and established communications with the headquarters at Okuniew and with the 1st Army.

The first work undertaken by the division's head of communications (Lieutenant Klimkiewicz) was the construction of a fixed line from Ząbki to Rembertów, to link up with the commands of the infantry brigades and the artillery. Due to a lack of material, that work did not begin until 13 August. On the same day a reporting point was organised in Ossów. The state of the telegraph equipment was also poor: the company did have one Hughes and two Morse apparatuses, but only one Morse apparatus was fit for use.

15th Infantry Division

The 15th ID was transferred from the 4th Army to the 1st Army in accordance with the order for the Battle of Warsaw. That division had been formed from the former 2nd Division of Wielkopolska⁴⁰ Riflemen, which was created from units formed during the Wielkopolska Uprising. At that time, the 5th, 6th, 7th and 8th Regiments of Wielkopolska Rifles were formed, which were renamed the 59th, 60th, 61st, 62nd and 62nd Regiments of the 15th Division. With that composition the division was redeployed from Greater Poland to the eastern front and took part in the offensive into the Ukraine. After completing that offensive, it moved north to participate in the June counter-offensive of the 1st and 4th Armies, as part of General Skierski's group. After the counter-offensive, the 15th Division remained with the 4th Army until 9 August.

The division was commanded by General Jung, the 29th Brigade by Colonel Wrzaliński, and the 30th Brigade by Colonel Galecki. During the period of the retreat, the combat value of the division weakened to some extent, and the behaviour of the division provoked some quite severe criticism from the higher commands in the last days. It was not in a satisfactory state – although the division command tried to refute the accusations made against the troops and the command – which was not helped by the fact that the division had very few officers at the time.

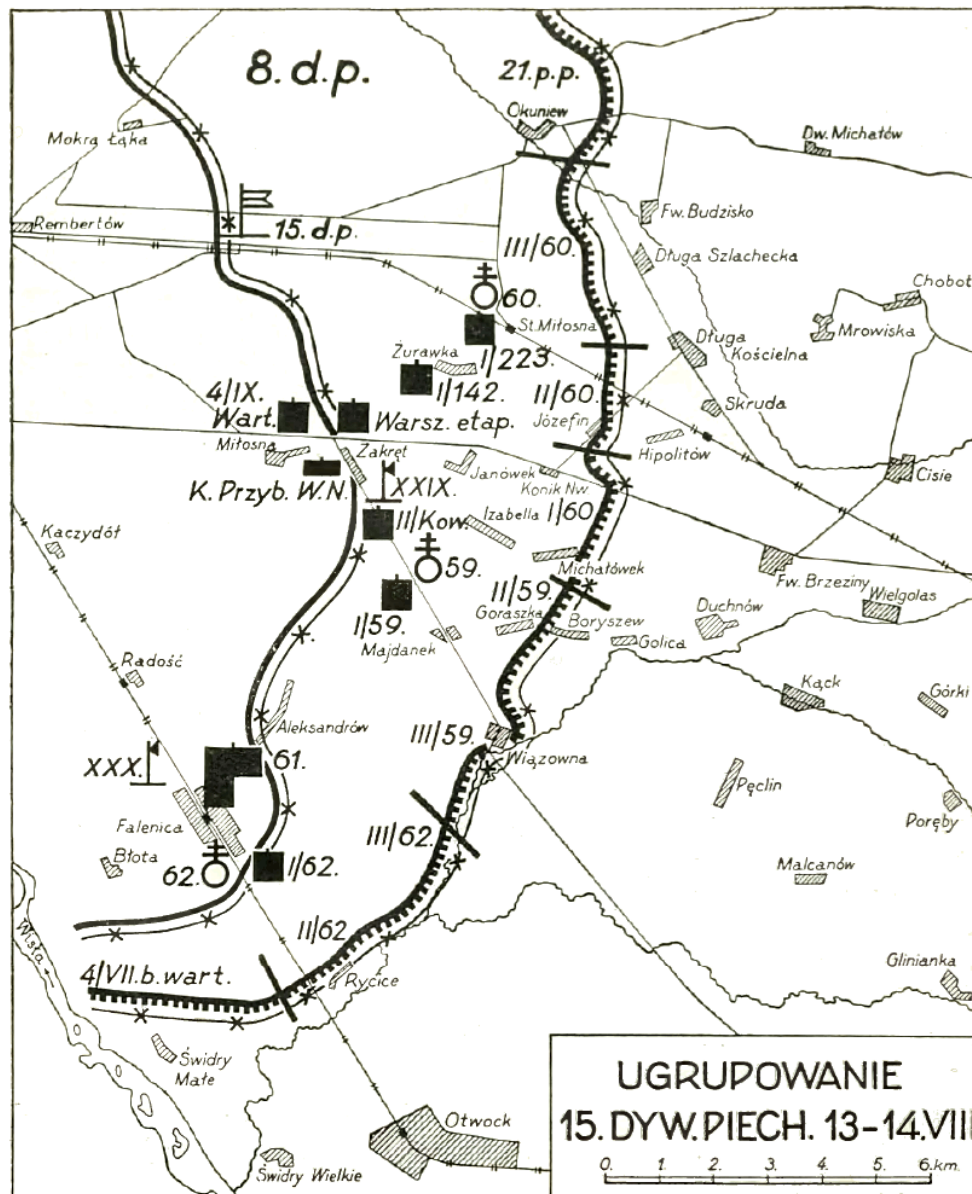
As noted previously, on its arrival at the bridgehead, the division received a relatively large reinforcements in the form of march companies and assigned battalions from the Governorate garrison.

On 11 August the division received the order to withdraw to the bridgehead. It issued orders that the 29th Brigade would garrison the section from Okuniew to Emów, and the 30th Brigade from Emów to Karczew and the Vistula River. The division's reserves would be: two battalions of the 59th in the area of Miłosna; one battalion of the 61st in the area of Falenica; the 3rd Battalion of the 59th in Wawer; and a squadron of

⁴⁰ Greater Poland. These had been the eastern portions of 1918 Germany. In 1920 it was the eastern border of Poland, but is now central Poland following Stalin's rearrangements after 1945.



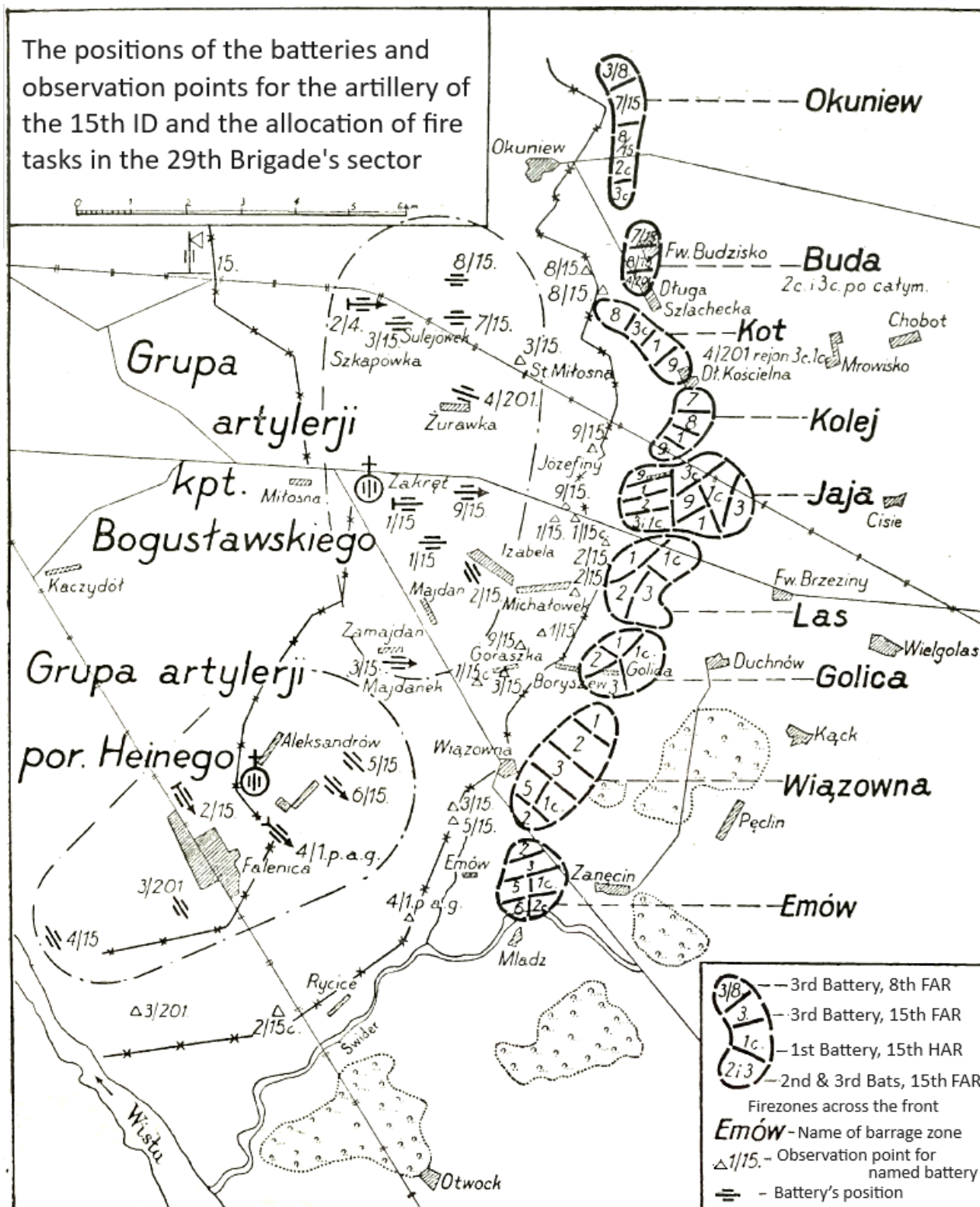
the 2nd Lancer Regiment in Rembertów. The 29th Brigade was assigned the Warsaw Stage Battalion and the 1st Battalion of the 223rd Regiment, while the battalions of the Warsaw security garrison were to become part of the brigades in whose sections they were located.



The final deployment of the division after the completion of the retirement to the bridgehead is shown in Sketch 36. That map takes into account the previously described redeployment of the division's right wing, which was to reach as far as Karczew. The 30th Brigade, which was to garrison those positions, reported that it found them unfinished. That resulted in a corresponding report being sent by, the 15th Division, which reported, among other things:

For these reasons the Army command finally agreed to abandon its positions near Karczew and, after midnight on 13/14 August, the division command ordered the 30th Brigade to march out of its positions at Mładz – Karczew – Przewóz and take up prepared positions on the Swider River. The troops remained on the line Natolin – Otwock – Karczew.

Finally, it should be mentioned that the 1st Battalion of the 168th Regiment (initially to be transferred to the division's reserve) was placed with the 30th Brigade, and remained between Gora Kalwaria and the mouth of the Świder River (on the left bank of the Vistula) with the task of observing the river. This battalion was supported by the 5th and 6th Batteries of the 201st FAR.



Sketch 37



After arriving at the bridgehead, command of all the artillery assembled in the 15 ID's sector was taken over by Colonel Niemira, commander of the 15th Artillery Brigade. He was subordinate to the division commander, who seems to have had unrestricted command of the entire artillery, as we have found no ties connecting Colonel Niemira with Colonel Hulanicki.

The artillery HQ was in Rembertów, alongside the division staff and the HQ of the 8th Artillery Brigade. Colonel Niemira had three *divisions* of the 15th FAR, the 1st *Division* of the 15th HAR and the batteries he found in the section: the 3rd and 4th of the 201st FAR, the 2nd Battery of the 4th HAR and the 4th Battery of the 1st MAR (which during the battle it was sent to the 8th Division).

That is a total of 16 batteries, including 3 heavy batteries, were in the sector. The total number of guns was 56, as the 4th and 6th Batteries of the 15th FAR and the 2nd and 3rd Batteries of the 15th HAR all had two guns.

This artillery was divided into two subgroups, which supported individual infantry brigades, namely Captain Boguslawski's Left Subgroup and Lieutenant Heine's Right Subgroup. There was no general artillery, concentrated in the hands of the artillery brigade commander, as the heavy batteries were given to the commanders of the subgroups.

This took into account the division's basic grouping, holding the Okuniew – Wiązowna sector with most of its forces, facing the directions leading from the east to Miłosna and Wiązowna.

Thus most of the batteries were given to Captain Boguslawski (commander of the 3rd *Division*, 15th FAR), namely: the 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 7th, 8th and 9th Batteries of the 15th FAR; the 3rd Battery of the 15th HAR; the 2nd Battery of the 4th HAR; and the 4th Battery of the 201st FAR. The HQ of the subgroup was in Zakręt.

The commander of the right subgroup, Lieutenant Heine (commander of the 2nd *Division* of the 15th FAR), had: the 4th, 5th, and 6th Batteries of the 15th FAR; the 4th Battery of the 1st MAR; the 3rd Battery of the 201st FAR; and the 2nd Battery of the 15th HAR. The group's HQ was in Falenica.

The location of the positions and observation points are shown in Sketch 37.

In conclusion, we must point out that the artillery of the 15th ID, like indeed the whole division, was in good condition, as it had plenty of time to prepare for the battle. By 14 August, when the first major fighting occurred, the artillery was sufficiently prepared and had built up an excellent fire network.

The wire communications in the 15th Division's sector were good, as it had a fairly rich network of fixed links. As detailed above, from 9 August on the field-company of 2nd-Lieutenant Winiarski had worked in this area. Between 9 and 13 August it built a two-wire permanent line from Karczew to Góra Kalwaria, which ultimately proved unnecessary, as the position at Karczew was abandoned.

On 10 August, 2nd-Lieutenant Winiarski undertook the construction of six wires, connecting Rembertów with Wawer, which he completed on 13 August, while on 12 - 15 August he built two wires for the Wawer - Falenica line.

After the arrival at the bridgehead of the 15th Telegraph Company, 2nd-Lieutenant Winiarski was subordinate to 2nd-Lieutenant Jasnoch, Head of Communications for the 15th Division. Jasnoch proceeded to build up the command network further. First and most importantly, he set up a Hughes and then Morse apparatus to link up with the Army headquarters. He placed a requisition for equipment and materiel and quickly got the gaps filled.

His 1st Platoon served the division HQ and built the connections necessary for its work, the 2nd Platoon was assigned to the 30th Brigade, and the 3rd Platoon to 29th Brigade. They built a network between the brigade commands. The 4th Platoon, on the other hand, was used to construct a line from Falenica to Jeziorna (where the batteries of the 201st FAR were stationed), with part of the 2nd Platoon assisting in that construction. Meanwhile Winiarski's unit was finishing the previous work and constructing a Kępa – Kąty – Kopyty line, which linked the 30th Brigade with Battalion 1/168.



Construction of the Second Line of Positions outside Warsaw.

Just before the battle, and even in some sections during the battle, construction started on the second line of positions in the bridgehead. These were based on the former German bridgehead lines, which we saw at the beginning of this study were completely destroyed and all work had to be started from scratch.

The initial forces used for the development of the line were small, and it was only after the transfer of some of the fortification troops from the first line that work intensified. The earliest to arrive was the 3rd Company of the 18th Sapper Battalion, which started construction in the area of Wólka Radzyńska. Around 8 August, Lieutenant Zaleski arrived from Fortification Group No. 12 and, with a handful of sappers but mainly civilian workers, began the construction of the Struga – Maciołki section. At the same time 2nd-Lieutenant Jędraszko from the 1st Reserve Sapper Company led the construction of the second line in the Benjaminów area (300 sappers). Finally, on 8 August, 250 sappers arrived from the 1st Reserve Sapper Company under the leadership of Lieutenant Wejtko and began construction in the section from Maciołki to Height 103

On 12 and 13 August the 1st and 3rd Companies of the 10th Battalion arrived, which were used in Lieutenant Zaleski's section and south of Height 103. Thus we can see that the northern flank was fortified earlier than the southern, as Lt-Colonel Butler began work on the second line on 12 August and Lieutenant Colonel Stefanowicz on 14 August.

Work on the northern end was not properly directed until the arrival of Major Hajkowicz, who took on the work with energy. All the units of the northern section were subordinate to him, or rather he took over all the units of the northern section, except for the unit of 2nd-Lieutenant Jędraszko, which nominally was subordinate to Captain Rueger, but in reality acted independently. The works managers also had a number of civilian workers.

By 13 to 14 August, the following had been built: an entrenched line from Borki to Fort Benjaminów and a section from Rynia to Fort Benjaminów (Jędraszko); firing trenches had been dug in the area of Wólka Radzyńska, and one burned line of obstructions had been partially salvaged (3rd Company of the 18th Sapper Battalion); but in the section Struga – Maciołki – Height 103, the position had only been partially fortified.

On 14 August Lt-Colonel Stefanowicz started work on the northern end in the section between Height 103 and Miłosna, using four companies of workers (200 men each), a technical company of the 155th Regiment, and a company of the volunteer 201st Sapper Battalion. Stefanowicz also took command of the 1st Sapper Company, which he found in the section.

On the south wing work was undertaken on 12 August. In this section the former German positions were the first line of the Polish bridgehead, while a second line was marked out 2 to 4 km to the west of it. The 15th and 19th Sapper Battalions (the latter leaving on 14 August for its division) and civilian workers were used in the construction.

The further course of the work no longer belongs to the period of defensive preparations, but relates to the activity of the divisions during the battle.

We can see that on 13 August, i.e. on the first day of the battle, the second line could not be called fortified, as work had only just been started in some sections, while in others little had been achieved.

Summarising the work on the two lines, unfortunately we conclude that neither was completed on time. The lack of unified management, a plan of work, and an appropriate distribution of people and materials took its toll. As a result, the likes of Major Hajkowicz and Lt-Colonel Stefanowicz had to exert a lot of energy to at least partially strengthen the positions.

The various heads of engineering and sappers were unable to take the lead, all the more so because they changed several times (Colonel Rybiński, General Wroczyński, Lt-Colonel Nawratil, Lt-Colonel Griebisch), which had a bad influence on the flow of work. The Northern Front issued instructions on 13 August which



stated that the first line had been badly executed, and ordered the construction of a new one to be undertaken, but now inside the bridgehead. However, the order stressed:

The heads of engineering and sappers will pay most attention to the fortifications of the first line, and the second line should under no circumstances be stronger, which could induce the soldiers to retire.

Centre and Crossings of the Warsaw Bridgehead

Simultaneously with the commencement of work on the first line (and thus earlier than on the second), work began on strengthening the Praga positions. Construction was directed by Lt-General Wejtko, then General Inspector of Technical Forces to the Commander-in-Chief, who built two positions within a few days, one on the line of the former Praga forts and the other on the outskirts of Praga. On 4 and 5 August General Wejtko moved the works to the left bank of the Vistula and began the construction of positions on the line of the former Warsaw forts. The fast progress of General Wejtko's works was due to good organisation and the fact that there were relatively many workers and equipment (being in proximity to Warsaw).

The positions around Praga were manned by units subordinated to General Zawadzki. The northern section (from the Vistula River to the Marecka Railway) was garrisoned by the 2/1st Guard Battalion, the middle section by the 1st Guard Battalion, and the southern section by the Women's Volunteer Legion. A regiment of state police and the Łódź Guard Battalion remained in reserve in Praga. The rest of General Zawadzki's troops were on duty in the city and protecting the crossings.

In the period of preparations for defence, a great deal of attention was devoted to the crossings of the Vistula – not only their preparation, but also their security and the precise regulation of traffic. As a result of this work, the crossings were successfully prepared, despite the difficulties encountered:

In Warsaw there was a pontoon bridge (built just before the battle next to the destroyed Poniatowski Bridge), the Kierbedź Bridge⁴¹ and a railway bridge, adapted for vehicle traffic (for two carts).

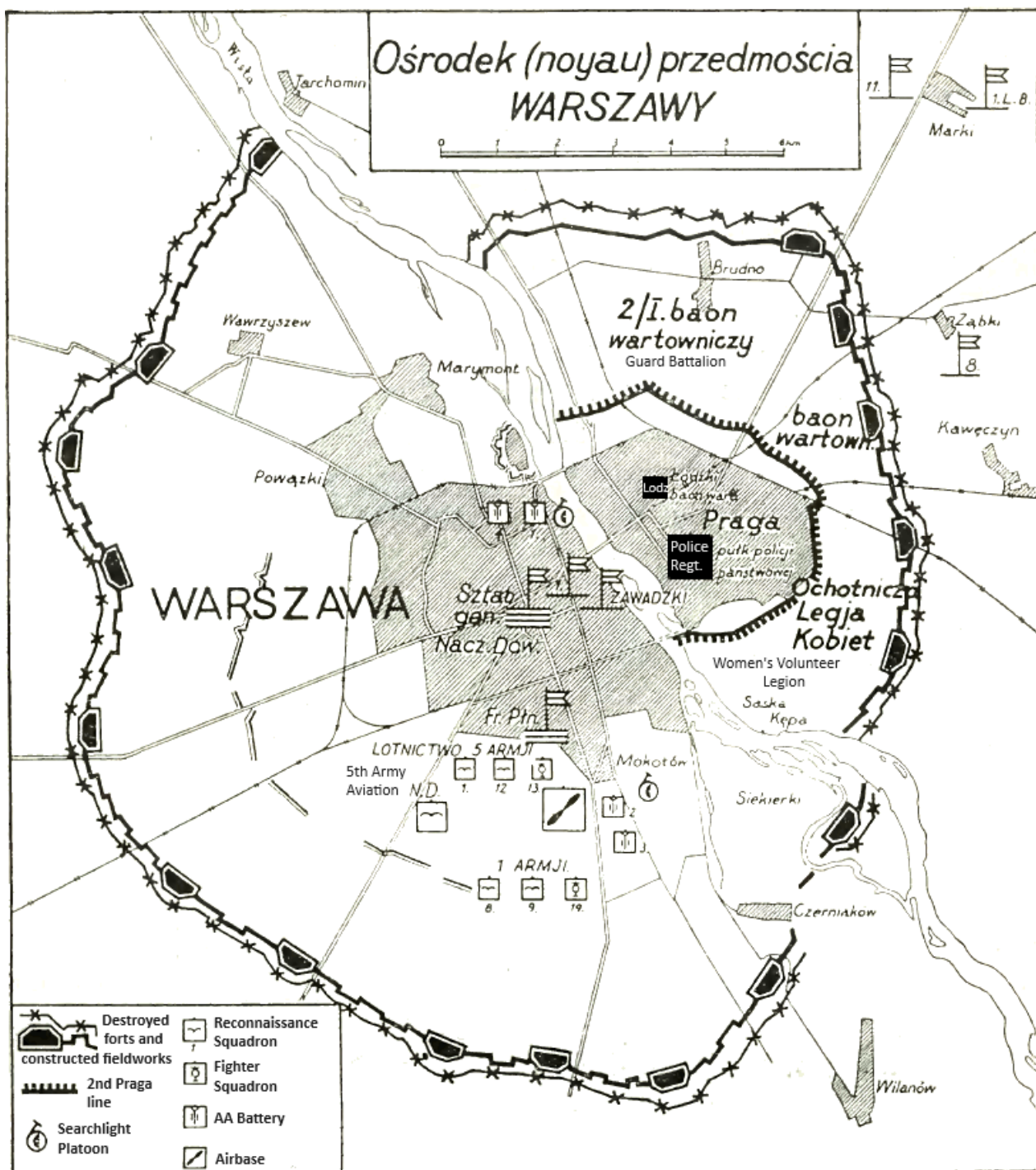
A steam ferry, with a capacity of 10 to 12 two-horse carts per half-hour, was in Jabłonna.

Góra Kalwaria had a steam ferry and a pontoon bridge was planned (but not completed until 20 August).

The bridges were given adequate protection; the pontoon bridge in Warsaw had the 3/5th Stage Company (with two machine-guns), 20 gendarmes and 30 members each of the rowing society and the civic guard; the Kierbedź bridge had 20 gendarmes, two machine-guns and 30 members each of the rowing society and the civic guard; finally, the railway bridge was manned by a stage company with two machine-guns and 20 gendarmes and 30 members each of the above organisations. Independently, there were control officers at each crossing, who were given detailed instructions for regulating the traffic.

⁴¹ The large Kierbedź bridge is the centre one on the Sketch 38, the pontoon bridge (by the Poniatowski) is the southern and the rail bridge is the northern.





Sketch 38 : Centre of the Warsaw Bridgehead



Chapter IX

Initial Battles on the Outskirts of Warsaw, 13 August

Contact with the Enemy in the Sector of the 48th Regiment

On 12 August the 48th Border Rifle Regiment was completing the work involved in organising the defence, secured by patrols which had been sent to the area directly in front. The whole day passed quietly and the enemy appeared only in the evening. These were just some small Russian patrols, which fired on the 5th Company outposts and soon disappeared, taking cover nearby.

Colonel Łukoski, the regimental commander, reported to the brigade commander that at 20:30 the regiment had come into direct contact with the enemy near Ruda.⁴²

As mentioned previously, that the regiment did not have a reserve at that time, and so in the evening of 13 August, at the request of the 48th BRR's command, the 11th and 10th Companies from the division's reserve arrived at Benjaminów.

After nightfall and the first shots had been fired, calm prevailed in the regiment's sector. Gradually the movement on the first line quieted down; only the lookouts listened and observed closely, knowing that the enemy was nearby.

The calm did not last long, however. At about 23:00 a sudden burst of gunfire and shouts of "ura!" came from the outpost lines of the 5th Company. Everyone jumped to their feet, all attention was directed towards Ruda and news was expected. But soon the noise died down, and silence returned.

Worried, 2nd-Lieutenant Górski, commander of the 7th Company, immediately sent out several patrols, which disappeared into the darkness of the night and gave no sign of life for a long time. The commander of Battery 5/9 FAR, Lieutenant Ezupowicz, upon hearing shots, went to Height 96, where he had left a NCO scout in the evening, and learned that the infantry had been taken prisoner. In the meantime Cadet Hartmanowski, who the company commander had sent in the evening with a report to the battalion commander, hurried to the 5th Company zone. Everyone was anxiously awaiting an explanation of the situation. But what happened to the 5th Company and what was the company commander doing? Well, at 23:30 a strong detachment, as it turned out later, of the Soviet 189th RR had approached Ruda, and attacked outpost No. 1. The outpost surrendered to the enemy who, encouraged by this, then attacked outpost No. 2. Here it met with short-lived resistance, but eventually that outpost shared the fate of the previous one.

Two machine-guns, which stood alone on the "machine-gun line", also fell into enemy hands. On the other hand, Outpost No. 3, sensing that something was brewing nearby, abandoned its position, retreating towards the 1st Battalion. The commander of the 5th Company, 2nd-Lieutenant Żak, had not received any reports from the outposts and therefore knew nothing about the course of events. The first patrol, which he sent out into the field, reported to him that the enemy was in Ruda, and the next two patrols, sent in the direction of the outposts, did not return and presumably were captured.

Now the shortcomings of the defence system became more apparent – the dispersion of forces due to the formation of three lines of personnel became more pronounced. After sending out the weak patrols, the company commander was left with only ten men, while the machine-guns had already been lost. Of these ten men, 2nd-Lieutenant Żak sent one with a report, left three in the main position, and with six soldiers went in the direction of Outpost No. 3. On the way, however, he met the enemy. Taken completely off guard, he retreated as far as the position of Battery 2/20. On the way, he took with him the men of Outpost No. 3, who he had met on the way.

Here we must point out that the battery scouts who were in that company's sector also left their observation posts. As a result of these events, the left wing of the 2nd Battalion was completely denuded.

⁴² On the maps in Appendix 3 Ruda is wrongly marked, with what is actually modern Rejentówka. Ruda is the group of unnamed houses, 1.5 km east of Height 96.



We have devoted some space to this episode in order to highlight the shortcomings of the defence at the outset of the operations, but these incidents were followed by other more important events.

When Hartmanowski arrived at the artillery position, he found only a few soldiers, from whom he learned little about the situation. Soon a patrol from the 7th Company approached, and around midnight scouts from Battery 2/20 appeared.

Now Hartmanowski felt more at ease, but he had not yet managed to clarify the position, as silence reigned in front. From the vicinity of the Ruda buildings some muffled human voices could be heard, and even some silhouettes seemed to be passing by. A patrol was sent in that direction.

Soon, what appeared to be a rifleman was spotted in the darkness. It seemed to be the company commander, returning to his position. Caution demanded that this conjecture be checked out though, so the cadet went out to meet him.

Soon a loud sound rang out in the silence of the night, "Who goes there?" – at which the rifleman sank to the ground and fired. One of the soldiers was killed, and Cadet Hartmanowski withdrew with the other to the position, from where the entire, tiny, garrison returned fire.

The enemy stopped and did not move. There was silence again. At this point Hartmanowski reported back the events in the 5th Company section. It is easy to understand that this immediately alarmed the command, as it was the first contact with the enemy, but it took a long time before the situation was clarified. That affected the activity of the batteries, which had initially abandoned their observation posts located in the section. The batteries had not yet been shot at in the bridgehead, and probably for that reason – even though fire was requested around midnight – the artillery really only started firing in the morning. Only Battery 5/9 fired a few shots, after which it received an order from the command of the Left Subgroup to cease.

Meanwhile, a counter-attack was being prepared to take back Ruda. At 05:00 on 13 August the 11th Company was sent from Fort Benjaminów under the command of Staff Sergeant Jagielski, which arrived at the 5th Company positions around 06:00. The battalion commander, Captain Grodzicki, also arrived there. In the middle of this Batteries 2/20, 3/20 and 5/9 began firing, in preparation for a counter-attack on Ruda. That fire inflicted losses on the enemy and caused him to flee in panic from the bridgehead, abandoning Ruda. Enemy reinforcements, moving near Załubice, were spotted and shelled by Lieutenant Ezupowicz's 5th Battery.

As the enemy faltered, the 5th and 11th Companies, led by Captain Grodzicki, moved forward. At the same time 2nd-Lieutenant Górski, 5th Company commander, seeing the enemy collapse, pushed one platoon towards Ruda.

Alongside the first platoon, the scouts of Battery 2/20 raced the infantry and captured several prisoners in counter-attack. So the enemy was driven out without great difficulty, suffering losses, and the line of outposts was retaken. A platoon of the 7th Company took Ruda.

The enemy left sixteen dead and three wounded on the battlefield, while seven unwounded men, together with a company commander of the 189th RR, were taken prisoner. Our losses were considerable: we lost one NCO killed and a dozen privates wounded, not counting those who were taken prisoner during the night. In addition, the 11th Company commander, Staff Sergeant Jagielski was wounded, after particularly distinguishing himself in this action, together with Captain Grodzicki.

Between 08:00 and 09:00 the counter-attack was complete: The 11th Company manned the former positions of the 5th Company, which went to the reserve. Around 09:00 the commander of the 48th Regiment reported to the brigade that the enemy had been driven out of Ruda and the outposts had been retaken.

After the capture of Ruda the infantry rested, exhausted by the sleepless night, while the artillery continued its activity. By 13:00 on 13 August, Battery 2/20 fired 477 rounds, and Battery 5/9 had fired 207 rounds; the other batteries fired a negligible amount. Battery 3/20 acted solely on its own initiative at the time, as communications with the subgroup command had failed. That battery had an accident when a shell



exploded inside one of the guns during firing, blowing up the charge chamber. Three gunners were seriously wounded, one of whom soon died.

During this time the enemy artillery fired several shells at the 48th BRR's positions, many of which failed to explode.

This seemingly minor episode near Ruda had quite important consequences. First and foremost, it forced the regiment to use its reserve recently received from the division (the 2nd Battalion did not have a reserve). Obviously, this had an impact on the mood, as it highlighted the weakness of the defence and the difficulties of command in the absence of reserves. To this end, the regiment's commander submitted a report that described the situation in more than menacing terms. This report was given to the division by the brigade command at 14:55. It read:

The regiment command once again reports that it is impossible to maintain a sector of the defensive line of up to two kilometres long with a company of 100 men, while at the same time setting up outposts in the forward ground up to Głęboki, against any concentrated action on the part of the enemy.

The regimental command asks unconditionally that the garrison and reserves of the 48th IR be reinforced. Otherwise I cannot guarantee the effectiveness of the defence, especially knowing that the Bolsheviks took some prisoners, so probably know the positions of our section and its weaknesses.

As a result, Colonel Jaźwiński handed over the rest of the 3rd Battalion (which remained in Wólka Radzyńska) to Colonel Łukoski, and, probably wanting to familiarise himself with the situation, set out in the afternoon for the 48th BRR.

Establishing Contact with the Enemy in the Sector of the 46th Regiment

The day of 12 August found the men in the 46th Regiment's sector at work completing the fortifications. Some were in the outposts, while the rest were working in the trenches or practising in the reserve. The day was cloudy, the weather uncertain. From the morning onwards, wagons and later columns of infantry arrived from the east and north-east. This was the 2nd Brigade of the 1st Lit-Bel ID, which was retreating through Radzymin to the vicinity of Pustelnik, Nadma and Kobylka. Soon the traffic on the roads ceased completely and only a few groups of latecomers were seen.

At around 10:00, a detachment appeared on the Wyszaków – Radzymin road, moving quickly in the direction of Radzymin. It was Major Matczyński's battalion. He informed Major Kwiatkowski, the commander of Battalion 2/46, that his unit was the last to arrive at the bridgehead from that direction, so the enemy could be expected to arrive soon.

After the last units of the 1st Lit-Bel Division had arrived, the commanders manning the positions sent patrols to the zone in front. In the afternoon a patrol of Horse Rifles arrived with Captain Kozłowski, who was also to conduct reconnaissance in front of the bridgehead.

Before evening the enemy had approached and was in front of the outposts of the 46th Regiment. So when a mounted patrol set out at 16:30 along the road in the direction of Zwierzyniec, it could not move ahead of the outposts, as it was fired upon. Together with the infantry patrols, it had to retreat to the line of the 6th Company outposts.

At 16:55 the first shots were fired at the 6th Company outposts. The commander of the 11th Sapper Battalion ordered the wooden bridge at Dybów to be lit. A heavy fire immediately broke out, engulfing the bridge. At that time shooting started in earnest, causing panic among the civilian workers building the positions, as a result of which they scattered in all directions.

The first clashes were not confined to the 6th Company, as the enemy also bothered the 7th Company. A horse patrol approached an outpost of the 7th Company on the road from Zawady to Zwierzyniec. The



outpost behaved dishonourably – four soldiers immediately running away from the position, leaving two to give fire, who eventually withdrew as well. Hearing the shots the company commander, Lieutenant Horak, rushed to the redoubt by the bridge and found the fugitives from the outpost there, “staggering with fear that the Cossacks were coming.” Not particularly bothered, Lieutenant Horak set off with a few liaison officers and drove off the patrol, which fled, leaving one dead. The outpost was re-manned.

At around 18:00 the first shots of enemy artillery were fired, aimed at the positions of the 2nd Battalion and reserves. Several shells also exploded in the town near the church. The Polish artillery did not respond, as the battery commanders were not allowed to start firing without direct orders.

Soon it was dusk. Soldiers kept watch in the first line, most of whom were hearing the whistling of bullets for the first time. The night of 12/13 August passed slowly. For the soldiers on guard – at the outposts, in the rear, at headquarters or at battery positions – it seemed an immeasurably long time. It passed “rather nervously: an attack from the Bolsheviks was expected any moment.”

On the enemy side, it was generally calm. Around midnight, the sounds of music were heard from the Zawady area, which indicated that the Russian troops were in a good mood.

Surprised by this, 2nd-Lieutenant Auriga, a platoon commander in the 7th Company, went to check the guards at the outposts near Zawady. After crossing the bridge over the Rządza, he encountered some soldiers in a ditch, who had escaped with their entire post from Zawady. They were very nervous.

The 6th Company did not have peace either: by 20:00 the enemy had taken its outposts. A firefight ensued. The company commander, 2nd-Lieutenant Kordziński, immediately rushed to the outposts and on the way met the retreating soldiers, whom he turned around. He managed to garrison all the outposts with relative ease, except for No. 3 in Zwierzyniec, as the enemy was already there.

Around midnight it quietened down, the outposts waited, keeping guard. Somewhere far away in the darkness, around Rasztów, some fires flashed and shadows flickered. From time to time there was the sound of horseshoes or a nervous shout. But the calm did not last long; around 01:00 firing restarted on the outpost line. Kordziński broke off and ran towards the outposts. He soon found his men fleeing in the direction of the bridge over the Rządza. After turning back the soldiers, the company commander went with them back to their positions. When they were reached, it could be seen that the enemy had just crossed the barbed wire fence surrounding the outpost. This sight:

... had such a depressing effect on the soldiers, that they had to be threatened to go into the trenches, but they did not have the courage to open fire.

Eventually, they managed to drive the enemy away from the outpost. But the clash resulted in a severe loss as the company commander, 2nd-Lieutenant Kordziński, was wounded. In addition to the commander, one NCO and several privates were also wounded. Four Russians were taken prisoner, including one wounded. After things calmed down, the wounded 2nd-Lieutenant was taken out of the line, and 2nd-Lieutenant Wolszleger took command of the company.

At dawn on 13 August, the sector of the 6th Company was calm. The regimental staff reported that at 05:00 the outposts of the 6th Company were in place.

The rest of the regiment was generally at ease during this melee.

The 1st Battalion was not seriously disturbed for the first time until about 02:00 on 13 August, when the enemy drove the outposts of the 4th Company from their positions. Since that company and its battalion had no reserves, and it was ordered that the outposts be recaptured, the regimental commander sent two platoons of the 12th Company with 2nd-Lieutenant Loedel to the aid of the 1st Battalion.

It is interesting to note that the regimental commander replied to every message with the line: “I order you to take back the outposts and to not retreat.”

The batteries of the Middle Subgroup did not fire and only just before dawn did they received orders to start doing so. Battery A/75 and Battery 4/20 were given the task of shelling the Zawady village area. However, Battery A/75 had sent its officer from the observation post in the 2nd Battalion (an NCO remained at the post) to reconnoitre a new post in the Wiktorów area. As a result of this, as the battery



commander recalls, cooperation between the battery and the infantry in the battle near Zawady suffered. Morning fog also hindered the batteries' observation and made it difficult to carry out effective firing. So the 4th Battery fired only a few rounds and those on the basis of a map.

It was not until around 06:00 that it gradually brightened up and the fog, rising from the meadows and fields and especially from the river valley, dissipated. The buildings of Zawady, Zwierzyniec and Kraszew could be seen more and more clearly, and eventually even the naked eye could see well into the area in front. The sharp eyes of the observers could then discover the enemy's positions, mainly in the area of Zawady, where freshly dug Russian trenches were strongly visible in the grey-green background. That showed that the enemy had not been idle during the night.

Repelling the First Enemy Attack

During the night of 12/13 August, the Soviet 21st Rifle Division pulled up its troops and formed up for the attack, intending to advance with the 62nd and 63rd Brigades towards Radzymin. The assault was to unfold in the Łoś to Kraszew area. The units of the 27th RD, which were in the Zawady to Kraszew area, stayed where they were and intermingled with the 21st Division, as they had not yet been ordered to advance.

Our 46th Regiment was aware that the enemy was preparing to attack, but it did not have accurate news. It continued to report various details of the enemy's actions and positions to the 21st Brigade, which passed them on to the division. Notable in this case is the report of 04:15, which among other things stated: "the enemy is preparing to attack the whole line before dawn."

Between 6:30 and 7:00 on 13 August the enemy 62nd and 63rd Rifle Brigades launched an attack on the section from Łoś to Kraszew. The attack was strongest near Zawady, and was supported by the fire of numerous machine-guns. The MG fire, which came from excellent positions, had a negative effect on the disposition of the 7th Company. After spending a restless night, it was in a rather skittish mood.

The enemy's attack had not yet made much ground when news broke in the trenches that the left wing was fleeing. The news quickly passed from mouth to mouth. Indeed, two soldiers with a machine-gun on their shoulders could be seen moving rapidly backwards, followed by left wing units breaking away from the trenches.

Seeing this, 2nd-Lieutenant Auriga, platoon leader in the 7th Company, ran hurriedly towards the fleeing men. He soon stopped them and found out the reason for their flight. It turns out a machine-gun had jammed and so the crew were carrying it back to fix it. Other soldiers then claimed that the gunners were running away, so they followed their example.

Auriga turned back the fleeing men but did not have time to sort them out when he saw that the right wing had wobbled. The enemy had indeed attacked the entire company's section and even crossed the river. It pressed on resolutely: "the Bolsheviks attacked quite boldly, sending up more and more lines."

Despite the strong impression created by the enemy's sudden attack, the officers of the 7th Company nevertheless managed to hold back the retreating soldiers and repel the first enemy attack. It was 07:45, when the redoubt near Zawady was lost. The enemy garrisoned it with a detachment of the 187th Rifle Regiment.

On hearing of the loss of the redoubt, the battalion commander sent the last platoon of the 11th Company to the aid of the 7th Company and at the same time ordered Lieutenant Horak to take back the lost positions. The counter-attack was to be supported by artillery.

The artillery support however was abandoned, as the batteries fired on the 2nd Battalion's positions rather than the enemy, and it was impossible to communicate with them. After getting ready, the 7th Company, led by Lieutenant Horak and supported by the fire of its own machine-guns, boldly moved forward. At 09:30 it threw the enemy out of the redoubt, driving them towards Zawady.

Having reached the redoubt, Lieutenant Horak halted the advance, seeing that recapturing the line of outposts would entail many losses and not much benefit. He therefore reported that to the regimental commander. The reply was to take the lost positions unconditionally. Lieutenant Horak tried to explain the



actual position, but to no avail, as the order remained in force. He then returned to the redoubt and, convinced that further advance was pointless, chose another solution. Without thinking too much about it, he moved forward with his liaison officers, while he gave an order to one platoon to advance behind him. However he recalls that

... once in our wire entanglements, making a passage for ourselves, we received such heavy fire that none of us were left unscathed.

While wounded, Lieutenant Horak still had enough strength that, after withdrawing, he went to the telephone and reported the results. Command of the company was taken over by 2nd-Lieutenant Auriga, who, seeing the fruitless efforts so far, contented himself with just manning the main position.

At the same time smaller battles were taking place in front of the other companies of the 2nd Battalion, which caused their outposts to withdraw as well. Larger clashes then took place in the section of the 1st Battalion, especially on its left wing, which was hit by units of the 62nd RB of the 21st RD.

The outposts of the 4th Company were driven from their positions just before dawn. Therefore the regimental commander ordered them to be recaptured and to that end sent two platoons of the 12th Company from Radzymin. However, before those platoons arrived at their positions, action recommenced, as the 1st Company conducted a strong but disorderly firefight. The shooting did not last long, as soon an enemy unit rushed the trenches and easily expelled part of the 1st Company, also taking a machine-gun. The infantry was followed by a unit of horsemen, who approached the left wing of the 4th Company.

The mere appearance of the enemy had such an effect on the soldiers that, without firing a shot, they started to retreat to a small clump of trees near Wiktorów. There was no panic. Second-lieutenant Usiekiewicz, commander of the 4th Company, managed to hold the rest of his company in their positions and tried to flank the enemy moving along the Kraszew – Radzymin road with fire.

In this rather dangerous situation, the 1st Battalion's handicap of its positioning became apparent, as it did not have any reserves, and had had to place all three rifle companies in the line. Fortunately, however, the position was brought under control fairly soon, as the retreating soldiers were stopped by 2nd-Lieutenant Molenda. After sorting out and forming up the riflemen, the enemy was stopped by fire. At this time Lieutenant Loedel, with the two platoons, arrived in the trees near Wiktorów, immediately formed his detachment for the attack, and moved forward.

As a result of the actions of 2nd Lieutenants Molenda and Loedel, the lost positions (except for the advanced outposts) were finally taken back. Loedel placed his platoons between the 1st and 4th Companies.

Over the course of the morning, the situation in the sector of the 46th Regiment calmed down completely; the enemy had stayed at the Rządza, and only fire from his infantry and artillery indicated that the battle could flare up again at any moment.

The position in the regiment's sector was mostly little changed: the main positions were held in their entirety, plus some of the "MG line" and some outposts. The regimental commander initially urged the recapture of the outposts, but eventually – under the influence of the reports from the line – allowed this action to be postponed until the evening. The regiment's reserve was partly used up.

Around noon, Major Matczyński's battalion (two companies with eight machine-guns) arrived in the regiment's area, with the task of reaching the rearguard of the 1st Lit-Bel Division. Obviously, it was already too late to carry out such an undertaking. Major Matczyński, no longer able to move out of the bridgehead, remained on the road (in roadside ditches) between Dybów and Radzymin and awaited further orders from his command.

In the description so far we have highlighted very strongly some situations that indicate that the soldier's were poor in combat. Indeed, on several occasions soldiers broke very quickly and abandoned their posts. However, these issues were related to the defence system and by no means only for the privates. The fighting to this point highlights the compromise of the defence system used, based on three lines – outposts, machine-guns and main resistance. It was in the line of outposts that the 6th and 7th Companies bled quite heavily. The machine-guns, placed in front of the main position, obviously failed, as the



operators felt insecure in front of the wire. In addition, the guns broke down quite often, and some of the machine-guns, which were on wooden bases, were of no use at all. Finally, in the course of the operations described above, there were shortcomings in telephone communications, which hampered the command and cooperation of the artillery.

Colonel Krzywobłocki (commander of the 46th Regiment) mainly sent orders to retake the outposts and reports back to the brigade command. The mood prevailing in the regimental staff was rather pessimistic. This was mainly due to the commander, about whom many reports from the participants speak unfavourably. The adjutant of the time describes his impression in these words:

He gave the impression of a man, or rather a commander, who did not realise the importance of the moment and the situation. Whose only hope of victory lay in defending with a thin defensive line.

The lack of confidence in the new commander was quite telling in those first hours of the battle. Some participants recall that the regimental commander, unable to make up his mind, would only repeat: "Our Lady will help us."

Cooperation with the artillery was poor. Moreover, it was not numerous and the enemy artillery outnumbered it both in numbers and fire rate. This was one of the main reasons why trust in the effectiveness of the defence was undermined, as the infantry was sorely disappointed not to receive the announced artillery support. So much had been said and written about the extraordinary strength of the artillery, which was supposed to break the enemy with just its own fire, that the activity of two batteries of light cannons and one of heavy howitzers was more a prelude to a proper act of artillery defence, which unfortunately did not take place.

The infantry directed their fire requests to the regimental staff, which passed them on to the artillery subgroup command, as neither the observers in the infantry line nor the liaison units were properly organised. As a result, the regiment's liaison was overstretched, which primarily affected communications with the artillery. Lieutenant Rehman recalled:

On the line it was like at the Tower of Babel ... when you needed to, you couldn't get a connection or communicate and, if you did communicate, the fire you got was delayed.

The midday calm on the line was used to supply food to the fighting men, after which the wagons departed for Marki. The mobile kitchens stopped in Cegielnia to cook supper.

The regimental physician, Captain Dr. Brończyk, evacuated all the wounded from the dressing station and sent them by train to Pustelnik.

Events in the Zegrze Sector

In the morning of 13 August, the area in front of the 7th Reserve Brigade was quiet. Before dawn news was received that the Polish troops had completely withdrawn into the bridgehead.

Between 07:00 and 08:00 patrols of Russian cavalry appeared in the vicinity of Serock, heading in the direction of Zegrze. Battery 7/16 dispersed them with two shots.

At 08:40, two armoured cars left in the direction of Serock and clashed with a unit of cavalry with infantry, south of Serock. After the skirmish, the cars returned (at 11:45) to Zegrze and drove off to Modlin, as they belonged to the 5th Army.

After these incidents, peace reigned for a long time. The batteries of the Zegrze and Skrzyszew groups did shoot a little.

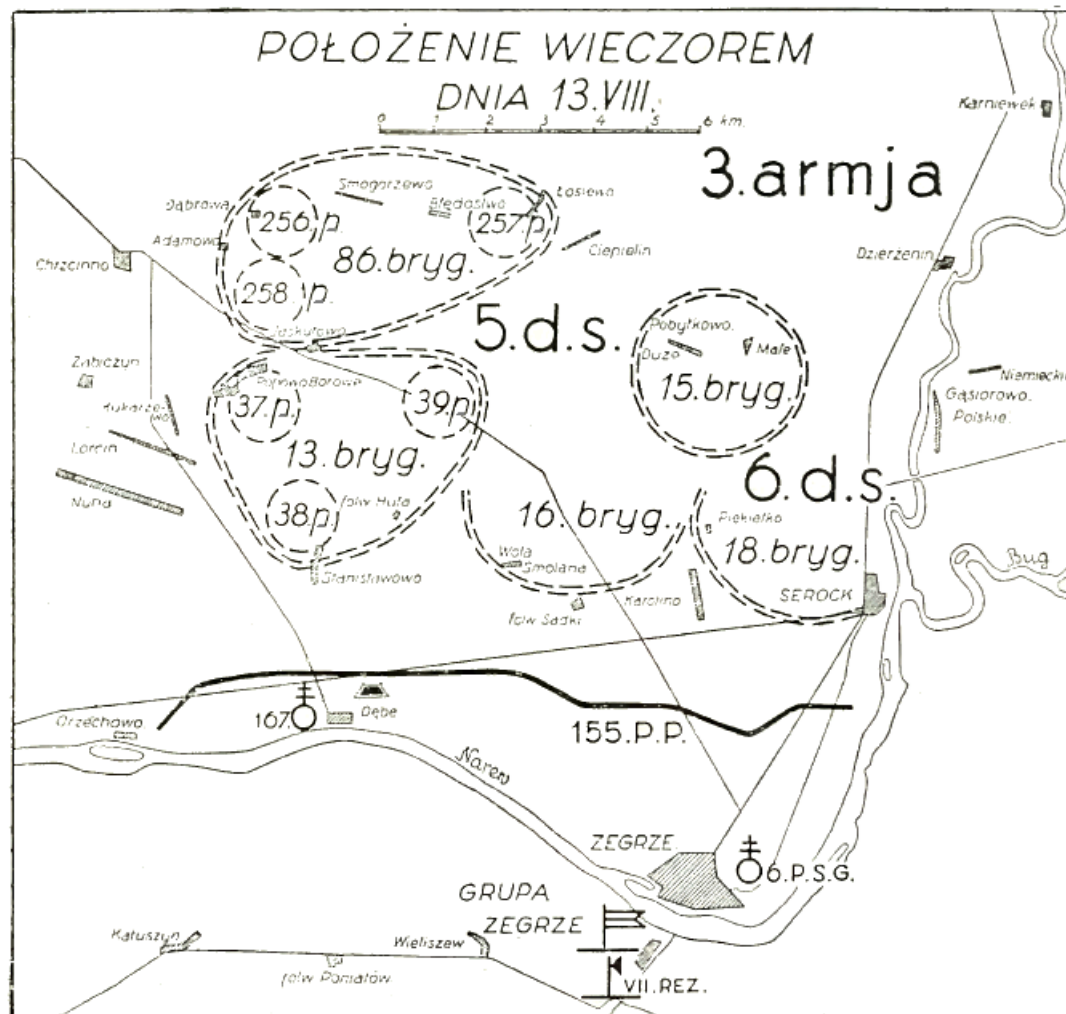
In the afternoon, operations in the whole section revived. Around 13:30 the enemy approached the Dębe sector and was stopped by infantry and artillery fire. Between 15:00 and 18:00 the enemy attacked the 155th Regiment from Marynino, but was also repulsed. The rest of the day passed calmly.



The enemy halted, reinforcing their positions. It was also noticed that on the more distant roads columns of infantry and wagons were moving, heading west. These columns were fired on by the 3rd *Division* of the 16th FAR and by the 3rd Battery of the 10th FAR (it fired 52 shots around Nuna).

On the whole, however, the group's artillery activity was insignificant. There was no need for it. Ammunition consumption barely exceeded 100 shells.

The positions of the enemy are shown in Sketch 39.



Sketch 39: Positions by the evening of 13 August in the Zegrze Sector

1st Lit-Bel Division's Rearguard on 13 August

On the morning of 13 August, the rearguard of the 1st Lit-Bel Division, consisting of the Mińsk Regiment and the 3rd *Division* of the 3rd Horse Rifles, was in the area in front of the 47th Regiment. The assigned battery left during the night for the bridgehead. In addition to those troops, there should be included the armoured train *Mściciel*, which supported the rearguard, and the armoured train *Paderewski*, which arrived at Wołomin station to assist the retiring troops.

During the night of 12/13 August, that rearguard broke away from the enemy and retreated behind the Rządza. The position of the rearguard on the morning of 13 August is shown in Sketch 40.

The 11th Division had sent out a unit under Lieutenant Zakrzewski, which reached the bridge on the Rządza River and retreated with the rearguard.

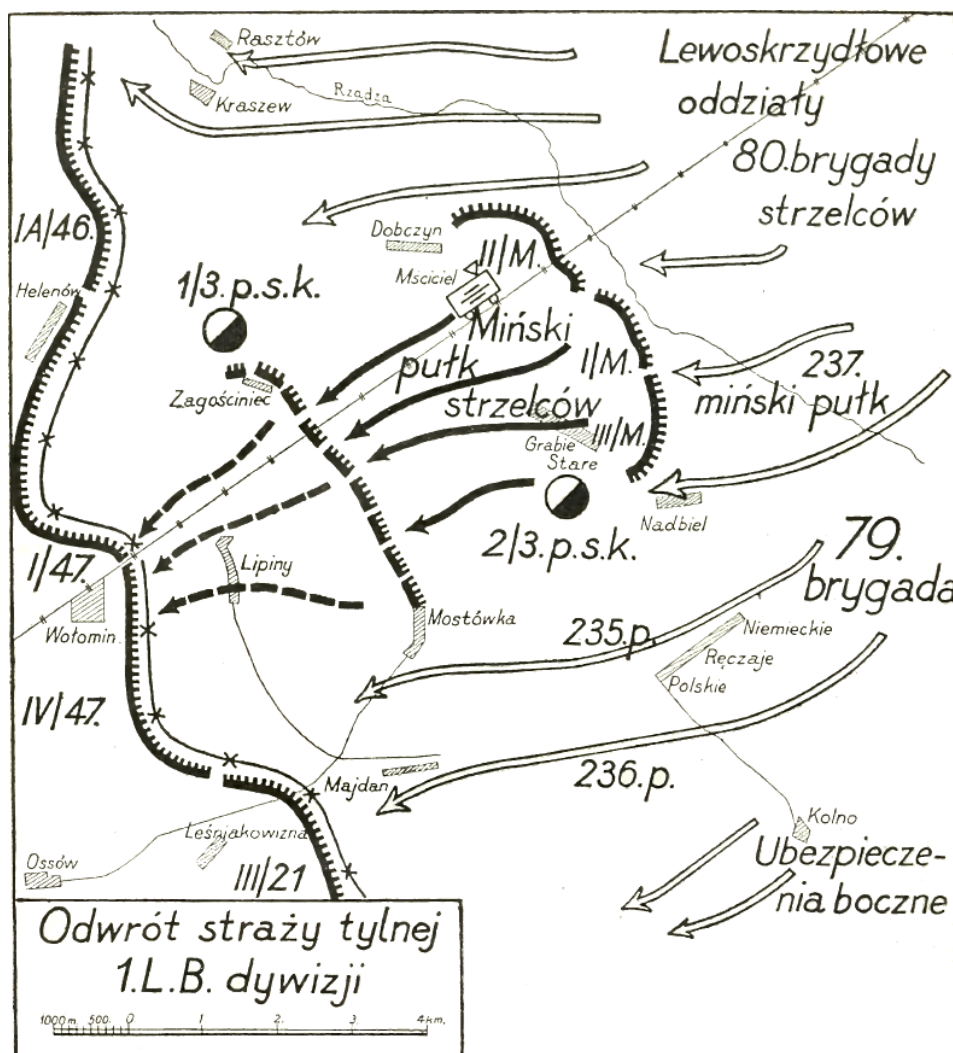
The 47th Regiment, in order to establish communication with the rearguard and to carry out reconnaissance, had sent out several foot patrols during the night, but they were not always able to fulfil their task. Despite this, the mood in the 47th Regiment during the night of 12/13 August, especially in the trenches of



the 4th Battalion, was very nervous. All it took was for a lookout to fire out of fear, and a firefight ensued, bringing everyone to their feet. So it was that Battery 3/19 was fired upon as it crossed the positions near Wołomin in the morning, retreating to the bridgehead.

From the early morning the rearguard had been troubled by the enemy, especially on the flanks. Around 09:00 the left wing had to withdraw from the area of Dobczyn and Pasek, as it was threatened from the side by the enemy, who had long since reached the area of Kraszew and Rasztów. These were units of the 80th Rifle Brigade.

The right wing did not have peace either, as at 08:00 units of the 79th RB attacked the 3rd Mińsk Battalion from the east.



Sketch 40 : Rearguard action of the 1st Lit-Bel Division

For some time the Mińsk Regiment held on to its positions, but finally due to the threat to its flanks it withdrew under the enemy pressure to the Zagościńiec – Duczki – Mostówka line. It was dangerous to remain in front of the bridgehead any longer, as not only was the enemy was threatening, but also units of the 11th Division nervously fired at their own side several times.

In the afternoon the regiment, keeping in constant contact with the enemy, approached the line of outposts of the 47th Regiment. On the wings the enemy had already reached the area directly in front of the Warsaw advanced positions. The last skirmish was fought by Cadet Pietraszko from the 3rd Horse Rifle Division, around 15:00 in the area of Majdan, where he clashed with a detachment of cavalry and infantry. After that the rearguard finally withdrew into the bridgehead in the Maciołki area.



The 8th Division's Rearguard on 13 August

Under Colonel Prohaska, the 8th ID rearguard was made up of the 1st and 2nd Battalions of the 13th IR, the 3rd Battalion of the 36th IR, a light battery and two squadrons of the 201st Light Horse Regiment. As we know, the rearguard was to hold on until 18:00 of 13 August.

As given previously, in the evening of 12 August the rearguard left the Łaziska – Stanisławów – Międzyłęś line and withdrew to the Tłuszcz railway line – Mińsk, where it was at dawn. On the left wing, reaching Dąbrowica, was Battalion 2/13; in the centre was 1/13; and the right wing was 3/36 and one and a half light horse squadrons. During the morning the wings were in the most trouble, losing communication with their neighbours and hanging in the air. Most importantly, communication with the rearguard of the 1st Lit-Bel Division was lost, as it left the Tłuszcz – Międzyłęś line around midnight.

At 02:00 the enemy threw back an outpost of the 5th Company of the 13th Regiment, on the Dąbrowica – Cygów road, crossed the railway track and at 04:00 occupied Wola Ręczajska. The 5th Company split into two parts, which withdrew separately in the direction of Mińsk and their own regiment. Due to this, the commander of Battalion 2/13 bent his left wing towards Helenów. Colonel Prohaska reinforced it with a company of the 36th Regiment, which was sent to Zawiesiuchy, while a squadron of cavalry was sent to the Małków – Krupki – Górki area.

Thus a gap was created between the divisional rearguards, widening with each passing hour. No one stood in the enemy's way, as the rearguards did not impede the enemy's march and concentrated in the direction of their own axis of retreat, i.e. that of the 1st Lit-Bel Division towards Wołomin, while that of the 8th ID towards Okuniew. So the 79th Rifle Brigade, advancing in the general direction of Majdan, had no obstacle in its path.

At around 07:00 the 8th ID rearguard, anticipating the threat to its left wing, withdrew to the Kolno – Krubki – Michałów – Chobot line, which Colonel Prohaska reported to the division. As a result, at 15:00 the division's command issued an order which, among other things, stated :

You should try to hold off the enemy as long as possible on the Kolno – Krubki – Michałów – Chobot line mentioned in your report, but not engaging in a major battle.

By this time, however, the rearguard had long left its positions and at 13:00 arrived in the vicinity of Michałów, where Colonel Prohaska must have received this division order, as he remained in the area in front of the bridgehead until 17:00. Finally the rear guard was withdrawn and disbanded, with Battalion 2/13 departing late at night for Rembertów, 1/13 remaining in Okuniew, while the squadrons of the 201st LHR departed for Jabłonna.

The commander of Company 1/13 recalled this moment the last units of the 8th Division pulled onto the bridgehead:

A sigh of relief rose from our chests. Our faces, parched from the heat of July and August, shrivelled from toil and weariness, shone with the glow of cheerfulness and encouragement. A joyful and creative song was on our lips, as we remembered the beloved creator of the armed forces, Commander J. Piłsudski, singing the Song of the Riflemen: From our toil and weariness Poland arose to live ...

Clash at Leśniakowizna

About 13:30, according to the history of the 47th Regiment, heavy shooting was heard on the right wing of the 4th Battalion's sector. What had happened was difficult to ascertain – then and later – but the fact was that the right wing company was thrown out of the trenches. It is worth noting that the company commander was not in the line, as he was in Ossów at the time.

The shooting drew the attention of the commanders and artillery observers. The telephone buzzers rang and news from the line was demanded immediately. No answer was received, and then communication was broken.



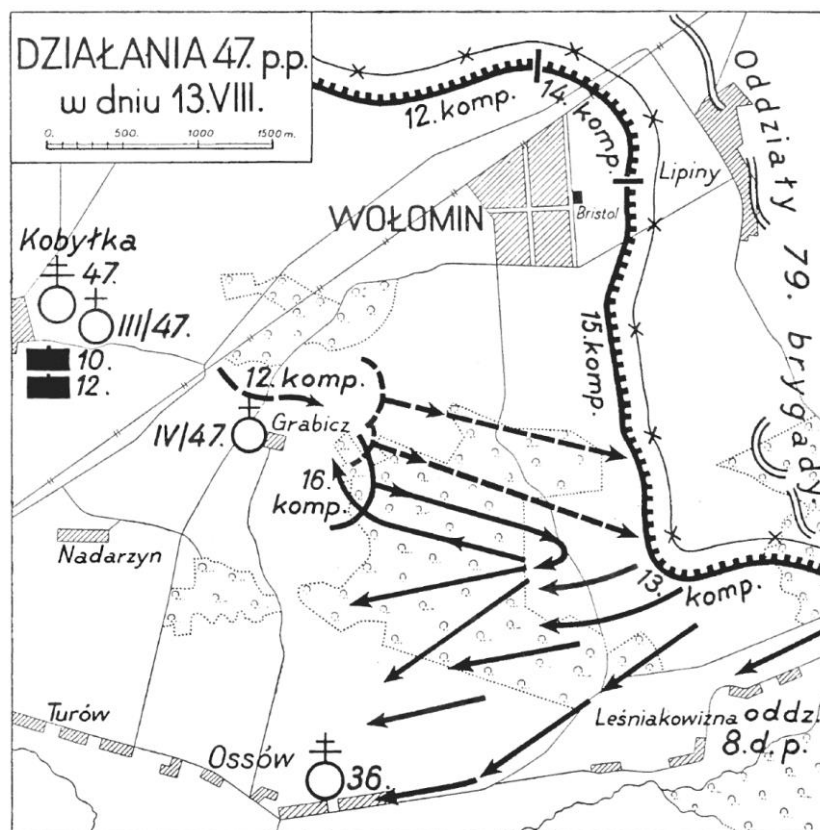
Soon the roar of gunfire suddenly fell silent. The 4th Battalion commander, Colonel Szukiewicz, wanting to investigate what had happened, mounted and rode to the right wing. The artillery observers could not give an explanation either, even though they had an excellent view of the area from the Bristol Villa (Batteries 2/11 and 7/11). However, they began to fire, with the 2nd Battery taking the right hand area in front of the bridgehead and the 7th Battery the Majdan area.

Meanwhile Colonel Szukiewicz had arrived at the 16th Company (the reserve) and found that some of the 13th Company had withdrawn to some trees behind the trenches, and the rest to Leśniakowizna.

This surprised Colonel Szukiewicz massively, since – as he claimed – “there had been no real battle yet, and only weak enemy troops, or maybe their patrols” had approached the bridgehead. In view of this, he went to the spot. Unfortunately, it was true: on the battle line the shots had long since fallen silent, but the trenches of the 13th Company were empty. The soldiers had disappeared and only their belongings and even their English rifles, abandoned in disorder, were evidence of a hasty escape.

But there was no time to ponder: the gap had to be closed as soon as possible, using a reserve company. So the colonel quickly turned his horse and galloped off, intending to direct the 16th Company to the spot. Quickly arriving at the reserve company, he alerted and assembled it, then threw it into a counter-attack. However, his hopes were soon dashed, as it was not long before the 16th Company “also went to pieces”.

At that point the battalion commander headed towards the regimental HQ in Kobyłka. On the way he met 2nd-Lieutenant Iwaszkiewicz, to whom he quickly explained that the 13th Company was retreating and the counter-attack of the 16th had failed; everyone was retreating in panic despite his efforts. Iwaszkiewicz was to take command of those companies.



Sketch 41: Positions of the 47th ID at dawn on 13 August

Second-Lieutenant Iwaszkiewicz recalls that it was too late:

Despite my haste, I only saw remnants of the retreating companies from a distance, disappearing into the forest in the direction of Ossów and Turów. Not being able to stop or catch up with those fleeing, I went as quickly as possible to the battalion's HQ in Grabcz, where I reported the above.



In the course of this, the regimental staff in Kobyłka was alerted to these incidents. At one point, according to Lt-Colonel Skokowski, the battalion adjutant rushed cap-less into the staff and shouted excitedly: "All is lost!"

There is no doubt that this alarming news made a strong impression. As a result, the 12th Company was summoned from the training ground in Kobyłka and ordered to march immediately to the orders of the commander of the 4th Battalion.

Soon the company set off. Its commander, 2nd-Lieutenant Kasprzykiewicz, went ahead to receive orders. He reported to Colonel Szukiewicz, who explained to him the position of the section. When the company arrived and a handful of scattered soldiers joined it, Kasprzykiewicz deployed the company for an attack to the left of the Grabież – Height 102 road and moved forward.

In the middle of the woods small enemy groups were encountered, which were driven off, and by 18:00 the abandoned positions were easily retaken. However, the lack of forces did not allow the positions to be completely manned and for this reason direct communication with the 8th Division was not achieved.

The 47th BRR command then sent the 10th Company, of 2nd-Lieutenant Kuczek, to help. But it proved to be no longer needed on the right wing, and so late in the evening it was used to reinforce the 14th Company.

During these events things were quiet on the left wing. Indeed, the rearguard of the 1st Lit-Bel Division had just withdrawn in that area. It was only in the evening that the action became lively, with the enemy managing to partially surprise the Polish infantry when it did not notice the approaching enemy battalions, having its view obscured by the buildings of Lipiny village and manor. However it did not escape observation by the artillery, as the enemy's movements were detected in time from the Villa Bristol. Lieutenant Kubecki, commander of Battery 2/11, waited until the enemy approached the area which the battery had ranged and then gave the order to fire. The battery's shells hit the enemy's battalions, and Kubecki wrote later:

They soon began a hasty retreat. The bridgehead was covered with thick clouds of dust, as the terrain in this section was sandy and dry, thanks to the previous spell of weather. The sand had an enormous effect on the shooting. After the dust had settled in the bridgehead, it could be seen that the fire had been quite effective, as the enemy had left their marks.

At that time the infantry was supported by an armoured train. It left in the direction of the bridge over the Rządza and operated in front of the bridgehead until 19:00. Some batteries of the Right Subgroup took part, and they shelled in front of the 4th Battalion, mainly Lipiny, Mostówka and Majdan. The consumption of shells was considerable, e.g. Battery 7/11 FAR fired 380 shells and Battery 3/11 HAD fired 120.

Despite the position being under control, things were not calm in the 4th Battalion, especially on the left wing, from where alarming reports were sent. After these initial skirmishes, the soldiers had not yet come to their senses, and one of the participants recalls that the soldiers were

... of depressed morale, with many of them sitting in a trench, shooting upwards. When one or the other was asked why they were shooting like that, they replied with tears that they were afraid because the enemy was attacking.

These reasons led to the fact that, despite the whole section having ended up garrisoned, "in view of the nervousness of the 4th Battalion" no one dared pull the regimental and battalion reserves out of line. The day of 14 August would find the 4th Battalion and the 47th Regiment without reserves.

The battalion's losses were quite considerable, as they counted: three killed, 29 wounded and about 300 scattered, missing or taken prisoner.



Left wing of the 8th Division

On the afternoon of 13 August the 21st IR remained in the 8th Division's sector, manning the positions with the 1st and 3rd Battalions. The 3rd, on the left wing, held from Height 116 up to and including the Leśniakowizna – Majdan road. That section was weakly held, and for this reason Battalion 1/36 was given to the 21st IR. Initially that battalion was to be used on the regiment's right wing, but there was a change of plan and at 11:55 Major Przyjałkowski ordered Battalion 1/36 to relieve Battalion 3/21. After the change, Battalion 3/21 was to move to the right wing and enter the line as soon as possible.

Around 13:00 Battalion 1/36 received the order to march out and at 14:00 set off from Ossów. On the way to Leśniakowizna it stopped at a clearing (at the western end) to eat lunch. The battalion commander, Major Kazimierz Sawicki, went forward, intending to familiarise himself with the position. Before leaving, he ordered 2nd-Lieutenant Krygier, the 3rd Company commander, to march at the head of the battalion to Leśniakowizna after lunch.

At this time the enemy was in front of Battalion 3/21 and the right wing of Battalion 4/47 and launched an attack. The main enemy pressure was towards Leśniakowizna and caused, as we know from above, the disorderly departure of Company 13/47. The left wing companies of Battalion 3/21 initially tried to hold their positions, but eventually, suffering losses, began to retreat in the direction of Leśniakowizna. This moment was observed by the adjutant of the 16th Brigade, Lieutenant Matus, who had been intending to get from Height 110 to the eastern end of Leśniakowizna. Having had his horse shot, he had to abandon his intention. He recounts it this way:

... a disorderly group of enemy ran out of the forest (about 200 metres east of our position, running along the eastern edge of Leśniakowizna), with a yell reached the barbed fence, which was not an obstacle at all, overran it (some Bolsheviks toppled the stakes in one blow) and quickly seized our position.

The position on that section of the line was dangerous, all the more so because simultaneously with the attack on Leśniakowizna the enemy approached the left wing of Battalion 1/21 (Height 116 to Height 119). Those positions not yet been fortified: they had no obstructions at all and only dug-in machine-gun positions in places. The sappers of the 14th Sapper Battalion were still working to clear the foreground and make entanglements.

The enemy, taking advantage of the scrub, reached just below the position almost unnoticed and then, before the sappers could grab their guns, the infantry wavered. This position was numerically weak. Seeing this, the machine-gun crew in the position also wanted to escape, but they were stopped by 2nd-Lieutenant Barczynski of the 3rd Sapper Company, who, together with Cadet Sapper Laskowski, took over the defence of the position.

Not many minutes had passed when, in the blink of an eye, the sappers of the 14th Wielkopolska Battalion leapt to their guns and manned the hill. Shots were fired. A short battle ensued, which brought immediate success: the enemy being stopped by the fire. However, the sappers lost one killed and six wounded, while the Russians left six dead and a prisoner in front of the positions and retreated towards Majdan. From questioning the prisoner of war and searching the dead, it was determined that the attacking troops included soldiers of the Nevel' Regiment⁴³ of the 79th Brigade and the 16th RR of the 2nd Division.

After the situation had calmed down, the 14th Sapper Battalion, as instructed by the 16th Brigade's commander, was withdrawn to Okuniew, and two sapper sections and four machine-guns under the command of cadet Laskowski were left as infantry reinforcements in the area. During this time the 16th Brigade's command, as a result of reports from the 21st Regiment, had sent Battalion 2/33 to Okuniew, which ultimately proved unnecessary and at 19:30 it returned to Ossów.

The result was that the enemy had captured the trenches in the vicinity of Leśniakowizna on the 8th Division's left flank.

⁴³ The 235th RR of the 27th RD.



While the events described above took place, Battalion 1/36 was marching towards the position, with the 3rd Company of 2nd-Lieutenant Krygier in front. The brigade's adjutant, Lieutenant Matus, let the commander of the 16th Brigade know about the events (by mounted messenger), and then went to Leśniakowizna, where he met the commander of Battalion 1/36. He wrote about it:

Since I was aware both of the situation and the terrain, at my instigation Major Sawicki directed the battalion to counter-attack.

The column met the brigade commander at the edge of the forest (in the forks of the Czarna Struga River). Rapid infantry fire could be heard and shells were flying over their heads. Major Sawicki gave a short order to Krygier: "Go straight ahead through the scrub as far as you can see" and indicated the direction with his hand. The company moved forward and, after passing the scrub, reached the trenches. It threw back the enemy, and the following companies did the same. A machine-gun and six prisoners were captured.

Despite the positions being retaken, the situation was precarious as there were gaps to the left and right of the battalion. Major Sawicki reported the results of the action (by messenger) to the regiment HQ in Ossów. The telephone connection was only just being built.

However, before Battalion 1/36 had properly settled into position and established communication, the enemy attacked a second time and, going around the flanks, forced it to retreat. Major Sawicki tried to counter-attack, but was unsuccessful. The adjutant of the 16th Brigade recounts:

It was a critical moment. The officers, realising the gravity of the situation, did not want to leave their positions. Their desperate efforts to stop the fleeing men, threatening them with pistols, had no effect.

The soldiers retreated towards Leśniakowizna. The enemy did not pursue.

This moment was reflected in the 8th Division's situation report of 16:10, which stated:

The enemy attacked Leśniakowizna strongly at 15:00 and pushed the company of the 36th out of the first line. A counter-attack was ordered.

At this time Battalion 3/36 arrived in Ossów, which then received the task of garrisoning the position on the section of Height 116 to Height 110.

Inadequate communication and the rapidity of events meant that the division command did not have accurate information. He notes:

The sounds of battle were faint at the division HQ. Before the regimental reports came in – the reports from the artillery observers were rather reassuring – I found that the brigade commanders had already used up most of the reserves, putting them into the line.

The divisional command still considered the possibility of bringing the reserves into the fight and ordered one battalion of the 33rd Regiment to remain on standby, "for possible use by the 16th Brigade around Leśniakowizna."

As the position was unclear, the division commander sent his chief of staff, Lt-Colonel Bagiński, to Ossów, and he immediately galloped from Ząbki towards the position. On the road in Ossów, Bagiński encountered groups of scattered soldiers of the guard battalion (Battalion 4/47), which he turned back. The soldiers reported to him, "that they did not know how to shoot and when they saw the Bolsheviks they fled."

At that time large groups of soldiers rushed into the village "in hustle and bustle, without any leadership." When they found themselves in the vicinity of the 36th Regiment's HQ, the adjutant, 2nd-Lieutenant Krubski, ran out to meet them. They stopped the fleeing officers and, threatening to shoot them, forced them to put the units back in order. It was then that Lt-Colonel Bagiński arrived on horseback, having already turned back some of the soldiers himself. One of the officers, 2nd-Lieutenant Alfred Pollak (from the 16th Company), testified to Bagiński that he had fled the position with his soldiers, while the other 2nd-Lieutenant Edward Trembicki (from the 13th Company) said that he had not been in the position, but had been in Ossów the whole time.



Eventually a detachment was formed from those soldiers, under the command of Lieutenant Zborowski of the 36th Regiment, which was to return to its former positions. While this was going on Lt-Colonel Jerzy Sawicki and the 33rd Regiment arrived. On the recommendation of Bagiński, Sawicki took command of the entire counter-attack. Two battalions of this newly arrived regiment were put into action: Lieutenant Zdrojewski's 3rd Battalion was directed along the Leśniakowizna – Majdan road; the 1st Battalion south of it. In addition to these units, Battalion 3/36 was sent a little later with the task of garrisoning Height 116-110, while to the left of the 33rd Regiment followed Battalion 1/36, and finally Lieutenant Zborowski's regrouped unit was directed into the gap between the 8th and 11th Divisions.

This counter-attack which was launched to regain the lost positions consisted of actions by different units, which did not always work in concert with each other. The artillery support was also inadequate and in the course of the action the Polish artillery, "shot too close and wounded its own infantry."⁴⁴ Lt-Colonel Bagiński was in charge of coordinating the action between the infantry and the artillery, but he encountered considerable difficulties that were not easy to overcome. He relates:

Due to the numerous alder trees, the terrain made artillery observation very difficult, and there was a shortage of wire for communication with the infantry. So that the adjutant of the 36th Regiment rode to the battle line, returned to the HQ of the 36th Regiment on the eastern edge of Ossów and only then telephoned the artillery squadron supporting the northern section of the defence.

At the same time the 2nd *Divizion* of the 1st MAR sent a few unobserved rounds into the enemy's rear in front of the left wing. The value of this fire was limited, because as its commander, Captain Steuer, himself states, the *divizion* was completely uninformed of events at the front.

In spite of these shortcomings, the counter-attack succeeded without much effort, as the enemy did not put up much resistance. Even before night fell the first lines of the Warsaw bridgehead were re-captured.

Battalion 1/36 was between Leśniakowizna and Height 102 (it was later withdrawn from there), with a hundred soldiers on the left wing, under Lieutenant Zborowski. Battalion 3/33 remained on the north-eastern flank, while the right wing was occupied by companies of Battalion 3/36 (Height 116 to Height 110). To the left of them was part of Battalion 3/33. After things calmed down, patrols were sent out and set fire to the buildings. The light from the burning buildings replaced light rockets, preventing the enemy from making a hidden approach.

At 18:00 the division's commander, Colonel Burhardt-Bukacki, reported in a situation report that the enemy's attack on Leśniakowizna had been rejected. He stressed the poor behaviour of the units of the 47th Regiment (the guard battalion), which without any reason – so the report stated – withdrew and were only stopped by the 8th Division's Chief of Staff.

So ended the action on 13 August at Leśniakowizna – a clash between the Polish troops in the positions and the forward troops of the 79th RB of the 27th RD. That brigade stopped for the night in the area of Lipiny, Mostówka, and Majdan.

Although it is difficult to claim that a large attack had been organised by the enemy or that the fighting was of high intensity, the losses of the Polish units were quite significant. Battalion 1/36 had six dead and sixteen wounded soldiers plus lost a machine-gun and the base of a second; while the 21st Regiment had one officer seriously wounded, five privates killed and 18 wounded. Other units had negligible losses, apart from the 14th Sapper Battalion, which we have already discussed. Given the low troop numbers, these losses must be considered quite significant.

The battles described above used the reserves of the 16th Brigade (the 36th IR) and partly those of the Division (the 33rd IR), but the commanders dared not withdraw them from the line, as they were convinced that their departure would overly weaken the strength of the sector.

⁴⁴ Colonel Pożerski, in response this accusation, stated that Sawicki was late in letting him know about the start of the attack. He claimed that the short shots fell on the artillery observers, who Pożerski claims, "had no complaints, because the normal range of shells allowed variation of up to 100 m."



The activity of the artillery on 13 August was limited, due to its on-going organisation. During the day the batteries did some shelling and made a number of barrages, mainly to the rear of the enemy, i.e. in the area of Majdan and Mostówka.

Organisation of the Defence of the 8th Division

As noted previously, the work of organising the defence for the 8th ID was not completed on 12 August. During the day of 13 August, as we have seen, it was obstructed by fighting. It was not until late in the evening of 13 August that the command of the 8th Division, issued new orders, following some from the Army. At 20:30 those went out, instructing the 16th Brigade to continue holding the Okuniew – Leśniakowizna section and grouping most of the reserves behind the left wing. The 15th Brigade, on the other hand, was to be (with the 33rd and 13th Regiments) in the area of Rembertów by 04:00 on 14 August. But we know that the 33rd Regiment had been used in the Leśniakowizna area and there was no hope of it being withdrawn. The reasons were presented in a report by the commander of the 33rd IR:

On the sector from Leśniakowizna to Height 116 the front was broken to the left of Leśniakowizna at the positions of the 21st and 47th IRs. A counter-attack carried out by Battalions 1/33, 3/33 and Company 4/36 drove out the enemy and the trenches were reoccupied. After the trenches were manned, it was found that to the north of Leśniakowizna there was an unoccupied gap of about one kilometre. South of Height 119 to the north of Okuniew there was also an unoccupied section of about one kilometre.

In view of the situation, the 33rd IB will have to remain in the sector of the 16th IB, otherwise that sector will again be threatened should the enemy renew its attack

Then at 22:00 the 8th Division command ordered the 16th Brigade to immediately relieve the 33rd IR and directed it to Ossów. Ultimately those orders were not carried out and the regiment remained in the line.

Battalion 3/21 was also moved rather late from the Leśniakowizna area to the right wing, as at midnight the commander of the 21st IR repeated that the battalion, without waiting for the relief to be completed, should march to Okuniew.

The division instructed the commander of the 8th Artillery Brigade that any troops in the sector would come under the division's orders, and that Colonel Hulanicki had no right to command it. That order was issued in the afternoon of 13 August.

In the evening the division command ordered Colonel Pożerski to pay attention to the communication between his batteries and the infantry, ordering them to be subordinated to the sector commanders. A following order highlighted to the artillery brigade the poor communication during the actions of 13 August and demanded that it be properly established during the night. At the end of that order, Colonel Burhardt-Bukacki warned that:

... unless the matter is settled satisfactorily by tomorrow morning, the entire artillery will be directly subordinated to the infantry commanders.

In closing the events the day of 13 August for the 8th Division, we must add a few words about reinforcements.

During the afternoon of 13 August the following arrived in the division: Battalion 1/236, two march companies of the 221st Regiment and some other smaller detachments, for a total of 1,650 men. In view of this, the colonel gave orders on the incorporation of the arriving reinforcements and emphasised their harmonisation with the division as a whole. They were divided up among the regiments. Half of Battalion 1/236 was given to the 36th IR (making up its 2nd Battalion), and half to reinforce the 21st IR and others. The march companies of the 221st IR were given to the 33rd IR.



Rearguards of the 15th Infantry Division on 13 August

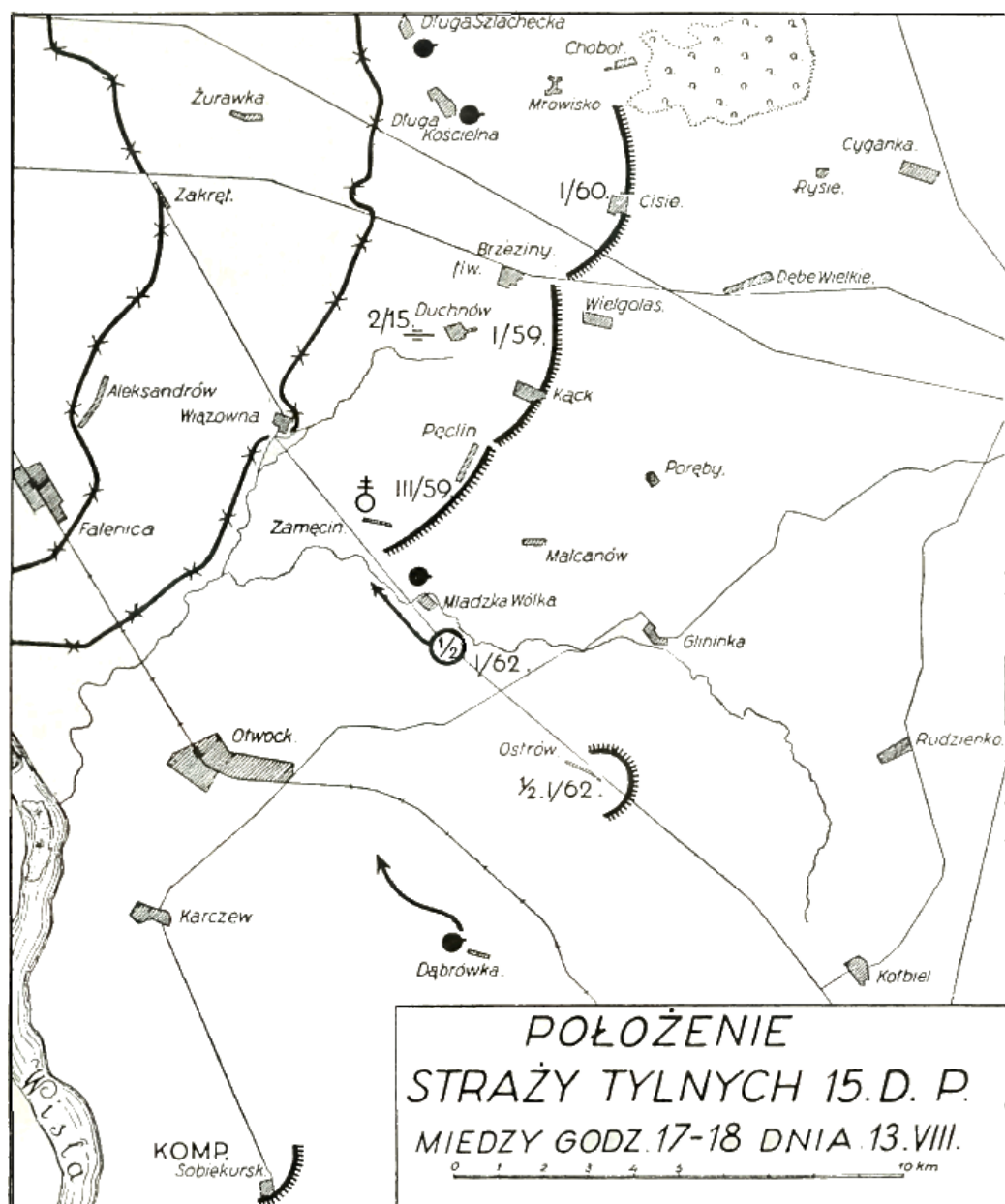
In the morning of 13 August, the 15th Division's rearguards, moved up from the bridgehead to the line Sobiekrusk – Dąbrówka – Ostrów Manor – Brzeziny – Michałów.

Although the rearguard did not encounter any difficulties, and the move was generally without any contact with the enemy, the Glinianki – Dębe Wielkie line was not manned as ordered.

In the morning the rearguard of 59th Regiment (Battalion 1/59) left the Mińsk Mazowiecki area under pressure from the enemy and at noon took positions on the line of Brzeziny Manor – Kąck, from where at 13:00, after being relieved by Battalion 2/59, it left for the bridgehead.

The 59th regiment advanced its 2nd and 3rd Battalions, which now occupied the line of Brzeziny Manor – Kąck – Pęcłin – Zanęcin. Those battalions established communication links with their neighbours and remained without combat contact with the enemy until late in the evening.

Around 18:00 the positions of the rearguard was as shown in Sketch 42.



Sketch 42 : Positions of the 15th ID rearguards between 17:00 and 18:00 on 13 August

In the evening the left wing of the advanced troops of the 60th IR was pushed back by the enemy advancing from Stanisławów to Okuniew. A prisoner was captured from the Soviet 146th RR of the 49th RB of the 17th RB, who stated that to the left of his regiment marched the 155th RR and to the right the 148th RR.



The left wing of Battalion 1/60 had outposts in Długa Kościelna, Szlachecka and in Mrowisko. The right of the regiment was from Brzeziny Manor to Cisie.

At 23:50 on 13 August the operational diary of the 15th Division recorded that the rearguards withdrew to the bridgehead positions.

At midnight on 13 August the division command issued an order in which it gave news of the intercepted orders of the Soviet 16th Army, and regrouped its troops in the bridgehead. The 30th Brigade was to leave the Mładz – Otwock – Karczew sector and take up a position by the Swider River, while placing advanced units on the line Natolin to Otwock. In Otwock town:

Patrols with hand grenades were to remain, which would delay the enemy's advance in the villa area through firepower and sorties.

In the sector of the 29th Brigade contact with the enemy was to be maintained, according to the orders, mainly by "sorties and reconnaissance" conducted along the road in the direction of Mińsk Mazowiecki.

This action was to be supported by the armoured train *Danuta* on the Rembertów – Dębe Wielkie line, and the armoured train *Paderewski* on the Otwock – Garwolin line. However, the *Paderewski* did not arrive because it was operating near Wołomin.

Higher Command Orders in the Afternoon of 13 August

No precise information was immediately available in Warsaw about the course of the events occurring on the first line and with the rearguards. As the operations were ongoing on the outskirts in the afternoon of 13 August important decisions were taken by the higher commands. It should be noted here that the Army HQ was rather pessimistic about the value of the fortifications of the Warsaw bridgehead. However, high hopes were attached to the artillery, tanks and air force: it was also hoped that they would be the units able to provide a fierce and decisive defence.

That assessment was far from reality, as we have seen in the preceding descriptions.

In those circumstances, the report of French General Billote, who had observed the course of the fighting of the 46th Regiment up to 14:30, was undoubtedly one of the more important factors in the decisions made. That report was sent by General Weygand to General Rozwadowski as "extremely urgent", adding that if the shortcomings are not remedied, "the chances of a successful defence will be considered greatly weakened." However Rozwadowski added at the end of the report, "A little more calm! So much nervousness! Appropriate orders are already issued."

General Billote's report read:

French Military Mission to Poland
General Staff

Warsaw, 13 August 1920

This is the situation as assessed by General Billote today at 14:30 on the outskirts of Dybów (north-east of Radzymin) :

I. During the morning of this day the enemy launched and continues to launch a number of small attacks, thanks to which he was able to establish himself at least temporarily inside the bridgehead in Dybów, in Mokre and maybe even in the woods located to the west of Mokre (shots, MG fire, shouts from the Bolsheviks assault, at the time of my return of 14:30).

From this one can conclude that the Bolsheviks are aggressively disposed and are preparing an attack, which will be launched as soon as the bulk of their forces have taken up their initial positions. (The Bolsheviks are probably excited by the proximity of the capital and the speed of the Polish retreat, which they may consider as a flight.)

II. On the Polish side, I have not noticed any sense, either in the soldiers or in the higher officers, that the battle that is taking place near Warsaw is a decisive one, and that it is necessary to stay in the trenches and die there. I think that they are not aware of what is coming, and that they treat the position in which they are (now) halted as a position better



prepared than the previous ones, but not one that is to play a special role, and so just like all the positions they have occupied successively since the beginning of the retreat.

In summary:

- A clear offensive intent of the Bolsheviks, who, in my opinion, are excited by the hope of an imminent entry into Warsaw and the end of the war.
- An ignorance and misunderstanding of the situation on the part of the Poles, who do not understand that a decisive battle has already begun in which Poland's fate will be decided. If the infantry does not hold its positions, the 1st Army can be regarded as doomed.

III. Action required

Tell and explain to the infantrymen that the battle that is being prepared must be very painful for the Bolsheviks, in order to weaken their fighting mood.

IV. Counter-measures

a) Send staff officers immediately in all directions to reach down to the battalions, in order to explain the Commander's thoughts: that is they must stop the enemy at all costs in his present positions, in order to allow the full development of the manoeuvre being prepared in the coming days,

b) immediately make visible all the artillery prepared for the defence of Warsaw (divisional and positional) in order to show that something has changed and thus encourage the spirits of the Polish infantry, while at the same time weakening the Bolshevik's combat mood.

All batteries along the front should start firing as soon as possible, even today after lunch. Concentrations of fire should be made on the positions already occupied by the Bolsheviks.

Fire barrages, day and night, should be made in the rear and on the roads, especially where aviation indicates the march of large columns.

Conclusion

From what I have seen this morning it appears that (regarding the present struggle) one of the opponents has an offensive fighting spirit, whereas the other side does not realise to what extent the present situation holds good hopes, gives the impression that it does not know what is expected of it, and is not animated by that faith which would be desirable.

This state of affairs must be changed as soon as possible, unless one wishes to put the outcome of the Battle of Warsaw in doubt. The issue is artillery – and every minute here is precious.

Billotte.

The report, which described the state of defence readiness pessimistically, was unfortunately indeed a reflection of the combat reality.

How strongly the situation at Radzymin affected the mood is shown by the fact that in the evening of that day the French decided that all foreign diplomats should leave Warsaw that day.

Another very important factor for the Polish command was information about the enemy. For the following order had been received by the 16th Russian Army (intercepted that day and deciphered):

Operational order to the troops of the 16th Army.

... [beginning missing] strike from the Zegrze line towards Praga? ...

I order the divisions to continue the offensive and, on the evening of 14 August, to capture the following areas with their main forces:

27th Division: Łajski – St. Jabłonna – Nieporęt.

2nd Division: Radzymin – Stanisławów – Pustelnik (excl.) – Helenów.



17th Division: Pustelnik – Wołów – Marki – Turów – Wołomin.

10th Division: Mokrołęg – Wawer – Jarosław – Okuniew.

8th Division: Karczew – Osieck – Kołbiel.

2) Heads of Intelligence of the 16th Army up to that time ...

3) The Command of the 27th Division is to co-operate ...

The Commander of the 10th Division is to be aware that, according to the circumstances, his division may be directed to Praga with its main forces to force its way across the Vistula River. Send this directive immediately to the 10th Div.

Command of 16th Army

This information was supplemented and interpreted by an intelligence report of the Front HQ 2nd Department, which repeated the details of the 16th Army Commander's order and added that on 12 August the 21st RD was found near Tłuszcz. The report drew the following conclusions:

1) The enemy is preparing a general attack on Warsaw.

2) The 16th Army is to attack from the east, supported on its right wing by units of the 3rd Army, in particular by the 21st Division, which received orders to attack in the direction of Praga from the Zegrze – Żałubice line.

3) Long columns were seen marching from Wyszaków in a south-westerly direction, allowing us to assume that the 3rd Army is to take part in a general attack on Warsaw.

4) The troops of the 15th Army will probably lead the attack from the north.

A report of the 2nd Department of the Supreme Command of 12 August generally agreed with the details now received. It was assumed that the Soviet 15th Army would head for the Serock – Nasielsk area in order to strike Modlin and Zegrze. The 3rd Army was to advance along the Białystok – Warsaw rail line and strike with its main forces on the Radzymin – Okuniew line or support the 15th Army in the direction of Benjaminów and Zegrze.

So on the basis of the information received, it was already being considered certain that two Russian armies, supported by the 15th Army from the north, would strike at the outskirts of Warsaw.

At around 17:00 General Haller, Front commander, held a meeting with Generals Rozwadowski and Weygand, at which it was decided that the 5th Army would move on 14 August to counter-attack and drive the enemy from the Wkra to the Narew. This decision had already been communicated by the Front's Chief of Staff, Colonel Zagórski, to the commander of the 5th Army between 17:00 and 18:00, with Colonel Zagórski remarking:

The whole of the Bolshevik 3rd and 14th Armies have crossed this afternoon to the south bank of the Bug River and will launch a strong attack on the Warsaw bridgehead tomorrow at dawn.

Two divisions are arrayed on each line. In addition, the 14th Army, in the known line-up, which is reaching Nasielsk with its wagons, will attack the Narew from the north: Zegrze – Modlin.

Delaying the attack of the 5th Army by even half a day will tie up the reserves of the 10th Division's front, so that they will no longer be available to assist in completing the 5th Army's attack.

The Bug section at Zegrze – Modlin is weak and must consequently be defended offensively. Moreover, only this use of the 5th Army will relieve the bridgehead front in the following days, which under the incessant attacks of the Bolshevik divisions massed on the northern flank would perhaps share the fate of so many battles to date. I completely understand that a strike by the 5th Army on the 15th would have been stronger, but unfortunately there is not the slightest doubt that it will be too late. The carelessness of the Warsaw garrison and the lack of understanding of the importance of this particular northern sector has caused this situation.



To this General Sikorski replied that he was not ready to launch an attack. However, General Haller confirmed the order and agreed that the 5th Army would launch a counter-attack, crossing the Wkra River – Nowe Miasto line around noon on 14 August at the latest.

The intelligence received, as well as the general position, caused the 1st Army's command to abandon for the time being any plans for changes to the positions on the outskirts. On the afternoon of 13 August, the Army abandoned the reinforcement of the 11th Division by reducing its sector. The Army's chief of staff, Colonel Bobicki, in a Hughes conversation with Colonel Jaźwiński claimed that:

Five Bolshevik divisions have received an order to attack us tomorrow. The direction is not strictly defined, but judging from the individual assignments, one division towards Jabłonna, one division at Radzymin, two towards Okuniew, one at Karczew. The order was given yesterday, so today there may be changes in positions. Not knowing the principle direction of their attack, I cannot distribute the reserves on the eve of the decisive battle. As for relieving you, I think there will be contact even today. The attack will begin at dawn, so we may be surprised at the moment of easing. Our strength lies less in the quantity as in the quality of artillery fire. Everyone, from section up to regimental commanders, must be totally forbidden from abandoning their positions without orders. This is the only way, with the amount of artillery at our disposal, to maintain the first line – and having such reserves in the Army that we can act decisively and decisively.

From the above and a further conversation it was evident that Colonel Bobicki thought that the strongest enemy attack would be in the 8th Division's sector. However, Colonel Jaźwiński claimed that he had no reinforcements, so he asked for two battalions be given to him as a reserve. To this Colonel Bobicki replied that he would only have spare battalions at his disposal in three days' time, but added:

If tomorrow is successful, then one regiment of the 8th Division will be relieved, as promised.

However, Colonel Jaźwiński was not content with this and reported that he had only one battalion in the division's reserve and that he had to use the other battalion as the 48th Regiment's reserve. At that point Colonel Bobicki replied:

In that case I'll look for something. Maybe I'll be able to strengthen something with something. The general will come and I'll report back.

The final expression of the previously mentioned projects, plans, discussions, etc., was the following order of the 1st Army:

1st Army Command

13 August 1920.

Positions for the evening of 13 August 1920

1) On 11 August the following enemy grouping was reported: the 10th RD at Kuflew, the 17th RD at Kałuszyn, the 2nd RD west of Kałuszyn, the 27th RD east of Stanisławów. It is likely that these divisions, which are part of the Soviet 16th Army, are in the process of moving further north.

The Soviet 21st RD was located on the night of 12/13 in the Tłuszcz – Wołomin area.

The above-mentioned divisions have received orders to capture Warsaw and are to reach it on the evening of the 14th. The 27th Division: Łajski – Jabłonna. The 2nd Division: Radzymin – Pustelnik. The 17th Division: Pustelnik – Marki. The 10th Division: Wawer – Okuniew. The 8th Division: Karczew – Osieck.

2) We are facing a decisive battle. The Commander-in-Chief, the Government and the Nation, are convinced that the troops of the 1st Army will not surrender a single inch of ground on the line currently occupied: they do not doubt that the Bolshevik invasion will smash itself against our chests. Aware of my responsibility for the outcome of the present battle, I order all commanders – from sections up to and including divisions – to maintain the line occupied.



In the defence of the capital and in the fight for the Polish Nation, "To be or not to be", one can only give one's life heroically, but one cannot dishonour the Polish name.

It is imperative that the units of the 1st Army maintain their positions.

3) In conjunction with this, I order:

a) The entire reserve of the 8th ID (the 15th IB) will upon receipt of this order move to the Artillery Camp (Rembertów), to the area below the word "Artillery".⁴⁵

(b) The 19th ID will move to the area of Pustelnik – Nadma – Pustelnik House.

c) The garrison of Gora Kalwaria, will be relieved by the units of the 2nd Army, and will send Battalion 1/168 to the 15th ID, while the artillery, under the orders of Lt-Colonel Doroszkiewicz, will be at the disposal of the Army command.

(d) The Zegrze Group is to be taken over by Colonel Małachowski. Rear Admiral Porębski will now be at disposal of the Commander-in-Chief. The Zegrze Group sector is extended as far as the Modlin forts (exclusive).

To cover the line of the south bank of the Narew from Zegrze to Modlin use the Volunteer Division of Lieutenant Siły-Nowicki.

e) The armoured train *Mściciel*, stationed in Wołomin, will remain at the disposal of the 11th ID, while the newly-arrived armoured train *Paderewski* will leave to be at the disposal of the 15th ID.

4) All units in the line are to conduct intensive patrolling by cavalry and infantry.

The bridgehead must remain in our possession.

5) I would remind you that divisional commanders are responsible for maintaining physical communication and liaison between the HQ and its neighbours to the sides, while Colonel Małachowski is also responsible for maintaining liaison with the 5th Army units and the 15th Division commander with the 2nd Army units.

6) Division commanders will organise *ad hoc* courts in accordance with the regulations in force, placing all retreating troops under their authority, regardless of charge.

For compliance.

Bobicki

Lt-Colonel of the General Staff

Commander of the 1st Army

Latinik

Major-General

Break in the Front of the 46th Regiment

By the afternoon of 13 August, the sector of the 46th Regiment was quiet. The enemy 62nd and 63rd Rifle Brigades, having been thrown back behind the Rządza, had given up and were content to hold some of the Polish outposts. The 46th Regiment intended to retake the lost positions at nightfall.

The situation was largely unchanged. The 2nd Battalion, reinforced with the 11th Company, was holding its section of the line, while two sapper platoons with 2nd-Lieutenant Bobrowicki were finishing off some of the defences and building up the Mokre to Radzymin trench line. Major Matczyński's battalion remained in the area of the fork in the road leading to Zawady and Dybów. The 1st Battalion occupied its section, having all the companies in line, along with two platoons of the 12th Company. The 3rd Company had not yet arrived, so the battalion's commander was without a reserve. Two platoons of sappers, with 2nd-Lieutenant Fress, were constructing of a position in the Wiktorów – Helenów section, which had not yet been fortified.

The battalion sectors were quiet. In the regiment's reserves were still two MG rifle companies of the 3rd Battalion (at Radzymin House), the 4th Machine-gun Company and the Technical Company. The 3rd *division*

⁴⁵ This is presumably a reference to the German maps.



of the 4th HRR and a half-squadron of 2nd-Lieutenant Kiedrzyński's light horse were located in Radzymin village.

There was much more movement in the artillery, as it was precisely in the afternoon that the batteries of the 1st Lit-Bel arrived, as described before. We also recall that the Middle Artillery Subgroup still had two commanders, as Major Rómmel and Colonel Aleksandrowicz were in command simultaneously, but neither of the whole subgroup.



The view of Battalion 1/46 at Widok towards Karczew, from an outpost of the Radzymin – Karczew road

Colonel Aleksandrowicz's batteries were preparing to shoot (1st Division of the 1st Lit-Bel FAR), or were just taking up positions. The latter included Captain Baying's batteries: Battery 2/13 HAR and Battery 9/19 FAR. The former was in the area west of Janków Nowy, having an observation point in Radzymin, while the 9th was just arriving at a position in the area of Ciemne and around 18:00 Lieutenant Kitkiewicz, commanding the battery, reached Rżyska, where he chose an observation point.

A considerable number of observers were concentrated on the towers of the church in Radzymin and on the roofs of the higher houses. There were probably no observers in the infantry line however. At this time the observation posts were quite busy with the arrival of new observers, but the foreground was generally quiet.

Breakthrough at the 1st Battalion

Meanwhile on the other side of the Rządza the enemy was preparing for a new assault – this time to be undertaken with a greater forces. Four brigades (of the 21st and 27th RDs) were now to strike at the 46th Regiment's sector and capture Radzymin.

The 46th Regiment was not aware of the imminent danger. For example, the 4th Company commander, 2nd-Lieutenant Usiekiewicz, recognised some of the enemy's preparations around Kraszew, but at first he was not able to report it, as the telephone system was broken. For this reason he sent a written report by messenger, but the soldier did not arrive on time. The battalion also had no telephone connection to the regiment.

The preparations escaped the attention of the artillery observers, as the terrain behind the Rządza, being wooded in many places, offered concealment. Admittedly, around 17:30 an observer of Battery 4/20 noticed from the administration building, "a concentration of Bolshevik troops on horseback and on foot in



the vicinity of Rasztów and Kraszew”, and on Major Rómmel’s order the battery fired on those villages. But soon it was asked to fire near Dybów and Mokre, and that is where it focused its attention.

At about 17:00 two or three batteries, which the Russians pulled up very close to the first line, started firing from near Kraszew at a distance of a few hundred metres. They shelled the centre of the 1st Battalion’s line with short but heavy fire. Shortly afterwards the enemy infantry set off from near Kraszew, with a few units heading for Kraszew Dzielny and along the Kraszew – Radzymin road. The launch of the enemy attack was noticed by Lieutenant Kitkiewicz, commander of Battery 9/19, but he could not shoot, as he was not yet in communication with the battery.

The commander of the 4th Company, seeing that the enemy was threatening the left wing, sent 2nd-Lieutenant Lukasik there. Second Lieutenant Fress was there with a machine-gun and with a handful of sappers.

It was a critical moment: the enemy, having struck the Poles with their barrage, quickly crossed the space separating them from the positions, coming up from the barbed-wire fence. The sight has a bad effect on the small groups of soldiers, scattered in individual trenches. The young soldiers did not feel well. And it really was going badly. A machine-gun positioned by the road to Kraszew fired, but after a single burst it jammed, “as the enemy entered our obstacles, ripping them up with their rifle butts.”

The machine-gunner desperately yanked back the lock, wanting to remove the jam at all costs, but unfortunately was unsuccessful. Second Lieutenant Lukasik was wounded, shot in the shoulder. Bleeding, and barely able to reach the commander of the 4th Company, he reported that, “to the left of our company the situation is very dangerous.”

On the left wing, especially in the section of the 12th Company platoons and the 1st Company, the situation quickly turned to the Poles’ disadvantage. In the 1st Company, a machine-gun jammed and an NCO platoon commander fell wounded. The soldiers, not yet over the shock of the short barrage, and seeing the enemy advancing in thick waves, did not hold their positions and fell back in panic, fleeing in the direction of Radzymin.

Second Lieutenant Loedel (with the 12th Company platoons) wrote that the enemy attacked, “in overwhelming force.” The soldiers of the 12th Company, seeing that their neighbours were abandoning their position, also “began to slip here and there” to the rear, until they finally broke completely. They ran.

Loedel was forced to retreat, so with a handful of others he set off towards the town. On the way he lost Sergeant Matlak, commander of the 1st Platoon, killed.

By this time, the 1st Company and the left wing of the 4th had already been wiped out, with mobs of scattered soldiers retreating chaotically, heedless of the fact that they were thereby increasing their own losses.

Following its left wing, the rest of the 4th Company, which by this time had lost a considerable number of its NCOs, also fell back. Despite the officers’ efforts, the “disorganised company” began to retreat rapidly towards Czarna, coming under fire from all sides. Finally, the right wing 2nd Company had to leave its position when threatened from the flank. It retreated through Janków Nowy towards the road near Nadma.

So with their 241st RR, and units of the 80th and 62nd RBs, the enemy had broken the front line in the section of the 46th Regiment.

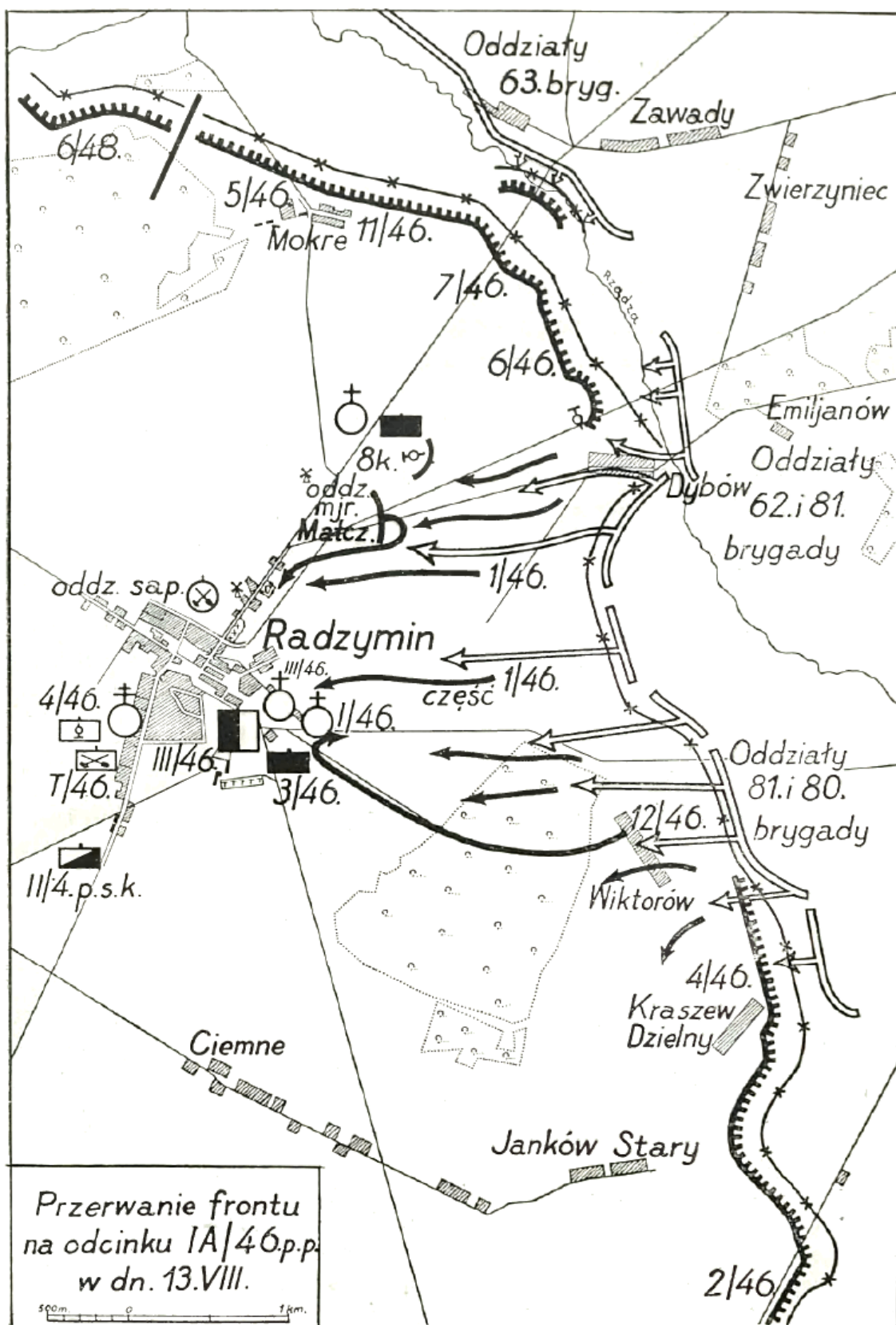
Now the battlefield was silent. The enemy infantry was advancing without shooting, in dense units towards Radzymin, not even pursuing the scattered Polish soldiers with fire. The Russian artillery had long since ceased firing.

Silhouetted against the sunset, the towers and roofs of the houses of Radzymin – the target of the day’s Russian attack – rose before the eyes of the attackers.

The commander of the 1st Battalion was surprised by the development of events, especially as he had no communication with the companies or the regimental command at the time. He found out about the breakthrough at the moment when the shattered troops arrived. Obviously there could be no question of a counter-attack.



The 2nd Battalion remained quiet, though the 6th Company on its right wing was now threatened from the flank, thanks to the enemy's penetration into the 1st Battalion's sector.



Sketch 43: Breakthrough of the Front of Battalion 1/46 on 13 August

Soon the enemy attacked the 6th and 7th Companies, who were facing units of the 81st and 63rd RBs. The frontal assault was thrown back but soon a greater danger threatened, as the enemy struck from the flank



through the gap vacated by the 1st Battalion. It occupied Dybów Manor and threatened the 6th Company. Dybów village had to be abandoned.

As a result, some of the soldiers withdrew through ditches to the road, where 2nd-Lieutenant Wollszleger gathered them up and placed them facing south. But it did not help much, as an attack of the Russian 243rd RR and other troops, directed at the bridges near Dybów, drove away the 6th Company and forced it to retreat towards the battalion's reserve and the 7th Company's section of the line.

The road from Dybów to Radzymin was open to the enemy, who immediately took advantage of its success and pushed infantry, horsemen and *tachankas* towards the town. Even the wagons followed.

The withdrawal of the troops from near Dybów took place partly in panic. Due to this, the commander of the 7th Company bent his right wing. So the break in the front made in the 1st Battalion's section extended into that of the 2nd Battalion as well.

During these events the 46th Regiment command did not have news from the line, although the sounds of battle reached the town immediately:

The active shooting alerted the regimental headquarters. Lt Rehman went to the telephone and asked the commander of Battalion 1/46 what was happening. He got the answer that the situation was unchanged and the outposts were in place.

This was true, because at that time the battalion commander still had no news from the line. In the following minutes there was silence – the telephone link was broken.

At the same time, some of the battlefield news reached the town, and Lieutenant Laube, commander of the staff company, gave it to Colonel Krzywobłocki. The regimental commander, however, replied:

Captain Dorociński would have reported that to me on the phone, and as I have no report, everything is all right.

After a while he picked up the receiver, but the connection was gone.

Meanwhile, the enemy was approaching the town.

Fighting near the Town

The first news about the enemy was from the artillery observers, who started to call down fire. It was at the moment when the enemy, after passing the forest near Wiktorów, appeared near the town. (Panorama 1 in the Appendix 4 shows what it looked like.)

Lieutenant Adamczyk, commander of battery A/75, recounted:

Tired and hungry after finishing firing, I went to serve myself dinner. Suddenly, I heard a terrified voice: "Lieutenant sir, Bolsheviks in the town!"

It was my NCO, who was observing towards the east from the second window of the tower, who had called out to me.

"You must be crazy," I exclaimed, as it seemed so improbable to me. But I ran up to the window and grabbed the binoculars.

Indeed, a yellow wave of Bolshevik cavalry was coming out of the forest, some two kilometres from the town. It was such a nightmare! I had been in all sorts of situations in the war, but it was the utter silence in which it all took place. Not a single shot was heard – not just machine-guns, but ordinary ones too. The Bolsheviks did not shoot, but kept their rifles set and walked slowly but steadily towards the town. There was no resistance on our part, no attempt at resistance. The surprise must have been complete for everyone, because not a single cannon shot had been heard so far either.



The first were mine. I frantically shouted out a command at once and fired a salvo from the spot. There was no time to aim. The first shot fell in our own infantry. The second and third were on the target. I moved to sweep fire. A battery from the right wing joined me.



Aerial Photo of Radzymin, from the North-West side

Now other observers were alerted. Lieutenant Tomaszewski, commander Battery 1/19, to whom the news was given by a scout, at first “scolded him for inciting panic”, but when he looked out the tower window, he saw three enemy rifle lines advancing one after another, nearing Radzymin. So he gave the order by phone to change the battery’s facing, and five minutes later he fired his first burst. As the enemy was already directly threatening the town, Lieutenant Tomaszewski ordered the battery to continue firing, with the aiming point gradually reduced, and finally ordered the horses to come forward and left the tower. The telephonists were ordered to roll up the line.

With the approaching danger the church towers – recently so overcrowded and enlivened with bustle – were quickly deserted. Observers rushed to their batteries.

The development of events was so rapid that when Lieutenant Tomaszewski got to the 46th BRR HQ, he found complete calm. The colonel was sitting almost undressed in his room by the telephone, the wagons in the courtyard were unharnessed, and everyone was wandering around – unhurriedly – the orderlies, telephone operators, liaison officers, messengers. No one could feel the storm approaching.

Lieutenant Tomaszewski rushed in and:

... in a nervous voice reported that the infantry line on the right flank of our sector was retreating towards Cegielnia and that the enemy was advancing unhindered into the town.

That news struck the assembled people like a bolt of lightning, with Colonel Krzywobłocki almost fainting and “at that moment was incapable of issuing any orders.”

Major Liwacz recalls:

Hearing this I got up from my seat, and not wanting to wait for orders from the regimental commander, who was not familiar with the situation, I shouted at the adjutant to immediately



alert the 3rd Battalion, while I personally went to the spot, i.e. to the eastern edge of Radzymin. I did not receive any orders from the regimental commander and I did not wait for them, as I knew both that he would not be able to issue them and that the danger of the situation required quick and decisive action.

The regimental adjutant, Lieutenant Rehman, quickly gave orders to the 3rd Battalion and notified the 2nd Battalion of the situation.

At the same time Major Rómmel also received the news, and in accordance with the instructions we have seen, announced to the batteries that they were to:

... switch to cannister at the approach of the Bolsheviks, start firing the MGs, die on the spot and do not leave their positions.

This did not help much, as the overwhelming force of events was stronger than any instructions. Moreover, the subgroup command lost communication with the batteries quite soon. Before that, however, Major Rómmel had managed to order some of the commanders to go to their batteries and direct the fire from there.

In the midst of these events, the battle began in earnest. The enemy artillery, which had so far remained silent, fired on Radzymin just as the Russian battalions were approaching the town. Two heavy shells hit the buildings of the school, located at the eastern end of the town, destroying the telephone connections of the observation posts. The shells exploding in the town caused total panic among the civilian population, who, unwilling to part with their belongings, remained in their homes. Scattered fleeing soldiers ran among the houses and gardens, increasing the panic in the town, and the wagons located in Radzymin likewise began to flee in panic.

The rumble of bursting Polish and Russian shells reverberated against the walls of the town. Here and there smoke erupted and flames consumed some houses. Delicate white clouds appeared and splashed in the sky, reddened from the glare of the setting sun – the fumes of bursting shrapnel. Radzymin was in the midst of a desperate battle.

Before we look at the assault on the town, some discussion on the artillery that had been threatened earlier.

At the moment the line was broken, Lieutenant Kitkiewicz's 9th Battery had no telephone connection with the observation post, and so the battery commander – firing on the basis of a map – fired the first shots. The battery held its position for some time and its machine-gun fired at the Russian troops near Ciemne, which were advancing towards the west, at the same time covering the withdrawal of its own infantry. However, the enemy soon came quite close to the battery, seriously threatening it. Lieutenant Kitkiewicz therefore ordered the First Officer to immediately withdraw with one platoon, while he himself remained with the other and continued to fire at close range.

At this time Colonel Aleksandrowicz, commander of the subgroup, arrived and threatened the officers with court-martial for changing their position without permission. He ordered an immediate return to the previous position. At this very moment the enemy hit the battery with machine-gun fire. Colonel Aleksandrowicz, probably seeing that the danger was so obvious, did not repeat the order, but left. So the 9th Battery galloped away from the endangered area towards Janków Nowy, where the 2nd Battery of the 13th Heavy Artillery Regiment had been until then. As communication with the battery commander was broken, it was now commanded by 2nd-Lieutenant Ścibor-Marchocki. Seeing the danger around Rżyska and Ciemne, he conducted the fire directly. The battery also received an order from Colonel Aleksandrowicz that, "it is forbidden to withdraw without his orders."

Eventually both batteries, threatened by the enemy from Ciemne village, had to leave. They retreated towards the Radzymin road.



Around this time the remaining Middle Subgroup batteries were also leaving their positions. Some of them left earlier, while some persevered longer and left at the moment of the 46th Regiment's collapse, which we will see later.

Battery 1/19 withdrew from the area of the Radzymin cemetery, under enemy fire. Battery 4/20, which was in the fields between Ciemne and Radzymin, also left its position. Finally, Lieutenant Kaminski's battery of 155-mm heavy howitzers, which was helped by civilians as the battery had too few horses, rolled its cannons from the Kronenberg brickyard up to the Radzymin road.

After leaving their positions, these batteries retreated along the road, with the exception of those that were in the Aleksandrów area (Batteries A/75 and 2/19), as they withdrew separately along dirt roads.

Counter-attack by the 46th Regiment

The regiment's last effort was a series of uncoordinated counter-attacks by those units which were on the eastern edge of the town – after withdrawing from their positions – or which were already in Radzymin. Those counter-attacks took place in difficult conditions and were more the actions of separate groups, even companies and platoons, as there was no time to organise them.

Major Liwacz tried to control the situation by directing the action, now on both sides of the Radzymin – Kraszew road. Assembled on the road were 2nd-Lieutenant Kloetzel (1st Company), 2nd-Lieutenant Loedel (half of the 12th Company), and Captain Dorociński (1st Battalion), who had his HQ nearby. Finally, the 3rd Company, which had previously been away from the regiment, had just arrived. On top of this, various scattered soldiers were collected in the area.

During these events the troops already in Radzymin were activated. The commander of the 3rd Battalion handed over to the 9th Company a regimental order that read:

The regiment is retreating in the whole sector. The 104th Battalion has left its positions. The 9th Company will make a counter-attack on the cemetery – Kraszew Dzielny. Occupy the trenches of the first line.

A few minutes later the 9th Company set off from Radzymin House, where it had been quartered up until then, and headed off in the ordered direction.

Meanwhile, Major Liwacz was hurrying on horseback to the HQ of the 1st Battalion. On the way he met the 10th Company, which was awaiting orders in full readiness.

On arriving at the eastern edge of town, Major Liwacz found that the enemy was then about 200 to 300 metres in front of the town. Bullets were already swishing overhead. His horse fell and he had to change to another.

Having familiarised himself with the situation, he ordered the 10th Company to advance to the left of the Radzymin – Kraszew road, and recapture the lost trenches of the 1st Company. Captain Dorociński, on the other hand, was to press forward with the 3rd Company, and assembled remnants, to the right of the road in the direction of Wiktorów and Kraszew.

But it was not easy to move the assembled men over to the attack, especially the 3rd Company, which had only just arrived. Major Liwacz, saw that the battalion's commander, Captain Dorociński, was not fully conversant with the situation, while the officers and privates did not properly realise the danger of the situation, so stopped by that company, wanting to encourage it by his own example and "personally influence its movement towards the counter-attack." Major Liwacz recalls that he was bravely assisted in this by 2nd-Lieutenant Fleischman, commander of the 1st Machine-gun Company.

Finally, the company moved forward, the soldiers so tired from the march that they:

... fell over mole hills as they ran through the mud near the Radzymin Administration building.

After pushing the 3rd Company forward, Major Liwacz went to the 10th Company. Led energetically by Lieutenant Wyzina, it advanced and, soon after passing the trenches at the edge of the town, met the enemy in the open. Under the influence of that attack, the enemy began to retire backwards. Major Liwacz



arrived and noted the successful development of the counter-attack. He also noticed that to the left of the 10th Company some sappers were advancing spontaneously. It was the commander of the 1st Company, Lieutenant Karolewski, who had gathered his sappers and some of the scattered soldiers and moved to a counter-attack from the north-eastern edge of the town.

Having checked that the assault north of the Radzymin – Kraszew road was developing successfully, Major Liwacz turned back to the company of the 1st Battalion.

By now the 9th Company was advancing to the right of the 3rd Company, but it had no communication with the remaining units. According to its commander, it reached the forest near Wiktorów, throwing out the enemy there.

During this time the artillery stopped and did not support the infantry. The batteries which had been in the Radzymin area, withdrew along a road overrun by “panicking civilians and wagons” and scattered soldiers. Major Rómmel pointed the batteries in the direction of Pustelnik.

The course of all these events was extremely rapid and chaotic, so it was difficult to understand what was happening near the town. In describing these events, we were forced to put the information in order and link them together. However, in reality the battle consisted of various episodes, all crowded together, developing at a feverish pace, and difficult to grasp. As one unit advanced, another broke and retreated deeper into the town, while elsewhere there was a mingling of Polish and enemy units. Such a picture is, of course, difficult to depict.

The counter-attack by the 46th Regiment initially went well and the units even reached halfway to the abandoned trenches. Then the forward movement stopped, only to turn into a violent retreat in the blink of an eye. Second-Lieutenant Loedel recalled years later:

All was well until one of the wings was threatened, or the appearance of a few ragged Bolsheviks in front caused panic, and a disorderly retreat that could not be stopped.

To this day I do not know what was the reason for the mad panic that developed during this phase of the battle.

The nature of the battle and the terrain did not allow the participants to grasp the totality of the action. Of course, they also did not know at the time how strong the advancing enemy was.

The wavering in the companies quickly turned into a violent retreat. Second Lieutenant Kloetzel was killed, Lt-Colonel Lipski and 2nd-Lieutenants Przewoźniczek and Sliwowski were wounded (the latter two had just arrived with the 3rd Company). There were also a lot of losses among the privates, as bullets whistled from multiple directions and wounded those retreating.

At this point Major Liwacz arrived and tried to rectify the situation, but unfortunately was unsuccessful, as the soldiers, “gripped by some incredible fear,” listened to no-one. Before his eyes, not only did the counter-attack collapse completely, but it also had disastrous consequences. He told the story:

All efforts were in vain. My second horse was badly wounded, and I remained in the square almost alone, abandoned by everyone. The units of the 1st Battalion streamed along the Radzymin to Warsaw road. My wounded horse carried me to the regimental HQ, where it fell.

The attack of the sappers also suffered the same fate, particularly as Lieutenant Karolewski was wounded. On the other hand, Lieutenant Wyzina’s 10th Company withdrew to the northern edge of Radzymin and retreated along the western edge of the town in slightly better condition.

Major Matczyński’s battalion, which had been in the area of the fork of the roads to Zawady and Dybów, also retreated along the same road. It was run into by soldiers retreating from the first lines, causing havoc. Enemy machine-guns rained down on the huddled mass. No force, no orders could stop the soldiers, everything retreated towards Radzymin.

A surprise awaited them at Radzymin, as the enemy was already in the city. Cavalry appeared in the streets. In the disorderly fighting, it was difficult to control the situation. In vain Major Matczyński called out: “Peasants! Are you afraid of the Bolsheviks? Forward!”, but it was of little help, as everyone fled in their



own way. It was a desperate fight and Major Matczyński himself would have been bayoneted if a soldier had not deflected the thrust in time.

In the end, the unit, having lost many men, including 2nd-Lieutenant Stolni, retreated along the western edge of Radzymin, bypassing the town.

Remnants of units remained on the battlefield. In the vicinity of the administration building and the Jewish cemetery, the commander of the 2nd Battalion, Major Wołk-Łaniewski, was still holding out with a handful of soldiers, perhaps because he did not manage to withdraw in time. An unknown platoon sergeant defended himself particularly bravely near the cemetery. Second Lieutenant Loedel also retreated with the remnants of his men near the cemetery and had an NCO platoon leader wounded there.

When a few groups of delayed or brave soldiers tried to retreat into the town, they found the streets were full of enemy cavalry and infantry. Confused soldiers tried to escape or hide somewhere, in cellars or sheds, to avoid being bayoneted or sabred. Major Wołk-Łaniewski rushed into the administration building with that intention. It was too late. Russian soldiers were already inside and were cutting down prisoners. One young boy stuck himself in a wardrobe and screamed loudly not to be killed. Others were dragged out of corners. Wołk-Łaniewski was shot at three times by a Bolshevik, but all missed and he was thus captured unharmed.

Retreat from Radzymin

In the course of the described incidents, which took place on the eastern edge of the town, fear grew in Radzymin, quickly turning into panic as more shattered units rushed into the town.

The regimental command was still deluded by the hope that the situation could be brought under control. After all, Major Liwacz had personally gone to lead the counter-attack, the 2nd Battalion was holding out, the staff detachments, alerted by Lieutenant Rehman, were standing by, while the exits of the streets leading from the market square were closed off with posts. News was awaited. Then suddenly the streets of the town were filled with soldiers fleeing in disorder and panic. At first a few huddled inside the fortifications, then groups of them ran, and finally whole waves of fleeing soldiers burst through the streets. The walls of the red building housing the regimental headquarters began to be hit by rifle bullets: with a noise and a penetrating clang, the panes of glass shattered. Several men fell to the ground wounded.

The officers ran quickly out of the headquarters. Lieutenant Laube grabbed a platoon of gendarmes, which was fleeing the town, and placed it in a ditch by the roadside, then ran to stop the fleeing men.

The effort was in vain – he did not stop those fleeing and in the meantime the gendarmes disappeared.

Lieutenant Rehman then directed Officer Cadet Czyżewski, with two guns from the 4th MG Company, to a position near the church by the road, demanding that he cover the rear and even, as a last resort, fire at the fleeing men.

The two officers gathered up a handful of men from the telephone units and liaison officers and attempted to stop the next waves of fleeing men with them.

The regimental commander, Colonel Krzywobłocki, was completely broken. Although he followed his adjutant, he:

... did not issue any orders and only kept asking what was going to happen, and whether there was any link to the brigade.

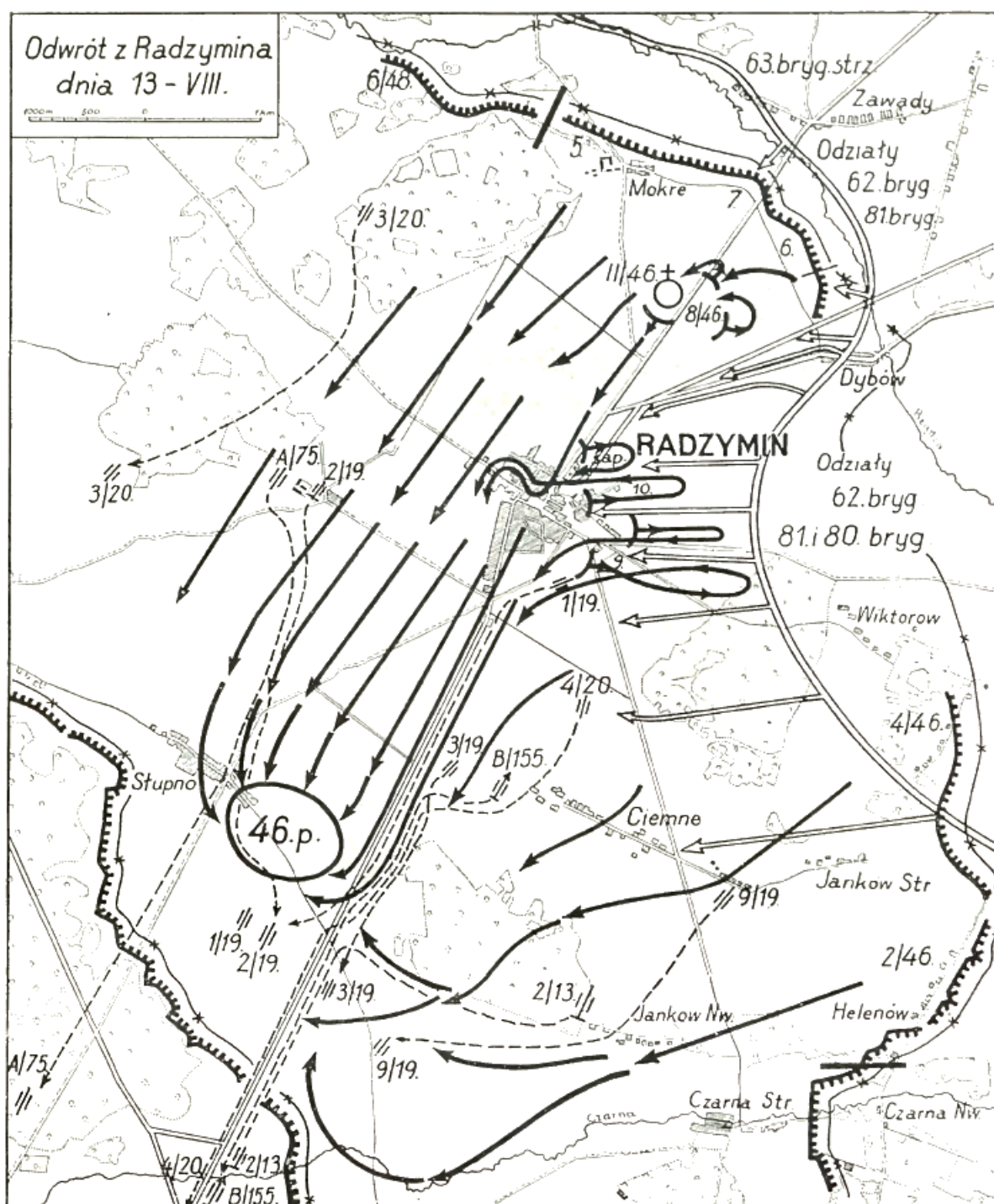
In the end, attempts to stop the fleeing soldiers failed both in the town and on the southern edge,

Because the panic was so terrible, keeping the soldiers disciplined, despite all threats, was out of the question.

The whole mass rolled along the road and beside the road, right next to the machine-gun position of Cadet Czyżewski, who relates:



Soon after them, Colonel Krzywobłocki and the adjutant, Lieutenant Rehman, passed by me. They greeted me with a shout: "They are coming! We are defeated!"



Sketch 44: Retreat from Radzymin on 13 August

Indeed, a few minutes later the enemy appeared, to be met with fire by Cadet Czyzewski. Soon, however, he had to retreat because of the danger to his wings. He stopped at the edge of the woods around the Kronenberg brickyard. The horse rifles, who had covered the retreat of the 46th Regiment, had recently departed from that area. The 2nd Division of the 4th HRR had been quartered in Wioska Radzyńska and, on seeing the retreat of the 46th Regiment, had been sent by Lieutenant Komorowski to take up positions on both sides of the road near Cegielnia. (This may have been in agreement with Major Liwacz.)

After the main mass of the regiment withdrew, the *division* also retired. Meanwhile, Cadet Czyzewski arrived in the area of the brickyard, and late in the evening Lieutenant Szut and his 10th Company was one



of the last to withdraw. Finally, during the night, 36 sappers and 14 privates of the 1st Battalion with an NCO joined in, bringing with them a rescued machine-gun.

This small group of soldiers were capable of resistance and finally stopped the enemy advancing along the road. However, as we will learn in more detail, the enemy had already abandoned any intentions to continue.

In the meantime, the sun had long since set behind the Benjaminów forests. Dusk gradually came and finally a dark night covered the unfortunate Radzymin.

Lieutenant Szut and Cadet Czyżewski, despite sending liaison officers to the rear, waited until midnight for some orders. Finally, Czyżewski, impatient with the lack of direction, went himself to the rear and reached the place where the remains of the regiment were gathered. Several bonfires were burning in a ditch by the roadside, with the officers beside them, and groups of sleeping soldiers nearby. A meeting was taking place.

However, before Czyżewski had time to report, Lt-Colonel Kohutnicki, the division's chief of staff, arrived by car.

Retreat of the 2nd Battalion

We left the 2nd Battalion in a position where its right wing had been forced back, due to the assault on the 1st Battalion's sector. We also pointed out that the rest of the battalion had held their positions for some time despite their dangerous position.

The battalion's commander was convinced for a long time that this temporary – as he thought – success by the enemy would be neutralised by the regimental reserves, so he tried to hold his section, counting on the help of Major Matczyński's unit. The latter hope turned out to be vain, as by the time the messenger reached the fork in the road with his letter, Major Matczyński's unit had retreated in the direction of Radzymin.

Further developments in the battalion's sector were unfortunate, as the 7th Company could not withstand the enemy pressure and faltered in its positions. Seeing this, the enemy increased its fire, which caused panic, with the result that, "it was impossible to keep the soldiers on the designated line."

Meanwhile, the 5th Company reported that enemy cavalry had broken through on contact with the 48th Regiment and was advancing along the woods in a south-westerly direction.

In the situation the battalion commander decided to counter-attack with the 8th Company. His aim was to halt the 7th Company, seize its trenches and take back Dybów. The 5th Company was to hold the position on the junction with the 48th Regiment.

Accordingly the commander of the 8th Company ordered the 1st Platoon to move along the road to Zawady and take up a position by the river, while the 2nd Platoon of Sergeant Tumanowicz was to strike for Dybów. The 3rd Platoon remained as the battalion's reserve.

However, before the commanders had moved their troops, the platoons suffered heavy losses from enemy fire. Ignoring this, Sergeant Tumanowicz rallied his men and moved forward. After running about 300 paces, the platoon again received fire from *tachankas* on the Dybów – Radzymin road. Obviously, this fire broke up the counter-attack of the 2nd Platoon. The counter-attack of the 1st Platoon also failed at the same time.

The battalion commander could now see that he could not even dream of holding his section of the line. The company commanders reported that they could not hold their troops and the soldiers were retiring. The 7th Company was already in retreat. Considerable enemy forces were advancing along the Zawady – Radzymin road. Here and there the panic was growing stronger. Disturbing noises could be heard from the rear in the Radzymin area. The sappers working on the construction of the Mokre – Radzymin positions, "mostly recruits, completely unskilled in the handling of weapons, started to run away chaotically in panic," but eventually 2nd-Lieutenant Bobrowicki managed – albeit with the threat of a revolver – to stop them.



In the circumstances, the battalion commander, Major Kwiatkowski, took the decision he mentions in these words:

Seeing that the expected relief was not coming, and that my battalion was exhausted, both morally and physically, and was rapidly diminishing due to heavy losses, I decided to break through to Radzymin in order to establish communication with our own side.

It was around 20:00 when Major Kwiatkowski ordered the remaining platoon of the 8th Company to move along the road to Radzymin. The rest of the troops were to follow, with the 7th Company covering the rear.

The execution of the retreat was not easy, as most of the companies were by now mixed up and generally left without any link with each other, at least not as planned. Only the front of the battalion, led by the commander, marched in the prescribed direction.

Soon the leading troops, marching continuously under enemy fire, reached a windmill near Radzymin. Here the battalion adjutant, 2nd-Lieutenant Radomski, was wounded. It was still hoped at that time that it might be possible to get through the town to their own unit. But when the north-eastern exit of the market square was reached, it proved impossible: heavy fire from close range showed that the town was in enemy hands. Second Lieutenant Radomski, being carried by some soldiers, received a second bullet in the forehead, this time fatal.

The town had to be bypassed. So they turned off the road and, fending back the insistent cavalry, went round Radzymin to the north-west. Before withdrawing they took the wounded Lt-Colonel Lipski, commander of the 11th Sapper Battalion.

So part of the battalion, concentrated around the commander, withdrew to the area where the remnants of the regiment were now located. The rest of the battalion withdrew in similar, sometimes worse, conditions. Many of them, unable to get a good grip on their location, wandered for several hours during the night before reaching the regiment. It must be remembered that these troops were scattered and often leaderless, for during this period the battalion suffered, in addition to the slain 2nd-Lieutenant Radomski, wounds to 2nd Lieutenants Nawrotek, Mękarski and Luczywo. The losses among the other ranks were considerable.

Withdrawal of the Batteries

We have related some of the activities of the batteries, but we did not dwell very long on the command of the artillery subgroup, for in the chaos of the battle all almost command links were severed. We saw the work of Major Rómmel, who eventually departed for Pustelnik. The other commander, Colonel Aleksandrowicz, kept the batteries in position until the last moment, which was obviously ineffectual, and too late.

We meet Colonel Aleksandrowicz again, when he arrived in the vicinity of Cegielnia and encountered Battery 1/19 retreating along the road there. He then shouted out the order: "We will not retreat any further! We must die here!" However, barely a few seconds passed before the battery came under fire. Bullets whizzed overhead and, before everyone's eyes, a scout standing behind the battery commander, Lieutenant Tomaszewski, bent down and fell off his horse, hit by a bullet.

It was clear that there was a danger in remaining where they were. Colonel Aleksandrowicz stopped giving orders and the battery moved on along the road. Other batteries followed in the same direction. After withdrawing, the batteries found themselves in the positions shown on Sketch 44.

Brigade and division commands

During the day of 13 August the 21st Brigade's command remained at Pustelnik, where the 9th and 11th Companies of the 47th Regiment were also in reserve. The other detachments subordinate to the division were located in Marki (Battalion 2/47) and in Wólka Radzyńska (company of the 48th Regiment). The brigade's command did little during the day of 13 August apart from repeating certain orders from the



previous days (mainly the demand to hold the outpost line) and submitting messages received from the regiments to the division.

In the afternoon the brigade command received news that the 46th regiment had again lost its outposts. At 15:55 the brigade commander, Colonel Wędziagolski, ordered the commander of the 46th Regiment to "push back the enemy at any cost to the outpost line."

At around 18:00 the brigade received reports of the outcome of operations on the right wing of the 47th Regiment. That regiment reported that it had manned the section (of the 4th Battalion) but had used up all its reserves. The brigade commander ordered one company of Battalion 3/47 to march from Pustelnik to Kobyłka. During the afternoon a report was received from the 48th Regiment, which rather pessimistically discussed the position and the possibilities of defence in the 48th Regiment's sector.

We lack any report in which the brigade commander included an assessment of the position from these hours. We have only found that he sent reports received from the regiments directly to the division. However, we do find traces that, in telephone conversations with the division command, he assessed the situation as unfavourable and alerted the command.

Finally, in the evening, the first news arrived, at first not very precise, then more and more informative and frequent. At 18:55 Battalion 1/47 reported that its 3rd Company had lost communication with the 46th Regiment adjacent to the left. That regiment was retreating.

Of course a telephone call was immediately made to the headquarters in Radzymin, but no message was received. Soon communication with the 46th Regiment was lost altogether.

It was 19:50 when a mounted liaison officer arrived from Radzymin, bringing a verbal report that the 46th Regiment had retreated to Radzymin. Knowing the actual course of action, we know that this news came from the first phase of the battle.

How did the brigade commander assess the situation and what did he intend to do? These questions are difficult to answer, as Colonel Wędziagolski did not yet know the extent of the catastrophe and rather took a wait-and-see position. The only, admittedly quite significant, evidence of his reaction to the events is the order issued at 20:00, after receiving the first news of the break in the front line, which reads:

The enemy should be immediately thrown back to his start positions and our former positions taken by counter-attack. Attention is once again drawn to the fact that no retreat is permitted.

Three quarters of an hour later Colonel Wędziagolski reported to the Division commander.

The line of the 46th IR is broken. On the Kraszew – Dybów line the enemy has moved up to Radzymin. He is flanking from the right. The right wing is retreating.

The content of this report indicates to us that the news was still from the period before abandoning Radzymin. The short sentences of the report indicate the nervous mood that had already gripped the headquarters.

In the midst of this, traffic on the Radzymin road became busier and busier. The brigade HQ, which was by the road, saw single horse-drawn carts and wagons moving more and more frequently. Then the traffic increased rapidly and long lines of all kinds of vehicles, moving in disorder, began to crowd next to each other, occupying the entire roadway. Refugees from the front were now streaming in, spreading alarming news.

A wave of panic was approaching, now engulfing the rear and the staff.

What was happening was no longer a retreat, but rather an flight. Military wagons, carts, kitchens, *biedki*⁴⁶ and carriages were now fleeing in panic. There were shouts, calls, curses, and among them, one phrase kept repeating itself: "Radzymin is lost!" For all those waiting for information, it was now clear that the catastrophe had assumed greater proportions than expected.

⁴⁶ Two-wheeled single-horse light carriages. Used for transport of machine-guns, mortars, ammunition, communication equipment, etc.



It goes without saying that the news must have had a strong impact on the brigade commander: this is evidenced by the fact that there were even concerns that he might shoot himself.

From this point on Colonel Wędziogolski had irrevocably lost any influence on events.

The news reported by the brigade command obviously disturbed the division command staff. Although it was incomplete and did not give a clear view of the situation, it indicated that the lower commanders had not mastered the situation. It was difficult to speak of a counter-attack by the brigade when it had only two companies at its disposal.

News of the break in the front had caused a depressing mood in the division's headquarters. It should be added that worrying signs, triggered by the disaster, were already reaching Marki. The commander of Battalion 2/47 recalls:

There was panic in the rear at that time. The fleeing civilians and a large number of privates of various arms arriving at Marki, demoralised the battalion.

The division commander, Colonel Jaźwiński, after a discussion with his chief of staff, Lt-Colonel Kohutnicki, decided to send him to the battle line. He was to take some of the retreating troops with him and act according to the situation.

At 21:00 the division commander sent a dispatch to the Army command in Warsaw, reporting:

Large enemy units attacked the entire section of the 46th IR, directing the attack at Radzymin and the 47th IR in Wołomin.

The 46th Regiment, with great losses, is retreating to the line of Radzymin. I have brought into action my entire reserve of one and a half battalions. I have the Grodno Regiment in the Radzymin sector, which I have not used yet. I cannot help the Wołomin sector with that regiment, so I ask you to put at my disposal the regiment of the Lit-Bel Division now in Kobyłka.

During the day's battle the influence of Colonel Szpręglewski's Radzymin Artillery Group command was limited, as the communication conditions made it difficult to work. In any case, from the first shots the subgroup commanders did not seek guidance from above, but worked with the regiment commanders.

It is difficult for us to speak of any centralised artillery command, especially as we cannot quote a single battle order from the group commander. Naturally there were orders issued from time to time by phone, but not that important, since they did not survive in the documents nor in the memory of the participants.

On the other hand, the group's commander did not yet have general artillery, although he had reserved Battery 3/13 HAR (near Zabłocie) for himself. But that battery had only just built a connection with the observation point, and had already lost it. The battery could not and did not fire on 13 August. It should be added that Colonel Szpręglewski still had a battery of heavy howitzers in Marki (Battery 4/3 HAR), but it was not in position. In such conditions, the influence of the group command on events could only be indirect and limited.

When news arrived that the retreat from Radzymin had assumed dangerous proportions, and that among those retreating was artillery which – as it was rumoured – was fleeing from its positions, Colonel Szpręglewski went with his staff officers (Lieutenant Kreutz and Cadet Zoll) with the aim of stopping the retreating batteries. Major Rómmel was met on the road in the vicinity of Pustelnik, and he gave news of the situation. Soon some of his batteries were also encountered. These batteries spent the night in positions behind the second line.

Lt-Colonel Kohutnicki left by car from Marki to Pustelnik, but – as he himself mentions – he did not find it easy to get to Pustelnik, as he had to force his way through the columns of the wagons crowded on the road, which were retreating in the greatest possible disorder and blocking the way. He had to get out of the way and only drive on once the road was cleared.



On the way he met a train which he ordered to be emptied out and loaded with the 8th Company of the 47th Regiment. On arrival at Struga, the 9th Company of the same regiment was loaded onto the train.

The mood of the soldiers could not be said to be great, they were rather skittish, and it is hardly surprising that the contagious panic had a demoralising effect on the young soldiers, especially as it was by then totally dark. The commander of Battalion 2/47, recalling the panic in the rear, added that the soldiers “had to be literally pushed onto the wagons.”

Night had already fallen when Kohutnicki ordered the train to leave Pustelnik. A machine-gun was placed at the front. Word was sent to the 46th Regiment that help was coming and the wagons started off. At some distance in front of the locomotive, the Chief of Staff rode in his car with one officer, fulfilling the role of an advance guard as it were. These precautions were advisable, as it was not known where or in what shape the 46th Regiment would be found, and an encounter with the enemy was not out of the question.

Soon, however, Kohutnicki learnt that the 46th Regiment was assembling between Cegielnia and Słupno, and so gave the order to stop the train.

At the intersection of the Nadma – Słupno road with the line the train stopped and here the companies were unloaded, setting off on foot.

This is the picture that Lt. Colonel Kohutnicki draws in his account:

Not far away one could already hear some disorderly shooting, and by the roadside we encountered mobs of the 46th Regiment. Some which were fleeing panic-stricken, while others had halted individually or in groups by the roadside, as if waiting to see what would happen.

At that moment, according to this account, the 46th Regiment was indeed a crowd of people, most of whom were already fairly well assembled, as the panic had subsided.

Having arrived, Kohutnicki wanted first of all to find out the reasons for the failure and the situation they faced. He turned for details to Colonel Krzywobłocki, who he had just found standing among the officers and privates, as with a trembling voice he tried to convince the soldiers that they should not flee from the battlefield.

Kohutnicki, recalling his impressions at the time, states that the commander of the 46th Regiment, Colonel Krzywobłocki, was:

... definitely a good patriot and honest citizen, and possessed good intentions – however he was completely unsuitable for regimental command.

Having familiarised himself with the position and condition of the regiment, the Chief of Staff offered “in a polite manner” that Colonel Krzywobłocki should report as unwell, and to hand over command of the regiment to Major Liwacz. Although Kohutnicki did not know Liwacz personally, he had heard much about him as a combat officer. This was the chief of staff’s first important order.

Kohutnicki also decided then, seeing the precarious position and condition of the 46th Regiment, that companies of the 47th Regiment should guard the position on both sides of the road. There was no question of undertaking a night counter-attack.

The events described above took place around 23:00. Having taken those decisions, Lt-Colonel Kohutnicki wanted Companies 8/47 and 9/47 to advance to the position of a small sapper detachment, which remained beside the road to the left of the brickyard.

The 46th Regiment was not yet in order. In that area around the road, the soldiers assembled by Lieutenant Szut and Cadet Czyżewski had just gathered, but Kohutnicki – as he himself recalls – only spoke to the wounded Lt-Colonel Lipski, commander of the 11th Sapper Battalion, who acquainted him with the position. He makes no mention of other units.

The chief of staff then called for the commanders of the 8th and 9th Companies, who arrived shortly afterwards. The officers sat in a ditch by the roadside and, by candlelight, a map was brought out to get an idea of the situation in the field. However, the night was quite dark and it was difficult to discern the area,



especially in such a tense atmosphere. Suddenly, out of nothing, a firefight broke out in front. The disorderly clusters of soldiers of the 46th Regiment were shaken again, succumbing to a momentary panic. But the mood of the arriving companies of the 47th Regiment, who had arrived already excited, was even more strongly affected.

The darkness of the night, the lack of awareness of what was going on around them, missing their officers, the overwhelming atmosphere – and above all their inexperience in combat – were the reasons for the panic among the arrivals.

Out of nervousness, disregarding everything else, the soldiers began to fire their rifles while still in column directly in front of them, no matter in which direction. They shot over the ears of their colleagues or under the arms of others. The artillerymen present nearby with Lt-Colonel Górski (1st Lit-Bel FAR) tried to calm down the inexperienced soldiers and make them disperse into a line formation. Before they could do so, however, Lieutenant Szut's unit suffered casualties and, shot at from two directions, had to retreat to the rear.

The commanders, hearing the commotion on the road, rushed to their units. The commander of the 8th Company mentions it in these words:

Hearing the shooting from the line, I rushed to the company, which had begun to retreat along the road to Marki. Having stopped the company, I immediately deployed it in a line to the left of the roadside and began to return rifle fire.

This confusion did not last long and soon the line was soon manned. The remnants of the 46th Regiment moved further to the left of the road, and the 8th and 9th Companies stood flanking the road. The 8th Company was on the sand hills around Height 94 to the left with the 9th Company advanced to the right of it. The 7th Company, which had just marched from Pustelnik, stood in reserve behind the right wing of the 9th Company. Due to the fact that the enemy was close by, 2nd-Lieutenant Osika, the 9th Company commander (to some extent commanding the companies of the 47th BRR), ordered that the troops be constantly on the alert and observe carefully. In order to establish communication with their 1st Battalion, a patrol was sent in the direction of Janków Nowy.

This was the extent of the intervention of the reserves. We can see that Lt-Colonel Kohutnicki's activity was limited to closing the gap and securing the supposed main direction of the enemy attack.

The division command, while deciding not to launch a counter-attack, used up three companies in the area of the chief of staff, while the rest manned the second line in the Pustelnik area. Only the Grodno Regiment, which was bivouacked around Pustelnik, remained in the division's reserve.

At this time the division command received from the Army command an order, issued on the 11th Division's report of the break in the front:

The 11th ID will regain the lost defensive line at Radzymin. The commander of the 19th ID will place at the disposal of the 11th ID one regiment, in Kobyłka. Report the surrender of the regiment.

The 11th Division command did not give its first more detailed report until 23:00. This was a situation report which read:

The 47th IR occupies a position on the first line. Communication with 8th ID established. Bolshevik attacks on Wołomin repulsed. The left wing of the 47th IR is bent along the Czarna River up to the House, where the 1st Comp is in reserve. The 46th IR has occupied the line of Aleksandrów, Wioska, Ciemne, sending two companies to the Struga Czarna House to establish communication with 47th IR. The 48th IR has taken up positions in the first line, bending the right wing 500 m to the south-west of Mokre.

This report gave inaccurate information, especially concerning the 46th Regiment. While not ignoring the very real difficulties in commanding the 11th Division in the defence of the bridgehead, we must nevertheless say that at this critical moment Colonel Jaźwiński proved indecisive. He had dispersed and



used up his weak reserves. We can therefore agree with the following, from an army commission of 1922 into the actions of Colonel Jaźwiński, that he:

... made efforts to complete the task, but nevertheless was not prepared for such a serious combat situation as near Radzymin.

In the end, due to the use of the 1st Lit-Bel Division in the counter-attack, the 11th Division was not to play a major part in the operations near Radzymin, relegating it to a subordinate role, about which we will write in more detail in the following chapters.

In the dark night the 46th Regiment was coming out of its depressed mood. The bewilderment was receding, the nervousness was dying down, but the sad awareness of the defeat suffered lingered. Spurred on by the news that Major Liwacz was taking command, the officers shook off their despondency and set about sorting out the confused men.

After assembling the regiment, Major Liwacz ordered that the hills to the west of the road be manned, that patrols be sent to the front and that communication be established with neighbours.

Let us now try to evaluate the regiment's numbers. On that fateful night the number of men was not counted, and even in the following days it was not possible to collate the numbers. It is only on the basis of the participants' accounts that we can approximate the state of the regiment at that time.

It was believed at the time that the 1st Battalion was the most broken. The 1st Company (2nd-Lieutenant Kloetzel killed) was shattered right at the beginning; the 2nd Company withdrew partly to Janków Nowy and probably joined the regiment during night, while one of its platoons returned from near Nadma; the 3rd Company (2nd Lieutenants Przewoźniczek and Sliwowski wounded) went to pieces after losing their commanders; the 4th Company (2nd-Lieutenant Lukasik wounded) withdrew through Janków Nowy to Nadma. The 1st Machine-gun Company had been divided among the rifle companies, so matched their fates. The commander of the 3rd Company and machine-gunners was wounded and hid in the town as he was unable to escape; the battalion commander was taken prisoner. The remnants of this battalion were collected by Lieutenant Wyzina.

So the core of the regiment at the muster was remnants of the 3rd Battalion and the staff troops. In relatively compact groups were Lieutenant Szut's 9th and Lieutenant Wyzina's 10th Companies, while the 11th (wounded 2nd-Lieutenant Nawrotek) and 12th Companies made it to the regiment in a much worse condition. On 13 August, the 3rd Battalion suffered the greatest losses in killed and wounded; in addition to the company commanders themselves, several platoon commanders were lost, including Warrant Officer Julian Bąk from the 10th Company killed.

The 2nd Battalion was not yet in place when Major Liwacz sorted out the regiment. Part of that battalion arrived with Major Kwiatkowski, while the rest joined in loose groups during the night or even in the morning.

As we can see, the regiment's numbers were rather meagre. By dawn on 14 August a total of around 700 privates had assembled. The combat value of the regiment, despite its recovery, was poor, as the participants of the time noted. Major Liwacz was aware of this and placed particular emphasis on making the officers aware of the soldiers. He himself personally walked along the regiment's positions at night, declaring to the soldiers that the defeat of 13 August must be repaired – not even the smallest stain must remain on the regiment.

Significant losses were also sustained by the 11th Sapper Battalion, which lost the wounded Lt-Colonel Lipski and Lieutenant Koralewski. In addition, 2nd-Lieutenant Biedroński (assigned from the Military Geographical Institute) was killed. The sapper company assembled during the night and departed for Struga.

The 2nd *Divizion* of the 4th HRR, on the other hand, had basically no losses. After withdrawing from the front lines the cavalry patrolled for some time during the night and then departed for the Słupno area.



After the withdrawal the split in the command of the artillery subgroup was maintained, as evidenced by the final grouping. Major Rómmel's batteries were behind the second line of positions, while Colonel Aleksandrowicz's batteries were in front of the second line, except for the 3rd HAR. So we will consider these two groups separately.

Battery B/155 after withdrawing was with Battery 4/3 HAR near Struga, having an observation point at the exit of the road from the forest. Battery 4/3 had come from Marki, and while the others were withdrawing from near Radzymin it stood in a column near Pustelnik. Lieutenant Jarecki, commanding the battery, then received an order from Colonel Szpręglewski to start shooting. He specified no location or target, but just:

To raise the spirits of the infantry, who hearing the shots, would rally and come to their senses.

Battery A/75, which withdrew through Słupno, was in the position shown in Sketch 44. Its commander went to Marki during the night and received from the 11th Division duty officer the task of keeping up a harrying fire on Radzymin through the night. Lieutenant Adamczyk characterises the mood of the battery in these words:

No one knew the extent of the enemy intrusion, nor when – or indeed if – there would be any counter-attack. There was only one thing we all realised: that the advance of one Bolshevik battalion might reach Praga without resistance. It was only in the morning that there was some encouragement. The troops of the Lit-Bel Division began to arrive – regiments with small numbers, but with good morale and a fighting spirit.

Battery 4/20 FAR, Captain Czajkowski, was in the position shown in Sketch 47.

This is all the detail we have about Major Rómmel's batteries. We would also point out that the major did not manage to locate all his batteries until 04:00 on 14 August.

The batteries of the 1st Lit-Bel Division, which were included in the Middle Subgroup, had immediately established communication with each other and with the command. Only Captain Baying's just-formed combat *divizion* did not act as a compact unit, as the battery commanders failed to communicate with him and took up positions at their own discretion.

It should be added that during the night one cannon of the 3rd Battery remained in an advanced position next to the road (at the junction of the road from Słupno) and only joined the battery in the morning.

The ammunition consumption of the artillery during the day, as well as on the following days, is quite difficult to determine. The data we have are inaccurate (e.g. the figures for 13 August refer to the period from the morning until 18:00), and it is impossible to establish precisely how much ammunition the batteries had before the battle.

We have calculated that the Left Subgroup fired over 1,000 rounds (Battery 2/20 fired 545, 5/9 – 207). The Middle Subgroup fired approximately 2,000 rounds (4/20 – 196, A/1 – 320, B/155 – 50, 1/19 – 196, 3/19 – 408, 9/19 – 500). The Right Subgroup fired about 1,200 rounds (2/201 – 107, 2/, 3/ and 7/11 FAR – 822, 2/ and 3/11 HAD – 125).

Adding those figures, we see that the Radzymin Artillery Group used a total of some 4,200 shells. Although this figure is not exact, the deviation from the actual number certainly does not exceed 500 to 700, as a more significant consumption of ammunition would have been reflected in reports, histories of the troops or ultimately in the records.

Taking into account the standards set on the eve of the battle (60 rounds per field gun, 40 rounds per 105 mm gun and 24 rounds per heavy), we calculate a standard day's fire for the group would have been 5,312 rounds. So, far from producing the announced hurricane of fire, they did not even use a normal day's worth.



Night of 13/14 August in the 4th Regiment's Sector

In the afternoon of 13 August the 48th Regiment's sector was quiet. The enemy did not show any offensive intentions. There was only the occupation of Łoś by the enemy 188th RR at 12:00, which forced the outpost of the 6th Company to withdraw.

The raid on Łoś

Upon hearing that the outposts were retiring, Lieutenant Sobolewski, commander of the 6th Company, rode towards the village. By the bridge near Łoś he met the retreating soldiers, who reported that the enemy was behind them. At first it was difficult to believe that, as three outposts were located just to the north of the village, and to the right were the outposts of the 46th BRR.

In order to clarify things, Lieutenant Sobolewski went to the commander of Company 5/46, who confirmed that his outposts had indeed withdrawn long ago. Recalling his orders the lieutenant demanded that the line of outposts must be maintained, and proposed to Company 5/46 a joint action in order to recapture them. The company commander agreed, and the commander of Battalion 2/48 gave permission.

Sobolewski then left two platoons in position, took the third platoon with him and crossed the river near Height 89 (east). Soon the platoon reached the forest, having two wounded on the way. Then some of the men ran to the western edge of the village and the rest with Lieutenant Sobolewski headed further north.

The assault on Łoś surprised the enemy. There was panic in the village, with hatless soldiers running out of their houses and fleeing wherever they could in disarray. A machine-gun was taken near one of the houses. The two groups quickly reached the centre of the village, capturing about 40 men. They soon approached the eastern edge of the village and from there a large group of Russians were spotted standing motionless a short distance away at the edge of the woods. Nearby, groups of horsemen were moving around.

Lieutenant Sobolewski was convinced that the enemy had no intention of fighting, so he shouted to them to drop their weapons and surrender. But, to general amazement, there was a flurry of curses and shouts from the Russian side for the Poles to surrender.

The situation was unpleasant. While this was going on, Lieutenant Sobolewski ordered Sergeant Mendak to take the prisoners, to leave them with rifles without locks, and to withdraw as quickly as possible to the company, bypassing the bridge.

The sergeant quickly left with some of the men and the prisoners. The timing was good, for soon the enemy's "ura" could be heard, as they moved into the village. Sobolewski ordered a salvo to be fired and to retreat to the rear. Soon the last soldiers had jumped over the river, heading towards their own positions. At this stage, the battle presented an interesting sight. At the front were a few soldiers with Sergeant Mendak running along, followed by a throng of Russian prisoners, who instinctively – as soon as the shooting started – scattered and ran away hastily together with the Poles, dragging a machine-gun with them. Behind them was Lieutenant Sobolewski with the rest of the men.

In a moment, the soldiers jumped into the trenches, where they just took a breath. In the meantime, four machine-guns began to fire at the enemy crossing the Rządza, stopping them.

The raid took place between 17:00 and 18:00. After the action, Lieutenant Sobolewski telephoned the battalion commander, reporting that Company 5/46 had disappointed him. He also sent a message to the commander of that company. The messenger soon returned and reported that no one could be found in Mokre or in the trenches.

Lieutenant Sobolewski was very surprised by this news, and he recalls that there was silence all around. So he went on horseback to Mokre and indeed found no one there. A villager testified that the Poles in Mokre, seeing the Muscovites running out of Łoś (probably Lieutenant Sobolewski's prisoners), had abandoned their position.

The lieutenant reported the above fact to the battalion commander, who initially did not want to believe it. Unfortunately, it turned out to be true. In view of the threat to the flank, two platoons of the 7th Company were sent to reinforce the 6th Company.



At 20:00 the battalion commander sent his adjutant, Lieutenant Kozłowski, to Radzymin to bring news of what was happening. The adjutant soon returned, reporting that on his way he had met a patrol of the 6th Company, who told him that Radzymin was occupied by the enemy. At 20:45 the 48th Regiment commander, Colonel Łukoski, reported to the brigade commander that the 6th Company had bent its right wing, as it had no communication with the 46th Regiment.

During the described incidents the brigade commander, at the request of the commander of the 48th Regiment, had sent the last company of Battalion 3/48 from its reserve in Wólka Radzyńska.

After receiving unclear news that the situation was poor in the 46th Regiment's sector, the 6th Company, unbothered by the enemy, garrisoned the western part of Mokre. One platoon of the 2nd Machine-gun Company secured the right wing.

Meanwhile, for the 1st Battalion it was quiet. At about 22:00 the enemy tried to cross the river near Wolica, but retreated under the fire (some 60 rounds) from Battery 6/9.

The night of 13/14 August passed in annoying anxiety, especially on the right wing of the 2nd Battalion, which was hanging in the air.

The breakdown of communications between the 46th and 48th Regiments and the withdrawal of the 46th Regiment put the right wing batteries of the Left Subgroup in a dangerous position. This was especially so for Battery 3/20, which, having no direct communication with the artillery subgroup command, had to communicate through Battery 5/9.

At dusk on 13 August, that battery came under rifle and machine-gun fire. Despite this, the battery stayed where it was, although it had no orders or information. Late in the evening the battery commander, Lieutenant Rychter, received a letter from the commander of Battery 5/9:

To the command of the 3rd Battery.

The 46th IR on the right wing is retreating. By order of the subgroup's commanding officer, Lieutenant Rychter is to establish communication with Company 6/46 and be prepared for all eventualities.

Rychter then sent out scouts to establish communication with the infantry units, but they could not be found. Then the battery commander, "assessing the situation as uncertain", ordered its withdrawal to its old position near Aleksandrów. The withdrawal took quite a long time, as not enough horses were available. First the cannons were taken, and then the teams were sent back for the caissons.

Once, when the battery commander was nearing Aleksandrów, shooting was heard and the thud of galloping horses. Concerned, Rychter returned to the battery and learnt that the carriages sent to collect the caissons had been fired upon by enemy patrols and the horses scattered, while the riders dismounted and returned to the battery on foot. In turn, there was confusion and disorderly shooting by the battery.

The battery found itself in an extremely difficult position: the lack of communication with anyone, as the patrols sent out did not return or did not find anyone; the depressed mood of the men; and especially the "unnerving silence"; all had a depressing effect. But the battery remained in position, as its commander decided to persevere until morning.

Battery 5/9 was also warned about the events in the vicinity of Radzymin. Lieutenant Ezupowicz, having received the news, returned from his observation post to the battery and continued to fire (now from a map) on Łoś and the surrounding area.

The artillery subgroup command notified him that its HQ would be moved to Fort Benjaminów. The last telephone order was:

Some of the batteries will be withdrawn. Battery 3/20 will join Battery 5/9 and organise a defence together. An infantry platoon will come over immediately to cover both batteries. It is necessary to fortify and defend to the last.



However, the promised cover for the batteries did not arrive until the morning of 14 August. Although the 48th IR command sent its 10th Company at 21:00 to cover the right wing batteries and to establish a link with the 6th Company, it wandered off during the night and could not find neither the 6th Company nor the 3rd Battery. It was not until the morning of 14 August that it arrived at Battery 5/9's position.

Unable to wait for the infantry cover to arrive, the battery set up pickets with its own men. The cannons remained in place, with only one cannon turned towards the south-east, as some danger could be seen to the rear.

In concluding we will once again emphasise the special position in which the 48th Regiment and this artillery found themselves. The right wing of the regiment and the batteries, out of communication, remained in position during the night while completely unprotected to the east.

The 47th Regiment's Sector

In the preceding paragraphs we learnt about the events that unfolded in the afternoon in the sector of Battalion 4/47 and on the left wing of the 8th Division. While there had finally been a calming down of the sector, the mood was still nervous. So it was not possible to pull the regimental reserves (10th and 12th Companies) out of the line.

We have already mentioned that the first news of the break in the front was received by the 21st Brigade's command from the 47th Regiment's headquarters. The commander of the 3rd Company, 2nd-Lieutenant Lurski, reported that the right wing company of the 46th Regiment (the 2nd) had withdrawn from Helenów.

The withdrawal of that company exposed Lurski's wing, and he therefore intended to bend it backwards. However, before he could give his orders, his left wing failed to hold their positions and retreated in disorder to Czarna Stara.

The infantry's withdrawal threatened the observation post of Battery 1/201 and the battery itself, which was in the vicinity. At that point the battery commander, Lieutenant Winnicki, ordered it to withdraw.

Then a nervous burst of firing began along the entire Battalion 1/47 line. The tension of the fire indicated the excitement of the soldiers. The noise alerted the command. Second Lieutenant Sierakowski, the battalion adjutant, mounted his horse and rushed along the companies to the left wing. On the way, he stopped several times and tried to calm the soldiers down, explaining that ammunition should not be wasted, but no arguments helped.

Approaching Czarna Stara, Sierakowski collected a few stray soldiers, who reported that they had been thrown out of their positions and that their commanders had been killed. The adjutant formed a unit from them and led them back.

They soon reached the positions where, to the surprise of the fugitives, they found everything in order, as by then 2nd-Lieutenant Lurski had mastered the situation. The left wing of the company was bent on the line of the Czarna River. Once in position, Lurski tried to establish communication to the left, but patrols brought no news. An outpost was set up in the vicinity of the House (to the west) in Czarna Stara as cover for the flank.

However, things did not remain quiet for long, as a huge noise soon broke out in front. The company's officers leapt up and with the commander ran to the outposts. It was about 22:00. A lookout reported that a unit had appeared in front of the wires, which had caused the commotion. Lurski ordered the men to throw hand grenades at the enemy and drive them away with fire. Lurski recalled:

Some very poor shooting ensued because the soldiers, unable to see what was happening in front of the wires (it was dark), fired without restraint – but, as I later found out, they fired inaccurately.

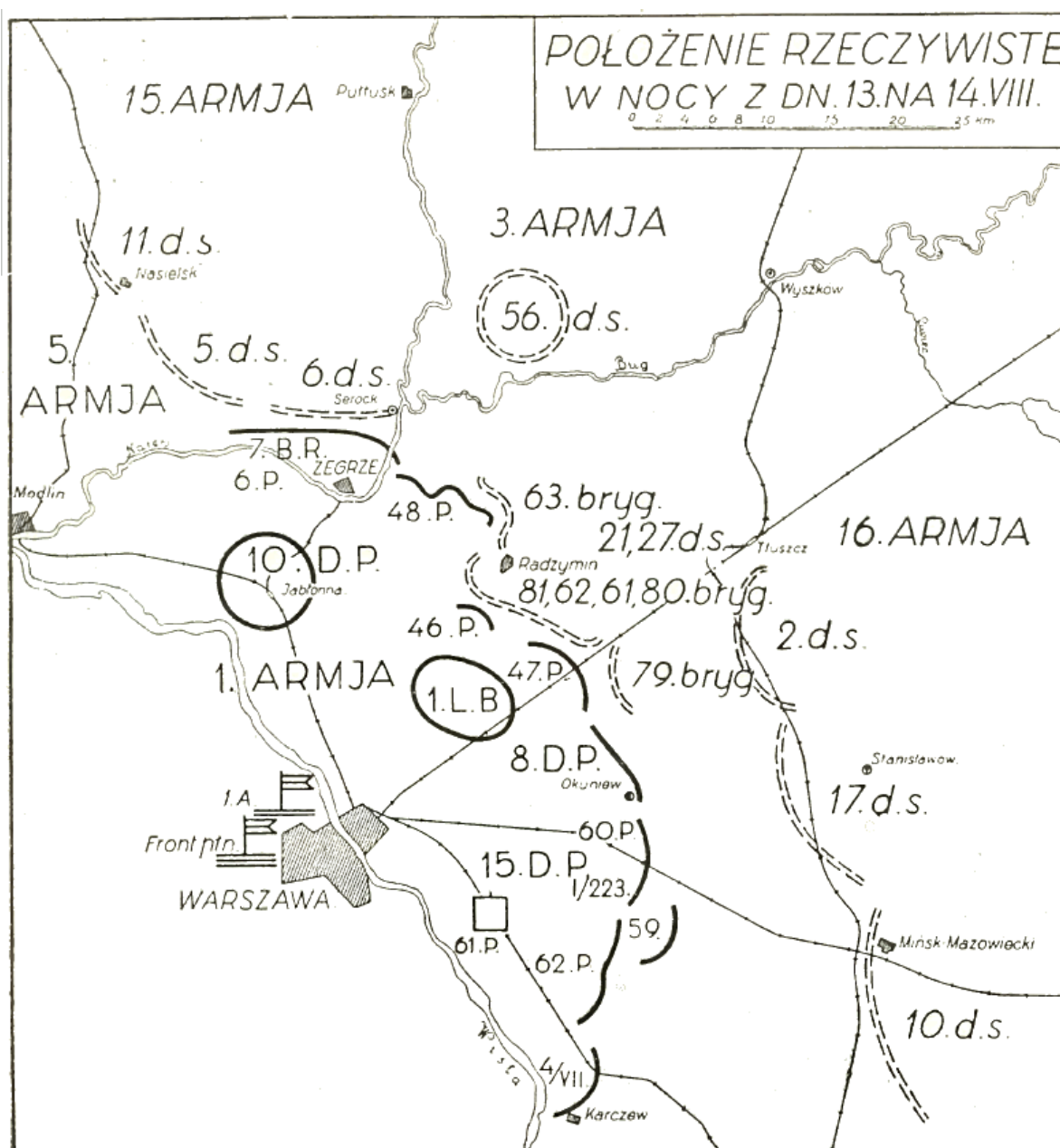
A lot of time passed before a gradual calming down took place. But the feeling of uncertainty lingered.

In view of the above, the battalion command sent two platoons of the 1st Company from the battalion's reserve with 2nd-Lieutenant Tarnawski at 01:00 on 14 August. Some of those who arrived were used to



So we that on the day on 13 August, it was the flanks of the 47th BRR that had seen action, while the centre of the sector generally remained calm.

Around 18:00 an order was issued by the Front, which directed the 5th Army to carry out a counter-attack on 14 August. The order stated at the outset: ‘Tomorrow begins the decisive battle for the fate of the war and Poland.’”



Sketch 45 : Enemy positions on the night of 13/14 August

In view of the above, the 10th Division, which remained the Front's reserve, was to await orders in Jabłonna from dawn on 14 August. Furthermore, the Front commander noted:

The 1st Army will hold its positions at all costs, counting on no reserves but its own and using all technical means at its disposal for that purpose.

As far as the situation allows, it will make vigorous offensive advances in the direction of Dąbrówka – Wyszaków, along the Warsaw – Białystok railway track and towards Nowo-Mińsk.⁴⁷

Note that the 1st Army command did not get news of the situation near Radzymin for a very long time, so the Army and Front orders of 13 August, some of which we have quoted, were not in reaction to the break in the lines. It is impossible to link the situation at Radzymin with the decision to counter-attack with the 5th Army.

During the disaster unfolding near Radzymin, the Army HQ had received generally reassuring news. At 15:45 Colonel Jaźwiński informed the Army chief of the staff that the enemy's attacks on the sectors of the 46th and 48th BRRs had been repulsed. Between 16:00 and 17:00 the Army received a report from the 8th Division that at 15:00 the enemy had attacked Leśniakowizna and driven the troops from their positions; therefore the 8th Division command had ordered a counter-attack.

Then Lt-Colonel Bobicki contacted the 11th Division command, demanding to know the situation:

This is Lt-Col. Bobicki. What's happening with the 47th IR?

(Lt-Col. Kohutnicki). This is the chief of staff of the 11th ID. The Bolsheviks attacked the right wing of the 47th Regiment with large forces. The outposts moved back under enemy pressure to the defensive line. The battle between the 47th and the Bolsheviks continues. The regimental reserves are already used, one company was transferred to the right wing of the 48th Regiment. Overall, in my opinion, it is nothing serious.

(Lt-Col. B.). Was there artillery fire?

(Lt-Col. K.). The artillery helped the infantry to repel the attacks.

(Lt-Col. B.). Enemy art.?

(Lt-Col. K.). It is firing, but how intensely exactly I will report when I receive details.

(Lt-Col. B.). The 8th Division is repulsing the attack on Leśniakowizna. Pay attention to the right wing. The divisional reserve will be reinforced with one regiment soon. The 19th Division is to be directed where?

(Lt-Col. K.). To Marki.

(Lt-Col. B.). Why so far?

(Lt-Col. K.). To the division reserve and there it will get further instructions.

(Lt-Col. B.). Isn't the 19th Division in the Pustelnik area?

(Lt-Col. K.). As a last resort, it will stay where it is, but please give instructions as to which regiment is being placed at our disposal.

As a result of this conversation, the Army issued an order in which directed the 1st Lit-Bel Division to detach one regiment. That regiment, while remaining in its current area, was to be a back-up for the 11th Division, with the proviso that use of the regiment could take place only with the knowledge of the Army.

Late in the evening more news from near Radzymin arrived, but the extent of the catastrophe was still not realised for a long time, as the 11th Division did not provide accurate reports. The Army HQ, still overestimating the capabilities of the 11th Division command (which we have seen had already been disrupted), ordered at around 22:00 that it recapture "the lost defensive line at Radzymin." In connection with that the Lit-Bel Division was to hand over to the 11th ID a regiment in the vicinity of Kobyłka.

⁴⁷ The name of Mińsk Mazowiecki until 1916.



Now reports came in from the commands of the other divisions, mainly complaining that their neighbours were not manning their positions on the wings. The 8th Division reported several times that a gap of one kilometre wide remained unoccupied by troops of the 11th Division after the attack at Leśniakowizna was repulsed. An even more alarming report was made by the 15th Division, as it claimed that it had had to occupy the line near Okuniew, since from that village up to Height 119 was apparently unoccupied.

One other issue was a subject of discussions and orders, namely the matter of manning the Zegrze – Modlin sector. At 22:45, the Front chief of staff urged that the 17th Division be relieved, and because of that, Major Mysłowski (deputising as head of the Army Operations Branch) at 23:15 warned the commander of the Zegrze Group, Colonel Małachowski, that an order would be issued to effect that. Soon after it was sent, and Colonel Małachowski, was to take the 11th Border Rifle Regiment (given to him in the order) and garrison the line on the south bank of the Narew from Dębe to Modlin (exclusive).

So in the late evening of 13 August we can see that even in the light of the inaccurate reports the situation looked threatening to the Army command.

Around midnight the Army received news from various quarters of the extent of the defeat at Radzymin and then decided to use the 1st Lit-Bel Division to counter-attack. But that order, drafted by the Chief of Staff, Colonel Zagórski, did not take into account the actual situation of the Polish troops, and its execution at the time was almost impossible.

After the Army had issued its order on the matter, the Front issued an order which the Army received at 02:15 on 14 August. That emphasised the “disgraceful” behaviour of the Radzymin sector’s garrison and ordered the implementation of an immediate investigation into the regimental and artillery commanders of that sector. It further demanded:

The 19th Division will drive the enemy out the captured positions no later than dawn of the 14th.

In conclusion, it should be mentioned that on the night of 13/14 August a report was sent by telegraph from the Chief of the General Staff to the Commander-in-Chief, describing the position of the Northern Front. In that, General Rozwadowski, among other things, expressed himself thus:

I hope that tomorrow the 11th Division, supported by the 19th, will be able to hold out decently well.

In his later work, “The Battle for Warsaw”, General Latinik said,

For experts in the tactics of the World War, this minor Bolshevik success does not represent a victory at all. For me it confirmed my assumptions and calculations as to the direction of the main enemy attack in the following days. For conducting an effective defence and tying down the enemy it was an important moment.

It very possible that Latinik did not read the full evening reports (they were paraphrased by Lt-Colonel Bobicki) and did not know the situation in detail.

The disaster at Radzymin, with the break in the front, which forced the use of an – unreplenished and unrested – division from the Army’s reverse, can in no way be called a “minor success”.

Reservations should also be held regarding the words supposedly uttered at the time by General Rozwadowski. He was said to have stated:

I knew very well that the 11th Division would defend itself and would engage the enemy, but it would not be able to withstand a strong attack. What it meant was that the enemy, after breaking the front, would direct its main attack at that point. I waited for that, and had the answer prepared.



Chapter X

Russian Operations on 13 August

On 13 August the Soviet 3rd and 16th Armies entered into battle with the Polish troops garrisoning the outskirts of Zegrze and Warsaw. The 16th Army divisions entered the battle one by one, starting with the right-hand 27th RD, which in the evening of 13 August found itself on the Rządza River, along with the 21st RD (3rd Army). The other 16th Army divisions remained one day's march behind the 27th.

So that was how the battle of Radzymin was fought. We have noted that the 16th Army had demanded that it should reach the area of Jabłonna, Pustelnik, Marki, Karczew, and Kołbiel by 14 August, and that the division's scouts should reconnoitre the Vistula. The 16th Army command did not order an attack on the Warsaw bridgehead at all – the divisions were to reach the mentioned areas and then proceed to force their way across the Vistula.⁴⁸ The Russian command only expected to encounter resistance on the left bank, and this may explain the fact that the Russian orders of the day did not mention the organisation of a Polish defence on the Warsaw bridgehead.

Offensive of the 21st Rifle Division

While describing the actions from the Polish side, we were able to follow the enemy's actions with various details of his activities. We shall now summarise the course of the enemy's operations, emphasising those moments which are important for an understanding of his further plans and intentions.

After establishing contact with the Polish troops on the Rządza, the enemy harassed the bridgehead all night. This was units of the 62nd and 63rd RBs of the 21st Rifle Division, who were trying to penetrate behind the Polish covering units. Clashes took place around Ruda, Zawady and Dybów, which allowed them to establish the general outline of the Polish positions. While these skirmishes took place on 12 August, units of the 27th RD marched to the Rządza and merged with those of the 21st RD. On the morning of 13 August, the 62nd and 63rd RBs of the 21st RD launched an attack, intending to force their way across the Rządza and capture Radzymin. After taking Radzymin, the 21st RD was to push towards Praga.

Between 06:00 and 07:00 of 13 August, the 62nd and 63rd Brigades attacked the section from Łoś to Kraszew; with major battles ensuing at Zawady, Dybów and Wiktorów. The 189th RR, on the left flank of the 63rd Brigade, suffered a defeat and was expelled from the area of Ruda, which it had forced its way into during the evening of 12 August. The troops of the 27th RD did not take part in the 21st RD's advance, merely passively observing events. So the 21st RD's offensive, conducted on a relatively large front, lacked sufficient strength. However, we have seen that the 187th RR boldly attacked the Polish positions near Zawady, supported by the fire of two batteries, while to the right of it the 188th RR advanced from the Łoś area. The Poles threw back the 63rd RB's attack and the 187th RR was only partially successful near Zawady.

The 62nd Brigade also had to be satisfied with only partial results – while some of its units penetrated as far as the main Polish positions, they were quickly thrown back.

Eventually, however, the 21st Division ceased its attack, having found out that the Poles were defending pre-prepared positions, and that they were responding to each attack with a counter-attack. So the units of the 21st Division remained where they were until the evening of 13 August, awaiting the entry of the 27th Division into the action. During this time the 61st RB, which had been the division's reserve, came forward and positioned itself behind the 62nd Brigade.

⁴⁸ The Soviets quite early on started to "correct" history, particularly concerning their defeats, and this is no exception. It soon became the official line that a battle at the bridgehead had always been the intention of the 16th Army. For example the authoritative *Russian Civil War 1918-1921. Operational-Strategic Sketch of the Red Army's Combat Operations*, edited by Bubnov, Kamenev, Tukhachevski and Eideman, says "However, on 13 August the 21st and 27th Rifle Divisions, on the initiative of their commanders, got themselves into a stubborn fight for the town of Radzymin, despite the absence of coordinated control of both divisions".

That Soviets orders never mention a Polish defensive line in front of Warsaw until after 13 August was glossed over.



Offensive of the 21st and 27th Divisions

On the morning of 13 August the commander of the 27th Division received an order in which the divisions were assigned regions to be reached by the evening of 14 August. By that time, the Army's front units were to reach the Vistula River in the sectors previously designated by the 16th Army commander on 11 August.

The 27th Division was ordered to reach the area of Łajski, Nieporęt and Jabłonna and to cooperate in the assault by the 21st Division "during its attack towards Praga." That last sentence was understood by the 27th RD commander to mean that he:

... should not allow the units of the neighbouring Army, operating to the north of the River Bug, to enter Warsaw earlier than the units of the 16th Army.

Here we find, in a way, an explanation for the 27th Division's passive role during the course of the 21st Division's assault. According to Comrade Putna, *KomDiv-27*, the 21st Division wanted to get ahead of its neighbours in the march on Warsaw – but he points out ironically that it was disappointed because, halted in front of the Polish positions, it did not even capture Radzymin.

At 09:00⁴⁹ the 27th Division's commander issued an order for the 80th and 81st Rifle Brigades to advance in the general direction of Jabłonna, while the 79th was to advance towards Pustelnik with the task of covering the 27th Division's left flank and "co-operating" with the 21st Rifle Division. The 80th and 81st RBs were thus entrusted with the primary task, while the 79th Brigade was to try to prevent the 21st Division from pre-empting it from entering Warsaw.

The advance of the 27th Division's units did not begin on time, as they were awaiting the arrival of ammunition. That was not received until midday, and then – as the 27th Division's commander recalls – the attack was launched at 14:00. In reality, the assault began much later.

The 81st Brigade was to advance with the 243rd RR through Dybów towards Radzymin, while the 241st RR was to advance from Kraszew also towards Radzymin. The 242nd RR was in reserve behind the left wing. In addition, the 62nd RB of the 21st RD was to advance together with the 81st RB, while the 61st RB would be in reserve behind those brigades.

Thus a fortuitous meeting and movement of the units of the 21st and 27th Divisions over the Rządza resulted in an unusually strong grouping in the Dybów – Kraszew sector.

The 80th RB, in the Kraszew area, had the 239th and 240th RRs in the first line, while the 238th RR was in reserve behind the left wing. Based on the results of the action, we can assume that the 239th RR was to advance through Kraszew Dzielny and Ciemne to Cegielnia, while the 240th RR was to advance through Rżyska to Ciemne. The 79th RB however, was operating during the day without any connection not only with the 21st RD, with which it was to cooperate, but also with the brigades of its own division, so its actions will be described separately.

Between 17:00 and 18:00 on 13 August, the units of the 21st and 27th Divisions grouped for their attack to drive back the Poles over the Rządza and to capture Radzymin.

The first attack by the units of the 21st and 27th Divisions on Dybów and along the road from Zawady to Radzymin was repulsed, as the Polish units stopped the advance and did not allow the Rządza to be crossed for some time.

On the other hand, the offensive of the 241st RR, supported by the units of the 62nd RB, which set off from the area of Rasztów and Kraszew, was completely successful. The course of that assault has been described in the previous chapter.

The 80th RB, advancing on the line Kraszew Dzielny – Rżyska – Helenów, according to its division commander, encountered fierce resistance from the Polish infantry, which it eventually fought off. At the same time, the Polish units, located in the Dybów – Zawady area, began to retreat from their positions due

⁴⁹ The original text notes that the Russians did not adjust to Polish time, so the two armies were working three hours apart. From the contexts though, it appears that the time differed actually by only one hour.

The text uses Polish time, except when quoting from Russian sources, and then it will be indicated.



to the threat to their right flank. That was then taken advantage of by the rest of the 62nd and 81st RBs and they moved along the main and other roads towards Radzymin.

Of the Russian troops, only the 63rd Brigade did not manage to set off, as it was forced to repel the Poles' advance on Łoś. The Russians were completely successful on the Mokre – Wiktorów – Helenów line, as after breaking the Polish resistance they reached the town of Radzymin itself. While still on the eastern edge of the town, the Poles moved to counter-attack, but were eventually broken up and dispersed.

The Russian attack was large, as the 62nd, 80th and 81st RBs (in addition to the 63rd RB, which was stationary) were then attacking. Just behind the advancing regiments advanced the 61st RB, which crossed the Rządza near Dybów with its last regiment just as the leading units were entering the city. At around 19:00 on 13 August, Radzymin fell into the hands of the Soviet troops. The 81st Brigade passed the town, heading towards Aleksandrów Manor. It camped in the area of Cegielnia and Aleksandrów, covering itself to the south and west. The 81st Brigade placed its 239th RR in the area of Cegielnia and Ciemne, while the 240th RR was in around Ciemne. Late in the evening of 13 August the commander of the 80th Brigade directed part of the 238th RR to Czarna Stara. That regiment took a line of Czarna Nowa to Height 109, but the unit sent to take Czarna Stara itself was repelled.

The 61st and 62nd RBs entered Radzymin, from where the 62nd RB advanced during the night to Cegielnia. The 63rd Brigade remained where it was.

The victory brought with it a very good mood in the ranks of the 21st and 27th RDs. After the capture of the town, some soldiers took the opportunity to loot shops – and the district hospital was not spared either. It should be noted, however, that the soldiers' abuses were limited to minor thefts: there were no major robberies. Polish prisoners of war, who were seized – if not slaughtered immediately but sent to the rear – were handled well.

According to a Russian press release of 15 August near Radzymin, some 300 prisoners were taken. The local population was hostile to the newcomers and felt disheartened to hear the soldiers of the Red Army boasting of their victory, talking about when they would enter Warsaw: they then joked that they should "go for chocolate at the Belvedere", as they said: "The Poles are taking us to Warsaw."

This was a major success for the Russians, leaving the Red soldiers intoxicated by the victory, the proximity of Warsaw and the certainty of conquering the Polish capital.

The troops of the 79th Brigade spent the night of 12/13 August on the Miąse – Międzyłże line. On the morning of 13 August the units set off: the 237th RR towards Grabie Stare, the 235th and 236th RR towards Ręczaje. After throwing back the Polish troops from the Dobczyn – Grabie Stare – Górale line, the brigade marched south-west. In the afternoon, after clashes with the Polish rearguards, it reached the line of Grabie Stare (237th RR) – Ręczaje (235th and 236th RRs).

Encountering almost no resistance, the brigade reached the Majdan area between 15:00 and 16:00. Only the Soviet 237th Minsk Regiment had skirmishes with the Polish Mińsk Rifle Regiment on the way.

After taking Duczki, Mostówka and Majdan, the brigade's front units advanced and reached the first line of the Warsaw positions and even penetrated beyond the obstacles. But they failed to hold on to the seized trenches, as they were thrown back by a counter-attack.

So at the end of 13 August, while two brigades of the 27th Division had broken through the first lines near Radzymin and found themselves between the first and second lines of the Polish defences, the third (79th RB) was still facing the first line.

The success achieved by the Russian 21st and 27th Divisions in the fighting at Radzymin was big, but it was only after taking prisoners and learning about the captured area that the Russians became aware of an organised defence on the first line of the Warsaw bridgehead, meant to prevent access to the Polish capital, which had been destroyed. But, on the other hand, it was made clear in the battle that, "the Polish troops were not the remnants of a shattered army, and were capable of resolute resistance."



On top of this, the 27th Division had taken prisoner a Polish military engineer during the day, who had on him a plan of fortifications and positions of the Warsaw bridgehead. Impressed by the above facts, the commander of the 27th Division (who arrived at Tłuszcz in the evening of 13 August) contacted his Army commander by phone and proposed that, despite the success to date, the offensive should be aborted and the troops should retreat beyond the River Bug. He justified his assessment by the fact that an organised defence had been encountered on the outskirts of Warsaw, and that hopes for help from the working-peasant class had been dashed – as instead they had volunteered to join the ranks of the Polish army.

However, the Army commander did not share the opinion of the 27th Division commander, and ordered him to continue the attack in the direction of Jabłonna, in accordance with his orders.

At dawn on 14 August, the 80th and 81st Brigades were to advance towards Jabłonna-Legionowo, and the 79th Brigade towards Pustelnik. In that way, the two lead brigades would carry out the division's main task, while the 79th would try, "in cooperation with the 21st Division," to get to Warsaw by the shortest possible route.

The Rest of the 16th Army

The 2nd Rifle Division moved during the day of 13 August from the area of Rudzienko and Stanisławów towards the north-west and by 15:00 reached the area of Lipka – Nadbiel – Czubajowizna with its 5th and 6th Brigades. Divisional patrols reached the front of the Polish positions.

On 13 August the division's commander issued an order, commanding the 5th and 6th Brigades to occupy the area of Radzymin – Stanisławów – Pustelnik – Helenów by evening, advancing along the Royal Canal and the New Canal, and to send reconnaissance units to the Vistula from Bagno to Dąbrowka Szlachecka, in order to – as the order stated – clarify the alignment of the opponent's forces and fortifications on the left (western) bank of the Vistula and to reconnoitre the approaches and river crossings.

The order shows that the 2nd Division was not yet familiar with the situation near Radzymin. In any case, there was no doubt that the actions of the division had not been agreed with the 27th Division.

The 17th Division marched on 13 August from the Stanisławów area westwards, tasked with capturing the Turów, Wołomin, Marki and Pustelnik areas on 14 August. At 15:00 on 13 August the units of the 49th and 50th Brigades arrived unhindered in the area of Ręczaje and Kolno, with the units of the 27th Division in front of them. Meanwhile units of the 51st Brigade were advancing towards Okuniew.

The 10th Rifle Division advanced during the day of 13 August without obstruction. In the morning the 30th Brigade captured Mińsk Mazowiecki. This division had the task of capturing the Mokre Łąki – Wawel – Jarosław – Okuniew area by the evening of 14 August, and according to the Army commander's order it could be used to strike in the direction of Praga and therefore was to place one brigade in the Okuniew area.

The 8th Rifle Division was to capture the area of Karczew – Osieck – Kołbiel on 14 August.

The 3rd Army

During the day of 13 August the 3rd Army divisions were operating on both sides of the Bug. The 21st RD, together with the 27th RD, had captured the Radzymin area. The 5th RD had reached Kamionna – Łosiewo (86th RB), Ciepelin – Buda (13th RB), and Podliskowo (15th RB) at 14:00. To the left of the 5th RD was the 48th RR (16th RB, 6th RD).

The 6th RD crossed the Narew quite late and headed towards Serock and Dębe. The actions of that division did not satisfy the Army commander and in an order of 14 August he pointed out that:

On 13 August the 6th Division's units, after crossing the Narew, had lost contact with the enemy.

Immediately to the right of the 3rd Army, the 11th RD (15th Army) occupied Nasielsk on 13 August. That division was given the task of defeating the enemy on the Wkra River, then force marching to the Vistula and forcing it in the stretch from Konstancja to Wyszogród during the night of August 15.



On 14 August the divisions of the 3rd Army received the following tasks:

- The 5th Division was to reach the line of the Vistula and prepare to force the river, grouping the 86th and 13th Brigades in the Lelewo – Wólka Góra area, while the 15th Brigade was to be behind the left wing of the 13th Brigade in the Psuckie Pieńki area.
- The 15th Cavalry Regiment was to carry out reconnaissance in the direction of Nowy Dwór and capture all the bridges there.
- The 6th Division was to continue its advance towards Zegrze and Dębe.
- The 56th Division was to advance in the rear of the Army, marching behind the 5th and 6th Divisions.

After the capture of Radzymin, the commander of the 21st RD ordered his brigade commanders to launch a further attack in the morning of 14 August to capture Praga and seize the bridges over the Vistula.

To this end, the 63rd Brigade was to advance through Radzymin to Wólka Radzyńska and then head towards Praga Station, while the 62nd Brigade was to advance through Słupno and Olesin to Brudno and Nowa Praga. The 61st Brigade was to stay the reserve and was to march behind the 62nd Brigade.

Thus the 21st Division's advance towards Praga was sufficiently strongly secured on the right wing (from the west), since the 80th and 81st RBs of the 27th Division were to operate towards Jabłonna. However, on the left wing the operation was not secure, since the 79th RB, which was supposed to operate with the 21st RD, was some distance away, and we have no information that the operations of that brigade were agreed with the 21st Division.

We have stressed several times the optimistic assessment of events by the Soviet command and their conviction of victory. It so happened that the Soviet side had the liveliest response to news of details showing enemy weakness. For example it was quickly known, and spread among the soldiers, that the foreign missions in Warsaw intended to leave the capital and that must mean the population was despondent. News of the success at Radzymin quickly reached the HQs, and on 13 August the commander of the 3rd Army sent the following radio message from Wyszaków:

The brave troops of the 3rd Army occupied Radzymin on 13 August at 23:00 pursuing the fleeing enemy. They are about 15 *versts*⁵⁰ from Praga. During the forty days of the offensive, without rest, worn out by the rapid advance and the great distance from their bases, with constant fighting they have marched about 600 *versts*. Inspired by the grand idea of liberating the Polish workers, they have raised the Red sword over the heart of noble Warsaw, so as to hand it over to the working people in the form of a Polish peasant government as soon as it has been taken.

The workers of Warsaw can already feel their liberation is near. Revolution is already boiling in Warsaw. Demands by workers to surrender Warsaw to the Red Army without battle, threatening to not let a single soldier go otherwise, are posted on the walls.

The Polish cause is collapsing. One last push to end Polish adventurism!

So many platitudes in one short message, but at the time, others also argued that victory was near. Soviet activists saw revolution where there was none – as they were soon to discover. The triumphant tone was typical of the time. For example there was a claim that the “nobles” could not hold the capital, and that the battle that was taking place near Warsaw was just an action against the rearguard, which was “covering the retreat of the wagons and shattered armies past Warsaw.” In view of that, the writer wondered whether it would be possible to capture the Warsaw bridges in their entirety, and pointed out that “this is why it is important for us to move quickly with our right wing beyond the Vistula below Warsaw.” The article ends:

There is no salvation for your Poland, Long live worker-peasant Warsaw!

⁵⁰ A *verst* is 1.07 kilometres.

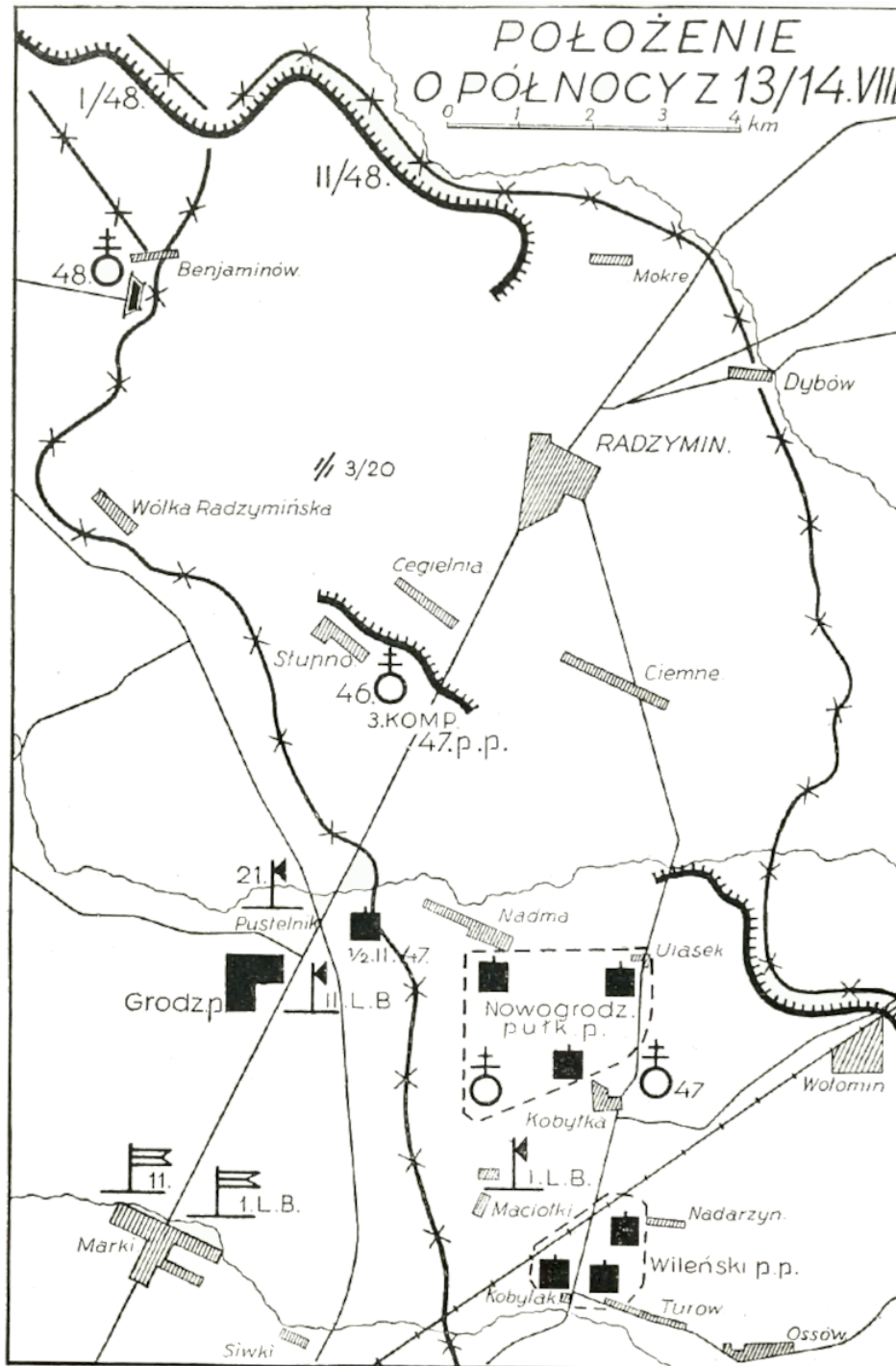


Chapter XI

Battle on the Outskirts on 14 August

Decision to Use the 1st Lit-Bel (19th) Division for the Counter-Attack

In the previous chapters we learned about the course of the action at Radzymin. The 1st Army command, not having initially been given accurate information about the break in the front, hoped that the 11th ID would be able to recapture the lost section with its own forces. The Army did give a part of the 1st Lit-Bel Division to Colonel Jąźwiński in order to replace his exhausted reserves.



Sketch 46: Situation at Midnight of 13/14 August

But the position at Radzymin turned out to be much worse than initially thought, which caused the 1st Army command to decide around midnight to use the entire 1st Lit-Bel Division for a counter-attack and to that end issued the following order:



1. Bolshevik attacks in the section of the 11th Division were bravely repulsed by the 47th and 48th IRs. In a counter-attack the 46th IR failed to hold its line.
2. Maj.-General Rządkowski will order the units of the 19th ID to regain the lost positions.
3. Colonel Jaźwiński will be subordinated to General Rządkowski for the duration of the action.
4. After regaining the previous line, the units of the 19th ID will be relieved by the 46th IR in a separate order.

These were the basic orders, connected with the decision to use the Army's reserve.

In this way a battle broke out on the outskirts on 14 August, which engulfed the entire Army sector. Several clashes took place, namely: near Radzymin, where the 1st Lit-Bel Division led the counter-attack; near Ossów and Leśniakowizna, where the front was broken by the enemy; and finally, in the evening, in the area of Zegrze and Nieporęt.

After issuing this order, we do not find signs of much activity from the Army HQ. It waited for reports from Marki about the beginning of the counter-attack by the Lit-Bel Division, which was to start the action at 05:00 on 14 August. Meanwhile, between 06:00 and 09:00 reports were received from the 11th Division, which indicated that the action had suffered a significant delay. General Latinik mentions it in these words:

The departure of the counter-attack was delayed by 2½ hours for reasons that are difficult to ascertain.

It is very likely that the higher commands hoped that the Lit-Bel Division had moved, in accordance an Army order of 13 August, to the area of Pustelnik and Nadma. However, the division had received the order too late (at 22:30) and had remained where it was until midnight.

In the morning of 14 August, the Army HQ received a report from the 8th Division (which was read at 07:00 by Lt-Colonel Bobicki). It reported that

The enemy struck at 05:30 in a strong column with numerous machine-guns to the north of Leśniakowizna and broke through between our left wing and the right wing of the 47th IR.

The command of the 8th ID reported that at the time Battalion 2/33 was advancing in a counter-attack on Leśniakowizna, and that a battalion of the 13th Regiment had been sent to Ossów from Rembertów. It emphasised the uncharacteristic behaviour of the troops of the 47th BRR.

The news prompted lively talks between the Army and Żąbki and Marki. It was probably realised that the enemy's encroachment at Leśniakowizna, at the moment when the Army's reserve was going to counter-attack Radzymin, made the situation quite dangerous. Lt-Colonel Bobicki ordered the news to be reported to the Front and communicated with the 11th Division.

Soon, however, reassuring news arrived. The command of the 11th Division reported that the enemy attacks had been deflected by the right wing battalion of the 47th Regiment and at 08:30 reported (received by Army HQ at 08:45) that the enemy was thrown out of Leśniakowizna by the counter-attack of the 8th and 11th Divisions. The 8th Division also reported the auspicious news that Leśniakowizna was recaptured at 08:00.

So for some time the Army command could be calm, although we know that these reports did not reflect reality and that it was during this time that the heaviest fighting in Ossów took place.

On the other hand, the Army had not yet received any news about Radzymin.

Battle of Radzymin on 14 August

In the evening of 13 August the 1st Lit-Bel Division HQ (which was in Marki alongside that of the 11th Division) did not initially have news of what was happening. The first details were brought by Lt-Colonel Rybicki, who had observed the course of the battle at Radzymin, and after the collapse of the 46th BRR, found it difficult to extricate himself from the confusion. He recalls it:



In the great confusion of the panicked soldiers of the 46th Regiment and the Bolsheviks, I broke through the ring of the enemy and in the evening made it to the 2nd Battery, 19th FAR, south-west of Radzymin. After receiving a horse from the commander of the 2nd Battery, late in the evening I reached the headquarters of the 2nd Brigade in Pustelnik amidst the chaos and confusion.

At that time Captain Morawski, the divisional staff officer (sent as liaison officer to the 11th Division), gave news of the situation by telephone. According to a note from the officer on duty, he reported:

Radzymin occupied by the enemy. Troops of the 11th Division have retreated to the line Helenów – Cegielnia – Aleksandrów.

General Rządkowski, alerted by this news, went to Pustelnik. When the general arrived at the 2nd Brigade HQ, Lt-Colonel Rybicki immediately reported. The 2nd Brigade's commander proposed that the 1st Lit-Bel Division should undertake a counter-attack to recapture the positions lost by the 46th BRR. General Rządkowski shared this view and immediately discussed with the brigade commander the plan of counter-attack (assuming that division would be used), after which he returned to Marki. From there, via the 11th ID HQ, the Army HQ was given the proposal of using the Lit-Bel division.

This showed that the commanders on the ground realised the gravity of the moment, but did not take into account the fact that the divisions had not yet rested and been replenished. They were convinced that the numerically weak division nevertheless possessed great combat value. But at the end of 13 August, the division's commander was effectively left with only one regiment (Wilno), as two regiments had been given to the 11th Division, while the Mińsk Regiment had only just completed its rearguard action and, tired, was retiring to its designated area. The danger then was that the division and brigade commanders would remain passive spectators of events, placing their tried and tested troops in uncertain hands.

After midnight of 13/14 August, the Army command decided to use the 1st Lit-Bel Division and issued the discussed order, which was passed on to the command of the Lit-Bel Division through the 11th Division. Upon receipt of that order, preparations were immediately made by issuing verbal orders, or single written orders. There was not enough time to draw up a general counter-attack plan.

It should be noted that at that time there was insufficient data on the position not only of the enemy, but also of Polish troops. General Rządkowski recalled:

At that time the 11th Division had not clarified the situation. It was known that the 46th Regiment had retired, and that the wings of the 47th and 48th Regiments were uncovered, so that the situation presented itself as dangerous. Whether the departing regiment had succumbed to the enemy's superior numbers or had had a collapse in morale, was of course, impossible to investigate at the time.

Lieutenant Gadomski, then head of the division's Operations Branch, states that the news he had "was extremely chaotic," so that it was difficult to form an accurate judgment of the situation. He relates that at the time it was presumed that the enemy was not very strong, and instead that the 46th Regiment had broken in morale. But there was no long reflection. General Rządkowski and Lt-Colonel Rybicki had already discussed the plan for the counter-attack in general outlines, so now it was a matter of determining details, handing over the troops to Lt-Colonel Rybicki and providing fire support from the artillery:

Gen. Rządkowski orders that the action to regain the positions to the northeast of Radzymin lost by the 46th IR be carried out by Rybicki at dawn on 14/8. He will receive at his disposal three regiments: Grodno, Wilno and Nowogród, *Divizion* 3/1 FAR and *Divizion* 3/3 Horse Rifle Regiment.

Carry out the attack, attacking Kraszew and Łoś and trying to bypass the enemy troops that have taken Radzymin.

In the end Lt-Colonel Rybicki received the infantry regiments mentioned, the 1st *Divizion*, 19th FAR and the 2nd Squadron, 3rd HRR. The 46th BRR was not relied upon in the counter-attack plan, as it was to remain in reserve and relieve the division after the action was completed. The counter-attack was expected to begin at 05:00, and at that hour the fire support of the Radzymin Artillery Group was requested.



At 01:00 on 14 August General Rządkowski hand-wrote the orders: he asked that the Wilno Regiment should immediately march out of its quarters and head to the crossroads near Struga, to be under the orders of Lt.-Colonel Rybicki. The Horse Rifles were to arrive in that area by 05:00 at the latest. After issuing the orders, General Rządkowski agreed with Colonel Szpręglewski on the co-operation of the artillery, whereby the 1st *Divizion* of the 19th FAR was subordinated to Lt-Colonel Rybicki.

At 03:30 the command of the 1st Lit-Bel Division reported to the Army:

By order of the 1st Army Headquarters, three regiments: Nowogród, Wilno and Grodno, under the command of Lt-Col. Rybicki, have been ordered to counter-attack in order to regain the former Łoś – Kraszew line, lost by the 46th IR. The attack is to be carried out in three columns in the direction of Łoś – Radzymin and Kraszew. The start of the action is 05:00.

After issuing these orders, General Rządkowski went to the regiments, intending to personally see to the execution and to encourage the soldiers to fight.

At this time Lt-Colonel Rybicki issued his own orders. As Sketch 46 shows, the closest to the focus of the battle was the Grodno Regiment, which then was in positions in the area of Height 101 (on the second line of defence). To the right of it (east of the road) there were three companies of Lieutenant Reut's 47th Regiment – the last of the 11th Division's reserve. The Grodno Regiment was to strike through Słupno and Aleksandrów to Mokre, "bypassing Radzymin" to the north-west.

The Wilno Regiment, which was quartered furthest away, was given the task of "tying up the enemy along the Struga – Radzymin axis." The 2nd Squadron, 3rd HRR was to secure the left wing of that attack and establish communication with the units in Benjaminów. The Nowogród Regiment was to advance towards Kraszew, while Major Matczyński's unit was to remain in reserve.

Rybicki did not count on the 46th Regiment, as he mentions:

I did not anticipate on using the 46th Regiment because I did not know the structure of that regiment and did not count it as a unit capable of operations.

His guiding principle (according to his own account) was to bypass and break up the enemy troops, which occupied the Radzymin area, attacking from the flanks in the direction of Łoś and Kraszew.

The Mińsk Regiment remained as the division's reserve, quartered with a battalion in Maciołki and two in Siwki. (They are not shown there in Sketch 46, as the units were still arriving from Wołomin at midnight.)

At dawn of 14 August, the division HQ had a connection with the Army HQ (two fixed wires). The division liaison in Marki had a one-wire connection with the 2nd Brigade HQ (Pustelnik), the 11th Division HQ and the 1st Brigade (Maciołki). The 2nd Brigade's HQ had telephone communication with the Grodno Regiment, with Major Matczyński and with the 3rd *Divizion* of the 3rd HRR. The 1st Brigade HQ had one with the Mińsk Regiment.

11th Division in the morning of 14 August

The troops of the 11th Division, having received news that the Lit-Bel Division had been sent to counter-attack to regain the lost positions, remained where they were and tried to establish communications between themselves and secure the gaps that had been created on 13 August.

The division staff knew that the assault was ordered for 05:00. However, it was soon realised that it would not be organised so quickly. At 06:30 the 11th Division was told that the Lit-Bel counter-attack would begin in an hour and a half.

Meanwhile from dawn on 14 August until 10:00 the enemy was the one taking the offensive, and the position changed to the Poles' disadvantage. The Russian 79th RB broke through the front in the Leśniakowizna area at the junction of the 11th and 8th Divisions. The 11th Division's command was at the time preoccupied with events around Radzymin, and so the 47th BRR was left to cope on its own – the 21st Brigade command sent a mere 62 soldiers from the Division's staff company to Kobylka at 07:25. The rest of



the reserve, namely the 5th, 6th and 11th Companies of the 47th Regiment were used to garrison the second line positions, the Horse Rifles were sent to guard the gap between the Wólka Radzyńska and Czarna Stara roads, while a sapper company was sent to the section (as yet unoccupied) between the 46th and 48th Regiments. That latter task was not carried out and in the morning the enemy showed up in the gap between those regiments.

Disturbing news began to arrive at the 21st Brigade's HQ from Wólka Radzyńska, Dąbkowizna and Benjaminów. At 07:45 its telephone link between Dąbkowizna and Fort Benjaminów was broken, and at 08:30 an enemy conversation was overheard, which indicated that Wólka Radzyńska and Izabelin were occupied by the Russians. The brigade's command sent out a mounted patrol, which returned at 10:20, reporting that the enemy had cut the road near Wólka Radzyńska and was firing machine-guns at the approaches. A patrol in a vehicle was also sent out, but did not bring the desired news, as it had to turn back from near Wólka Radzyńska, having lost two killed and two wounded.

At the time when the 1st Lit-Bel Division began its counter-attack, the situation in the vicinity of Wólka Radzyńska had not been clarified.

Fire Preparation for the Counter-attack

During the night of 13/14 August the deployment of the Radzymin Artillery Group batteries did not change from those taken on the evening of 13 August. The Middle Subgroup was the least orderly, both in terms of communications, command and the organisation for observation. (According to Lt.-Colonel Römmel's account he handed over command of the Middle Subgroup to Colonel Aleksandrowicz on this day.)

We have previously noted that Colonel Szpręglewski received general orders from General Rządkowski, while details of the fire preparation were discussed with Colonel Jaźwiński and Lt-Colonel Rybicki. The commanders of the subgroups were ordered that at 05:00 the batteries should begin fire preparation for the counter-attack, mainly shelling Radzymin.

This order was only partially carried out. Moreover, as we have seen, the launching of the counter-attack was delayed and so between 07:00 and 08:00 the subgroups were ordered to resume their fire preparations.

In the end this deadline was not met either, as the attack did not begin until around 10:00 and was launched without artillery preparation, with only the 1st *Divizion* of the 19th FAR firing.

The Middle Subgroup batteries (1st, 2nd, 3rd and 9th, now under Lt.-Colonel Rybicki) were located south-east of Słupno. Their observation points and the *divizion* commander were located on Height 94, apart from the 1st Battery, which had theirs in a windmill in Słupno. The *divizion* was primarily tasked with supporting the attack of the Wilno Regiment, while the 3rd Battery was also asked to support the Grodno Regiment.

The batteries prepared for this and, awaiting the arrival of the Wilno Regiment, they fired a barrage and occasionally against any targets appearing. The 9th Battery, which up to that time had been working to support the 46th Regiment, fired at small enemy columns moving in the area of Cegielnia and Aleksandrów Manor in the early morning. At around 08:00 the telephonists overheard a conversation between:

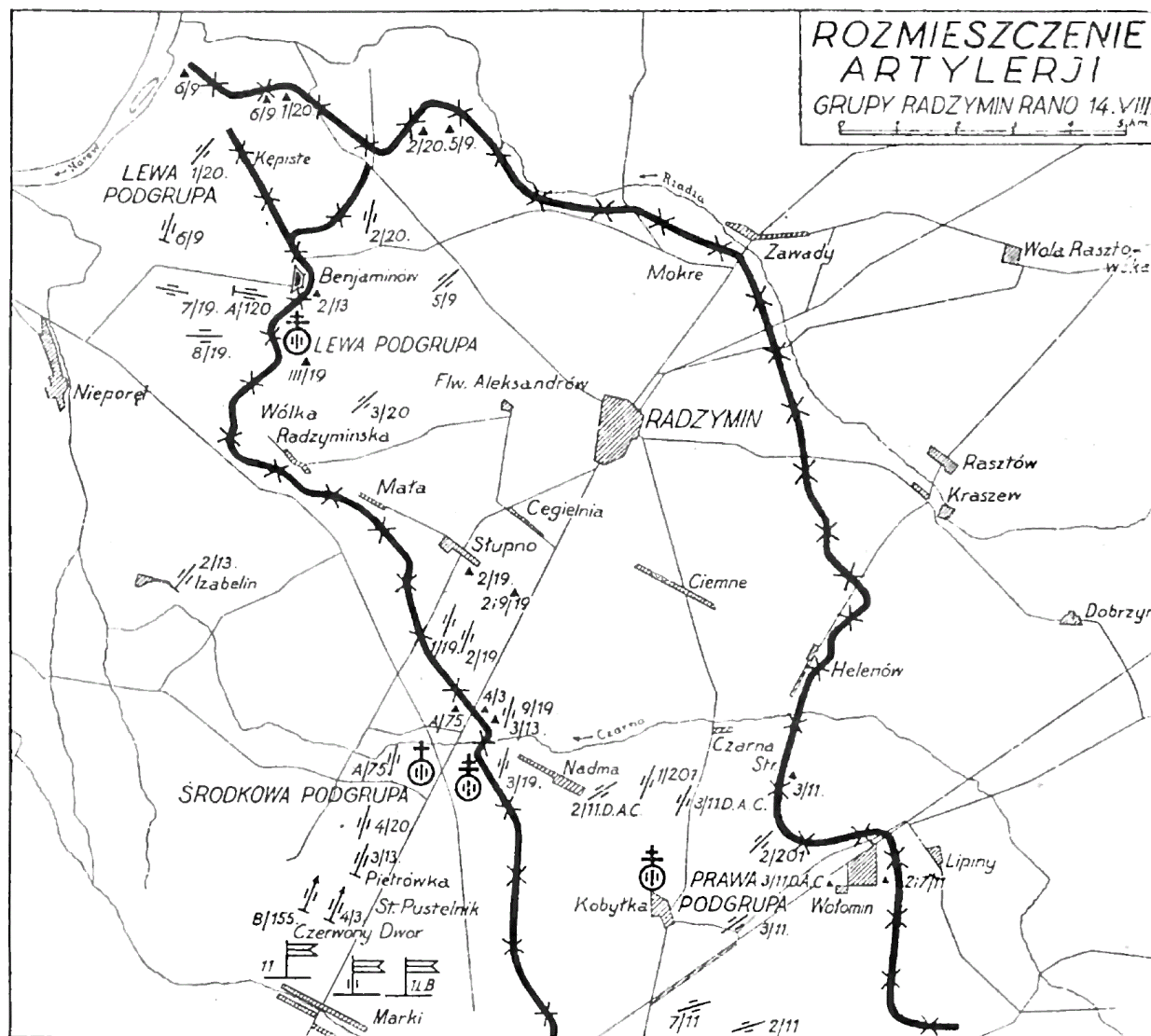
... the commissars, who boasted of the previous day's gains and announced an attack on Warsaw at noon.

The other batteries of the Middle Subgroup were subordinate to Major Römmel and Colonel Aleksandrowicz. Their positions are shown on Sketch 47. It should be noted that Battery 4/3 HAR and Battery B/155 initially remained in position east of the road junction, having observation points in the second line next to the road. Not all the batteries were ready to fire in the morning and some of them were still moving or organising observation. Some of them fired from time to time, but it could by no means be called fire preparation.

The position and course of events in the Right Artillery Subgroup was quite different. That subgroup received the task of supporting the counter-attack of the Nowogród Regiment with its left-wing batteries. Accordingly, at 05:00 some batteries began to fire, namely the *Divizion* 2/11 HAR (the area east of



Radzymin) and Battery 2/201 FAR (between Kraszew and the railway track). This fire was not observed as the dense fog made it difficult to see. During this time small enemy units managed to break through in the area between Janków Nowy and Czarna Stara and push back the Polish covering units.



Sketch 47: Radzymin Artillery Group in the morning of 14 August

Around 06:00 the whole sector of Battalion 1/47 was under attack from the enemy. Company 4/47 alerted the artillery that it would be forced to abandon its position, however, "the order to counter-attack kept the 4th Company in its position."

It was worse, however, on the left wing of the regiment, where Captain Müllner (commander of the combat *division*) had just headed, intending to talk with the commander of the Nowogród Regiment. When he arrived north of Ulasek, he found no one there except retreating wounded. Also visible near Nadma was Battery 2/11 HAD, which was firing very quickly. Captain Müllner, seeing that the Polish infantry had been dispersed, turned back and galloped to Battery 3/11. He found "the battery in consternation and the infantry retreating behind it." This was also noted by the battery's observer, Cadet Mokrzycki, who was on a high chimney in Wołomin:

Our infantry halted behind the battery entanglements, the connection with the battery was broken, the Bolsheviks were at the edge of the forest in front of the battery.

It should be added that this moment is not reflected in documents or infantry reports, although the fact of the enemy's advance and the confusion it caused is not in doubt. This is evidenced by Captain Müllner's report of the time:



At 06:00 the left flank was completely uncovered, the Bolsheviks were approaching the battery at 300 m with a revolver in hand I had to turn back the retreating 3/47 infantry. The two MGs protecting the flank threw back the Bolsheviks.

Eventually Müllner sorted out a group of infantrymen and directed them towards Czarna Stara, supported by machine-gun fire. In that way the enemy was driven back.

In the midst of this, Battery 2/11 did not stop firing. From 06:30 it was accompanied by 3/11, shelling the area of Kraszew and Lipinki (57 rounds). At 07:55, the 3rd Battery received orders to shell the area located halfway between Radzymin and Kraszew, and it did so between 08:00 and 08:50, expending 140 rounds. The 2nd Battery had by then fired 176 shells.

Dawn of 14 August found the 46th BRR, together with three companies of the 47th BRR, where we had left them late in the evening of 13 August. Company 8/47 remained at the edge of the road, to the right of it was Company 9/47, while the right wing and flank were secured by a platoon of Company 7/47. The rest of Company 7/47 remained in reserve behind Company 9/47. The 46th Regiment held a line opposite Cegielnia, but had no communication to its left.

As soon as the morning lightened up, enemy movement was noticed in front. Infantry were seen heading west, with the enemy in Ciemne being particularly active. At that time the 11th Division command sent the 4th Squadron of the 4th HRR with the task of securing the area of Janków Nowy. About 08:00 the cavalry had reached the village, encountering no one in the area except small cavalry patrols.

In the 48th BRR sector there were a number of surprising incidents for the Polish troops between Wólka Radzyńska and Benjaminów. This is because the enemy 81st RB anticipated us and moved towards Wólka Radzyńska in the morning, attacking various Polish units on the way, including some lone batteries

In the morning of 14 August the 48th Regiment held its previous positions, having the 1st and part of the 2nd Battalions in the first line positions. The 6th Company had bent its right wing to the south. The 10th Company arrived in the morning at Benjaminów and secured Battery 5/9 FAR located in the area. The regimental commander still retained the 9th Company (in Fort Benjaminów), the technical company and the 3rd and 4th Machine-gun Companies. A telephone liaison remained in Wólka Radzyńska, where the 3rd Battalion was quartered. In the vicinity of that village the 3rd Company of the 18th Sapper Battalion was reinforcing the second line of the bridgehead.

The commands of the 48th Regiment and the Left Artillery Subgroup were informed of the counter-attack on Radzymin and the batteries were to lead the counter-attack with fire preparation.

Battery 2/13 HAR had lost its observation point in the area of the Aleksandrów Manor on 13 August, and in the morning of 14 August was busy with observation equipment. Captain Stępniewski (the battery commander) chose a new point at Fort Benjaminów and went there with Lieutenant Winnicki. Between 05:00 and 06:00 the battery fired a lot of rounds at Radzymin and the surrounding area, as the group commander had ordered.

Battery 3/20 FAR meanwhile found itself between Aleksandrów and Fort Benjaminów, where it received an order from the subgroup commander to take part in the fire preparation of the counter-attack on Radzymin at 08:00. The rest of the subgroup's batteries stayed in their positions.

At the same time Battery 6/9 FAR was joined by a platoon with 2nd-Lieutenant Nowak. Not wishing to remain idle in Czarna Struga, he set off on 13 August to Marki, from where he was directed at night to Benjaminów. Around 04:00 he arrived in Pustelnik, then drove towards Nieporęt. Near Wólka Radzyńska he encountered the commander of the company from the 18th Sapper Battalion and, after consulting with him, left his platoon in place, while he himself drove cross-country to Dąbkowizna with one scout. Through the liaison officer of the artillery subgroup, he communicated with the battery commander, and then sent a scout to Wólka Radzyńska with orders for the platoon to move along the road through Nieporęt towards Fort Benjaminów.



At that time the melee with the enemy had just begun. Around 07:00 the enemy (units of the 81st RB) appeared near Battery 3/20 from the area of Aleksandrów Manor. Their appearance was unexpected, and before they could react, the battery were fired at by several machine-guns. This paralysed the battery crew, and there was not even enough time to turn the guns. The battery commander was powerless and could not threaten the enemy with even rifle fire, as the crew was "afraid to venture out from behind cover, and anyway they did not know how to use the rifles." Lieutenant Rychter quickly decided to abandon the cannons and managed to escape with his men in the direction of Dąbkowizna, where he reported the incident to the subgroup commander. Several gunners and one officer were taken prisoner.

After capturing the battery, some of the 81st RB headed towards Wólka Radzyńska, where the 3rd Company of the 18th Sapper Battalion was working, while the rest turned towards Dąbkowizna. The commander of the 3rd Company had received news in the morning that "the situation was sorted out in our favour" and had therefore ordered the sappers to resume their work on the second line. The telephone liaison officers ran from the village, calling out that they were escaping from Wólka Radzyńska. A few minutes later shots rang out from behind the cottages, from a distance of several dozen paces. Lieutenant Stapf deployed his sapper company and, under enemy fire, manned the trenches opposite Wólka Radzyńska. The village was occupied by the enemy.

The company's rolling stock and 2nd-Lieutenant Nowak's artillery platoon departed in the direction of Nieporęt. Finally the company received an order from the commander of the 48th Regiment (this was the last order before the liaison officer left) to defend the section near the road. For about half an hour the company engaged in a firefight, but eventually weakened as there was a very little ammunition. Having exhausted its supply, the company withdrew from its positions and gathered in Izabelin, from where it marched off to Jabłonna-Legionowo.

In the battle near Wólka Radzyńska the company lost one officer killed and five wounded sappers (though it is possible that Lieutenant Becker fell the next day during the attack of the Grodno Regiment).

Due to the loss of Wólka Radzyńska, the telephone connection between Battery 2/13 and the observation post at the fort was broken. Dąbkowizna and Fort Benjaminów lost communication with Pustelnik and Marki. With the last report (timed to before 07:30) the commander of the 48th Regiment alerted the 21st Brigade's command that the regiment had received shots from the direction of Dąbkowizna.

The commander of Battery 2/13 was concerned about the danger to his battery, which was positioned in the forest without any cover, so he hurried with scouts towards the position (from the observation post). He did not receive any orders from his superiors. Not long after, Captain Stępniewski reached the road where the enemy fired on him, which meant that Wólka Radzyńska was lost. In view of this he sent a scout with the order that the battery should escape towards Nieporęt.

In the course of these events, despite the breakdown of communication, the battery continued to fire at targets previously shot at by the battery commander. After receiving the order to leave it left for Nieporęt, the battery, under the cover of a platoon from Squadron 2/3 HRR (which was patrolling in the area at the time).

These incidents in the area of Wólka Radzyńska, especially the loss of Battery 3/20, alarmed the command of the Left Subgroup, which then asked for protection for some of its batteries from the command. The 48th Regiment then sent 30 men to Dąbkowizna. The danger was indeed serious, as the enemy soon directly threatened the HQ, attacking Dąbkowizna unexpectedly.

In order to stop the enemy, an *ad hoc* unit was formed on short notice from orderlies, telephonists and liaison officers, which halted the advance for a while. In the midst of that, some of the HQ and communication equipment was withdrawn, and then everything left for Fort Benjaminów. But communication was lost, not only with the group command, but also with the batteries. The last sounds from HQ managed to reach the battery positions. Second-Lieutenant Nowak recalls:

The phone rang with a commotion and screams, from which I understood ... that the Bolsheviks were attacking Dąbkowizna, we were losing the connection ...



The impact of these events affected the batteries located to the west of Dąbkowizna and Fort Benjaminów, namely batteries: B/120, 6/9, 7/19 and 8/19. Battery 8/19, which was in a clearing in the forest to the south-west of the fort, was closest to the incidents. Concerned about them, it sent patrols in an easterly direction, and the 48th Regiment was asked to assist. The 48th Regiment commander replied to Captain Siedlecki (*division* commander of the 19th FAR) that he had no forces to send. The battery's location was inconvenient, as it could not fire at close range –the shells did not carry above the trees when aiming at nearby targets and hit the battery's observers. The *division* commander then ordered the 7th Battery to fire at the approaches to the 8th Battery.

But the 48th Regiment did send one platoon to help, which patrolled the danger area and occupied part of second line south of the fort. This covered the batteries to some extent, but the mood was still uncertain. Around 10:00 for some inexplicable reason, the battery crew panicked. The gunners and riders threw themselves on to their horses and, after cutting their traces and abandoning their guns, fled. The remaining handful of men and the officers took some of the equipment and, destroying it as they fled, followed the fleeing men. Four heavy cannons, machine-guns, a kitchen, various equipment and papers were left in position. The panic must have broken out suddenly, as their neighbours found out about it after the fact. The commander of the 48th Regiment later reported that:

There was not the slightest reason for the panic and flight, as the enemy was at least three kilometres from the battery, in front of the infantry line.

The fleeing battery crew caused confusion and made others nervous. The batteries positioned along the road near the barracks were especially alarmed. Battery 6/9 FAR let its commander know (at the observation post) that:

Individual soldiers are fleeing through the forest, and the team, with the halters on their horses cut, are fleeing along the road in the direction of Nieporęt.

In response, Lieutenant Dutkiewicz (the battery commander) ordered the guns to be turned facing east, to send out patrols, to wait for his arrival and "to not move from their position". The battery commander soon arrived; it was quiet around the position, the patrols had not yet returned, but sounds of shooting were coming from the forest. At this time that the rest of the scattered crew of the heavy battery was marching along the road. Lieutenant Dutkiewicz recalls the encounter in these words:

I rode up to them. It turned out to be the commander and several privates of the battery that had been left behind, notably a French-speaking Pole, with whom I could not get along in any way, as he was terribly depressed and cursing the subordinate soldiers who had run away from him. The privates accompanying him looked stunned.

The few episodes we have presented show the gradual lack of unity within the artillery subgroup. The impact of these incidents also affected the command of the 48th BRR. The artillery had so far caused the infantry nothing but trouble, made all the worse by the fact that it was difficult to guard the batteries, as the modest regimental reserve did not permit it. Meanwhile, artillery support was mostly lacking.

At this time (around 10:00) the 2nd Battalion was ordered to withdraw from its positions and take up entrenched positions between Borki and Fort Benjaminów. The departure of that battalion took place without hindrance. The rest of the regiment (9th Company, Technical Company, 3rd and 4th Machine-gun Companies) then manned the positions at Fort Benjaminów and the stretch just south of the fort.

The reasons discussed, and especially the lack of communication with higher command, made it impossible for the 48th BRR and the Left Artillery Subgroup to co-operate in the counter-attack on Radzymin. From that moment on they acted in isolation, having no information of the events taking place.

Preparations for the Counter-attack

Despite the attack being announced for 05:00, that time could not be kept, as the troops were not ready. The Wilno Regiment received the order from the division commander on 14 August at 03:00, while Squadron 2/3 HRR received the order at 3:30. The Grodno Regiment was the earliest to receive the orders



and could be used immediately, while the Nowogród Regiment only received the orders at 06:00. The commander of the Nowogród Regiment ordered it to assemble.

So the artillery preparation, ordered by the group commander 05:00, which some batteries took part in, was premature.

At 07:50 the commander of the 2nd Brigade reported that, "the Wilno [Regiment] and [Divizion] 3/3 Cavalry have arrived, the action is in progress."

The assault was to begin at around 08:00, and so Colonel Szpręglewski once more ordered the battery commanders to make preparations to fire. At that time communication with the Left Subgroup was lost, while the Middle and Right Subgroups did not fire very much, so there was no real preparation. In any case the counter-attack did not begin at 08:00, as the infantry lost a lot of time taking up their start positions.

The Grodno Regiment had spent the night of 13/14 August on combat alert in the second line of the bridgehead positions (Radzymin Road to Height 104).

The mood of the regiment was good, all the more so because General Rządkowski arrived in the morning and spoke warmly to the soldiers. He said that the victory must be ours, and ended the speech with a shout: "Boys – we will not give up Warsaw!"

Around 05:00 Lt-Colonel Bohaterewicz, the regiment commander, gave verbal orders for the attack in the presence of the division commander. The regiment was to strike through Słupno, in the general direction of Mokre, with two battalions in the first line (2nd and 3rd). The direction of the attack and communication with the Wilno Regiment was to be maintained by the Lieutenant Ciechanowicz's 2nd Battalion. Each battalion was to attack in two lines (two companies each). Meanwhile Lieutenant Waśkiewicz's 1st Battalion was to stay behind the left wing as the regiment's reserve and, according to the commander of the 3rd Battalion, was to cover the attack from the west. That task had not been precisely established and the commander of the 1st Battalion did not clearly recall the order later. That battalion remained on the second line in the woods near Height 104. The Technical Company was also placed in the regiment's reserve.

Between 05:00 and 06:00 the 2nd and 3rd Battalions moved out from the second line and halted in the area of Słupno to prepare for the attack. Just beyond that village the battalions of the 46th Regiment were encountered lying in the fields. The regiment's formation for the attack is shown in Map 5 in Appendix 3.

The battalions remained there for a long time, as the order to move had not yet been received. While this was going on, alarming news came from the left wing, which indicated that the enemy was in the area of Wólka Radzyńska. At 10:35 the commander of the Grodno Regiment reported to the Wilno Regiment's commander:

I have two battalions in Słupno. I am supposed to attack Cegielnia, but have my left flank threatened from the direction of Wólka Radzyńska. I am waiting for the Wilno Regt to start the attack.

However the troops of the Grodno Regiment were actually already on the move by then.

The 1st Squadron of the 3rd Horse Rifle Regiment, having completed its work with the rear guard, took until 01:00 to reach Maciołki, where it was to spend the night. At 03:30 the squadron was alerted, and the hungry, sleep-deprived and weary soldiers:

... officers and senior NCOs had to ... straightaway wake up, rise and saddle their horses to be able to set off as quickly as possible.

On arrival at Pustelnik, the squadron was told by Lt-Colonel Rybicki to cover the division's left wing in the vicinity of Wólka Radzyńska, carrying out reconnaissance and establishing communication with Benjaminów. Around 08:00 the squadron moved towards Wólka Radzyńska. Soon the squadron's lead unit approached the fork in the road and was fired upon. One horse was lost. Lieutenant Czuczełowicz, the squadron leader, did not give up the idea of reconnaissance of the Wólka Radzyńska area, but, not



wanting to waste his horses in the difficult terrain, asked the infantry nearby (1st Grodno Battalion?) to send a patrol that way. However, the foot patrol was also fired upon: it had two men killed and retreated. There was no doubt that the enemy was in the vicinity of Wólka Radzyńska.

The squadron halted on the spot and sent patrols along side roads to Izabelin, which reconnoitred the area around Wólka Radzyńska from the south and established contact with units operating in the Nieporęt area.

The Nowogród Regiment halted overnight with the 2nd Battalion in Nadma and Ulasek, the 1st Battalion in Kobyłka, and the 3rd Battalion and staff at Chur Manor. At 06:00 on 14 August, as we have already seen, the regiment was ordered to assemble at Ulasek. Once there Major Oziewicz (its commander) did not give the orders for an attack, but instead for a standard covered march through Czarna Stara to Kraszew. Lieutenant Pawliszyn's 2nd Battalion was at the head of the regiment, followed by the rest. The company commanders were convinced that the enemy was some distance away and therefore there was no need to be too cautious. There was no communication with neighbouring units, nor was there any information about the general situation.

These shortcomings were due to the fact that the 2nd Brigade had no telephone connection with the regiment, which was more occupied with its left wing.

During the night of 13/14 August, the Wilno Regiment was quartered in Kobyłka, Turów and Nadarzyn. At 04:00 the regiment set off from there, and about 08:00 arrived in the vicinity of Struga, where it stopped in a wood near the road. The higher commanders waited for the regiment to assemble. General Rządkowski then addressed it more or less in these words:

Boys! I know you are exhausted, but you must make one more effort – to take Radzymin from the enemy. The eyes of all Poland are on you. If you do not capture Radzymin immediately, the enemy may enter our capital. You must drive him away from it.

The speech had a strong effect on the mood. It was rumoured in the ranks that the 46th BRR had fled or broken apart, with only its remnants left in the bridgehead. It was said that the regiment had lost its flag at Radzymin – Radzymin, Radzymin was on everyone's lips. In the situation, General Rządkowski's personal influence, which excited the enthusiasm and self-belief of the soldiers, obliterated the gloom blowing from the battlefield.

The regiment had been tasked with attacking along the road towards Radzymin with the fire support of the 1st *Division* of the 19th FAR. To this end, the regiment formed up with the 2nd and 3rd Battalions in the first line along the road, with the 1st Battalion advancing along the road as the reserve. On reaching Radzymin the regiment was to turn towards the north-east and retake the lost positions of the 46th BRR.

Between 09:00 and 10:00 the regiment set off and soon reached the intersection of the road with the Słupno – Nadma road, where, under the cover of low hills, it prepared for the attack. At this point the units of the 46th Regiment could be seen in position. The 2nd Battalion advanced with the 6th and 7th Companies, and kept the others in a second line; while the 3rd Battalion, which was to attack to the left of the 2nd Battalion, had the 9th and 10th Companies in the first line and the 11th and 12th Companies in the second line.

The counter-attack did not take into account the 46th BRR, which was to man its former positions only after the action of the 1st Lit-Bel Division was over.

Initially Major Liwacz, its commander, did not know about the intentions of his superiors, and it was not until 08:50 that he received a telephone message that the Lit-Bel Division would counter-attack to retake Radzymin and the lost positions.



At 09:50, Colonel Jaźwiński arrived at the 46th BRR and then, according to Major Liwacz, the following conversation ensued:

Colonel Jaźwiński ... asked me why I was not advancing. I replied that the brigade had informed me that the 1st Lit-Bel Division would pass through my present positions to counter-attack – which I considered completely understandable – so I was consolidating in my present positions. However, Colonel Jaźwiński verbally gave me another order, which I am quoting almost verbatim, “The regiment lost its positions at Radzymin and the regiment must retake them. To the right and left the regiments of the 1st Lit-Bel Division are advancing.”

This order put Major Liwacz in a difficult position, as there was no time to organise the attack. He had to content himself with issuing quick orders. Among others, 2nd-Lieutenant Osika (commander of Company 9/47) received a short order of the following content:

At 10:15 there will be a general attack on Radzymin.
(-) Liwacz.

Such short orders, verbal or written, were received by other units of the 46th Regiment. This is the recollection of one of the participants:

If I am to be honest, the attack was carried out without any plan, as we did not receive any precise task – just the order “capture Radzymin” was given.

The organisation for the attack, if one can speak of it at all, was very simple. Major Liwacz divided the regiment into two parts: one was to advance with him, and the rest was to move in reserve under Major Kwiatkowski. The reserve consisted mostly of the units which had just arrived during the morning after having been dispersed on 13 August.

Second Lieutenant Osika gave orders to the companies of the 47th Regiment: The 8th and 9th Companies were to move along the road to Radzymin, while two platoons (of the 7th and 9th Companies) were to attack Ciemne. The rest of the 7th Company was to advance behind those platoons and, if necessary, support the assault on the Ciemne village.

After making preparations, the units of the 46th and 47th regiments waited for the approach of the leading units of the Lit-Bel Division. But when this was about to take place, Colonel Jaźwiński urged the 46th Regiment to set off. According to Major Kwiatkowski, the division commander

... ordered in a raised voice the start of the assault, claiming that [the Lit-Bel units] would appear on time.

The departure of the 46th Regiment was observed by Colonel Krzywobłocki, who was fetched by Colonel Jaźwiński and ordered to watch the regiment's attack.

Advance on Radzymin

At around 10:00 preparations for the counter-attack were coming to an end and operations were about to begin. The front was generally calm. There was no artillery preparation, only *Divizion 1/19 FAR* was to prepare the attack and support the advance.

The Wilno Regiment approached the positions of the 46th Regiment. The soldiers of that regiment, under the eye of Colonel Jaźwiński and Lt-Colonel Kohutnicki, were ready to set off. The regimental commanders were beside the troops.

Lt-Colonel Rybicki also arrived, and chose an observation post on a dune by the road north of Height 101. Soon afterwards he left for the Grodno Regiment. Captain Morawski, a staff officer who General Rządkowski had assigned to the 2nd Brigade for the duration of the action, remained in the line. General Rządkowski and his staff also arrived at Lt-Colonel Rybicki's observation point. In the course of the action the point was overcrowded, as quite a number of Polish and Allied officers arrived from various directions (mainly from Warsaw). It was evident that these officers were concerned about the fate of the battle, but on the other hand the need to keep them informed made the commanders' work difficult.



When the Wilno Regiment was just reaching the 46th Regiment's positions, the batteries of the 19th FAR made a brief barrage, mainly shelling the area around Wioska Radzywińska. During that, the troops moved forward.

The enemy had been observing the Polish preparations during the morning, and with the fire of a dozen or so machine-guns, placed in Cegielnia, greeted the rifle line of the 46th Regiment, which were rising to advance. But not only the 46th Regiment was targeted, as the 8th Company of the 47th BRR and other companies setting off, from nearby on Height 94, were stopped by heavy machine-gun fire. At the same time two Russian batteries fired into the woods to the east of the road and the rifle line of the 46th Regiment. A participant recalls:

After the artillery preparation we rose to attack. It didn't work. The soldiers did not move, as the furious fire of the Bolshevik MGs from the outskirts of Cegielnia did not allow us to get out of the trenches.

This critical moment of hesitation was short-lived, as officers and braver privates immediately came to the fore despite the fire. Captain Morawski recalled that, wanting to encourage his soldiers by personal example, he then jumped over his own trenches and, under machine-gun fire, ran forward to the north of Height 94. Just then, the companies of the 2nd Wilno Battalion entered between the right wing companies of the 46th Regiment and the 8th Company of the 47th Regiment.

Now everyone move to the attack. The riflemen moved forward briskly.

The rest of the 46th Regiment, which had rushed forward from in front of Słupno, was already on the move. There was also movement on the right of the road:

In spite of the blistering fire of the Bolsheviks from the numerous HMGs positioned in front of Cegielnia, the soldiers moved forward with a real contempt of death – as if on a training ground. In the eyes and movements of each one was guided by one thought: We are going to take Radzymin back!

All along the counter-attack line, clusters of soldiers ran forward, carried away by their zeal. Here and there one or another fell, but nobody stopped. A loud "Hura! Hura!" rang out. Soon the shouts of the attackers intensified, while the enemy fire was clearly diminishing. Again and again the nervous clang of a machine-gun broke out, but it did not manage to prevent it – the Polish companies were just reaching Cegielnia.

The enemy 61st and 62nd Brigades could not withstand the attack and, abandoning a considerable number of machine-guns, they fled in panic in the direction of Radzymin. They were pursued by the Polish units. The force of the Polish attack was very violent: the enemy failed to retain the machine-guns and six of them, along with two cannons, fell into the hands of the 46th Regiment. The 2nd Wilno Battalion and companies of the 47th regiment also seized several machines. Prisoners were taken.

It was 11:05 when Captain Downar-Zapolski, commander of the 1st Wilno Battalion (in the reserve), reported to the commander of the 2nd Brigade:

As ordered by the regimental commander I report that Cegielnia has been captured. The regiment is advancing to the town of Radzymin.

The successful news quickly reached the commanders. Here is Lt.-Colonel Rybicki's (later) assessment of the moment:

The remnants of the 46th Regiment were bravely assisting the Wilno Regiment. The Grodno Regiment was slower on this day, acting sluggishly – seeing that, I urged its commander on.

After throwing the enemy out of Cegielnia, the pursuit took on a dizzying pace. Soon the Polish troops, running almost on the heels of the fleeing Russians, reached the southern edge of Radzymin. They did not stop there but ran into the streets of the town, shouting and firing in all directions, and continued to press on.

Now the battle took on a different aspect. When setting out on the assault the troops had stuck together, but once in the town the tactical links loosened.



One of the participants recalls that in the end:

... it was chaotic. Admittedly for a time there was strong and decisive push of the dense rifle lines, up to two km behind the retreating enemy.

He also noted that by the end the advancing forces were exhausted: many soldiers could no longer run, and others stopped along the way with some abandoned trophy. The northern edge of the city was reached by groups of the bravest and most resistant soldiers, who mostly stayed close to their officers.

Despite the mixing of units and the loosening of tactical links, however, some order was maintained: a few riflemen of 46th Regiment reached the north-western edge of the town, while two companies of the 2nd Wilno Battalion (5th and 7th), together with the leading companies of 3rd Battalion, reached the area of the cemetery and to the left of it, while the rest of 2nd Battalion was only just approaching. On the north-eastern edge of the town was the 8th Company of the 47th Regiment, with the 9th Company to the right of it (around the Radzymin – Kraszew road), which was intending to advance further on towards Dybów.

Meanwhile, the rest of the 46th Regiment, in the reserve with Major Kwiatkowski, reached the southern edge of Radzymin, where it halted. The 1st Wilno Battalion was in the vicinity of Cegielnia, while part of the 3rd Battalion was used to advance on Ciemne.

It should be explained that the assault, led along the road, moved in spite of the enemy being in Ciemne. After the main attack was launched, Company 7/47 and a platoon of Company 9/47 attacked Ciemne, but were unsuccessful.

Similarly unsuccessful were the efforts of the Squadron 3/4 HRR, which was to advance on Stary Janków and Wiktorów and cover the right wing of the attack along the road. That was beyond the capabilities of the weak squadron, of only 42 sabres. At the time the Polish troops took Radzymin, the squadron attempted to advance from the woods towards Ciemne, but was stopped by heavy fire from the Russian 239th RR.

Thus, the right wing regiment of the Russian 80th Brigade were not ejected from Ciemne, and they repulsed all the Polish attacks.

In the midst of this, *Divizion 1/19 FAR* prepared to move observation posts to further support the advance. Its commander, Lieutenant Romiszewski, rode towards the town, ordering the 2nd Battery to move observation posts. In the mean time it was to use the observation point of the 1st Battery (a windmill in Słupno) and an advanced observation point on Height 94. The 3rd Battery moved its point to a forester's lodge east of the road, near Cegielnia, where the 4th Company of the Wilno Regiment was located, facing towards Ciemne.

However the batteries of the Middle Subgroup, which were still in the area of Struga and Pietrówka, could not effectively cooperate, as they were too far from the battle line, and in addition their observation points remained on the second defensive line. Only the 4th Battery of the 3rd HAR moved its observation point to Cegielnia.

The capture of Radzymin was, of course, a great success, and news of it spread rapidly. General Rządkowski, Colonel Jaźwiński and many other Polish and foreign officers made their way by car or on horseback towards the town. The news was also eagerly awaited by the staff officers who had remained at the command posts. The HQ of the 1st Lit-Bel Division (in Marki) received the news that the first line northeast of Radzymin had been reached, while the action to recapture Kraszew was in progress. This was not entirely accurate by the way, but was passed on to the 11th Division HQ and the Army.

Soon the news of the capture of Radzymin was confirmed and at around 11:30 the 11th Division's staff reported to the 1st Army that the left wing of the 1st Lit-Bel Division was in the process of establishing communication with the 48th Regiment. At 11:10 the commander of the artillery group, Colonel Szpręglewski, was notified of the capture of Radzymin and the development of the assault towards Kraszew.

While most of the news was positive, there was also some that was worrying. At 11:35 the Lit-Bel Division staff in Marki received a message from the 11th Division that the 47th Regiment had reported that, "three



regiments or battalions were spotted on the Lipiny – Nowa Wie line, developing a counter-attack” against the Lit-Bel Division, and that enemy troops were advancing in the direction of Kraszew. Upon receiving this news, the artillery group command was requested to give the order to fire on those columns. However for various reasons that order was only given to the Right Subgroup at 14:00.

But the real danger threatened from elsewhere, in precisely from the opposite direction, because the enemy’s 81st Brigade threatened the left wing, the Grodno Regiment, which we must now deal with more closely.

The Attack on the Left Wing

We left the Grodno Regiment, as it arrived in the vicinity of Słupno, deployed for the attack. At this time news came from the direction of Wólka Radzyńska. Unfortunately the documents and accounts don’t tell us what the news was or who sent it. Likely the commander of the Grodno Regiment received the results of the reconnaissance by Lieutenant Czuczełowicz (Squadron 1/3 HRR) and the 21st Brigade command. At 10:35 Lt-Colonel Bohaterewicz wrote to the commander of the Wilno Regiment that he was waiting in Słupno for that regiment to launch an attack, as its left wing was threatened from the Wólka Radzyńska area.

The Wólka Radzyńska area may indeed already have been of concern to the commanders. We have mentioned previously that at 08:30 the 21st Brigade had overheard a telephone message that the enemy had seized the area of Wólka Radzyńska and Izabelin, and therefore sent a horse patrol and two patrols by car in the direction of Wólka, which indeed found the presence of the enemy. Then the commander of the 21st Brigade turned to some artillery commander (likely Colonel Aleksandrowicz) asking him to fire at Wólka Radzyńska, “as, in all probability, a serious force had gathered there.” He received a harsh, negative reply, as the artillery commander claimed that he “did not want to cause panic in the batteries positioned to the north of Wólka.”

In the course of these events the attack of the Grodno Regiment began, between 10:30 and 11:00. The 3rd Battalion moved towards Height 98 and Aleksandrów Manor, while the 2nd Battalion, lapping the western edge of Cegielnia, followed with its left wing also towards Aleksandrów Manor. Shortly after setting off, the left wing companies of the 3rd Battalion stopped. Enemy appeared on the slope of Heights 98 and 92, which they had not noticed when they set off. Second Lieutenant Lipin’s 9th Company, meeting no resistance on the road, got to a distance of 200 paces west of the buildings of the manor. Then a large enemy transport column was spotted between the buildings, surprised by the Polish attack. The manor was taken by the 9th Company, which took a large number of prisoners. The 2nd Battalion was advancing during this time, having visual contact to the right. It took part in an assault on Cegielnia (capturing two MGs and several prisoners), after which the 5th and 6th Companies advanced towards Aleksandrów Manor. The 8th Company stayed in reserve in Słupno. We can see that the regiment’s offensive lacked decisive action. This was influenced by the situation in the area of Wólka Radzyńska.

At 11:55 the commander of the Grodno Regiment reported to the brigade commander:

I am advancing slowly. The troops have passed Cegielnia in the indicated direction to Aleksandrów. My left wing is threatened and under attack, as the 48th Regiment has retreated from Wólka Radzyńska.

The 21st Brigade’s command did not abandon its intention to reconnoitre the area of Wólka Radzyńska and therefore ordered at 11:30 the dispatch of one company of Battalion 2/47 with two machine-guns “in order to eliminate the enemy who had broken into Wólka”, but before a quarter of an hour had passed the order was cancelled due to a notification from the division commander that the defensive line and Radzymin had been regained.

What made the situation even more confusing was that at one point a car came from the Wólka Radzyńska area and stopped around the 21st Brigade HQ. In the car sat some unknown women. Greatly surprised, Lieutenant Tokarz, the brigade’s adjutant, approached the car and asked where they had come



from. They answered from Zegrze and that no enemy had been seen on the way. The brigade command then sent a patrol by car to establish communication with the 48th Regiment.

The news was true, as the enemy 81st Brigade, on hearing that the Poles had struck in the direction of Radzymin, left one regiment in place, while two turned back eastwards. The enemy's departure was taken advantage of by Lieutenant Czuczelowicz's Squadron, which now entered Wólka Radzymińska. It was then that the car, travelling from Zegrze to Struga, passed along the road. But the village was held for only a dozen or so minutes, as by 11:30 the driver returned from near Wólka Radzymińska, reporting that he had been fired upon. The commander of the 21st Brigade ordered Battalion 2/47 to send an officer patrol with the task of establishing communication with the 48th Regiment at any cost. So a battle between the Grodno Regiment and the Soviet 81st RB ensued.

The 2nd and 3rd Battalions lost contact with each other now, and only the 5th Company of Cadet Papuziński reached Aleksandrów Manor from the 2nd Battalion. Second Lieutenant Lipin, commander of the 9th Company, who was operating to the left of Aleksandrów Manor, noticed Cadet Papuziński, but did not manage to communicate with him due to the rapid development of events. In the midst of this, the 3rd Battalion was surprised while moving by enemy machine-gun fire, coming from Heights 92 and 98. There was no communication with the 1st Battalion, which was supposed to provide cover to the left, and the commander of the 3rd Battalion did not know why that battalion was not following him.

Soon afterwards units of the Russian 241st and 242nd Regiments advanced from behind the hills and attacked the 3rd Grodno Battalion. Its companies, taking losses, faltered, even though "the battalion commander tried with all his might to prevent the battalion from retreating."

Aware of the considerable advantage the enemy had, the 3rd Battalion commander no longer thought of attacking, but wondered if he could even hold on to the positions he had reached. Fearing that the small battalion would break up, he ordered a retreat to the starting positions of the morning. The leading companies found themselves in a dangerous position. The left wing company suffered heavy losses (Cadet Ewiak killed), and the 9th Company was cut off on the retreat. The remaining companies withdrew under the cover of their machine-guns, which halted the enemy.

The development of events was so rapid that the 9th Company commander realised too late when an enemy rifle line appeared behind him and threatened his line of retreat. He then moved with the company to the south-east, placing the machine-guns on some carts of captured rolling stock, the soldiers walking alongside, firing at the enemy. But it was not easy to evade the enemy, who was advancing quite fast, and its fire was hurting men and horses. The situation was bad.

Suddenly the rattle of a machine-gun came from the last wagon. It turned out that a soldier, having a Maxim on his cart, had loaded it and fired at the Russian riflemen and a cavalry patrol. The company breathed a sigh of relief, as now the enemy did not interfere with its retirement. It reached the Radzymin road and then withdrew to the second defensive line positions.

The 5th Company of Cadet Papuziński was attacked in a similar way (it had remained in the vicinity of Aleksandrów Farm), and in difficult conditions barely escaped from the hands of the enemy, taking heavy losses. Cadet Ryllman, who had joined from the 46th Regiment, was wounded.

This was a counter-attack of the Soviet 81st Rifle Brigade, which immediately broke the leading companies of the Grodno Regiment. The rest of the 2nd Battalion, as a result of the blow from the west, withdrew to the western edge of Cegielnia, and from there to Słupno. The battalion's retreat was facilitated by 2nd-Lieutenant Pełka, who, counter-attacking with the 8th Company, rushed to the aid of the retreating companies.

The Russian 81st RB, having thrown back the Grodno Regiment, advanced to the east, now threatening not only the Grodno Regiment, but also the troops that occupied Radzymin. At that time the troops, located in Radzymin, were also in retreat. The situation became dangerous, as the enemy threatened the Polish troops from the flank. This moment was described by Lieutenant Gędziwłło, commander of the Grodno Regiment's technical company, in the following words:



Something was wrong in front of us. The barking of machine-guns intensified furiously, the shots become hurried, feverish, closer and closer. They burst out at once and faded away, only to burst out again in a disorderly fashion. Bullets whistled overhead.

The enemy did not stop after it dispersed the Grodno Regiment, pushing forward and threatening the retreating troops. Soon they threatened the technical company and a small sapper detachment in Słupno. Lieutenant Gędźwiłło recalls it in these words:

Suddenly we heard some shots closer and clearer from the left wing. Some 1,000 to 1,200 metres ahead of us, on low hills, we could see some little dots moving quickly towards us.

That was probably our retreating riflemen. Several shells burst on the hills – our artillery was holding back the enemy. “I can see,” my spotter shouts from a tree, “on the left behind the hills are some chains of infantry, it’s Bolsheviks.” The thunder of our rifles quiets down, while the swish of bullets becomes sharper, more intense. At that moment Corporal Iwanowski runs up to me: “Lieutenant,” he shouts from afar, “the sappers are running away – everyone is running away.”

I run after him to my right – there are no sappers. “You should have shot the bastards,” I shout. “There were no orders, and we are short on bullets anyway.”

The Grodno Regiment finally withdrew to the second line of the bridgehead and manned it. After the withdrawal the regimental commander reported to the brigade that he had retreated due to the threat to his left flank and the withdrawal of the Wilno regiment, noting that he could not hold the regiment anyway.

Attack on the Right Wing

We have already noted that at 06:00 on 14 August the commander of the Nowogród Regiment gave an order to muster in the Ulasek area and, after assembling the regiment, ordered it to march towards Kraszew. On setting off from Ulasek, Major Oziewicz (regimental commander) gave verbal orders to the commander of the 2nd Battalion, Lieutenant Pawliszyn. He was to:

March immediately with the whole battalion through Czarna Manor and Helenów to Kraszew. Defeat the enemy if possible, occupy the above-mentioned villages, and after capturing them, report the execution with a mounted liaison officer.

Leading the advance guard – it was a covered march – was Cadet Prażmowski, commander of the 6th Company, with an added a machine-gun. The cadet, like the other commanders, did not have time to get acquainted with the location and terrain, and could not send scouts. He received:

... an order to move immediately with the advance guard, directly from the regimental commander, who personally told him to set off.

So as he moved forward, apart from the advance guard, there were only patrols at close range to the sides. The rest of the battalion marched at some distance behind the 6th Company, and the 1st and 3rd Battalions advanced in column. The regimental and battalion officers rode at the head of the 3rd Battalion.

At around 10:00 the 6th Company passed the buildings of the manor house in Czarna Stara, crossed the bridge over the Czarna River and moved out from behind the fences of Czarna Stara village and manor to the north bank. The advance guard was now advancing slowly, as it marched in the open terrain rising from the banks of the river towards the north. Nearby, wooded hills could be seen, which, stripped of bushes in some places, glittered in the sun with bright patches of sand.

At one point several shots were fired at the lead unit, without causing any harm. It was from Russian lookouts, who retreated behind the hills.

The company moved on. At 200 paces from the hill it received fire again, this time much stronger. Now Cadet Prażmowski deployed the company and pushed forward, intending to capture the hill the enemy was shooting from. Despite the heavy fire, coming from the north and east, the company made it to the hill. The enemy posts withdrew.



The company commander sent a messenger to report the results to the battalion commander. He also asked for reinforcement on his right flank, as the danger from the east (heavy enemy fire) made it difficult for him to advance further. So the battalion's commander crossed the Czarna River, then directed the 7th Company to the left of the 6th, and reinforced Prażmowski with two machine-guns. The 8th Company and two machine-guns remained; he intended to keep all of them together with the rolling stock, hidden among the trees to the right of the road.

Upon the commander's order, the 7th Company set off, but only after a few dozen steps, heavy fire from the direction of Helenów caused confusion. The disorder soon turned into full on flight, initially of individual groups of soldiers, and finally of the whole company. Second Lieutenant Sadowski, the company commander, was wounded, and his soldiers retreated to the manor house in Czarna Stara.

The retreat of the 7th Company shook the 6th Company and contributed to its retreat. This is mentioned by the company commander in these words:

Seeing this, the demoralised privates of my company, not having sufficient NCOs, also began to flee from the flanks, so that soon the whole company was forced to retreat to Czarna under flanking enemy fire.

At first the battalion commander tried to gather the 8th Company and counter-attack, but seeing it was fruitless, he finally surrendered the initiative and ordered the battalion to assemble among the buildings of Czarna Stara village and manor. He reported the events to the regimental commander.

So this was the first attack of the Nowogród Regiment, thrown back by the units of the Russian 80th RB, which were manning positions in the area of Ciemne and Helenów.

At around 10:30, the regimental commander decided to use the 3rd Battalion for an assault and sent two companies with the task of securing the flanks of the 2nd Battalion. The 10th Company was sent to the right of the bridge, while the 9th Company was ordered to attack in the general direction of Janków Stary and Wiktorów. The 1st Battalion and the rest of the 3rd Battalion stayed with the regimental HQ in a wood south of Czarna Stara Manor. Having made these preparations, Major Oziewicz ordered the commander of the 2nd Battalion to resume the attack.

The assault was undertaken in not very favourable conditions: there was no information about the location of any neighbouring units and no communication with them, as well as no artillery support. The regiment directed its fire demands through the 2nd Brigade, but it could not help the regiment much, as it was occupied with fighting in other areas. In the end, the regiment was supported only by Battery 2/11 HAD, which was on the eastern edge of Nadma.

The 2nd Battalion, having formed one company from its entire strength, moved (under the command of Cadet Prażmowski) towards the buildings to the west of the road. To the right of it the 10th Nowogród Company and Company 3/47 were to attack. Cadet Prażmowski outlines the course of the attack in these words:

After deploying in a loose formation, as soon as we came out into the ground 200 metres from the buildings, we were fired on heavily from the front. However, we reached the buildings in one go, and the enemy platoon, together with an MG, ran away to the rear in panic. During the attack, the privates were very reluctant to advance, so I had to chase them many times with the threat of my revolver.

After capturing the buildings, while I was organising our line to move forward, three Bolshevik lines suddenly emerged from behind the hills, advancing along the road. A fierce firefight ensued, which did not stop the advancing men, pushed on by several commissars in red blouses. The events of the first attack were repeated. On the wings, where there were no officers, or even NCOs, the privates started to flee in panic to Czarna. Soon I found myself, with only a few privates, several dozen metres away from the advancing Bolshevik horde, trying to stop our from our left wing from fleeing.

So the second attack of the 2nd Battalion did not bring the desired results, especially as no one supported it. There was just the left flank of Company 3/47, where Sergeant Zawodny and a handful of men advanced.



They fell under machine-gun fire, the brave sergeant was killed, and the men retreated back to their positions behind the river. The 2nd Battalion, after withdrawing, went to Czarna Manor, while the 3rd Battalion manned the trenches with Companies 3/47 and 4/47, reaching the bridge with its left wing.

This failure caused the regimental commander to use the companies of the 1st Battalion. He now directed the 1st Company to the right wing, between Companies 3/47 and 4/47. The 3rd Company was ordered to attack Janków Nowy. Major Oziwicz reported this to the 2nd Brigade, saying: "I am currently trying to attack for the third time." Ultimately, however, the third attack did not take place, as it seems the Nowogród Regiment received news from Radzymin.

The regimental commander, intending to open the way to Helenów and then to develop an assault on Kraszew, pushed forward the battered 2nd Battalion twice and, once it failed, threw companies of the other battalions to the left and right of it. The results were not good. In the course of these events, the Nowogród companies and Battalion 1/47 intermingled with each other.

Second Lieutenant Lurski, commander of Company 3/47, who observed this – as he expresses it – hesitant advance, states that:

Without artillery support it was difficult to consider regaining the former positions. The Bolsheviks were on the hills and could see every man at a glance, and they had a lot of machine-guns, supported by artillery.

After halting his advance, Major Oziwicz reported to the brigade commander that, due to the threat of enemy fire from the east and north, he had stopped at the Czarna River.

He was unaware of the general situation or his nearest neighbours. He proposed (in a report to the brigade) that the 47th BRR should strike in the direction of Lipiny and Nowa Wieś. Major Oziwicz felt this would secure his right flank.

Breakdown of the Advance in Radzymin and then Retreat

Map 6 and Panorama 3 in Appendices 3 and 4.

We have just learned about the course of the main attack that led to the capture of Radzymin. The flank offensive failed as the Polish forces proved too weak. The enemy broke the attacks on the wings and then threatened the central column.

As the troops occupied Radzymin, Major Liwacz, the commander of the 46th Regiment, hurried forward, intending to personally oversee any further action. On the way, he encountered Captain Morawski, who he took to be chief of staff of the Lit-Bel Division, and asked him to secure the flanks. He made the same request to Lt-Colonel Kohutnicki, Chief of Staff of the 11th Division.

Soon Major Liwacz arrived at the market square, where Lieutenant Wyzina (leading a battalion of the 46th) reported to him that enemy cavalry had appeared to the west of the town. Liwacz then left for the edge of town, where he verified that the message was true. Accordingly, the regiment's adjutant, Lieutenant Rehman, was sent to report the situation to his superiors. Rehman went to Cegielnia, where he met Lt-Colonel Kohutnicki. The chief of staff, however, did not believe the news.

It was also noticed from the road that a number of riflemen were heading towards Cegielnia from the west. At first it was assumed that they belonged to the Grodno Regiment, but soon the mistake was recognised. It was indeed the enemy.

At the same time there was a collapse of the troops in Radzymin, and a retreat began on the left flank.

The riflemen of the 46th BRR, who had advanced to the northern edge of Radzymin town, saw the enemy cavalry leaving the woods and advancing rapidly towards the town. Tachankas could be seen among the groups of horsemen. At the same time, Russian infantry units showed up to the north. So the Polish troops in Radzymin were in a dangerous situation.



News about the appearance of cavalry on the left wing, about the threat to the rear and the enemy infantry advancing with terrifying speed spread among the soldiers of the 46th Regiment. By the time the encounter with the enemy took place, some groups of soldiers were had lost their morale and collapsed.

The 46th Regiment was not an organised unit at that time. In the assault everyone had been united by the common and understandable goal of taking back Radzymin, but now that everything had broken down, it was impossible to organise the regiment. It is difficult in a street fight to indicate to a soldier the purpose of an action: moreover, they were reluctant to listen to unknown commanders. The efforts of a few officers of the 46th Regiment, trying to stop the retreating men, were hopeless. Indeed, they did not last long, as they too were soon swept away by the wave of panic. One of the participants recalled:

I was experiencing mental depression, bordering on confusion of the senses.

As the soldiers retreated through the city, they encountered the enemy pressing into the streets from the west and cutting them off. This increased the panic.

Soon the scattered men of the 46th Regiment broke through to the southern edge of the town and headed towards Cegielnia in disorder. The retreat of the 46th Regiment quickly took its toll on its neighbours.

The closest at that time were companies of the 2nd and 3rd Wilno Battalions and the 8th Company of the 47th Regiment. The commander of the 7th Company recalls the moment in this way:

The attention of the company was unexpectedly seized by an surprising complication on the left wing, where the Grodno Regiment was operating, which was already almost up to us, when from a nearby hill masses of enemy infantry moved to counter-attack it with loud shouts of "ura!". Among the enemy infantrymen, figures on horseback could be seen hovering, apparently commanders, exhorting their soldiers to attack.

The Grodno Regiment's infantry, apparently surprised by this, stopped, then there was a breakdown and confusion, characteristic of being attacked, and finally they began a determined retreat. This was happening before our eyes. With no enemy in front of us for the time being, we opened a heavy fire on the enemy flank, which was level with us.

Similar details are also given by other participants. At that time, Captain Szczerbicki (commander of the 2nd Wilno Battalion) was in the market square in Radzymin, having just received news that the enemy had encircled Radzymin from the western side and forced its way into the town. In the heat of the moment, he ran out of time to inform the other companies, as he had to retreat. On the way out he was wounded.

There was no need to warn the companies, as the troops – alerted by the shouting and clamour coming from the town – were already retreating. Soon the companies of the 2nd Battalion reached the market square, where they found the enemy. Second Lieutenant Witkowski of the 5th Company recounts:

We hadn't managed to reach the square in Radzymin, when we saw Bolshevik columns, headed by a dozen or so Cossacks, advancing on our troops.

There was no kidding oneself – we had to break through immediately.

Company 8/47, which also tried to retreat through the town, came under heavy enemy fire while still on the northern outskirts. The company's commander, 2nd-Lieutenant Jablonski, fell seriously wounded, and the company dispersed. Most of it retreated east of the town, to Company 9/47. The latter was at the time engaged in a firefight with the enemy, occupying positions in the Dybów area. It was then threatened to the rear.

In view of this, 2nd-Lieutenant Osika, the company commander, ordered a retreat towards a grove between Wiktorów and Ciemne, and then towards the forest south of Ciemne. At the edge of that forest the company stopped, exhausted and thinned by losses.

The retreat of the 2nd and 3rd Wilno Battalions took place in different conditions. At first, the retreating companies ran quickly through the streets and, jumping over fences, tried to escape the pursuing cavalry. However, as soon as the retreating men managed to get out of the hands of the first danger, they were immediately confronted by a second, because the enemy was again blocking its way, coming from the west



towards the eastern edge of the town. At that time, by an unfortunate coincidence, Polish heavy and light artillery shelled the city, hitting the clusters of mixed-up soldiers.

The men of the Wilno Regiment could no longer move through Radzymin and headed through the fields towards Cegielnia and Ciemne. The soldiers, despite being dispersed, were escaping in groups gathered around their officers (Lieutenant Orzechowski, and 2nd Lieutenants Turczyński, Puzinowski and Witkowski). Those wounded who could still be saved were not forgotten. Two NCOs were leading wounded 2nd-Lieutenant Terlecki from the 3rd Battalion.

During this retreat a cavalry unit suddenly appeared from the east, which drove away the last groups of retreating soldiers between the fences of Ciemne, and captured some of the men – including the wounded 2nd-Lieutenant Terlecki. The same unit raced after the rest of the Wilno Regiment. This episode is recalled by the commander of the 7th Company:

We had just passed the edge of Ciemne, when a loud shout that cavalry were behind us compelled us to immediately undertake some counteraction.

At this critical moment there were three officers who were staying together in our escape: Lieutenant Orzechowski, commander of the 5th Company; Lieutenant Puzinowski, commander of the 6th Company, and myself. Aware of the danger, we instinctively pointed our revolvers at our own soldiers, ordering them to stop immediately, calm themselves down and open fire at the cavalry. Apparently the soldiers also understood that escape from the cavalry was impossible, as our order was generally immediately and well executed. And the timing was good – a squadron of Bolshevik cavalry came charging at us with sabres drawn, at a distance of about 150 metres.

Hit by our heavy fire, the enemy squadron quickly turned back to the village, taking cover behind the huts.

However, we had barely managed to start running again, heading in the direction of the forester's lodge, when the same squadron tried to charge again. This time, however, the attempt failed completely – our soldiers, aware of the success they had just achieved over the cavalry, did not allow themselves to be intimidated by the flashing sabres. On the contrary, they opened fire on the enemy without any orders, and it, suffering losses, returned back to the village.

After this clash, the 2nd and 3rd Battalions fortunately withdrew to the woods, where they were able to catch their breath.

While most of the troops broke and retreated from Radzymin, some attempts were made to organise resistance.

At the moment of the crisis in Radzymin, the only detachment capable of action was the 1st Wilno Battalion, which the regimental commander had halted in Cegielnia. The reserve of the 46th Regiment, led by Major Kwiatkowski, shared the fate of the rest of the regiment. Kwiatkowski appealed to Major Bobiatyński, commander of the Wilno Regiment, for help, but – as he recalls – received the reply that it would not happen until the 46th Regiment was fit for action. Undoubtedly, Major Bobiatyński, seeing the threat from the west and having news that the majority of the regiment was embroiled in a chaotic battle, did not want to deprive himself of his last reserves.

At this time only three companies remained of the 1st Battalion, as Cadet Jurkiewicz's 1st Company also took part in the assault. Lieutenant Przedwojewski's 2nd Company stood beside the road near Cegielnia, the 4th Company garrisoned the brickworks, and the 3rd Company was in the middle. The observer of Battery 3/19 FAR was in the line of the 1st Battalion.

The senior commanders tried to stop the escaping soldiers of the 46th Regiment in the fields between Radzymin and Cegielnia, but they soon gave up and rode back. The earliest to leave the battlefield was Colonel Jaźwiński, as by 13:40 he was at the headquarters of the 21st Brigade in Struga, from where he



immediately sent one company to Lt-Colonel Rybicki. The division commander stayed in Struga for a short time, after which he went to Marki and informed (by Hughes) the Army command of the situation. He reported at the same time:

Our attack has stopped in such a way that the Bolsheviks hold the northern part of the town, while we hold the southern part. The fight continues. I have used the last company of my reserve. The reserve of the 19th Division was already exhausted.

It goes without saying that the situation at the time was much worse than this report.

General Rządkowski, Lt-Colonel Kohutnicki and other officers remained some time on the road, trying to control the retreat. Seeing the futility of the effort, Kohutnicki suggested to Rządkowski that he should depart.

The clumps of men, which had failed to stop at the southern edge of the town, rolled down the road and followed in an unstoppable broad wave towards Cegielnia. The 1st Wilno Battalion began to arrive at the positions, initially in small numbers and then in larger groups. The first groups of fleeing soldiers were stopped, but before the bulk from Radzymin arrived, bullets began to whistle from both sides of the road.

Seeing the danger, Captain Downar-Zapolski, commander of the 1st Wilno Battalion, ordered Lieutenant Orzeszk, commander of the 1st Machine-gun Company, to man the road with all the MGs, his own or captured. Then a rifle line appeared from the direction of Ciemne. At first it was taken for Poles, but it turned out to be the enemy, opposed by the small 4th Wilno Company and some detachment of the 11th Division (probably of the 47th BRR). Lieutenant Orzeszk reinforced it with two machine-guns and a handful of infantry. At the same time, danger threatened from the west, as enemy riflemen were seen approaching from there, aiming to cut the road. The 3rd Battery fired on those new enemy.

The main mass of those fleeing Radzymin were still flowing southwards. At this time the right wing of the 1st Battalion was reinforced with a company of NCOs from the Wilno Regiment and the technical company of Lieutenant Strumiłło-Pietraszkiewicz. It was hoped that it might be possible to hold back the 2nd and 3rd Battalions. This proved impossible to do, as the soldiers of those battalions were exhausted, while the enemy did not let them rest, as it continued to pursue.

A right wing company and a detachment of the 47th Regiment held out for some time around the brickworks. Soon the enemy's infantry appeared, moving from Ciemne area through the forest towards the road. Enemy machine-guns advanced to the west end of the forest and immediately began firing. The 4th Company was forced to retreat in the direction of the road, where the other divisions were heading, the soldiers gathering in disorderly groups on the road, not only constituting a good target for the enemy, but also a crowd susceptible to a new collapse. Captain Morawski, seeing that the enemy was not only threatening the retreating infantry with fire, but was also flanking it from Cegielnia, proposed to Captain Downar-Zapolski that a counter-attack be made in that direction.

It was not possible to form the troops to counter-attack, as the enemy's superiority was too evident and the worn-out Polish troops were incapable of offensive action at this point. Then another panic arose, making counter-action impossible.

Now the men retreated to the second defensive line. Once again, an attempt was made to take up a position around the junction of the Janków Nowy to Słupno road with the highway. To this end, Captain Downar-Zapolski stopped and, as he was giving orders, received a fatal shot in the chest. At the last moment, he ordered Cadet Liksza of the 1st machine-gun company to take his bag containing the map and orders, and then he died. The 1st Battalion, having lost many men at that time (including the wounded Lieutenant Przedwojewski), shared the fate of the other units and disintegrated. The scattered units were now approaching the second line.

For the artillery, the events that took place in Radzymin and the subsequent retreat affected primarily the batteries that had supported the attack. When we last looked the 1st *Divizion*, 19th FAR was preparing to move its observation posts forward. Battery 4/3 HAR was also building a telephone link, to an observation post at Cegielnia.



The commanders of Batteries 1/19 and 2/19 FAR stayed at the observation point in Słupno, while the commander of the 3rd Battery was in the infantry line around Cegielnia. Lieutenant Romiszewski (*division* commander) went to the town to examine the situation. Other commanders, such as Colonels Aleksandrowicz and Szpręglewski stayed on the second line or at Lt-Colonel Rybicki's observation point.

At the critical moment Lieutenant Romiszewski ordered the batteries to cover the retreat, which was not easy to do as the Polish infantry was retreating here and there, mixed with the enemy infantry. We have noted previously that a few shells of our own artillery struck the retreating clusters and added to the panic. We saw that the infantry tried to organise resistance in the Cegielnia area and eventually, threatened from the east, had to retreat. The Russian 81st RB threatened the retreat from the west, advancing towards the road after the Grodno Regiment had been thrown back.

Lieutenant Tomaszewski (commander of the 1st Battery) saw from his observation point in Słupno that the rifle lines of the 81st RB were getting closer and closer, while the battery could not fire at the enemy from its position, as a high bank covered the guns from the west, which it could not shoot through. So the battery commander sent a platoon with 2nd-Lieutenant Rajewicz and Cadet Henneberg at a trot to an open position in the fields between Słupno and Cegielnia. Soon the platoon began firing straight ahead, aiming at the enemy approaching from the west towards the road.

This fire was very effective, but obviously did not last long. Soon one gun broke down and eventually the battery commander ordered the platoon to return. At the same time the Polish infantry, pushed out of Cegielnia and other positions, appeared in disarray close to the second line. The artillerymen now had a difficult task to fulfil.

First came the scattered units of the 46th Regiment, retreating through the fields between Słupno and the road. The loose groups of retreating soldiers tried to stop at the positions of the Batteries 1/19 and 2/19, but failed. That was no surprise as the soldiers had run quite a distance under fire and remained in a state of panic-stricken bewilderment – all the more so as they still had the enemy on their heels. They had by now suffered heavy losses, with Lieutenants Wyzina and Szut and 2nd-Lieutenant Wollszleger being wounded among the officers (all from the 46th Regiment), not counting the considerable losses among the privates. Just before the second line, 2nd-Lieutenant Auriga fell unconscious from exhaustion.

Following in their wake, and often in parallel, came a wave of the Wilno Regiment which had also suffered considerable losses on the day. Passing through the obstacles of barbed wire, the commander of the 1st *Division*, Lieutenant Romiszewski, and the commander of Battery 3/19, 2nd-Lieutenant Jan Misiewski, were wounded on the road. This was the final period of the retreat.

Officers of various commands rushed to their posts. It was feared that if the soldiers were not held at the second line, the catastrophe could assume incalculable proportions.

One of the first to reach the positions was Colonel Jaźwiński, who took all the officers from Marki. General Rządkowski, having departed from Radzymin at the moment of the greatest panic, also decided to halt the retreat at all costs. The general was suffering from dysentery at the time, but he found enough strength to stand among the retreating troops with a rifle in his hand. He later recalled:

I assessed the situation at that moment as very dangerous, particularly if our troops continued to retreat too quickly. I believe that the less resistant would have passed through the defensive line. Meanwhile the enemy, wanting to take advantage of the victory, would have pushed on and on and could have seized that line, and then the road would have been completely open ... Contagious panic in the military spreads like wildfire ... It was my intention to hold the second defensive line, but my first duty was to get the situation under control, in order to give an opportunity for the majority to come to their senses, to put things in order, and to rest for a while.

At 13:35 General Rządkowski ordered the Mińsk Regiment to march immediately to the crossroads.

By now the rest of the infantry had drifted off to the second line and the commanders of Batteries 1/19 and 2/19, seeing that their batteries remained alone in front of the line, ordered them to leave. At the moment



when everything was ready to depart, Colonel Aleksandrowicz appeared and ordered them to stop, shouting that there they should, "die, but not retreat".

Within seconds the batteries came under direct enemy fire, resulting in losses. Then Colonel Alexandrovich agreed to retreat.

It was already time. A few more shells were fired by the 2nd Battery at close range, and then, taking advantage of a convenient opportunity, it clanked and trotted away to the second line. The 1st Battery did the same. The infantry, deathly tired, then manned the positions.

Throughout the retreat, Battery 9/19 FAR (in front of the swamp east of the road) kept up a heavy fire. After its observation post had been rolled up, it fired from the map, and when the enemy was in the vicinity of Height 94 and on the edge of the Ciemne forest, it switched to direct fire. In the threatening moment Lieutenant Kitkiewicz did not begrudge the guns or shells, and he still had about six hundred of them in the position. In the morning of that day the battery had lost one cannon, now it was close to losing another or two. The cannons were so hot that the barrels had to be covered with coats and drenched with water. In the end, the retarder springs broke in two of the cannons, so the commander ordered them to withdraw, and he himself remained with the last one for 15 minutes, firing quickly at close range despite orders to leave. Finally, he left with the last of his guns crossed over the second line just as General Haller appeared on the hill. He had arrived on the battle line to observe the agony of the retreat.

General Haller's attention, along with that of the officers accompanying him, was drawn to the appearance of a large group of cavalry at the edge of the woods (south of Ciemne). The general ordered the cannon of the 9th Battery to stop at the junction of the road and fire at the enemy.

The last cannon, under the command of 2nd-Lieutenant Pac-Pomarnacki, pulled into position, whereupon General Haller reproved the confusion caused by the improper departure of the previous ones. Pac-Pomarnacki writes of this episode thus:

The gunner started to aim the cannon, but as he was grumbling, I moved him aside and, wanting to create a greater effect in the presence of General Haller, I aimed the it myself.

However, after firing the first shot, the gun jammed and was sadly forced to withdraw.

The same enemy was also spotted by the observer of Battery 4/3 HAR, which at that time was firing heavily. Battery A/75, which had an observation post at the road junction, was not idle either. It was these batteries that had the final say and deprived the enemy of the will to continue the attack on to the second line.

The commander of Battery 4/3 HAR wrote about this, emphasizing the horror of the moment.

The infantry retired into the woods behind the second defensive line, incapable of further action. The field battery, which until the last moment had been firing straight ahead from its position to the south of Słupno, also gave way and withdrew to the area of Marki.

There was nothing in front of the observation post nor in front of Battery 4/3 HAR, and the order to retreat was not forthcoming.

The Bolsheviks marched in a wave in five rifle lines, cavalry advanced from the woods south of Ciemne. The enemy began to shell the battery's observation post (in addition to machine-guns).

The cavalry was smashed with one burst from 4/3 HAR, so that it retreated into the woods and did not show itself again. The battery commander prepared himself for hand-to-hand combat. Having four HMGs, he continued to shower the Bolshevik rifle lines with alternating shells and shrapnel. Apart from the 4/3 HAR everything in this section was silent, as they were all retreating. The Bolsheviks came to within 200 to 300 m of the observation post in an unstoppable wave, so that one could distinguish faces with the naked eye. However, not everyone had rifles. Half walked with bare hands.

But they could not withstand the fire of eight guns. The attack broke down in front of the observation post ...



... The soldiers began to retire, one by one and slowly, then in crowds and *en masse*, until the retirement turned into a panicked retreat.

Admittedly we have no other similarly threatening description, although it is known that the enemy was trying to reach up to the second line, especially in the area of Słupno. But his attempts to conduct an attack along the road were unsuccessful, as no enemy movement escaped attention on the vast plain.

After the withdrawal, the troops quickly recovered from their daze and soon, as compact units, stood in position. Barely had the flimsy wires of the position been crossed, when almost instantly the panic among the troops died down. After their harsh experiences, the soldiers were finally able to draw breath and rest.

After the position was manned, the kitchen was ordered to come up, as the 46th BRR and Lit-Bel Division had had nothing to eat since 13 August.

The deployment of the troops is shown in Map 5 in Appendix 3. The left wing of the Grodno Regiment was supposed to reach as far as Height 88 (west of Wólka Radzyńska), but eventually reached only to Height 104, from where the wing was bent to the south.

After the withdrawal beyond the second line, the batteries of the Middle Subgroup, mainly those of the Lit-Bel Division were around Pietrówka, where there were batteries that had not moved forward during the day. Obviously this gave a large concentration of batteries. General Kaczyński, the inspector of Front artillery (who had come up with General Haller), pointed this out in an order, stating:

The selection of these positions was made by the batteries on their own, without receiving any instructions from either the group or *division* commanders, without taking into account that in the event of a renewed attack or a break in the front they would all be lost at once.

One cannot also overlook the fact that as a result the batteries' fields of action were restricted, as they could not fire on Słupno, Mata, Wólka Radzyńska or Nadma.

The batteries were in the positions shown on the map. All the collected batteries were subordinate to Colonel Aleksandrowicz, as the commander of the Middle Subgroup, but some were directly under the command of Colonel Szpręglewski. These were mostly Major Römmel's batteries and those that had recently arrived. The artillery command was rather convoluted.

The artillery was much more active on 14 August than the previous day

- The Right Subgroup fired 3,470 shells (Battery 1/201 – 557 rounds, 2/201 – 1 012, 2/11 HAR – 578, 3/11 HAD – 574, 2/11 – 212, 3/11 – 148, 7/11 – 389).
- The Middle Subgroup fired at least 3,000 rounds (1/19 – 714, 2/19 – 360, 3/19 – 140, 4/3 HAR – 186, 3/13 HAR – 54, 9/19 – 1 000).
- We have incomplete about the consumption of ammunition of the Left Subgroup, but it is estimated at about 1 500 shells in total (2/20 – 505, 5/9 – 600, 6/9 – 207, 2/13 – 25 shells).

Based on this we can assume that on 14 August the Radzymin Artillery Group fired at least 8 000 shells, i.e. one and a half days' worth.

The considerable consumption of ammunition by the Right Subgroup entailed certain consequences, as by the evening some batteries had only a few dozen rounds left (201 FAR), which the depot refused to replenish. The supply of ammunition for that subgroup was hampered by the heavy sandy roads.

Operations around Benjaminów and Nieporęt

The position in which we left the 48th BRR in the morning was still shaping up unfavourably. The ejection of the Left Subgroup command from Dąbkowizna, the loss of communication with the superior commands, the loss of a battery to the enemy – we have already spoken about those failures



Admittedly, the enemy did not attack the regiment's sector directly, but as it held Wólka Radzyńska it had already penetrated deeply. However, Colonel Łukoski decided to hold his sector, defending himself in the Benjaminów area. As a result, the 2nd Battalion was withdrawn to a bolt position⁵¹ from Borki to Fort Benjaminów. In order to protect against an attack from Wólka Radzyńska the technical company and half of the 9th Company were used as the regiment's right wing (sector II of the position south of the fort). There was almost no-one left in the regiment's reserve.

In the meantime the situation did not improve and even worsened, especially with regards to the artillery. Eventually Colonel Łukoski had to abandon all artillery support because his regiment could not sufficiently protect the batteries. In any case the batteries, located in the forest west of the fort, could not properly support the nearby infantry, as the technical conditions for shooting did not allow it. He communicated with the commander of the Left Subgroup and at 11:00 a decision was made to withdraw the batteries. The history of the 48th Regiment illuminates that moment in these words:

As there was a possibility that the only line of retreat (the Benjaminów – Nieporęt road) could be seized by enemy units, advancing unhindered from Wólka Radzyńska to Nieporęt, the section commander, Col. Łukoski, gave the order to withdraw all the batteries and light combat wagons to Nieporęt.

Due to the regrouping of the infantry, the withdrawal of the batteries did not take place immediately, but took some time. It did, however, take place peacefully. Between 14:00 and 15:00 the regrouping was completed: the 1st Battalion remained in its former positions, while the 2nd Battalion garrisoned the entrenched position from Borki to Fort Benjaminów, with the 6th and 7th Companies in the line. In the fort were the 10th Company and the 4th Machine-gun Company; to the right of them was the Technical Company and part of the 9th Company.

At 14:30 the right wing, forced by enemy pressure to abandon its position (opposite Dąbkowizna), withdrew to the hills south-west of the fort, where half of the 9th Company remained. The Technical Company left for the fort and together with the 11th Company formed the regiment's reserve.

The regimental commander sent reports on the situation and orders by mounted officers, who travelled via Nieporęt to Pustelnik. At 16:20 they arrived by way of a detour to the 21st Brigade's headquarters.

It should be noted that 48th Regiment's sector was quiet from midday until evening, the only clashes being by some patrols in front of the positions. The mood of the infantry was good.

As stated, at around 11:00 a decision had been made to withdraw the batteries. The decision, however, did not solve the issue of how to place the artillery securely, so this matter fell to Colonel Małachowski's group in Zegrze, which was closest and interested in the events taking place in the vicinity of Benjaminów and Nieporęt. To that end, Captain Kondracki, commander of the 1st *Divizion* of the 20th FAR was sent to Zegrze, with more or less the following order from Colonel Łukoski:

Situation known – Radzymin, Wólka Radzyńska and Dąbkowizna are occupied by the enemy, who is advancing south-west. My communication with my superiors is broken. I am bending my right wing to Benjaminów and will defend myself here. Awaiting orders.

Captain Kondracki was to report on the danger threatening the rear of Colonel Małachowski's group and to try to ensure appropriate steps were taken to stop the enemy threatening to cut off Zegrze.

On arriving in Zegrze, Captain Kondracki reported to Colonel Małachowski, but as he began to repeat details of the situation, the group commander interrupted his report and – as Captain Kondracki recalls:

... threatened to arrest him for spreading disturbing news, declaring that he knew well that Radzymin was in our hands.

⁵¹ I'm not sure what the correct English term is. Bolt positions are developed between the basic positions, diagonally to the front edge of the defence. They can be used to channel the movement of an attacking enemy.



Then Captain Kondracki, as he writes, went to “try his luck” instead with Lt-Colonel Podonowski, commander of the artillery. His support and that of some French officer, was heard by the commander. In the end, Colonel Małachowski promised to send troops to Nieporęt to secure the area.

While this was going on, the Left Subgroup was getting ready to march. The first to receive the order were Batteries 2/20 and 5/9th, followed by 1/20. The batteries of 20th FAR went directly to Nieporęt, while 5/9 stopped for a while near the fort (by the position of A/120) ready to support the infantry. Captain Siedlecki, commander of *Divizion* 3/19 FAR, also received orders to march to Nieporęt and take up positions there. The 8th Battery, the most endangered, departed first, followed by the 7th.

However Battery 6/9 withdrew under different conditions. Its commander, Lieutenant Dutkiewicz, alerted by the news that the subgroup command had left and that the heavy battery had fled its position, arrived at his post, where he received the news that the enemy had indeed been seen in the area of Wólka Radzyńska and Dąbkowizna. Being convinced that the enemy would advance towards Nieporęt, and “unable to accept close quarter combat at the position in Benjaminów” – as he recalls – he decided himself to withdraw to Nieporęt.

So all the batteries departed successively for Nieporęt. The earliest to reach there was the 2nd Battery of Captain Stępniewski’s 13th HAR, which had to leave its position near the Zabłocie foresters lodge in the morning. Around noon the battery arrived and took up position a kilometre north-west of the village next to the road. Upon arrival, the construction of a telephone line was begun to connect with the observation post at the fort.

At this time, the 1st Army Volunteer Cavalry *Divizion* arrived in Nieporęt, together with a squadron of the Łódź Mounted Police, which had been sent from Zegrze. That police unit, at the suggestion of Captain Stępniewski, went with him in the direction of Wólka Radzyńska to carry out reconnaissance. On reaching the woods before Wólka, the unit was fired upon by the enemy, but nevertheless remained in the area and continued to reconnoitre.

Between 12:00 and 13:00 the first batteries of the Left Subgroup arrived in Nieporęt. A little earlier the scattered personnel of Battery A/120 arrived.

Captain Stępniewski approached the newcomers and heard from them, “that they did not know what to do next”. He proposed they take up positions immediately, “with the task of shelling the forest with direct fire”. Shortly after the first batteries arrived, a car arrived from Zegrze with two senior officers (there is speculation that this was General Ledóchowski and Lt-Colonel Podonowski). They knew about the flight of Battery A/120, and when they met the commander of this battery, they insulted him. That officer then walked around looking distressed and asking the other battery commanders to lend him horses. Eventually he managed to get his guns back from the position.

The officers from Zegrze, also approached some of the battery commanders, demanding to know the reason for their withdrawal. In response, one of the battery commanders replied: “I could have allowed myself to die in the forest, I prefer it here in the open field.” In the course of these events, Captain Kondracki arrived and then, around 17:00, the rest of the batteries. The subgroup commander, Colonel Maluszycki, also arrived and took command.

The final positions of the batteries is shown on Sketch 48. The subgroup commander placed himself in a roadside shelter, the battery observation points were necessarily located on the line of the forward-most guns. The batteries prepared for close combat, and for that purpose the machine-guns were placed in positions. As few men as possible were left with the horses, and the limbers were placed behind the positions in a hollow in the ground just behind the road leading to Benjaminów.

The mood of the artillerymen, even though the announced infantry did not arrive, was good. It is difficult to believe that the isolated batteries felt too upbeat, however, “the batteries decided to defend themselves,” noted the commander of Battery 2/13 in his battery’s logbook for the day.



Events on the Left Wing of the 1st Army

We have several times highlighted the unexplained position in the Wólka Radzyńska area. In the morning of 14 August and in the course of the counter-attack on Radzymin, the Army command received news from various quarters about incidents that had occurred in the area of Wólka Radzyńska and Dąbkowizna. Those reports were vague and did not specify the exact location, but regardless, they showed that the subordinate commands could not cope with the matter. In view of this, Army HQ took up the task of finding what was happening with the dispatch of a cavalry detachment in the direction of Wólka Radzyńska and with pressure on the subordinate commands to also attempt to reconnoitre the area.

At 11:15 the Army issued an order that read as follows:

1st Army

14 August

To: Squadron 201 LR via 10 ID

To: 48 IR via 11 ID.

Weak enemy patrols have showed themselves in the area Wólka Radzyńska – Dąbkowizna. The 48th IR are manning the sector from Łoś, 5 km north of Radzymin to Rynia on the Narew River.

The squadron of the 201st LHR will immediately depart from Jabłonna in the direction of Wólka Radzyńska – Dąbkowizna. There it will drive out small enemy patrols, after which the squadron leader will proceed to Fort Benjaminów, where he will report to the 48th IR commander, and then to the 1st Army HQ.

The squadron, having accomplished its task, will remain in Benjaminów as Army reserve.

Bobicki

Lt-Colonel, Chief of Staff

In accordance with the above, before noon the 10th Division's command ordered the 201st Light Horse squadron, Lieutenant Skawiński, to go immediately to the 48th BRR at Fort Benjaminów:

... patrolling on the way, in particular the villages of Dąbkowizna and Wólka Radzyńska and the surrounding area.

In the afternoon the 10th Division, in connection with new information about Radzymin, sent Battalion 1/28 to Kąty Węgierskie with the task of covering the roads leading to Jabłonna-Legionowo. We will write about this later.

During the day the Zegrze Group command had to deal not only with the defence of its own sector, but also with the matter of securing the flanks and establishing communication with its neighbours.

As noted previously, as part of this the 11th Border Rifle Regiment was sent to the junction of the group with the 5th Army. The commander of that regiment, Colonel Kunicki, reported in the morning of 14 August that it had garrisoned the southern bank of the Narew near Kałuszyn and established communication with the 17th Division. He also reported that his men had patrolled the area between Dębe and Stare Orzechów without encountering the enemy.

Before dawn on 14 August, the enemy 6th RD had launched an attack, striking across the entire sector of the Zegrze Group. The assault was supported by the Russian artillery.

The first enemy attack ended in complete failure. At 06:30 Lt-Colonel Langner, commander of the 167th Regiment, reported that the enemy, who had advanced in large numbers towards Bolesławów, was driven back with artillery and machine-gun fire. At the same time the Russians were also attacking the 155th Regiment, but they did not even manage to get close to the bridgehead, as the fire of the Polish artillery and machine-guns blocked their way. After these weak assaults were repulsed, the section became calm. The enemy dug in in front of the bridgehead and conducted reconnaissance.



While this was going on, the Zegrze Group command received disturbing news from the area of the 11th Division. As early as the night of 13/14 August, the first news of the failure at Radzymin had arrived, and from then on, new, often contradictory, information arrived almost every hour. That raised concerns for the group's own rear. The group's chief of staff, Lt-Colonel Lichtarowicz wrote:

Contact with our neighbours was a worry for us because communication with them was difficult to maintain. Moreover, the rapid fall of Radzymin was not expected and created a very difficult situation for us, the more so because the enemy threatened the rear of our defence system.

During the morning of 14 August, news spread in Zegrze that the enemy had seized Wólka Radzyńska. This was spread by civilian workers, who had been working on the construction of field fortifications. It was confirmed by an officer carrying orders from the Army HQ who had been fired upon near Wólka Radzyńska, which meant he had to turn away from the road.

This caused the group's command to send the Volunteer *Divizion* of Lieutenant Siły-Nowicki (reinforced by the Łódź police horse squadron) to Nieporęt in the morning of 14 August, with the task of reconnaissance of the Wólka Radzyńska, Izabelin and Dąbkowizna area and maintaining communications with the 48th BRR.

Around 11:00 that *divizion* arrived in Nieporęt, from where it sent one platoon (35 horses) of mounted police with Lieutenant Sub-Commissioner⁵² Sarnecki with the task of establishing and maintaining communications with the 48th BRR.

At this time, Captain Kondracki arrived in Zegrze from Fort Benjaminów bringing the news discussed above. The group chief of staff wanted to pass it on by telephone to the 11th Division HQ, however he could not get a connection. Then Lt-Colonel Lichtarowicz struck up a conversation with the 1st Army Chief of Staff, Lt-Colonel Bobicki. Among other things, he reported to him that

The Bolsheviks have taken Aleksandrów, Mata, and Wólka Radzyńska. They are attacking Dąbkowizna, which is south of Fort Benjaminów.

Lt-Colonel Bobicki announced that he had sent "160 sabres of the 201st Regiment" to Dąbkowizna, and gave his consent for Zegrze to send a squadron of Volunteer cavalry to Nieporęt. He stressed that;

They should be ordered just to do intelligence and see what forces there are there; warn them of the 201st Regiment's squadron, which is heading from Jabłonna to Benjaminów.

In the afternoon the Army received news of the recapture of Radzymin, of which Zegrze was notified. But this did not reassure Zegrze, as it then had news from Fort Benjaminów and Nieporęt, contradicting the claims that the Poles were superior in that area.

At 14:00 Lt-Colonel Lichtarowicz reported to the Army that the enemy had taken Dąbkowizna, seized the Polish battery, and intended to advance towards Nieporęt and "further south on the road towards Jabłonna". The Zegrze Chief of Staff stated that this was hampering the position of the Zegrze sector, and so he claimed that, "now it must be eliminated immediately."

But in the Army did not believe this news and the officer who spoke to Lichtarowicz replied:

I will explain in a moment, but I have the impression that this is news from yesterday. At 12 o'clock Radzymin was occupied. Our rifle lines are advancing north of Radzymin.

The Nieporęt area, however, seemed to remain threatened, and a danger to Colonel Małachowski's group. This conviction forced the group's commander to send infantry to Nieporęt in order to protect the artillery located there, to hold the Nieporęt area, and at the same time secure the rear of the Zegrze group.

Between 17:00 and 18:00 orders to that effect were issued to the commander of the 7th Reserve Brigade, Lt-Colonel Zenkteler. At 18:00 Zenkteler, personally ordered Battalion 4/157 to march immediately to Nieporęt, taking with them two machine-guns with crews from the 6th BRR.

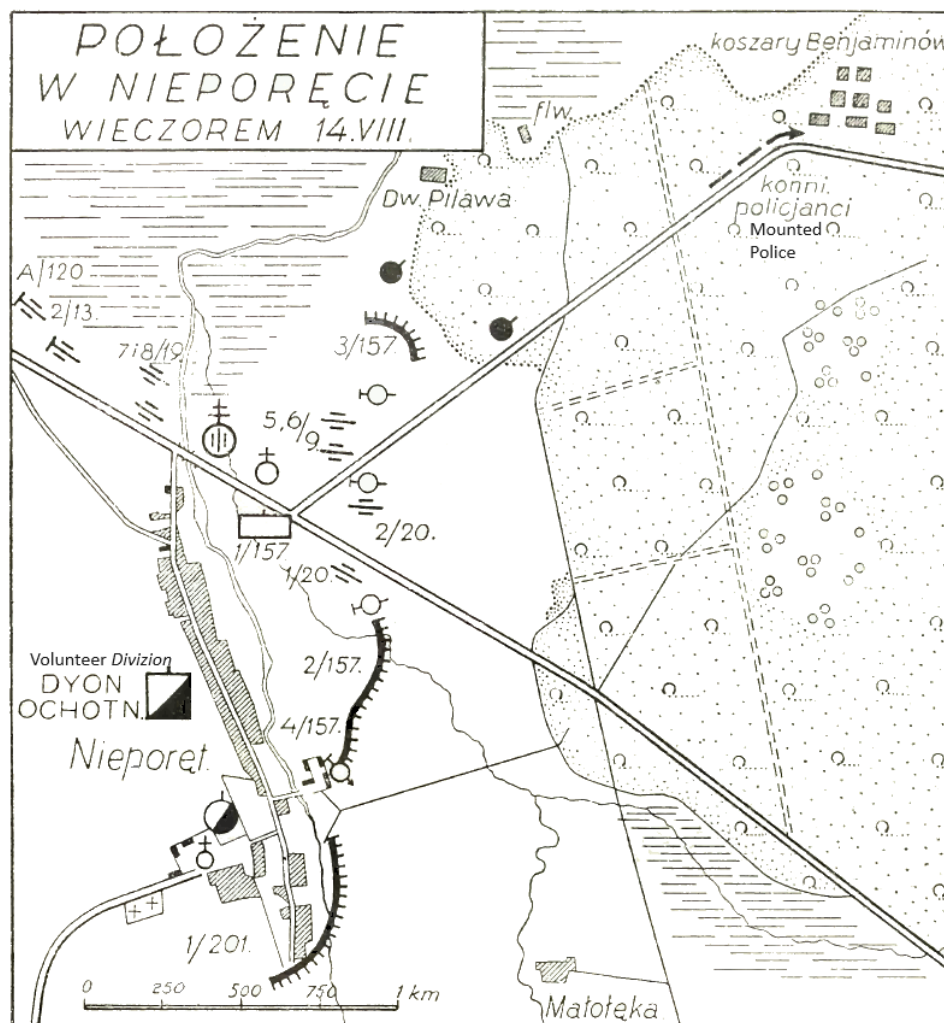
⁵² A police rank.



Upon arriving in Nieporęt, Lieutenant Stypa (who commanded the battalion at the time) was to take command of all the units (i.e. the 4th Battalion, Volunteer cavalry squadron, the Łódź police), man the bridge over the Royal Canal, send foot and horse patrols in front of the positions, and establish communication with the crew of Fort Benjaminów.

Fighting at Nieporęt in the Evening of 14 August.

We left the batteries of the Left Subgroup as they were in positions near Nieporęt and prepared for battle. The guns were charged and ready for action, and the crew were prepared for close combat.



Sketch 48: Positions at Nieporęt in the evening of 14 August

A Volunteer horse squadron was patrolling in the area in front, reaching almost to Wólka Radzyńska. Patrols of Squadron 2/3 HRR, sent from the Zabłocie area by the squadron's commander, Lieutenant Czuczelowicz, were also scouting the area.

The cavalrymen's task was not easy, as the terrain was inconvenient. In one melee near Wólka Radzyńska, the Volunteer squadron lost two wounded and two horses. In the evening the enemy drove the Volunteer patrols out of the forest (between Nieporęt and Wólka Radzyńska) and eventually the division departed for Nieporęt. On the southern outskirts of the village, the *division* stopped, with some of the police squadron remaining in the vicinity of the road junction.

The squadron commander reported the results of the reconnaissance so far in writing to the Zegrze Group HQ, which from then on was quite accurately informed of the position in Nieporęt.

The meeting of the artillery and infantry units with this cavalry in the Nieporęt area awakened a considerable amount of curiosity. The troops immediately placed their trust (especially the 48th Regiment)



in the Łódź mounted policemen, who were easily recognisable as they were then in navy blue uniforms. One officer recalled:

The morale of the mounted policemen was indeed excellent. They patrolled bravely, recounting with enthusiasm and humour their encounters with Bolshevik patrols. They were old cavalymen, mostly from the Russian army.

There was less confidence in the hastily assembled 1st Army Volunteer Cavalry, also known as the “Hussars of Death” *divizion*. One of the participants, an infantry officer states:

The mood of the Hussars of Death was much worse, all the more so because they were only young boys, untrained, and easily panicked.

In the afternoon of 14 August, another mounted unit arrived in the area, namely Squadron 1/201 LHR, which was to maintain communication with Benjaminów. The departure of that squadron had been delayed considerably, as first the squadron commander was called to Jabłonna-Legionowo and given orders (about 15:00), he then returned to Jabłonna and from there did not set off until 16:00 with his squadron, heading for Nieporęt.

At about 17:00 the squadron arrived in Nieporęt, where it joined up with the troops just mentioned. Its cavalry patrols, sent into the woods east of Nieporęt, were met by enemy fire. It was then that the squadron leader, 2nd-Lieutenant Skawiński, abandoned a further move to Benjaminów, especially as he had undoubtedly learned that communications with Benjaminów were in place. The squadron was withdrawn behind the village, the horsemen dismounted, and then positions near the manor were manned. The horses were hidden behind a church fence.

Lieutenant Skawiński reported the above to the 10th Division around 19:00 and, as the history of the 3rd Light Horse Regiment states, he then received the following order from General Żeligowski:

Hold Nieporęt. Protect the artillery and establish contact with your own infantry in the direction of Izabelin – Aleksandrów.

Around 19:30 movement was noticed on the road leading from Zegrze, and then the singing of marching soldiers was heard. It was Battalion 4/157 – the first infantry unit to arrive in Nieporęt. Upon arrival, Lieutenant Stypa (the battalion commander) did not immediately find the commander of the Volunteer squadron, as he was at the southern end of Nieporęt, but communicated with the artillery commander. From him he learned of the situation, which he had not known when marching out of Zegrze.

Lieutenant Stypa asked Colonel Maluszycki (commander of the Left Artillery Subgroup) to move his batteries to the rear, and thus give the battalion the opportunity to settle in positions, because otherwise the infantry would have no foreground. He wrote that he received the telling reply:

The commander of the artillery did not want to do this, claiming that he would not retreat from the position he had taken, and that in any case the artillery could defend itself with cannister.

Having received this reply, the battalion commander gave orders to place his companies on the wings of the artillery, since there was, “nothing left for him to do but to take on the role of artillery cover.”

So in the end the task of defending the area of the intersection of roads near Nieporęt, closing the enemy's access to the rear of the Zegrze group (the danger of cutting the road Zegrze – Jabłonna), was fully taken on by the artillery, and the other arms covered it. The battery commanders, together with Colonel Maluszycki, were decisive, but it must be added that this solution resulted from several factors. For there was no time to regroup and choose new positions, and the infantry and cavalry units were numerically weak. In view of this, 36 guns and about 18 machine-guns, concentrated on a small patch of ground, were indeed a formidable force.

The following infantry deployment was then made: the 2nd Company with two machine-guns and the 4th Company were to the right of the right wing battery, reaching with its southern wing as far as Nieporęt Manor, where there was a squadron of dismounted cavalymen; the 3rd Company was directed to the northern wing of the batteries in order to garrison the edge of the forest and set up an outpost on the road



leading to Benjaminów. At nightfall Lieutenant Stypa communicated with Lieutenant Siła-Nowicki, commander of the volunteer cavalry squadron, who reported that communication with Benjaminów was being maintained by the mounted police, while his squadron was patrolling in the direction of Izabelin. Lieutenant Stypa ordered Lieutenant Siła-Nowicki to continue his task and to cover Nieporęt from the south. Lieutenant Stypa reported these orders to the commander of the 7th Reserve Brigade.

However, in the end, the Volunteer cavalry remained in the village, while on the right wing the squadron of the 201st LHR took up a position with three dismounted platoons from the manor house to the bridge at the southern end of Nieporęt. One platoon remained as the squadron's reserve behind the village. Lieutenant Stypa did not manage to establish communication with the commander of that squadron, and the relationship between 2nd-Lieutenant Skawiński and Lieutenant Siła-Nowicki was also very loose. Liaison between the units was maintained by the indefatigable policemen.

As evening twilight fell, vigilance in the positions increased: there was no doubt that the night would be uneventful. For the time being, it was still quiet, with occasional single shots of clashing patrols in the forest foreground.

It was not until around 20:00 that the enemy showered the Polish troops with heavy fire. The batteries responded with cannon and machine-gun fire. The combat broke out suddenly and discharged the nervous tension of the waiting. It did not matter that a soldier from the outpost on the road had been killed in the fire, and that one shell had hit his own line and damaged a machine-gun, and finally that a handful of infantrymen, stunned by the noise, had gone to the rear. The stakes were now high – the artillery was everything.

At the sound of the first shots, Lieutenant Stypa placed a reserve company between the 2nd and 4th Companies, while the gunners returned a dozen or so infantrymen to the line of the battery positions. Some of the policemen also stood at their posts. It should be noted that the fire of the Polish batteries was extremely strong, as all the batteries were waiting for this moment with their cannons loaded, and in the blink of an eye they began a rapid and concentrated fire. The enemy covered the batteries with machine-gun fire, which did not do much damage – only one gunner was wounded. At the same time as the artillery fire, all the machine-guns of the battery and infantry were fired.

The impact was powerful: 16 guns, firing in the first line and at close range, threw out an avalanche of fire. The heavy intensity, which indeed reminded the older artillerymen of hurricane fire, lasted for about 15 minutes, after which the batteries slowed down and switched to a slow rate. The enemy's fire also weakened; then silence reigned at the edge of the forest. One could feel that the enemy was surprised by such a mass of fire, which came unexpectedly from near Nieporęt. But the enemy was probably aware that he had encountered artillery in front-line positions, which were uncovered, as the batteries were firing cannister. The enemy therefore had an opportunity to seize eight Polish batteries and penetrate deep into the Poles' rear. From the edge of the forest in front of Nieporęt, one could see the lights of Zegrze; and Nieporęt also lay on the route to Jabłonna-Legionowo. These towns were mentioned in enemy orders. The opportunity was golden.

Scarcely a few minutes had elapsed when the enemy resumed its attack. His machine-guns began to fire again. A loud "ura!" echoed from the edge of the forest and reverberated towards Nieporęt, Zegrze and Jabłonna.

As soon as the enemy's shots and shouts rang out again, the batteries again covered the edge of the forest with fire. An indescribable noise prevailed at the positions, the crews were busy working their guns, while the free gunners fired their machine-guns and handguns. Even the officers were firing their rifles. Some were also shouting "hura!".

This havoc lasted for several minutes, then things slowly calmed down again and only occasional enemy shots rang out from the edge of the woods, indicating that the enemy did not dare to move out of the woods and attack the batteries. It waited for a more convenient opportunity. By 23:00 the artillery had deflected several attacks. These expended a great deal of nerves and energy. There were no losses other than a gunner.



In the midst of this battle, 2nd-Lieutenant Pac-Pomarnacki came to Captain Siedlecki, bringing orders that 19th FAR *divizion* should leave for Pustelnik. Captain Siedlecki reported this to Colonel Maluszycki, remarking that, in this situation it would be inappropriate for him to take his batteries and “leave, as this could make a bad impression on the troops who had just been attacked”, and therefore offered to hold the *divizion* until dawn “when the situation, together with daylight, would cease to be alarming.”

Evening on the Zegrze Bridgehead

Furthermore the strength of the group had been reduced by the sending to Nieporęt of the Volunteer Cavalry *Divizion*, the Łódź police detachment and Battalion 4/157. In addition, between 18:00 and 19:00 Batteries 2/10 and 5/10 FAR and *Divizion* 3/4 FAR left their positions. Battery 2/10 HAR also left to go to Płock, while Battery 3/10 HAR had not yet completed its reorganisation and was in Kałuszyn, so its battery of 6-inch guns was not yet ready to fire. Finally, Battery 6/3 HAR (100-mm howitzers) had no ammunition. This all made it difficult to command the hastily assembled group.

We were visited by the Front commander, General Haller, who assured us that we should persevere for three days and the situation would then definitively change in our favour.

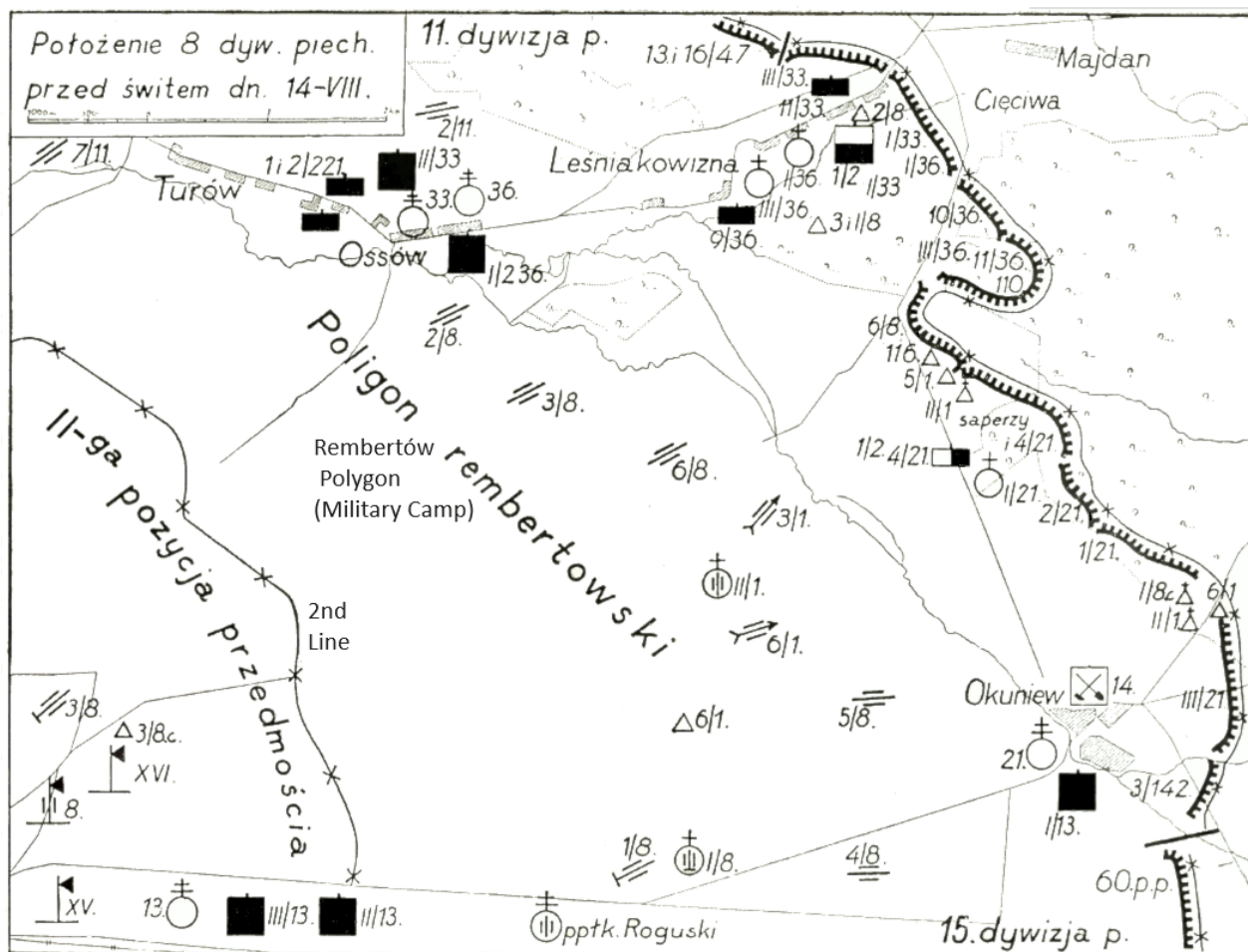
Sketch 49 : General Positions on the Left Wing of the 1st Army, evening of 14 August

In the midst of this, a battle ensued along the entire sector of the 7th Brigade, which lasted from 21:00 until midnight, after which there was a calming down. Lt-Colonel Langner, commander of the 167th Regiment, reported that four enemy attacks had been deflected during that time. Battalion 1/155 also repelled the enemy. In the course of these operations a prisoner of war was taken of the 46th RR of the 6th RD. The 7th Brigade's losses on the day were 7 killed and 11 wounded.

So Colonel Małachowski's group ended the day of 14 August having held out perfectly in its positions. Despite the difficult conditions and the worrying news from the rear, the 7th Brigade repelled the enemy attacks with total composure.

Battle for Leśniakowizna and Ossów

Above we left the 8th ID when it was to take its final positions after re-establishing itself in the area of Leśniakowizna. On the evening of 13 August, the 8th Division's command received an order from Army HQ, and correspondingly at 20:30 ordered the 16th Brigade to hold the sector and group the reserves behind the left wing, while the 15th Brigade was to move to Rembertów camp (the area between Heights 112 and 117) by the morning (04:00) of 14 August.



Sketch 50⁵³ : Positions of the 8th ID at dawn of 14 August

However it was not possible to move the 33rd Regiment to the reserve or even to take it out of the line. Its commander reported that if it was then any renewed attack on the 16th Brigade's sector would put it in danger. For this reason two battalions of the 33rd Regiment remained together with two battalions of the 36th Regiment in the area of Leśniakowizna, and one in Ossów (2nd). The incoming reinforcements were not able to be incorporated, as they arrived too late.

⁵³ The river on the map without a name, flowing along Ossów and Turów is the Długa, which on German maps is marked as the Zonze (Żązę).



Colonel Burhardt-Bukacki took this state of affairs into account and, as he recalled, had to agree "to leave the units in the positions, which had resulted from the afternoon's fighting." According to the Army's order, he anticipated that an enemy's attack would come on 14 August. In addition the division commander, unable to immediately incorporate the arriving reinforcements, ordered that the better-trained volunteers be selected from the marching companies and sent to the line to reinforce the leading battalions, but he felt that the rest of the march companies needed to be kept in reserve. These were Battalion 1/236 (which after incorporation became Battalion 2/36), two companies of the 221st Regiment and other smaller detachments, which remained mainly at Ossów. It should be noted that the arrival of reinforcements had an invigorating effect on the morale of the troops.

At that time the artillery preparations were coming to an end, but the command of the artillery still had not been sorted out. Colonel Poźniak (commander of the 8th FAR), who was to command the Left Subgroup, did not set off from Rembertów to Ossów until 08:00 on 14 August.

Details of the deployment and grouping of the troops are shown on Sketch 50. It should be added that the division commander, on the basis of reports on the course of the fighting so far, was convinced that the enemy did not have an advantage. Colonel Burhardt-Bukacki wrote:

I was calm about the battle on 14 August, so long as the nerves of the commanders did not fail.

The night passed peacefully, but it was felt that the coming day would be heated.

Before dawn on 14 August, it was found that the enemy was grouping his forces in front of the division's left wing and in contact with the 47th Regiment. This was reported by Colonel Kraupa, commander of the 16th Brigade, noting that there was, "an attack expected in the morning."

Break in the Front

Between 03:00 and 04:00 the enemy launched a strong attack "with great bravado". It was an attack by the 79th RB of the 27th RD, which with its 235th and 236th Regiments advanced along the Leśniakowizna – Ossów road, while another regiment struck from the Lipiny area towards Wołomin. The attack was on the sections of Battalions 4/47, 1/33, 3/33 and 1/36.

News of this penetrated rapidly to the rear. Battalion 1/36 reported to the regimental commander at Ossów that, "the enemy is conducting a strong attack on the sectors of 1/36 and 33 IR." This was one of the last reports, as the telephone connection was soon broken. The news was reported to the brigade command by 2nd-Lieutenant Krubski, adjutant of the 36th IR.

The Polish troops were expecting an attack by the enemy, but were surprised by its violence. After a short artillery fire preparation, the enemy pushed several waves of infantry to the assault. The resistance of the battalions of the 33rd and 36th regiments was short-lived, as they succumbed to the enemy's superior numbers, faltered and then began to retreat in the direction of Leśniakowizna. In the course of this retirement, the commander of Battalion 1/33, Lieutenant Świątkowski, fell wounded.

Battalion 1/36, under Major Kazimierz Sawicki, was unable to oppose the enemy, as its companies were forced to retreat and dispersed.

When the retreating clusters of soldiers were in the middle of Leśniakowizna, Major Sawicki was approached by 2nd-Lieutenant Müller, who was hurrying to the aid of Company 9/36. A firefight was already raging in the village, bullets were flying all around, and even the 9th Company had begun to suffer losses. At this critical moment, Sawicki threw that company into a counter-attack to the left of the road leading through the village. This action failed, 2nd-Lieutenant Müller was killed, and the company dispersed. The remaining soldiers gathered around by Sergeant Walecki and retreated in the direction of Ossów.

At that time Battalion 3/33 was still in position and was holding back the enemy. It had no knowledge of the events that had taken place to its right, from where the sounds of heavy shooting were coming. Soon, however, its reserve (the 11th Company) started to take fire from behind and to the right, so there was no doubt that the front had been broken.



The situation was dangerous. Lieutenant Zdrojewski, commander of Battalion 3/33, immediately threw the 11th Company into battle, while the adjutant and his liaison officers went on horseback to inquire about the situation of their neighbours. But in the confusion of the battle they were disorientated, and it was only after the fight that they made it back to the commander.

Meanwhile, the enemy was not idle. It broke the resistance in the village and now turned part of his forces against Battalion 3/33. The 11th Company, with the battalion's commander by its side, came under machine-gun fire from tachankas.

The battalion began to retreat from its positions, forced not only by the encirclement to the right (from the rear), but also by a push from the front and a break in the front to the left, in contact with the 47th BRR. Zdrojewski was unable to reassemble his battalion at this point, as that would have caused greater losses, so ordered the commander of the 10th Company, 2nd-Lieutenant Latour, to retreat in the direction of Ossów. He himself remained with the 11th Company to cover the retreat.

Thus the 3rd Battalion, shattered and heavily bloodied, withdrew from the Leśniakowizna area without encountering (apart from the wounded) any troops on the way. Leśniakowizna was then in enemy hands.

During this period of fighting support by the Polish artillery was insignificant. The commander of Battery 2/8, who had been at the observation post at the eastern end of Leśniakowizna before the battle, barely managed to leave it, and then retreated across the bridge to Długa. The commander of Battalion 1/36, Major Sawicki, states that the infantry had no artillery support during this time, and if it did fire it was mostly shooting unobserved.

While this was happening the sectors to the left and right of Leśniakowizna, also experienced an attack, although weaker.

Battalion 4/47 was attacked simultaneously with the attack on Leśniakowizna by the 237th RR, which advanced from Lipiny to the left wing of the battalion. One company then faltered and began to retreat towards Wołomin. The observers of Batteries 2/11 and 7/11, occupying an observation post at the Bristol Villa on the outskirts of Wołomin, were then alerted. Lieutenant Kubecki, commander of the 2nd Battery, looked out in front across the field and saw a dangerous sight: Polish infantry, "retreating, firing weakly along the trenches to the north, that is towards Wołomin."

The connection with the battery was lost – the last words the battery officer received from Lieutenant Kubecki were "The Bolsheviks are encircling me," followed by silence – the wire was broken.

Fortunately, the threat of danger was short-lived, as other companies of the 47th Regiment (10th and 14th) held firm and, supported by artillery (3/11 FAR and 3/11 HAR) and armoured trains, defended their section. The enemy gave up and was forced to halt. It remained on a line of Lipiny House to Lipiny village, continuing to shoot, but in vain.

Events were different on the right wing of the 4th Battalion, which had joined the 8th Division. We have already mentioned that the assault, directed against the left wing of the 8th Division, also engulfed the right wing of the 47th Regiment, namely the 13th and 16th Companies. Those companies, demoralised as recently as the day before, failed to hold their positions again (they could not have held out for long anyway). The 16th Company fell into disarray, while the 13th Company initially intended to bend the wing and lean on the 12th Company, but eventually shared the fate of the 16th Company.

At 05:30 2nd-Lieutenant Kasprzykiewicz, commander of the 12th Company, reported to the battalion commander:

The right wing company, i.e. the 16th, has left the trenches, the 13th as well. Shots are coming from behind us.

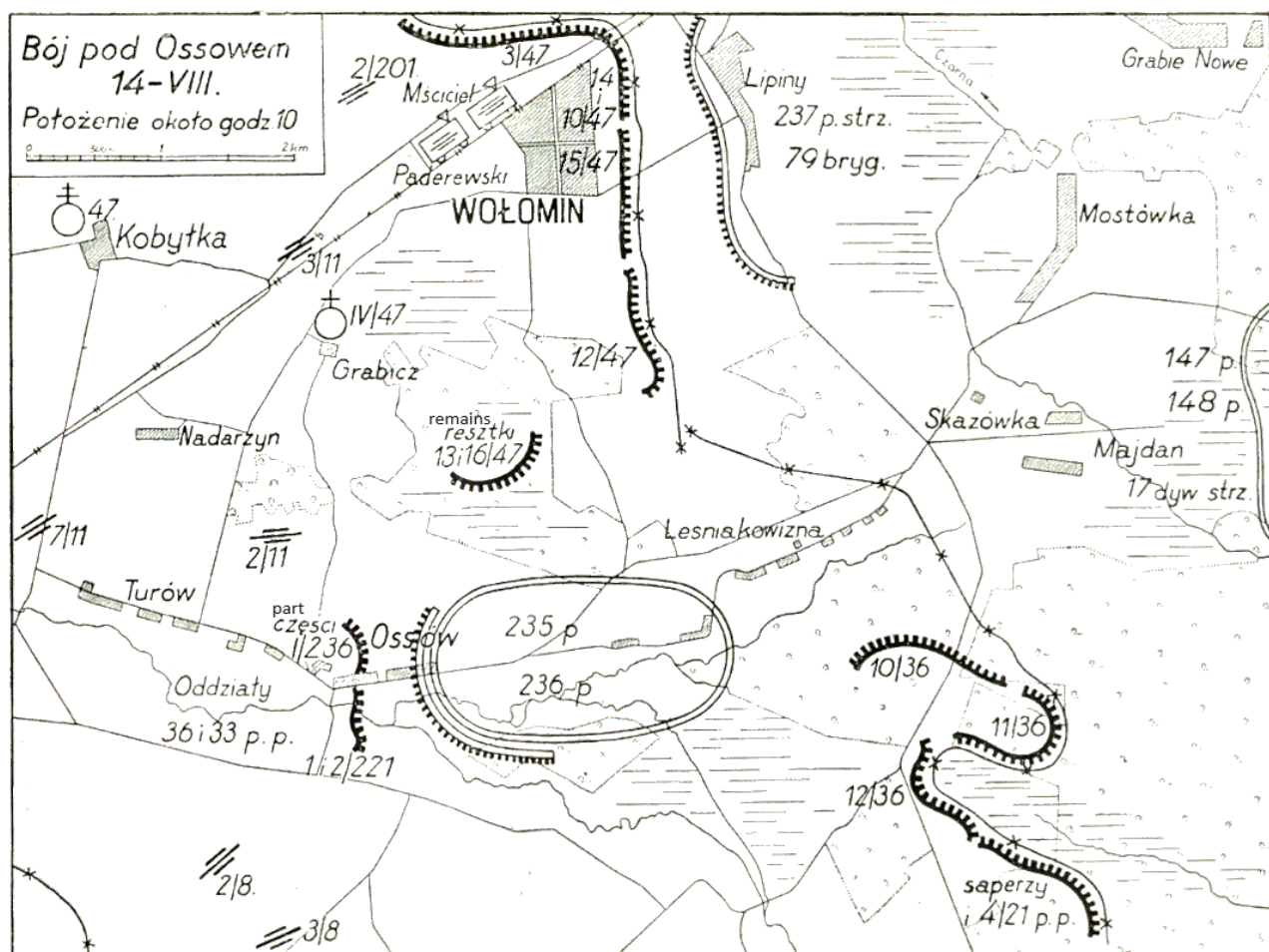
The shattered companies withdrew into the woods south-west of Height 102, where the commanders gathered only a paltry remnant. From there they sent reports, giving their desperate position. The time was 07:20 – 07:30. These reports did not represent the actual situation, and the battalion commander was



convinced from them that he would still hold his sector. He was relying mainly on the 12th Company, of which he reported that, "it stands firm in its position."

Indeed, 2nd-Lieutenant Kasprzykiewicz, commander of the 12th Company, remained cheerful. Despite the withdrawal of the 13th and 16th Companies, he stayed in position, securing his right wing and flank with the 3rd Platoon. However, he was aware that the enemy had penetrated far into the front lines, as the sounds of battle were coming from as far away as Ossów. In spite of this, he remained convinced that he would hold: he described his own position as favourable and proposed to the battalion commander that, with the help of the reserves and his company, he should strike at the enemy's rear and flank, which had advanced to Ossów. He did not receive a reply to these messages; moreover, neither the battalion commander nor the regimental commander had any reinforcements to give.

So Battalion 4/47 had repulsed the attack of the 237th RR and prevented it from taking Wołomin (Sketch 51).



Sketch 51 : Battle for Ossów 14 August, positions about 10:00

We left the observers of the 2nd and 7th Batteries at the moment when, forced to abandon their observation post, they hurried back to the batteries. At that time the batteries, under the influence of the danger threatening from Leśniakowizna, did not hold their positions and started to leave. It seems that they were not fleeing, rather it could be interpreted as a change of what seemed to be threatened positions. The lack of panic was noted by Colonel Ładziński, commander of the Right Subgroup, who met Battery 2/11 on the road between Nadarzyn and Grabcz and ordered it to return to its position.

The battery immediately obeyed the order and, disregarding enemy fire, rode into an open field near Height 94, where it took up a position. Lieutenant Kubecki went to an observation post in the area. The 7th Battery returned to a position under orders from Captain Zaremba (*division* commander). After taking up



their positions, the battery observers were on Height 94, from where they had a perfect view of the battlefield at Ossów.

Battalion 3/36's sector was threatened from the north by the break in the front near Leśniakowizna. Initially that was only on the left wing of the 10th Company, and then 2nd-Lieutenant Porębski's 11th Company, garrisoning the "redoubt" on Height 110. Under the enemy pressure some of the 10th Company retired, losing several wounded and the base of the machine-gun. However, the previous position was soon restored. The 10th Company was reinforced by Porębski transferring some men to the left wing.

The 10th and 11th Companies were supported by Battery 6/8, which began to shell the enemy, but they could not prevent his march forward. Soon the Soviet troops disappeared from direct observation, and only the sound of shooting indicated that fighting was on-going.

Now in the 3rd Battalion's area the enemy's pressure dropped away, and for the 21st Regiment, neighbouring to the right, it was calm. But 3rd Battalion's position, deprived of communication with its regiment command, lacking a commander⁵⁴ and reserves, was not good.

Still, the company commanders decided to hold their positions. The imperative of the moment – to hold one's ground despite the loss of a flank – was a particularly important and obvious task. Second Lieutenant Sokol took command of the battalion, as he describes in his account.

All attention was turned to the left wing and for this reason the 10th Company was withdrawn and the left wing was bent deep to the rear. In the midst of this the front line and the vicinity of the battalion became completely silent, with the sound of shooting only coming from afar. Second Lieutenant Sokol, wanting to investigate the position in the area of Leśniakowizna, sent two patrols to the north, but neither of them returned. Only a third patrol brought the news that the enemy had seized Leśniakowizna and his rifle lines were facing south, while the battle, the sounds of which could be heard, was taking place in the Ossów area. This news was shared by Sokol with the commander of Battery 6/8 still on Height 116. Second Lieutenant Borowski, that battery's commander, saw that his cannons were endangered in that position, which he mentions in these words:

Soon the company commander let me know that the Russians were entering Ossów. Since Ossów was almost to the rear of my battery, I phoned the *division* and received an order to leave for Height 106 near Rembertów.

Soon the battery left, while the 3rd Battalion remained at its post. It could only be supported by the batteries of the 2nd *Division* of the 1st Mountain Artillery Regiment, especially that the 5th Battery, which had its observation post on Height 116. As a result of these actions, the breach made by the enemy in the area of Leśniakowizna was partially confined to the south; the 3rd Battalion securing the wing of the 21st Regiment.

So although the enemy's main advance had not yet been stopped to the front, it had been limited on the wings.

Attempts to Counter-attack

We left the troops when they were forced to retreat after being broken in the Leśniakowizna area. We also saw that it was not possible to put up much resistance, as there was a lack of nearby reserves, and the small groups of volunteers, sent to the line as reinforcements, had long since disappeared in the chaos. It should be noted that on hearing that the front had been broken, the commander of the 36th Regiment left with his adjutant, 2nd-Lieutenant Jesionowski, for Leśniakowizna.

In the course of these events, new information was coming to Ossów, indicating that the break of the front was already threatening disaster. It was then that the commander of the 33rd Regiment, Lieutenant

⁵⁴ We saw when the 9th Company was broken in Leśniakowizna that it prevented its battalion commander getting to the rest of his battalion.



Colonel Jerzy Sawicki, decided to push Battalion 2/33, which had so far remained in Ossów, to counter-attack at Leśniakowizna. Soon that battalion, commanded by Lieutenant Michałowski, set off from the village. It was quite small (just over 100 bayonets), as it had not yet been replenished. At the same time 2nd-Lieutenant Krubski, adjutant of the 36th, briefly had telephone communication from Ossów to Leśniakowizna. He managed to receive a telephone order from the regimental commander that read:

Alert 1/236, Lieutenant Jesionowski will arrive immediately with a verbal order.

Battalion 2/33 advanced to the attack, but ultimately failed to stop the enemy, as it too was dispersed and mixed up with the retreating troops. In the course of this the commander of the 7th Company, 2nd-Lieutenant White, was seriously wounded.

The commander of the 33rd IR, shocked by the news, mounted and rushed towards Leśniakowizna with a few officers. It was already too late.

By now single groups and clusters of scattered soldiers, forming a swollen wave, were heading towards Ossów, and the enemy was following those fleeing soldiers. The gap, initially created with the break in the front at a narrow stretch near Leśniakowizna, was now extending at a rapid pace and was already engulfing the eastern edge of the town.

The first news of the situation did not cause alarm at the division. Its commander recalls:

Initially the reports contained nothing threatening, but within an hour news came in of a complete break in the front, with the commander of the 33rd Regiment reporting that the Guard Battalion (4/47) had retreated and the enemy had followed, while the brigade commander reported that he would control the situation with his reserve.

Colonel Burhardt-Bukacki got in contact with the 47th Regiment and found out that it was holding its positions, the 21st Regiment remained calm in its section, and Battalion 3/36 was, "according to the information from the 21st Regiment, holding perfectly well". It seemed clear that the situation was not too threatening, and above all did not yet require the division commander to move.

In reality, however, the failure was already reaching the proportions of a disaster.

A considerable number of volunteers still remained in Ossów (1st Battalion of the 236th Regiment, two companies of the 221st and others). Battalion 1/236 was bivouacked in a meadow on the south side of the village and the march companies quartered in the western part of the village. Colonel Krakówka sent an adjutant of the 36th Regiment, 2nd-Lieutenant Jesionowski, to Ossów and he quickly gave orders that two companies of 1/236 were to advance and counter-attack to Leśniakowizna, while the rest were to leave for the western end of Ossów.

So the 3rd and 4th Companies marched out of Ossów under the command of 2nd-Lieutenant Szulje, commander of the 4th Company. Before marching out Szulje asked to be informed of the situation. He received a brief reply: "Front interrupted – enemy ahead. Counter-attack!"

According to the account of one of the officers, it was then 05:30. Soon Szulje moved with his companies to the eastern edge of Ossów. He deployed the 4th Company around the Ossów – Leśniakowizna road, sending a platoon with 2nd-Lieutenant Stanislawski to the right for cover. The 3rd Company he deployed to the left of the road.

Aware of the retreating Polish troops, he ordered that those retreating could pass and then take the enemy's fire. Unfortunately this order was not carried out, as the volunteers did not hold still, but with shouts of "Hura!", ran forward.

Soon the companies reached the bushes between Leśniakowizna and Ossów. Then further movement broke down, for suddenly shouts of "They have gone around us..." could be heard from the left wing. The 3rd Company faltered and fell back, and in its place the enemy appeared. Although few in number, their fire, especially from their machine-guns, inflicted losses on the 4th Company and, worse still, caused great confusion. So the 3rd and 4th Companies of the 236th Regiment were scattered and mixed with other retreating troops.



In great disorder, clumps of volunteers ran back to Ossów, ignoring the cries and orders of their commanders. Second Lieutenant Szulje could not take control of the troops, and was wounded not long afterwards. At the same time an officer of the 3rd Company, 2nd-Lieutenant Franciszek Kaminski, was also wounded.

Fighting in Ossów

The counter-attack so far, which consisted of throwing different units at the enemy one by one, did not yield good results, as before the units could get ready to fight they were carried away by the chaos of the retreat, forcing them to flee also.

Soon the mass of fleeing troops ran into Ossów. Some of the soldiers, unable to come to their senses and shake off their panic, ran deeper into the village. Some, but not many, gathered in groups near their officers: for example, the wounded 2nd-Lieutenant Szulje managed to hold with several dozen men. A similar group of soldiers was also brought by Lieutenant Zdrojewski, who took up positions at the western exit of Ossów.

Meanwhile, the enemy had positioned themselves at the eastern end of the village, where they set up quite a number of machine-guns. Those held the road through Ossów and the fields and meadows, surrounding the village under their murderous fire, taking a particularly grim toll. Groups of soldiers who were still resisting the enemy suffered under that fire. Second-Lieutenant Michałowski was killed.

By this time there was panic in the village, and the contagion spread with frightening speed. Masses of wagons were fleeing down the road through the village. Volunteers of various formations ran about aimlessly, not knowing where to go. Not understanding what was demanded of them, they fired in random directions. There was a "terrible disorder". This is what 2nd-Lieutenant Krubski writes about that moment:

Numerous groups of volunteers retreated in panic into the village. The officers of Battalion 1/36 and the 33rd IR tried to stop the fleeing men with threats and revolvers. They only partially succeeded. A few, irregular groups were formed along the road in that way, which hold their position in the field, while the rest slipped away through the marshes west of Ossów in an unstoppable stream. Command at all levels was lost – there was no uniformity of action.

Under those conditions the remainder of Battalion 1/236, leaving for the western edge of Ossów, entered battle. Just then those companies were setting off from the meadow in a column of twos to the road at Ossów.

At that moment, along with the retreating troops, the commander of the 33rd IR Maj. [Lt-Col.] Sawa-Sawicki, arrived with his staff, and seeing the unit marching in a compact column and order, he shouted: "Who is running away and where to, when there is fighting over there?"

After a verbal clash with the commander of the 1st Company, who replied that he was carrying out the order of his regimental commander, Lt-Colonel Sawicki ordered:

On my responsibility and on my order: one company to the right, the other to the left, in rifle line, counter-attack!

Soon 2nd-Lieutenant Slowikowski advanced with his 1st Company to the left of the road, while the 2nd Company was directed along the south side of the village. The battalion commander remained behind the right wing.

As he was passing through the village gardens and fences, Slowikowski was approached by Father Skorupka, the unit's chaplain, who asked earnestly that he be allowed to, "go with the soldiers and take part in this first battle". The commander of the 1st Company gave his consent.

But it was not easy to organise the attack, for we must remember that the chaos in the village did not stop, and even grew worse, affecting the young soldiers. Finally, after overcoming great difficulties, 2nd-Lieutenant Slowikowski managed to spread his column into a rifle line and move forward. Initially, the 1st Company advanced without firing a shot. However, this did not last long, as soon single shots started



coming from the east, followed by more and more intense fire from the enemy. The heat of battle increased.

The murderous fire, with the crackling and whizzing of bullets did their job – the Polish line of battle began to fall to the ground. The commander saw that and shouted “hura!” to get them to run forward. Second Słowikowski was afraid that the attack might get stuck. But it worked, and after running 200-300 metres the rifle line advanced again, “the soldiers got excited and walked boldly on.” During this, Father Skorupka, who was walking next to the company commander, and thus in front of the line, fell. The lieutenant paid no attention to this, as he thought that the chaplain had tripped over a furrow, and anyway, other matters occupied his mind.⁵⁵

The company advanced to a new area (a stubble field) and, reaching almost level with the eastern edge of Ossów village, came under heavy frontal fire from machine-guns, while at the same time shots were fired from the side, from Ossów village. The rifle line stopped and began a disordered fire. The heavy enemy fire inflicted heavy losses, and the moans of the wounded and yells of inexperienced soldiers who did not know how to use their rifle, were coming from the line – they had cartridges without magazines and did not know how to load their rifles. The situation was dangerous: although the 1st Company had managed to get quite a long way, its advance was stopped.

The 2nd Company, however, had had their attack broken by the enemy much sooner. That company came under heavy enemy fire almost immediately after setting off. The volunteers suffered considerable losses and were forced to retreat in disarray. A lot of wounded and dead remained where they were, on the road and in the meadow south of the village. The battalion commander, Lieutenant Matarewicz, fell lifeless, struck down by a heart attack.

The enemy, having stopped the advance of the 2nd Company, now turned all its attention against the remaining company. Słowikowski, seeing that he was threatened from the side, ordered a retreat in singles to the rear.

The retirement began, paid for with new losses. The enemy wanted to take advantage of this success, but he succeeded in driving them back.

The companies finally withdrew almost to the middle of Ossów and only stopped there. Apart from the remnants of the volunteer companies and some loose groups of soldiers from 33rd and 36th Regiments, nothing more remained in Ossów – the rest had withdrawn to the south of the Rządza, to Rembertów Field.

Słowikowski saw that the volunteers were incapable of passive defence and could only push forward, so he roused the soldiers to attack several more times. The village was not recaptured and the enemy not driven back, but their advance towards the west was finally stopped.

However, these actions had to end, as fatigue “had reached its ultimate limits” and finally 2nd-Lieutenant Słowikowski, by his account, could not force himself:

... even with a revolver in hand, to stand up and move forward. The soldiers in the line lay almost lifeless, only rarely firing.

At the same time two companies of the 221st Regiment were introduced into the battle (south of the village), energetically led by Major Dobrowolski, which scattered into a rifle line. This put the companies in the village in a much better condition and filled the gap between the river and the village.

⁵⁵ This apparently odd interest in the doings of a minor priest, Ignacy Skorupka, is as a result of his fame after the battle – being immortalised in numerous books, poems, statues and paintings. All the Polish readers at the time this book was published would have been intensely aware of who he was.

This was part of an attempt by Josef Piłsudski’s conservative opponents to attribute the “miracle” of the Battle of Warsaw to divine providence (or French advice) – rather than a result of the Marshal’s effective plan.

There was some dispute at the time about whether Father Skorupka died leading the assault with cross in hand – which suited the conservatives – or had been shot while attending to a badly wounded man. Hence the – otherwise odd – desire to discuss his activities at the time of his death.



Although the advance of the new companies was interrupted and they were stationary, engaging in a firefight, it was these companies, together with those of the 236th Regiment and the loose detachments of the 33rd and 36th Regiments, that blocked the enemy's path.

In Ossów they gave up their attempts to renew the attack and concentrated on reorganising the troops and manning their positions. The soldiers – from the 33rd IR, 36th IR and volunteers – who had lost their heads, were gathered up.

There were also some who wandered far to the rear, spreading panic and bad news everywhere. Some proclaimed that their units had been broken up and they, “not knowing what to do, were going to Warsaw.” The task of the officers who tried to rally those troops was quite difficult.

The 36th IR HQ staff had left for the Rembertów training ground and had stopped in the vicinity of Height 103. Some of the 33rd Regiment were left there. By 07:20 the commander of the 16th Brigade reported that the 36th Regiment had retreated west of Ossów. At that time the commander of the 16th Brigade, Colonel Kraupa, went with his staff adjutant, Lieutenant Matus, to Ossów:

Without reaching the village, the brigadier met groups of fleeing soldiers, whom he personally turned back.

Much more detail can be added about the commanders, but we will stop here as the battle for Ossów was now at a standstill, as both sides, exhausted and bloodied, had no more strength for combat. It remained that way until the counter-attack of the 8th Division was organised.

Divizion 1/8 FAR, threatened by the enemy, had had to withdraw deep into Rembertów Field. The movement of the unit and the chaos of events limited the possibilities of artillery cooperation. Colonel Pożerski recalls that:

The participation of the artillery on the 14th expressed itself in a powerful firewall at the rear of the enemy in the area of Leśniakowizna, in order to prevent the approach of further enemy reserves and the withdrawal of those that got to Ossów.

The artillery group command had not yet completed its organisation and so Colonel Pożerski, having no communication with Ossów, went there personally and gave *ad hoc* orders. He had only horse liaison officers at his disposal, and it was only in the course of the action that he received a telephone connection to Turów with the commander of *Divizion 1/8 FAR*.

The batteries of that *divizion*, having no infantry cover, had to disperse some of their personnel into a rifle line, including 2nd-Lieutenant Rohoziński and the scouts. The artillerymen, as accounts testify, were determined to do everything they could: Colonel Pożerski ordered them to hold their position, even if it came to close quarter combat.

In contrast, the right wing batteries operated under different conditions. Above all, they were not under direct threat, which made their work easier. *Divizion 2/1 MAR*, Captain Steuer, began firing on the enemy quite soon (using the observation point on Height 110 and the auxiliary point of the 5th Battery), shelling the area between Leśniakowizna and Majdan. Its commander recalled that:

Direct support of our own troops in the Ossów area was impossible, as it was impossible to observe that region, being covered to the south by forests.

Captain Bujwid's heavy batteries were not idle either: the 3rd Battery fired on the enemy's rear in the Majdan area and the 1st Battery in front of the 21st Regiment.

Also noteworthy were the batteries of the 11th FAR, which we have seen returned to uncovered positions and discharged all their efforts in support of the action at Ossów and Leśniakowizna. Its 2nd and 7th Batteries were operating under the direct command of Captain Zaremba. The commander of the subgroup, Colonel Ładziński, also took a keen interest in them, having arrived at the battlefield. In the course of these operations Captain Zaremba personally established communication with the troops in Ossów and left



Lieutenant Myśliński, the *division's* reconnaissance officer, there as liaison officer. In addition the batteries sent NCOs to the village for reconnaissance.

Once communication was established, the batteries began firing, but the issues that limited the cooperation of the 8th *Division* also affected these batteries. Captain Zaremba recalls that the activity of the artillery was mainly the execution of suppressive fire, "to prevent enemy reinforcements from entering the battle."

Counter-attack

We have seen that so far all attempts to move to a larger counter-action had failed, as neither the regimental commanders nor the commander of the 16th Brigade, who arrived on the spot, had been able to rally the troops. Colonel Pożerski and Colonel Kraupa, the commander of the 16th Brigade, went to Ossów. According to Lieutenant Matus's account, the commander of the 16th Brigade gave an order to the commander of the 36th Regiment that:

Regardless of the losses incurred, we must not retreat from here. We must strive to regain the positions at Leśniakowizna.

It was before 06:00 when Colonel Burhardt-Bukacki of the 8th Division heard from Colonel Pożerski about the situation and the panic in Ossów. The commander of the 8th Artillery Brigade, "expressed that there was complete disorder there". No other news could be obtained, as the telephone link between Ząbki and Ossów was broken and it only reached Turów. What was known, however, was that the wagons were already fleeing in panic, and that scattered soldiers had appeared in the rear.

At the first news of the break in the front, the 8th Division's command ordered two battalions of the 13th Regiment to wait in readiness to march towards Ossów. Shortly afterwards, Burhardt-Bukacki ordered the alerted troops to form and move to the woods south-west of Ossów, with further orders to be received *en route*.

The division's commander found himself in a difficult situation: first of all, his staff was forced by Army orders to remain too far from the front, so it could not influence the course of action on an improvised basis – all the more so when the communication failed. Finally, the reserves were too far from the battlefield in which they were to be engaged.

Burhardt-Bukacki estimated that the counter-attack by the 13th IR could begin at about 11:00 at the earliest. He was aware that there was no one in command in Ossów, or rather the officers were all in charge together. So he decided to leave for the battlefield, intending to take control of the situation on the spot and to personally direct the counter-attack. He ordered his chief of staff, Lt-Colonel Bagiński, to remain at the command's staging area in Ząbki and inform the Army about what was happening, with instructions to present the situation somewhat optimistically. Finally, the chief of staff was to keep the division commander informed about the position of the neighbouring units and the 21st Regiment, sending telephone messages to Turów. Colonel Pożerski was to establish communication with the 13th Regiment.

Taking his adjutant, a few mounted liaison officers and gendarmes, the colonel set off at a gallop from Ząbki over Height 103 towards Turów.

From now on we cannot follow the further activity of the commanders on the basis of documents, as the reality of the battlefield forced the commanders to give *ad hoc* orders. The only documents we have, namely the situation reports of the 8th Division, lose their relevance since, as we have seen, Lt-Colonel Bagiński was to present the situation optimistically. Moreover, as those reports necessarily had to contain late information, they sometimes differ considerably from reality. Thus, for example, on 14 August, at 07:00 Bagiński reported to the Army that:

After a momentary bending of its left wing, Battalion 2/33 started a counter-attack, and is now advancing towards Leśniakowizna, gathering on the way the broken companies of the 47th BRR.

At 08:00 Bagiński reported to the Army that Polish infantry had:



Driven out the Bolsheviks, recaptured Leśniakowizna, and were advancing eastwards.

On his way to Ossów, Colonel Burhardt-Bukacki met the commander of the 33rd Regiment in the fields south of Ossów, who gave him a very pessimistic report, saying, "all is lost, he had nothing left to command and was unwell." (In fact Lt-Colonel Sawicki went to hospital after the battle and died soon afterwards.)

After this meeting, Burhardt-Bukacki went with Sawicki to Ossów, where they met up with some soldiers. The division commander ordered Lieutenant Gajda, who he found in the village, to collect the men. At the western end of the town, the commander of the 16th Brigade, Colonel Kraupa, was found with Lieutenant Matus.

Having familiarised himself with the situation, Burhardt-Bukacki's final plan was as follows: Colonel Kraupa was to command all the troops grouped in the fields north of the Ossów – Leśniakowizna line, and Sawicki all those remaining south of that line.

After issuing those orders, the division commander proceeded to put the troops in order and at that time he had the, "impression that the situation was manageable, despite the frenzied fire." He then took up the matter of artillery support, and so rushed to the commander of *Divizion 1/8 FAR*, where Colonel Pożerski also was. An order was sent to the units of the 13th IR to move to Leśniakowizna, from where they were to advance further on his command.

After communicating with the artillery, the division commander returned to Ossów and, leaving his horses on the western edge of the village, went on foot to the battle line. Burhardt-Bukacki felt that the enemy "was beginning to break down", as its fire was already weaker, at which point he became "convinced that any blow from the flank would be enough to retake the lost positions." With that conviction, he returned to Turów, where he learned that Battalion 3/13 was in the area of *Divizion 1/8 FAR*, while the rest of the regiment was more than an hour's march behind. He recalls the moment in this way:

I decided not to wait for the rest of the 13th Regiment, but to attack with Battalion 3/13. I gave the order to Colonel Pożerski, who was to pass it on to Battalion 3/13, and discussed the organisation of the pursuit with artillery fire and then transferring the fire afterwards to the roads to Majdan.

The colonel had already ordered the march of the 2nd and 3rd Battalions of the 13th Regiment towards Ossów in the morning. Lieutenant Szewczyk, commander of the 3rd Battalion, recalls that he received the following order from the regimental commander at that time:

The enemy has broken the front in the area of Ossów, orient yourself according to the shooting, and carry out a counter-attack. More precise news is lacking.

When order was received the 3rd Battalion was a considerable distance away from Ossów, as it had been quartered in the Rembertów barracks. So it was a long time before it was able to enter the battle. After a march the battalion reached the vicinity of the second line of positions, near Height 102.1, where it stopped for a rest. The commander went forward to get an idea of the situation.

To the east of Height 102.1 he found the battery positions of *Divizion 1/8 FAR* and spoke with the squadron commander, Major Mazurkiewicz, who explained to him that – according to the information received from Colonel Sawicki – the 33rd Regiment had suffered heavy losses and retreated towards Turów. Due to lack of ammunition, the artillery said it could not provide support.

With this news, Szewczyk advanced the battalion in the direction of Ossów (across the training ground), ordering the 10th Company and 2nd-Lieutenant Marchewa to advance to the right and the 9th Company to the left. The company reserves were to advance behind the outer wings of their sub-units. The 3rd MG Company was to follow in the centre of the battalion.

Furthermore he requested the artillery *divizion* support his attack. At first its commander was reluctant, explaining the lack of ammunition, but finally he agreed, allocating 60 rounds, and sent a cadet observer and a telephone with the battalion.



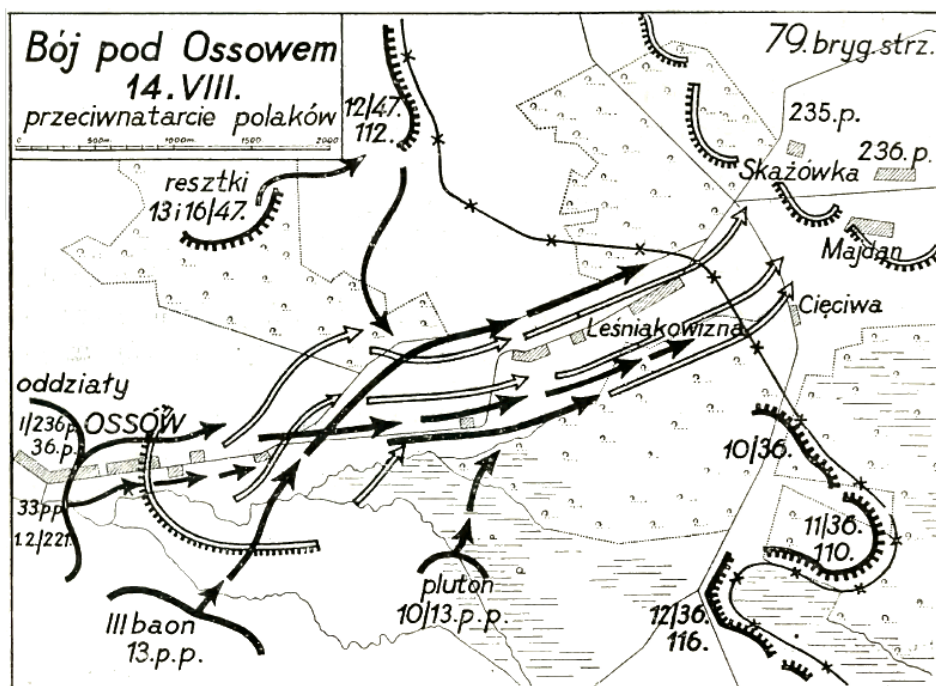
Battalion 3/13 began its attack. As the enemy neared, the atmosphere of the battlefield became more and more noticeable. Bullets were coming from the distance, making a clear impression on the volunteers, about 80 of whom had been drafted into the battalion the night before. Szewczyk noticed this and ordered the battalion to deploy. He then ordered, as if on exercises – although the gunners insisted on haste (due to the possibility of danger to the batteries) – that the companies should disperse into rifle lines.

After a few minutes, the battalion moved off in exemplary order along a dirt road towards the bushes by the Długa River. From time to time stops were made along the way to check the companies' alignment. The volunteers gradually became accustomed to the whistle of flying bullets.

About 60 volunteers from various detachments, without commanders, were encountered in the bushes by the river. They knew little of what was happening, saying only that they had been broken up. Lieutenant Szewczyk placed those volunteers under the command of Sergeant Woltyński of the 10th Company and ordered them to follow in reserve behind the 3rd MG Company.

Soon the companies approached the river, where they halted. Combat patrols were sent to the other bank. On the left wing, Sergeant Kapusta's platoon established communication with a detachment of the 33rd IR, or companies of the 221st IR, in the area. On the right wing, there was no communication with any neighbours at all, so the battalion commander ordered 2nd-Lieutenant Marchewa to send a platoon to patrol in the direction of Leśniakowizna.

Lieutenant Szewczyk, together with the artillery cadet, went across the river and, observing from behind the bushes, noticed that at a short distance from them was an enemy unit was digging in, with its front facing south. A larger enemy detachment was marching westwards through Ossów, and the sound of machine-gun fire was coming from the centre of the village.



Sketch 52 : Battle of Ossów on 14 August, Polish counter-attack

Lieutenant Szewczyk gave a short order that at the whistle each soldier was to fire five rounds and then throw himself forward at the run across the river. The commanders were to watch out for the young volunteers. The machine-guns were to follow the leading companies so that they could quickly support them with fire as soon as the movement slackened. The artillery cadet was to take up an observation post on a tree near the bridge. The artillery was also to shell in front of Ossów and the village itself on his signal.

As soon as the whistle was blown the companies swiftly leapt forward, the machine-gun company followed the battalion commander and crossed the bridge.

This unexpected attack did the job. Admittedly, the enemy opened up a heavy fire at first, but seeing that the Poles were advancing and reaching a close distance, they gave up the fight and started to retreat to the



village. Panic broke out in the enemy ranks in Ossów, which was increased by the accurate shooting of the Polish artillery.

The enemy intended to put up resistance in Ossów, but the “underarm” fire of the advancing companies, especially of one machine-gun, prevented him.

As soon as Lieutenant Szewczyk’s attack was started, the units on the left wing, which had been moved up on the order of the division commander, also advanced. This happened around 11:00.

The critical break leading to success at Ossów must be primarily attributed to the attack of the 3rd Battalion. The division commander mentioned that the attack of Battalion 3/13 was:

One of the best conducted ones I have seen in the war (thanks to Major Szewczyk and Lieutenant Marchewa).

While the actions of Battalion 3/13 were organised and conducted skilfully, the attack of the other troops was quite different. Here we will make use of the descriptions and reports of the artillerymen of the 11th FAR, who were able to observe the course of action well. Lieutenant Kubecki, commander of Battery 2/11, wrote:

After coming out from the gardens into the open area, the units gathered in one mass and, with a shout reminiscent of the images of a long-gone war, pushed vigorously forward.

Similar details can be found in the accounts of infantry officers: the Polish units, countering from Ossów, were indeed “moving in one compact pile”. At the same time Captain Zaremba, commander of the 2nd *Divizion* 11th FAR, reported at 11:45 that:

Our infantry is going onto the counter-attack, supported by its artillery.

The 16th Brigade command was already reporting success at 11:30.

The companies carried on in pursuit of the enemy, rolling through Ossów and chasing it towards Leśniakowizna. In the course of this retreat, the enemy was threatened from the north by Company 12/47.

Company 12/47 had remained in its position near Height 102 throughout, even though its right wing was not covered (the shattered 13th and 16th Companies were then in the forest). The company commander, 2nd-Lieutenant Kasprzykiewicz, did not know what was going on in Ossów and he had no communication with the battalion commander, however he felt that in the situation a lot could still be done. In the morning he had asked the battalion commander whether a counter-attack was planned. He was not discouraged that he did not receive an answer and proposed launching a counter-attack with the 12th Company again. However he received no reply to either request.

However, he could see that enemy wagons were constantly circulating from Leśniakowizna to Ossów and some information was brought to him by a wounded soldier who had escaped from the Russians. So the commander of the 12th Company decided to strike on his own at the rear of the enemy fighting in Ossów at the time. To this end he left some of his men to cover the existing position, while he prepared to act offensively with half the company. Kasprzykiewicz did not have exact information about the course of the Polish counter-attack in Ossów, but when he deduced from the sounds of battle that the moment was opportune he set off with the intention of cutting the Majdan – Ossów road. Having reached the road, Kasprzykiewicz advanced westwards and reached a wood north-west of Leśniakowizna, from where he drove out several Russian horsemen. A machine-gun and an ammunition cart were seized.

It was now to be expected that enemy infantry would soon appear, so he prepared for that clash. Not many minutes had passed when a cavalry patrol appeared, which was fired upon, and enemy infantry were soon seen. The enemy did not expect to encounter Poles on their line of retreat, so they thought there had been a misunderstanding, and so they gave a signal with their caps. This is what 2nd-Lieutenant Kasprzykiewicz wrote about the clash:

In response to that, I gave the order to shoot. Panic broke out in the Bolshevik units, which were growing larger by the minute. Some kept on waving their caps, while the majority threw

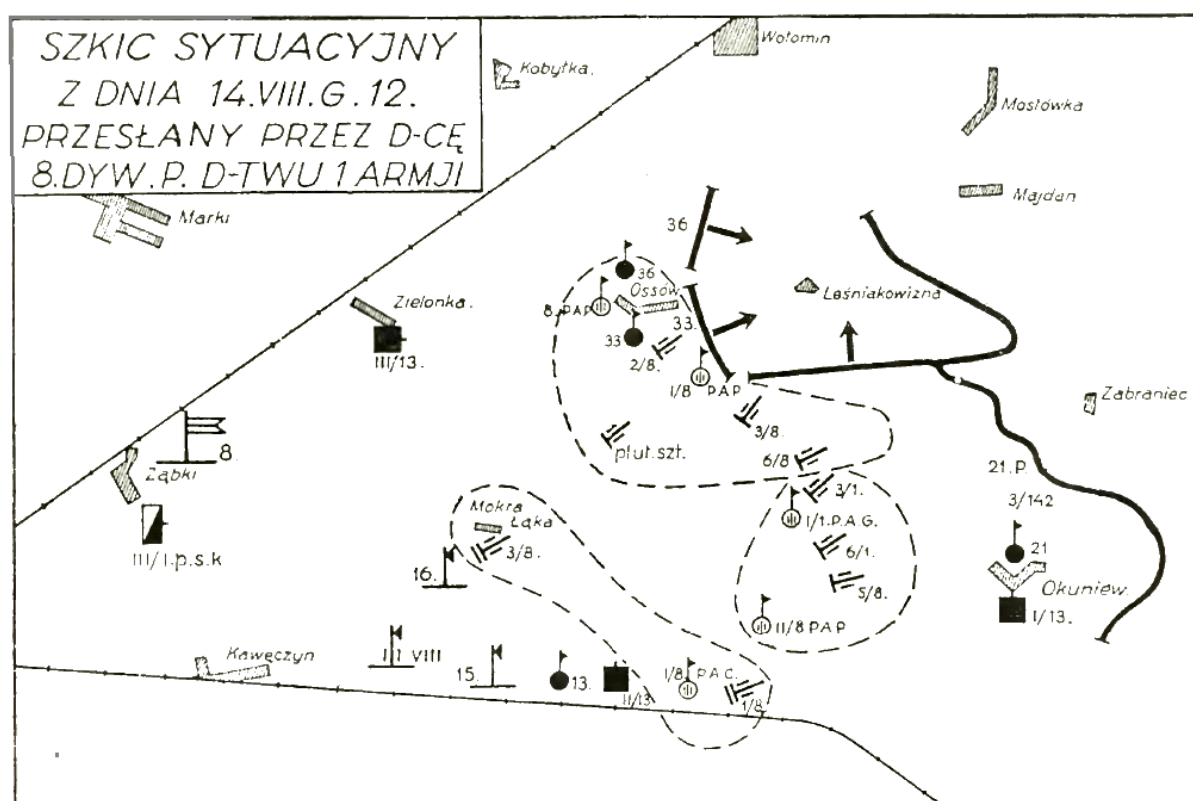


down their rifles and walked along the edge of the forest towards Height 102. I continued to shoot at the crowd in front of me – fearing that if they realised the weakness of my unit, they would attack me. The shooting increased the panic among the fleeing men, whom I was sure would be caught near Height 102, but unfortunately the silence from there convinced me that Height 102 had been abandoned by the rest of the 2nd Platoon. However, I was pleased to see that Sgt. Bąkowski (head of the company), on his own initiative attacked Height 102 in sections, making way for the fleeing soldiers. At this time the 1st Platoon, Cadet Panecki, also struck to the north-west, driving some of the Bolsheviks into the woods and the rest towards Height 102.

The scattered enemy troops therefore headed east. Second Lieutenant Kasprzykiewicz was left with about 100 prisoners of war, two machine-guns, and other trophies. The prisoners mostly said they were from the 236th RR, with some from the 235th RR.

The battle was over as the units of the 8th Division, joined by the 13th and 16th Companies of the 47th Regiment, followed the retreating enemy, now escaping mainly through Leśniakowizna.

News of the counter-attack also reached Ząbki, where Lt-Colonel Bagiński was. That was reflected in a situation sketch dated 12 o'clock, which Bagiński sent to the Army command (Sketch 53 is a reduced copy).



Sketch 53: situation at 12:00 on 14 August drawn by the 8th ID for 1st Army command

Retaking the First Line and Repulse of the Evening Attack

After the counter-attack, the troops stayed in the recaptured positions. This was done rather loosely, as only Battalion 3/13 had held firm. It occupied the section to the left of the Majdan – Leśniakowizna road. Meanwhile the other sections were not manned by proper units, as those had been dispersed in the course of the battle.

Officers sent patrols to all directions, especially to the battlefield near Ossów, to collect back the volunteers who, having lost most of their commanders, were wandering around all over the place. But the young



soldiers brought to the trenches soon disappeared again. This gathering of scattered volunteers not only continued on 14 August, but was not even finished by 15 August.

So the line was thinly held and the commander of the 3rd Battalion mentions that, despite his best efforts, he did not manage to fill the gap to the right of his battalion in the Leśniakowizna area. For the time being this was not dangerous, as the enemy had been soundly beaten and gave no signs of life.

The division commander, after returning to Ząbki and receiving reports from his subordinates, sent a report to the Army HQ, relating the results of the battle at Ossów. He stated that the enemy attack had been "completely wiped out", noting at the same time that his troops had suffered heavy losses, especially in the 33rd Regiment. Colonel Burhardt-Bukacki, speaking by phone with the Army, then proposed that he be allowed to take advantage of the situation and make an advance on Majdan with the 13th Regiment. The Army command, fearing the weakening of the front, did not agree to that.

The division's losses were very heavy; the first calculation, given in the situation report of 15 August, listed 50 killed and 300 wounded.

On the afternoon of 14 August, the 8th Division command issued orders at 18:00 and 19:00 giving new positions. The sector was divided into two brigade sub-sectors: the left was to be taken by the 15th Brigade, keeping the 13th Regiment in line and the 33rd Regiment in reserve, while the right was to be taken by the 16th Brigade, leaving the 21st Regiment in the line and the 36th Regiment in reserve (at the training ground barracks). The command of the 15th Brigade was to move to Mokre Łąki. The division commander intended in this way to give the 33rd and 36th regiments a rest and allow them to replenish their units. The 8th Division also received a tank platoon during the day, which was sent by rail to the military stop.⁵⁶ This regrouping was to be carried out overnight.

At the same time the organisation of the artillery, which was still not working properly, was finally made. *Divizion 2/1 MAR* received Battery 4/1 MAR from the 15th Division's sector, while *Divizion 2/8 FAR* received two guns, which were used to supplement its 3rd and 5th Batteries.

Colonel Burhardt-Bukacki also appealed to the soldiers in these words:

I call upon all officers and soldiers to persevere at the moment when the general counter-attack begins – which will give us victory. It is our duty to stay unswervingly in our present positions at the moment of the decisive battle and to die with honour rather than retreat from our positions.

Many more hours passed before the manning of the sector could be sorted out. Meanwhile, at 22:00 there was an enemy attack, which struck at Leśniakowizna and Okuniew. It was the 17th Rifle Division, which was unsuccessful. At around 23:30 calm descended.

So ended a memorable day in the history of the 8th Division.

47th Regiment's Sector in the Afternoon of 14 August

Having repulsed the attack, the soldiers of the 47th Regiment took a breather. Calm prevailed on the bridgehead. By the evening, the 1st Battalion had established communication with the Nowogród Regiment, with which it reached an agreement on the withdrawal of the relocating troops. At 16:00 communication was established with the troops of the 8th Division.

During this second day of the battle – which was ending successfully because, after all, the 47th Regiment had held its section of the line – the infantry slowly gained confidence. The commander of the 4th Battalion, reporting on the course of that day's action, stressed that "the commander of the 12th Company deserves praise", as it was his actions which mastered the situation, "thus saving the whole sector".

⁵⁶ The authors noted that it was called by their time the Wesola stop. This is still a station called Warszawa Wesola, which is presumably the same one. It is 8 km in a straight line from it to Leśniakowizna.



Of the 4th Battalion's companies, the 14th was the best so far, while the 13th and 16th Companies had not yet been reassembled in their entirety and had given a poor performance.



Taken from 1 km east of Wołomin Station, in the area of the armoured train's excursion

On the afternoon of 14 August, operations in the regiment's sector rested mainly on the artillery and armoured trains. The artillery, keeping watch in front of the positions, fired at any targets that appeared and also at those ordered by the command or at the request of neighbouring units.

The armoured trains *Paderewski* and *Mściciel* also made an advance to disperse an enemy grouping near the railway track. At 14:15 *Paderewski* left Wołomin on the right track, soon followed by *Mściciel* on the left. The *Paderewski* advanced further, as the *Mściciel* remained behind due to damage to the track. Having approached the Lipinki area, the *Paderewski* began to shell the infantry and wagons in the area and drove them away, while the *Mściciel* dispersed the enemy troops located north of the Nowa Wieś Manor with fire. Between 15:20 and 16:50 the *Mściciel* shelled Duczki, where numerous infantry and cavalry were stationed.

In the midst of this the *Paderewski*, while returning, got caught in the fire of enemy artillery from the area of Grabie Nowe, and then had to stop, as a cavalry patrol had torn up the railway track in two places. The *Mściciel* covered the retreat of the *Paderewski* and between 17:00 and 17:30 shelled the area of Zagościniec and Duczki. It also came under fire of an enemy battery, which was in the area of Nadbiel.

Having fulfilled their task, the armoured trains withdrew at 17:35 back to Wołomin station. In this action the *Mściciel* fired about 60 artillery shells.

The 15th Division on 14 August

The morning of 14 August was quiet in front of the advanced units of the 15th Division (on the line Długa Szlachecka – Długa Kościelna – Brzeziny – Pęcłin – Otwock – Karczew). The lead units of the Soviet 10th Rifle Division were just arriving.

At about 10:00 the enemy pressed on the troops of the 59th IR, which withdrew gradually to the forward positions. At the same time the troops of the 30th Brigade also came into contact with the enemy, and more skirmishing ensued.

From 16:00 the enemy began to creep up close to the 59th IR, mainly in the Emów – Wiązowna – Boryszew area. However, these were small enemy detachments which, thrown back by rifle and machine-gun fire, mostly hid in the woods east and south-east of Wiązowna. In contrast, the 60th Regiment's section was quiet.



The 15th Division's command had news that large enemy columns were still marching along the Siedlce – Warsaw road and could presumably enter the battle in the morning of 15 August.

At around 21:00 a larger battle broke out near Okuniew, where the enemy attacked twice (at 21:00 and 21:45). They were repulsed by infantry and artillery fire. The commander of the 29th Brigade reported that the enemy had sustained significant losses, "because a lot of groaning can be heard in the foreground, apparently from the wounded."

Around this time enemy horse patrols had reached Otwock and Karczew, in front of the 30th Brigade. The armoured train *Danuta* patrolled the Miłosna – Dębe Wielkie stretch during the day.

Generalising the results of the operations on 14 August, the command of the 15th Division stated in its daily situation report that the enemy was approaching the front of the Polish positions very cautiously.

The artillery in the 15th ID's sector shelled targets appearing in the foreground. The ammunition consumption was relatively high: the 15th FAR fired 1,272 rounds, the batteries of the 1st *Divizion* 15th HAR fired about 50 rounds, Battery 4/20 FAR fired 60, and Battery 3/20 fired a dozen or so rounds. In total (and adding other data), one can assume a figure of 1,500 shells fired on 14 August.



Chapter XII

Russian Operations on 14 August

In the morning of 14 August the Russian troops still kept the offensive force which had been rolling them forward in the previous weeks. The 13 August success achieved at Radzymin had raised the mood of the soldiers and commanders and it had spurred the war commissars to step up political activity in the ranks.

The slogans: 'Surrender Warsaw!', 'Death to the Polish bourgeoisie!' and similar, which for weeks had been used to stir up the tired Red Army, were supposed to push the decisive effort to achieve total victory. And it seemed close to becoming a reality.

After all, as one Russian author recalls, Warsaw appeared in front of the ranks: "16 versts – it seemed – separated us from the revolution in Europe". The 27th Division decided to go through the "whirlpool of revolution" at any cost.

We must admit that there must undoubtedly have been enthusiasm in the Russian ranks, especially as the last few days had produced relatively easy successes. On 14 August the tension of the battle increased considerably, and from that moment the balance of advantage began to waver. It was then that the Russian side began to show its weaknesses, which increased almost hourly.

The Russian divisions fighting at Radzymin had not been directed up to this point – although they had acted in accordance with orders, the reality of the battlefield now demanded improvisation as conditions changed. This was an indispensable condition for further action.

There is a line of thought that the Soviet command should have taken advantage of the success achieved at Radzymin on 13 August, and that there were opportunities to do so. What was needed was a change of direction of the remaining divisions of the 16th Army towards the battlefield at Radzymin, which would have corresponded with the Front commander's guiding idea. He wanted the 16th Army to strike with a strong right wing north of Warsaw. The 21st Division would then have to become part of the 16th Army.

But on 14 August 1920, which even the Soviets admit "can be called the day of the conclusion of the general battle on the whole front", the 16th Army command was too far from the front lines and did not agree on the divisions' tasks. The army's HQ was in Wysokie Litewskie and the advanced operational base was in Siedlce. However, the Army commander, Sollohub, was unable to leave to direct operations, due to illness and the chief of staff was not sent either.⁵⁷

On 14 August, news of the successes so far reached the higher commands. It seemed reasonable that the troops would be roused to a decisive effort, and that victory would fall to them.

On the same day, Trotskii, chairman of the RMS of the Republic, issued an order which he concluded with the words:

Red troops, forward! Heroes, on to Warsaw! Long live victory!

21st and 27th Rifle Divisions on 14 August near Radzymin

On the morning of 14 August, the 21st and 27th RDs were to launch a further attack and take control of Praga and the Vistula River crossings (21st), and the Jabłonna area (27th). During the night of 13/14 August, the units of those divisions were in direct combat contact with the Polish divisions and, on the morning of 14 August, were tied up fighting in their respective sectors.

The brigades undertook their offensive actions at different times. The 81st RB of the 27th RD was the first to act.

At dawn on 14 August, the 81st RB, which had spent the night in the area between Aleksandrów and Cegielnia, set off in the direction of Jabłonna. The 243rd RR headed towards Dąbkowizna and Height 88,

⁵⁷ It was not practice in any case for a Soviet chief of staff to direct operations in that manner. They were generally administrators, not commanders.



while the 241st and 242nd RRs headed towards Wólka Radzyńska and Izabelin. No difficulties were encountered on setting off, as there was no one on the road. Just one Polish battery was encountered, which found itself without infantry in position. Things were looking up when soldiers of the 243rd Regiment stormed the battery and captured the guns, along with a handful of crew. Following this episode, the 243rd RR attacked Dąbkowizna and drove the Polish troops from it. Some of the regiment continued to march on and reached Height 88.

While this was happening the rest of the 81st Brigade, covered to the east by a sand embankment stretching from Aleksandrów to the south-west, marched towards Wólka Radzyńska. In the vicinity of that village it fought a brief battle with a Polish unit and occupied some trenches above the road. After reaching the road, patrols were sent in the direction of Nieporęt and Izabelin and machine-guns were placed on the road, directed towards Struga. At around 08:30 a telephone report was made that Wólka Radzyńska and Izabelin had been captured.

After capturing Wólka Radzyńska, the 81st Brigade halted, awaiting the start of the neighbouring advance. However, it did not remain idle, as between 09:00 and 10:00 it engaged in a firefight with mounted and foot patrols of Poles approaching from the direction of Pustelnik and Izabelin. Those patrols were driven off, and a Polish patrol which had arrived by car near Wólka Radzyńska was also defeated.

Soon the sounds of battle came from the vicinity of Aleksandrów and Cegielnia, from behind the brigade. It appeared that the Poles, advancing towards Radzymin, had succeeded in driving back the units of the 21st RD towards the town. In view of this, the 81st Brigade's position was becoming dangerous, especially as the Polish troops also attacked some of its wagons. However, the brigade was not involved in any fighting at that time, which allowed it to decide to turn back and rush to the aid of the units fighting in the area of Cegielnia – Radzymin. The 243rd RR was left in the Wólka Radzyńska area, with the task of providing cover from the west and south, while the rest – the 241st and 242nd RRs – were quickly sent back to Aleksandrów and Cegielnia.

Battle for Cegielnia, Ciemne and Radzymin

In the morning of 14 August, the units of the 61st and 62nd RBs were in the area of Cegielnia, Wioska Radzyńska and Radzymin in direct combat contact with the Poles. At dawn the brigades attempted to advance, but were stopped by Polish fire and so the units of the 21st RD remained on the line of Cegielnia. The right wing regiment of the 80th RB (the 239th), which also intended to advance towards Słupno in the morning of 14 August, was stopped by fire as it set off from Ciemne and Cegielnia (by the road). Patrols of the 240th Regiment, sent in the direction of Janków Nowy, encountered Polish units behind the Rządza River, which drove them back. The 80th RB then remained in place and continued to hold the positions: the 239th RR in Cegielnia and Ciemne, the 240th RR in Ciemne and Height 98, and the 238th RR in Helenów, Czarna Nowa and Height 109. The brigade commander was not able to get all the regiments together and go onto the attack, especially as the regiments soon had to defend their own positions.

At around 10:00 the Poles launched an attack, heading from Słupno towards Aleksandrów and Cegielnia and along the road. At the same time small detachments of Polish cavalry and infantry advanced from the forest and approached Ciemne. Those troops were rejected by the 80th Brigade.

Several attempts by the Poles to advance with smaller forces from Czarna Stara towards Height 98 were also unsuccessful. However the Poles were successful in the sector of the 21st Division. The 61st and 62nd RBs failed to stop the Polish advance and, leaving behind a dozen or so machine-guns and a battery, hastily retreated in the direction of Radzymin.

Encouraged by this, the Poles took up a pursuit of the retreating soldiers and moved into the town, which they captured. The 61st and 62nd RBs halted in the fields north and north-east of Radzymin, rallied, and took up positions. Units of the 63rd RB soon came to the rescue from the Mokre area and they, together with the 21st Cavalry Regiment and units of the 61st and 62nd RBs (which had sorted themselves out by this time), attacked the city from the north-west and north. The Poles could not take the attack, broke and, in great disorder, began to flee the city.



At this point the manoeuvre of the 81st Brigade, which had sent two regiments from Wólka Radzyńska back towards Aleksandrów and Cegielnia, made itself felt. After reaching a sandy hill (stretching from Wólka Radzyńska towards Aleksandrów), it clashed with Polish troops moving north. The Russians set up machine-guns on the hill and fired heavily at the Poles, who began to retreat. The brigade, taking advantage of that, moved forward vigorously and seized Aleksandrów and Cegielnia, thus cutting off the retreat of the Polish troops.

The 239th RR of the 80th RB, seeing that the Polish troops retreating from Radzymin were running through the fields between the road and Ciemne, struck westwards with infantry and mounted scouts. The retreating troops were not completely smashed, but heavy losses were inflicted and a handful of prisoners were taken.

In pursuit of the enemy, the Russian troops reached the southern edge of the forest (near Ciemne) and Słupno. The Polish troops, fragmented and scattered in disorder, escaped under Russian fire along the road towards Pustelnik, stopping only on the edge of the wooded hills. The units of the 21st and 27th RDs did not pursue further, as the Polish artillery increased their fire to cover the retreat and, showering the Russian units with shells, prevented them from advancing further.

As a result of these actions, Radzymin was retaken and Wólka Radzyńska and Słupno were captured.

Attack of the 79th Brigade

The 79th RB spent the night of 13/14 August in the immediate vicinity of the Polish troops with whom it had fought on 13 August. The 237th RR was in the area of Duczki and Lipiny, and the 235th and 236th RRs were around Mostówka and Majdan. The next day the brigade was given the task of covering the left wing of the 80th and 81st RBs (marching towards Jabłonna) and of co-operating in the assault of the 21st RD towards Praga. This task was difficult to accomplish, as the 21st RD was operating on a different sector, away from the 79th RB, while the 81st and 80th RBs were stretched over a considerable distance. The 79th Brigade commander ordered the 237th Regiment to press on towards Wołomin, while the 235th and 236th Regiments were to strike in the direction of Leśniakowizna and Ossów.

At around 05:00 the troops moved on to the attack, preceded by the fire of an artillery *division*. This barrage, directed mainly at the Polish positions near Leśniakowizna, was short-lived but relatively strong. After a firefight, the 235th and 236th RRs struck in several waves in a narrow section on both sides of the road to Leśniakowizna. The Polish resistance did not last long: they could not hold the advance of the 79th RB and retreated in disorder to Leśniakowizna and Ossów. The Russian brigade followed the retreating units and soon reached the eastern edge of Ossów, where it clashed with the new Polish units, which advanced to counter-attack.

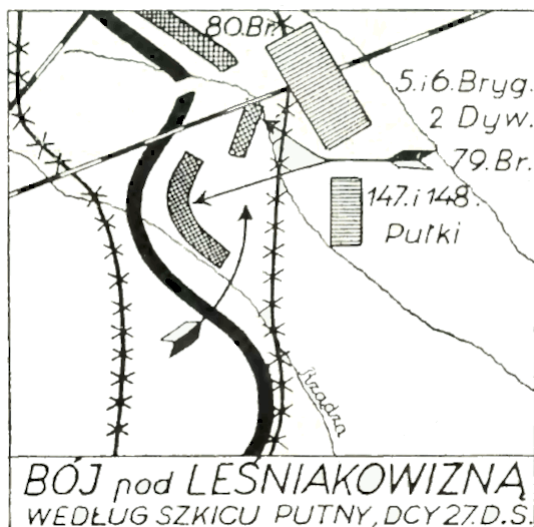
A number of fierce battles ensued, with the Poles going onto the assault several times, but finally collapsing under machine-gun fire. There was even some close-range fighting. The 79th Brigade threw back all the Polish counter-attacks and positioned itself in the eastern part of Ossów, facing west and south (along the Długa River). The 79th Brigade therefore failed to carry out its allotted task, as it was held in Ossów.

Meanwhile, the 237th RR was leading an attack along the railway track towards Wołomin. Although it almost reached the Polish trenches near Lipiny, it encountered resistance from the Polish troops combined with the fire of Polish artillery and armoured trains, and had to stop and give up. As a result, the two regiments of the 79th Brigade, which had penetrated deep into the Polish positions, found themselves in a dangerous position. They had lost their attacking strength and, at any moment, the previous success could end in defeat. The 237th Regiment, tied up in an ineffective battle at Wołomin, was unable to come to the aid of the rest of the brigade.

In this difficult situation, KomBrig Chachanian turned to the commander of the right wing brigade of the 17th Division (whose regiments were near Kolno and Ręczaje), asking for the support for the 79th Brigade. Now what the 27th RD had accused others of came back to bite: the day before he had claimed that the 21st RD intended to pre-empt the 27th RD and enter Warsaw first. The 79th Brigade had set off in the morning of 14 August also wanting to capture Warsaw, and had not sought to secure the assistance of the



2nd and 17th Divisions, in whose zone of operations it was advancing. Now, not surprisingly, the 17th Division did not want to rush to Ossów and the KomBrig of the 17th RD refused to support the request, explaining his refusal by the fact that he did not have orders from above.



Sketch 54 : Battle of Leśniakowizna, taken from Putna (Commander of the 27th RD)

At about 11:00 the Poles crossed the river and struck the rear of the 79th Brigade between Ossów and Leśniakowizna (Sketch 54) and forced the 236th and 237th Regiments to retreat. At the same time strong Polish rifle lines came from the west and now pushed forward unstopably. The Russian retreat through Leśniakowizna took place in difficult conditions and caused considerable losses. The fleeing regiments were harassed by the Poles on all sides and barely managed to escape from their trap to Mostówka and Majdan. The division commander recalls, that the 79th Brigade lost 625 soldiers. Putna (*To the Vistula and Back*) states that the division suffered losses of as many as 1,096 men. These figures, especially for the 79th Brigade, seem too high. If this is the case, the combat strengths of the Russian divisions would have to be higher than those given by other Russian authors.

2nd Division Enters the Battle near Radzymin

On 13 August the 5th and 6th RBs of the Russian 2nd RD were in the area of Lipka, Nadbiel, and Czubajowizna. The 4th RB was the division's reserve. The division was to, by the evening of 14 August, occupy the area of Radzymin, Stanisławów, Pustelnik, Helenów and, reaching the Royal Canal – New Canal line, send reconnaissance parties to the Vistula River to reconnoitre the section between Bagno and Dąbrowka Szlachecka.

But during the day of 13 August, when those orders were issued, much had changed. An organised defence was encountered on the approaches to Warsaw. However, that news did not reach the divisions' staffs quickly, and from the morning of 14 August the situation changed so frequently that it was difficult to make out what was going on. The commanders of the 21st and 27th Divisions were not present in the front lines with their troops. However, that did not affect the decisions of the 2nd Division commander who, in line with previous orders, directed the 5th and 6th RBs to reach the area of Radzymin, Pustelnik and Helenów.

Between 11:00 and 12:00 the leading units of the 5th and 6th RBs reached the vicinity of Duczki. They probably knew that the 27th RD had been attacking since the morning and therefore hoped to follow them and reach the designated areas. Meanwhile, at this time the 79th RB was thrown out of Ossów and the advance stopped near Wołomin, while at the same time the Poles retook Radzymin. The troops of the 2nd Division were spotted and the Polish artillery shelled the Duczki area. At that point, the 5th Brigade took side roads along the battle front in the vicinity of Radzymin, while the 6th Brigade marched towards Czarna Stara and Nowa. The march was slow, as the Polish artillery, along with armoured trains, laid heavy fire on the Russian units crossing the railway track around Duczki, Zagościniec and Lipiny.

In the afternoon of 14 August the 15th RR of the 5th RB arrived (together with a battery) in Radzymin and the 14th RR in the area of Cegielnia and Ciemne. The 13th RR was the brigade's reserve. The 6th RB was behind a section of the 80th RB near Czarna. Thus there was now a mixing of units from the three divisions, namely the 2nd, 21st, and 27th. During the night of 14/15 August the command of the 2nd Division submitted a situation report by the following by ciphered radio :

From the 2nd Division HQ to 16th Army HQ

15 August at 01:00

Operational report, 2nd Division HQ.

5th Brigade: the brigade's units, with fighting, reached the line of Aleksandrów – Cegielnia.



6th Brigade: the brigade's units have occupied a line from Czarna Stara – Ulasek.

4th Brigade: is concentrated as the divisional reserve in the area of Ręczaje – Korwan [Kolno?].

KomDiv – Naumov

Chief of Staff – Kirsnov

Cipher – Nikitin.

Division Assignments for 15 August

The battle on 14 August, which was fought with varying fortunes, left the 21st and 27th Divisions with partial success in the Radzymin area. However, this was only that the results of 13 August were maintained and the Polish counter-attacks were rejected. The Poles withdrew to the second lines in front of Warsaw, which the Russians captured only in the area of Wólka Radzymińska. The divisions failed to perform their main task, as the 27th did not reach the Jabłonna area, nor did the 21st capture Praga and the Vistula River crossings, to say nothing of the other divisions of the 16th Army, which had not yet fought near Warsaw.

During the evening of 14 August and night of 14/15 August the tactical relationships of the shuffled units of the three divisions were not brought into order: it is very likely that this was intended to be done in the course of operations on 15 August. It is known that the division commanders operating in the Radzymin area communicated with each other and, to some extent, agreed on tasks.

The commander of the 27th Division, who since 16:00 had been in communication with the commanders of the neighbouring divisions, states that it was agreed to launch a simultaneous attack at dawn on 15 August. Accordingly, he issued his own orders: the 81st RB was to take Nieporęt, the 80th RB was to take Jabłonna, while the 79th RB was to advance behind the 80th RB, staying in reserve.

During the night, units of the 2nd Division were to relieve the 80th RB on the line Ciemne – Czarna Nowa – Height 109, and then also move to capture the Stanisławów area.

The task of the 21st Division changed radically. The 3rd Army commander, seeing that his troops (5th and 6th Divisions) had encountered resistance on the approaches to the Narew and Wkra Rivers, decided that the 21st Division would abandon its previous course of action towards Praga, and would begin to operate to the west, in favour of the 3rd Army (mainly the 6th Division).

On the afternoon of 14 August, the commander of the 21st RD issued orders to the brigades related to the new task, indicating that the division was from then on to attack in the direction of Wieliszew and southern Zegrze (Zegrze – Zagroby), in order to support the attack of the 6th Division, advancing from the north to the bridgehead of Zegrze. With this shift, the 27th Division was gaining a strong foothold on the northern wing. In the evening of 14 August, units of the 17th Division relieved the 79th Brigade on the section Majdan – Mostówka.

Following verbal orders, the commander of the 27th Division issued an operational order at 02:30 on 14 August,⁵⁸ in which he first stated the stubbornness of the Poles' defence. He notified the brigades that the 21st Division was to assist with a strike in the direction of Wieliszew, while the 2nd Division was to occupy the Stanisławów region and advance its forward troops to the Vistula. The line of demarcation between the 27th and 2nd Divisions ran through Kraszew, Słupno, Jabłonna (inclusive for the 27th Division). The task of the 27th Division was to reach the line Łajski – Jabłonna-Legionowo. To this end, the 81st Brigade was to strike vigorously in that direction at dawn on 15 August and seize the region of Łajski, Michałów and Nieporęt as quickly as possible. The 80th Brigade, after surrendering the Ciemne – Czarna Nowa section to the units of the 2nd Division, was to attack vigorously at dawn in the direction of Izabelin and, covering itself to the left, take Jabłonna and Jabłonna-Legionowo in the shortest possible time. The 79th Brigade (remaining in reserve) was to advance behind the 80th Brigade and stop in the Aleksandrów – Kąty Węgierskie area.

⁵⁸ Presumably this is actually 15 August.



This plan of action can be considered rather risky, although it was essentially in line with the orders of the 16th Army. However, we must take into account that the previous orders had disregarded the possibility of Polish resistance on the eastern bank of the Vistula, as evidenced by the sentences about marching to force the Vistula. But the 27th Division commander had in his possession captured plans of the fortifications of the Warsaw bridgehead and knew that, holding Wólka Radzyńska as he did, he had made a deep breakthrough into the second line. This allowed him to direct the assault in the direction of Nieporęt.

However, under this assumption and in accordance with his orders, the 79th and 80th Brigades were to parade in front of Warsaw's second lines, which, as we have already seen, had a considerable amount of artillery. Moreover, the 27th Division could not count on the assistance of the 2nd Division, at least at the beginning of operations, as that division was to first take over a section of the 80th Brigade and then move to capture the Stanisławów area. Meanwhile, support on the right wing was provided by the 21st Division. The execution of the attack therefore would not be easy, as there was no cover for its flank, which would be exposed to the danger of a counter-attack from the Poles all the way along. Yet the commander of the 27th Division demanded that the task be completed as quickly as possible.

The commander of the 21st Division (in Zabrodzie) received at noon on 14 August an order from the 3rd Army, which directed him to support the advance of the 6th Division with a blow in the direction of Wieliszew. At 15:00 (Russian time) the division commander issued an order giving his brigades the following tasks: the 63rd RB, reinforced by the 21st Cavalry Regiment, was to throw the enemy out of the Ruda – Łoś area and, striking in the direction of Nieporęt, was to take Wieliszew – Łajski inclusive; the 21st Cavalry Regiment was to capture the junction of roads in the Jabłonna-Legionowo area; the 62nd RB was to strike as vigorously as possible in the direction of Stupno and Izabelin and then capture Łajski – Jabłonna-Legionowo; the 61st RB, the division's reserve, was to advance behind the 62nd RB.

These orders came rather late for the brigade commanders, as the battles of 14 August had obviously affected staff work, especially as the divisions were not in good order, and that issue preoccupied the commanders. The hour of execution was not specified in the division's orders; but stated that action had to be started as soon as the order was received and after notifying the neighbouring units.

At 23:40 (Russian time) on 14 August the commander of the 62nd Brigade issued an order for his regiments to assemble in Stupno, from where they were to proceed to attack in the direction of Izabelin. The brigade was to hold the following sections: Michałów to Kozłowska Manor by the 185th RR; Kozłowska village to Jabłonna barracks by the 186th RR; as the brigade's reserve the 184th RR was to remain in the barracks. The 185th RR was to advance through Wólka Radzyńska and Małotka, the 186th RR through Mata, Aleksandrów and Wola Aleksandra, and finally the 184th RR through Mostki Wólczyńskie and Izabelin. (We do not have the order of the 63rd Brigade commander, but the division commander's orders inform us sufficiently of that brigade's task.)

When comparing the orders of the 21st and 27th Divisions, it is striking that there was in fact no reconciliation of tasks, since even the commanders of the 62nd and 81st Brigades did not communicate with each other. A literal execution of those orders would have resulted in the crowding of two brigades into one lane of operations. Nor do we have information that such an agreement took place before dawn on 15 August.

Most of the divisions of the 16th Army (2nd, 8th, 10th and 17th) did not fulfil their allotted tasks on 14 August. Those divisions hardly fought on that day, either because they had skirmishes with the Polish rearguards or because they had no enemy in front of them at all. Some of the divisions did not reach their prescribed areas, as the distance to be covered was too great. There were also those that found themselves in front of the Polish positions, but for various reasons did not advance (2nd and 17th RDs). The main forces of the 17th Division during the night of 13/14 August were several kilometres from the Wołomin – Okuniew line. During the day of 14 August, the 49th and 50th RBs reached the Ręczaje – Kolno area, while the 51st RB was only just reaching Okuniew.



In the evening of 14 August, the troops of the 17th Division came into direct contact with the garrison of the Polish bridgehead. Units of the 79th RB marched out from Majdan – Mostówka and were replaced by the units of the 50th RB. The 150th RR (right wing) joined up in the north with the 237th RR of the 79th RB, which was still in Lipiny.

Late in the evening of 14 August, units of the 17th Division attacked the Polish positions, pushing from Majdan to Leśniakowizna and along the road to Okuniew. Part of the 51st Brigade attacked Budziska. However the rifle lines, as they approached the barbed wire obstacles, were thrown back by Polish artillery and infantry fire. Around midnight, the whole stretch between Majdan and Okuniew became calm.

The 10th Division marched during the day of 14 August and in the evening its main forces were on the line Dębe Wielkie – Poręby – Glinianki. The forward units advanced and in the evening came into contact with the enemy near Wiązowna, who were manning a strongly fortified position.

The left-wing 8th Division marched unhindered during 14 August and in the evening of that day its main forces reached the Glinianki – Osieck – Garwolin area. The forwardmost troops reached the Vistula River.



Chapter XIII

Use of the Front Reserve and the Battle of Wólka Radzyńska

Decisions Connected with the Failure at Radzymin

In the late morning of 14 August, the Polish 1st Army command received situation reports from the battle lines, which indicated that the actions of the Polish troops at Radzymin and Ossów were developing successfully. However, the situation near Radzymin gained more attention due to alarming reports from Zegrze, which reported on the danger threatening from the vicinity of Wólka Radzyńska and Dąbkowizna. But the news did not cause General Latinik much concern at the time. He went to lunch, while the command of the Army passed to Lt-Colonel Bobicki, whose orders we saw in a previous chapter.⁵⁹

At around 14:00 the Army received reports from General Rządkowski and Colonel Jaźwiński on the breakdown of the counter-attack and the failure at Radzymin. According to those reports, the Polish troops had failed to defeat the 21st and 27th Divisions, with whom they had fought at Radzymin, as the enemy brought fresh forces into the battle and gained the upper hand. These troops outflanked the Poles and tipped the scales of success in favour of the Reds.

News of the defeat at Radzymin spread quickly in Warsaw, arousing understandable excitement in the staffs, the military and civilian authorities and the public, who keenly felt the events at the front. Some commanders went to the battle line. Members of the government and political activists also rushed to the front, believing that their arrival would have a positive effect on the soldiers of the 1st Army.⁶⁰

General Haller arrived at the front and witnessed the end of the retreat from Radzymin to the second Warsaw line. General Latinik also intended to go to the battle line.

At this critical moment the need arose for the 10th Division to enter the battle, as the 1st Army had no reserves left. The Chief of General Staff's liaison officer, Colonel Kubin, reporting the position to General Rozwadowski from Marki, remarked:

I just want to draw attention to the possible use in of the 10th Division.

⁵⁹ Original footnote: General Latinik mentions in his work (*The 1st Army in the Battle for Warsaw*) that, while enjoying lunch at his brother's place, he received a message from Lt-Colonel Bobicki about the failure and then gave orders to the chief of staff, notifying that he would return from lunch in an hour and a half. At that time his brother queried that. "Are you someone who wants to eat when you have to defend Warsaw?" To which Latinik answered, as he himself mentions: "Calm down, my dear boy, and don't spoil your appetite and mine, because to defend you need physical and mental strength, and these are obtained through the stomach – I will explain to you now." Latinik then gave his brother his assessment of the situation.

In his brochure the general does not mention this notable episode, but links his ideas to a conference of "chief tactical officers of the staff convened *ad hoc*". In both sources, the Army commander mentions that he ordered the chief of staff by telephone to secure Zegrze from the Nieporęt side (which, as we know, was done), and gives inaccurate details about the buses.

From this, as well as from other indications, we unfortunately have to conclude that the details given by General Latinik require careful examination and comparison, as many of them do not correspond to what actually happened.

⁶⁰ Original footnote: The arrival of members of the government at the battle line at such a critical moment is an episode of great significance. But it had no effect on the mood of the soldiers, as the appearance in the ranks of the President of the Council of Ministers, Witos, and the Minister of the Interior, Skulski, gave no particular morale boost.

One of the battery commanders recalls that Witos's appearance was received indifferently by the soldiers. The significance lay elsewhere. There is no doubt that familiarising themselves with the essential situation was of great importance to the government and the public, as upon their return to the capital, they could boldly proclaim that the shabby, barefooted and miserable soldiers could be counted on. This is mentioned in a communiqué of the Polish Telegraphic Agency of 14 August which includes:

The Prime Minister, Wincenty Witos, and the Minister of the Interior, Skulski, visited the troops of the Lithuanian-Belorussian Division in one of the sectors, who despite being tired and exhausted after a fresh attack, retained great resilience in battle.



Several officers of the French Mission (acting as liaison officers) also let their superiors know about the events at Radzymin. Two officers (names unknown) even went to Jabłonna-Legionowo and tried to persuade General Żeligowski to move the division to fight at Radzymin on his own initiative.

General Haller decided the 1st Army's 10th Division would be used in a counter-attack at Radzymin, and was probably convinced that the situation was dangerous, as he personally went to see General Żeligowski at Jabłonna-Legionowo. General Latinik also went.

The officers of the French Military Mission assessed the situation as bad. This moment was later described by General Weygand in these words

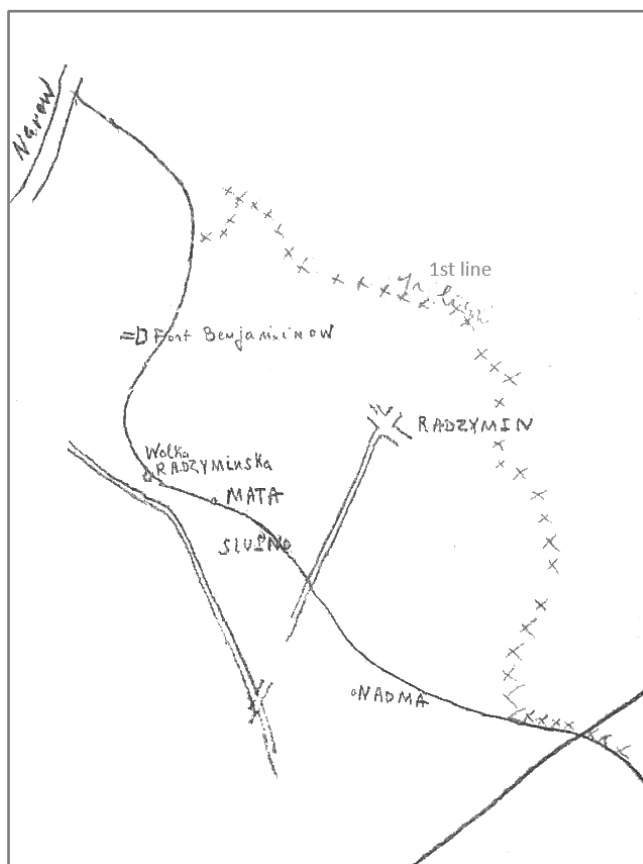
The enemy had even reached the second line in two places, only 15 kilometres from the Praga bridge. This was the gravest moment of the battle.

In connection with the locations on the bridgehead on 14 August, General Weygand sent General Rozwadowski a letter in which he enclosed a sketch. He wrote:

Here is the presumed outline of the Bolshevik lines in the vicinity of Radzymin on the basis of all the reports from French liaison officers. Matters stand much worse than they seem to you, from what you have been told up to now, and require rapid repair.

It also follows from this that the 4th Army must be speeded up. I await with anxiety the answer that the Head of State will give on this matter. On my return (home) I talked to Lt-Colonel de Verquette of aviation and Colonel Maret of tanks.

I fear that the preparations for this action are not being made with the necessary energy. A date of the 17th for this action was apparently mentioned to Colonel Maret, which would not correspond to what was agreed with the Head of State.



Weygand's Sketch of the supposed Russian positions

In the above letter, as we can see, General Weygand gave far-reaching conclusions – lacking confidence in the defence, he saw a way out in speeding up the manoeuvre from across the Wieprz.



We have just mentioned that Generals Haller and Latinik went to Jabłonna-Legionowo in the afternoon and around 15:00 arrived at the 10th Division's HQ, located in the barracks. The course of the conference between Haller, Latinik and Żeligowski is difficult to reconstruct precisely, as accounts of the conference are contradictory. However, the essential details are not in doubt.⁶¹ The written order from the Front command, which followed General Haller's verbal orders, stated:

The command of the 1st Army will use the 10th Division, subordinated to it at 15:45, directed by the Front command, to Kąty and Rembelszczyzna, for the recapture of Radzymin and the first line of trenches.

During the night one of the former divisions should be withdrawn to the reserve at the disposal of the Front commander.

That order was received by the 1st Army (by Hughes) at 17:35.

Lt-Colonel of the General Staff Zagórski, Front Chief of Staff, later illuminated these orders as follows:

There was a desire by the Front command to fix the break in the line during the day of the 15th, with the result that an order went out as early as 14:00 on the 14th to the command of the 10th Division and the 1st Army to set out immediately through Józefów – Kąty Węgierskie and Rembelszczyzna, where it would be grouped for an attack in the direction of Radzymin. After this the 10th Division was to come under the command of the 1st Army, which received the task of retaking Radzymin with the division's help on 14 August.

The 1st Army, on the other hand, did not issue any written orders to counter-attack. But there was no fundamental difference in the concepts of a counter-attack between Generals Haller and Latinik on the one hand, and General Żeligowski on the other.

As we shall see in the execution of the battle, the only issue was in the way in which the 10th Division was introduced into battle, as General Żeligowski intended to concentrate the bulk of his forces in Nieporęt and march on Wólka Radzyńska. However, the orders from his superiors directed the division to Wólka Radzyńska via Rembelszczyzna. These actions were to begin immediately, but the Front ordered the counter-attack on Radzymin to start on 14 August, while General Żeligowski intended to launch the actual counter-attack at dawn on 15 August, which the Army command did not oppose. The organisation of the attack by the three divisions (1st, 10th and 11th) fell entirely to General Żeligowski.

The 1st Army's situation report of 16:00 stated:

A counter-attack by the 19th Division, 10th Division and units of the 11th Division, with the aim of retaking the sector of the 1st Army's defensive line across the front, has been ordered.

Late in the evening the Army, having received orders from the Front, issued a short order:

1. Front Order 3931/III has subordinated the 10th Division to the 1st Army.

⁶¹ Original footnote: General Żeligowski recalls:

I received From General Haller orders to take command of the 11th and 1st Lit-Bel Divisions, with the task of carrying out a counter-attack. I told him of my intention to attack from Nieporęt instead of a frontal attack from Jabłonna. The general agreed completely and put nine buses at the division's disposal, which arrived at Jabłonna. The entire conversation took place in the courtyard of the house where the division's headquarters were located. It lasted a very short time. General Latinik – as far as I remember – did not speak.

Further on General Żeligowski states:

The concept of the Front commander was to strike concentrically at Radzymin as soon as possible, even at night. My concept was that, after retaking and manning the second line at dawn, a strike for Mokre.

General Latinik, on the other hand, clearly states (article in *Głos Narodu* and his brochure) that he gave General Żeligowski personal orders for action.

It is difficult to establish what General Latinik's plan was, but the intentions in his account too clearly resemble the actual execution.



2. In order to regain the lost areas of Radzymin and the first line of trenches, I order:
- a) the 11th and 19th IDs are subordinated to General Żeligowski for the duration of this action,
 - b) General Żeligowski will order the action according to instructions given to him personally by the Army commander,⁶²
 - c) after regaining the designated line, General Żeligowski will order the 19th ID to be sent to the area of Pustelnik – Nadma – Pustelnik Station, as Front reserve,
 - (d) the line of demarcation between General Żeligowski's Group and the Zegrze Group is the former line between the 11th Division and the Zegrze Group. Between 8th ID and General Żeligowski's Group is the former line between 8th ID and 11th ID.

The command of the 1st Lit-Bel Division received the order at 24:00.

Ammunition supply crisis

In the morning of 14 August, i.e. after just the first day of the battle, during which not a single unit of fire had been fired at Radzymin, and on average not even a third of a unit had been used in front of the bridgehead, the Army command was alarmed that there was a shortage of ammunition. At 04:00 that day the Head of 1st Army Artillery reported directly to the Chief of General Staff that there were only 210 rounds per 100-mm gun, 200 rounds per 75-mm gun and 125 rounds per 105-mm gun in the units, depots and trains. The ammunition level at 08:00 was given as: 200-220 per 75-mm gun, 125 per French 105-mm gun, 180 per French 155-mm gun, 210 per 105-mm gun, 450 per Russian 76-mm (3"). The head of artillery also noted:

Besides this, the 1st Army has no stocks in Warsaw, as everything has been evacuated.

The artillery commander noted:

Such low numbers come from the fact that the 5th Department of the Ministry of Military Affairs is systematically cutting supply. In Warsaw there is no ammunition for the guns listed. We ask for an order that by this evening the amount of ammunition above be placed at the disposal of the Army, otherwise the Army artillery will not be able to perform its tasks.

The Army Headquarters submitted an ammunition requisition for a 4-day supply, taking into account the state of ammunition at the time, and it was noted that:

The request has been increased in view of the great consumption of ammunition in the recent battles.⁶³

⁶² In its original form, this point read:

General Żeligowski will order the assault of the 10th ID through Wólka Radzyńska on Radzymin, which is to be supported by the 11th and 19th IDs.

⁶³ The stock at the time of the request was 360 rounds for the 75-mm guns, 240 for the 105-mm guns, 200 rounds for the Russian 76-mm guns. The stock for the 155-mm guns was held in Łódź.

The following items were shown in the requisition:

For guns	75 (mm)	120 pieces	360 rounds	43,200 total
	105 Fr	28	240	6,702
	155 Fr.	stock, is in Łódź		
	105 Germ	20	240	4,800
	76-mm Russ	24	200	4,800
	77 M16	14	240	3,360
	77 M96	16	240	3,840
	100-mm M16	12	200	2,400
	100-mm M14	2	200	400



Notwithstanding the submission of this requisition and the sending of the letter to the Chief of the General Staff, the Army also approached the Front on this matter. In the afternoon, Lt-Colonel Bobicki reported by Hughes to the Front Chief of Staff:

There is a shortage of ammunition for the artillery and the ordnance section cannot get any, despite the intervention of General Rozwadowski. Please order some, or else some of the batteries will have to remain silent.

In view of this, on 14 August the Ordnance Department issued orders for ammunition to be sent in fast transports to the Warsaw Citadel. However, despite pressure from all sides and quick loading by the sending depots, the ammunition arrived rather late in Warsaw.⁶⁴

Defence of the Right Wing

During the afternoon of 14 August, the Army was generally unconcerned about its flanks. In the centre of the bridgehead, the 8th Division had repulsed the enemy attacks, while the 15th Division had so far only fought the Russian advance guards. The Army expected an enemy attack on the right wing, but assumed that it would be a push by weaker forces. It stated this in the following sentence:

Aerial and offensive intelligence indicate the enemy's intention is to launch an attack on Praga, with small detachments on Okuniew and Wiązowna and along the Warsaw-Dęblin railway.

In view of the above, the Army command ordered:

In view of the fact that the Army reserves have been given the task of conducting a counter-attack in the Radzymin sector, the 8th and 15th Divisions must hold the occupied line with their own forces.

An enemy incursion into the wooded area between Praga and Świder would endanger the entire Warsaw bridgehead.

By the same order the Army subordinated to the 15th ID Battalion 1/168, which was garrisoning the left bank of the Vistula River from Świder Wielki (lying opposite) to Góra Kalwaria, and ordered the grouping of the 15th Division's reserves in the Aleksandrów area.

The centre of the bridgehead remained unchanged, except that the 8th Division was to hastily complete the replenishment of its troops and assign one of its regiments to the Army's reserve. That regiment was to be stationed in the south-eastern part of the Rembertów field in such a way that it could be used in the direction of Wiązowna or Okuniew.

Finally, on 14 August an order was initially given to place an entire company of tanks under General Rządkowski, but during the day the order was changed and the twelve tanks were ordered to be moved to Miłosna Station as part of the 8th Division.

⁶⁴ Poznań received two dispatches: the first demanded the sending of 4,800 shells of 76-mm, 3,360 of 77-mm, 3,840 of 77-mm M96; and the second for: 5,000 of 76-mm, 5,000 of 77-mm M96, 5,000 of 77-mm of M16 and 2,000 of 105-mm M16.

In execution of the above Poznań sent on 15 August amount in the first order and on 16 August at 12:00 sent 3,000 of 77-mm M16, 16,500 of 77-mm M96, 5,000 of 76-mm and 500 of 105-mm M16.

Kielce also received two orders, the first order directed the dispatch of 6,720 rounds of 105-mm, which was sent on 15 August. On the same day a second order was received, which demanded the dispatch of 20,000 shells of 75-mm, 3,000 of 105-mm, and 2,000 of 155-mm. On 16 August Kielce sent 17,000 of 75-mm, 2,624 of 105-mm and 1,774 of 155-mm.

Kraków was ordered on 14 August to send 2,400 shells of 100-mm Austrian howitzer M16 and 400 for M14, amended to 500 for the M14, which was to be sent on 15 August. In addition, it was to send 30,000 shells of 75-mm, 2,000 of 155-mm and 3,000 of 100-mm Howitzer M14, which was sent on 16 August.

On 14 August Łódź sent 27 wagons of ammunition to Warsaw, which contained approximately: 5,000 rounds of 75-mm, 4,000 of 76-mm, 5,000 of 105-mm and 3,000 of 155-mm.



Failure at Radzymin and the 5th Army

We cannot overlook the impact on the 5th Army, whose command was in Nowy Dwór, of the events at the bridgehead. The commander of that army, General Sikorski, recalling that day, wrote about the “extremely sad impression” caused by the news of the setbacks. On the afternoon of 14 August, news arrived at 5th Army HQ of the renewed loss of Radzymin. According to General Sikorski:

The seriousness of the situation, was intensified by the extremely frightening news of the second fall of Radzymin, of the alleged complete destruction of the 19th Division and the departure to Radzymin of the 10th Division, which, positioned in Jabłonna, was covering the rear and the right flank of our Army.

At the same time the Army commander notes that rumours spread that Russian patrols were approaching the outskirts of Praga and even close to the forts of Nowy Dwór.

As a result of the news received, General Sikorski issued orders intended to clarify the situation on his right wing, as, in his opinion:

Bolshevik patrols advancing on Praga also suggested the possibility of us being cut off from Warsaw.

A strong reconnaissance was then sent out (the 214th Lancer Regiment?), which reported during the night that the 48th Regiment was holding the fort at Benjaminów, while Nieporęt was occupied by the enemy. The latter was untrue.

Another order was issued, which the Army commander did not mention in his work. The 17th Division was on the right wing of the 5th Army, with its 69th Regiment located in the Kikoły – Orzechowo sector, while the 67th, 68th and 70th Regiments were in the Stanisławów and Nowy Dwór area. On 14 August, at 23:00 the 17th Division’s command issued an order, declaring:

The 17th Infantry Division will move the 34th Infantry Brigade HQ and 70th IR immediately by forced march to the Kałuszyn region, as well as sending strong intelligence patrols in the direction of the north (Dębe) and east (Aleksandrów).

In accordance with the above, the 34th Brigade ordered the 70th IR at 00:40 to set off for Kałuszyn. In less than two hours this regiment marched out and arrived at 07:30 on 15 August.

The above orders show that the 5th Army was seriously concerned about its rear and right wing.

News of the failure was received at the Commander-in-Chief’s Headquarters in the afternoon. Marshal Piłsudski remembered:

On the 14th the situation took a turn for the worse. Concerned dispatches came from Warsaw. Our resistance was broken with the first Soviet attack, and Radzymin and its surroundings were taken by storm. The messages sounded fearful, reflecting the mood that must have prevailed in the capital.

With the worried reports coming from Warsaw, clear attempts were made to pressure me to hurry to help and to agree, although unprepared, to set off immediately.

In connection with the above, a conversation took place in the afternoon between Colonel of the General Staff Julian Stachiewicz, from the Supreme Commander’s headquarters, and an officer on duty in the 3rd Department of the Supreme Command.

Good morning. This is Colonel Stachiewicz. Please tell Colonel Piskor the following: the date set is dawn on the 16th, earlier is difficult for organisational reasons.

The situation in the north is going fully in line with the prediction of the Commander, who set the 14th as a possible day of pressure on the Warsaw bridgehead. The bridgehead must hold out for a few days, after all the assumption is that it should severely repulse the enemy.

I will see the Commander this evening and discuss the matter.

A message of similar content for an acceleration came from General Weygand.



The Commander-in-Chief mentions the final decision, stating that he had brought forward the date of departure by one day:

I have notified Warsaw that I am starting the strike on the 16th at dawn.

In the course of the Hughes conversation just mentioned, Colonel Stachiewicz received news of the position on the bridgehead. The officer on duty telegraphed:

I report that heavy fighting is in progress on the Warsaw bridgehead in the Radzymin sector.

When asked by Stachiewicz about the results of the fighting so far, reported:

Radzymin, which was taken by the Bolsheviks yesterday, was retaken today at dawn by a counter-attack by the 19th Division. Now, as Colonel Zagórski has just reported, it has been lost again under the pressure of new violent attacks ... The 10th Division is to enter the battle – over.

Not content with that, Stachiewicz asked whether the 19th Division had been replenished, to which he received the answer that it had been given march units, and the 46th BRR had been incorporated into it.

The Commander-in-Chief's Headquarters, not counting the periodic situation reports sent from the commands, at 19:50 heard from the head of the 3rd Department of the General Staff of the Supreme Headquarters, Colonel Piskor, who gave a situation report to the Commander-in-Chief through the command of the 4th Army, stressing, among other things:

A counter-attack by the 19th and 10th IDs is now underway with the order to ruthlessly regain the original lines. On the southern part of the bridgehead it is calm.

General Żeligowski's Counter-Attack

From the morning of 14 August, the 10th Division remained on standby in the Jabłonna-Legionowo area, awaiting orders that could direct it to the battlefield of the 1st Army or the 5th Army. The news reaching Jabłonna, however, drew the attention of the commanders towards Radzymin, which was closest and from where most news was coming. General Żeligowski wrote:

At dawn on the 14th, a strong cannonade began again near Radzymin. At noon the battle, judging from the sounds, reached its highest point, and the roar of gunfire could also be heard from the direction of Wólka Radzyńska. Now there was no doubt in my mind that the division would be used there.

In the afternoon, two French officers met General Żeligowski and the brigade commanders at the 10th Division HQ, bringing "the first news of serious setbacks at Radzymin". The names of these officers are not known, nor is it known on whose orders they appeared. It is likely that they acted on their own initiative, seeing the collapse of the counter-attack at Radzymin. They informed General Żeligowski of the course of action and the situation at Radzymin and, as General Żeligowski recalls, "they were both agitated and very pessimistic about our situation." They wanted to persuade him to move with the division and counter-attack at Radzymin on his own. The general did not agree to this, but being aware of the possibility of a threat to Jabłonna from the north-east, he ordered Battalion 1/28 to be sent to the area of Kąty Węgierskie. At 14:00 the battalion departed by buses. At 15:00 a similar order was received by 2nd-Lieutenant Grębocki, commander of the division's staff company.

As a result of these events, the attention of the commander and his subordinates was drawn even more strongly in the direction of Radzymin. Consideration was given by the staff of the possibilities that awaited the division, should the order throw it in that direction. The commander of the 20th Brigade, Colonel Sikorski, having considered the information he had received about the situation and terrain (from the map), came to some definite conclusions, which he gave to General Żeligowski. These formed the basis of the basic idea, later developed into the division's plan of operations. According to the report of the 20th Brigade staff, the proposals sounded like this:

With regard to the 10th Division, the brigade commander gave a divisional action plan to General Żeligowski and this is accepted:



The 19th IB, starting from the crossroads (given as Białobrzegi) south-west of Zegrze, will carry out an action towards Mokre – Aleksandrów, west of Radzymin, by way of Wieliszew – Wólka Radzymińska.

Special emphasis is placed on capturing Mokre, as being decisive for the fate of Radzymin.

At the same time, the 30th IR, advancing through Kąty Węgierskie towards Radzymin, is to maintain communications with the 19th IB and the 1st Lit-Bel Division and, during the approach of the 19th IB to Mokre, is to advance towards the western edge of Radzymin and thus neutralise any counter-attack of the Muscovites on Mokre. The 1st Lit-Bel could advance in conjunction with the 30th IR.

The 31st IR, at the moment being one whole day's march away as the reserve of the division,⁶⁵ shall move on the road through Wieliszew – Wólka Radzymińska according to the situation.

The commanders' predictions soon came true, as at around 15:00 Generals Haller and Latinik arrived at Jabłonna-Legionowo. The Front commander informed General Żeligowski that the 10th Division was coming under the orders of the commander of the 1st Army, and familiarised him with the location of the 1st Lit-Bel and 11th Divisions. Then General Żeligowski, as he recalls, presented General Haller with a plan of operations for the division. Obviously, the plan was not as crystallised at the time as the 20th Brigade's report, which laid out the details later. The commander of the 10th Division mentions that General Latinik, who was present at this conversation, did not issue any orders.

There is no doubt that some verbal instructions were given by General Latinik to General Żeligowski. This is confirmed by the Army order which contained the following sentence:

General Żeligowski will order the action according to instructions given to him personally by the Army commander.

General Żeligowski, now appointed as commander of the entire counter-attack, found himself in difficult command conditions, the more so given that his role was not clearly defined, as his operational group had no formal structure.

After the departure of Haller and Latinik, Żeligowski issued orders to his brigade commanders, anticipating that on the same day he would bring his troops into battle and capture the area of Wólka Radzymińska. The entire operation of the 10th Division was to be directed on behalf of General Żeligowski by Colonel Sikorski ("to see to the execution of orders"). Żeligowski bade Sikorski farewell with the words: "Well, keep it up!" when leaving Jabłonna-Legionowo for Struga,.

Having received instructions from the commander of the Front and the Army, General Żeligowski had decided to leave for Struga in order to talk with the commanders of the 1st Lit-Bel and 11th Divisions. Communication for coordinating the counter-attack were difficult, as the HQs of the other divisions were in Marki, and Jabłonna could only communicate with them through Warsaw. The 10th Division did not have the manpower nor resources to build a special Jabłonna to Marki line, as the 10th Telegraph Company was barely sufficient for one division. General Żeligowski mentioned the various difficulties that arose at the time:

I was most concerned about:

- 1) Taking command of the 11th and 1st Lit-Bel IDs and the question of what state they were in,
- 2) the coming night, which would hinder the operation that had begun,
- 3) the absence of my brigade commanders. One of them, Colonel Małachowski, has been – as I said – recommended as commander of the Zegrze Group, while the other, Colonel Sikorski, had fallen ill and had to go to Warsaw for a short time, in order to have an operation.

⁶⁵ It joined the division on the morning of 15 August.



Punctually at 18:00 General Żeligowski arrived in the vicinity of Struga at the second line positions.⁶⁶

At that time Captain Morawski, the staff officer of the 1st Lit-Bel Division's HQ, was finishing writing a situation report, addressed to the division's chief of staff, Captain Perkowicz, who was in Marki. This report contained interesting data on the enemy's positions and intentions:

I. The enemy is advancing through Radzymin towards Słupno and Wólka Radzyńska.

A small infantry detachment, not exceeding one company, has broken through the road from Wólka Radzyńska into the woods in the direction of Izabelin. Along the Radzymin – Warszawa road and in the Ciemne area there are only enemy patrols.

From the testimonies of the prisoners of war taken in the action on Radzymin: the Bolsheviks, in the form of the 21st and 27th Divisions, have been tasked to attack Warsaw through Izabelin and Oleson to Brudno and Nowe Brudno. A plan of action found with a killed enemy senior officer confirms the testimony of the captives.

II. Our own troops, after the action on Radzymin, garrison a line from Height 101 at the crossroads to Height 88 (exclusive) north-west of Wólka Radzyńska.

To the left there is no communication with the 48th IR.

To the right of the road to Nadma is the 46th IR and in the area of Czarna is the Nowogród Regiment, which maintains communication with the 47th (no exact reports are available).

In order to restore the first line of bridgehead positions and seize the town of Radzymin, the participation of the 10th Division in Aleksandrów – Mokre – Łoś is necessary.

Captain Downar-Zapolski was killed in the action on Radzymin and about 100 men were wounded, including several officers.

III. and IV. No change.

HQ 19th ID

Gen. Żeligowski has arrived.

Capt. Morawski

Having communicated with the commander of the 1st Lit-Bel Division and his subordinates, General Żeligowski was able to finally assess the position. His plan of action for 15 August coincided with the views of the 1st Lit-Bel Division's command, as evidenced by the situation report just written by Captain Morawski. Generals Rządkowski and Żeligowski probably also talked about the 10th Division's operations through Aleksandrów to Mokre and Łoś, so as to best suit the 1st Lit-Bel Division.

We do not have the exact details of the commanders' conversation – the officers who were present only caught some fragments, which give some valuable details. Lieutenant Tomaszewski, *division* commander in 19th FAR), confirms for us the time already known from the report. He wrote:

At about 18:00 General Żeligowski arrived and arranged the plan of action for 15 August, discussing the details with General Rządkowski and Lt-Colonel Rybicki. The plan was outlined on a cigarette box.

On the basis of this data, General Żeligowski's final plan can be put together as follows. Up to daybreak on 15 August the 1st Lit-Bel and 11th Divisions would hold their positions, while the 10th Division would group the 19th Brigade at Nieporęt and one regiment of the 20th Brigade (30th IR) would move along the road from Jabłonna-Legionowo towards Słupno. During the night the 10th Division would reach the area of Wólka Radzyńska. In the morning of 15 August both divisions would counter-attack: the 10th Division with its left column (19th Brigade) towards Mokre, while the right column (30th Regiment) together with the left wing of the 1st Lit-Bel would aim at Radzymin.

⁶⁶ General Latinik had briefly preceded him to the division HQs, to see for himself the tactical situations of the 11th and 1st Lit-Bel Divisions, to establish a plan of attack with General Rządkowski and Colonel Jaźwiński, and to inform them that General Żeligowski was in charge of the action.

Before Żeligowski arrived the command of the 1st Lit-Bel Division had sent the head of its operations branch, Lieutenant Gadomski, to Jabłonna-Legionowo to coordinate operations with the 10th Division.



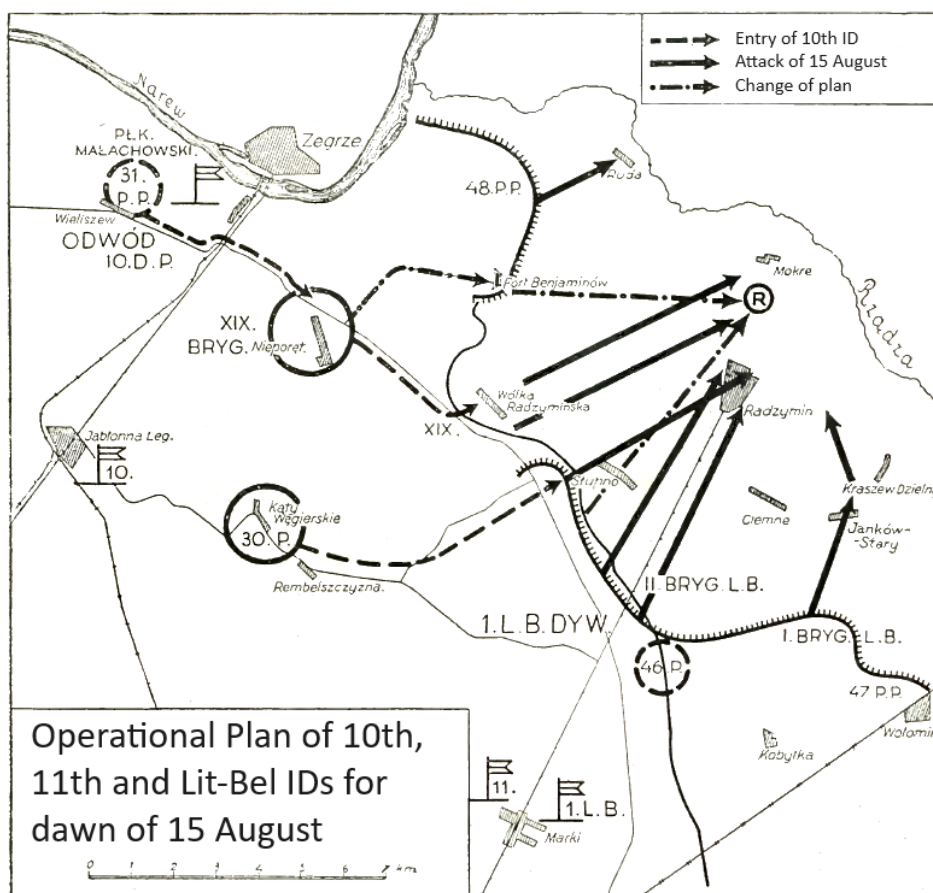
On the other hand, General Żeligowski in his work (*The 1920 War*) states:

I acquainted General Rządowski with my plans, which as I have said, consisted of recapturing and manning the second defensive line first and foremost.

The attack to this end was to be made by the 10th Division, while the task of the 1st Lit-Bel Division was to hold its left flank at all costs, at the level of Słupno, and incorporate the reinforcements arriving during the night.

At the second stage of the battle, once we were prepared to defend ourselves, I wanted an action on Mokre in the rear of Radzymin. This important tactical key was to be captured and held by the 10th Division. During this operation, the 1st Lit-Bel Division would attack Radzymin, but avoiding any concentration in the area of that town. The initiative of the battle was to belong to the 10th Division, while the 1st Lit-Bel Division, together with the rest of the 11th Division, was to co-operate with the 10th Division. I also informed General Rządowski that Pogonowski's battalion was behind his left wing.

The above account combines in addition to contemporary thoughts many details from the later execution and ideas arising from deliberations. The documents do not say that the 1st Lit-Bel Division was to attack Radzymin "avoiding any concentration in the area of that town", and indeed the orders of the 10th Division and the 1st Lit-Bel Division indicate that a strong attack of the 30th Regiment and the 2nd Lit-Bel Brigade was to head for Radzymin. General Rządowski, in an oral report on the matter, confirmed the above fact.



Sketch 55

Having held talks with his commanders, General Żeligowski did not miss the opportunity to get close to soldiers who came from his hometown, or who had served in the same ranks in the past. Żeligowski's conversations, as well as his entire manner, were characterised by simplicity and, above all, calmness. This was of great importance, as we remember that from 13 August onwards there was growing excitement in the divisions and staffs, which at some times reached unprecedented nervous tension. Under these conditions, Żeligowski's distinctive calmness was reflected in the mood.



In the second lines the general saw officers of *Divizion* 1/19 FAR, which used to be part of his 4th Rifle Division in Odessa, and wanting to convince himself that the artillery was ready, he requested that they open fire on the windmill in Słupno. The *divizion* commander recalls that at the third shot, in the second minute, the 1st Battery was on target.

General Żeligowski also entertained the Wilno regiment. Seeing that the kitchens had brought dinner, he tried the food. At one point he asked the commander of the Wilno regiment: "Well, are you going to give me something to eat?" Major Bobiatyński had just been given a chicken and there was also a bottle of cognac. General Żeligowski sat down, and a conversation ensued over that dinner, in which memories of service in the 1st Eastern Corps were refreshed, linking General Żeligowski with officers of the 1st Lit-Bel Division. Relatively little was said about the present situation, especially as not everyone knew that General Żeligowski commanded the whole attack. (In any case, Żeligowski coordinated actions without issuing direct orders: both generals respected the former positions of seniority between them, and in this case Rządkowski was the senior.) Finally Żeligowski rose and, on departing, threw in the words:

Well, hold on. I will go to Jabłonna, from there to Nieporęt and attack the Bolsheviks.

It was already dusk when General Żeligowski passed through Kąty Węgierskie. One could feel the skittish mood of the population in the village, because it was reported that enemy patrols had shown up in the area. Late in the evening he arrived at Jabłonna-Legionowo. There he was visited for the second time by General Haller, who "urged the loading and departure of units of the 10th Division by buses."

In the presence of the Front commander, and probably on his orders, the 10th Division Chief of Staff, Lt-Colonel Grabowski, verbally gave orders to the commander of the 201st Light Horse Regiment, Major Kulesza, who was to set off with the regiment to Kąty Węgierskie and cover Jabłonna-Legionowo from the north-east. In addition, it was reported to Żeligowski that the attempted redeployment of the 19th Brigade by bus had failed, and some of the troops had to march on foot.

At the same time, news arrived of the 19th Brigade's activities in the Nieporęt area, and on the basis of these reports General Żeligowski ordered that the assault on Wólka Radzyńska was not to take place until dawn on 15 August, rather than on 14 August as originally planned. The 30th Regiment, which had arrived from Chotomów, was held at Jabłonna.

In the course of the events described, the division's Chief of Staff edited an operational order, capturing the various orders to date. The Chief of Staff wrote it quite early (judging from some editorial changes, perhaps even before the 19th Brigade marched to Nieporęt), but the order was not issued. It is very possible that it was thought that the situation might still change during the night. In the end, some changes were made to the original drafting and, at 05:00 on 15 August, General Żeligowski signed the order, which was distributed to the commanders. It read:

10th ID

15 August 05:00

Operational Order

I. The enemy was engaged in fierce fighting all night in the sectors of the 8th, 11th, 19th IDs. It captured Radzymin – Wólka Radzyńska – Dąbkowizna.

II. The line of Radzymin sector runs: from south of Wołomin (by the Warsaw – Białystok rail line) – Czarna Stara – Nadma and further along the forest lane in the direction of Wólka Radzyńska – Nieporęt – Fort Benjaminów – Rynia (2 km northeast of Zegrze).

The above-mentioned sector is garrisoned from the south by the 47th IR (11th ID/19th ID) and from Benjaminów to Rynia by the 48th IR (11th ID).

III. The 5th Army took 600 prisoners during the day yesterday and its action is developing successfully.

IV. Task: Take back the line Okuniew – Radzymin – Rynia.

V. Execution:



1) The 10th Division moved to the Nieporęt area from the Jabłonna area with the task of carrying out the attack: the 48th IR on Ruda, 19th IB on Mokre, 20th IB, including the left wing of the 19th ID, and having one regiment in the division's reserve, on Radzymin.

During this action, which will begin at an hour to be signalled later, General Rządkowski's group will attack Radzymin from the south.

2) The 201st LHR is at Kąty Węgierskie.

The 13th LR is at Jabłonna Stary.

3) 10th ID HQ at Jabłonna, field HQ at Nieporęt. 19th IB HQ at Nieporęt, then the road to Mokre. 20th IB HQ at Nieporęt, then road to Radzymin.

4) Ammunition: Columns at Zegrze and column at Jabłonna, ammunition depot at Stary Jabłonna.

5) Ambulances at the junction of roads Jabłonna – Zegrze and Wieliszew – Nieporęt. Dressing station of Hospital 402 in Jabłonna. Hospital train at Jabłonna Station.

6) Provisions: HQ in Zegrze and Economic Office in Zegrze.

Żeligowski

Lt-General and Divisional Commander.

The 10th Division Enters the Battle

On the afternoon of 14 August, units of the 10th Division gradually left their previous accommodation for the battlefield of the 1st Army. The departure of the units was regulated by verbal orders, with written orders coming out much later. The first detachment to set off was Battalion 1/28, sent to Kąty Węgierskie. The division's staff company was also sent in that direction, eventually moving on to Pustelnik. The rest of the division, went into action much later.

When entering the battle at Radzymin the 10th Division did not have divisional artillery, as that was in positions near Skrzyszew, supporting the 167th Regiment of the Zegrze Group. In view of the fighting on the outskirts of Zegrze and Dębe, it was impossible to pull all the batteries from their positions. So the commander of the 10th Artillery Brigade ordered (between 19:00 and 20:00) that just the 2nd and 5th Batteries 10th FAR, leave their positions and move through Wieliszew to Nieporęt, passing back to their own division.

In addition, the 19th Brigade was given *Divizion* 3/4 FAR, under Lieutenant Pilecki, which was reorganising and resting in Łajski. That *divizion* had taken part in the retreat as part of the 10th Division. Between 20:00 and 21:00 the batteries set off for Nieporęt. Lieutenant Pilecki went ahead and at the crossroads met buses carrying some troops of the 10th Division.

The division, being the Front reserve at Jabłonna-Legionowo, had had sufficient technical communications. On 14 August, the headquarters of the division, brigades and artillery command (the latter soon disbanded) were operational. In the morning a Hughes station was set up at the division HQ, and in the afternoon a Morse station. The 20th Brigade's staff and commander moved from Chotomów to Jabłonna-Legionowo.

With the introduction of the division into battle, conditions worsened considerably, as new needs arose that could not be met, particularly as there was an acute shortage of cable. With the departure of the 19th Brigade, its HQ was moved to Nieporęt, with the intention of communicating from Nieporęt via Zegrze (Nieporęt – Zegrze – Jabłonna) until a direct Nieporęt – Jabłonna connection was built.

Late in the evening the HQ of the 20th Brigade was transferred to Michałów. In view of the division's further activities, it was planned to extend the line of communication to Nieporęt, where the HQ of the 10th Division was to go. There was no wire communication with the commands of the 1st Lit-Bel and 11th Divisions. Second Lieutenant Pietrzkiewicz was sent to Marki as a liaison officer.



Troops Covering the 10th Division

Battalion 1/28 was to secure Jabłonna from the north-eastern side, and for this purpose it left by bus at 14:00 for Kąty Węgierskie, under the command of Lieutenant Pogonowski. On arrival, the companies were unloaded and held beside the road. Soon (between 15:00 and 16:00) General Latinik arrived by car.

Having learned from Lieutenant Pogonowski about the battalion's task, he changed it and ordered it to march immediately to Pustelnik at the disposal of the commander of the Lit-Bel Division.

Major Boski Jerzy says that Pogonowski:⁶⁷

... was reluctant to carry out General Latinik's order to march further on and cited orders received from General Żeligowski. General Latinik explained he was the commander of the Army and so was the higher authority. Nevertheless, the battalion remained where it was.

The battalion commander then sent Lieutenant Boski, commander of the 1st Company, to report the order to General Żeligowski.

The division commander listened to Lieutenant Boski's report and asked the question,

Well, where did I tell you to stop?

In Kąty Węgierskie, General Sir.

And General Latinik?

In Pustelnik, General Sir.

Well, then put it halfway between the two.

So in accordance with those orders, the battalion moved eastwards at about 18:00 and halted at a fork in the road, sending out cover. At the time the battalion commander saw that the 19th Brigade was moving to Nieporęt and his unit would be the brigade's cover. At 19:00 Lieutenant Pogonowski reported to the commander of the 28th Regiment that he was in the vicinity of the fork in the road, where he had moved by order of General Latinik. He also reported that he had established communication with Pustelnik and in the direction of Słupno. This report was received by the commander of the 28th IR before he marched out of Jabłonna, and as a result he gave Lieutenant Pogonowski an order to continue.

Around midnight the battalion commander received orders from the brigade commander and the regiment commander and then ordered that at 02:00 on 15 August his companies should be beside the road in readiness to march out, heading towards Wólka Radzyńska. His orders were limited on that point, and so the company commanders generally had little information about the tasks that awaited them. Second Lieutenant Hołubski, commander of the 2nd Company, knew that the battalion was to strike towards Wólka Radzyńska, but the exact orders were to be given by the battalion commander after reaching Mostki Wólczyńskie. Lieutenant Boski, the most senior company commander, had the most information.

In the evening and during the night the battalion received news of its neighbours' location from its patrols and from a messenger from the 10th Division's Horse Rifles. That message gave the following precise information: on the left wing of the 1st Lit-Bel Division, located (in the vicinity of Height 104), was the 1st Grodno Battalion, whose wing was bent directly to the south; to the right of that battalion were the 2nd and 3rd Grodno Battalions. The Grodno Regiment had the enemy in front of it on the second line position in Słupno and Matza and was expecting an attack from the Wólka Radzyńska area.

The 201st LHR assembled on 14 August at Jabłonna, less 2nd-Lieutenant Stawinski's squadron, which was being used to establish communication with the 48th Regiment. In the evening Major Kulesza, commander of the 201st, received from the 10th Division's Chief of Staff (in the presence of General Haller) verbal orders to march to Kąty Węgierskie, with the task of securing Jabłonna-Legionowo from the north-east and

⁶⁷ This is from a August 1930 oral account. Żeligowski also describes the episode in his book.



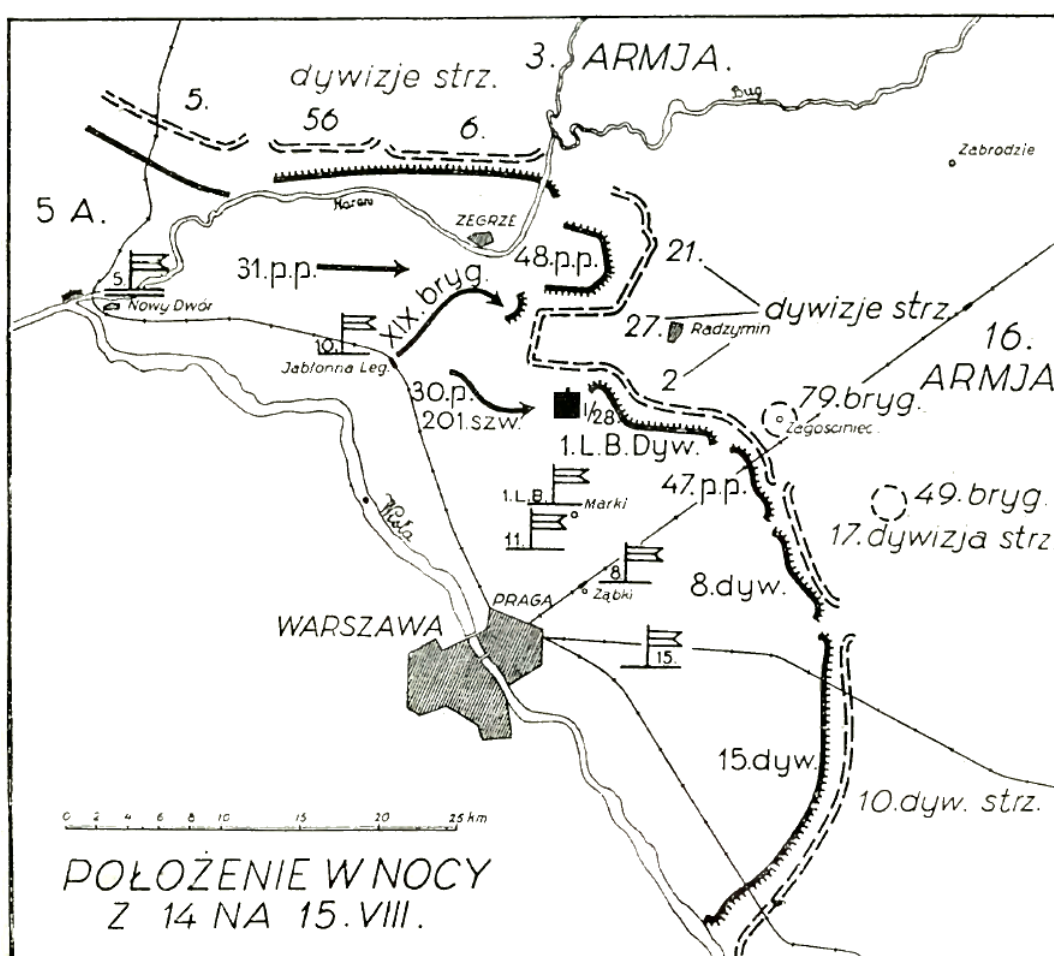
establishing communication with Pustelnik and Nieporęt. The regiment's departure was considerably delayed due to the distance between Jabłonna-Legionowo and Jabłonna, where the regiment was stationed, and it was not until after midnight that the designated place was reached.

Front Orders

Previously we have mentioned here and there personal interventions by General Haller. As we have seen, he first arrived in Jabłonna-Legionowo at 15:00 and then a second time in the evening. He found out while there that at 19:00 that units of the 10th Division had not yet been put into action, and so he ordered a hasty loading into buses and departure from Jabłonna. The general, as recalled by Lt-Colonel of the General Staff Thomme, described:

... the situation in dark terms, and in particular that Nieporęt was already allegedly in enemy hands and therefore the enemy was bypassing the fort to the south.

While General Haller was there orders were issued to the 201st LHR. After a short stay in Jabłonna, he went to Zegrze, where he informed Colonel Małachowski of the 10th Division's actions.



Sketch 56: Positions during the night of 14/15 August

It should be noted that the Front command was dissatisfied with the delayed departure of the 10th Division, as evidenced by an order of 21:00, edited by Lt-Colonel Zagórski, which included:

1) The 5th Army has launched an offensive and repulsed with its left wing the Bolshevik 4th and 18th Divisions, which have retreated in panic to the north and north-west. The right wing of the 5th Army successfully repulsed the attacks of superior forces on the Wkra River.

The 1st Army, despite being reinforced by the reserves of the second line, was unable to cope with the enemy forces that broke through in the Radzymin area.



2) I have seen with my own eyes that in some units of the 1st Army, the leadership leaves much to be desired. Mainly the punctuality in carrying out orders is sometimes downright imbecilic.

3) For the 1st Army I strictly order: the 11th ID, 19th ID and 10th ID will execute before dawn, from the positions that they will take during the night, a vigorous concentric attack on Radzymin. They will ruthlessly throw back the enemy, before noon on the 15th, to the first line of trenches.

The 1st Army will then move the 10th ID to Kałuszyn and Skrzyszew, to the north of Jabłonna. I expect the first transport of that division punctually no later than at 12:00 ...

The above orders were repeated by the Army. Around midnight, the Front telegraphed on the matter, indicating that the order remained in force and was to be strictly executed.

The Front command had demanded an immediate counter-attack by the 10th Division, which was eventually delayed. It is hard to deny that there were some shortcomings in the operations of that division, which we shall see in the execution of the attack, but the demands of the Front were definitely extravagant. They required that the 1st Army, after being given the Front's reserve, be able to deal with the enemy forces that had encroached into the Radzymin area by 21:50, i.e. in the hour in which the order was issued.

The Front Chief of Staff later wrote, that:

The tardy execution of this order and the sluggish movement of that division by the 1st Army had the effect that it advanced without any apparent need to the vicinity of Nieporęt, not arriving there until late in the evening.

In the opinion of Lt-Colonel Zagórski, the 10th Division did not make it to action in time, as it "dithered irresponsibly".

The 19th Brigade Enters the Battle

From 15:00, i.e. from the moment the 10th Division was surrendered to the 1st Army, until almost 19:00 the 19th Brigade remained where it was. The 30th Regiment of the 20th Brigade was moved in the afternoon from Chotomów to Jabłonna-Legionowo, where it remained until midnight.

According to previous Front orders of 13 August, the division should have been on standby, so its engagement in the battle should not have encountered difficulties. In spite of this, it was not until around 20:00 that the first transports of the 29th Regiment were directed to Nieporęt, at which time General Haller arrived and urged them to set off. We do not know all the reasons for the delay, and so we do not know whether waiting for the buses was the main issue, or whether they were simply waiting for General Żeligowski to arrive.

The entire action of capturing Wólka Radzyńska, as this was what was at stake, rested in the hands of Lt-Colonel Thomme. At the moment of setting off from Jabłonna-Legionowo, the brigade commander had his plan of action: it consisted in a quick march to Nieporęt and an immediate assault on Wólka Radzyńska. The first transports were to go with the 29th Regiment.

However, it soon became apparent that transporting the brigade would consume too much time (there were eight buses), and so Thomme ordered the 28th Regiment to move on foot to the southern end of Nieporęt. After issuing these orders, the brigade commander proceeded there himself.

The first bus transport was of the rifle companies of Battalion 1/29 together with two machine-guns and crew. The other companies and machine-guns marched on foot. The commander of the 1st Battalion, Captain Rogowski, who rode in the first bus, did not have much information. He was to reach the fork in the road near Nieporęt as quickly as possible, where he was to receive further orders.

The bus ride was quite difficult, as its lights were not switched on due to the proximity of the enemy. Nevertheless it was very much enjoyed by the soldiers. Between 21:00 and 22:00 the first buses arrived just



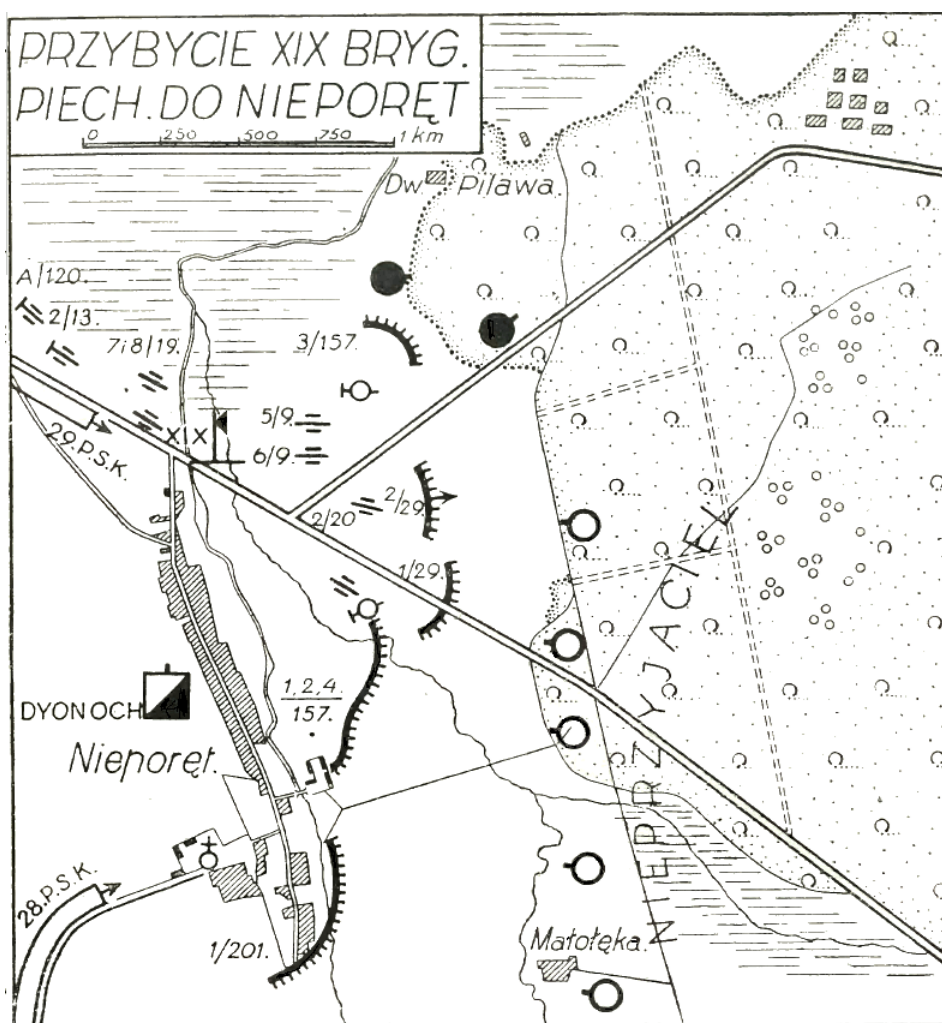
as the battle heated up near Nieporęt. As if to greet the incoming men, a shell explosion or perhaps enemy bullets caused the windows of the buses to crack and shattered with a clatter. An NCO recalled:

There were green, red and yellow rockets hovering over Zegrze, In front of us the noise of machine-guns and the roar of cannons could be heard. The voices of the artillerymen's commands and orders rang out, and the shouts of the commanders: "Boys, for God's sake don't run away, rather die. If we retreat, the Bolsheviks will take Warsaw."

This moment is mentioned by one of the artillery officers in these words:

Around 23:00⁶⁸ the noise of vehicles sounded from the direction of Jabłonna. It was the 29th Infantry Regiment from the 10th Division, which was being driven in buses to help us. The 1st Battalion had already reached the artillery positions along the road. At that moment a virulent rattle of enemy machine-guns rang out from a distance of about 300 metres.

The situation was serious. Captain Rogowski, instinctively threw the 100-120 men of the first three buses into the line of artillery positions. It was given the task of rejecting the enemy into the woods to the north-east. The order to unload was carried out quickly. In a moment two more buses arrived and the 80 men with two MGs were used as cover for the right wing. The rest of the battalion remained on the road.



Sketch 57: Arrival of the 19th IB at Nieporęt

Sergeant Wawrzyniak, platoon commander of the 1st Company recalled:

Each of the commanders took his company or platoon and ran towards the Bolsheviks, scattering his squad into a rifle line on the way. We got to the line of the forward artillery and just before their barrels we stopped and opened fire on the Bolsheviks.

⁶⁸ Actually before that.



The 1st Company followed the road towards Wólka Radzyńska, while the 3rd Company went to the left wing of the artillery. Sergeant Kubis of the 3rd Company wrote:

It was difficult to get a grasp of the situation at first. In front of us was a cannon in constant fire. The ground was rumbling from the impact of those guns, and the changes in air pressure were overwhelming. We all had ringing in our ears from the endless bangs. The whinnying of the artillery horses, standing just behind the cannons in a gully, made the situation even more sinister.

It proved impossible for the infantry to advance past the cannons given the pressure of the artillery fire. Besides, recalls another NCO:

The night was so dark that it hit you in the face. Our eyes were blinded from the flashes that the cannons gave off.

One artilleryman wrote of the situation:

The leading companies of the 1st Battalion, surprised by machine-gun fire on their marching column, clung to the ground for the time being, behind an embankment of the road. A bayonet assault was expected at any moment. Then, however, the Polish artillery spoke. Streams of fire and iron burst from the cannon barrels set horizontally to the ground. The thunder of the cannon shots, mixed with the roar of bursting shells and the clatter of the enemy's and our machine-guns, created a hellish music, with a hundredfold echoes from the surrounding woods. Huddled behind the gun shields, the gunners worked feverishly in the darkness, made worse by the clouds of dust that rose from the dry ground after each shot. In the intervals between cannon salvos there were the hoarse shouts of Russian commands and enemy salvo fire. The battle went on!

Gradually, however, the intensity of the fire diminished until it finally dropped away completely. At last the battlefield became quiet. Then the rifle companies took up their bayonets and moved forward. It was not long before the battalions reached the isolated houses on the edge of the forest and stopped. The time was after 22:00. Jabłonna was informed:

The enemy withdrew eastwards to Wólka Radzyńska. Our troops are preparing to counter-attack.

It was generally quiet in the foreground. The infantry stopped in front of the forest and sent out patrols. The 1st Company sent out a platoon, which reached the edge of the forest and met the enemy. After a brief exchange of shots it turned back. Another patrol advanced too far and, after a melee with the enemy, was dispersed and its commander taken prisoner. But this was the end of the battle of Nieporęt, as the 29th Regiment did not continue to attack. In any case, the arrival of the 28th Regiment, marching on foot through Michałów to the southern edge of Nieporęt, was expected.

Before marching out of Jabłonna, the commander of the 28th Regiment, Major Sobieszczak, received a report at 19:00 from Lieutenant Pogonowski. In response to it he sent the following order:

The regiment at 20:30 will march past Michałów Manor to Nieporęt.

From there it will lead an attack on Wólka Radzyńska – Aleksandrów. After the regiment arrives in Nieporęt it will begin an attack on Wólka Radzyńska. Battalion 1/28 will march from the staging area along the road to Słupno, through Mostki Wólczyńskie to Wólka Radzyńska, where it will join up with the regiment and continue a joint attack on Radzymin.

I point out that Wólka Radzyńska is currently occupied by the enemy.

Soon the regiment left Jabłonna, the 2nd Battalion marching at the head of the regiment. Lieutenant Zaborowski recalls:

The march itself was very fast. We were going to Nieporęt through the forest almost at a run. Why? Because that was the order. I wanted to find out what was going on in Nieporęt, but



none of my colleagues knew anything. Lt-Colonel Thomme was supposedly already there – this added to our confidence, as Lt-Colonel Thomme was a ruthless and proven leader. However, the mood in the open was disturbed by the searchlights. There were a lot of them – illuminating the sky in various places with beams of light, wandering in the firmament – somehow aimlessly ... Were they ours? And why were they shining? And what were they looking for?

At around 23:00 the troops reached the southern edge of Nieporęt and stopped near the church. Patrols sent out earlier reported that the 29th Regiment was already in the village; the situation in the foreground was still quiet. This affected the mood, as Lieutenant Zaborowski's account testifies:

We entered the village. It was a silent night. Near the cemetery wall the order came: "Stop and sit down."

The company sits down, leaning with their backs against the wall. It is comfortable. A few shots are fired somewhere very close by, somewhere off to the side and somewhere behind ... The men, accustomed to such occurrences, fall into a carefree sleep, holding their weapons between their legs ...

Thus, the entire 19th Brigade was gathered in Nieporęt.

Between 21:00 and 22:00 the brigade commander, Lt-Colonel Thomme arrived in Nieporęt with Lieutenant Pilecki, commander of *Divizion* 3/4 FAR, who he had met on the road. On arriving in Nieporęt, Thomme tried to familiarise himself with the position, which was not easy, as the fighting going on made the job difficult. Thomme describes the batteries

... were deflecting the Bolshevik attacks with cartridge fire – a heroic, almost superhuman effort. ... The batteries are already in such a condition that there could be no question of withdrawing them.

Lieutenant Pilecki, for his part, points out:

The town was the centre of a violent battle. Cannon and machine-gun fire was very rapid and irregular. The access road was under fire from machine-guns.

In Nieporęt, Thomme was reported to by commanders of various units. He recalled:

All of them had one question – what to do? Rescue us, give us orders. They were all pleased with the arrival of our brigade. I saw tears in the eyes of the senior officers.

He then gathered the commanders in a roadside hut to discuss the position and determine tasks. However, not much time had passed when the meeting, as Lieutenant Ciba of Battery 2/10 FAR, describes:

... was abruptly interrupted by the fire of an enemy MG, which spotted light through a window crack, shattered the glass and plunged us – fortunately without loss – into darkness.

They moved to another hut.

At 22:40 Thomme gave the division HQ news of the situation in Nieporęt (presumably by telephone via Zegrze). In the 10th Division's operations log they recorded:

Commander of 19th Brigade Lt-Colonel Thomme reports that the enemy is attacking Nieporęt. Battalion 1/29 BRR has been thrown into a counter-attack.

Our artillery is firing cartridge. It is a serious situation.

The commander of the 19th Brigade is waiting for the rest of the 29th Regiment and the arrival of the 28th Regiment at the southern end of Nieporęt, in order to counter-attack at Wólka Radzyńska with all his forces.

At this time Lt-Colonel Thomme sent an order to the 28th Regiment, urging it to march to Nieporęt to launch an attack on Wólka Radzyńska. The order stated:



29th IR is to attack from the western edge of Nieporęt along the road to Wólka, 28th IR is to accelerate its march and attack in the general direction of Wólka. Establish close communication with 29th IR. Commander 19th Brigade in Nieporęt.

At the same time he addressed the commander of the 48th Regiment, informing him of the brigade's position and task. He reported that the brigade had concentrated in Nieporęt, with Battalion 1/29 having already moved to attack along the road towards Wólka Radzyńska.

He also reported on the task of the 28th Regiment and finally gave his own intention in these words:

Maintaining close communication with the 48th IR and the left wing of the 1st Lit-Bel Division the 19th IB will pass through Wólka Radzyńska for a general attack on Radzymin. Please assist with the right wing and establish communication with 29th IR. The 20th Brigade is to go to Nieporęt.

In the course of these events news arrived of the results of the 29th Regiment's activities. It appeared that the night had made it difficult to carry out further manoeuvres. It was then decided to cease further operations, and this was the end of the 19th Brigade's combat activity on 14 August. The result had been to secure the accumulated artillery and hold Nieporęt. The need now arose to put the troops in order. The brigade commander then came to an understanding with General Żeligowski, who agreed that the assault on Wólka Radzyńska would begin at dawn on the following day.

Now Thomme, having more time and peace, finally determined the plan for capturing Wólka Radzyńska, changing the original intentions. At the suggestion of Major Walter, commander of the 29th Regiment, he abandoned the intention of attacking with the entire brigade along the road in the direction of Wólka Radzyńska. Now the 29th Regiment was to head straight for Fort Benjaminów, from where it was to strike through Dąbkowizna towards Wólka Radzyńska with part of its forces. To the 28th Regiment he issued a verbal order in which, among other things, he demanded:

Strike with two battalions at Wólka Radzyńska from the west along the road and with the 1st Battalion from the south.

The 3rd Battalion was to advance behind the 2nd Battalion, remaining the regiment's reserve, but with the proviso that the regimental commander could not use it without the brigade commander's permission.

Preparations and regrouping for the assault began at once. By 24:00 Battalion 1/29 had been relieved by units of the 28th Regiment, while some of the (dismounted) police were used to man the sector. The rest of the police continued to maintain communications with the 48th Regiment. Lt-Colonel Thomme noted that this task was "excellently performed". The commanders of the mounted units were ordered to send patrols through Aleksandrów and Izabelin to establish communication with Battalion 1/28 and the 1st Lit-Bel Division. A squadron of the 201st LHR also remained in position (dismounted), as did Battalion 4/157, which was to hold the positions until the 28th Regiment began its advance, and then assemble at Nieporęt.

The artillery also received corresponding orders. Colonel Maluszycki's Left Subgroup batteries were to precede the attack with 20 to 30 minutes' fire (not, in fact, carried out). Battery 8/4 FAR was assigned to the 29th Regiment, while Battery 9/4 FAR and Battery 2/10 FAR were to support the 28th Regiment.

The brigade's liaison officer, 2nd-Lieutenant Łączyński, was to establish communication with the division's command, at the same time taking into account the fact that the brigade's command would be moved to Wólka Radzyńska. He ordered the construction of the Nieporęt – Jabłonna-Legionowo connection, and instructed the regiments' communications officers to establish communication with the brigade staff. Until the direct Nieporęt – Jabłonna connection was built, the brigade continued to use the fixed two-wire line connecting Nieporęt with Jabłonna via Zegrze. Communication with the regiments was so far limited to the use of foot and mounted messengers.

The commander of the 29th Regiment did not issue any detailed orders and confined himself to designating a battalion which was to lead the regiment and cover the column. The communications platoon was not given a task and moved with the regiment. The regimental physician, Captain Dr. Pawłowicz, set up a dressing point in Nieporęt. The chaplain, Father Wesołowski, also stayed there.



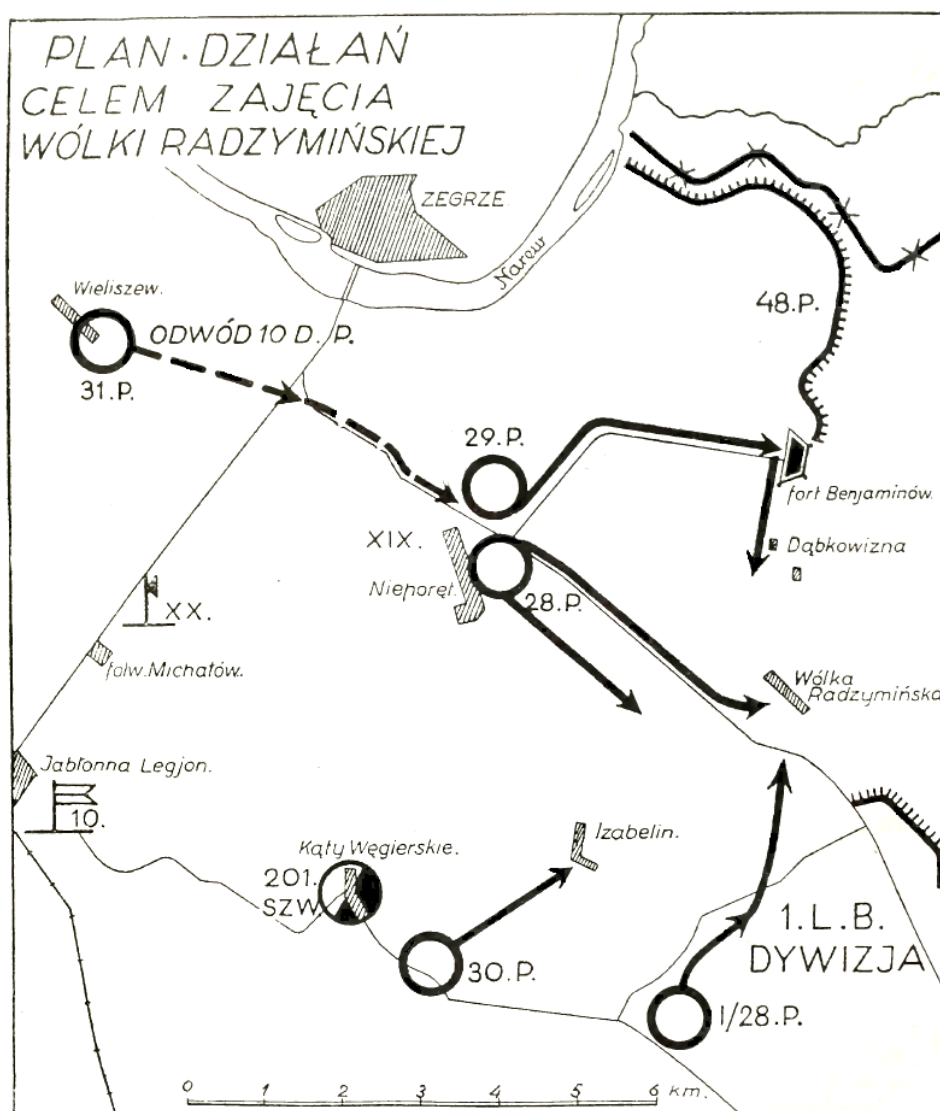
The commander of the 28th Regiment had more difficult command conditions and a more complex task. At around 23:00 Major Sobieszczak, summoned the commanders of the 2nd and 3rd Battalions to a briefing and outlined their tasks, giving verbal orders to advance. The 2nd Battalion was to advance in two columns (each of two companies): the left column was to advance along the road and head straight for Wólka (the previous task of the 29th Regiment); meanwhile the second was to set off from the southern edge of Nieporęt, making its way through Suta, also in the direction of Wólka Radzyńska, while establishing communication with Battalion 1/28. The 3rd Battalion was to march along the road following the 2nd Battalion. The task of the 1st Battalion remained unchanged; at 23:15 Major Sobieszczak sent the following order to Lieutenant Pogonowski:

Your battalion will immediately attack Wólka Radzyńska in the direction from the battalion's current position along the road to Słupno, halfway along the road to Mostki Wólczyńskie, sending cover in the direction of Mata and establishing communication with the Lit-Bel.

After the capture of Wólka, 1/28 will leave to be the reserve.

Battalion 2/28 will attack Wólka from the southern part of Nieporęt in an easterly direction and along the Nieporęt – Wólka road. Further route of attack: Wólka – Aleksandrów – Radzymin.

Regimental HQ is on the Nieporęt – Wólka road.



Sketch 58: Plan for the attack on Wólka Radzyńska

These would be the last of the orders for the 28th Regiment. It should be noted that that regiment had the best equipped communications platoon. It had initially built the Jabłonna – Nieporęt connection, then, after



abandoning that, it began to establish communication between the regiment HQ and the 2nd and 3rd Battalions. Communication with the 1st Battalion was maintained using horse and bicycle messengers.

The doctors of the 2nd and 3rd Battalions set up their dressing points in Nieporęt, in which village the regimental Doctor, Captain Dr Butrymowicz, was also based. The doctor and the battalion stayed near a fork in the road where the battalion had spent some of the night. During the course of the day, the division's head of medicine, Lt-Colonel Dr Więckowski, moved forward the division's field hospital base to the intersection of the Nieporęt road with the Jabłonna – Zegrze Highway.

And so the 19th Brigade prepared for the attack on Wólka Radzyńska.

The Battle of Wólka Radzyńska

At 02:30 on 15 August, the 10th ID command received reports from Zegrze, Nieporęt (19th IB) and Michałów (20th IB) that a large enemy detachment was advancing from Izabelin through Aleksandrów towards Jabłonna-Legionowo, "at a strength that Zegrze and Nieporęt calculated to be the entire division." It was even reported that cavalry had appeared in the Michałów area.

It later turned out that the information was exaggerated, but at the time it was difficult to check it and dismiss the news, which was the product of an excited mood. For example, between 01:00 and 02:00 a boy from Stanisławów came up to a squadron of the 3rd Light Horse Regiment, which was stationed in the vicinity of Zabłocie at the time, reporting, "that the Bolsheviks had attacked their village, taking soldiers prisoner, while the rest fled to Warsaw." Of course, there were no Polish troops in Stanisławów (apart from patrols), but the enemy – as it later turned out – had captured the area. At 03:00 the squadron withdrew to the south-west.

The 10th Division's command did not move the 30th Regiment to Kąty Węgierskie until after midnight, where the 201st LHR was already located. That regiment sent out patrols in all directions, used one platoon as an outpost and kept one squadron on foot on both sides of the road. After midnight the 201st was given the task of "clearing the road" for the 30th Regiment, which was marching from Jabłonna-Legionowo.

It was clear from the orders so far that the 10th Division's command maintained a wait-and-see attitude during the night. However, the movements were carried out in accordance with the basic plan. Colonel Sikorski oversaw them, remaining in contact with Lt-Colonel Thomme, as he sought to make final arrangements for the action. At 01:00 on 15 August, Sikorski travelled by motorbike to Wieliszew, where the 31st Regiment had just arrived from Nowy Dwór, having at rejoined the division after a long absence. The colonel familiarised himself with the condition of the regiment and explained the division's situation and task to its commander.

By 04:00 Sikorski had issued the necessary orders. The division's main effort was to be along the 19th Brigade's axis of advance, so Colonel Sikorski directed the division's reserve, the 31st Regiment, in that direction. At 04:10 he sent an order to the 31st IR to march immediately to Nieporęt. The 30th Regiment, as the order stated, "is marching from the barracks at Jabłonna station to the Aleksandrów – Izabelin line." The command of the 20th Brigade was to remain at the inn in Michałów for the time being, and then move to Nieporęt.

These last preparations were echoed to the command of the 1st Lit-Bel Division, which was notified by General Żeligowski at 04:50 that he had:

One reserve regiment in the Kąty area, while two regiments were approaching Wólka Radzyńska and would attack as soon as they arrive. The division's HQ is being transferred to Nieporęt.

These were the final orders before the clash at Wólka Radzyńska.



Having made all its preparations for the assault, the 28th Regiment regrouped to set off before dawn on 15 August at its starting positions in Nieporęt, while it awaited orders. However, it took a long time for dawn to lighten, which caused a delay in the march.

The first to set off were the 5th and 6th Companies, heading through Suta towards Wólka Radzyńska. They had the task of attacking that village from the south-east and establishing communication with the 1st Battalion. Each company received two machine-guns. At the front marched 2nd-Lieutenant Pęczkowski's 6th Company in a rifle line and behind it, in a column of fours, the 5th Company.

It had brightened up a bit when the 6th Company reached the area north of Aleksandrów. Here it stopped for a while. The 5th Company also stopped, with the soldiers sitting down by the roadside.

At that time the rest of the 2nd Battalion, with the commander, moved along the road towards Wólka Radzyńska. The 8th Company (reinforced with heavy and light machine-guns) marched in front, while the 7th Company was 100 metres behind. These companies were to advance along the road to Wólka Radzyńska. Following the 2nd Battalion, the 3rd Battalion and the regimental command advanced (along the road).

This was between 03:00 and 04:00 on 15 August. Then the sounds of gunfire from the area of Dąbkowizna and Wólka Radzyńska were heard. This was, as we shall see, from the actions of Battalions 1/29 and 1/28. The assault was thus developing according to Thomme's plan.

Of course the enemy immediately turned its attention to its rear when he heard shots coming from the area – from where the neighbouring Russian troops were due to arrive. The 241st Rifle Regiment, as we can see from Sketch 59, was then furthest away. Its commander, concerned about this, tried to get information and sent messengers to the 242nd RR. Those efforts failed. As a result, the regiment, under the cover of one battalion left as a rearguard, began a retreat, intending to join up with the 243rd RR, which had remained at the edge of the woods.

This was the situation when the clash at Aleksandrów took place. It was just getting light when suddenly Companies 5/28 and 6/28 were shelled by flanking fire. They faltered as the young soldiers, who had only recently arrived at the front, could not stand their ground. Second Lieutenant Pęczkowski, commander of the 6th Company, wanted to get the situation under control. First he ordered the machine-guns to fire, and then, encouraging his soldiers to fight, he roused his company to advance. It was this company that met the 241st Regiment, which was moving north to link up with the 243rd Regiment. A battle ensued.

The sound of this clash soon reached the main column on the road. The 2nd Battalion halted its march. The battalion commander, having no news of what was happening, sent an adjutant in that direction. Until the situation was clarified, the 3rd Battalion also stopped on the road, as:

... although it was beginning to dawn, it was not yet possible to observe the movements of the company accurately.

News soon came that 2nd-Lieutenant Pęczkowski was continuing the attack despite being wounded. One of the NCOs of the 9th Company recalled:

In the morning fog, which prevented us from seeing anything, we could hear the voice of 2nd-Lieutenant Pęczkowski, shouting, "Forward!"

Second Lieutenant Jagiełło, commander of the 11th Company, wrote:

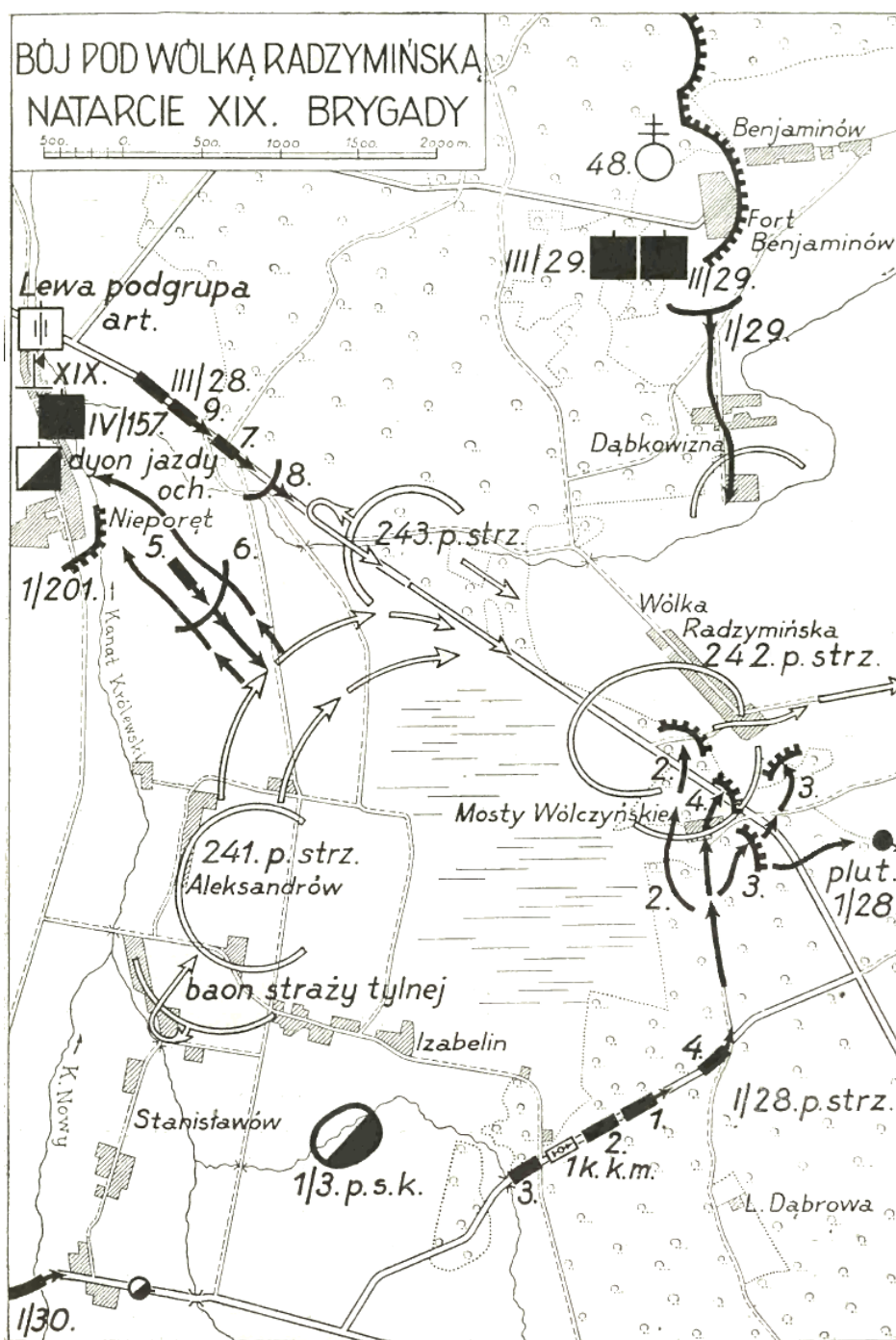
Then, from somewhere on the right wing of my rifle line, I heard the most ferocious shouting – it was that of 2nd-Lieutenant Pęczkowski.

Soon the scattered soldiers from those companies were seen.

At one point Pęczkowski's voice broke off suddenly, because in the course of the clash he was wounded in the leg. However, he ignored it and once again tried to rouse the soldiers to the attack. Then just as he was ordering the singing of *Jeszcze Polska nie zginęła*,⁶⁹ he was mortally wounded.

⁶⁹ "Poland Is Not Yet Lost", which was the then *de facto* (and later official) national anthem.





Sketch 59: Battle of Wólka Radzyńska. Attack of the 19th Brigade

After the loss of Pęczkowski, the attack finally collapsed: The 5th and 6th Companies succumbed to panic and fled back towards Nieporęt in disorder. The fog had cleared and the battlefield could be seen unaided. There was no doubt that both companies were retreating towards Nieporęt. Seeing this, the regimental commander alerted the brigade commander with the following report:

The enemy is attacking in strength the southern part of Nieporęt village. I can see the right wing running away to southern Nieporęt. I am on the road at 1½ km south of Nieporęt. I ask for help at Aleksandrów – Izabelin.

At that time the 1st Squadron of the 201st LHR was at the southern end of Nieporęt. Together with the newly arrived 2nd Squadron it undertook the defence of the village to enable the retreating troops to be put in order. In addition, a platoon of mounted scouts and telephone operators, with 2nd-Lieutenant Tuzinski, was thrown in to help.



The collapse of the assault also affected the brigade commander's plans. Lt-Colonel Thomme saw the situation as so serious that he requested assistance from the division command. In addition, at 05:00 he ordered the 29th Regiment to send one battalion to Nieporęt and also asked the 30th Regiment to direct the leading companies towards the southern edge of the village. When Thomme received the report above from Major Sobieszczak, he immediately replied, writing on the back of a sheet of paper:

The 30th IR is to march on Aleksandrów. General Żeligowski has left to push it on. Major Walter has received orders to send one battalion to Nieporęt. It is necessary to hold Nieporęt with all our might.

Not content with issuing written orders, he also rushed in person to meet the retreating troops, and with his help they were reorganised.

At the same time the 3rd Battalion brought in the 9th Company, which moved towards Wólka Radzymińska (in place of the dispersed half-battalion). Nevertheless, the position was still unclear, with uncertainty in the air. Quite simply, the 28th Regiment did not know the intentions of the enemy, who – as we will learn later – was not advancing towards Nieporęt, but merely hurrying to link up with the 243rd Regiment, which it succeeded in doing. Taking advantage of the confusion in the 28th Regiment, the enemy troops fled in the direction of Wólka Radzymińska.

This behaviour of the enemy was incomprehensible to the Polish side. Thomme later wrote:

Unexpectedly, there was dead silence from the Bolsheviks. Not a single shot.

An explanation for this lies with the actions of the other Polish units.

Between 02:00 and 03:00 on 15 August Battalion 1/28 had set off northwards from the fork in the road to co-operate in the assault on Wólka Radzymińska at dawn, in accordance with the orders received from the Brigade and Regiment.

It advanced in a travel march, but to ensure its safety, the 4th Company of 2nd-Lieutenant Noworolnik was advanced in front at a distance of about 200 metres. The rest of the battalion advanced in column in the following order: 1st, 2nd, MG Companies and finally 3rd Company (see Sketch 59).

The march was peaceful and soon the battalion road turned left along a forest road to Mostki Wólczyńskie, before reaching the Nieporęt – Struga road.

It was beginning to lighten. The morning fog did not subside at first and it was still grey for a long time. The front company was approaching a group of buildings in Mostki Wólczyńskie.

Suddenly shots were fired from close range – at first single shots, then a moment later increasingly dense, and finally rapid fire covered the leading company. However, 2nd-Lieutenant Noworolnik's company surged forward and drove out, as they found out later, the 242nd RR. In a moment the company reached the hill next to the road, where it engaged in a firefight with the enemy.

At the sound of shots the rest of the battalion, just reaching the edge of the forest near Mostki, stopped. The battalion commander, Lieutenant Pogonowski, was at the head of the battalion along with Lieutenant Boski and other officers. Lieutenant Boski recalled:

We were under the impression that our own troops were firing at us, and in order to clarify the situation Lieutenant Pogonowski ran up to the 4th Company.

While Pogonowski went forward, Lieutenant Boski's ordered the battalion to split up. The 1st Company remained where it was, the 2nd Company moved 100 metres to the left, and the 3rd Company to the right. The MG Company took its equipment off the wagons. In addition the lieutenant sent a patrol to the right to establish communication with the units of the 1st Lit-Bel Division.

Lieutenant Pogonowski arrived among the houses in Mostki and from there he could observe the combat of the 4th Company. He quickly summoned 2nd-Lieutenant Hołubski, commander of the 3rd Company, and advanced to a small rise overgrown with bushes just in front of Mostki Wólczyńskie's houses. There he gave orders to the company commander. It was evident that the 4th Company had already crossed the road and



was firing at the enemy. Away in the fog the eastern part of Wólka Radzymińska or its manor was visible. Hołubski was ordered to move his company to the rise, extending the right wing of the 4th Company with one platoon.

These events had taken Battalion 1/28 somewhat by surprise. After all, they believed that they would join up with their regiment at Wólka Radzymińska, while so far everything indicated that they had entered the battle in isolation. This shines through clearly in the following report by Lieutenant Pogonowski to the commander of the 28th Regiment:

I report that in Mostki I met the enemy. The enemy has retreated to the eastern side of the road. I have no communication to the left or right.

Where is the 2nd Battalion?

What is the situation?

The enemy is attacking me.

In the course of these events, shots were fired here and there – shooting broke out, then waned again. At one point Lieutenant Pogonowski slumped to the ground with a severe wound. At first he still had enough strength to send a messenger, calling Lieutenant Boski to him.

Unfortunately, when Boski arrived, the battalion commander was already unconscious. Soldiers carried him to the wall of a house in Mostki Wólczyńskie.

Now Lieutenant Boski took command of the battalion. First he found that the actions of the 4th Company had so far caused considerable confusion among the enemy – it could be seen on the road leading from Wólka Radzymińska that a large enemy column was wavering, its front nearing the road in close formation.

Lieutenant Boski decided: "Maintain the battalion's battle front parallel to the road." He hoped that the 28th Regiment would soon arrive from Nieporęt.

Second Lieutenant Kulczyński, commander of the 2nd Company, was to extend the left wing of the 4th Company and prevent the enemy from reaching the road. In addition, he was to establish communication with the regiment. The 3rd Company, of 2nd-Lieutenant Lukasik, was ordered to provide cover for the right wing and, if possible, establish communication with the units of the 1st Lit-Bel ID. In view of the new task, a platoon moved along the road to the east by some 300 metres and ran under fire north of the road by leaps and bounds. It sustained considerable losses, but did not stop until it reached an alder tree, located 300 metres east of Wólka Radzymińska. In place of that platoon, 2nd-Lieutenant Hołubski brought the 2nd Platoon forward into the line.

The 1st Company remained in reserve, while the machine-guns were placed on the hills by the road, between the 3rd and 4th Companies. They developed considerable firepower, as eight heavy machine-guns and three or four light guns were then concentrated in a small section. The 1st Battalion remained for some time in these positions, maintaining a heavy firefight.

At about 03:00-04:00 the 29th Regiment reached Fort Benjaminów unhindered, where it met up with units of the 48th Regiment. On arrival, Major Walter, commander of the 29th Regiment, summoned the commander of the 1st Battalion, Lieutenant Rogowski, and gave him orders. He was to strike through Dąbkowizna towards Wólka Radzymińska, co-operating in the attack with the 28th Regiment.

Dawn was breaking and thick fog rose from the meadows surrounding Fort Benjaminów. Under the cover of the fog, the 1st Battalion advanced to attack Dąbkowizna. Two companies advanced in the first wave, followed by the others in reserve. Dąbkowizna was quickly reached. The detachment was encountered when spotted at only 50 metres away. At first, no shots were fired, all the more so as shouts of, "Don't shoot, it's our side here," were heard from the opposing ranks. Not many seconds passed when they were recognised as the enemy. The companies leapt into an attack and, despite the enemy's fire, they reached the enemy with a shout. The enemy was dispersed, with about 30 prisoners taken and four machine-guns captured.



It was 05:00 when the regimental commander reported that Dąbkowizna had been captured. In pursuit of the enemy, the battalion reached a wooded hill south of Dąbkowizna, from where it advanced to a plain of marshy meadows. There they spotted cannons abandoned by the Russians (Battery 3/20 FAR had been taken on 14 August). The Poles wanted to take those guns away, but their efforts failed at first, as the battalion's rifle line came under heavy fire from machine-guns around Wólka Radzyńska and from a sandy hill, stretching from that village towards Aleksandrów. Initially, the 1st and 3rd Companies ignored the fire and, wading through the muddy meadow, pushed forward. Soon, however, losses and the threat to the right wing forced them to withdraw. As they withdrew, the 3rd Company took one of the recaptured guns with it.

The enemy troops did not pursue further and were satisfied with the rejection of the 1st Battalion. They then headed from Wólka Radzyńska towards Aleksandrów.

As further assault attempts failed, the commander of the 29th Regiment decided to send help to the 1st Battalion, which we shall see later.

Capture of Wólka Radzyńska.

We have just presented the individual parts of the whole action at Wólka Radzyńska. We have seen that these actions developed according to Lt-Colonel Thomme's plan, and indeed led to the entrapment of the 81st Brigade of the 27th RD. The 242nd RR, attacked by Battalion 1/28, had to leave the Mostki Wólczyńskie area and did not even manage to notify the 241st RR. We also saw that the 81st Brigade was threatened not only from the south, but also from the north.

It would seem that no one from the 81st Brigade would come out unscathed. And yet. We have previously described how the 241st RR, hearing shooting in its rear, moved towards the 243rd RR on the road and clashed bloodily with 2nd-Lieutenant Pęczkowski's column on the way.

Only the 19th Brigade took part in the action connected with the capture of Wólka Radzyńska, while the rest of the divisions had not yet been introduced into battle. The 30th IR, which was to advance with the 1st Lit-Bel Division on Radzymin in the morning, was detained for a long time at Jabłonna-Legionowo, while the 31st Regiment had only just arrived that night. The division's command probably believed that the forces of the 19th Brigade were sufficient to take Wólka Radzyńska, and this may explain the fact that the 30th Regiment did not receive the order to march out of Jabłonna-Legionowo until 02:00.

Between 04:30 and 05:30 the 10th Division's HQ received news of the clash of the 19th Brigade near Nieporęt, which indicated that the situation was serious. The brigade commander asked for help.

That news received prompted a number of orders. Firstly, Lt-Colonel Thomme was informed that the 30th Regiment had been sent to Aleksandrów and "General Żeligowski has left to push it on." Moreover, the 10th Division's Chief of Staff, Lt-Colonel Grabowski, addressed the following message to General Rządkowski:

The enemy has attacked the right wing of the 28th Regiment in strength, which has retreated to Nieporęt. Counter-attack in progress. Interaction of the left wing of the 19th ID needed.

The commander of the 20th Brigade, who was then in contact with Nieporęt, upon learning of these events left for Wieliszew on a motorbike at 05:30, intending to personally supervise the march of the 31st Regiment from that village to Nieporęt.

At around 05:00 General Żeligowski had arrived at the 30th IR, and at that time he subordinated the 201st LHR and Battalion 1/28 to Lt-Colonel Jacynik, commander of the 30th IR. This was however not ultimately carried out, as events developed rapidly their own way. After a brief spell with the 30th IR, Żeligowski proceeded to Nieporęt, and on his way between 06:00 and 07:00. encountered the 31st IR on the road, marching to Nieporęt. He was then, "greeted cheerfully by each company".

On arriving in Nieporęt, Żeligowski met with Thomme, who reported that Dąbkowizna had been taken, while the assault on Wólka Radzyńska was in progress. This conversation is mentioned by the brigade commander:



General Żeligowski was informed of the overall situation and the immediate plan to capture Wólka Radzymińska.

I understood from a conversation with him in Nieporęt that he had not been very successful in speeding the advance of the 1st Lit-Bel Division, that he was placing all his hopes on the 10th ID, that the capture of Wólka Radzymińska would greatly facilitate the further operation in the south on the section of the 1st Lit-Bel D, and I felt sure that the seizure of the second line of positions was the Group's commander's great hope for the time being.

To my enquiry as to what was happening to the south of me, with the Lit-Bel Division, General Żeligowski replied rather evasively, i.e. that he did not want to enlighten me with the pessimistic position and was still confident that those divisions would follow on from the success and victories of the 10th ID.

The commander of the 19th Brigade notes that he then asked General Żeligowski to speed up the actions of the 30th Regiment and to pull up the 31st Regiment. Lt-Colonel Thomme added:

I myself promised the general that I was going immediately in person to Wólka Radzymińska and would throw all my forces to capture it.

After the general's departure, Colonel Sikorski arrived to announce that the 31st Regiment was coming, a fact of which Thomme was "extremely pleased".

Between 05:00 and 06:00 the troops of the 28th Regiment were ordered and undertook a further march towards Wólka Radzymińska. The 8th Company marched along the road, while the 7th Company turned down a forest road to the left of the main road with the task of reaching Height 79 and attacking Wólka Radzymińska from that side. On the right side of the road the 9th Company advanced, followed by the 5th and 6th Companies. The remaining companies of the 3rd Battalion marched along the road behind the 2nd Battalion.

Soon the 8th Company came to the edge of the woods, where it was stopped by enemy machine-gun fire. It then set up its own machine-guns and returned fire, but with little effect. As the 2nd Company's machine-gun commander, 2nd-Lieutenant Rzedzicki recalls, the guns often jammed due to poor ammunition. Communication was lost with the 7th Company.

Meanwhile, the company, led by Lieutenant Gordziałkowski, had reached Height 88, from where Wólka Radzymińska could be plainly seen. Initially it seemed that the capture of the village would present no difficulties. However, it turned out to not be easy, as the first attempt to reach the village ended in failure. However, this was the last effort by the enemy, who was already leaving the village.

Battalion 1/28, which we had left halted in positions in front of Wólka Radzymińska and carrying out a fire fight, were not allowing the enemy to reach the road.

After some time had elapsed Lieutenant Boski decided to go on the offensive, as he relates:

The enemy's behaviour indicated that he was totally surprised by the clash and his resistance was very disorderly. I decided not to wait for the arrival of [Battalion] 2/28, but, taking advantage of the situation created, to advance.

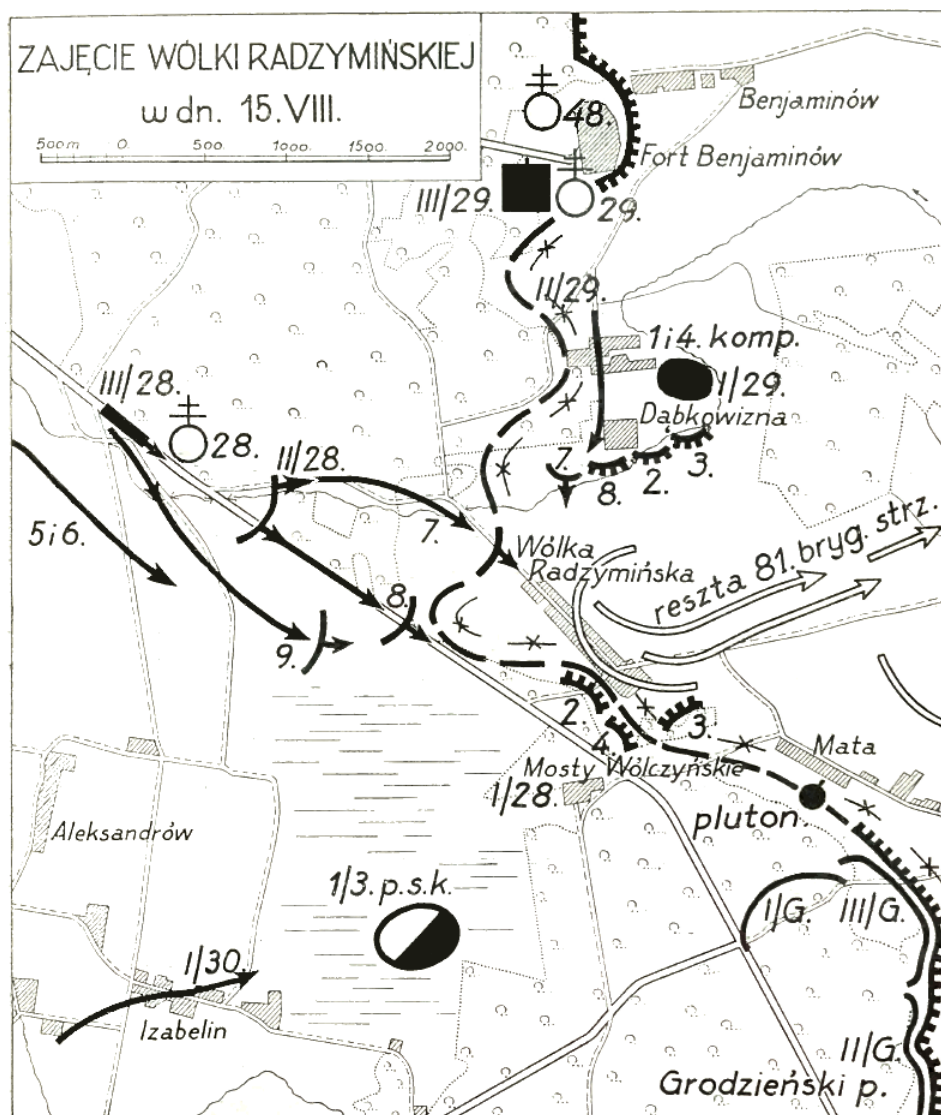
This attack was to be mainly by way of a manoeuvre by the right wing – a strike by the 3rd Company, directed through the woods south-east of Wólka Radzymińska. This company was to be followed by the 1st (the battalion's reserve), while the 4th and 2nd Companies were to advance directly towards the village. In that formation the battalion went onto the attack and, advancing, reached the edge of the woods in front of the village, from where it poured fire onto the last of the retreating enemy. One platoon of the 3rd Company then managed to successfully threaten them with fire from the east.

At around 06:30 Wólka Radzymińska was partially recaptured by Battalion 1/28. The battalion's losses were four privates killed and eight wounded.



During these operations Lieutenant Boski heard shots coming from the west, which “disoriented” him. As a result, he did not move the battalion to continue a pursuit, but stopped at the edge of the woods on the second line positions. He was eventually able to establish communication with his neighbouring units. In that position Lieutenant Boski sent a report to the brigade commander which read:

I report that the 1st Battalion has occupied Wólka Radzyńska, also taking 4 MGs and about 30 prisoners. We are now fortifying our position in front of the village along the road. The village is manned with outposts. Commander of the battalion, Lieutenant Pogonowski, is seriously wounded. I have taken command.



Sketch 60: Capture of Wólka Radzyńska on 15 August

At this time Major Walter sent first the 8th Company and then the 7th Company and the Assault Company towards Dąbkowizna.

These companies arrived at the positions of Battalion 1/29 and partially reinforced its right wing, helping to fire at the Russian units that were moving to Aleksandrów after leaving Wólka Radzyńska. The 7th Company was directed to attack Wólka Radzyńska. It arrived in the village when it had just been occupied by the 28th Regiment. General Żeligowski stopped further operations in those positions.

The 30th IR did not receive the order to march through Józefów and Kąty Węgierskie to Stanisławów until about 02:00. It set off, with a detachment of mounted scouts in front and the 1st Battalion at the head of the column. The rest followed at a distance of 1½ kilometres. Following the regiment was Battery 5/10 FAR.



General Żeligowski had met the battery on the road leading from Zegrze to Jabłonna and ordered it to join the 30th regiment, which, as the general noted, “will march on Radzymin at dawn.”

Between 04:00 and 05:00 shooting was heard from the vicinity of Nieporęt, Aleksandrów and Wólka Radzyńska. The commander of the 30th Regiment received a written message about the clash near Nieporęt from the commander of the 19th Brigade. It was a timed 05:20:

The enemy is attacking Nieporęt in strength. Please direct the leading companies immediately to the south end of Nieporęt.

This was when General Żeligowski arrived and issued the orders we have already seen.

So Lt-Colonel Jacynik directed the 1st Battalion northwards towards Aleksandrów and Izabelin. In the end, however, the 30th IR did not manage to enter the action, as Wólka Radzyńska area had been captured.

Not encountering any obstacles, the 1st Battalion reached the second line positions near Słupno, where it halted, while the rest of the regiment, together with Battery 5/10, arrived in Izabelin. An order from General Żeligowski reached it there, halting further advance.

Halting the Advance of the 10th Division

The initial objective was to capture the area of Wólka Radzyńska, in order to then move on to a further assault in the direction of Mokre and Radzymin. In this spirit, subordinate units and neighbours were informed. For example, at dawn the 201st Light Horse Regiment received a letter from the division's command, which among other things stated:

The division begins an action in the direction of Radzymin: 19th Brigade to Mokre, 20th Brigade (30th IR) to Radzymin.

In the morning, the commander of the 19th Brigade, Lt-Colonel Thomme, notified Lieutenant Czuczełowicz, commander of the 2nd Squadron of the 3rd Horse Rifle Regiment (operating in the Zabłocie area), that

After capturing Dąbkowizna, Wólka Radzyńska and Izabelin the 19th IB and the 30th IR attack Radzymin. The 31st IR is the division reserve.

Once Wólka Radzyńska was finally captured, Thomme went to the village to give further orders. The 30th Regiment, advancing behind and to the right of the 19th Brigade, was approaching the second line of positions. From this deployment the division was to move towards Mokre and Radzymin for the further assault, long since planned. Unfortunately General Żeligowski did not know the exact positions of his own division at this point and did not have an accurate news of the enemy. At 08:00 General Żeligowski arrived from Nieporęt at Jabłonna-Legionowo.

Just moments before Lt-Colonel Grabowski had had a Hughes conversation with the Army HQ. Because of the importance of this conversation we will give it in full:

This is the Chief of Staff of the 10th ID.

This is Major Mysłowski – greetings Colonel! The chief of staff of the 19th ID has reported to me that the advance on Radzymin is going very slowly, and especially that strong enemy attacks on the left wing of the 19th ID in the region of Wólka Radzyńska are taking place at the moment. Please explain the current situation to the 10th ID. Stop.

Greetings Major! The 19th Brigade, carrying out an action from the Nieporęt area, encountered strong enemy resistance. A strong enemy action this morning forced the right wing of the 28th IR to retreat to Nieporęt. Enemy units which had passed the line of trenches in the Wólka Radzyńska area, threatened the right wing and the rear of the brigade.

Aleksandrów and Izabelin were taken by the Bolsheviks during the night. A counter-attack of the 30th IR from Kąty Węgierskie area is in progress.

Small enemy units, having also penetrated the trench line, attacked a battalion of the 28th IR near a road junction 2 km south of Izabelin.



The 201st Light Horse Regiment received the task of clearing and recapturing the area.

Due to the temporary interruption of the telephone line to Nieporęt, there is no further news on the development of further action. General Żeligowski left for that sector to examine the situation and issue the appropriate orders. In today's action, especially during the second counter-attack (illegible) there were heavy losses in the 28th Regiment. Please consider the above as a situation report, which I will supplement when I receive further news. Stop

This is General Latinik. it's a pity that the action was not carried out yesterday, instead of regrouping in the evening in order to strike in the morning. One regiment was in Nieporęt, another in Wieliszew and the southern column in Kąty. The enemy took advantage of that time to advance through the Radzymin gap. I am temporarily suspending the order for a counter-attack on Radzymin. However, I require that the 10th Division throw the enemy out of the Nieporęt – Izabelin forests and bring the manning of that line to order. Please carry out this task with all your energy and report on it as soon as possible. Inform the 19th ID in Marki of the situation – Latinik.

We can see, even at this time, that the failure at Nieporęt had a continuing heavy influence, with the consequence that the Army commander "suspending" for the time being the "order for a counter-attack on Radzymin." In the course of this conversation, General Żeligowski arrived at Jabłonna-Legionowo and conducted a further conversation with General Latinik in person.

Hello General, Sir. General Żeligowski has just arrived.

This is General Żeligowski. Yesterday the movement by vehicle took some time and so the action was a bit delayed, as there were only eight buses and it was possible [missing in the dispatch]. Now everything is fine, the enemy is retreating. We seized Dąbkowizna and I have no reports from Wólka Radzyńska yet. I think that the action on Radzymin can be carried out after the line of German trenches has been taken.

What happened today is that by the time the first battalions began to reach Nieporęt, the Bolsheviks had already taken Izabelin and Aleksandrów. The first battalion had to attack Małoleka from the buses. I had been worried by the night-time chaos. We were going one way and the Bolsheviks the other. Young soldiers are very nervous at night – but now I expect everything to calm down and we will execute the plan of attacking Radzymin.

(Gen. Latinik). The attack on Radzymin must be made now that the situation in Dąbkowizna has settled down. The attack must be carried out simultaneously by the 10th, 11th and 19th Divisions. So please inform the Army command at what time the artillery is to prepare the attack and the divisions of neighbouring divisions are to move, so that I can inform General Rządkowski and Colonel Jaźwiński of that. Stop.

(Gen. Żeligowski). As soon as Wólka is ours, I will inform you. I was with Rządkowski yesterday. We agreed on all the details, except for the time of the attack. As soon as the pocket is cleared I will inform you immediately.

(Gen. Latinik). Thank you, good luck, but you have to push vigorously – Latinik.

Immediately after this conversation, General Żeligowski issued an order stopping the further advance. This order read as follows:

To 30th IR

08:10

We have occupied Dąbkowizna – Wólka Radzyńska. It is necessary to seize the old German trenches on that line as soon as possible, dig in, establish communication with the 1st Lit-Bel D, and repel any counter-attack.

When everything is completed we will execute the Radzymin attack plan. I will set the time. Conduct reconnaissance and maintain contact with the Bolsheviks.

General Żeligowski.



General Żeligowski, on the other hand, did not notify the 1st Lit-Bel Division until 09:00. That division's chief of staff, Captain Perkowicz, upon receiving the news, gave it in a written report to General Rządkowski, who was at an observation post on the road near Height 94. It also took a long time to send that message. It read:

General Żeligowski's units have occupied Dąbkowizna and Wólka Radzyńska after a battle. General Żeligowski (in his own words) will proceed to further action after arranging his troops on the line of German trenches and establishing communication with the 1st L-B Division. The direction of the 10th Division's attack: 48th IR to Ruda, one brigade of the 10th Division to Mokre, the second brigade of the 10th Division to Radzymin.

General Żeligowski will inform about the start for the new attack and asks for the simultaneous action of the 1st Lit-Bel Division.

All written down from General Żeligowski's words at 09:00.

Perkowicz, Captain and Chief of Staff.

Halting the attack surprised some commanders and especially the commander of the 20th Brigade. Colonel Sikorski hoped that the 10th Division would get on to its main task, and for this reason urged the 30th IR to hurry up in order to relieve the 19th Brigade. At 09:00 he ordered the 31st Regiment to move to Wólka Radzyńska from Nieporęt, with the proviso that one battalion of that regiment was to be handed over to Lt-Colonel Thomme.

Then at about 10:00 the commander of the 30th IR received an order from General Żeligowski, which, as we saw, stopped the further movement of that regiment. The history of the 30th IR states:

The 20th Brigade command, being surprised and puzzled by this change, demanded the original orders be followed.

Lt-Colonel Jacynik, in his report of 1921, noted as follows:

The 20th Brigade command, knowing nothing of the orders from the division commander directly to the 30th Regiment, found itself in a rather troubled state. It demanded General Żeligowski's original orders from the regimental command, making it clear that these original orders should be carried out, i.e. for the 30th IR to attack Radzymin.

Indeed, judging also from the reply of the 20th Brigade's command, it can be said that it too was surprised by this order, with Colonel Sikorski assessing it as follows:

This order was in practice a reversal of the previous plan and was probably dictated by higher considerations, but which were not known to the brigade commanders.

Colonel Sikorski, feeling ill, left the division for Warsaw a short time after these events. In the afternoon Lt-Colonel Jacynik took over command of the brigade.

It must be emphasised that the division command was for a long time still under the impression that there were Russian troops hiding in the forests near Nieporęt, Izabelin and Aleksandrów. General Żeligowski, who arrived at Wólka Radzyńska at 11:00, gave the commander of the 201st LHR the following order:

There are a lot of Bolsheviks left in the forests between Nieporęt – Wólka Radzyńska – Dąbrowa. Your regiment is to clear these forests today. Our regiments have advanced everywhere.

In the afternoon the chief of staff of the 10th Division would give various other cavalry detachments the task of patrolling the forests. But in fact the enemy had been absent from those areas since the morning, and diligent searches did not find even a single Russian soldier.



Chapter XIV

Battle Of Radzymin on 15 August

Attack of the 1st Lit-Bel Division before Noon

On 15 August the division's reports gave the following numbers of combatants:

- Wilno Regiment – 10 officers, 1,050 bayonets and 19 machine-guns
- Grodno Regiment – 19 officers, 456 bayonets and 17 machine-guns.
- Mińsk Regiment – 17 officers, 500 bayonets and 27 machine-guns.
- Nowogród Regiment – 13 officers, 368 bayonets and 30 machine-guns.
- 3rd Horse Rifle Regiment – 7 officers, 154 sabres and 4 machine-guns, in two squadrons.

The incorporation of the march companies into the Wilno Regiment and one into the Mińsk Regiment are included in this count. But neither the company of the 54th Regiment nor the company for the Mińsk Regiment were absorbed during the day.

Since the evening of 14 August, the Lit-Bel command had had sufficient information about its own position. The situation on the division's left wing, initially unclear, was finally established, and it became obvious that it could not reach further than the area of Height 104. The enemy, located around Wólka Radzyńska, was being watched by the 1st Squadron of the 3rd HRR, which was positioned around Izabelin and Zabłocie and informed the 2nd Brigade's headquarters from there. In addition the division had a lot of information about the enemy from the testimonies of prisoners of war and captured Russian orders. It was thought that the enemy's objective was the capture of Praga and that, therefore, it would advance directly along the Radzymin road and its side roads (through Wólka Radzyńska, Olesin and Brudno).

The division's operational orders for the assault were drawn up quite early. The main idea was to direct a primary effort along the road directly towards Radzymin, and so that task was entrusted to the strongest units, namely the Wilno and Grodno Rifle Regiments, which were to be commanded by Lt-Colonel Rybicki, commander of the 2nd Brigade. In addition, he was given a platoon of tanks. Due to the fact that the Wilno Regiment had suffered the heaviest losses on 14 August, and an important task was again falling upon it, it was reinforced with two march companies. The third march company, which arrived on the night of 14/15 August, was kept in reserve. (These were companies from the reserve battalions of the 19th IR, 53rd IR and 54th IR, under Lieutenants Ordega, Waligóra, and Kijak.)

The divisional orders, as formulated, did not correspond to the actual intentions of the command for the 1st Brigade. The accounts of participants indicate that less importance was attached to it, and the role of the brigade was considered secondary.

The order for the attack of the 1st Lit-Bel Division was:

Command of 1st Lit-Bel Division

Marki, 15 August, 01:00

Operational Order

I. 1st Army command ... has tasked the 10th, 1st Lit-Bel and 11th Infantry Divisions with a counter-attack on 15 August to regain the lost area of Radzymin and the first line of trenches.

II. Accordingly, I order:

- a) The 2nd Lit-Bel Brigade, composed of the Wilno and Grodno IRs, will strike on 06:00 on 15 August along the road in the direction of Radzymin, having regrouped in the area of Pustelnik.
- b) The 1st Lit-Bel Brigade, composed of the Mińsk and Nowogród IRs will at the same time launch an attack from the Ulasek area through Helenów and Janków Stary in a north-western direction towards Radzymin, trying to get into the enemy's rear.
- c) A platoon of tanks has been put at the disposal of the 2nd Lit-Bel Brigade, to be used for the action along the Radzymin road.



III. The artillery will fire all night with harassing fire on the Radzymin – Cegielnia – Słupno – Ciemne area to prevent the enemy from concentrating and preparing for the attack on 15 August 1920.

At 05:30 on 15 August it will start an intensive artillery fire, which is to last until 05:50, at which time our artillery will move to firing on the enemy's rear positions.

IV. The start of the action is 06:00 on 15 August.

V. Major Matczyński will leave with his unit on the 15th at 08:00, in accordance with Front orders, to Nasielsk.

VI. Division HQ will be in Marki, 1st Brigade HQ in Kobyłka, 2nd Brigade HQ at Pustelnik Station.

VII. After performing its task, the entire Lit-Bel Division will leave for the region of Pustelnik, Nadma and Pustelnik House as a Front reserve. Separate orders will be issued for this later.

General Rządkowski

Until the attack began, the units of the 1st Lit-Bel Division were to hold their positions and repel enemy attacks, in case the latter took offensive action earlier than the Poles. Finally, great attention was given to communication with the 10th Division HQ, with whom contact was greatly reinforced after midnight.

Throughout the day of 14 August the Radzymin Artillery Group had poor organisational structure and that was not sorted out in terms of command until dawn on 15 August. The Left Subgroup, following the loss of communication with the group command acted independently; the batteries of the Middle Subgroup were subordinated to different commanders, and only the Right Subgroup worked together, acting in accordance with previous plans.

Colonel Szpręglewski, commander of the artillery group, talked in the evening of 14 August with General Żeligowski, but he received no specific orders. In any case, the Radzymin Artillery Group could not support the 10th Division until it reached the second defensive line, while it was up to General Rządkowski to agree on cooperation between the artillery and the infantry fighting at Radzymin. This is where we meet the ills resulting from the inadequate command structure. We have seen how General Rządkowski was not the commander of the counter-attack by the two divisions (11th and the 1st Lit-Bel), as he led only his own division. Neither Colonel Jaźwiński nor Colonel Szpręglewski were formally subordinate to him, so General Rządkowski could only have artillery tasks done by direct agreement. This proved insufficient in practice and did not work effectively.

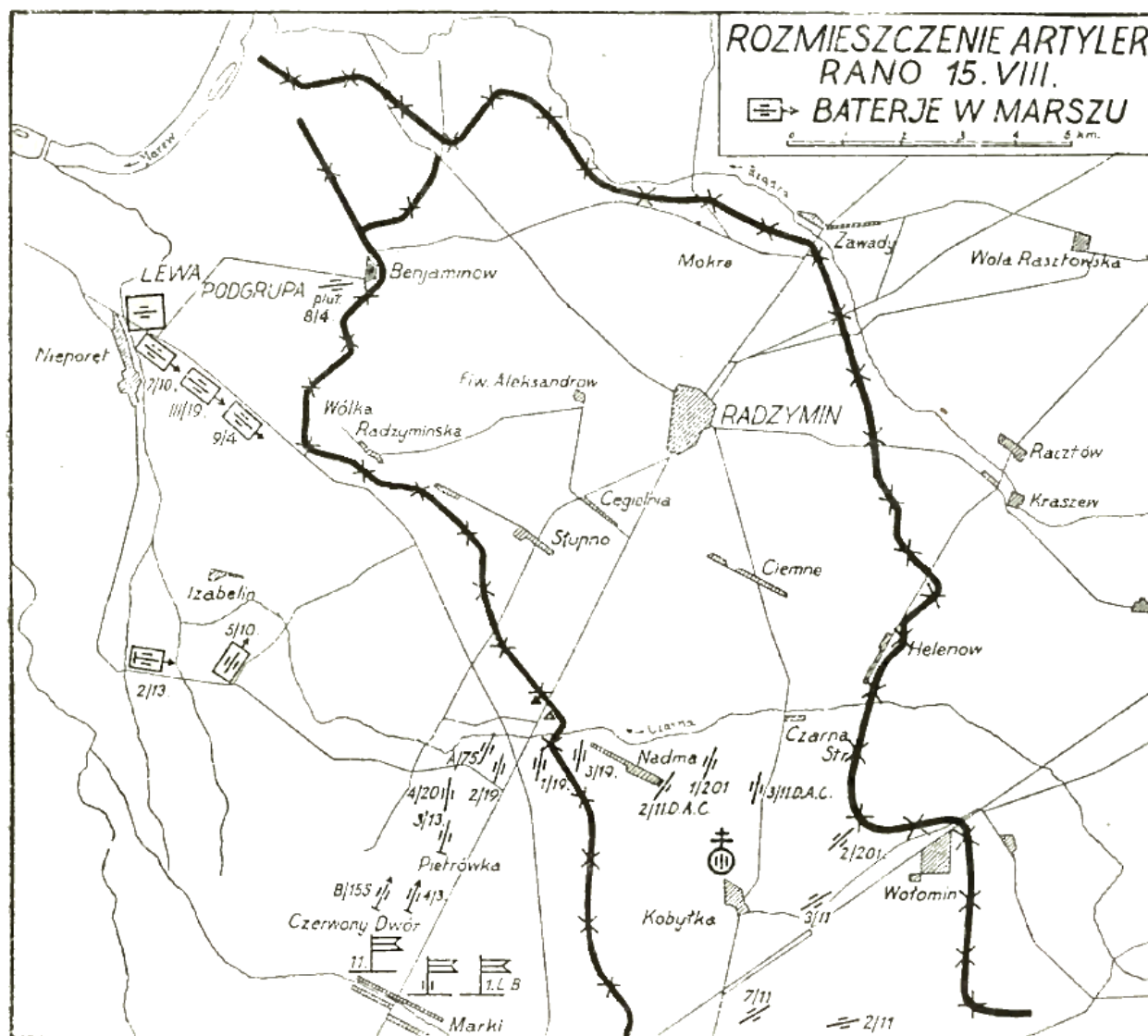
It is noticeable that no artillery orders have been found in connection with the intended counter-attack of the Lit-Bel Division, and we have established that the last orders from the artillery group commander concerned only the defence of the second line of positions, relating to positioning of the batteries. So there was a certain discrepancy between the work of the artillery and the infantry – while the infantry was preparing to attack, the artillery had orders to prepare for the defence of the second line.

We have mentioned previously that during the withdrawal on 14 August the Front Artillery Inspector, General Kaczyński, drew attention to the location of the batteries in the rear of the second position. In connection with that, Colonel Szpręglewski issued orders on 15 August for the 1st *Divizion* of the 1st Lit-Bel FAR to be located west of the road triangle, as well as Battery 4/3 HAR and Battery 4/20 FAR to the south of Nadma. The other batteries were to remain in place.

The new locations were to provide the best possible conditions for firing in front of the second defensive line, and the change of positions was to be made in such a way, "that the artillery fire would not cease". Colonel Aleksandrowicz, or his deputy Major Römmel, was to be at the artillery subgroup HQ in Pustelnik, "so that, if necessary, Colonel Szpręglewski could communicate by telephone." Finally Battery 3/13 HAR was not to fire at located targets without Colonel Szpręglewski's orders, "as it is designated to fire at distant targets." These orders from Colonel Szpręglewski were repeated in a letter from the adjutant of the Middle Subgroup to Colonel Aleksandrowicz of about 10:00 on 15 August.



Not surprisingly, the command of the 1st Lit-Bel Division sought to bring its entire divisional artillery back under its command by keeping the 1st *Divizion* 1st Lit-Bel FAR and bringing along the 3rd *Divizion* and 2nd Battery of the 13th HAR. Colonel Aleksandrowicz received approval from the Artillery Group command and then gave 2nd-Lieutenant Pac-Pomarnacki the task of finding the batteries of the 13th HAR and delivering them the order to return to the division immediately. We recall that, although the officer reached Nieporęt late in the evening of 14 August and handed over the order, the situation there at the time did not allow the batteries to leave. It was not until the morning of 15 August that Battery 2/13 HAR set off through Izabelin towards Pustelnik, while the 3rd *Divizion* was held by General Żeligowski, and in the end those batteries did not take part in the attack of the 1st Lit-Bel Division on 15 August.



Sketch 61: Positions of the artillery in the morning of 15 August (arrows indicate on the march)

We note that the orders for the division's assault were issued early, so the artillery commanders still had time to make the appropriate preparations. We do not have any written orders from the artillery commanders related to the assault, but they were rarely issued in any case, as the artillerymen usually communicated directly by telephone or verbally with their superiors, infantry and among themselves.

The 1st *Divizion* of the 1st Lit-Bel FAR was supposed to provide direct support to the 2nd Brigade, while the other batteries of the Middle Subgroup could also support the attack, and indeed did, but we have no evidence of an agreement on cooperation. One artilleryman mentions that this was most often done by friendly agreement.

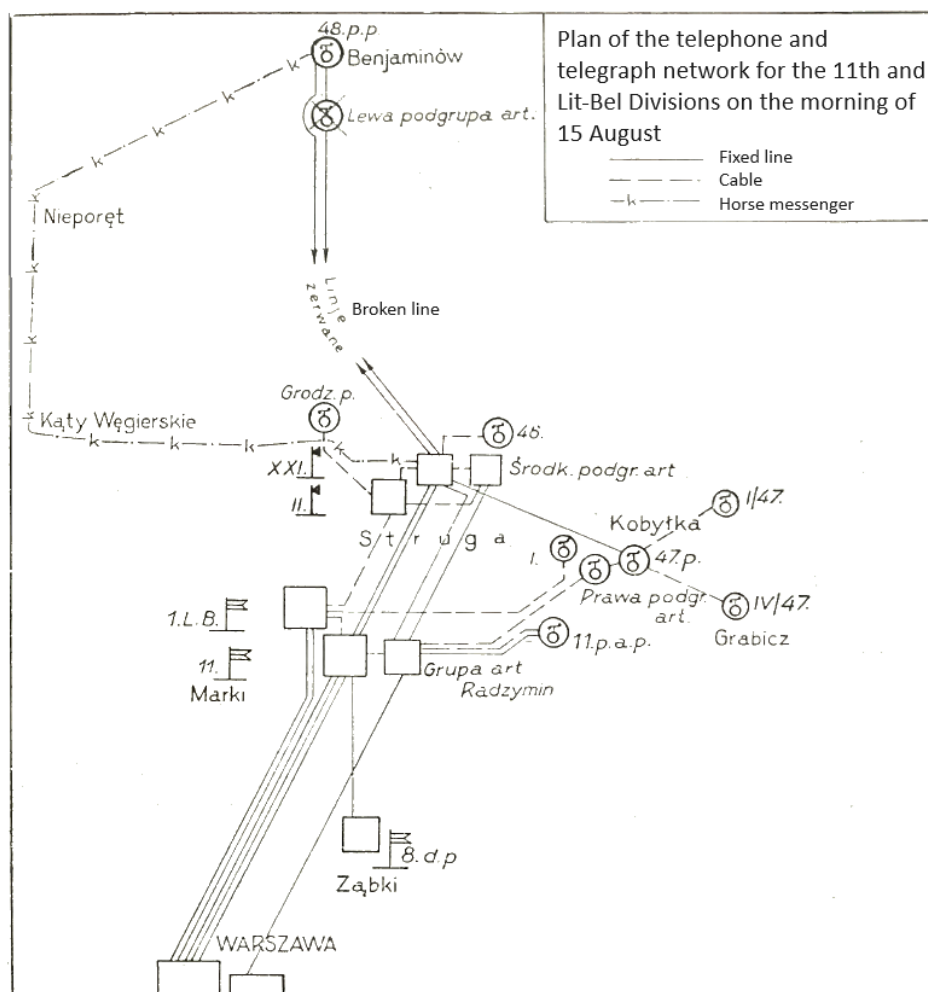
The 1st Brigade was probably supposed to receive the 3rd *Divizion* 1st Lit-Bel FAR, but thanks to the non-arrival of those batteries, it was ultimately left without artillery support. In the fire preparation for the 1st



Brigade's attack, the left-wing batteries of the Right Subgroup would take part (albeit not significantly), performing this task as a supplementary one.

The batteries of the Right and Middle Subgroups, firing in support of the 1st Brigade's advance, would do so mostly without observation and communication with that brigade's HQ. The cooperation of the 1st *Divizion* was, of course, the best arranged. Its commander, Lieutenant Tomaszewski, discussed details for cooperation with the brigade commander, and it was agreed that as soon as the counter-attack was launched, the 1st and 2nd Batteries were to prepare to move to the front and would set off on command, while the 3rd Battery was to hold its position. The location of those batteries is shown in Sketch 61.

The communications system of the 1st Lit-Bel Division and the artillery had not changed. The division had scarce resources, especially a lack of cable and telephone apparatus. Before noon on 14 August the division's telegraph company set up a junction (inductor⁷⁰) in Marki. The brigade junctions were already in operation: the 2nd (inductor) in Pustelnik and the 1st (buzzer) in Kobyłka. The diagram of the technical liaison of the 1st Lithuanian-Byelorussian and 11th Divisions is shown in Sketch 62.



Sketch 62

Lt-Colonel Rybicki (2nd Lit-Bel Brigade), who was entrusted with the main task in the assault, had gained some experience from the course of the battle on 14 August, mainly in observing the lack of co-operation between the Grodno and Wilno regiments. Therefore, while preparing the attack for 15 August, he placed emphasis on this. That, the information received, and the incidents that occurred on the night of 14/15 indicated a dangerous position for the left wing. Lt-Colonel Rybicki ordered the Grodno Regiment to adopt a suitable formation and secure the division's attack from the left flank. In reality the move of the 10th

⁷⁰ I believe a buzzer is a low quality telephone system run on a single wire connection. An inductor system, run on two wires, allows the same wires to be used for both telephone and telegraph/Morse.



Division's units to be level with the 2nd Brigade, meant that the concern for the left wing fell away. The 2nd Brigade's order for the attack was:

Command of the 2nd Lit-Bel Brigade

St. Pustelnik, 15 August 1920, at 03:40

Operational order

1. The enemy is currently occupying Janków, Ciemne, Cegielnia, and the hills on the line Słupno – Wólka Radzyńska.
2. To the right of us is the 11th Division, to the left is the 10th Division.
3. The 1st Army command, ... has ordered a counter-attack of the 10th, 1st Lit-Bel and 11th Divisions, to regain the lost area of Radzymin and the first line of trenches along the Rządza River.
4. The 2nd Brigade, supported by a platoon of tanks, consisting of the Wilno and Grodno Regiments will strike at 06:00 on 15 August 1920 along the road in the direction of Radzymin.
5. The 1st Brigade, composed of the Mińsk and Nowogród regiments, will at the same time launch an attack from the Ulasek area through Helenów and Janków Stary in a north-westerly direction, trying to get to the enemy's rear.
6. The artillery will begin a heavy fire at 05:30, which is to last until 05:50, after which it will move its fire to the enemy rear positions.
7. Major Matczyński will leave with his unit to Nasielsk on 15 August at 08:00 in accordance with the order of the Front command .
8. In addition to Point 4 of the above order I order:

The Wilno Regiment (Major Bobiatyński), supported by a platoon of tanks, will cover itself with a screen on the right wing, and maintaining communication with the Grodno Regiment, will strike at 06:00 along the road to Radzymin from the south.

The Grodno Regiment (Lt-Col. Bohaterewicz), will maintain communication with the Wilno Regiment and covering itself with a strong reserve behind the left wing, will strike at 06:00 along the road to the southern end of Słupno, the northern end of Cegielnia, Aleksandrów Manor, reaching the crossroads (letter R on the map). After reaching the designated point, the brigade's regiments will attack. After establishing communication with the units of the 1st Brigade and the 10th Division, it will commence further action, occupying the first Line trenches south of Zawady by the Wilno Regiment and south of Łoś by the Grodno Regiment.

The tank platoon will support the advance of the regiments with fire, and after the regiments reach the trench line they will hide themselves on the Zawady – Radzymin road.

After the execution of the action the 1st Lit-Bel Division will leave to become the reserve of the Front command, in the area of Pustelnik – Nadma.

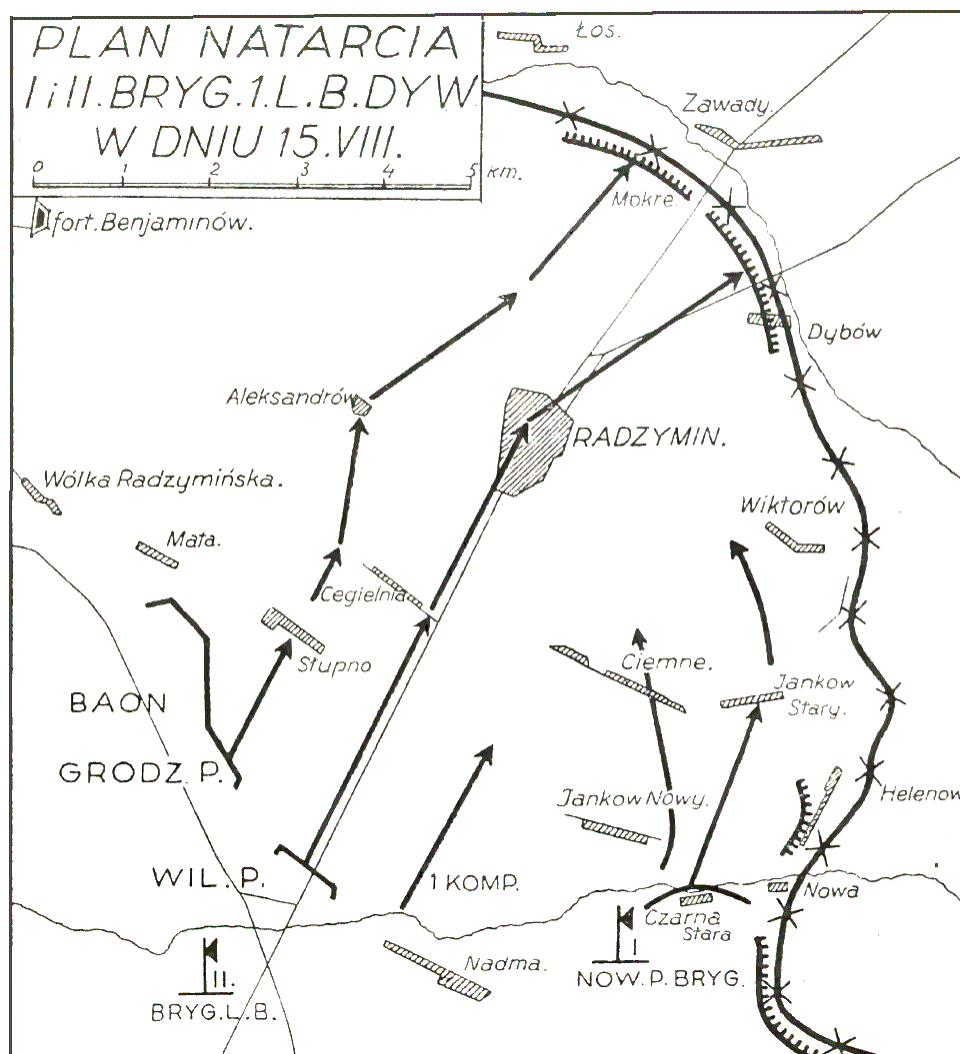
During this action I personally will be with the Wilno Regiment on the Radzymin road.

The regiments will leave a small number of machine-guns (three per regimental sector) in their present positions as rear security.

Rybicki, Lt-Colonel

Major Bobiatyński, commander of the Wilno regiment, received the brigade order at around 04:00 on 15 August. He then summoned his battalion commanders for a briefing and familiarised them with the locations and task, before issuing orders: The 1st Battalion was to advance towards Radzymin from the left side of the road, the 3rd Battalion to the right of the road; the 2nd Battalion was to remain in reserve and advance behind the left wing of the 3rd Battalion. The 1st MG Company, the NCO School Company and the Technical Company were to remain in the second line of defensive positions.





Sketch 63: Plan of attack for the 1st and 2nd Lit-Bel Brigades on 15 August

All the commanders were aware of the importance of the task. Major Bobiatyński stressed at the briefing:

The regiment would again be burdened with a major battle, but also a great honour.

The battalion commanders issued their orders, and at the appointed hour the units, prepared for the assault, awaited their orders to march. The commander of the 3rd Battalion, Captain Rapszewicz, had the 9th and 12th Companies in the first line, and the 10th and 11th in the second. He himself intended to march with the 10th Company. He demanded that in the course of the assault a link be established with the Nowogród Regiment. The commander of the 1st Battalion, Captain Piecków (after Captain Downar-Zapolski was killed), also formed up in two lines: the 1st and 4th Companies were in the first line, and 2nd and 3rd in the second. The 2nd Battalion, assigned as reserve, withdrew its companies from its sector at the appointed hour and was positioned by the road in the woods near Height 101.

During the night of 14/15 August the Grodno Regiment held its positions, being ready to repulse an enemy attack that might come from Słupno, or from the west – the direction of Wólka Radzyńska. The regimental commander, Lt-Colonel Bohaterewicz, issued his own orders. The battalions were given similar tasks as on 14 August: the 2nd Battalion was to advance on Słupno and Cegielnia (western end), the 3rd Battalion on Aleksandrów, and the 1st Battalion was to advance behind 3rd Battalion and cover the left flank of the regiment. The Technical Company and two machine-guns from the 4th MG Company remained in the second line positions.

Colonel Bejnar, commander of the 1st Brigade, after receiving warning of the division's orders by telephone, summoned the commander of the Mińsk Regiment, Lt-Colonel Adamowicz, to the brigade headquarters in Maciołki. Between 01:00 and 02:00 an officer from division HQ arrived at the brigade's headquarters, bringing the operational order, which he supplemented with oral explanations. This was



mentioned in a joint report by Colonel Bejnar and his staff adjutant, 2nd-Lieutenant Frambach, who also noted:

These explanations added nothing new, being limited to the fact that the division's plan of attack was presented in such a way that the main attack was to be made by the 2nd Brigade (reinforced for this purpose by the Wilno Regiment, the rested and most battle hardened regiment of the 1st Brigade), while the 1st Brigade, consisting of the Mińsk and Nowogród Regiments, was to play a supporting role.

For this supporting role Lt-Colonel Bejnar was given the division's weakest regiments. The Nowogród regiment, despite having distinguished itself several times in the retreat, was the weakest in terms of combat strength in the division, especially when coming out from under the direct influence of Lt-Colonel Rybicki. The Mińsk Regiment was then weak and the brigade commander assessed its value thus:

One could not count on Mińsk Regiment in any serious action at that time. It had been tired to the point of exhaustion by the battles at Tłuszcz, and had not been well rested since, as it had been constantly moving from place to place over the previous 2-3 days and nights. It was somewhat demoralised, and quite weak.

Having received the orders, Colonel Bejnar told the commander of Mińsk Regiment to move to Ulasek and remain as the brigade's reserve. An order was sent to the commander of Nowogród regiment to prepare for the attack, then the colonel went with his adjutant, 2nd-Lieutenant Frambach, to the Nowogród regiment's HQ in Czarna Stara House. The brigade commander could not communicate with the artillery, as it had not been assigned to him, and as Colonel Bejnar was entering the battle on the outskirts for the first time, he was not familiar with the composition and organisation of the artillery in the Radzymin sector.

The 1st Brigade's Orders for the attack were:

Command of 1st Lit-Bel Brigade

15 August

Operational Orders

I. The Army command has ordered a counter-attack on the 15th to recapture the Radzymin area and the first line of trenches.

II. This action will be carried out by the 10th ID, 11th ID and 1st Lit-Bel Division. The Mińsk and Nowogród Divisions are the 1st Brigade, and the Grodno and Wilno Divisions are the 2nd Brigade.

III. The 2nd Brig. will launch an attack from the Pustelnik area along the road to Radzymin.

IV. 1st Brigade:

(a) The Nowogród Regiment will move from the line it is manning to attack in the direction of Janków Stary and further north-west to Radzymin. It will strongly secure its right wing to Helenów; and send a company along the Czarna – Radzymin road to maintain communication with the 2nd Brigade.

b) The Mińsk Regiment to move as a reserve behind the main attacking column of the Nowogród regiment.

V. The action will start at 06:00 on 15 August 1920.

VI. At 05:00 the artillery will start an intensive fire, which will last until 05:30, at which time it shifts its fire to the rear of the enemy's positions.

VII. I will be with the Mińsk Regiment, from where I will send reports at least every two hours.

VIII. After the action, a separate order will regulate a transfer to the reserves.

IX. This action is part of the battle for Warsaw, for our future and freedom.

X. The Mińsk Regiment will set out at 04:30.

Bejnar, Colonel and commander



Between 06:00 and 07:00 the 2nd Brigade's adjutant, Lieutenant Rojszyk, arrived at Colonel Bejnar's place (Czarna Stara House) and informed him of the 2nd Brigade's plan of action and then familiarised himself with Colonel Bejnar's plan of action. However the 1st Brigade did not manage to communicate with the 47th Regiment.

The Nowogród Regiment remained at Czarna Stara during the night, holding the battalions in the line in its sector. The night was hard, especially for the regimental commander, who was overwhelmed by the sense of responsibility and importance of the task. He feared a break in the front and relief only came with dawn.

The brigade order demanded that the Nowogród Regiment carry out a difficult task, but it should not be thought that the order was to be taken literally. The regimental commander knew that the 2nd Brigade:

Will be operating in the more important sector – where the battle would be decided – and that the Nowogród regiment was on a secondary sector.

At around 05:00 Major Oziewicz summoned the battalion commanders and acquainted them with the task, after which he issued orders: The 1st Battalion was to set out from its positions near Kozłówek (a group of houses north-east of Nadma) and advance towards the left edge of Janków Nowy and then towards Ciemne. The 3rd Battalion was to aim also towards Janków Nowy and then towards Height 98. After capturing those points, the Mińsk Regiment was to lead the further assault. The 2nd Nowogród Battalion was to remain in reserve at Czarna Stara House.

Colonel Jaźwiński (11th ID) had so far depended somewhat on General Rządkowski (1st Lit-Bel) for guidance. General Żeligowski's contact with the command of the 11th Division was more than loose, and moreover no special orders were received by the 11th Division. General Żeligowski took no interest in that division's activities, and there is a complete lack of information in that regard. He does not mention anything about it in his account either. The 48th Regiment's cooperation with the units of the 10th Division was directly agreed between the commands of the 48th BRR and the 19th IB, and the 11th Division command found out about that after the fact.

The situation for Colonel Jaźwiński was not great. He had no communication with the 48th Regiment and did not know what it was doing, so obviously could not give it orders. The 46th Regiment could not be counted on, as it was still living under the threat of disgraceful disbandment and it remained in the second line positions between the regiments of the Lit-Bel Division. Only the 47th Regiment was unreservedly subordinate to him, but, as we have seen, it maintained its section of the line without the help and influence of the divisional command.

It is probable that General Rządkowski, in preparing the attack for 15 August, communicated with Colonel Jaźwiński on the matter, although we have no information about this in the files. We conclude from the eventual execution that Colonel Jaźwiński's task was to hold the sectors [of the second line] entrusted to the 11th Division. We can also assume that in the course of the Lit-Bel Division's attack that he was also to hold their positions in the second line with the 46th BRR and one and a half battalions of the 47th BRR, but we have no evidence of that. Nowhere is there any information about tasks for the 46th Regiment, which was to be disbanded. It was not until the morning of 15 August (in the course of the attack) that that regiment was handed over to the 2nd Brigade's commander, who ordered it to man the second line.

So we are convinced that the role of the 11th Division's command at Radzymin had effectively ended. However, it had to continue to inform the Army and other commands about the situation, for the simple reason that Warsaw had the best connection with Marki through the 11th Division, and so it was no wonder that explanations were often requested. Interesting conversations then ensued. One such example is the conversation between Colonel Jaźwiński and General Minkiewicz at 21:00 on 14 August. Colonel Jaźwiński, when asked about the position in the Słupno area, replied:

The situation is as follows: yesterday a Bolshevik detachment of some sort got through a gap in the section of the 46th Regiment in the direction of Wólka Radzymińska, which at the present moment is throwing itself in various directions, probably looking for a way out – action ordered.



In this serious moment of drama being played out near Warsaw it is hard not wonder at the ridiculousness of such a depiction of the situation. The rest of the conversation was no better. General Minkiewicz then asked:

Do you already have communication with the 10th Division?

Yes, it is already marching.

Finally, when asked about the location of the 48th BRR, the division commander reported:

The 48th Regiment, having lost communication with the 46th Regiment, fortified itself as far as possible from the east, withdrew the southern batteries to the road, holding the whole section – the attacks were repulsed.

This news probably did not reassure the Army, as another conversation on the matter was held. The Army chief of staff, Lt-Colonel Bobicki, then spoke with the division chief of staff, Lt-Colonel Kohutnicki. Bobicki demanded to know the position of the 48th Regiment, to which he received this reply:

In the sector of the 48th Regiment all is quiet at present. The 47th regiment has repelled the attacks, and in the sector of the 46th regiment, I have only just learned that the attacks on the right wing have been deflected.

However, the Army chief of staff once again asked what positions the 48th regiment was occupying and then Kohutnicki reported:

The same as before, that is, the first defensive line ... there is no more information for me to tell you, and if there is anything more serious, I will report it.

In the ensuing conversation, Lt-Colonel Bobicki demanded information about the situation in the Nieporęt area, which Lt-Colonel Kohutnicki was unable to provide. The conversation went:

(B). What is happening in Nieporęt?

(K). I don't know anything about Nieporęt.

(B). Do you have communication with the 48th IR?

(K). There is no communication with the 48th IR.

(B). And what have you ordered to get it established?

(K). Horse patrols and foot patrols have been sent. In the evening we have come to the conclusion that the situation of the 48th IR has not changed.

(B). According to the Front, the enemy is near Nieporęt. If the 48th IR is there, that is impossible. The situation of the 48th IR should be clarified immediately and reported.

(K). I repeat that horse patrols and foot patrols were sent and the response was always that the situation has not changed – only, what I have now learned for the second time, that the 46th IR and 47th IR have deflected a Bolshevik attack. It is, however, necessary to launch the 10th Division as soon as possible.

(B) At what time were these patrols to the 48th IR?

(K). As I was leaving from the 46th IR, that is in the evening of the 14th.

(B). At what time?

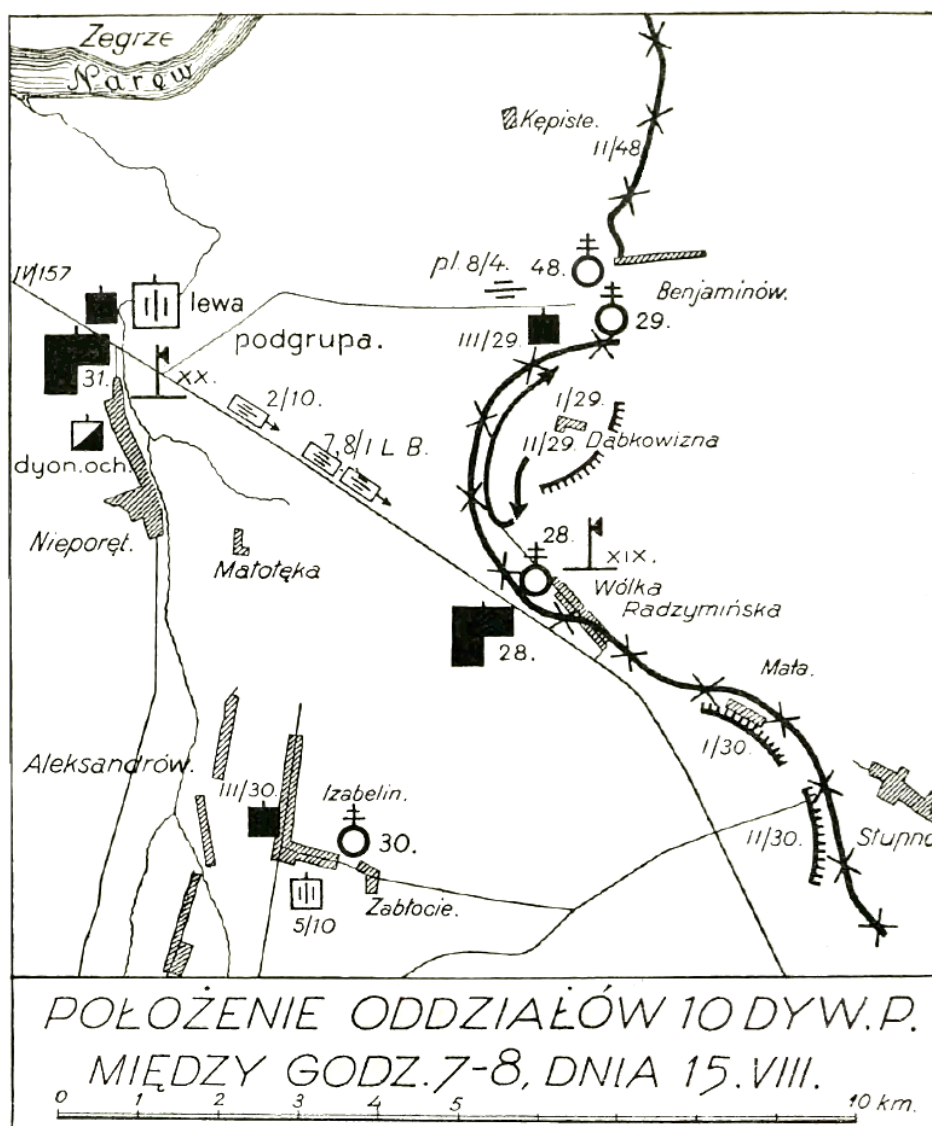
(K). I don't remember exactly, around 18:00 or 19:00.

(B). You have to send more immediately – send immediately – send immediately, because the situation may have changed since then.

From this we can see that the 11th Division HQ was not well informed of the situation and had insufficient knowledge of its own units. As a result of pressure from the Army, the division sent the 2nd *Divizion* of the



4th HRR at 03:00 on 15 August with the task of “establishing contact with the 48th BRR and investigating the situation in the area of Wólka Radzyńska – Izabelin.”



Sketch 64: Positions of the 10th ID between 07:00 and 08:00 on 15 August

From 05:00 on 15 August the units of the 1st Lit-Bel Division occupied their starting positions for the assault, awaiting the order to move out. Although the divisional and brigade orders stipulated the time to begin the advance, departure was ultimately made dependent on contact being made with the 10th Division units. In view of this, the 20-minute artillery fire preparation did not take place as ordered and instead, between 05:00 and 07:00 the artillery fired several times, with varying intensity.

In view of the tasks ahead, the Lit-Bel Division staff prepared accordingly. General Rządkowski, with his orderlies and the chief of the Operations Branch, Lieutenant Gadowski, left for the battle line (the Pustelnik –Radzymin road), where he would be based throughout the action, while the Chief of Staff and the rest of the officers remained in Marki, the location of the division HQ. It was to maintain communication with the 10th Division (with General Żeligowski) and the Army. News would be passed through the command of the 2nd Brigade to General Rządkowski.

Before leaving Marki, General Rządkowski received messages from the 10th Division and the 2nd Brigade, which were recorded in the so-called “daily notes” of the staff officers, allowing us to follow the development of events. At 04:50 news was received from General Żeligowski, saying that he had:



One regiment in reserve in the area of Kąty, while two regiments are approaching Wólka Radzymińska and will attack as soon they get there. He is transferring the division's HQ to Nieporęt.

This was an important report, showing that the 10th Division would soon enter battle in the Wólka Radzymińska area. The 10th Division's plan of action, which had been known in general outlines on the evening of 14 August, was becoming increasingly clear.

Soon the division staff received reports from the 2nd Brigade indicating enemy movement in the vicinity of Wólka Radzymińska. At 05:30 Lt-Colonel Rybicki reported, that:

A considerable enemy force is moving from Wólka Radzymińska towards Izabelin. He [Rybicki] asks for a battalion from the reserve to eliminate it.

It can be assumed that the commander of the 2nd Brigade, absorbed by the thought of an assault, did not want to involve his forces, prepared for that assault, in secondary tasks. The divisional staff officer receiving it noted:

There is no such battalion, so the Chief of Staff issues an order that at least the artillery should fire on Wólka Radzymińska. The Chief of Staff asks that Colonel Szpręglewski fire his artillery.

A dozen or so minutes later the command of the 2nd Brigade delivered more news. At 05:50 at the divisional HQ in Marki it was noted:

Lt. Col. Rybicki – the enemy has occupied Nieporęt, then Aleksandrów. Czuczelowicz retreated to Rembelszczyzna. The mounted outposts of some of the regiment have retreated. The Bolsheviks are strongly attacking the left wing of the fortifications, and the Wilno Regiment reports that strong columns are advancing from Radzymin in the direction of Wólka Radzymińska.

At this time General Rządkowski left for the 2nd Brigade. The division's chief of staff held further talks with the Army and the 10th Division, and the news received was forwarded in writing or by phone by the 2nd Brigade to the general. Meanwhile, he passed on news from the battle line to his neighbours and the Army, such as the news we have just mentioned from the 2nd Brigade. At 07:00 Captain Perkowicz received news from the Chief of Staff of the 10th Division, who reported:

The 28th and 29th IRs will carry out an action in the direction of Mokre from the Nieporęt area. As Aleksandrów and Izabelin are occupied by the enemy, the 30th IR is to hit those villages from the Kąty Węgierskie area and, after pushing them out, will advance to Radzymin. The 201st LHR is clearing the surrounding forests of any units.

At around 08:00 there was the conversation between Lt-Colonel Grabowski and Major Mysłowski, then with General Latinik and General Żeligowski. The decision was then made to temporarily halt the advance on Radzymin (General Latinik's words: "the order for the counter-attack on Radzymin is temporarily suspended"), with the Army commander demanding that the divisions (the 10th, the 1st Lit-Bel and the 11th) simultaneously carry out the attack. In view of this, he then said to General Żeligowski:

I would like to ask the Army command to inform me at what time the artillery is to prepare the attack and the units of neighbouring divisions are to move, so that I can inform General Rządkowski and Colonel Jaźwiński.

In response to this General Żeligowski replied:

As soon as it is finished in Wólka I will inform you at once. I was at General Rządkowski's yesterday, we agreed all the details, except for the time of the attack. As soon as the whole pocket is liquidated I will inform you at once, general.

The command of the 1st Lit-Bel Division was not notified of the halt in the advance of the 10th Division. Major Mysłowski, who at 08:45 spoke with the 1st Lit-Bel chief of staff, limited himself to reporting that

Dąbkowizna, to the east of Wólka Radzymińska, has been taken by the units of the 10th Division. The enemy is retreating.



Also at 08:45 a letter was also received from the 10th Division command, reporting that the enemy had attacked the right wing of the 28th Regiment in strength, which had retreated to Nieporęt. The letter ended with the following phrase: "The interaction of the left wing of the 19th ID is needed."

It was not until 09:00, as we shall see shortly, when the attack of the 1st Lit-Bel Division had fully developed, that General Żeligowski informed Marki (Lit-Bel HQ) that the advance of the 10th Division had been halted, and that a new time for the attack would be announced by General Żeligowski. This message was passed on in the afternoon to General Rządkowski, who was in the battle line.

So the joint action of the two divisions did not take place.

The initial situation of the 1st Lit-Bel Division before the attack on 15 August is shown in Map 7 (Appendix 3), which also shows the positions of the enemy. We can see that the 81st RB of the 27th Division escaped from the tangle prepared by the 10th Division and found itself between Wólka Radzyńska and Aleksandrów in front of the left wing of the 1st Lit-Bel Division, where it joined the 61st and 62nd RBs of the 21st Division, occupying the area of Słupno – Mata – Cegielnia. In front of the right flank was the 80th RB and the troops of the 2nd RD. We shall learn more details of the enemy's intentions and positions in Chapter XV.

The Second Brigade's Attack

The morning of 15 August found the troops of the 1st Lit-Bel Division at the ready. The day promised to be bright. As the morning mist receded from the foreground, terrain features in front of the second line positions became clearer. First the outlines of Słupno's buildings emerged – one could clearly see the windmill. Later the houses of Cegielnia stood out from the surroundings.

The Radzymin road divided the attack area of the 2nd Brigade. The eastern half had a wet meadow at the road's exit from the forest, making passage difficult, with mist still hovering over it here and there. Further on, the terrain became flat, bounded to the north by a large swathe of woodland stretching along to Ciemne, invisible from the second line.

The terrain to the left of the road just in front of the second position was also not very convenient for marching, with the result that the tank platoon would only deploy later for the assault and initially set off in column.

As it was getting light, one could see the chimneys of the brickworks, first of all those of Kronenberg – the one near the road, opposite Ciemne, and then others, sticking out from the right side of the road to Radzymin. In the distance, one could already see the towers of Radzymin church, silhouetted against the clear sky.

The Grodno Regiment had no clearly distinguishable objects on its axis of advance. In the distance, in front of the forest, could be seen the white walls and buildings of Aleksandrów Manor, where the 2nd and 3rd Battalions had fought the day before. On the road to Aleksandrów lay, transversely, the villages of Słupno and Cegielnia.

We noted previously that the 2nd Brigade reported to the division that the enemy was advancing in front of its left wing, and that the artillery was ordered to fire because of this. Indeed, there was some shelling of the Słupno area and between Słupno and Cegielnia, which did not last long but was relatively strong. An officer recounts:

Our artillery fired once more. Heavy shells rained down between my trenches and Słupno, throwing up whole mountains of sand and earth, covering the field with iron shrapnel. One of the shells fell right next to our trench and nearly buried my platoon. A crater more than 8 m in diameter and 3 m deep opened up. The soldiers jumped out of their trenches, cursing the gunners. However, the next shells fell further away, and we were able to sleep for an hour.

Between 05:30 and 07:00 the units of the 2nd Brigade remained on the second line, awaiting news of contact with the units of the 10th Division, in order to advance simultaneously with them. The 1st Grodno Battalion, the division's left wing, was to deliver the news. The commander of that battalion knew the



location of the division and his task on August 15, and indeed, having established communication with the 10th ID troops (Battalion 1/28), he sent off the news. The rest of the Grodno Regiment awaited the order to move out at their starting positions: the 3rd Battalion opposite the eastern edge of Mata, and 2nd Battalion opposite Słupno. The mood of the regiment was excellent. The commander of the 8th Company recalls

The soldiers were eager to attack. They were in a kind of frenzy. I had to use threats and persuasion to stop them.

Second-Lieutenant Paczowski's tank platoon was ready for action. At 05:00 it arrived in the vicinity of Height 101 and stood 70 metres away in a dip next to the road. Cadet Jurkiewicz, commander of the 1st Wilno Company, cleared the road of obstacles to make it easier for the tanks to set off.

The Wilno Regiment was also ready for the attack: three battalions were grouped in the forest near the road's exit, the soldiers eagerly awaiting the order to attack. Backpacks and coats were deposited in the forest, mostly from those soldiers who had arrived in the regiment the day before. (The infantrymen needed to be relieved of them, as the day promised to be hot.) The soldiers' mood was also influenced by the presence in the line of senior commanders and various guests who had arrived to watch.

General Rządkowski and his staff remained in the vicinity of Height 101, awaiting news from the left wing or from Marki (10th Division). The divisional units were also reporting readiness for action. On the height there were also officers of other commands and artillery observers. The commander of the Middle Artillery Subgroup, Colonel Aleksandrowicz, gave some orders to Lieutenant Tomaszewski, the commander of the 1st *Divizion* of the 1st Lit-Bel FAR which, the squadron commander recalls, contradicted the orders received from Colonel Rybicki. General Rządkowski intervened, after which Colonel Aleksandrowicz left and did not meet with the *divizion* commander again.

There were a lot of foreign officers on Height 101 and at the exit of the road, who were examining the foreground with binoculars with interest, pestering the commanders with questions and also eagerly awaiting the start of operations.

The sandy hill and the hills next to the road, from where the attack of the Wilno riflemen was to come, were covered with a pine forest with a lot of undergrowth, especially on the northern edge. Against the strong green of the forest, a few Frenchmen dressed in blue uniforms formed a colourful group, standing out among the grey mass of our soldiers. We do not know the names of all the officers, but we know that in the Radzymin area were: Lt-Colonel Eyraud, Lt-Colonel Mara (a tank commander), Major Boulanger and Captain Foglierini. In the course of operations, others arrived as well. In addition to the French, there were also English and Italians, although we do not have their names, except that we know that Captain Count Maoro Paolozzi, adjutant to the Italian General Romei, was there at some point.

As guests and staff gathered and the soldiers waited patiently, time passed. The sun was rising higher and higher, already warming up nicely.

At 07:10 the adjutant of the 2nd Brigade, Lieutenant Rojszyk, informed Major Rómmel that at 07:20 the Grodno Regiment was "going to attack Słupno". It was therefore requested that the artillery shell the village until 07:25. However, the launching of the attack was again delayed, for the umpteenth time.

At 07:45 the adjutant gave General Rządkowski news from Captain Perkowicz:

The 10th ID's chief of staff informed him at 07:00 that the 28th and 29th IRs were carrying out an action on Mokre from the Nieporęt area. The 30th IR is to strike in the direction of Radzymin after dispersing the enemy troops from the Izabelin – Aleksandrów area (1 km west of Izabelin). The 201st Light Horse Regiment was directed to the Fort Benjaminów area.

At the same time Lieutenant Rojszyk reported that at 07:30 he had spoken with Colonel Bejnar, commander of the 1st Brigade, from whom he received the news that he was attacking with the Nowogród regiment from Czarna Stara (House) towards Nowy and Stare Janków. After the capture of Stare Janków, further action on Radzymin was to be carried out by the Mińsk Regiment. Moreover, the brigade's adjutant added that the Grodno Regiment reported that the 28th Regiment, together with a company of the Grodno Regiment, had attacked Wólka Radzymińska, but were repulsed and Polish troops were now occupying the second defensive lines.



The news received probably reassured the division commander that this was a convenient moment to set off, and so the 2nd Brigade began to advance a little bit after the 1st Brigade. In front of the eyes of many spectators, the troops moved into the attack. The movements of the Wilno Regiment took place as if on exercise, arousing much admiration. "The sight was magnificent," recalled the artilleryman, 2nd-Lieutenant Pac-Pomarnacki. There was a brief preparatory fire from the artillery before the attack began.

After receiving the order, the 1st and 3rd Wilno Battalions advanced from the edge of the forest at the exit of the road and followed the road. Some difficulty was encountered on the way out, due to the necessity of avoiding the marshy meadows with moorland, located just off the road on both sides.

The 3rd Battalion set off from the right side of the road, having two companies in the first line (9th and 12th) and two in the second (10th and 11th). The 3rd MG Company marched together with the battalion. Initially, the battalion had no communication to the right, as the 46th Regiment stayed in its section of the second line, while the Nowogród Regiment was quite far away. But the battalion commander hoped to establish communication in the course of the assault.

At the same time the 1st Battalion set off, also formed in two lines: 1st and 2nd Companies in the first, with the 2nd Company placing with its right wing against the road. The other companies advanced in the second line: the 4th Company, using a ditch by the road, marched in a double column. The 1st MG Company remained in the second line.

The tank platoon followed the 1st Battalion in column and only after crossing the inconvenient terrain did it deploy for the attack, heading towards Słupno.

A moment after the battalions had developed their attack, which movement could be easily observed by the enemy on the open plain, the enemy infantry began a rather light fire. An enemy heavy battery also began firing and two shells struck accurately at the edge of the woods at the exit of the road. They did not do much damage, but frightened the spectators, too many of whom had gathered around Height 101. They moved to a safer place and several French officers followed the attack. The next eight enemy shots were fired near Pustelnik.

The attack of the Wilno Regiment progressed well. Soon the front battalions were followed by two companies of the 2nd Battalion, and then the others.

As the leading companies reached a distance of 200-300 metres from the line between Słupno and the southern edge of Ciemne Forest, enemy machine-guns sounded from around the eastern edge of Słupno. Enemy fire from the southern edge of Ciemne Forest was felt even more strongly. The tanks could not support the 3rd Battalion, as that exceeded the technical capabilities of their weapons. A liaison officer of the tank platoon was wounded near Słupno.

By this time the 1st Battalion had already used the 3rd Company in the first line, occupying the gap between the 1st and 2nd Companies. But even this was not enough and forced an order to be given for the 4th Company to accelerate its march and occupy the space between the 1st and 3rd Companies. Soon the 1st Battalion reached level with Słupno and headed towards Cegielnia, without encountering much resistance, although the enemy fire kept increasing. The enemy's 61st and 62nd RBs, which occupied the Słupno – Cegielnia – Wioska Radzyńska area, remembering the previous day's clash, had no desire to meet. It should be added that the 1st Battalion was supported by a tank platoon which left a left wing tank near Słupno due to a broken fan belt.

The 3rd Battalion had a more difficult task, as before approaching the southern edge of Ciemne Forest, it had to cross an area under heavy enemy fire. It also received, for the first time that day, several shells from its own artillery, which the soldiers ignored. The 12th Company marched quite slowly as it had inconvenient terrain to cross.

After approaching the forest, the battalion's commander, Captain Rapszewicz, ran to the leading 9th Company and roused it to an assault. The others then also moved. A participant recounts:

With an loud echo the cry rang out: "To bayonets. Hura!" We rushed forward in such a way that we soon saw the backs of the fleeing Bolsheviks flickering in the dust.



After a short battle, the enemy was driven back and it retreated towards Ciemne. However, the clash inflicted heavy losses on the 9th Company: its commander, Cadet Lachowicz, was killed, and more than a dozen men were killed or wounded.

After capturing Ciemne Forest, the 3rd Battalion now had two directions to face. On the one hand, it had to keep pace and advance at the level of the advance of the 1st Battalion which, as noted, had already reached Cegielnia and was advancing further north-east, but on the other hand it also had to fight off resistance from around Ciemne.

So the 3rd Battalion was split. Part of 2nd-Lieutenant Ordega's 10th Company and part of Cadet Cachel's 11th Company as well as the remainder of the 9th Company were directed to attack the western edge of Ciemne. From there, after throwing out the enemy, they were to advance towards Radzymin. Meanwhile 2nd-Lieutenant Kowalewski, commander of the 10th Company, advanced along the road towards Radzymin with a handful of men. Encountering the enemy to the right of the road, he took up positions in the pits behind the brickworks. He was soon followed by 2nd-Lieutenant Cikowski, commander of the 11th Company, with a dozen men.

Around 08:45-09:00 the attack of the Wilno Regiment encountered strong resistance on both wings. The 1st Battalion, after capturing Cegielnia (the 1st Company took about 70 prisoners) and advancing south-east of the village, came under heavy fire on its left flank from the direction of Aleksandrów and the southern edge of Radzymin. The battalion's offensive was now supported by only three tanks, as the tank of the left section's commander had stopped near Cegielnia – the tank's gun had blown up and the commander was wounded.

The enemy fire inflicted losses on the 1st Battalion, but did not stop it. When its companies reached the level of the cemetery (west of Wioska Radzyminska), the enemy appeared from the Aleksandrów area and, moving in front of the 1st Battalion, retreated towards Radzymin. Cadet Chmura from the 2nd Company ran up to one of the tanks and, knocking on the turret, tried to draw the crew's attention to direct their fire to the left wing. However he was wounded doing so.

The 1st Battalion's rifle line, with its wing threatened and under heavy fire from Radzymin, hesitated. The battalion's adjutant, 2nd-Lieutenant Parfjanowicz, went to the wounded Cadet Chmura, familiarised himself with the situation, then ran to the central 3rd Company and roused it to advance. But only a few minutes had passed when he too was wounded. The company was now led by Cadet Bułharowski, but he was soon shot in the chest.

However, the 1st Battalion's assault was successful. The enemy ceased its resistance and left the southern edge of the town. The 2nd Company of Cadet Felczykowski followed them through the streets, taking several cavalry prisoner along the way. The townspeople, ignoring the fire, came out of their houses and cellars and greeted the soldiers joyfully. Soon the company reached the market square. The tanks, only one of which was still fully operational, also advanced along the same road. They placed themselves on the road in the southern part of Radzymin.

The 1st, 3rd and 4th Companies, along with the battalion commander moved along the western edge of Radzymin and stopped on the road leading from the town to Radzymin Kościelny.⁷¹ Here the commander ordered the men to stop and fortify themselves in their positions: the 1st Company was to man a group of houses lying to the left of the battalion, and to establish communication with the troops of the Grodno Regiment, who were just approaching. The 2nd Company halted at the northern edge of town and settled in a ditch.

It was 10:00 when the Wilno battalion captured Radzymin. The brigade command had ordered that after the capture of Radzymin the Wilno Regiment was to wait until the Grodno Regiment reached the designated area (letter R on the German map), after which the regiments were to establish communication with the units of the 10th Division and the 1st Brigade and then proceed to further advance in order to retake the first line positions. Due to this, the commander of the Wilno Regiment ordered the 1st Battalion to hold in place and await further orders.

⁷¹ A group of houses by the Radzymin – Siwek road, 500 metres to the west of the town as it was in 1920.



Radzymin was secured with one company to the north, while the eastern edge of the town and Wioska Radzyńska was not held by anyone. Only a small detachment of the 3rd Battalion with 2nd-Lieutenants Kowalewski and Cikowski arrived in that area. So enemy patrols, despite the town's occupation by the Poles, could enter Radzymin from the east and north-east without hindrance.

When the 1st Battalion occupied Radzymin, significant fighting was still taking place near Ciemne. The 3rd Battalion, thrown by Captain Rapszewicz into an assault on the village, faced units of the 80th RB and the 2nd RD. But the assault failed as, after advancing on the plain in front of the village, the companies came under a murderous machine-gun fire. Cadet Cachel of the 11th Company was killed, 2nd-Lieutenant Ordega and many privates were wounded.

The companies retreated to the edge of the forest, and here the battalion commander, having no other officers, had to organise the companies by himself. At this time the 12th Company reached the battalion's right wing, which was along at the edge of the forest, held by enemy fire from Ciemne.

The battalion commander asked the regimental commander to send:

... at least one company to its right wing, as the Bolsheviks are holding on in the villages of Kraszew and Wiktorów, and are flanking the right wing.

Major Bobiatyński directed the 6th Company to the 3rd Battalion. Soon, however, the 5th and 7th Companies and their battalion commander, Lieutenant Orzechowski, also arrived in the vicinity of Height 94, where Captain Rapszewicz remained with the remnants of the 9th Company.

Having received the order to attack, the Grodno Regiment had advanced at the moment when the front of the Wilno Regiment was reaching Słupno.

Lieutenant Ciechanowicz's 2nd Battalion advanced along the road to Słupno, with the 7th and 8th Companies in the first line and the 5th and 6th Companies in the second line, in an echelon to the left. The battalion commander advanced beside the 6th Company, marching along the road to Słupno.

The 2nd Battalion quickly reached Słupno without hindrance. The enemy left the village and some enemy soldiers were taken prisoner by the population of the village, armed with rifles taken from their captives. In Słupno the 2nd Battalion stopped for a while. The regimental commander and technical company arrived.

Not long afterwards the 2nd Battalion moved off again, heading towards the western edge of Cegielnia. There was communication with the Wilno Regiment to the right, but none to the left, as the 3rd Battalion had set off a little later. It is likely that the 3rd Battalion had waited for some time for movement by the 10th Division troops, as they had been told that they would be developing operations to its left.

The advance of the 2nd Battalion towards Cegielnia went well. In the ranks of the attacking troops was an unknown sapper officer, who took off his jacket, as it was hot, and rushed forward alone with his rifle. The riflemen of the Grodno Regiment did not lack zeal either. Around 09:00 the 2nd Battalion occupied the western edge of Cegielnia, where 11 prisoners from the 185th RR of the Russian 21st RD were taken.

Having taken the village, the 2nd Battalion made a further move to the north-east. Now some machine-gun fire was heard from the left wing and from around Aleksandrów. It was the enemy, as the 3rd Battalion had not yet reached the level of the 2nd Battalion. At 09:20, 2nd-Lieutenant Pełka reported to the battalion commander:

Cegielnia occupied. Our left wing in the air. Bolshevik riflemen are firing on our left flank.

In view of this, he asked that his left wing be secured. Pełka, leading the front companies, communicated with the commander of the 7th Company, 2nd-Lieutenant Kuferski, who then turned his front towards Aleksandrów. The 5th Company, marching in the second line, in an echelon to the left, was also approaching that way.

But the enemy resistance in the Aleksandrów area did not last long. After a short exchange of shots, the enemy retreated to the north-east and clashed with the Wilno Regiment on the way. The 2nd Battalion, continuing its assault, reached the Radzymin – Siwek road and stopped there, as the 3rd Battalion had not



yet arrived. In that area a new enemy unit was encountered, which had advanced from the north and intended to attack. Despite this the enemy infantry stayed beyond the road. There was no clash with the 2nd Battalion. The enemy retreated towards Mokre.

The 2nd Battalion, now having quiet in front of it, took up positions, establishing communication to the right with the 1st Wilno Battalion.

Soon the 3rd Battalion arrived and extended the 2nd Battalion's line to the left along the road up to Height 95. The 1st Battalion arrived in Aleksandrów.

The Grodno Regiment remained in this formation for a long time. It had almost fulfilled its ordered task, as it was in an area a kilometre north of Radzymin (letter R on the German map), where it was to organise itself and establish contact with the units of the 10th Division. The 3rd Battalion tried to advance by the forest towards Mokre, but was rebuffed.

No units of 10th Division were visible and it was only in the afternoon that the first lines of the Border Rifles were seen, approaching Aleksandrów from the direction of Wólka Radzyńska (see Maps 7 and 8 in Appendix 3).

After the attack had been launched, Lt-Colonel Rybicki, having left his staff in Pustelnik, followed the regiments along the road. At the junction of that road with the one from Słupno he stopped near a cross, taking his observation point there. Telephone communication was established from that point with his 2nd Brigade HQ in Pustelnik.

The initial course of the assault indicated that the 2nd Brigade would achieve complete success. It was hoped that the neighbouring units of the 28th Regiment to the left would co-operate. This is evidenced by the 2nd Brigade's reports, which emphasised that the Grodno Regiment was in communication with it. Lieutenant Gadomski, chief of the division's operational unit (he arrived with General Rządkowski at the observation post of the 2nd Brigade), also noted at 08:05 to the chief of staff in Marki in a written report:

The action along the road to Radzymin is progressing and our units are reaching a forest parcel to the north-west of Janków Nowy. Communication with the units of the 10th Infantry Division in the area of Wólka Radzyńska is maintained.

At 10:00 Lt-Colonel Rybicki read the report of the commander of the 1st Brigade of 07:50, addressed to the division commander, in which Colonel Bejnar reported on the start of the assault at 06:30, noting that the enemy's resistance was weak on the "left wing". The earlier departure of the 1st Brigade and the weak resistance on its left wing allowed one to assume that the main assault on Radzymin was sufficiently secured from the east. At 10:00 Rybicki wrote to Bejnar that:

The Wilno Regiment is reaching Radzymin. Communication maintained with 1/28 on the left. The enemy, resisting, is retreating to the north.

Messages received were also sent to the brigade headquarters in Pustelnik, which reported to the division command. At 09:50 it sent :

Action in progress. The enemy is putting up fierce resistance. Upon leaving, he groups in the woods near Aleksandrów. Heights 92 and 98 are in the hand of the enemy.

Rybicki was, of course, also reporting verbally directly to the division commander, who was at the observation post.

In the course of these events, the guns of the 1st *Divizion* of the 1st Lit-Bel FAR, in accordance with Lt-Colonel Rybicki's orders, prepared to move forward. Already by 08:00 the 1st Battery had galloped to a new position near the eastern edge of Słupno. The observation point was a windmill in Słupno. The 2nd Battery also moved to a position from the previous day, while the 3rd Battery remained in the second line, having an observation point in a tree at the exit of the road. In the course of the attack, this battery also moved an observation post to the vicinity of Janków Nowy. The *divizion* commander, Lieutenant Tomaszewski, moved his vantage point to the 2nd Brigade's observation point, where the *divizion's* liaison officer was



immediately sent and communications with the batteries were established. Battery A/75 also moved its observation post to be positioned next to the 2nd Brigade commander's post.

Now the division commander turned his attention to the rest of the artillery, wanting to bring the remaining batteries of the Middle Subgroup forward. It turned out that Colonel Aleksandrowicz had not ordered the batteries to move to new positions, and as a result the advanced infantry were deprived of artillery support. That forced General Rządkowski to personally order the batteries to march out from their old positions at 09:00. But it should be noted that, apart from two batteries of the 1st *Divizion*, no other batteries moved before noon into positions in front of the second defensive line. We do not even have any traces of an intention to move the observation points forward. For this reason, the co-operation between the artillery and infantry on 15 August would fail. It should be added that there was now a shortage of ammunition for the heavy guns. At 10:20, Colonel Aleksandrowicz had that reported to Colonel Szpręglewski, noting at the same time that:

There is a shortage of ammunition at the decisive moment of the battle.

At 10:00 the brigade received news that the Wilno Regiment had taken Radzymin and by 10:20 the Chief of Staff sent a despatch from Marki, detailing the results so far. He reported that the southern part of Radzymin had been taken "after a bloody fight". Half an hour later, the 10th Division's liaison officer in Marki relayed this news by Hughes to the division command. So far the news of the results of the assault had been favourable. But soon after, between 10:00 and 11:00, news arrived that the Wilno Regiment had encountered strong resistance near Ciemne and had used up its reserve in the battle for that village. No communication was established with the Nowogród Regiment. The division commander also had no news from the 1st Brigade and only the sounds of battle indicated that it had not progressed as far.

Perhaps the greatest surprise was the news that the troops of the 10th Division had not taken part in the assault up to this point. Between 09:00 and 11:00 the Chief of Staff, Captain Perkowicz, sent General Rządkowski a message in which he announced:

General Żeligowski's units have occupied Dąbkowizna and Wólka Radzyńska after a battle. General Żeligowski (in his own words) will proceed to further action after arranging his troops on the line of German trenches and establishing communication with the 1st L-B Division. The direction of the 10th Division's attack: 48th IR to Ruda, one brigade of the 10th Division to Mokre, the second brigade of the 10th Division to Radzymin.

General Żeligowski will inform about the start for the new attack and asks for the simultaneous action of the 1st Lit-Bel Division.

This ended the offensive by the 1st Lit-Bel Division, as its further actions should be described more as anticipating the development of its neighbours' actions. It should be remembered that the 1st Lit-Bel Division, when organising the attack, did not leave any reserves. Although the 46th BRR was handed over to Lt-Colonel Rybicki in the morning, the orders arrived rather late and it was not until around 11:00 that the regiment's commander reported to the 2nd Brigade commander. That regiment had 15 officers and 712 privates in its fighting strength, so it was more numerous than an average regiment of the Lit-Bel Division, but it could not be relied on, as it was worn out by the previous battles – and besides, even the regiment's command itself reported at the time that the regiment's morale was bad.

Lt-Colonel Rybicki ordered the 46th Regiment to advance two companies in the direction of Radzymin (along the road), while the rest of the regiment was to hold second line positions. General Rządkowski's order, however, left out the 54th Regiment's march company (Pustelnik).

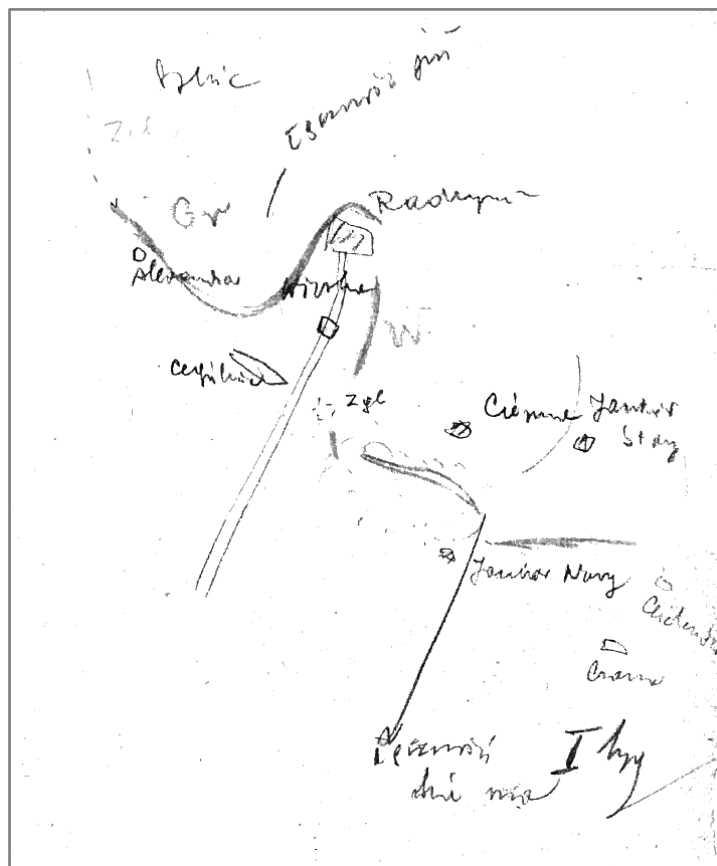
At 11:45 Lieutenant Gadomski reported the situation in writing to the Chief of Staff, attaching a sketch to the report. He reported that.

The Grodno Regiment has reached Aleksandrów and is advancing. The Wilno Regiment is in Radzymin.

The 1st Brigade has reached Janków Nowy and encountered resistance on (Height) 98.



Detailed reports from the 1st Brigade are lacking. The enemy is probably in Zimne (Ciemne). So far 30 prisoners have been taken from the 184th and 15 from the 185th (21st RD). The enemy is putting up fierce resistance.



Sketch by Lieutenant Gadomski of the location of the 1st Lit-Bel Division at 11:45

The news received from Lieutenant Gadomski, and other reports sent later, were included by the division chief of staff in a situation report, communicating the following to the Army command:

Aleksandrów and Radzymin are occupied by troops of the 1st L-B Division. The enemy is retreating to the north-east, putting up strong resistance, especially in the Ciemne area. Communication with the 10th ID, which is approaching Mokre, as well as with the 47th (11th ID) in the area of Czarna Nowa is maintained. The action is progressing successfully. About 100 prisoners of war of the 184th, 185th, 186th and 241st RRs and some MGs have been taken.

Detailed reports will be sent soonest.

The same report was given in summary by the 10th Division's liaison officer to Jabłonna.

Between 11:00 and 12:00 the 2nd Brigade commander tried to clarify the position on the right wing, but in the end had to give up the initiative and demanded only that the brigade hold its positions. Rybicki later recalled it this way:

The insufficient number of infantry, and the lack of reserves did not give me the opportunity to move forward. From 12:00 a period of mutual harassment by artillery fire began.

It should be noted that he was still counting on the development of the 1st Brigade's attack, so Rybicki headed in the direction of the Nowogród Regiment, but he did not manage to reach it. Having returned to the road, the commander of the 2nd Brigade reported verbally to General Rządowski his view of the situation. He mentions it in these words:



I presented to the general, the commander of the 19th ID, the lack of movement of the 1st Brigade. I pointed out that due to the lack of co-ordination in the division the effort of the 2nd Brigade might also be in vain on 15 August.

It is very possible that this caused General Rządkowski to send Captain Morawski, the division's staff officer, to the commander of the 1st Brigade. However, we know that the position in which the 1st Lit-Bel Division found itself was caused mainly by the halt in the advance of the 10th ID.

Fighting at Ciemne, Loss of Radzymin

After the assault of the 3rd Wilno Battalion on Ciemne, which was rejected with considerable losses, three companies of the 2nd Battalion arrived in the vicinity of the hill. One of them, the 6th Company, was put under the orders of Captain Rapszewicz.

Now the enemy occupying Ciemne began to act in an offensive manner, threatening to cut the road near the Kronenberg brickyard at any time. In order to counteract this a cannon of the 2nd Battery, with 2nd-Lieutenant Szymański, was sent. Second-Lieutenant Turczyński, who had just reached Height 94 with the 7th Company, recalls that it "very nicely and boldly" took up a position on the north-western tip of the forest around the forester's lodge, and immediately fired on the enemy advancing from Ciemne. The enemy stopped, then turned back and the gun then returned to the battery, while 2nd-Lieutenant Szymanski remained on the roof of the lodge and continued to direct the fire at Ciemne.

The recently arriving companies of the 2nd Battalion took up positions: the 7th Company took up a section to the right of the brickyard, facing Ciemne; the 6th Company was to the left of it; and the 5th Company took up positions on the edge of the forest. To the right, quite some distance from the 5th Company was the rest of the 11th Company and even further away, on the edge of the forest, was the 12th Company. The 9th Company was kept by the battalion commander at his side around Height 94. The 8th Company still remained in reserve near the cross next to the division commander's observation post.

At about 10:30 the 3rd Battalion commander ordered the 6th Company to attack Ciemne.

Without thinking much about it, the commander of the 6th Company immediately picked up his soldiers from their positions near the brickyard and, under heavy enemy fire, launched an attack towards the western edge of Ciemne. But it was a negligible handful in the face of the enemy forces concentrated in the village and on the road from Ciemne to Radzymin. The officers who watched the action called it downright "madness".

A few minutes after the soldiers had rushed off the company came under a murderous fire from machine-guns. It halted the attacker and then the enemy, taking advantage of its superiority, moved with all its might to counter-attack.

The moment was critical. The remains of the 6th Company, retreating towards the positions of the 7th Company, prevented that company from opening fire, and were followed by dense enemy battalions. No help was to be seen from anywhere.

Fortunately, the 5th Company, occupying a flanking position to the now attacking enemy, greeted it with heavy fire, forcing it to cease the pursuit and retreat. However, it was not without losses. The commander of the 5th Company, 2nd-Lieutenant Witkowski, wanting to hold back the scattering soldiers, jumped out of the trench, but before he had advanced a dozen steps fell wounded. A dozen or so minutes later, 2nd-Lieutenant Waligóra took command of the company.

After withdrawing from the front lines, the 6th Company gathered in the sector of the 7th Company.

The commander of the 6th Company, 2nd-Lieutenant Puzinowski, made the following report on his attack:

In accordance with the order I carried out an assault on Ciemne. Under heavy fire I advanced to the village, which I attacked, but was repulsed by a counter-attack from an enemy infantry brigade, leaving 47 men on the battlefield.



I retreated to the 7th Company's position with 16 privates remaining from the entire company. To the right towards Ciemne, behind the hill, the Bolsheviks are grouping up to attack the gap between our battalion and Mińsk Regiment.

The soldiers set off very bravely, but, as a result of sending only a small force, the attack could not succeed.

After the attack on Ciemne was thrown back and the companies were put in order, that section was taken over by the commander of the 2nd Battalion, Lieutenant Orzechowski.

The commander of the 3rd Battalion, some of whose men were in Radzymin and the rest (almost without officers) to the right of the 2nd Battalion, was still thinking of resuming the action and to this end at 10:40 asked the regimental commander for the tanks to support his right wing, or for the 1st Battalion to attack the enemy, located on the road between Ciemne and Radzymin. The 2nd Battalion commander was concerned about the sounds of battle coming from the area of Janków Nowy. He also asked for the tanks to be sent and the 8th Company, reporting that:

On the right wing the situation is serious, the Bolsheviks are still attacking.

In Radzymin was the 2nd Company on the northern edge and about a platoon of soldiers with 2nd-Lieutenants Kowalewski and Cikowski on the north-eastern edge. The rest of the 1st Battalion (three companies) remained on the western edge of the town and on the road to Radzymin Kościelny. We have already noted that the 1st Battalion had not secured access to the town – and in fact did not know what was happening there.

This undoubtedly encouraged the enemy, who by this time had sorted itself out. Patrols penetrated unhindered into Radzymin from the east. At around 13:00 enemy units emerged from the small forests between Ciemne and Wiktorów and headed towards the southern edge of Radzymin and towards Wioska Radzyńska. Other troops entered the town from the north-eastern side.

The enemy, approaching the town from the east, did not encounter any resistance, as its movements were not observed. Only the soldiers with 2nd-Lieutenants Kowalewski and Cikowski fired at the enemy, but eventually, seeing that they would not be able to retreat along the road to the south, they left through the town and emerged onto the road at the location of the tank platoon.

The tank platoon commander recalls:

One of the gunners alerted me that he could see Cossacks. Indeed, lone horsemen could be seen in the gaps between the houses, racing towards the village of Ciemne or *vice versa* (to Radzymin). Soon single shots began to be fired in our direction, less frequent at first and then more so. I ordered the men to stop everything and wait for my signals.

The tanks stood ready on the road. Enemy was approaching from everywhere, appearing from behind houses and fences. A large group was seen in the direction of the church, marching straight towards the tanks. The platoon leader reports of this moment:

I thought at first that they were our men and were firing, but when they came closer (about 30 paces), I had no doubt that I was dealing with Bolsheviks. I raised my flag as the sign: 'Attention' and started shooting.

Soon the platoon commander gave the signal to retreat from Radzymin. Second Lieutenant Paczoski recalls:

At that moment I noticed that Platoon Leader Domagalski had opened the door and was giving desperate signs. Then got out, ran up to me and reported that he could not get the motor to move (as it turned out, there was water in the carburettor) and asked me to tow it. I approached his tank in reverse.

At that point the driver and gunner of the tank, Sergeant Domagalski and Gunner Oliwiecki:

... firing their guns to cover each other, hooked their tank to the commander's tank, setting it in motion, and then unhooked and tidied up everything and re-entered the tank.



The wounded 2nd-Lieutenant Kowalewski was then taken on one of the tanks and they moved along the road through Wioska to Cegielnia, where they stopped.

These incidents, or rather the shooting from them, drew the attention of the 1st Battalion, especially the 2nd Company. Its commander thought that it was Jews who were shooting from behind, so he sent two sections to the town to investigate the situation. It turned out, however, that it was the enemy. The 2nd Company, now threatened from all sides by enemy infantry and artillery, had to force its way through the town in order to get out unscathed.

The 3rd and 4th Companies, with the battalion commander, stayed at their posts a little longer. The shots being fired in the town caught their attention. Patrols were sent to there, which soon returned with a report that, "half of the 2nd Company have been taken prisoner and the rest have fled to the rear." On receiving this news, the companies began to retreat along the western edge of the town. The left wing company, which had the 8th Company of the Grodno Regiment to its left, remained where it was.

The commander of the 8th Company, 2nd-Lieutenant Pełka, had heard the shooting in the town, but seemed unconcerned, since at the suggestion of a sapper officer (name unknown, he had taken part in the Grodno Regiment's assault) he agreed to go into town with him.

When the officers arrived at the market square, a Jew ran up to them, shouting that there was an enemy in the town, and that they were right then in his garden. They did not believe him – the silence in the town contradicted it. The two officers walked further down the lane to the southern edge of Radzymin and here, unfortunately, they actually met the enemy. Having now no choice but to flee, they rushed between the buildings and gardens. During this run, the sapper officer was wounded. Pełka dragged him to a ditch, put a bandage on him, covered him with grass, and then ran on. As he ran out into the open field behind Radzymin, he saw a new danger – there were a dozen or so horsemen galloping around, intent on taking prisoners.

At this time the 3rd and 4th Companies, having snuck along the western edge of the town, were heading in the direction of Cegielnia. At one point a shout was heard: "Cavalry behind us!" and indeed a unit of cavalry was seen preparing to charge the 1st Battalion.

The sight and the shouting had such an effect that many of the soldiers panicked and dispersed, but some were held back by their officers and began to fire on the cavalry. A group of soldiers from the 1st Battalion defended 2nd-Lieutenant Pełka, who went to his unit.

The 1st Wilno Company of Cadet Jurkiewicz held its position for some time and then withdrew in the direction of Aleksandrów, as any retreat via Wioska Radzyńska was cut off.

Due to the loss of Radzymin and as a result of pressure from the front, the right wing of the Grodno Regiment was bent backwards, with its front towards Radzymin. The position of the regiment was precarious, as it was feared that the troops would not hold their positions. Lt-Colonel Waskiewicz, commander of the 1st Battalion, wrote to the commander of the 2nd Battalion, demanding he hold positions on the Rynia – Radzymin road. Lt-Colonel Waskiewicz noted:

The 3rd Battalion will take up positions to the left of you on the sandy hills. The 1st Battalion will leave to be the reserve at Aleksandrów Manor. Do not depart from your positions in any respect.

The enemy in Ciemne tried to cut off the way for those retreating from Radzymin. The situation was dangerous and it was feared at the time that the failure might take on greater proportions. Lt-Colonel Rybicki rushed to the battle line, but his horse was wounded. Major Bobiatyński also headed that way. The commander of the 1st Artillery *Divizion*, Lieutenant Tomaszewski, sent out a platoon of the 1st Battery with Cadet Henneberg. Fortunately, the fears proved to be misplaced, as the retreating troops were stopped by Captain Rapszewicz, who also positioned Lieutenant Daniuszewicz's 3rd MG Company on Height 94 to cover the retreat of the troops retiring from Radzymin. Other units, meanwhile, were holding the brickyard and the edge of Ciemne forest.

Soon the 1st Battery platoon arrived and took up an open position near Cegielnia, from where they fired at the enemy's rifle line attacking Cegielnia from the direction of Ciemne. After the enemy had been driven



back, the crew had to roll the cannons along the road, as the Russian fire made it impossible to bring up the limbers to the guns.

So the troops in Radzymin withdrew but the enemy's attempted assaults were repulsed. The course of the retreat and the positions taken are shown on Map 8 (Appendix 3).

The losses of the Wilno Regiment were severe, especially in officers. Nevertheless, the mood of the troops was good. After these events, part of the 3rd Battalion remained near Height 94, while the edge of the forest and the brickyard were held by the 2nd Battalion. The rest of the 3rd Battalion was to the right of the 2nd Battalion. The companies of the 1st Battalion halted to the left of Height 94 and in the fields between Cegielnia and Stupno but were unable to fight for a long time. The command of the 2nd Brigade informed Marki about the course of these events by a phonogram of 13:40. It reported that at 13:00 the 1st Wilno Battalion had been thrown out of Radzymin, and gave the regiment's latest position. The situation of the Grodno Regiment was given a little later.

Aviation in the Battle of Radzymin

General Żeligowski, preparing for the attack of 15 August, asked the Army for air support. The Army asked the chief of staff of the 10th Division at 12:00, "to indicate when the planes should be sent." An Army staff officer pointed out that

It would be desirable for them to go at the moment of the greatest intensity of the attack.

However, the 10th Division's staff was too far from the battle line and had too few details of the course of the battle to be able to provide useful information. So the chief of staff, Lt-Colonel Grabowski replied, evidently having aerial reconnaissance in mind:

I think that the aeroplanes should be sent immediately, as a study of the terrain and the grouping of enemy forces will provide us with the basis for further operations.

Army HQ soon sent the planes.

It is very likely that messages was received from somewhere, or that an earlier report from a combat flight of the 8th Squadron aircraft (pilot 2nd-Lieutenant Krzyczkowski, observer Lieutenant Menczak) was used. The task of that flight had been to carry out reconnaissance of the Radzymin area and it had taken off at 10:30 from Mokotów airport. The airmen stated:

Our troops are 1½ km in front of Radzymin on the Radzymin – Warsaw road. To the north-east of Radzymin there are cavalry in the rifle lines. North of Radzymin in the fields there are cavalry and wagons on their way east. General impression: Bolsheviks from Radzymin in retreat.

That aerial report, and other situational reports from the commanders, may have confirmed to the Army staff that while it was having the conversation with the Chief of Staff that it was then the most opportune time for the use of aviation.

Sometime in the afternoon (after 12:00) four planes of the 19th Fighter Squadron (led by 2nd-Lieutenants Mroczkowski, Bieniawski, Cadet Gutmajer and Platoon Leader Walerjańczyk) received the task of "cooperating in the counter-attack on Radzymin." Meanwhile two aircraft of the 9th Squadron were to bomb the enemy rear in Radzymin (pilots Cadet Perkowski and Sergeant Żuromski, observers 2nd-Lieutenant Bohuszewicz and Sergeant Godlewski).

At 12:40, three planes of the 19th Squadron took off. Five minutes later the fourth plane of that squadron set off and one of the 9th Squadron. At 12:55 the second aircraft of the 9th squadron left. So we see that the aviation entered the battle at a time when the fighting in the vicinity of Radzymin had died down, and it was not until about 13:00 that the action revived – but by then the Poles had been thrown out of the town.

The aircraft fired at several enemy groups, dispersing them. At 13:20-13:25 the planes of the 19th Squadron returned to Mokotów airfield. The planes of the 9th Squadron operated a little longer. They



bombed and shelled enemy wagons and troops in the vicinity of Roszczep and Radzymin. The airmen also collected some information about the enemy's positions, which they gave in their reports.

This is what the "cooperation in the counter-attack on Radzymin" of the 1st Army aviation looked like. We can see that the activity was large, for the conditions of the time, but not sufficiently effective, as a result of the failure to co-ordinate with the men fighting on the ground.

At 13:15 another plane took off from Mokotów with Major Pilot Abżóftowski and observer Lieutenant Boski, which flew the Radzymin – Niegów – Dąbrówka – Postoliska – Roszczep – Radzymin and, in the vicinity of Dąbrówka, threw bombs at the enemy wagons. They also found that Radzymin was empty. The flight returned at 14:30.

The 1st Brigade's Offensive

At about 07:00 on 15 August, the Nowogród Regiment moved to the attack, bringing the 1st and 3rd Battalions into action, with the 2nd Battalion in reserve. At the last minute, that battalion was also brought into action and subordinated to the commander of the 1st Battalion, which was to advance towards Janków Nowy. The 3rd Battalion was to advance from Czarna Stara House directly towards the north. A mortar platoon remained in positions at the house.

The 1st Battalion, with the 1st Company on the left wing and the 4th Company on the right wing, advanced from the river to the western edge of Janków Nowy. Encountering no particular resistance, as it had only the enemy's covering units to deal with, the battalion entered the village. On the other hand, the Polish artillery was a nuisance, as it shelled Janków Nowy and wounded the soldiers of the 1st MG Company and the 4th Company.

The 2nd Battalion with a right wing of the 6th Company (Cadet Prażmowski) and a left wing of the 5th Company (2nd-Lieutenant Zaklicki) seized the eastern edge of Janków Nowy. However, when its company wanted to head north from there it fell under heavy MG fire from Height 98. (At this time the battalion had only three companies. The battalion commander was unwell, and only the adjutant, Lieutenant Lityński, remained from the battalion staff.)

Meanwhile the attack of the 3rd Battalion was developing. On the left side of the Czarna – Ciemne road the 9th and 10th Companies advanced, supported by two machine-guns on the left wing and two machine-guns advancing along the road. The 11th Company (Cadet Fornalski) and the 12th Company (2nd-Lieutenant Rutkowski) advanced on the right. Two battalion machine-guns remained in the House at Czarna Stara.

Initially the assault of the 3rd Battalion went well, but in the end it was stopped by fire from Height 98 and the flanking fire from the direction of Helenów.

At 07:50 Colonel Bejnar reported from Czarna Stara House to the division commander:

The action of the 1st Brigade started at 06:30. Batn 1/Now has passed Janków Nowy and heading to Ciemne.

Bat 3/Now directed to Helenów has crossed the river. Batn 2/Now and Mińsk Reg in reserve.

Weak enemy resistance on the left wing.

Artillery contribution is weak. At Janków Nowy it shelled our own line. Strong MG fire from Height 98.

After capturing the western edge of Janków Nowy, the 1st Battalion advanced and reached the north-eastern edge of Ciemne Forest. Here it received an order from the regimental commander of 09:25, which stated:

Halt in the village of Janków Nowy, or to the west in the forest.

The Nowogród Regiment's attack was halted, and a firefight ensued across the line.

The 1st Brigade commander could see that the Nowogród Regiment would not break through the resistance and capture Height 98 without artillery assistance. He also stated that the 3rd Nowogród



Battalion was pinned by fire from the direction of Helenów and Czarna Nowy. In view of this, Colonel Bejnar ordered the commander of the Mińsk Regiment (in Ulasek) to order two companies to strike at Czarna Nowy. The left wing of the Nowogród Regiment was to continue to advance towards Ciemne.

Colonel Bejnar, having no subordinate artillery and not knowing who was meant to support him, sent his fire demands through the commander of Battalion 1/47. He requested

Artillery co-operation for the village of Helenów, then to Kraszew and the woods in the area of Kraszew and Janków Stary.

The commander of Battalion 1/47, on receiving this letter, demanded fire at the indicated points, but the artillery refused, saying that it had only 40 shells each for its own defence.

Colonel Bejnar then sent officers to find the *division* commander, who was to report to the brigade commander. The *division* commander was located, but refused the order, explaining that he had, "his own strict fire instructions."

Bejnar then sent a second order demanding support for the 1st Brigade's attack, emphasising that observers should at least be sent to the brigade's line. After issuing these orders, he hoped to receive artillery support, but it was also not forthcoming. At 09:00 Bejnar reported to the division commander, that "heavy fire from Height 98 and Helenów" had stopped the assault on the line of Janków Nowy – Czarna Stara. He indicated that "after the artillery fire, the attack will continue further". He also reported that two companies of the Mińsk Regiment had been sent.

The commander of Nowogród Regiment expected artillery support in front of the 2nd and 3rd Battalions and the co-operation of the Mińsk Companies. He also hoped that the attack of the 1st Battalion would relieve the other battalions. With that in mind, he wrote at 10:45 to the 1st Battalion commander, that if he could not advance from Janków Nowy due to the threat to his right wing, he would leave cover in that village ("at least" the 2nd Battalion) and move with the 1st Battalion through the Ciemne Forest towards Ciemne, "firing from the eastern edge of the forest" with machine-guns at Height 98. He was to occupy Ciemne and advance towards Janków Stary. Finally the regimental commander ordered communication to be established with the Wilno Regiment.

The 1st Battalion left the 2nd Battalion – 5th, 6th and 1st MG Companies – in Janków at the eastern end of the forest, and with the rest moved north. It established communication with the Wilno Regiment through their 12th Company, but received little news of the position near Radzymin.

However Colonel Bejnar now received news of the 2nd Brigade's capture of Radzymin. He issued orders demanding an intensification of the 1st Brigade's effort, notifying the Division Commander of that at 11:00. He reported that the 1st Battalion of the Nowogród Regiment was advancing from Janków Nowy to Ciemne, while the right wing battalion had not advanced. Finally, the brigade commander noted:

News was received of the occupation of the southern end of Radzymin by the 2nd Brigade. In view of this, six companies of the Mińsk IR have the task of a decisive assault along the Czarna – Helenów road towards Kraszew Dzielny and Wiktorów.

Soon some news about the position of the Wilno Regiment reached Czarna Stara House, as at 11:30 the commander of the Nowogród Regiment sent the 1st Battalion an order that read:

Advance as vigorously and quickly as possible towards Ziemne (Ciemne), as the Bolsheviks are attacking the right wing and rear of the Wilno Regiment. Pay no attention to losses.

Where are you now? You still have the 8th Company, it is under your orders.

At the end of this order, Major Oziewicz also added that six companies of the Mińsk Regiment were going to Helenów, Rżyska and Kraszew.

In the end the Nowogród Regiment could not overcome the resistance in the area of Height 98 (2nd and 3rd Battalions), nor could it launch an attack on Ciemne, as it was beyond the strength of the 1st Battalion – too much enemy resistance was encountered, forcing the assault to be abandoned. The firefight, which had not ceased, had already resulted in considerable losses. But one of the main reasons for the failure of the



attack by the weak forces of the Nowogród Regiment was the lack of artillery support which, when it fired at all, did so often at its own lines.

Meanwhile, in front of the left wing of Battalion 1/47, companies from the Mińsk Regiment entered the battle in succession. At 09:25 Colonel Bejnar had ordered the commander of Mińsk Regiment to send two companies along the railway to Czarna Nowy with the task of, “flanking with fire the enemy in Czarna,” whose strong fire had halted the Nowogród battalion heading for Helenów. The Mińsk Regiment commander entrusted that task to Lieutenant Łappo, instead of the battalion commander, giving him the 7th and 8th Companies.

Having received the task, Lieutenant Łappo set off north-east from the Ulasek area and soon reached the hill, stretching from the village of Czarna Stara to Height 109. At this point the companies crossed the entrenchments of Battalion 1/47 and set off to attack Czarna Nowa.

This attack failed. The enemy was garrisoning the forest, houses and villas in Czarna Nowa with considerable forces, and in view of this not only “disrespectfully”, as Lieutenant Łappo states, rejected the attack, but also counter-attacked. It should be noted that only 60 men were attacking at the time.

The soldiers, frightened by the sight of the Bolsheviks advancing *en masse*, flinched and it was difficult to push them to attack.

The 1st Battalion was then thrown into an attack, along with two companies of the 2nd Battalion. The whole action was now directed by Major Rutkiewicz, commander of the 1st Battalion. He directed the 3rd Company (2nd-Lieutenant Hepner) to the eastern end of Czarna Stara, from where he was to launch an assault on the right wing of the Nowogród Regiment. The 2nd Battalion was to resume the attack on Czarna Nowa, and finally the 1st Company advanced to the vicinity of Height 109. The 2nd and 4th Companies remained in reserve.

This assault too failed. The 3rd Company set off from the Czarna River heading north-east, but had barely run about 60 paces when, hit by heavy fire from the front and side, it had to turn back to the river. The 1st Company, supported by only one company of the 2nd Battalion, was also unsuccessful and retreated to the positions of Battalion 1/47. The right wing of the Nowogród Regiment suffered losses during this: the commander of the 3rd MG Company, Lieutenant Uhryniewicz, and the company commander, Cadet Fornalski, were wounded.

This was the end of the 1st Brigade’s fighting before noon. Colonel Bejnar abandoned further assaults and awaited new orders. The brigade’s section was generally calm – the break in operations, was used to replenish ammunition, take out the wounded and reorganise the units. Most of the soldiers rested.

The brigade commander sat down to dinner with his adjutant at Czarna Stara House. Captain Morawski, sent by General Rządkowski, arrived to inform Colonel Bejnar of the division’s position and make the 1st Brigade resume its advance. During his conversation with Colonel Bejnar, Major Oziewicz arrived and reported that the Polish heavy artillery had shelled his soldiers. Captain Morawski recalled the moment:

I then presented to the brigade commander the fortunate situation of the troops advancing on Radzymin, and expressed my conviction that it was advisable for the brigade to attack again in the direction indicated by the division.

The brigade commander indicated that he had tried to advance, but that the enemy had proved too strong for the assault to succeed.

The Nowogród Regiment has suffered losses from the fire of its own artillery, as you have heard from the regimental commander’s report. It is doubtful whether it will be able to renew the attack.

Break in the Action

We have seen that the assault of the Lit-Bel Division did not produce the expected results in the morning, while the 10th Division had not yet entered the battle. The position of the 1st Lit-Bel Division after the loss



of Radzymin and the repulsion of the attack from around Ciemne is shown in Map 8 (Appendix 3), which also gives the positions of the enemy.

In front of the division were the units of the 80th and 81st Rifle Brigades of the 27th Rifle Division, the 61st and 62nd RBs of the 21st RD, and the 4th and 5th RBs of the 2nd RD. Facing the 48th Regiment remained the 63rd RB. The 79th RB was marching towards Radzymin at the time. More details about the enemy will be given in the next chapter.

At this point there was calm on the battle line. The riflemen of the Lit-Bel Division lay in scrapes and rested after the hardships of the day. The fighting had exhausted the men, especially the young volunteers who, after a sleepless night, had gone straight into a battle which was their baptism of fire.

There was a firefight for a while, then it quietened down and only an occasional burst of shooting broke out. The sun was high in the sky and it was baking hot. The orderlies, carrying the wounded, and the soldiers, hauling cartridge packs, moved sluggishly and were over-heated. At the time the best place to be was in the Ciemne Forest, where the trees provided shelter from the scorching rays. But there was no peace there either, not only because the busy enemy threatened, but also when the Polish artillery occasionally made its presence felt.

The traffic in the rear revived. On the Radzymin road, which was the main artery of communication, there were many Polish and foreign officers arriving from Warsaw. Not only officers, but more and more frequently people in civilian clothes were seen at the HQs and observation posts. These were representatives of the government, members of the Sejm and reporters. No doubt this was a moment of close contact with the soldiers fighting near the capital, but of course the visitors could not reach the front lines of battle. General Jacyna recalls:

On 15 August it was very fashionable to take a trip from Warsaw to the Radzymin area – to the front.

Lieutenant Gadomski, in his account of the battle at Radzymin, states that on the afternoon of 15 August when:

General Rządkowski and the officers of the 1st Echelon were at the cross by the Radzymin – Marki road, 3 km south-west of Radzymin, various foreign missions arrived there in cars (French with General Henrys, English, Italians, Americans), and even ladies taking care of the soldiers, who insisted that they be allowed to go to the first line to distribute their gifts.

Obviously, such a group of cars and people soon attracted the fire of the Bolshevik artillery, and several rounds of shrapnel dispersed the whole gathering.

Only the French officers remained with us, following with interest the further course of the action.

Actions of the 19th Brigade and the 48th Infantry Regiment

After capturing Dąbkowizna and Wólka Radzymińska, the units of the 10th Division, on the orders of General Żeligowski, halted and remained in position until 11:00 (19th Brigade). The break in action was used to put the troops in order and collect them.

The 19th Brigade command received the 10th Division's order of 05:00, which incorporated the verbal orders given to date and gave the brigade the task of advancing towards Mokre, while the 20th Brigade, including the left wing of the 1st Lit-Bel Division, was to advance towards Radzymin, with one regiment to remain in the division's reserve.

The commander of the 19th Brigade, Lt-Colonel Thomme, had driven from Nieporęt to Wólka Radzymińska in the morning and remained there, awaiting further orders from General Żeligowski. He had no communication with the Lit-Bel HQ, but undoubtedly received some messages about the progress of that division's actions. There was no wire communication with the 10th Division until midday, as 2nd-Lieutenant Łączyński, the brigade's communications officer, was building a single-wire telephone line from Nieporęt to Wólka Radzymińska, which was completed around midday – but a lot of material was used, forcing the



single-wire telephone line linking Nieporęt directly to Jabłonna to be cut, and from then on the Nieporęt – Zegrze – Jabłonna connection was used. The Brigade also had no telephone connection with the 29th Regiment, so Thomme had to rely on foot and horse messengers. However, in matters of greater importance he tried to have personal communication with his subordinates.

The brigade commander, did not have good observation of the battlefield at Wólka Radzyńska, but the enemy's hasty retreat did not escape his attention. The readiness of the troops, and the conviction of the necessity to undertake a further assault, caused him to not wait any longer for General Żeligowski's orders, and between 10:00 and 11:00 he issued orders to set off on his own initiative. The orders did not differ in any way from the plans known to us so far, and continued on with the basic idea of the division's attack, except that they were issued on his own initiative. Lt-Colonel Thomme wrote this clearly in these words:

I have decided on my own, without any pressure or order whatsoever, which I categorically confirm, to head on to Mokre.

His intention was to take Mokre and the first line of positions. The brigade's units were to man: the 29th IR from Height 89 (east) to Ruda (exclusive) and the 28th Regiment from that hill to Mokre (inclusive). For this purpose the 29th IR was to set off from Fort Benjaminów, "through the woods in the direction of the 'R'", from where, together with the 28th IR, it was to attack Mokre. The 28th IR was to advance from Wólka Radzyńska to Aleksandrów and from there also in the direction of the 'R', while Battalion 1/29 was to advance from Dąbkowizna in the general direction of the assault, inside the brigade.

Thomme did not have time to draw up a detailed order of attack. He gave a verbal order in Wólka Radzyńska to Major Sobieszczak, commander of the 28th Regiment, and then, in order to discuss the task with the commanders of the 29th and 48th Regiments, he went with his adjutant to Fort Benjaminów.

At the fort the brigade commander had a 10 minute conversation with Colonel Łukoski, commander of the 48th BRR, and Major Walter. He agreed on co-operation with Łukoski, which was to be done by his regiment recapturing some of the first line positions near Ruda. Major Walter, commander of the 29th Regiment, was given the task we have just mentioned. Thomme proposed to Walter that he should remain on the spot and direct the regiment's attack from the fort, but the major replied that he preferred to go with his troops. These verbal orders were later given in written form. After they were issued, Thomme returned to Wólka Radzyńska.

So Thomme had secured the cooperation of his left-hand neighbour, but not with the right-hand one. In any case, he was counting on the actions of the 30th IR and the 1st Lit-Bel Division, given in the orders.

There were various other units gathered in the area of Wólka Radzyńska which were more or less connected with the 10th Division's assault. Above all there was a large number of cavalry gathered there: the 1st Squadron of the 201st LHR had come from Nieporęt and the 2nd Squadron of the 3rd HRR from Izabelin.

The 2nd Squadron of the 4th HRR had also arrived, which had been sent to establish communication with the 48th BRR. On its arrival at Wólka Radzyńska, it learned that communications had already been established with Fort Benjaminów. So Thomme ordered the squadron to undertake a search of the forests between Izabelin, Nieporęt and Wólka Radzyńska. That task was fulfilled, finding no-one, and at 11:30 Lieutenant Breza, replacing the squadron commander, reported from Nieporęt to the 11th Division the course of operations of the 10th ID during the morning. He added at the same time the following:

To maintain further communications between the 48th IR and the 11th ID HQ I am going to Wólka Radzyńska. I will act in that area according to the situation, having a liaison officer at 19th IB and at 19th ID.

The units remaining in Nieporęt were now leaving for their respective sectors: Battalion 4/157 left at noon on orders from the 7th Reserve Brigade for Zegrze; the Left Artillery Subgroup was preparing to march back



to its old positions; while the 1st Army Volunteer Cavalry *Divizion* departed for Benjaminów, for the time being having the task of maintaining communications between Zegrze and Benjaminów.

At this time the 19th IB had three artillery *divizioni* of artillery, admittedly split:

- The 3rd *Divizion* of the 4th FAR (Lieutenant Pilecki), whose 9th Battery was in position a kilometre east of Wólka Radzyńska (observation point Height 98), while the 8th Battery was near Benjaminów.
- The combined *divizion* (Captain Bartoszkiewicz), whose Battery 2/10 FAR was supporting the brigade from a position near Wólka Radzyńska, while Battery 5/10 remained with the 30th IR in Izabelin.
- The 3rd *Divizion* of the 1st Lit-Bel FAR (Captain Siedlecki), which had positions in the vicinity of Mata, with observation posts on Height 98.

So in the afternoon of 15 August quite a number of artillerymen were gathered on Height 98, as the *divizion* commanders joined the battery observers. The task of the artillery was to directly support the 19th Brigade.

Squadron 2/3 HRR was given the task of covering the artillery and between 12:00 and 13:00 moved to near Aleksandrów.

While Lt-Colonel Thomme was at Fort Benjaminów, General Żeligowski was travelling to Wólka Radzyńska. On the way he met the 31st Regiment, as it was marching from Nieporęt. Colonel Sikorski had ordered it to Wólka Radzyńska, with one battalion to stand near the 19th Brigade's command.

General Żeligowski also encountered Squadron 3/201 LHR, to which he gave the task of patrolling the forests north-west of Radzymin (between Benjaminów and Mokre) and possibly reaching Mokre. Żeligowski also gave the following order to the squadron commander:

There are a lot of Bolsheviks left in the forests Nieporęt – Wólka Radzyńska – Dąbrowa. Today the Gentleman's Regiment⁷² is to clear those forests. Our regiments have advanced everywhere.

In obedience to this order, the regiment sent its 2nd and 4th Squadrons from Nieporęt towards Pustelnik, which searched the woods until the evening, but encountered no one.

When General Żeligowski arrived at Wólka Radzyńska, the units of the 19th Brigade were on the move. However, the details of the action could only be given by Lt-Colonel Thomme, who left Fort Benjaminów to Wólka Radzyńska at 13:00. It was then that the brigade commander gave the general further details of his intention, noting that it was, "already in the process of being executed." However, he asked the over-cautious commander of the 30th IR to push vigorously towards Radzymin, and to quicken the march of the 31st IR and become the reserve of the 19th Brigade. Thomme adds the following details:

I reported to the Lt-General my impression that right then, i.e. at 13:00, when the 28th IR had already occupied Aleksandrów Manor and was advancing further to the north-east, the capture of Radzymin would not encounter great difficulties. In turn, it would enable me to quickly seize Mokre and perhaps Zawady.

General Żeligowski accepted my plan of action, but advised greater caution – he sensed a counter-attack from the Bolsheviks from Mokre and Radzymin – and communicated that of course the 1st Lit-Bel had not been successful, but that they had sorted themselves out. The general would order them to begin an immediate action in the general direction of Wiktorów – Kraszew; that he would give a categorical order to Major Jacynik to march on Radzymin ...

General Żeligowski indicated that the regiment would arrive near Radzymin by 15:30 at the latest. After a brief conversation with Thomme, Żeligowski left for Marki, and from there headed along the road towards Radzymin. At the intersection with the road from Słupno, he met General Rządkowski at the observation point.

⁷² This might be a reference to the fact that it was volunteers, so likely with quite a high number of richer folk.



March of the 28th Regiment to Aleksandrów

The 28th Regiment, which was in Wólka Radzyńska, received at 11:00 a verbal order from the brigade commander to march towards Aleksandrów (see above). On receipt the regimental commander ordered the 1st and 2nd Battalions to move in the ordered directions, while the 3rd Battalion was to remain, according to the regimental commander's account, in the brigade's reserve. However, after Battalion 3/31 arrived in Wólka Radzyńska, it followed the rest of the regiment to Aleksandrów. On his departure at 12:10 the commander of the 28th IR sent to the 29th IR commander a message:

The 28th IR is advancing from Wólka to Aleksandrów. Please support me.

At 13:00 the regiment was already on the move, and at 13:50 its commander urged on the 1st Battalion, demanding a vigorous advance towards Aleksandrów. Soon the that battalion, advancing without contact with the enemy, reached Height 98 and sent patrols in the direction of Aleksandrów. This was reported in writing to the commander of the 28th IR, along with a message from the 29th IR commander, timed 13:00, which it had just received. The commander of the 29th IR, Major Walter, reported:

The 29th IR is conducting an action to seize Mokre. To the left communication is maintained with the 48th BRR.

In this way the 1st and 2nd Battalions, without encountering any obstacles, reached Aleksandrów. At 15:15 the regimental commander ordered a further march in the direction of Mokre.

Meanwhile, after passing Aleksandrów, the 28th Regiment was shot at from the right, from the direction of Aleksandrów. The 7th and 8th Companies, advancing at the head of the battalion, spotted a detachment of Russian cavalry in the fields between Aleksandrów and Radzymin. Those companies turned west and, firing at the enemy, stopped at the edge of the forest. The regimental commander halted further movement of the 2nd Battalion, being convinced that in view of the threat from the east, any further advance towards Mokre must be cautious. The 1st Battalion also halted on his order and stood at the edge of the forest, one and a half kilometres north of Aleksandrów, where the 7th and 8th Companies were also located.

Taking advantage of the break in action, the battalion commander asked the regimental commander to send a kitchen and to allow him to give out lunch. Meanwhile the 5th and 6th Companies, together with the 4th MG Company, halted and dug in facing east of Aleksandrów, securing the right flank of the regiment.

The 3rd Battalion and the regiment's technical company were the last to arrive at Aleksandrów.

The regiment remained in these positions until 17:00 to 18:00 and did not take part in any action. It should be recalled that the 3rd Grodno Battalion was between Battalions 1/28 and 2/28, and to the right was the 2nd Grodno Battalion. The 1st Grodno Battalion remained in Aleksandrów.

Then the commander of the 28th Regiment received a report from the commander of Squadron 3/201 LHR, dated 14:30 minutes, who reported that after patrolling the forest (not finding anyone) he had remained by the Ruda – Mokre road and noted that infantry (the 29th IR) had headed to Mokre.

So we can see that the offensive actions of the 19th Brigade were only from the 29th Regiment, which we will see shortly, as the 28th IR had so far not taken any part in the attack on Mokre.

Clash of the 29th Regiment at Mokre

The 29th Regiment had halted in the morning in the Benjaminów area (1st Battalion at Dąbkowizna). After receiving orders to continue the assault, Major Walter, ordered the commanders of the 2nd and 3rd Battalions to prepare to set off. They were not given detailed tasks, as Major Walter intended to lead the operations and direct the battalions personally, as he usually did. Only the commander of the 1st Battalion received any instructions.

According to the account of Captain Rogowski, commander of the 1st Battalion, while the rest of the 29th Regiment would attack Mokre from the west, the 1st Battalion was asked to strike it from the south, and for that purpose it would move from Dąbkowizna through Aleksandrów.



The regiment's communications officer, 2nd-Lieutenant Demel, remained at Fort Benjaminów, set up a liaison and built a line halfway to Nieporęt. As the brigade's command had then moved to Wólka Radzyńska, there was no wire communication with it.

Setting off from Benjaminów, Major Walter sent a letter at 11:00 to the commander of the 28th Regiment, notifying him that:

The 29th IR is conducting an action to seize Mokre. To the left communication is maintained with the 48th BRR.

Between 11:00 and 12:00 the regiment set off on a covered march in the direction of Mokre, with Lieutenant Pelca's 11th Company in the lead.⁷³ They marched along a forest road from the village of Benjaminów, over Height 88, to the area of Height 89 (east). No obstacles were encountered on the way and it was only in the vicinity of Height 89 (east) that the column was fired upon by the enemy.

That enemy was broken by a strong blow from the 11th Company and had to retreat towards Łoś. These had been outposts of the 63rd RB of the 21st RD.

Between 13:00 and 14:00 the regiment halted in the vicinity of Height 89. Polish aircraft were spotted firing on targets on the ground near Mokre. The regimental commander stopped at a forester's lodge, west of Height 89.

Major Walter now ordered the 3rd Battalion to garrison Section 1 of the bridgehead positions in the vicinity of Height 89, which presented no difficulties. With the rest of the regiment, that is with the 2nd Battalion, Major Walter intended to move through the woods to the southern periphery and to come out in front of the place marked on the map with the letter "R". Then he would attack Mokre, together with the 1st Battalion and the 28th Regiment. At about this time he must have received news from the commander of Squadron 3/201 LHR, which was in the vicinity of Height 89, after searching the forest between Benjaminów and Mokre.

Major Walter ordered the 6th, 7th, 8th and Assault companies to get ready to leave. Before setting off, the regimental commander received a message that had just been brought by a horse messenger. The commander of the 7th Company recalls that,

The regimental commander, upon reading the letter, grimaced, hesitated for a moment, and then mounted his horse and gave us the order to march.

We could not establish which message he had received. It is likely that it was a card from the commander of the 28th Regiment, of 12:10, in which Major Sobieszczak reported that he was advancing from Wólka Radzyńska towards Aleksandrów and asked, "please support me." Major Walter may also have received an order from the 19th Brigade at 12:00, assigning sections to regiments when manning the first line of positions. At this time he sent the following report to the brigade commander:

29th IR

To Command 19th IB

I report that the 29th IR has occupied and manned a section of the positions from Height 92, east of Mokre, to Height 89. It maintains close communication to the left with the 48th IR. There is no communication to the right.

Walter

Major and regimental commander.

This report is of exceptional importance in the battle on the outskirts of Warsaw, as its news had a strong impact on the higher commanders. We can see at once that it contained details that were not correct. The 29th IR did not occupy Mokre at that time, nor the section situated east of Mokre up to Height 92. If the commander of the 29th Regiment had reported that it occupied only Mokre, the mistake could have been explained to some extent. The 3rd Battalion had then occupied with its right wing a group of houses in the

⁷³ Pelca had previously been acting commander of the 3rd Battalion, but Captain Wilczyński had returned.



forest, which was indeed Mokre – but Nowe Mokre, not marked on the maps of the time. But the mention of a section of the positions east of Mokre to Height 92 cannot be explained at all.

Around 14:00 Major Walter set off with the 2nd Battalion to reach the southern edge of the forest, while the 3rd Battalion remained in the first line positions. Around 16:00 the 3rd Battalion established communication with the 48th BRR, which was manning positions in the Ruda area. Communication with the 2nd Battalion and Major Walter was very difficult, especially as the commander of the 3rd Battalion did not know the overall task. That was not a cause for concern, as it was known that Major Walter was personally in charge of the operations, and the men had confidence in him. Neither did the company commanders, marching under the direct command of Major Walter, know the task of the regiment or even their own unit. They knew, however, that it was a matter of seizing Mokre and the fact that the regimental commander was marching with them was enough. Major Walter rode with his adjutant on horseback in front, well ahead of the marching column.

The march through the forest passed in peace. Soon Walter stopped the detachment without reaching the southern edge of the forest (1 kilometre north-east of Height 95). He rode out on horseback to the edge of the forest and saw that there was an enemy position 200 metres away, manning positions parallel to the edge of the forest. So far no shots had been fired from either side.

Major Walter, going in person to the edge of the forest, probably intended to investigate and assess the position. After all, his 1st Battalion and the 28th Regiment were to arrive in this area (letter "R") and then, according to the orders from Lt-Colonel Thomme, the brigade was to proceed to an attack on Mokre. Unfortunately, it turned out that the enemy was in the area, and so he should have waited for the 1st Battalion and 28th IR to arrive. This might have had a deterrent effect, and was probably taken into account by Major Walter, but it was not long before he made his decision. The companies were ordered to take up the march again.

The leading 7th Company soon arrived and met Major Walter on the road, now dismounted. He ordered bayonets fixed. Then, without further explanation, Major Walter pointed out to the commander of the 7th Company, 2nd-Lieutenant Pstrokoński, a group of horses in the hazel thickets and ordered him to lead an attack, but without leaving the forest. During this conversation, the 7th Company did not stop marching, but now turned in the direction ordered and marched in column a few dozen more steps. There was silence all around. Then 2nd-Lieutenant Pstrokoński gave the signal to scatter into a rifle line.

While the men were deploying, suddenly two enemy shots were fired close by, followed by a burst of machine-gun fire.

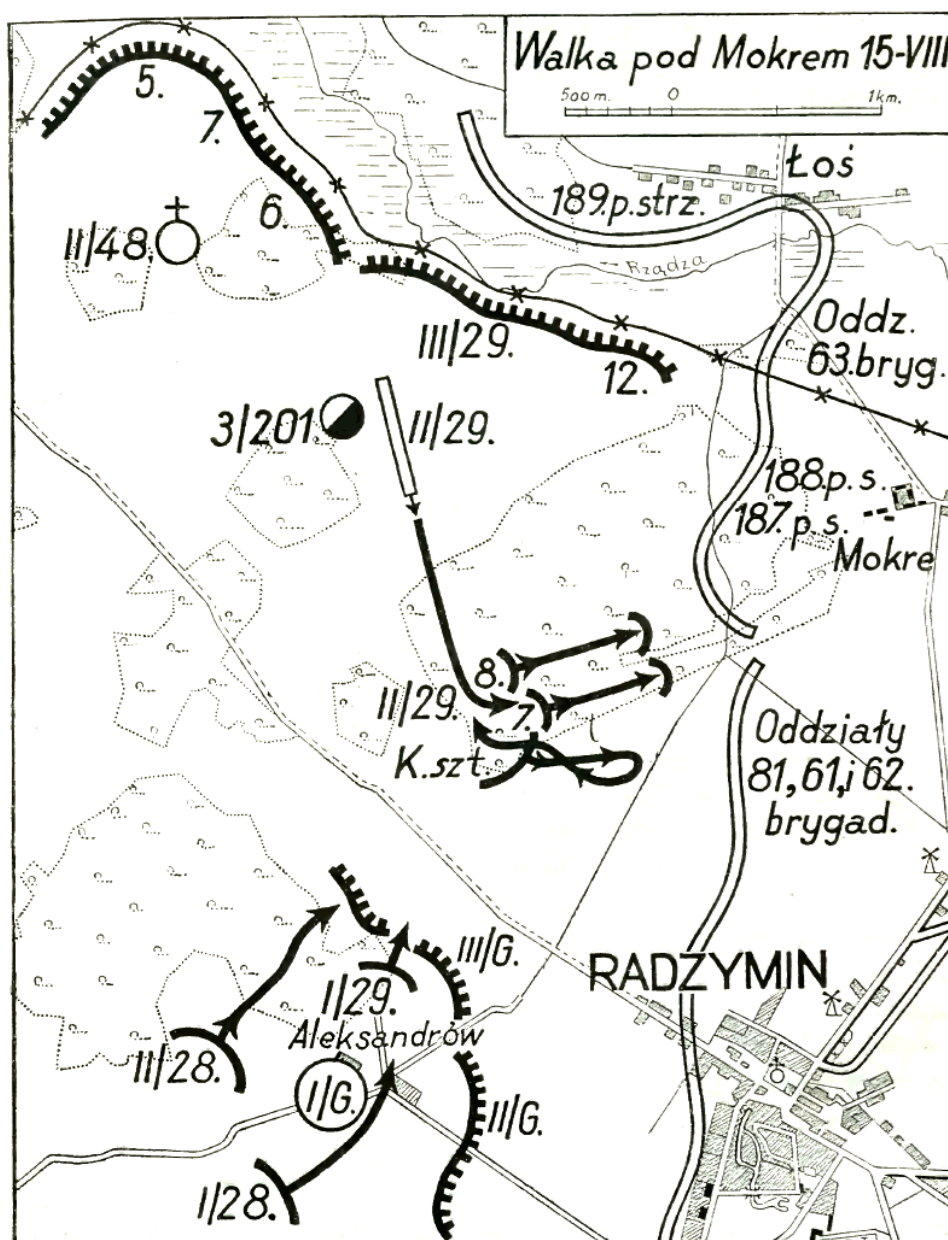
The 8th Company, which was commanded by Lieutenant Blicharski (in place of Lieutenant Żukowski), were behind the 7th Company, and after the 7th Company spread into line formation, they advanced to the left of it. However, as the 7th Company did not stop, the 8th remained a little behind and to the side of the 7th, "thus forming cover for the front company."

It was not long before the 7th Company's line advanced through a clump of scrub and encountered a dozen paces ahead of it a very dense rifle line, which was entrenched in a position cutting through the forest perpendicularly to its edge, in a place where there was an isolated farm. To the right, closer to the edge of the forest, a machine-gun was firing, while to the left, at a distance of about 50 paces, stood two more machine-guns.

The appearance of the 7th Company, and especially its immediate charge, took the enemy by surprise. The Poles reached the enemy in one rush and drove the Russians out. The 8th Company, advancing to the left, along an embankment parallel to the edge of the forest, did not encounter any enemy resistance, since the 7th Company's assault had caused the entire dense enemy line in front of the 8th Company to leave their positions and flee in panic towards Mokre, without even firing a shot. However, just behind the Russian positions, the 8th Company surprised a group of enemy soldiers struggling with their horses as they tried to move their kitchens and wagons out. They fell into the hands of the 8th Company, which then advanced further towards Mokre, separated by a bank from the 7th Company.

The 7th Company took three machine-guns and 16 prisoners, and the 8th Company two machine-guns and seven prisoners.





Sketch 65: Battle for Mokre, 15 August

After the assault and the demolition of the enemy, the 7th Company did not stop for long, but moved quickly forward between the bank and the edge of the forest. After covering a distance of 100-200 m, its movement gradually weakened as a result of flanking fire from the right, coming from a ditch overgrown with trees and lying some 100 metres away, parallel to the edge of the forest. The soldiers of the 7th Company's right wing turned to face that fire, one after another, and gradually its movement died down.

The 8th Company, which was pursuing the enemy, also came under heavy enemy machine-gun fire, from overgrown hills just southwest of Mokre.

The enemy's movement and very heavy fire testified to the introduction of new forces, but they did not dare to counter-attack. The 7th and 8th Companies settled into a firefight, in which the enemy both outnumbered them and had better positions.

The companies began to suffer losses. For the time being the 7th Company still felt safe, as the men were lying in a depression in the clumps of bushes in front of the bank, but the enemy thought that they were on the crest of the bank, so were largely firing too high.

In order to maintain communication with the 8th Company, 2nd-Lieutenant Pstrokoński had left three men on the rampart, but soon the heavy fire left two of them dead. The last, however, remained in position.



In the course of this battle Major Walter moved along the positions of the companies, surveying the situation. He reached the 8th Company with an entrenching spade in his hand, "as if using it to fend off bullets".

Things were worse with the 8th Company. In the short fight, 2nd-Lieutenant Blicharski had three riflemen lying next to him killed. He himself also received a light wound, with the bullet shattering his revolver.

Major Walter was forced to abandon the assault by the 7th and 8th Companies, and now brought the Assault Company into the battle. It had arrived a few days ago as a supplement from the 1st Battalion of the 109th Regiment, and was going into battle for the first time under the command of Cadet Dąbrowski. Beside it was Lieutenant Kosianowski's 6th Company, also composed of young soldiers.

The assault company was to lead the attack across the plain in the direction east of the forest. Walter may have been counting on the approach of Battalion 1/29. It is also more than likely that he had already observed from the edge of the forest the leading companies of the 1st Battalion, which at that time were in the vicinity of Aleksandrów on their march to Mokre (Sketch 65). He could also have seen units of the 28th IR in the vicinity of Aleksandrów. At the same time numerous wagons were on the roads from Radzymin, departing from the town to the north-east.

A few minutes later the assault company moved out of the woods and into an open potato field. "It moved at first boldly and eagerly," which apparently made an impression on the enemy – a considerable number in front of the woods stood up and began to retreat. But soon the assault company came under enemy artillery fire, which confused its formation somewhat. Major Walter and the officers with the company reorganised it to renew the attack.

However under heavy fire from the flanks, the company came to a halt. Then numerous enemy rifle lines appeared in the fields, moving to counter-attack from the north-east and east.

It was a critical moment. Walter tried to get the men to stand up, running along the company line and shouting orders, but then fell with a severe chest wound. Seeing their commander fall, the young soldiers of the assault company broke completely and retreated in disorder to the forest. They were only reassembled behind the bank. They even left the seriously wounded Major Walter behind, but the old soldiers of the 29th Regiment, together with the Major's orderly, ran over and carried him into the forest.

As the soldiers were applying a bandage to Major Walter, Lieutenant Żukowski came running over. Walter ordered him to take command of the entire detachment and, "hold on to the occupied positions until nightfall".

The loss of the regimental commander had a strong and depressing effect on the soldiers. The commander of the 7th Company recalled:

The situation was unpleasant. We were isolated in the face of much larger enemy numbers. We did not know the unit's orders and there was no map. The assault company, after its first appearance in battle and the losses it had suffered, was bewildered and was only just beginning to come to its senses.

However, the 7th and 8th Companies remained in their positions. Indeed, the position of the 29th Regiment was unremarkable although none of the battalion commanders knew the regiment's task in the brigade's overall operation.

The losses in the 2nd Battalion were: 16 wounded in the Assault Company; 2 killed and 10 wounded in the 7th Company; and 3 (?) killed and 8 wounded in the 8th Company.

Lieutenant Żukowski persisted in those positions for some time, but feeling insecure with no communication to the left or right, and being under pressure from the enemy, he ordered a withdrawal into the forest. While the 2nd Battalion was retreating, Captain Rogowski arrived with Battalion 1/29.

That battalion had been in the vicinity of Aleksandrów at the time of the Assault Company's action. It had arrived unhindered at Aleksandrów, but received fire from Radzymin side when its patrols moved on. Initially, Captain Rogowski thought that was a misunderstanding, as he had been informed that Radzymin was in Polish hands, so he sent reconnaissance in that direction. However It turned out to be the enemy,



which was confirmed by the officers of the Grodno Regiment encountered in the area. Captain Rogowski, having no intention of attacking Radzymin, left one company as cover for the right flank, while the rest moved towards Mokre.

When a kilometre north of Aleksandrów, the attack by the Assault Company was seen, just setting off from the edge of the forest. The battalion commander, marching with the leading company, ordered the march to be accelerated in order to help, but before they could cross the gap, the assault had broken down. It was then seen to retreat and disappeared from sight in the forest.

Soon Captain Rogowski met the units of the 2nd Battalion in the forest, retreating south-west, and received news from Lieutenant Żukowski about the course of the action so far. Rogowski decided to stop the 1st Battalion in the forest and take up positions in the dunes and establish communication with the 3rd Battalion. At around 19:00 he spoke with Captain Wilczyński, the 3rd Battalion commander, who had taken command of the regiment. Captain Wilczyński did not take any offensive action, merely trying to rally the regiment.

For a long time there was no communication with either the brigade or 28th IR command. The companies of the 2nd Battalion were withdrawn to the forest lodge (west of Height 89 East). At about 19:00 Lieutenant Boski appeared in the section of Battalion 1/29 with Battalion 1/28, which was now taking part in an attack on Mokre. Battalion 1/29 left for the forest lodge, where it joined the 2nd Battalion. Once the regiment was assembled, Captain Wilczyński sent a report to the brigade commander at around 20:30, requesting that the regiment be relieved as soon as possible.

During the early morning of 15 August the 48th Regiment remained in its sector, having the 1st and 2nd Battalions in the Rynia – Borki – Benjaminów positions, and the 3rd Battalion in the vicinity of Fort Benjaminów. It did not have contact with the 21st IB nor the 11th ID, and received news from the 10th ID or from Zegrze. The artillery had no communication with the Radzymin artillery group. Around 10:00 Colonel Maluszycki, commander of the Left Subgroup, contacted Colonel Łukoski and ordered the batteries to return to their old positions. Colonel Maluszycki had at the time the Batteries 1/20 FAR, 2/20, 5/9 FAR, 6/9 and A/120.

Around 11:00 we have seen that a conversation took place at Fort Benjaminów between Lt-Colonel Thomme, Colonel Łukoski and Major Walter. The 19th Brigade was to take Mokre and the first bridgehead positions, while the 48th Regiment was tasked with recapturing the section from Ruda to Height 89. This was to be done by the 2nd Battalion, which set off towards Ruda between 11:00 and 12:00.

Encountering no resistance from the enemy, the 2nd Battalion took up its former positions between 14:00 and 15:00, with the 5th Company occupying the area around Ruda, linking up to the right with the 6th and 7th Companies, and to the left with the 1st Battalion. The right wing of Battalion 2/48 linked up near Height 89 with the 29th IR. In this action the 5th Company took several prisoners.

At 15:00 the 48th BRR reported to the 21st IB that the former section of the line had been taken. At 16:30 the telephone connection with the 21st IB HQ was regained after a two-day break.

Between 12:00 and 14:00 the batteries of the Left Subgroup remained at their old positions, which are shown in Sketch 68. The batteries communicated with the infantry, who reported that things were calm in front of the 1st Battalion, and no enemy could be seen a long way into the foreground. It was also quiet in front of the 2nd Battalion.

The 3rd Battalion remained at Fort Benjaminów as the reserve.

Attack of the 1st Lit-Bel and 10th Divisions in the Evening of 15 August

1st Army Orders

During the morning of 15 August the Army command did not issue any special orders, as it was waiting for reports from the battlefield to arrive. The first news was not very accurate, and it was not until around



11:00 that the 1st Lit-Bel Division reported from Marki that at 08:30 that its units had reached the edge of the forest near Ciemne, and were in contact with the 10th Division's units in Wólka Radzyńska. They also supplied the information that southern part of Radzymin was occupied. Colonel Kubin, liaison officer to the Chief of General Staff, gave the same news to General Rozwadowski at 10:30 from Marki, stressing that the advance of the 10th, 11th and 19th Divisions was developing successfully. General Rozwadowski was satisfied with this news, and he noted on the dispatch, "excellent", then ordered the news be relayed to other commands. This is also reflected in his message to Marshal Piłsudski of 17:00, in which, among other things, he stated:

We have Radzymin in our hands again and we repulsed their attacks easily, as the artillery finally began to work there collectively.

The French officers who followed the course of the battle at Radzymin also sent reports to their superiors. General Weygand, mentioning the assault on 15 August (probably in the morning), spoke of the capture of Radzymin, "with beautiful momentum".

At 13:45 the Army HQ received news from the 1st Lit-Bel Division that Aleksandrów and Radzymin had been seized, the enemy had withdrawn, and that there was communication with the 10th Division, which was approaching Mokre. The Army also received reports on the development of the 10th Division's advance. There were messages about the capture of Dąbkowizna and Wólka Radzyńska and the advance of the 19th Brigade towards Mokre and the 20th Brigade towards Radzymin. The assumption was that the units of the 10th Division did not stop at the second line positions, but immediately moved in the ordered directions. The chief of staff of the 10th Division noted that "the action was developing successfully." On the basis of that news, which testified to the successful development of the action, the Army command could expect that the assault would be successful.

Then between 14:00 and 17:00, instead of the expected reports on the regaining of the first line positions, vague news was received from the subordinate commands. The Army staff telegraphed Marki, demanding more details. Major Mysłowski (of the Operations Department) received news from Colonel Jaźwiński that the units of the 1st Lit-Bel Division:

... have retreated back to the line of Cegielnia. The right wing of the division is leading an attack on Ciemne, The left wing, together with the 10th Division, has taken Aleksandrów.

There is no doubt that the news of the loss of Radzymin took the Army by surprise. Meanwhile the position on the left wing of the attack could not be understood, as evidenced by Major Mysłowski's first query:

Does the Colonel know for what reason the 10th Division has deflected so much to the rear that Aleksandrów is the junction between it and the Lit-Bel?

In response to this, Colonel Jaźwiński reported that

... the 10th Division had probably lagged behind because it was late starting ... the main reason for the retreat from Radzymin is the indefensible delay of the wings.

At the same time the Army received news that the 1st Lit-Bel Division was out of reserves.

The news received was reflected in the 1st Army's situation report of 17:00, which gave the following details:

The situation in the Radzymin sector is unexplained. Heated fighting continues on that sector and, according to a report from the 11th Division, units of the 19th Division withdrew from Radzymin to the hills south of the town at about 14:30. There is no confirmation of this news from the 10th Division. The last report received at 13:35 speaks of the capture of Aleksandrów (2 km west of Radzymin) and Radzymin. According to that report, the units of the 10th Infantry Division were approaching Mokre, north of Radzymin.

At 17:00 the Army issued the following laconic order:



Command of the 1st Army

To the commander of the 19th ID.

Order: take Radzymin immediately and to report why the units of the 19th ID departed from Radzymin.

Stokalski

Colonel, Head of the 3rd Department

In response to this order, general Rządkowski reported that the Wilno Regiment

... was forced to leave Radzymin because the neighbouring division on the left could not reach the designated places on time, due to the fighting at Wólka Radzyńska, while the attack of the right wing encountered strong enemy resistance.

General Rządkowski concluded his report with the sentence: "It was ordered to take Radzymin."

General Latinik mentions this period of fighting in these words:

This turnaround in the success to that point must be attributed to the difficulties in coordination of the attacks by single units and regiments, surprised not only by the enemy's superior numbers, but also by the vehemence of the counter-attacks.

Our 10th Division, breaking the enemy's resistance in the woods, lost too much time and could not keep up with the central column (2nd Lit-Bel Brigade). However, seeing a favourable advance on the Radzymin road, it wanted to take advantage of that, overrunning the enemy's rear from the direction of Mokre.

General Żeligowski, who was in overall command of the assault on Radzymin, was probably so preoccupied with the fight of his 10th Division and trusted that Radzymin itself would inevitably fall so that he did not attach much importance to the direct collaboration of the units of his 10th Division with the central column (2nd Lit-Bel Brigade). The latter, isolated in Radzymin and threatened from the flanks, fought with its last breath, and finally, unable to wait for a diversion either from the Mokre (10th ID) or from Janków (1st Lit-Bel Brigade), had to retreat in order to avoid being taken prisoner or cut down.

On hearing of the retreat from Radzymin, for reasons then unexplained, I ordered General Rządkowski to repeat the attack on Radzymin, as General Żeligowski, although in command of the whole action, was occupied solely with his division.

Before evening airmen were sent to Radzymin for the second time. At 18:00 two planes of the 19th Fighter Squadron took off from Mokotów airfield, led by 2nd-Lieutenant Bieniawski and Cadet Gutmajer: the former was tasked with bombing the roads leading north-east from Radzymin, while the latter was to target Roszczep – Trojany.

The airmen carried out their tasks, but their activity finished before the ground attack had developed. The airmen fired at any spotted enemy groupings and had the general impression (during the flight that ended at 19:00 that: "Our front line seems to be moving to the northeast" and "The enemy was retreating from Radzymin to the north and east."

Preparations for the Attack

General Żeligowski's Orders

As we have seen, General Żeligowski, after a conversation in Wólka Radzyńska with Lt-Colonel Thomme, drove to Marki, and from there went to General Rządkowski. General Żeligowski now wrote orders for the 1st Lit-Bel Division and the 30th Regiment, which were issued at 16:10 (and so earlier than the Army orders above). General Żeligowski then received a report on the capture of Mokre from Lt-Colonel Thomme, which read:



Command 19th IB

15 August at 16:30.

To: General Żeligowski,
Command 10th ID

The 29th IR has occupied and manned the section from Height 92 (east of Mokre) to Height 98 inclusive, establishing close communication with 48th IR. There is no communication to the right.

The 28th IR is marching to Mokre and will close the Zawady – Radzymin road.

If the 1st Lit-Bel Division leads an attack on Radzymin immediately, without giving the enemy an opportunity to concentrate in the area Radzymin – Dybów, it will occupy Radzymin without any trouble.

Thomme
Lt-Colonel

This important news had a significant impact on the commanders. At 17:00 the 19th Brigade had already informed the 28th IR that

... the 29th IR has occupied and manned a section of the positions from Height 92, east of Mokre, to Height 89. It maintains close communication to the left with the 48th IR.

The 10th Division's command was also notified quite soon after, as already by 18:50 the chief of the division's operations branch, Captain Lapinski, was reporting to Zegrze Group's command that Mokre, "was occupied by us at 16:00", and that "the present line runs from the north: Wolica, Borki, Ruda, 89, Mokre to Dybów." In a similar manner, another officer informed the Army, noting that, "the 29th IR occupied Mokre at 16:00. The 28th IR was assigned to provide cover for the front from the direction of Debów."⁷⁴

So we can see that General Żeligowski, the commander of the 19th Brigade, and the division staff were all convinced that Mokre was in the hands of the 29th IR, which was garrisoning Section 1 of the bridgehead position from Heights 89 to 92. General Żeligowski mentions this moment in these words:

At 15:00 Mokre was taken. Now the attack of the 1st Lit-Bel Division on Radzymin was very expedient, as it held the [Soviet] 2nd and 27th Divisions under pressure, while our 28th and 29th Regiments were bleeding for Mokre, which was the tactical key of the entire battlefield ... I attributed great importance to the capture of Mokre.

In order to make a final agreement on cooperation, General Żeligowski went to General Rządkowski, who he found at an observation post by the road, and there he remained until late in the evening. General Żeligowski arrived without any staff and was accompanied only by his adjutant, 2nd-Lieutenant Jan Łepkowski (the transfer of the 10th Division's field staff to Nieporęt did not take place). One of the division's officers writes about this:

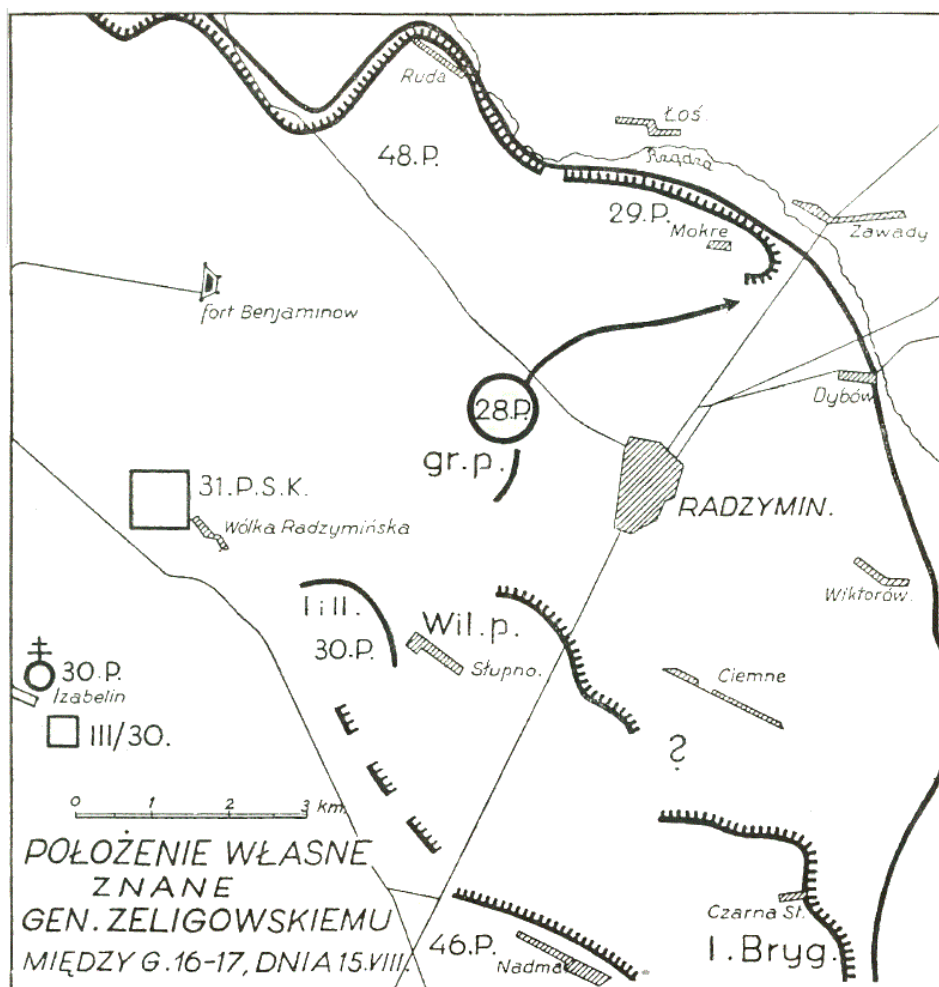
The division's staff was not informed of the commander's intentions, and remained on constant alert, awaiting orders. The 10th Telegraph Company, which had a certain amount of equipment and material, which had been brought to readiness on 14 August, was also awaiting its tasks.

Remaining at the observation post of the 1st Lit-Bel HQ, General Żeligowski was able to use the command's telephone network, but it only allowed him to communicate with Pustelnik and Marki, while there was no direct connection with Jabłonna-Legionowo. So he was forced to communicate with the 19th and 20th Brigades using horse messengers, while he could only communicate with his headquarters in Jabłonna-Legionowo from Wólka Radzyńska via Nieporęt and Zegrze.

As General Żeligowski's orders for the attack on 15 August were written without the cooperation of a staff they did not have logged numbers, but were simply written on the pages of a notebook. The order issued to the commander of the 1st Lit-Bel Division read:

⁷⁴ Presumably a typo for Dybów.





Sketch 66: Positions as best known to General Żeligowski between 16:00 and 17:00 on 15 August

15 August 16:10

To Gen. Rządkowski.

The 10th Division is advancing between Benjaminów and Radzymin, aiming to reach Mokre and operate in the enemy's rear. It was ordered to occupy the first line of trenches by 17:30.

At 17:30 all units are to push out the still defending Bolsheviks as vigorously as possible and take the trench line.

The artillery is again to cooperate energetically with the final attack.

After seizing the trenches, the L-B and 11th Divisions are to man the sections under the command of the General.

The 10th Division is to go to the reserve.

Żeligowski

15 August 16:10

To General Rządkowski.

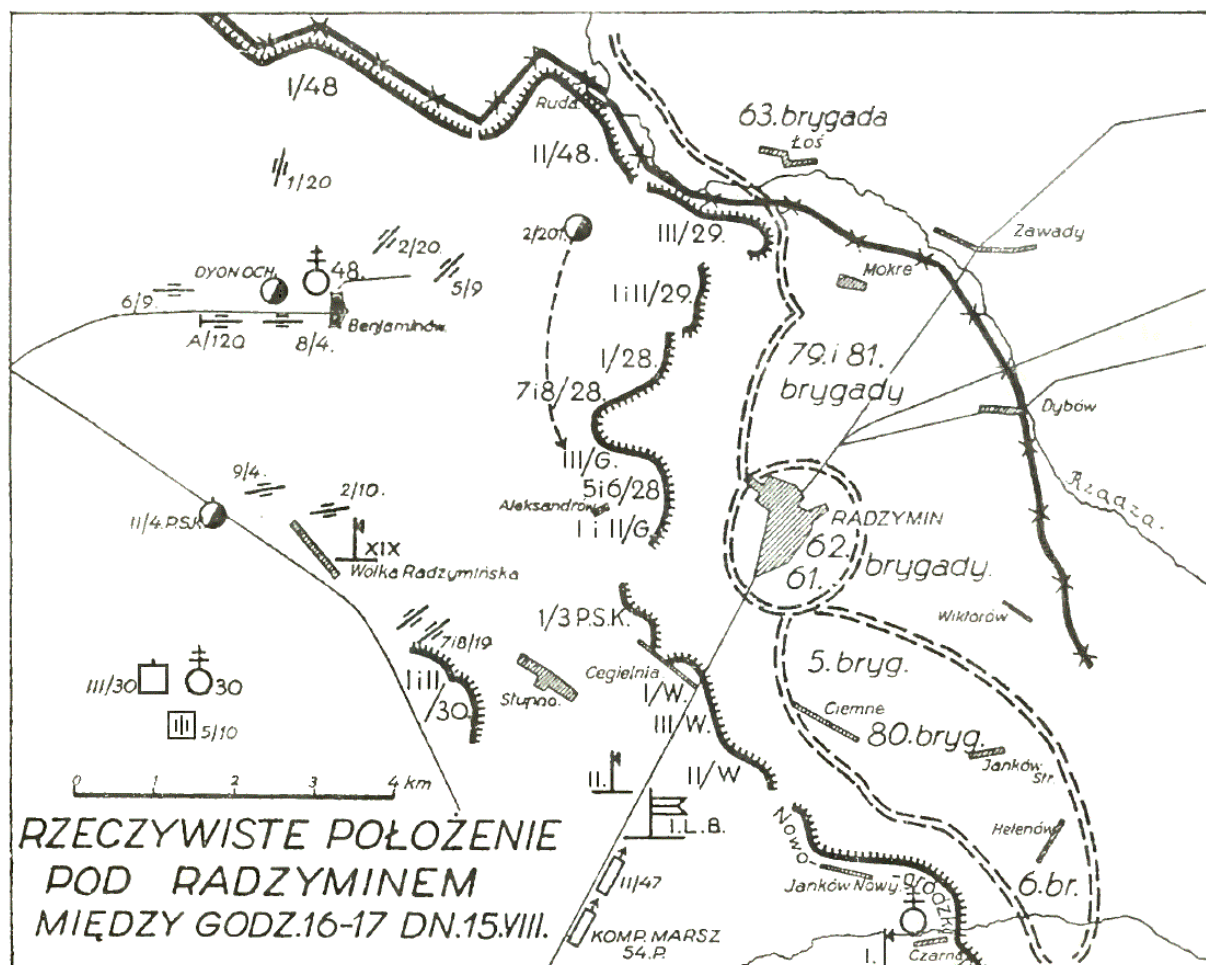
I am sending a report for your information from the commander of the 19th Brigade, which is occupying Mokre.

Żeligowski

At the same time General Żeligowski issued orders to the 30th IR, which was to make an attack on Radzymin together with the 1st Lit-Bel Division. According to the history of the 30th IR, the order was as follows:



Żeligowski



Furious that by 15:00 there was no news from either the 30th IR or the 1st Lit-Bel Division, I ordered a strong officer patrol sent to Radzymin.

This task was given to the 28th Regiment, which, according to the order, was to send an officer patrol:

... to Radzymin, in order to clarify the situation in the town itself and east of it. The patrol should be sent from the cavalry platoon attached to the regiment.

At this time Thomme received a report from Major Walter about the manning of the first line positions on the section from Mokre to Height 92, and sent the news to General Żeligowski, noting that the 28th Regiment was marching to Mokre and would close the Zawady – Radzymin road. Thomme was probably convinced that Walter's brigade, by seizing Mokre and the line Mokre – Height 92, had done its job, while the rest of the work was up to the neighbours who were delayed. The commander of the 19th Brigade rightly reported to General Żeligowski that:

If the 1st Lit-Bel Division leads an attack on Radzymin immediately, without giving the enemy an opportunity to concentrate in the area Radzymin – Dybów, it will occupy Radzymin without any trouble.

Further orders from Thomme related to holding the section occupied by the 29th Regiment. At 17:00 he ordered the 28th Regiment to advance one battalion to Mokre and the Zawady – Radzymin road in order to cover the right wing of the 29th Regiment (Mokre – Height 92). An hour later he asked the commander of Squadron 2/4 HRR, in Aleksandrów, to send reconnaissance in the directions of Dybów, Radzymin and Ciemne. Finally, at 18:35, he notified the 28th Regiment that the 30th Regiment

... is attacking Radzymin from the south-western side, covering itself with one battalion at Ciemne. The L-B Division is to attack at the same time. Establish close communication with the 30th Regiment and support its attack.

Lt-Colonel Jacynik, after taking command of the 20th Brigade, ordered the 30th IR HQ, the 3rd Battalion and the staff troops to move from Izabelin to the junction of the road from Jabłonna with the Pustelnik – Nieporęt road (opposite Height 104). He then went to the 1st and 2nd Battalions and Battery 5/10 FAR at the second line of positions and ordered them to launch an attack on Radzymin at 17:30. The 1st Battalion was to attack Radzymin from the south, the 2nd Battalion from the south-west. The whole action was to be led by Major Muszyński, commander of the 1st Battalion. The 3rd Battalion was to remain in reserve in the area of the crossroads, while the 31st Regiment was to hold in the area of Wólka Radzyńska.

After receiving the order to advance, General Rządkowski discussed verbally with General Żeligowski the task of the 1st Lit-Bel Division. This discussion, held in a ditch by the road, was short-lived, because by 16:45 General Rządkowski had his operational orders ready. Lt-Colonel Rybicki, who was present, was first given verbal orders, while for the 1st Brigade the general handed a written order to Cadet Kotołowski (from the division's staff), who was to take it to Czarna Stara House, notifying on the way any troops he met of the assault. This was because it was a matter of rushing into action. As a result, Cadet Kotołowski received verbal instructions that supplemented the details he had heard from General Rządkowski's conversation with General Żeligowski. The cadet understood the general plan in this way:

The 10th Division was to launch an attack with the task of hitting the rear of the Bolsheviks, located in Radzymin. The main idea was that the 10th Division's action would be supported prominently from the south by the 1st L-B Division with the accuracy of one minute – which was emphasised by the commanders of both Divisions.

General Rządkowski's written order read:

Command 1st L-B D.

15 August at 16:45.

Op.

I. 10th Div. will advance between Benjaminów and Radzymin to seize Mokre and operate in the enemy's rear.

It is ordered to occupy the first line of trenches by 17:30.



II. The 1st and 2nd L-B Brigades will continue the assault in accordance with previously issued orders.

By 17:30 the remaining enemy troops are to be pushed beyond the first line of trenches, which is to be manned. As soon as the first line of trenches is reached, the 10th Division is to withdraw to the reserve. The section from Rynia through Siwek, Borki, Ruda, ... Wiktorów will be garrisoned by the 1st L-B D. The section from Wiktorów through Kraszew Dzielny, Helenów, Czarna Nowa, Sławek, Wołomin station, Leśniakowizna will be garrisoned by the 11th ID.

III. Detailed order for the positions of the troops after reaching first line will be issued.

To: 11th ID, 1st Brig, 2nd Brig

Rządkowski
General

General Rządkowski will command the group consisting of the 1st L-B RD. and the 11th ID.

In spite of the repetition from the units of the 10th Division of the news that the 19th Brigade had seized Mokre and was operating, striking at the enemy's rear, certain reservations must have occurred to Lieutenant Gadowski, Lit-Bel chief of operations. This is reflected in the situation report of 17:20 to the Chief of Staff, Captain Perkowicz, which at the same time gives a fairly detailed account of the division's position at the time.

The 10th ID, advancing between Benjaminów and Radzymin has, according to unverified news, reached Mokre and is in the enemy's rear.

Our own line runs on the hills near Aleksandrów Manor, to the south of Aleksandrów, to the south of Wioska, the edge of the forest to the south of Ciemne, the hills to the north of Janków Nowy, joining the 47th IR in the first line of trenches in the area of Czarna.

Radzymin was abandoned at 14:00 due to strong enemy pressure from the east.

At this moment an attack on the whole line is ordered, with the aim of driving out the enemy troops in the Radzymin – Ciemne – Janków Stary area.

The enemy is putting up fierce resistance.

Communication with the 10th ID and the units of the 11th ID, as well as within the units of the 1st L-B Div, is maintained.

In order to carry out the final assault and achieve the objective, the last reserves have been drawn in.

As a result of General Żeligowski's order to attack, the roles of the units changed. The burden of the action fell on the 19th Brigade, whose manoeuvre was to bring about the result, while the rest of the action was to be more of an exploitation of the 19th Brigade's success. Before the evening assault, Lt-Colonel Rybicki spoke with General Żeligowski.

He mentions it in these words:

Around 16:00 General Żeligowski arrived, which is when I met him for the first time. The general had been examining the terrain for some time, looking at the formation of the 2nd Brigade.

I reported to the General that I was expecting an attack from the Bolsheviks and was ready to repulse it.

The General bade me farewell with the following words: "Hold strong, I am leading the action behind your left wing."

The task given to the 2nd Brigade and the lack of time to regroup the attack to be undertaken from the existing positions forced the 2nd Brigade to go into the attack from its previous positions. The Grodno



Regiment was to attack via Radzymin to Wiktorów and the Wilno Regiment was to head to Ciemne. The 30th Regiment was also to advance towards Radzymin.

As a result the assault towards Radzymin was not sufficiently organised, as the regiments, subordinate to two different brigade commanders, were to advance in one lane of action. The Wilno regiment, which was to take Ciemne, so far strongly defended by the enemy, was reinforced with a march company of the 54th Regiment and a tank platoon.

In the course of events, it turned out that the 1st Brigade did not take up the attack and could not be counted on to co-operate. So it fell to the 2nd Brigade to take on the task of the whole division. Lt-Colonel Rybicki finally determined the tasks of the regiments, of which he reported at 19:50 to the division:

Considering the attack on the 2nd Brigade from the east and the failure of the 1st Brigade to advance, I directed the units of the 2nd Brigade through Radzymin to Kraszew (and through) Cegielnia – Ciemne (to) Helenów, with the aim of reaching the trenches of the Warsaw bridgehead, lost by the 11th ID, and throwing back the enemy to the east.

Artillery Preparation

The artillery was still not an organised and commanded whole. It did not receive its task directly from General Żeligowski, as he gave orders to the commanders of the 11th and 1st Lit-Bel divisions, as well as the 19th and 20th Brigades, and only those commanders were to order the cooperation of the artillery. For that reason the artillery took part in the preparation of the attack and supported it with individual battery groupings.

The 48th Regiment was directly supported by five batteries (A/120, 1/20 FAR, 2/20, 5/9 FAR and 6/9), the 19th Brigade by five batteries (7/1L-B FAR, 8/1L-B, 8/4 FAR, 9/4, 2/10 FAR), the 2nd Brigade by three batteries (1/1LB, 2/1LB, 3/1LB), the 20th Brigade, or rather the 30th Regiment, was supported by one battery (5/10 FAR), and the 1st Brigade had no artillery at all. The 47th Regiment continued to be supported by the Right Artillery Subgroup with unchanged composition.

Meanwhile Colonel Aleksandrowicz's five batteries (A/155, A/75, 4/20 FAR, 2/13 HAR, 3/13), together with three batteries, subordinate – directly or indirectly – to Colonel Szpręglewski (4/13 HAR, 5/13, 1/9 HAR), supported the attack in the entire zone of action, constituting to some extent general action artillery. A total of 29 Polish batteries fired at Radzymin. The location of the batteries is shown in Sketch 68.

As far as observation was concerned, the direct support batteries, cooperating with the infantry commands, generally provided themselves with sufficient observation, but it was worse for the batteries subordinate to Colonel Aleksandrowicz (the Middle Subgroup) and Colonel Szpręglewski. Almost all of the batteries had their observation points on the second line of positions, which had been suitable in the morning but once the infantry crossed the line Aleksandrów – Cegielnia – southern edge of the forest near Ciemne, the observation from then on was poor, which resulted in the artillery shelling the positions of its own infantry several times. This was particularly in the 1st Brigade's sector. These lack was mentioned by the artillerymen afterwards, e.g. 2nd-Lieutenant Ścibor-Marchocki from Battery 3/13 HAR:

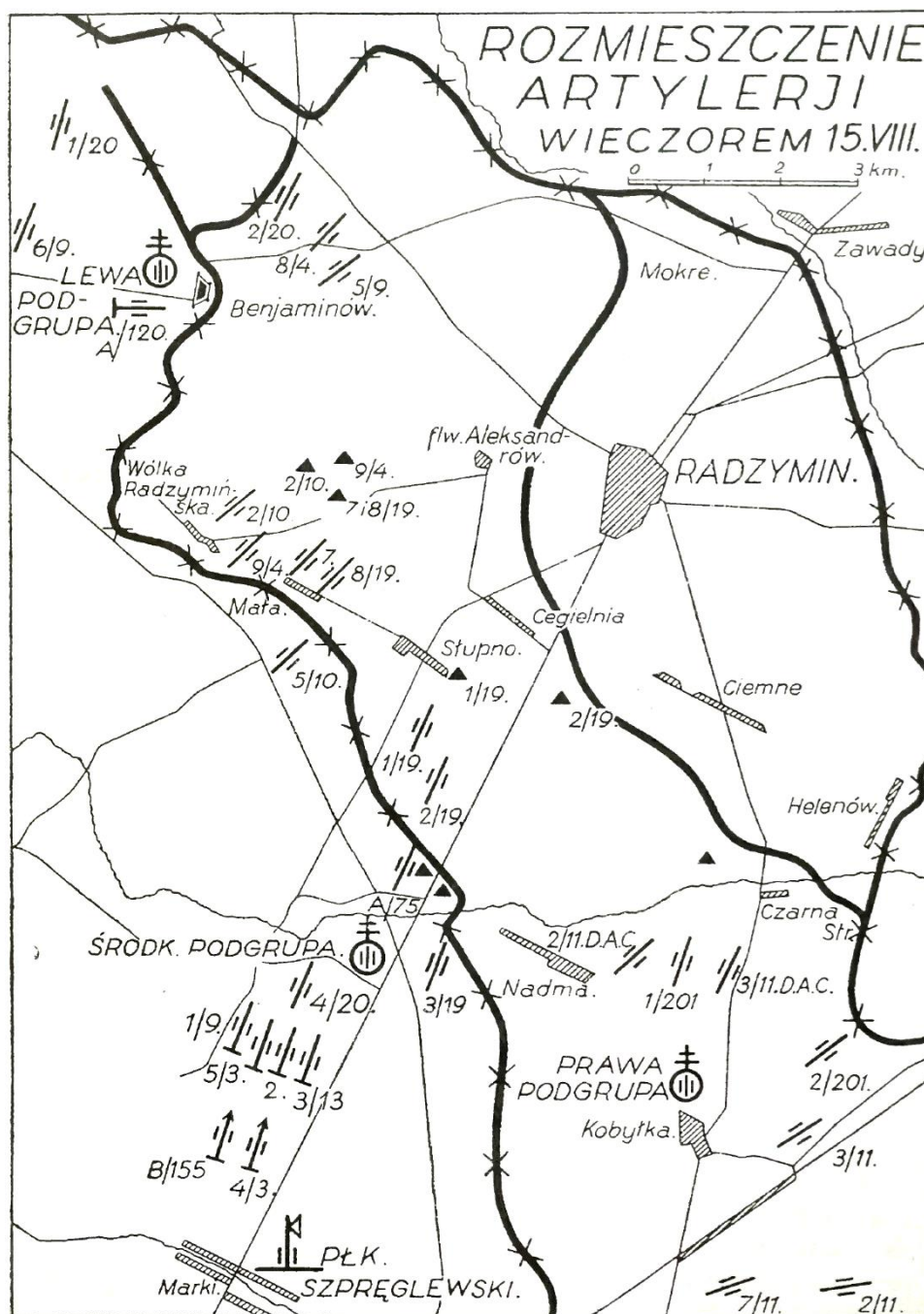
My sad personal observation from the battle of Warsaw was that at the time there was a complete lack of observation and communication in the artillery.

There was also the issue of ammunition. Already in the morning there was a shortage of ammunition, which was reported to the Army Headquarters. By 17:00 only some of the required ammunition had been received, while the shells for the Russian 76-mm were mostly unusable. The 77-mm and 155-mm guns received none at all. Obviously this significantly limited the artillery's ability to work during the period of preparation and support of the assault on the evening of 15 August.

Divizion 1/1 Lit-Bel FAR, which during the day had co-operated significantly with the 2nd Brigade, continued to support it, shelling mainly the area around Ciemne. The 3rd *Divizion* of the regiment (it had a liaison



detachment with the 28th and Grodno Regiments) shelled mainly the southern edge of the town of Radzymin and by 19:40 had used 289 shells.



Sketch 68: Artillery positions in the evening of 15 August

The batteries of the 19th Brigade probably did not receive fire assignments, as it was reckoned that the brigade's action was almost complete. Battery 2/10 FAR only used 41 shells during the day.

Battery 5/10 FAR received a request from the commander of the 30th Regiment to support his attack on Radzymin. For that purpose it took up a position west of Słupno with an observation point around Height 104. In the course of the action it fired 48 shells, mainly at the Radzymin area.

On the other hand, the batteries of the Middle Subgroup, which shelled around Radzymin, Ciemne (very significantly) and Janków Nowy, took a relatively significant part. The activity of these batteries is emphasised by Major Römmel's telephone report from 18:15:

The batteries fired on Ciemne. Several hundred shots were fired. The barrels got so hot that in Battery 4/20 two shells burst inside the barrel, wounding two men. The infantry is approaching



Ciemne, so the batteries have transferred their fire to Wiktorów. Battery 155 is out of ammunition.

The batteries that arrived in the afternoon under Colonel Szpręglewski's orders could not participate in the fire preparation of the attack, as Battery 1/9 HAR, which was positioned next to Battery 2/13 HAR, did not report as ready to fire until 20:30, and Battery 5/3 HAR, which was moved to next to the other batteries with 105-mm guns, did not take its position until late in the evening.

The Left Subgroup had not been able to participate in the attack in the morning, as it returned to its positions in the afternoon, and the command only established communication in the evening. The Right Subgroup, on the other hand, took part with some of its left wing batteries.

For a variety of reasons, however, the assault did not begin at the same time in all sections, and so the artillery began firing at different times.

In spite of this, as a result of the related tasks of the various batteries (often accidentally), perhaps for the first time a strong concentration of fire was seen on Ciemne and the south-western edge of Radzymin. The Middle Subgroup in a report of 15 August stressed that on that day, "the artillery fired a huge number of shells." Naturally, this refers to the activity of the artillery during the entire day.

The Fighting at Ciemne, Janków Nowy and Czarna Nowa

While Generals Żeligowski and Rządkowski were making preparations for the assault, and the 2nd Brigade and the 30th Regiment were preparing for action, the 1st Brigade, together with units of the 47th BRR, fought at Ciemne, Janków Nowy and Czarna Nowa. That battle consisted of a series of mutual assaults and counter-attacks.

As we have seen, the 1st Brigade had made several attempted assaults during the day, then remained in the achieved positions in the afternoon, sustaining a fire fight. The enemy was constantly on the offensive in the gap between the 1st and 2nd Brigades, and threatened the Wilno Regiment. Because of this General Rządkowski between 16:00 and 17:00 introduced Battalion 2/47 at the brigades' junction, on loan from the 11th Division. The battalion received its task directly from General Rządkowski.

Now the commander of the 1st Brigade, Colonel Bejnar, was preparing for a further assault and before receiving General Rządkowski's order for a general attack he issued his own orders. He directed his reserve to the right wing, in the area of Czarna Nowa and Helenów, as the enemy was pinning the Nowogród Regiment's attacks up to that point from the east. Colonel Bejnar notified the division command at 16:00.

Several attacks on Helenów have been repulsed by the enemy. Colonel Adamowicz has given the Mińsk Regiment and Nowogród Battalion the task of seizing Helenów – Janków Nowy and the woods to the east, held by the 1st and 2nd Nowogród.

If Helenów is taken, we will advance as a whole group along the former trenches to Wiktorów.

After seizing Helenów I will look for communications at Ciemne – Wioska.

Artillery observers are needed in the infantry line.

Bejnar.

The 3rd Nowogród Battalion was given to Lt-Colonel Adamowicz, who was to attack Helenów with the Mińsk Regiment.

However Adamowicz did not even have time to start his task when the situation completely changed along the whole line.

The Assault on Ciemne by Battalion 2/47

Between 15:00 and 16:00 the 21st Brigade commander gave Battalion 2/47 to the 1st Lit-Bel Division commander. That battalion had so far remained as the brigade's reserve and after receiving this order it



moved along the road to Radzymin. At 16:15 Lieutenant Reutt, the battalion commander, reported its arrival to General Rządkowski, who was at the observation post.

General Rządkowski explained to Lieutenant Reutt the position at the junction of the division's brigades and gave him the following task:

You and your battalion will go and clear the forest east of the road, between the villages of Cegielnia and Janków Nowy. In Janków Nowy there is a Nowogród regiment. Cegielnia is occupied by a Wilno Regiment. Between them there is a gap into which you are to place your battalion, moving forward, and allowing the Nowogród and Wilno Regiments to attack.

The battalion commander, who had previously observed the vicinity of Janków Nowy with binoculars, had seen a strong line-up of enemy machine-guns there. So he reported to the general, saying that:

... entering the designated gap he would receive HMG fire from the hill on his right flank.

General Rządkowski told him that:

... the situation was hanging in the balance, so that one blow was enough to move everything forward.

Having received the orders, the battalion turned right from the road and moved east, along the southern edge of the forest. The battalion soon entered the forest and, at when it had gone forward to level with Janków Nowy, it came into contact with the left wing of the Nowogród Regiment. Here the battalion commander received from the commander of the 1st Nowogród Battalion detailed information about the positions in the area. Lieutenant Reutt recalls that he then assessed the position as follows:

I found out that my assault would be very difficult. If the attack was made on the hill between Janków Nowy and Ciemne, the battalion would be exposed to the flanking fire of the HMGs from Ciemne, while if I made the attack on Ciemne, the battalion would be exposed from the side of the hill.

Eventually, the two commanders agreed on their tasks: Battalion 2/47 was to launch an attack on Ciemne, passing through the forest along its eastern flank, while the Nowogród Regiment (1st Battalion and part of the 2nd) was to tie up the enemy, occupying positions between Jankov Nowy and Ciemne, and to cooperate with Battalion 2/47 with its left wing. The 1st Company, which had previously tried to link up with the Wilno Regiment, was now to link with Battalion 2/47. That company had machine-guns set up on the eastern edge of the forest, and the 4th Company was to link with the 2nd Battalion, occupying the western part of the village of Janków Nowy. The remaining companies were between the 1st and 4th.

Lieutenant Reutt formed his battalion in two lines; the first was the 5th Company of 2nd-Lieutenant Górecki and the 6th Company of 2nd-Lieutenant Żuk, reinforced with two machine-guns, while the second was the 7th and 8th Companies. The two remaining machine-guns were placed on the right wing, thus increasing the firepower of the 1st Company and the machine-guns of the Nowogród Regiment. The attack was therefore secured on the right flank. There was no danger to the left flank, despite the lack of communication with the right wing of the Wilno Regiment, which was known to be somewhere in the woods or on the northern edge of the forest. After getting ready, the front companies moved onto the attack and at a fast pace in the forest heading north.

During this movement, the regiment's own artillery caused an unpleasant surprise, as it fired at the eastern edge of the forest, hitting a machine-gun platoon of Battalion 2/47, shattering it. The commanders were helpless as they could not communicate with the artillery. Soon the leading companies reached the northern edge of the forest and then advanced into the open field with the intention of attacking the village of Ciemne.

The attack of the right wing 5th Company broke down when came under heavy enemy fire , taking losses. The enemy not only stopped its advance, but also launched a counter-attack. The 5th Company became unstable and, having had its commander killed, started to flee in panic to the south.



The enemy took advantage of this and charged with a cavalry unit, directing it from the trees near Height 98⁷⁵ to the eastern edge of the forest and the western edge of Janków Nowy.

The 6th Company, which had left the forest and was advancing on Ciemne, noticed the 5th Company stop. Second Lieutenant Żuk ran towards the 5th Company in order to keep it moving of which he recalls:

I saw its right wing begin to retreat, and at the same time I saw a Bolshevik counter-attack coming out in a line from Ciemne. It seem to recall that I also saw Bolshevik cavalry. The 5th Company began to flee, dragging my 6th Company along as well. No force could stop them, so that I was left alone in the open ground with a few soldiers and a medical corporal. The Bolsheviks were some 100 m away. Before I could decide what to do, a shot was fired and I was wounded, lying in the open.

These incidents were observed from the company's reserve line. At that point the battalion commander threw the 7th Company into action, and sent his adjutant, 2nd-Lieutenant Majkowski, to the left wing, while he himself remained on the right. However, the use of the new company did not help much, as its commander (2nd-Lieutenant Komarewicz) testifies:

I immediately set off with the 7th Company and in a few minutes was mixed in with the companies retreating in panic.

The panic spread among the soldiers and my company also began to flee. All attempts on my part to stop the fleeing soldiers and even threats went unheeded. All three companies were retreating rapidly.

The enemy pursued the fleeing men with fire, as well as with infantry and cavalry, which now even threatened the 12th Wilno Company. It bent its right wing deep into the woods and held, driving back the insistent enemy with firepower.

The 2nd Battalion commander, seeing that the enemy had thrown back the attack and that the 7th Company had shared the fate of the leading companies, ordered the last 8th Company to enter the battle, but at that moment shouts rang out, "Cavalry to the right!". Some of the Nowogród Regiment was seen retreating from Jankov Nowy to the south and south-west. Soon the scattered riflemen spilled out of the forest into the fields between Nadma and the road.

The commander of the 2nd Battalion, seeing the fruitlessness of his efforts, withdrew with a handful of soldiers of the Nowogród regiment.

At that time Cadet Kotołowski was riding along the northern edge of the forest with a liaison officer, carrying orders to the commander of the 1st Brigade. He reached the right wing of the Wilno Regiment without issue and from there tried to gallop towards Janków Nowy. However, he came under heavy enemy fire, which forced him to turn back into the woods. Soon both his horse and the liaison officer's were killed and they had to break through on foot towards Czarna Stara. On the way they encountered scattered soldiers whom they tried unsuccessfully to stop. Finally, after many adventures, Cadet Kotołowski ran with the liaison officer to Czarna Stara House and gave the orders to Colonel Bejnar.

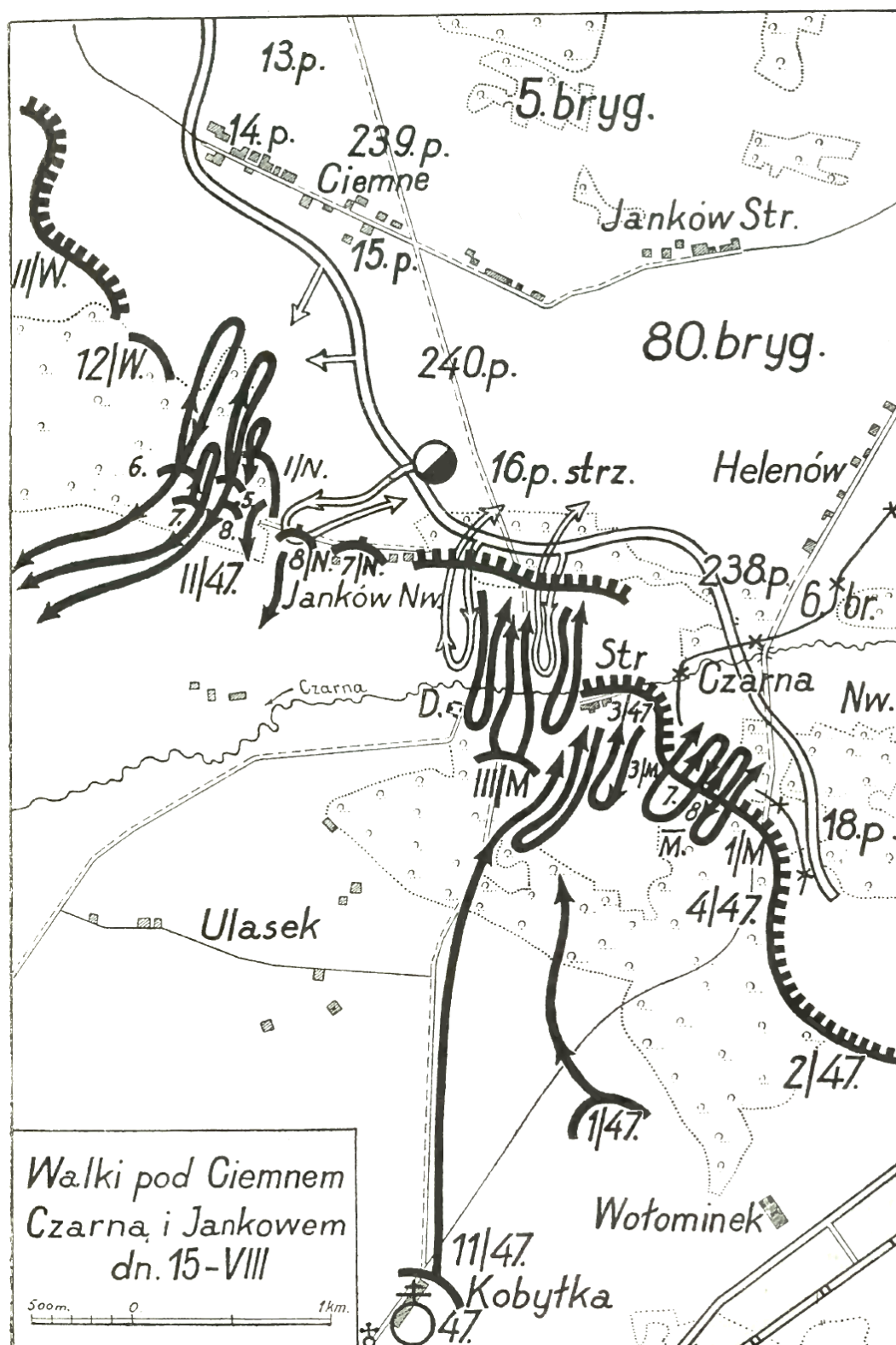
Meanwhile, the retreating rifle lines of Battalion 2/47 were observed from the Warsaw – Radzymin road, where Generals Żeligowski and Rządkowski and many other officers were present. They were all busy preparing for the final assault, which was to begin in a moment along the front, when they saw fleeing soldiers in the fields, pouring out of the woods. There were quite a number of foreign officers at the observation post, watching the battle with interest.

The sight of the fleeing clusters of soldiers had an unpleasant effect on the spectators on the road. The words of General Żeligowski, who assured them that all was well, as his division was heading into the rear and already had Mokre, lost their significance.

A French officer rode up to General Rządkowski on horseback and pointed at the retreating soldiers, unable to understand how they could withdraw so panic-stricken.

⁷⁵ On the German map the 98 refer to an unmarked hill, lying 100 metres south of the letter k of the word "Janków".





Sketch 69: the battle for Ciemne, Czarna and Janków

General Żeligowski recalled the moment:

Then a commotion was caused by some enemy movement in the Ciemne area and on this occasion the resulting shooting dispersed the Polish and foreign civilian dignitaries gathered on the road. In the momentary panic they could not believe that the Mokre hills behind Radzymin were already in our hands.

Both generals sent their staff officers to turn back the scattered soldiers. General Żeligowski sent 2nd-Lieutenant Łepkowski, and General Rządowski sent 2nd Lieutenants Moykowski and Styczyński. Other



officers went with them, on foot or on horseback, among them French officers. In addition, General Żeligowski gave a personal order to the commander of the 1st *Division* of the Lit-Bel FAR, Lieutenant Tomaszewski, to take a cannon to the infantry line. Tomaszewski ordered one cannon to be sent from the 1st Battery. Soon it left with the *division* commander and 2nd-Lieutenant Rajewicz to the vicinity of Height 94. It fired at some cavalry near Ciemne, while another cannon with Cadet Henneberg advanced to the road and fired at the enemy rifle lines coming out of the forest from near Janków Nowy.

The other batteries in front the second line, turned all their barrels towards the woods. Squadron 2/3 HRR began to gather the scattered soldiers of Battalion 2/47 and the Nowogród Regiment. It was also intended to use tanks for this improvised action, as the tank platoon commander approached General Rządkowski, "to report that four tanks were ready and could be used for action." The platoon leader recalls it in these words

I saw General Żeligowski and General Rządkowski doing everything they could to stop the fleeing men. Someone present suggested using the tanks to stop the infantry. After a while General Rządkowski ordered me to make an attack on the forest. One of the chauffeurs of several cars nearby (some foreign mission, I think) offered to drive me to the tanks.

The tank platoon was (after withdrawing from near Radzymin) in the second defensive line near the exit of the Radzymin road from the forest.

Lieutenant Matusik, commander of the 2nd Company and the MGs of Battalion 2/47, and 2nd-Lieutenant Majkowski, adjutant of the same battalion, personally received orders from their generals and, assisted by staff officers, put their troops in order, before moving back towards the forest. Their movement encountered no obstacles as the enemy withdrew. The companies linked up and occupied the northern and eastern edges of the forest. A badly wounded 2nd-Lieutenant Żuk and a dead 2nd-Lieutenant Górecki were taken from the battlefield.

The battalion's losses that day amounted to 66 men. A detailed calculation later in a report of 22 August included: one officer and three privates killed, two officers and 16 privates wounded, as well as 18 missing, seven deserters and one ill.

Fighting at Janków Nowy and Czarna Stara

On the afternoon of 15 August, the Nowogród Regiment prepared for further action. The left wing (1st and 2nd Battalions) was to co-operate with Battalion 2/47, while the right wing (3rd Battalion) was now to come under the orders of Lt-Colonel Adamowicz, who was tasked with the assault on Helenów. Behind the left wing of the Nowogród Regiment was the 46th BRR, which manned the section from Nadma and reached eastwards to the area of Czarna Stara House. The right wing of that regiment was its 3rd Battalion, which had set up an outpost from the 11th Company north of Czarna Stara House (about 50 paces).

Between 16:00 and 17:00 the 1st Nowogród Battalion launched an attack with the left wing of the 1st Company in conjunction with Battalion 2/47, which initially developed successfully. Soon, however, the assault on Ciemne stopped. Then enemy cavalry suddenly emerged from the woods near Height 98. It set off on a charge towards the western edge of Janków Nowy, where the 8th Nowogród Company was positioned, linking up to the left with the 4th Company. The commander of the 1st MG Company, Cadet Toporowski, recalls the moment:

During the attack, the Bolshevik cavalry unexpectedly appeared from the area of the forest near Helenów, charging at the left wing of the 2nd Battalion and the right wing of the 1st Battalion, where they caused a great deal of panic among the attackers. The privates of the 2nd Battalion, seeing the cavalry on the opposite side, began to flee to the town of Czarna, as a result of which the cavalry hit the right wing of the 1st Battalion.

The rifle line of the right wing then fled, and the cavalry, hacking at them with their sabres, raced after them.



In the end the 1st Battalion, after retreating into the woods, stopped the cavalry with fire, aided by an unknown Polish battery. The 8th Company could not be stopped, as its commander, 2nd-Lieutenant Zaklicki, had fallen wounded and was finished off with a lance, and a handful of his men were scattered. The 6th Company of Cadet Prażmowski managed to hold out in the vicinity of Janków Nowy.

The first news of the events that took place near Janków Nowy was brought to Czarna Stara House by scattered soldiers, fleeing in that direction. By chance men from the 46th Regiment were recognised in the first escaping soldiers. It was not known where they had come from, but there was no doubt that they were from that unfortunate regiment, on which all the failures were blamed.

The soldiers had come from the outpost of Company 11/46, which was near the Czarna Stara House. That outpost, seeing the Nowogród regiment attacked and retreating, had left its position – with half of the men fleeing, while the outpost's commander managed to stop the rest, and retired behind the Czarna River.

Soon more retreating soldiers appeared in the gardens and between Czarna Stara village and House, and a strong rifle line was formed.

Second Lieutenant Frambach, the brigade adjutant, ran outside the House buildings and noticed:

On the left side, in the meadow, several soldiers were running away from the enemy, and when I looked out behind the building, I saw that our entire left wing was at a distance of about 100 m and fleeing in panic, and that the enemy was some 200 m from Czarna. There was just enough time left to mount the horses and quickly leave the endangered spot.

The adjutant rode towards Ulasek and on the way encountered the 3rd Mińsk Battalion, which was marching towards Czarna Stara. Other officers (Major Oziewicz, the commander of the Nowogród Regiment, and Captain Morawski) tried to stop the retreating men. The situation was serious.

At that moment, Battery 2/11 HAD came to their assistance. The battery's log notes that at 16:45 Lieutenant Palmi, seeing the enemy advancing, returned to the battery, took the 1st Platoon and galloped at top speed to an open position. At 17:00 the platoon fired its first shots, which slowed the enemy somewhat.

By this time the enemy infantry had reached the Czarna River and was advancing southwards. They then clashed with the 3rd Mińsk Battalion, which counter-attacked vigorously. The power of the 3rd Battalion's attack, reinforced by groups of scattered soldiers, was so great that the enemy was immediately broken. The Russians began to retreat back across the river and then to the north.

See Sketch 69 and Panorama 8.

During this clash the commander of the 3rd Mińsk Battalion, Lieutenant Bielawski, fell seriously wounded. He was replaced by Lieutenant Małachowski and the battalion drove the enemy away from the line, previously occupied by the Nowogród Regiment. After the enemy was thrown back, the units regrouped and established communication with each other, while the command staffs returned to their previous positions.

Combats at Czarna Nowa and Stara

While the fighting was occurring at Ciemne and Janków, part of the Mińsk Regiment had moved for a second attack. This was before the planned attack for the whole Mińsk Regiment and the 3rd Nowogród Battalion.

The details of this attack are difficult to recover, especially the actions of the commanders. Neither the records nor the personal accounts have sufficient information, while Colonel Adamowicz retained no memory of the action. In any case, it can be said that the regimental commander's role was insignificant and consisted of sending out, one by one, the companies requested by the brigade commander. The assault planned for later by the whole regiment on Helenów was therefore not prepared and carried out by Lt-Colonel Adamowicz, as the situation had already changed.



At around 16:00, two companies of the 2nd Battalion, under the command of Lieutenant Łappo, covered on the wings by the 1st Battalion, launched an assault towards Czarna Nowa and Helenów. The 7th and 8th Companies advanced from the hills and at an interval of about 100 paces moved forward.

They had only managed to make a few bounds when they fell under heavy enemy machine-gun fire, which forced them to move forward slowly. The enemy had taken up positions hidden in the woods and among the summer houses, and could see the movements of the Polish units from the roofs of buildings perfectly. The company commanders, however, tried to push forward.

Lieutenant Okołów, having been wounded in the heel in the battle on the Berezina River, used a stick to support himself and raise his soldiers to attack.

Soon the attack collapsed. Second Lieutenant Okołów fell dead, along with five soldiers. The rest of the men, unable to withstand the heavy enemy fire, started to retreat, together with the 8th Company. Seeing this, the enemy launched a counter-attack.

The situation was dangerous, as at this point the scattered companies could not put up any organised resistance. They were helped by the fire of the 1st Company, 2nd-Lieutenant Weraksa, which enabled them to withdraw beyond the wires.

The retreat of the companies from the foreground, the offensive attitude of the enemy, the noise of the battle coming from the left wing, and the withdrawal of groups of soldiers towards Czarna Stara House also affected the companies that were still in position.

The 3rd Mińsk Company, which was at the eastern end of Czarna Stara, threatened from the east, had to withdraw to the south-west. Company 3/47, in the western part of the village, was greatly stressed by the fighting so far and, moreover, tired from the three-day battle. The company commander recounts:

Around 16:00 the Bolsheviks attacked more strongly on the left wing. I was with the soldiers and we defended ourselves bravely. At that moment a soldier from the right wing came running up and reported that my men there had already withdrawn and that the Bolsheviks were getting into our rear.

I saw that the situation was lost. Further defence was improbable, and I could not influence the soldiers because I had lost the ability to speak. I gave the signal to retreat, notified the battalion by phone and took my camera.

However, the report was wrong, the right wing had held, and moved away only when it saw me retreating.

However, I couldn't save the situation at that point, mainly due to my lack of speech, because you had to shout and I couldn't.

In reality, however, the right wing was retreating – although not Company 3/47, but the 2nd Mińsk Battalion and the 3rd Mińsk Company from the eastern edge of Czarna Stara were moving back. Company 3/47 withdrew to the south-west.

The situation between Czarna Stara House and Height 109 was now fragile. The danger was all the more serious as the brigade and Nowogród Regiment commands were busy fighting at Janków Nowy and the 1st Brigade's reserve – the 3rd Mińsk Battalion – had been drawn in that direction.

The area of the fighting at Czarna Nowa belonged to the command of Battalion 1/47. However, as a result of the interchange of units, the lack of communication and especially the lack of knowledge of the 1st Brigade's intentions, the battalion command had not been aware for a long time of what was happening in its sector.

Upon hearing that the front had been broken, 2nd-Lieutenant Sierakowski, the adjutant of the 1st Battalion, directed Company 1/47 from the reserve, as well as the free men of the 1st MG Company, and ordered them to advance along the trenches of the 4th Company to the north. At the same time he communicated with the commander of the 47th Regiment, who sent the 11th Company, which had just arrived from Struga from the 21st Brigade's reserve, in the direction of Czarna Stara.



Captain Niedźwiedzki, who had just arrived to take command of the 2nd Mińsk Battalion, was in the battle line. By the time he managed to get his bearings on the situation, the Mińsk and 47th Regiments had begun to withdraw, as we have seen.

The 2nd Battalion was in such a state that they first had to be put in order before returning to the battle. Eventually Captain Niedźwiedzki managed to reassemble it, and part of the 1st Battalion, and lead them into a counter-attack to retake the lost positions.

So the units of the 1st Brigade and the 47th Regiment moved to a counter-attack. The 3rd Mińsk Battalion, part of the Nowogród Regiment, and even some of the 46th Regiment made a counter-attack on Czarna Stara House. Company 3/47 together with the arriving Company 11/47 and groups of soldiers from the Mińsk Regiment headed for Czarna Stara, while the units of the Mińsk Regiment – the 2nd Battalion and a part of the 1st Battalion, under Captain Niedźwiedzki – led the counter-attack to the north-east towards Czarna Nowa.

The enemy resisted for a while, but was eventually repulsed. The Mińsk units recaptured their former positions and even followed the enemy as far as Czarna Nowa near Helenów, from where they had to retreat. During this counter-attack, Captain Niedźwiedzki was seriously wounded, and Cadet Nowakowski, commanding the 8th Company after 2nd-Lieutenant Okołów was killed, fell.

Once things calmed down, the troops were put in order and communications were established. By nightfall it had quietened down in the foreground. The tired troops could now rest.

Between 19:00 and 20:00 the 2nd Battalion's kitchens arrived. The soldiers, who had not eaten anything for 24 hours, rushed as one man towards the food. It is possible that the enemy noticed this movement and took it as a sign of panic, as they tried to attack.

At the order, "form rifle line!", the clusters of soldiers gathered around the kitchens dispersed quickly and with rifles, but naturally also with canteens in hand, they leapt "with a fury" into a counter-attack – and drove the enemy from the foreground – and from the kitchens.

In the evening the 2nd Battalion received a march company, which for the time being was not disbanded, but left in readiness as a reserve. At 19:50 Major Rutkiewicz, to whom the 1st and 2nd Battalions were subordinate, reported on the manning of the positions. The 2nd Company occupied positions between the 3rd and 4th Companies of the 47th Regiment, while the 1st and 8th Mińsk Companies remained in the foreground, having communication with the 3rd Mińsk Company, located on the eastern edge of Czarna Stara. The rest of the 1st and 2nd Battalions remained in reserve.

Major Rutkiewicz requested that the section he was to occupy be specified more precisely. The 47th Regiment command intervened in the matter of the shuffled units in the line. Rutkiewicz was ordered to leave with his men, but reported that he felt that he should not leave without some relieving units as:

... the line of the 47th Regiment is thin and nervous enough anyway.

We have seen that the fighting at Ciemne, Janków Nowy, Czarna Stara and Czarna Nowa was quite heavy. Polish troops pressed at various points along a wide stretch, but at around 17:00 they were met by counter-attacks all along the front, which were a heavy blow.

In the conditions, holding the positions as they were was considered a great success. The brigade commander reported on 16 August:

Due to the general condition of the soldiers, I could not start any action at night

On 15 August, after putting the troops in order, he reported the course of action as follows:

Before starting the decisive action of the Mińsk Regiment on Helenów, a company of the 46th IR positioned to the left of us (how it got there, I do not know), started to panic and fled – dragging our left, then right wing. The enemy was already approaching the Czarna River, when the 3rd Mińsk Battalion, standing in reserve, counter-attacked, holding back and then throwing off the enemy, taking MGs and prisoners from the Soviet 16th Regiment. Fleeing in panic, the



men of our right wing and the 47th IR were held back by the officers of the Mińsk Regiment and Nowogród Regiment and led back to their previous positions.

At present I have the whole brigade on the Janków Nowy – Czarna line, the 46th IR and Major Matczyński's battalion join us on the left.

The artillery's work is scandalous. During the day our artillery several times prevented our troops attacking from out of Janków Nowy. During our re-occupation of Janków Nowy it opened fire on our trenches, inflicting serious losses on us. It cannot prepare our attacks, having no observation points and no knowledge of the situation. Yes, it is an obstacle to our action. An order for the commander of the 3rd *Divizion* to report to the Brigade Headquarters, and for an observer to be placed in the line remains without effect.

Our own losses are very considerable. A large percentage of officers.

During the night of 15/16 August, the 1st Brigade and regiment commands were busy sorting out the troops. Their task was to maintain their positions.

Assault on Radzymin and Ciemne and Operations at Mokre

In the evening of 15 August the Wilno Regiment prepared for the attack, to capture Ciemne and the first line of positions in the Helenów – Rżyska sector. The regiment was to attack with two battalions in the first line: the 2nd Battalion with a platoon of tanks was to attack Ciemne village and the 1st Battalion to the left of it. The 3rd Battalion, whose companies were the most fatigued by the fighting so far, was to be the regiment's reserve.

Two march companies arrived at the division: one of them was given to the Mińsk Regiment, while the other (march company of the 54th Regiment) was kept by General Rządkowski in reserve. Around 16:00 the general decided to bring that company into the battle, and he ordered its commander to march along the road towards Radzymin. General Żeligowski, who was present, added: "Happiness to the Lord". Lt-Colonel Rybicki, who the company commander met on the way, ordered him to go further on, until he met the commander of the Wilno Regiment, who would give him a task.

At the level of the forest near the brickyard, the company stopped and, on the order of Major Bobiatyński, hid in the roadside ditches. The regimental commander had no time to disband the company and incorporate it into the regiment's ranks. So Major Bobiatyński decided to use the company in the attack, as a lead company, to take advantage of the enthusiasm inherent in young soldiers. But there was also a possibility that the arriving company might collapse, something that Major Bobiatyński feared. So he issued, as recalled by its commander, 2nd-Lieutenant Kijak, the following order:

You will attack with your company and a platoon of tanks the village of Ciemne, which you must take. Tell your men that there will be machine-guns of the 2nd Wilno Rifle Regiment. They cannot retreat, because the machine-guns will open fire on them. You must not retreat.

Kijak asked what he should do after capturing the village, to which he received the answer:

Remain at the front of the village (i.e. the eastern edge) and defend it for the night.

In addition, Major Bobiatyński instructed the company to form in three lines, the first of which would go with the tanks, and the others at a distance of 100 paces. The company commander then moved the men from the road to the woods, from where he pointed out Ciemne to the soldiers (Panorama 6) and stressed to them

Do not to be afraid of anything, but move boldly with the tanks, then the Bolsheviks will flee ...
We must act boldly, because all the staff are watching this attack.

After these words from the company commander, "the men were a good mood – they began to threaten the Bolsheviks." Kijak did not mention Major Bobiatyński's reservations to the soldiers. After preparation with fire, which took a long time, and the occupation of the starting positions by three tanks (one had broken down before reaching the starting positions), between the brickyard and the forester's lodge the



companies of the 2nd Battalion formed up one behind the other at a distance of a few dozen paces from each other, with the march company in front of them a little to the left. To the left of the 2nd Battalion and the march company, the 1st Battalion advanced, followed shortly behind by two companies of Battalion 2/30 (Map 9 in Appendix 3).

At the observation post of Battery 2/1 Lit-Bel FAR (near the forester's lodge) was 2nd-Lieutenant Garliński, several French and an English officer, who watched the preparations for the attack.

Finally the order was given to set off. The orderly, dense rifle lines advanced from the vicinity of the brickyard. Silence reigned for some time on the enemy side. Only when the march company had moved about 400 paces did heavy enemy machine-gun fire suddenly break out.

The riflemen of the Wilno march company dropped to the ground. Second Lieutenant Kijak tried to restart them moving, as he recalled

At first the attempts to get the men to move forward had no effect. Only the threat that I would shoot worked, so that the dozen or so closest to me moved, followed by the rest of the first line. The example of the first line had an effect on the next lines, which also stood up from the ground.

Now the march company moved at a run and overtook the tanks. On the order of the company commander, the soldiers began to shoot on the march. At this time the tanks also started to fire, but their fire was ineffective, as:

The shells of the tanks went only a few paces, or were directed into the sky.

The leading men had to slow down their pace of advance, so that the three lines of the march company merged into one. The men of the 2nd Battalion also clustered together.

At a distance of about 400 metres from the village, the commander of the march company gave the order and:

The company, without any hesitation, and with a shout of "hura!", set off with great enthusiasm to storm the village.

The enemy ceased fire and left the village so quickly that the march company, which was pursuing, saw the fleeing enemy men only after reaching the eastern edge of the village. At a distance of a few dozen paces from the village, the company stopped and took cover.

Meanwhile, dusk had already fallen when the mixed companies of the 2nd Battalion went into the middle of Ciemne. Two tanks stopped at the western edge of the village, while the commander's tank remained in front. It was now difficult to advance further without first sorting out the units, and anyway the fighting had quietened down, so the companies could be collected in peace. Second Lieutenant Turczyński recounts:

It was not until we got out of the huts and fences of Ciemne into an open area, fit to take a formation, that the company commanders got round to putting their units in order – encouraged and assisted energetically by the battalion commander, Lieutenant Orzechowski. It took us a considerable amount of time.

The 2nd Battalion commander, although he had not established a link, knew that the march company was in position in front of him. He did not make any further move, due to the darkness and the lack of communication with his neighbours. He reported to the regimental commander:

I report that I am on the eastern edge of the village of Ciemne. Orientation is very difficult. All the companies have shuffled together. I ask you to send some of the reserve and ammunition. There is no communication with Nowogród Regiment. Who is to the right of the 1st Battalion?

The 1st Battalion, which at that time was advancing between the villages of Ciemne and Wiktorów, reached a grove north of the village of Ciemne. During this advance the left wing, the 4th Company, having no communication to the left, unexpectedly encountered a small detachment of enemy cavalry, which caused temporary confusion.



However the 1st Battalion encountered little resistance and reached Janków Stary, where it stopped and established communication to the right with the Wilno march company. The battalion's commander, Captain Piecków, met personally with 2nd-Lieutenant Kijak.

The commander of the Wilno Regiment moved with the 3rd Battalion to Ciemne, where he then brought the regiment's staff units.

Actions of the 19th Brigade and 48th Regiment

At about 17:00 the 28th Regiment was in the vicinity of Aleksandrów: the 1st Battalion was 1½ km north of the village, two companies of the 2nd Battalion were at the edge of the forest and the remaining companies of that battalion were to the north-east of Aleksandrów. Between the 1st and 2nd Battalions was the 1st Grodno Battalion, the rest whose regiment lay to the right of Battalion 2/28. Battalion 3/28 and the technical company were in Aleksandrów. At this time the 28th Regiment had no communication with the 29th Regiment.

Between 17:00 and 18:00 Major Sobieszczak received an order from the brigade commander, which stated that the 29th Regiment was to man from Height 89 to Height 92. The 28th Regiment received the task of advancing one battalion to Mokre and to the Zawady – Radzymin road, in order to secure the right wing of the 29th Regiment, which was occupying Mokre. In addition, the brigade commander turned his attention to Radzymin and ordered deep reserves to be held. This task could be understood to simply mean that one battalion of the 28th Regiment was to march to Mokre.

So the 28th Regiment commander assigned the 1st Battalion to Lieutenant Boski. Part of the 2nd Battalion was to maintain communication between the 1st Battalion and the rest of the regiment. The 3rd Battalion remained in reserve in Aleksandrów with the task of conducting reconnaissance towards Radzymin.

Fairly soon afterwards a new order from the brigade commander made it known that the 30th Regiment was to attack Radzymin from the south-west and the 28th Regiment was to support the assault.

This task was given to Lieutenant Lepkowski, commander of the 3rd Battalion, who prepared two companies in case it was necessary to co-operate with the 30th Regiment. So the attention of the 28th Regiment commander was turned in two directions: towards Mokre and towards Radzymin.

The 1st Battalion made a march towards Mokre. It went through the forest, not wanting to expose itself to fire from the north-east. Soon Lieutenant Boski encountered units of the 29th Regiment on the forest road, which were sorting themselves after an unsuccessful attack and taking up positions. Boski received information about the situation and, having communicated with Captain Rogowski, commander of Battalion 1/29, he occupied his position, while the 29th Regiment moved to the left. Any further march to Mokre was halted. The information received was sent back to the regimental commander.

The news surprised Major Sobieszczak, who immediately alerted the brigade commander with the following report:

The 29th IR has retreated, leaving my wing exposed. Right wing also not well secured. Please secure my left wing from Fort Benjaminów in the direction of Mokre.

At that time Major Sobieszczak had all his battalions in action: The 2nd Battalion, which was manning the edge of the forest, took up positions next to the 1st Battalion on a hill at the edge of the forest, while the 3rd Battalion had its attention turned towards Radzymin. Sobieszczak (5 minutes after the was received) messaged the commander of the 1st Grodno Battalion that "the situation requires" that he should remain where he was with his battalion until the position was clarified.

At this time Lt-Colonel Thomme gave Major Sobieszczak the following order:

It is necessary to use one's reserves so as to hold Mokre absolutely, and establish communication with the right wing of the 29th IR.

Explain what caused the withdrawal of the 29th IR. Inform Major Walter, commander of the 29th IR, he is to retake his previous positions.



Please detail the situation in reply.

Is Mokre in our hands? Immediately state why there is no telephone connection.

After receiving this order, Major Sobieszczak ordered the commander of the 1st Battalion:

Because of the attack of the 30th IR and the 1st Lit-Bel on Radzymin, you must attack and occupy Mokre, establishing communication with the 29th IR. Write to its commander that by order of the Brigade commander he is to take the old positions immediately.

You will be given two companies of 2/28 by order of the Battalion command.

After taking Radzymin and passing it through, establish communication with the 30th Regiment.

At 20:35 Major Sobieszczak reported to the Brigade Commander, that the 29th Regiment and the left wing of the 28th Regiment had retreated and that Major Walter was reportedly wounded. Furthermore, he reported that the commander of the 1st Battalion had been ordered to "occupy Mokre unconditionally" and, concluding the report, added:

The 30th IR is entering Radzymin. I will send a report on the seizure of Mokre.

Sobieszczak now had a lot of news about the progress of the 30th Regiment's action from the commander of the 3rd Battalion, who he ordered at 20:00:

If the situation demands, push two companies to the assistance of the 30th Regiment from the west to Radzymin.

Lieutenant Łepkowski, commander of the 3rd Battalion, was conducting continual reconnaissance towards Radzymin, using a cavalry platoon (Squadron 3/201 LHR), which he had "managed to take possession of," as he reported to the regimental commander. He added:

I have the impression, judging from what I hear and from observation, that there is no one in Radzymin, and that the enemy, as I have observed, is departing for Wiktorów. I think that if the 1st Lit-Bel carried out a real attack on the town, which it has not done so far, the operation would have been successful and the trenches occupied along the river.

Soon after Łepkowski was able to reassure the regiment's commander, that he was in communication with the 30th Regiment and stated that the 2nd Grodno Battalion had moved towards Radzymin from the direction of Aleksandrów with the task of attacking the town from the west. From this information Łepkowski concluded that,

In view of the fact that there is complete silence in the Radzymin sector and that I have also observed the 30th Regiment's entrance into the town, I can assume that the matter of assistance is out of the question for the time being.

Lieutenant Łepkowski then received a letter from the commander of Battalion 1/30, Major Muszyński, who reported from Cegielnia to the 28th Regiment at 22:00:

The detachments of the 30th IR have taken Radzymin, manned it, and the forward patrols have gone to Dybów. In order to avoid being flanked it is necessary to take Mokre, if not already occupied. The 2/30 BRR is advancing on Wiktorów from Ciemne. General Haller is in Radzymin.

Now the 28th Regiment was covered from the east and could direct its attention towards Mokre. The regiment's HQ and staff troops were moved to an isolated house at the edge of the forest, from where wire communication with the battalions and brigade was established.

Lieutenant Boski, who took over a section in the forest on the hills near Mokre from the 29th Regiment, had heard about their situation from the commanders of that regiment. They probably did not exaggerate the enemy's superior numbers, but spoke of a considerable force at Mokre. Probably for these reasons Boski decided to remain in a defensive posture. However, in view of the regimental commander's order to



attack Mokre, he sent the 1st Company, under the command of 2nd-Lieutenant Janus, with the task of seizing that village.

Janus, who was disoriented and did not have a map, reported to one of the battalion commanders of the 29th Regiment (Lieutenant Żukowski?) asking for help. The latter reported, as 2nd-Lieutenant Janus recalls:

To attack that village with one company would mean that I would be leading myself and my soldiers to certain doom. He had attacked this village before the evening with two companies and had to retreat before the enemy strength.

Janus informed his battalion commander of this, but regardless he set off for Mokre and reached the edge of the forest near the village. He now sent out patrols to ascertain the enemy's position.

The 1st Company remained in that advanced position during the night, covering the other companies, as the battalion commander soon abandoned the night attack on Mokre. (Map 9 in Appendix 3). The assault on Mokre was therefore not undertaken due to, "darkness falling and difficulty orienting oneself in the terrain."

The 1st Battalion's companies took up positions in the forest, while the 3rd Company (right wing) reached the edge of the forest, where it joined up with the 2nd Battalion, which was manning the edge of the forest facing Aleksandrów.

After midnight the commander of the 28th Regiment received an order from his brigade commander, which once again stated that the regiment was to garrison the section from Mokre inclusive to the Zawady – Radzymin road, and noted that:

Due to the late completion of today's action the 19th Brigade would not be relieved until tomorrow.

During the events described above, the 29th Regiment (the other half of 19th IB) remained in its positions. The 3rd Battalion occupied the trenches in the first line of positions, with Captain Wilczyński initially reporting to the brigade that the regiment held part of the village of Mokre, and at 22:30 he reported that the regiment was holding:

... from Height 89 inclusive to the south-western edge of the village of Mokre.

In reality, however, as indicated by the account of the commander of the right wing company, 2nd-Lieutenant Kortylewicz, its right wing reached to the houses in the forest – which was Nowe Mokre – where it sent one platoon as cover. As it turned out later, this platoon "ran away" into the forest. This was understandable, as with the withdrawal of the 2nd Battalion from near Mokre, it could not remain so isolated for too long.

Captain Wilczyński asked twice for the regiment to be relieved. During the night Lt-Colonel Thomme ordered Captain Rogowski to take command of the regiment in his stead. Captain Rogowski recalls:

At the time I did not make any regrouping, only giving orders to hold on to the occupied positions at all costs, to feed the men, and to keep them on constant combat alert.

It was particularly difficult on the night of 15/16 August to establish and maintain communication with the 28th Regiment. The mood in the ranks of the 29th Regiment was captured in the combat diary of the 11th Company in this way:

Situation, uncertain – complete lack of news from the right wing, where we have no communication. Finally late at night we establish it with the 28th IR. The 28th IR had been wandering around somewhere in the woods all day – it was supposed to attack Radzymin and did not attack – nevertheless they tell us it is a heroic regiment.

In the evening of 15 August, in front of the 48th Regiment was quiet. It was only deeper into the foreground that there was shooting from the covering units, which made it clear that the enemy was



holding his troops on the Rządza River. Battalion 2/48, which manned the first line, was in communication with the 29th Regiment, from where it received news, unclear as it was, of the 10th Division's activities.

Around 18:00 the regimental commander, Colonel Łukoski, arrived at the sector of the 2nd Battalion. Lieutenant Sobolewski, commander of the 6th Company, turned to him with a request that his company should be relieved, so that he could make an attack on the enemy, who was making it difficult to capture Mokre.

The regimental commander was rather sceptical about this proposal, probably due to the rather unclear general situation. He knew that so far a considerable part of the 10th Division had been fighting in the Mokre area, so the action of one company – as the 48th Regiment could not afford to send any more – would probably achieve little. In the end, however, Sobolewski was allowed to make an excursion.

The lieutenant, who knew the area of operations well, intended to cross the river at nightfall near the former positions of the 7th Company, and then take a road through the forest to the village of Łoś. The advance was to be supported by the 2nd MG Company, which (mainly by 37-mm cannon fire) was to shell a hill in the forest and then move its fire to the enemy's rear. This was mainly for the morale effect, and to give the enemy the impression that the Poles were attacking head-on, so diverting its attention.

At nightfall on 15 August the lieutenant sent two NCOs to crawl over the river and ascertain the location of enemy outposts at the edge of the forest.

Having made preparations, the company set off, taking advantage of the darkness of the night. Two footbridges were placed over the river and without noise, unnoticed by the enemy, they marched single file to the other side. The march continued. Here and there a canteen or entrenching tool clattered, but fortunately the enemy heard nothing.

And finally, deep in the forest below the hill, there was a sudden shout "Stop! What idiot goes there?" A moment's silence and soon: the company was under attack. Across the forest, into the trees, enemy bullets rained down. However, as soon as the shots rang out, the soldiers of the 6th Company, in the line they were in, fell down and fired.

It had been agreed that the 3rd MG Company would come up at this point, but its action was delayed for various reasons.

So Lieutenant Sobolewski raised the men and ran forward in the darkness. This was successful and it was soon found that the enemy had fled. The company passed over the Russian trenches, where they found a Chinese man and some soldiers of Asian origin with a machine-gun.

Once the company was sorted out, Lieutenant Sobolewski set off in the direction of Łoś, covered to the sides by patrols at close range. No obstacles were encountered on the way, although at one point a rocket was fired, which caused the company's soldiers to start shooting, especially the four French machine-guns, which had set off on a sortie. A great deal of noise was made in and around the forest.

Eventually the edge of the woods west of the Łoś was reached, where they stopped. More enemy were found further to the east, in Łoś and beyond the village. It was about 13:00 when Lieutenant Sobolewski sent a report on the results of the raid so far, asking for another company to be sent, with which he intended to attack Łoś (Sketch 70).

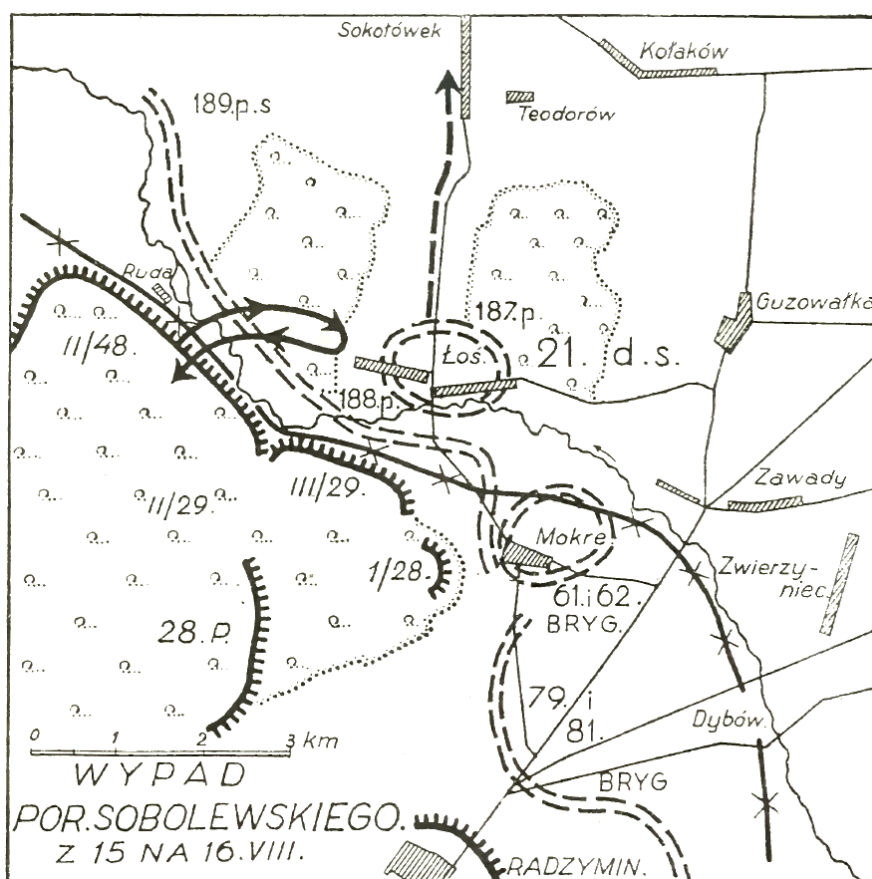
However, the battalion commander sent his adjutant, 2nd-Lieutenant Wincenty Kozłowski, who reported that Lieutenant Sobolewski was to return to his position. The battalion commander probably thought that the 6th Company might get into trouble that night and not get out of it. Sobolewski replied:

Go tell Captain Grodzicki that they won't do anything to me, and that I can always withdraw.

Sobolewski intended to take advantage of the success he had achieved, and to this end, if not to attack further into the night, then to hold out until dawn, then to push the enemy from Łoś. However, the adjutant soon returned for a second time and confirmed the order to return.

Late at night the company, unhindered by the enemy, returned to its positions.





Sketch 70: Raid by Lieutenant Sobolewski on 15/16 August

This raid caused the enemy a great deal of trouble. We will learn more about its impact in the next chapter.

Seizure of Radzymin

The 30th Regiment, which received the task of leading the assault on Radzymin, in the afternoon of 15 August had two battalions in the vicinity of Słupno, while the regimental HQ and the 3rd Battalion were in Izabelin.

Between 16:00 and 17:00, having received news of the loss of Radzymin by the 1st Lit-Bel Division, the commander of the 1st Battalion received an order to organise the defence of Sector 2 of the positions opposite the villages of Mata and Słupno. However, a dozen or so minutes later Major Muszyński, the commander of the 1st Battalion, received a short order:

General Żeligowski has ordered a general attack for 17:30, preceded by artillery fire, to finally reach the former line of trenches in front of Radzymin.

Soon Lt-Colonel Jacynik arrived at the leading battalions, taking over command of the 20th Brigade and sending Major Muszyński to lead the regiment.

Major Muszyński's orders were that two companies should move along the road to Radzymin, and the other two to Ciemne. The latter two companies were to cover the actions of the companies attacking Radzymin.

The rest, i.e. 4 companies, were to advance behind the companies attacking Radzymin. The 3rd Battalion was to advance to the crossroads in the vicinity of Height 104. Battery 5/10 FAR was to support the regiment's attack and for this purpose it took up a position near Height 104 and, in the course of the operation, it advanced an observation point to the eastern edge of Słupno village. In addition, as we have seen, the assault on Radzymin received strong support from the batteries of the 19th Brigade and the Middle Artillery Subgroup. The 19th Brigade command was informed that the 30th Regiment was to



advance with one battalion towards Radzymin, while the second battalion was to secure itself from the direction of Ciemne.

Before the regiment set off, a platoon of mounted scouts (about 50 sabres) was sent under the command of 2nd-Lieutenant Orłowski to carry out reconnaissance but primarily to establish contact with the neighbouring units. In the vicinity of Cegielnia, Orłowski reported to the commander of one of the 1st Lit-Bel units, who gave him orders to carry out reconnaissance between the village of Cegielnia and Radzymin.

Upon receiving this order, the platoon rode without issue to the right of the road and got on the Ciemne to Radzymin road. It soon reached the vicinity of the Jewish cemetery in Radzymin. A woman ran out of a nearby house and warned them that there was an enemy in the town. This was true, as moments later shots were fired from the town in the direction of the platoon. The scouts dismounted from their horses and left them at the cemetery wall, while they set off on foot towards the town.

When they reached the crossroads (next to the Administration building), a strong firefight with the enemy patrols ensued, but they were dispersed and the unit advanced as far as Radzymin's market square. Horse patrols, sent in pursuit of the retreating enemy to the north-east (along the street with the Catholic cemetery), were engaged and driven back by enemy machine-gun fire. Finally Orłowski, seeing that it would be difficult to remain in the city, as the enemy was again appearing in the streets, withdrew his platoon along the road next to the cemetery back to the place from where he had set out.

After reporting the result of the reconnaissance, the platoon left for the 30th IR. At this time that unit was marching from Słupno to Cegielnia, encountering nearby units of the 1st Lit-Bel Division, which were preparing or about to launch an attack.

Soon the 1st Company, under Lieutenant Petelewicz, advanced from Cegielnia along the road to Wioska Radzyńska. The 3rd Company followed it. The 5th and 6th Companies, without reaching Cegielnia, turned right from the road and stood in the woods near the brickyard. Meanwhile the 7th and 8th Companies moved into Cegielnia, where they stopped, with the 8th Company manning the western edge of the village and the 7th Company garrisoning the eastern edge. The rest of the 1st Battalion also halted in the vicinity of Cegielnia.

So the majority of the 30th Regiment only reached the positions already held by the units of the 1st Lit-Bel Division, where they remained until the end of the operations. Only two companies were sent towards Radzymin. (Map 9 in Appendix 3).

Around 19:00 the 1st Company, having just reached Wioska Radzyńska, was hit by enemy machine-gun fire. It soon ceased and only some disorderly rifle shooting could be heard. Lieutenant Petelewicz concluded that, "there were insignificant Bolshevik units in Radzymin," and so ordered the troops to advance more rapidly.

Soon the leading platoon with Sergeant Jani reached the junction of the roads from Aleksandrów and Cegielnia and encountered more enemy resistance. He was quickly supported by the 2nd Platoon under Sergeant Szwarocki, who, having driven back an enemy cavalry unit with fire, also pushed forward.

The streets of the town became busy, as patrols of Squadron 3/210 LHR and Squadron 2/4 HRR entered it in the vicinity of the brewery at the southern end. These patrols, as Major Muszyński mentioned in his report, stirred up "confusion in the enemy ranks and forced them to withdraw."

One such patrol of the Horse Rifles, sent from Aleksandrów under Sergeant Kozłowski, broke into the town around the brewery and pursued the enemy. Two of the cavalymen even rode as far as the market square, where there was still a lot of enemy attempting to leave the town. One of the two was wounded and the other, Senior Cavalryman Nieradko, was chased through the streets. The rest of the patrol now came into contact with a company of the 30th Regiment and advanced alongside it.

So the town was easily captured: the 1st Company marched through Radzymin, with General Haller arriving by car just behind it. The town was taken with the loss of only two wounded.

Soon after the 3rd Company arrived, coming under the orders of Lieutenant Petelewicz. The 1st Company went to north-eastern edge of the town, securing it from Zawady, Dybów and Kraszew, while the 3rd



Company was used to clear the town and then went to the northern edge of the town. By about 21:00 Radzymin was completely in Polish hands. At this time units of the Grodno Regiment arrived from Aleksandrów.

The rest of the 30th Regiment did not enter the battle, but stopped near Cegielnia. Two companies of the 30th Regiment, after the Wilno Regiment occupied Ciemne, moved to that village and established a link with the leading units of the Wilno Regiment. However the 1st and 3rd Companies, which went to the north-eastern outskirts of Radzymin, did not link up either to the right or to the left, nor did they have the strength to advance any further.

The 20th Brigade's situation report of 16 August, describing the course of the action on 15 August, stated that, "due to the darkness the troops could not advance."

The 1st Company sent a number of patrols to the front and to the wings to reconnoitre the position. One of these patrols, with Sergeant Szwarocki, sent in the direction of Dybów, found wagons hauling on the Radzymin – Zawady road, accompanied by, "indescribable shouting and an unusually loud noise". The NCO reported this to the company commander, but received a reply that, "the 28th ID had advanced and these were its wagons."

Between 21:00 and 22:00 Major Muszyński had news of the 1st Battalion's seizure of Radzymin, of patrols being sent to Dybów and of the 2nd Battalion's advance on Wiktorów. This last piece of news turned out to be inaccurate. At 22:00 Major Muszyński reported that information to the 28th Regiment.

General Żeligowski was now on the road south of Cegielnia. He was not satisfied with the reports he received, as he gave the following order to Lt-Colonel Jacynik:

To the Commander of the 20th Brigade.

In view of the fact that the 11th and 1st L-B Divisions are not advancing it is necessary to support the 30th IR, in consultation with the command of the L-B Division, which is on the Radzymin – Warsaw road.

It is necessary to act energetically in order to finish quickly and not to leave the matter uncompleted for the night.

Żeligowski

Mokre is occupied by the 19th IB. Establish close contact with the L-B Division and aid them.

Żeligowski

However, Lt-Colonel Jacynik probably believed that once Radzymin was seized, the action was finished, and:

... went personally to the Radzymin – Warsaw road to find the L-B Division commander and report to him on the situation, as well as to discuss the matter of relieving the 30th IR with units of the 1st L-B Division, as provided for in the orders of the 10th ID commander.

Near Cegielnia Lt-Colonel Jacynik met General Haller and Lt-Colonel Rybicki, who, according to the history of the 30th Regiment, replied:

... that the 30th Regiment would not be relieved until the following day, as the battle for Radzymin was still on-going and the situation in that area had not yet been clarified.

At 23:00 Jacynik returned to the regiment HQ, which had now been moved with the 3rd Battalion to Słupno. Around this time Major Muszyński, deputy commander of the 30th Regiment, wrote from Cegielnia to the Wilno Regiment:

I am communicating that, by order of the 10th Division commander, the 30th Regiment is to move its left flank in the direction of Zegrze. In view of this, I ask you to replace two of my companies in Radzymin. To the west of Radzymin are units of the 28th IR.



However, there was no way that the Wilno Regiment could relieve the 30th Regiment, as it was operating on a different sector and facing a different direction. Nevertheless, the 30th Regiment was convinced that the task had been fulfilled, and so, apart from two companies, no more were brought into action.

This Grodno Regiment had spent the afternoon in the vicinity of Aleksandrów, waiting for the advance of the 10th Division. Before 16:00 its commander reported to the Wilno commander:

The Grodno Regiment is concentrated in Aleksandrów, it awaits the action of the 10th ID, which is to attack: 28th IR to Mokre, 29th IR to Łoś.

Between 16:00 and 17:00 orders were given to the 2nd Lit-Bel Brigade commander for the evening attack. The Grodno Regiment was tasked with leading the attack on Radzymin and further east. Its HQ had liaison with the 28th IR and the Wilno Regiment. Lt-Colonel Bohaterewicz informed the commander of the Wilno Regiment that:

The Grodno Regiment, concentrated in Aleksandrów, will attack in the direction of Radzymin – Wiktorów. It is co-operating with the 30th IR with one battalion to Cegielnia – Radzymin, the second one to Ciemne.

However, the Grodno Regiment did not set out at the appointed hour, as it was expecting the arrival of the 30th Regiment. Moreover, we saw that the 28th Regiment tried to stop the 1st Grodno Battalion at a position near Mokre.

Finally, late in the evening, the Grodno Regiment set off from the Aleksandrów area towards Radzymin and, without encountering any enemy, entered that town from the west. After capturing the town, the Grodno Regiment halted at the market square, where it remained for a long time. It was 02:00 before it moved in the direction of Wiktorów. Squadron 2/3 HRR also moved at that time from Cegielnia to Wioska Radzyńska.

Field Commanders During and After the Assault

In the evening of 15 August, General Żeligowski stayed on the road for some time and awaited reports from his subordinate commands on the performance of their tasks. He was probably not satisfied with the course of action of the 1st Lit-Bel Division, which caused him to give an order to Lt-Colonel Jacynik to assist the 1st Lit-Bel Division, noting that:

It is necessary to act vigorously and not to leave things unfinished overnight.

However, after Radzymin was taken, Lt-Colonel Jacynik, as well as Major Muszyński of the 30th Regiment, who had led the action on Radzymin, believed that the regiment's task had been completed and demanded that the 1st Lit-Bel Division relieve the 30th Regiment.

The commander of the 19th Brigade, Lt-Colonel Thomme, was alerted by reports from the commander of the 28th Regiment, which indicated that the situation in Mokre was unclear. Thomme moved his staging area to Aleksandrów, while the brigade's liaison officer, 2nd-Lieutenant Łączyński, was left in Wólka Radzyńska to receive reports and orders until the Wólka Radzyńska – Aleksandrów connection was built. The connection with the 10th Division was broken.

After receiving a message from the 28th Regiment, Thomme ordered it to, "hold Mokre absolutely". At the same time (19:55) he ordered the commander of Squadron 2/4 Horse Rifles (which was in the vicinity of Aleksandrów) to send two platoons to Fort Benjaminów, in order to establish communication between the 28th and 29th Regiments and to "cover a possible gap". However, the messages received did not give the commander of the 19th Brigade a clear picture of the situation and so he left for the 28th Regiment. He met the 28th IR kitchens at the crossroads Radzymin – Benjaminów and Aleksandrów – Mokre, which he mentions in these words:

On asking where they were coming from, they replied that from the Radzymin brewery, where the kitchens had procured beer for the regiment soldiers.



It was a great joy – it turned out, Radzymin had been abandoned by the enemy, and certainly as of 17:00 the scum was no longer in the town.

At about 21:00 Lt-Colonel Thomme received the first news of Major Walter's wounds, and soon Captain Wilczyński, deputy commander of the 29th Regiment, reported on the course of events, and twice asked for the regiment to be relieved.

After explaining the situation, Thomme did not issue any new orders, but before midnight sent an order in which he repeated the previously issued orders for the 29th Regiment to garrison the stretch from Height 89 to Mokre (exclusive), and for the 28th Regiment from Mokre (inclusive) to the Zawady – Radzymin road. The regiments were to assign one battalion each to the brigade's reserve: that of the 28th in Aleksandrów and the 29th in Benjaminów. At the end he stressed that

If the position is not held by [the start of] tomorrow, the brigade will be drawn into combat, which will make relief impossible.

We can see that Thomme also thought that his brigade's action was almost complete.

Thomme then returned to Wólka Radzyńska, from where he was summoned to General Żeligowski, who was on the road near where the 31st Regiment was bivouacked. Thomme reported on the course of events. The general was already aware that Radzymin had been occupied by the 30th Regiment and a unit of the Lit-Bel Division, but noted that:

The 1st Lit-Bel Division advanced south from Radzymin to the Wiktorów – Kraszew sector, but it met strong resistance from the enemy everywhere and reached the first defensive line at no point. However, the enemy did not achieve success anywhere either and was finally defeated by the 10th Division. He also reported that the Commander-in-Chief's plan was being carried out very successfully.

He was very worried about the injury to Major Walter. He assessed the situation in such a way that the day had brought about a very serious upheaval in the psyche of the battle – that the enemy had collapsed morally and physically, while his own troops had healed themselves and obtained an unbreakable belief in victory and success.

He ordered the Lt-Colonel to capture Mokre and to do so, if possible, with the forces of the 19th Brigade plus the 48th IR, recommending the use of the 31st IR only as a last resort, as the general was always fearful of a strong counter-attack in the 1st Lit-Bel's sector, especially as the latter had not yet reached the first defensive line.

The general expected that even there, in the 19th Brigade's sector, that the enemy would try to recapture Radzymin.

After this conversation Thomme had to retire to bed, as he was exhausted by the day's fighting and tired from a strong fever.

The commander of the 2nd Lit-Bel Brigade, Lt-Colonel Rybicki, had counted on the success of the brigade's action from the moment he took control of the position near Ciemne. He recalls:

After a short struggle – it was in the balance – I felt complete mastery of my own position, the power and strength of victory.

The day was ending, there was heavy shooting from outside the 19th ID's sector. The sound of heavy fire was coming from the direction of the far south, and with that I experienced hope and faith in an imminent victory.

After capturing Ciemne with the Wilno regiment, Lt-Colonel Rybicki did not press that regiment any further, knowing that it was the most exhausted on the day, and tried to push the Grodno Regiment "forward onto the enemy's neck."

To that end he went by car to Radzymin, which had just been occupied. On the way he met General Haller's car, which was just returning from Radzymin. In the town, Rybicki was warned that there were still cavalry



behind the church next to the cemetery. Eventually he gave up personally overseeing the Grodno Regiment's action – he had seen that action had mutually ceased along the entire line. In view of that, he returned to his staff in Pustelnik, thinking about the Grodno regiment, directed from Radzymin to Kraszew, of which he recalls:

I did not know what was happening with the 10th ID – its plan of action was not known. The situation of the 19th ID presented me with a clear picture that final victory was slipping out of my hands.

The commander of the 1st Lit-Bel Division, General Rządkowski, also remained for some time on the road, awaiting the results of the assault. At 21:00 the head of the operational department, Lieutenant Gadomski, sent the following brief report to Marki, together with a sketch: "Radzymin and Ciemne occupied. Action complete." In the end, however, Generals Żeligowski and Rządkowski did not receive the report that their positions had been reached and returned: General Żeligowski to Wólka Radzyńska, and General Rządkowski to Marki.

At midnight the 10th Division staff managed to compile a report, in which they tried to capture the situation of General Żeligowski's entire sector. Among other things, the report included:

To command 1st Army and Zegrze

Situation report 15 August at 24:00

1) The enemy, putting up fierce resistance and suffering bloody losses, withdrew after our attack from Radzymin to the north-east, beyond our first trench line, except for the section Dybów – Ciemne – Helenów. The prisoners taken are from the 184th, 185th [RRs of the] 21st Division, which includes regiments of the most resolute Communists.

2) Our troops, having carried out the ordered action with a strong energetic attack, with the participation of artillery and tanks, captured Radzymin at 21:00. The heaviest load fell on the 29th IR, which, advancing after the seizure of Wólka Radzyńska from Aleksandrów, took Mokre with a daring attack, as well as the 30th IR, which entered Radzymin from the south-west at the bayonet, driving the enemy back along the road to Wyszaków. The action to finally eliminate the Bolshevik units, and throw them back over the first line, continues to develop.

The northern wing of the group (48th IR) is holding the line Wolica – Borki – Ruda – Height 89, having constant communication with the units of the Zegrze section (155th IR), while the southern wing (47th IR), passing from Nadma through Czarna – Wołomin, leans on the left wing of the 8th ID in the Leśniakowizna area.

The 13th Lancer Regiment, from the Army command was placed at the disposal of the Zegrze sector command.

In order to patrol and clear the woods west of Nieporęt of wandering deserters, during the morning action ... the 201st LHR was sent to the command of the local sector, and one railway guard battalion was deployed at Jabłonna Station (camp).

3) Good physical condition and morale; material condition – no uniform or underwear.

Operations in the Other 1st Army Sectors on 15 August

In the evening of 15 August the Army HQ was awaiting reports from its subordinate commands. In particular, it was concerned with the results of the counter-attack at Radzymin. Having no direct communication with General Żeligowski, not even a liaison officer at his side, the Army staff had to make use of reports from various commands – especially since General Żeligowski did not give any information, and the staff of the 10th ID was not sufficiently informed about the course of the battle. Hence the list of reports received by the Army in the evening of 15 August is quite telling.



The 11th ID, probably getting the news from General Żeligowski, informed the Army that, "the 10th ID was successfully advancing on Mokre", and the 48th BRR was to take over the first line positions. The same news was given to Lt-Colonel Bobicki by Major Pełowski (recently appointed chief of staff of the 11th ID).

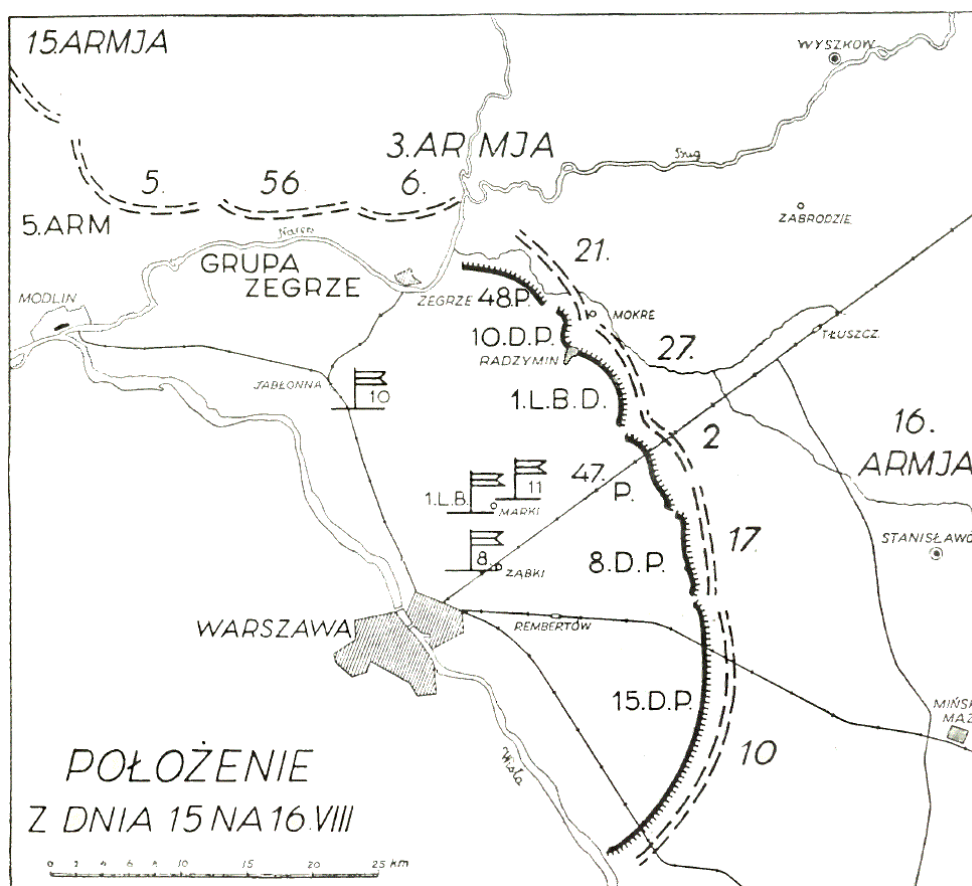
Between 21:00 and 22:00 the Army received quite abundant information in the situation reports of the divisions. At 21:00 Lieutenant Tarnawski from the Army staff spoke with the 10th Division, which reported that the 29th Regiment had occupied Mokre at 16:00 and that the 28th Regiment had been directed to provide cover on the Dybów side. At 22:00 Lieutenant Koczwa of the 10th ID reported to Lieutenant Chmielewski at the Army that the 48th BRR occupied the section as far as Mokre, where it linked with the 29th Regiment.

At 22:25 the 11th ID sent a situation report (timed 21:45) reporting that the 48th Regiment had occupied the former first line sector, linking in the area of Mokre with the 29th Regiment, while the 10th Division:

... is attacking along the Rządza River, encircling the rear of the enemy defending Radzymin.

At around midnight the Army received the report cited above that captured the entire course of operations from the 10th ID. It stated the enemy had been pushed back beyond the first line positions except for the area of Dybów, Ciemne and Helenów; that 29th IR had had the hardest task, capturing Wólka Radzyńska via Aleksandrów and taking Mokre in a daring attack.

On the basis of that the Army command could consider that, although the first lines had not been completely taken, and so the counter-attack had not been totally completed, the 15 August battle at Radzymin was ending successfully.



Sketch 71: Positions at 15 to 16 August

Particularly pleasing was the report of the 1st Lit-Bel Division, received by the Army on 16 August around 02:00, giving the situation at 01:15. That report was received by Lieutenant Gierdawa of the Army staff from Captain Morawski of the 1st Lit-Bel Division. Among other things, the captain reported that the front line:



... thanks to the occupation of Helenów and Height 98, probably runs from Janków Nowy along the eastern edge of the forest at Ciemne, the eastern edge of the forest north of Janków Stary to Wiktorów and then along the line of old trenches through Dybów to Mokre. In the Mokre region is the 10th Division from north of Mokre from Height 89 to Rynia (48th IR), then the Zegrze Group.

Lieutenant Gierdawa, as if wanting to be sure, asked:

Captain, you mean that the situation is eliminated completely, except for in the Helenów – Ciemne area?

He received a positive answer.

As the reports were coming in explaining the situation near Radzymin the Army did not issue any orders. During the evening of 15 August, the Army received an order from the Front of 19:30, which, among other things, said:

Insofar as our first line is not reached in the Radzymin area, the 1st Army is to continue its action using tanks and armoured trains.

Until the situation near Radzymin is fully restored, the attack of the right wing of the Army, according to the order of the Front Command ... will not be carried out.

We must point out that General Haller, as we have seen in the course of the action, had been informed in advance of the outcome of the action at Radzymin and as early as 00:16 on 16 August General Latinik reported by despatch to the divisions that:

The Front commander, General Haller, thanks the commanders and units of the 10th, 11th and 19th Divisions for the capture of Radzymin – he intends to arrive in the afternoon of 16/8 to thank them personally and awaits requests for decorations.

In addition to this, on 16 August between 01:00 and 03:00 the divisions received an order from the Army, which emphasised that:

The task of the 1st Army is to actively tie up the enemy forces in order to facilitate the task of the Southern Army and to ruthlessly maintain the first line.

General Latinik ordered the 10th, 11th and 1st Lit-Bel Divisions to continue action in the Radzymin sector, and then, after reorganisation, the 46th and 47th BRRs were to leave to be the Army reserve in Pustelnik, while the 48th BRR was to be assigned to the 10th Division. Finally, General Latinik drew attention to the inadequacies of the operations to date in these words:

I once again draw attention to close communication and carefully planned interactions of the various units, which have been lacking in the actions to date.

The failure of the 11th and 19th Divisions to carry out the tasks entrusted to them has caused heavy losses and nullified the very good initial successes of the day. I require the 11th and 19th divisions to strictly carry out the orders tomorrow.

Thus, the intention of the Army command was to reach and hold the bridgehead positions. On the same day the Supreme Command clearly emphasised:

The general situation requires the absolute maintenance of the Warsaw bridgehead. The Front command will exert all possible pressure on subordinate commands to use armour, numerous artillery pieces, mortars, etc., a good one to one ratio, to regain and permanently hold our lines.

This order was not given to the Army by the Front until 11:50 on 16 August.

Primary attention was paid to the operations near Radzymin, but reports were also received from other sectors of the bridgehead, which testified to the successful course of their defensive actions.



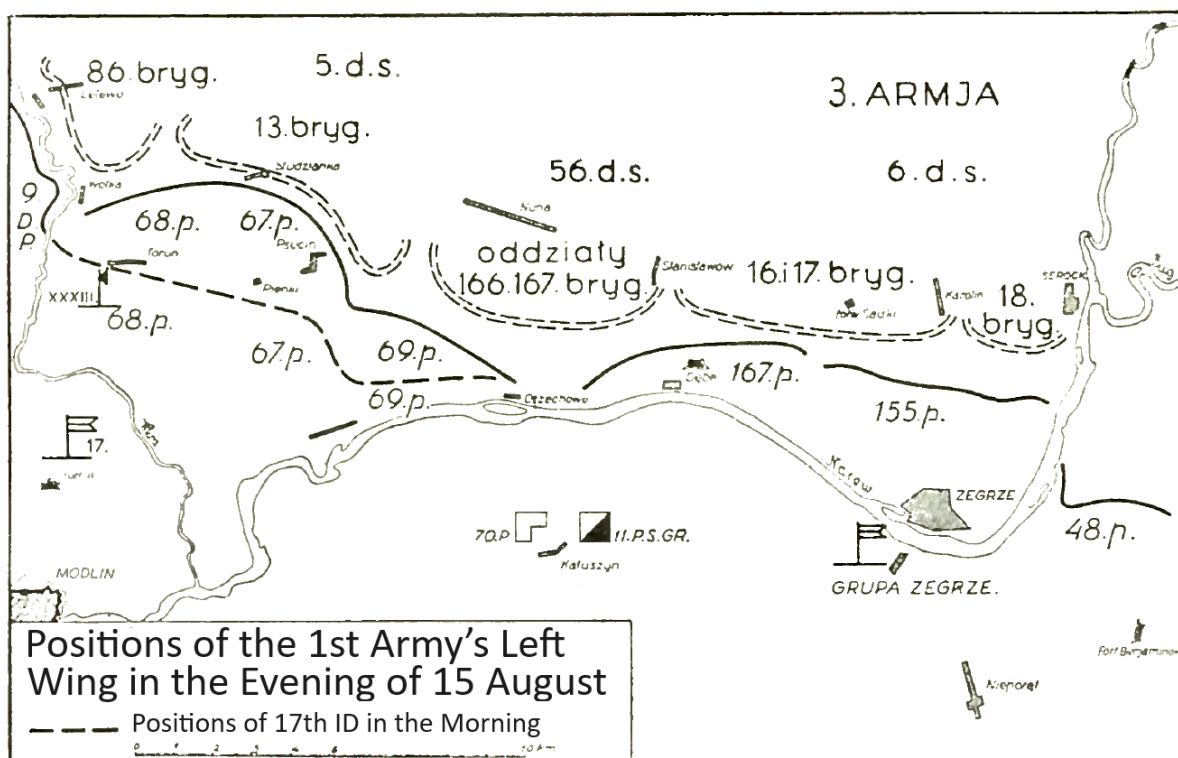
In the evening the Army received situation reports from the 8th ID, which stated that the attacks of the 50th Rifle Brigade of the 17th Rifle Division on Leśniakowizna had been repulsed, and that the enemy was in a defensive posture (dug in) near Okuniew. In addition, the 8th ID reported that a prisoner of war had been taken who testified that there were three regiments facing Okuniew and two divisions in the Michałowek area, which had received orders to take Warsaw within two days.

However, the Army command must have been confident that the 8th Division would be able to cope on its sector, because at 23:00 it even ordered the transfer of one battalion of the 33rd Regiment to Kobyłka to be a reserve for the 47th Regiment (with the proviso that it could only be used on the right wing of the 11th ID's sector).

The Army also received good news from the 15th Division. It stated that the enemy had carried out lively reconnaissance activity and its attacks during the day on the 29th and 30th Brigades had been repulsed. The losses of the 15th Division were small, with only six wounded in the 29th Brigade.

Zegrze

The day of 15 August passed relatively calmly in the Zegrze Group sector. In the morning (03:00) the enemy attempted to push on the line of Battalion 1/155, but was repulsed by artillery and infantry fire. After those clashes, the 7th Brigade's sector was calm until the evening. It was reported in the afternoon that the enemy was moving from Wierzbica and Serock to the west. Some columns of enemy infantry, cavalry and wagons were spotted and fired upon by the group's artillery.



Sketch 72

Before noon the commander of the 11th Border Rifle Regiment sent in a report from 07:50 of some rather strange news. He reported from Kałuszyn that the 70th IR of the 17th ID had just marched there:

... as if Zegrze was in danger and the 46th IR was to retreat, so the 70th IR received the task of patrolling and reconnaissance north of Dębe and east of Kałuszyn to Aleksandrów.

Despite clarifying the situation, the 70th IR remained in Kałuszyn until the morning of 16 August.

As already mentioned, there was calm in the afternoon in front of the 7th Reserve Brigade. Colonel Małachowski's order of 17:00 stated that the 155th IR had found the enemy absent from its section. Therefore it was ordered to make raids in the sections of the infantry regiments, while the commander of



the 11th BRR received an order to make a raid to the north with two squadrons, should the units of the 5th Army launch an attack.

Around 21:00 the enemy attempted an assault on the 7th Brigade's sector, with its artillery shelling the bridge at Dębe. The enemy's attack, directed at the left wing of the 167th Regiment, was rejected by the infantry with the support of artillery fire (mainly from Batteries 1/10 and 3/10 FAR, which fired 180 shots). The enemy's rifle lines, which approached from the area of Wola Smolana towards of Wola Kiełpińska, were stopped at the wire. A platoon of the 3rd Company with Cadet Bak made an assault on a distillery north of Ludwinów and smashed an enemy unit, capturing a machine-gun and ten prisoners from the 49th Regiment of the Russian 6th Rifle Division.

Generalising the course of events in the 7th Brigade's sector, we can say that the regiments felt completely confident in their position and rejected every enemy attempt. However, the enemy's assaults were weak.

From nightfall till the dawn of 14/15 August the 47th Regiment's sector had a continuous firefight, especially in the section of Battalion 1/47, as described in the previous chapter. It should be noted that the soldiers of the 47th BRR were convinced that the enemy was continuously attacking during the night, and so they spared no ammunition. Polish artillery also took part.

Around 04:00 of 15 August the enemy attacked the 2nd and 14th Companies, manning the two sides of the railway track, in strength. Several wounded soldiers, not wanting to wait for the end of the battle, left the trenches, wanting to move back. However a handful of healthy soldiers, seizing the opportunity, joined them, and the mob of men raced into the position of Battery 2/201 FAR, which only just stopped them.

The enemy noticed the commotion and, encouraged by it, approached the barbed wire in thick waves. The 47th's infantry and artillery began to fire. The commander of the 2nd Company, Lieutenant Gorczyca, managed to get the position under control, but danger still loomed and it took the arrival of the armoured train *Mściciel* to significantly boost to the defence. Lieutenant Gorczyca recalls that:

The *Mściciel* massacred the enemy with its fire, so that the survivors ran in a great panic and hid behind the village of Lipiny.

After repulsing the night and morning attacks, things calmed down for the 47th Regiment and by 05:00 only enemy patrols could be seen in front of the positions.

The 47th Regiment's command, in describing the results of the battle to that point, emphasised the excellent co-operation with the artillery of Colonel Ładziński's subgroup. The various unit reports on the day clearly emphasised the confidence and good spirits of the soldiers. The commander of the 1st Battalion reported before noon on 15 August:

The spirit of the soldiers is excellent. The original nervousness has subsided. The soldiers have gained confidence and do not fire without seeing the enemy first. Ammunition consumption is decreasing.

Battalion 4/47 had a calm day. The battalion commander reported on 16 August that:

The day of 15 August passed calmly apart from a light exchange of rifle and artillery fire.

Around 17:00 the enemy tried to approach near the railway track, but was dispersed by the fire of the armoured trains.

Late in the evening of 15 August the enemy again attacked near the railway track on the right wing of the 1st Battalion and the left wing of the 4th. When the enemy approached the wires, the infantry immediately notified the trains, which were waiting in readiness at the Wołomin station. The armoured train *Mściciel* advanced in front of the lines and began to fire at the flanks at the attacking Russian rifle lines. With the help of the armoured train and artillery, the infantry repulsed the enemy.

However, the *Mściciel* was not content with that, and until 03:00 on 16 August it continued to harass the enemy in front of the 47th Regiment with an effective fire by cannons and machine-guns. Using the light of rockets, the train showered the enemy's infantry with bullets. The Russian artillery took up the fight and



their artillery shells damaged the tracks behind the train – one shell even hitting the *Mściciel*. Having repaired the tracks under enemy fire, the train withdrew to Wołomin before dawn. The activity of the train was expressed in the number of shells fired, namely: 91 cartridge, 22 shrapnel and 55 HE in addition to several thousand rounds for the machine-guns.

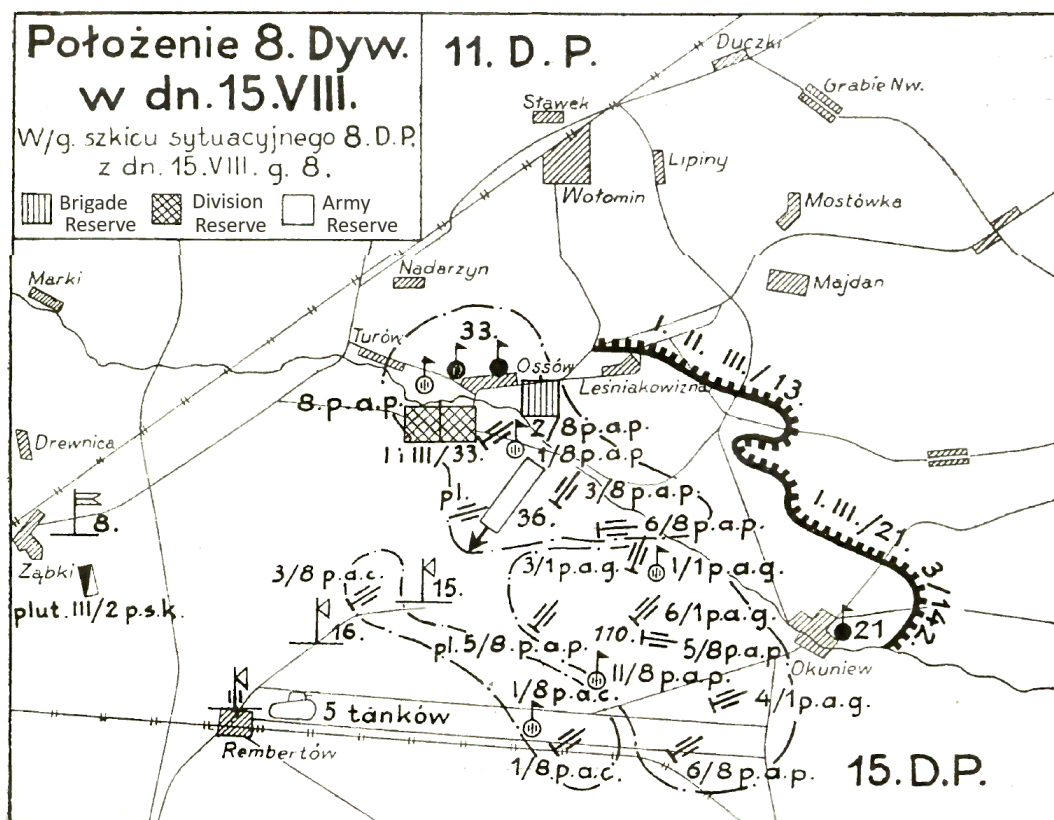
8th Division

During the night of 14/15 August, the 8th Division sorted out the troops that had been shuffled on 14 August, with the final incorporation of the march companies. At the same time it set about reinforcing its positions and repairing the barbed wire obstacles and entanglements.

The 15th Brigade occupied the left portion of the division, manned by the 13th Regiment: the 3rd Battalion from Height 97 to the Leśniakowizna – Ossów road and the 2nd Battalion from the road to Height 116. The regiment's reserve was two companies in Leśniakowizna and one in the eastern end of Ossów.

The brigade's reserve was Battalion 2/33 Regiment in Ossów. The 13th and 33rd Regiment HQs were in Ossów, where two battalions of the 33rd Regiment were also kept as the division's reserve. The HQ of the 15th Brigade was in Mokre Łąki.

The 16th Brigade garrisoned the previous section, i.e. Height 116 to Okuniew, with the 21st Regiment. The 1st and 3rd Battalions remained in the line and the 2nd Battalion was in reserve. On the right wing was the 3rd Company of the 142nd Regiment. The 21st IR HQ was in Okuniew and the 16th Brigade HQ was located in the buildings of the training ground (Poligony Gorodok on the German map).



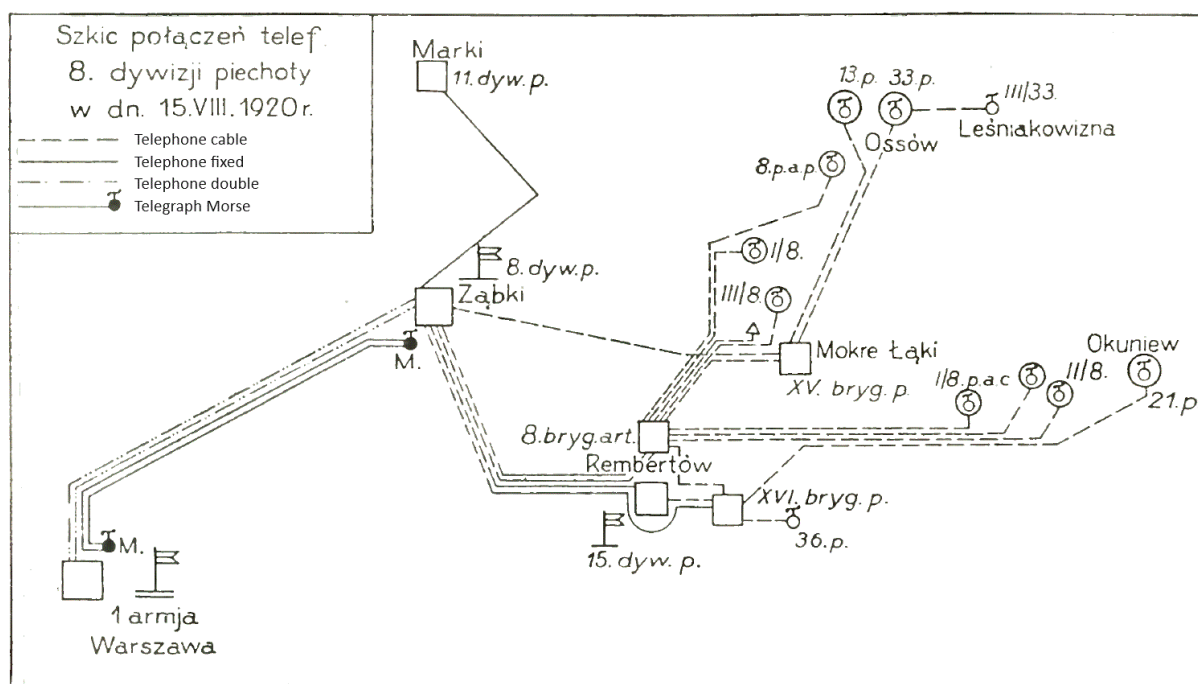
Sketch 73: Positions of the 8th Division at 08:00 on 15 August

During the morning of 15 August the 36th Regiment moved from Ossów and went to the south-eastern end of the Remberków training ground as the Army's reserve.

The 8th Division's HQ remained in Żąbki. It had two fixed telephone lines with Warsaw (one of which was out of order). At 21:00 a Morse apparatus was activated. There was a telephone connection with the command of the 16th Brigade in Mokre Łąki and from there a connection with the 33rd and 13th Regiments and with the artillery HQ. Other telephone lines connected to Remberków (the 8th Artillery Brigade HQ and the 15th Division HQ) and with the 16th Brigade. During the day of 15 August, telephone communication



was also established with Marki (with the 11th and 1st Lit-Bel Divisions). The communications scheme is shown on the sketch.



Sketch 73: Communications net of the 8th ID on 15 August 1920

The artillery grouping remained unchanged.

The division's combat strength on 15 August, after supplementing and deducting losses, was:

13th IR	21 officers	916 rifles	17 MGs
21st IR	19	690	9
33rd IR	28	942	5
36th IR	20	602	8

This state of affairs, however, must be regarded as fluid, as many of the volunteer soldiers who had arrived with reinforcements, became dispersed and wandered off to the rear. So for example, the 36th Regiment collected 90 such soldiers as of 16 August. The 13th Regiment had not yet managed to absorb all the volunteers

On the morning of 15 August there was only minor fighting in the division's sector, near Leśniakowizna. Battalion 1/13 was pulled closer to the front.

During the day fighting continued in the sector, but the enemy was unable to cross the wire, and those facing Battalion 1/21 could not even approach the wire. It was established the Poles were facing the Soviet 17th RD.

Around 16:00 the attention of the 8th Division's staff was directed to the Okuniew area. A prisoner of war stated that an infantry regiment was approaching Okuniew, followed by two more regiments, and that two Soviet regiments were grouped in the area of Michałówek (or Michałów), which were to occupy Warsaw within two days.

The 8th Division's HQ, stressing that it expected an attack on Okuniew from the north-eastern side, at 18:00 ordered the 15th Brigade's command to immediately move Battalions 1/33 and 3/33 (the division reserve) from Ossów to Mokre Łąki, while the 16th Brigade was to advance a battalion of the 36th Regiment to south-west of Okuniew. However, that battalion could only be used with the permission of the division commander. The other battalions of the 36th Regiment were practising with tanks on the training ground during this time.



The evening and night of 15/16 August passed calmly for the 21st IR, as all the enemy's attempts failed. The course of events so far was summarised by the 16th Brigade's commander in the following sentence:

All the attempts by the enemy to break through the front were thwarted by the brave behaviour of the infantry and accurate artillery fire. Morale is fairly good. Spirits are lifted, the soldiers are in an offensive mood.

Late in the evening of 15 August, a heavy firefight broke out in the 13th Regiment's sector, which lasted all night. Battalion 2/33 moved to the eastern edge of Ossów (next to the 13th Regiment HQ) and remained there all night on alert. This night "full of nervousness" was indeed hard going. Lieutenant Zdrojewski, commander of Battalion 2/33 recalls that from the evening:

The infantry fire increased more and more, and was joined by heavy artillery fire – one had the impression that a very serious battle was being fought ... Reports from the positions were very scarce and vague ... We could not determine the actual situation, what enemy forces were advancing and where the stronger attacks were being directed.

For these reasons Battalion 2/33 stood ready all night, with their guns at their feet.

In reality, however, there was no actual enemy attack. The heavy firefight was mainly due to the nervousness of the volunteers, who could not be calmed down, and officers often had to take weapons out of soldiers' hands to control the unnecessary shooting. It was not until the morning of 15 August that the fire eased and the sector finally calmed down completely. The commander of the 13th Regiment, who rode out to the line on horseback in the morning, could not find out exactly what had actually happened during the night.

15th Division

From dawn on 15 August, fighting began in the section near Wiązowna. The first enemy assaults were repulsed. From then on the enemy constantly approached the front line of the 59th Regiment with small detachments, each time being rejected by the infantry and dispersed by artillery fire. The enemy's assaults were also supported by its artillery, throwing a weak fire at the 29th Brigade's positions.

On the other hand, it was not until the afternoon that fighting in the 30th Brigade's sector began. Between 15:45 and 18:20, the enemy attacked the Bielsk – Emów section, but without success. The brigade commander shifted one reserve battalion (the 2nd) of the 61st IR to a brickyard near Aleksandrów. At around 20:00 the enemy advanced to the foreground near Świdrów Wielkie, but was soon forced to withdraw by Polish artillery.

In describing the course of action on 15 August, the 15th Division stated in a situation report of 20:00 that during the day there was "lively activity by enemy patrols in the whole of the division's sector.



Chapter XV

Russian Operations on 15 August

Radzymin

At dawn on 15 August the units of the 21st and 27th Rifle Divisions, fighting at Radzymin, were not ready to advance, despite the agreement of the divisional commanders.

This was understandable: in the previous battles from the Berezina to the Bug, the Russian divisions had always had enough space in front of them, and in the course of further offensive operations they could deploy in their divisional zones. Now however, there was a shuffling of the brigades from several divisions and the commanders did not know how to get out of that situation and put the tactical units into order. The orders of the Army commander, demanding a march to the Vistula, and those of the division commanders did not take into account the fact of encountering resistance on the bridgehead, which had to be defeated first in order to be able to proceed to the basic task.

In the situation presented the main task was to break the Poles' defence on the bridgehead, and it was for that purpose that an attack by the 2nd, 21st and 27th Divisions had to be organised, which under a single commander would undoubtedly have had better conditions for success. That offensive, breaking through the Poles' defences of the second line of positions, would have opened the way for the remaining divisions of the 16th Army, after which the entire Army could have completed the task of crossing the Vistula and capturing Warsaw.

However, the Army HQ was too far from the front lines and could not improvise, while discussion between the division commanders, as we have seen, did not lead to concerted action. We have mentioned in previous chapters that the orders of the 21st RD, issued on the afternoon of 14 August, had not been agreed with the 27th RD, and any literal execution of them would have resulted in the crowding of the troops of the two divisions into one lane of action. It was not until 09:00 on 15 August that the commander of the 21st RD issued orders which now took into account the tasks of the 27th RD.

That order stated that the enemy was fiercely defending itself in the area of Zegrze and had halted the 6th RD, while the 5th RD was approaching the Wkra. The Army ordered the continuation of a vigorous attack, and by the evening of 15 August the 5th RD was to reach Zdunowo – Kroczewo, while the 56th RD, which was directed between the 5th and 6th RDs, was to force its way across the Narew and attack Modlin from the north-east with part of its forces. On the other hand, the 21st RD, as we know, was to support the actions of the 6th RD and, to this end, strike to the rear of Zegrze, capturing the Wieliszew – Łajski area.

The 21st RD commander, after agreeing on operations with the 27th RD, reduced the band of action of his brigades and changed the direction of the assaults. According to that order, the 63rd Brigade was to attack the enemy fortified in the area of Kępiste – Benjaminów and, advancing towards Ostrów and Białobrzegi, capture the section Zagroba – Wieliszew. The 21st Cavalry Regiment (so far subordinated to the 63rd Brigade) was to be assigned to the 62nd Brigade, which was now to advance with its main direction towards Aleksandrów, Wólka Radzyńska and Nieporęt, and take the section Wieliszew (exclusive) – Łajski (inclusive), while the 21st Cavalry Regiment was to be advanced with the task of capturing the Jabłonna railway junction. The division commander made sure that the 62nd Brigade commander did not allow the troops to intermingle with the 27th Division. The 61st Brigade retained its previous task. It was to advance behind the 62nd Brigade, remaining in as division's reserve.

The line of demarcation between the 21st and 27th RDs (according to the 21st Division commander) ran: Wólka Radzyńska – Łajski for the 21st Division, inclusive. Between the brigades: Benjaminów, the road to Wieliszew and Wieliszew was assigned to the 63rd Brigade, inclusive. Once the task was completed, the division HQ was to move to Jaktory House, the 63rd RB's HQ was to be in Benjaminów and the 62nd RB's in Wólka Radzyńska.

This was the final arrangement of operations between the 21st and 27th RDs. It should be noted though that when those orders reached the brigades, the units were having to defend themselves instead of being able to group for the attack, putting the initiative into the hands of the Poles. The brigade commanders' orders would not be issued until later in the evening.



There was also an agreement for operations between the 2nd and 27th RDs. The 2nd RD was to relieve a detachment of the 80th Brigade during the night of 14/15 August.

However, the positions the divisions found themselves in at dawn on 15 August was far from what had been anticipated. From the 27th Division, only the 81st RB was ready for action – and indeed took action before dawn on 15 August. The 80th RB, on the other hand, had not yet been relieved by troops of the 2nd RD and had not advanced.

The 27th Division commander later said that the 80th RB, not being relieved, and having the enemy in front of it who could strike at any moment, could not move at dawn on 15 August to attack towards Jabłonna. He claims that the 80th RB was tied down by enemy that could have come out from around Pustelnik.

However, we cannot agree with that. The possibility of a Polish attack from near Pustelnik always existed and the 27th RD commander took this into account when he ordered the 80th RB to cover the left wing during the attack towards Izabelin. On the morning of 15 August, the 239th and 240th RRs were quite some distance from the Polish positions and unconnected with the fighting, so nothing prevented the start of the ordered attack. Only the 238th RR had the Poles on the bridgehead in front of them.

A more significant reason for the 80th RB's failure to move can be seen in the discrepancy in the 27th RD commander's and the 80th RB's assessment of the position. The commander of the 27th RD, when ordering the move to Izabelin, did not see, or did not want to see, the danger from the south that could threaten the 80th RB during its march, while the commander of the 80th RB, who knew the situation on the ground better, had no desire to expose himself, and decided to remain in place under the pretext of not being relieved by the 2nd RD.

Things were different for the 21st RD, whose brigades had only regrouped in the morning of 15 August and were quite late in receiving their marching orders. The 62nd RB was (between 05:00 and 06:00) in the area of Słupno and Cegielnia, and the 61st RB in Cegielnia and Wioska Radzywińska. The 63rd RB remained in the Ruda – Łoś area and held the forest between Benjaminów and Mokre. On the morning of 15 August, the units of the 21st RD did not take offensive action.

The situation was similar for the 2nd RD, which also failed to advance on the morning of 15 August. The 5th RB remained intermingled with units from the 61st and 80th RBs, the 6th RB relieved the 238th RR of the 80th RB with its 16th RR, and occupied the area around Nowa Wieś with the 18th RR. The 4th RB remained as the division's reserve.

On the morning of 15 August, the 79th RB, after being relieved, regrouped at 09:00 in the area north of Zagościniec, without the 237th Regiment, which remained near Lipiny.

Combat of the 81st Brigade

During the night of 14/15 August the commander of the 81st RB, Stepanov, was with his staff in Radzymin, having his regiments in the vicinity of Wólka Radzywińska. Late in the evening of 14 August and during the night of 14/15 August, patrols and larger units of the brigade were in combat contact with the enemy in the vicinity of Izabelin and around Nieporęt, where prisoners had already been taken from the Polish 10th Division. The brigade held the Nieporęt – Struga road, which it crossed near Wólka Radzywińska. After midnight, the brigade received the division's orders, and at around 02:00 the regiments moved off in the ordered directions. The 243rd RR was directed towards Nieporęt, the 241st RR towards Izabelin, and the 242nd RR was to advance behind the left wing of the 241st RR with the task of covering the brigade from the south.

The 81st RB encountered no resistance from the Poles before dawn.

- Uvarov's 241st RR moved towards Izabelin, stopped in front of Izabelin and Aleksandrów, and sent out reconnaissance patrols.
- The 242nd RR, which was advancing behind the left wing of the 241st RR, by dawn found itself in the vicinity of Wólka Radzywińska and secured itself in Mostki Wólczyńskie and on the road from Struga.



- The 243rd RR advanced to the western edge of the forest in front of Nieporęt and halted. Its commander, Terentyev, knew that there was a lot of Polish artillery in Nieporęt and had also known since the evening of 14 August that units of the Polish 10th Division were approaching the Nieporęt area.⁷⁶ He decided to stay put, probably hoping that the rest of the 27th RD would soon arrive, and an advance by the 21st RD would develop on his right

These were the positions when at dawn, just when it was just getting light, the Poles launched an attack from Nieporęt on Wólka Radzyńska and struck at Mostki Wólczyńskie from the south.

This was a critical situation, as the 81st Brigade knew it could not count on the assistance of either its own or the 21st Division at that point.

The 242nd RR was attacked unexpectedly in Mostki Wólczyńskie and was thrown back from the road. It withdrew to the village of Wólka Radzyńska, not feeling able to fight off the advance of the Poles, who occupied foxholes between the road and the village and kept the area around Wólka Radzyńska under fire.

The 243rd RR also did not remain long on the western edge of the forest near Nieporęt, as, seeing that the Poles were moving out from Nieporęt, it retreated deeper into the forest towards Wólka Radzyńska.

An even greater danger threatened from the north, as at that time the Poles also advanced from around Fort Benjaminów and suddenly ran into the troops of the 81st RB, throwing them out of Dąbkowizna. The further advance of the Poles was halted by fire from the direction of Wólka Radzyńska (probably the 242nd RR).

The brigade had become cornered. The only thing it could count on was exceptional luck, which would allow it to escape the trap.

The 241st RR, which at that moment was operating around Aleksandrów, found itself in the worst situation. Its commander, alerted by shots fired in the rear, sent patrols in that direction, but received no news. In view of that, he decided to withdraw to the north, to the section of the 243rd RR. Soon the regiment, under the cover of one battalion in the rearguard, headed through Aleksandrów and unexpectedly ran into Polish troops advancing from Nieporęt towards the 243rd RR, the heavy fog limiting visibility. A brief clash ensued, ending with the Polish unit being smashed. Some of the soldiers escaped in the direction of Nieporęt, while several dozen were taken prisoner along with two machine-guns.

The captured prisoners were sent back under escort to Izabelin and Wólka Radzyńska, while the regiment joined the 243rd RR in the forest. Some were recaptured near Izabelin by Lieutenant Czuczelowicz and Squadron 2/3 HRR.

The retreat of the 241st and 243rd RRs through the forest narrows around Wólka Radzyńska was very difficult. The Poles blocked the retreat route to Aleksandrów with their fire, and could have surrounded the brigade at any time. However, the brigade managed to escape the trap and, under Polish fire, the two regiments slipped through Wólka Radzyńska towards Aleksandrów, where they halted on the hills south of the village. The Poles did not pursue the fleeing men.

The brigade suffered heavy losses in the fighting. About 200 men were wounded, many of them commanders (although these losses were for the whole day of 15 August, most of them resulted from the battle at Wólka Radzyńska). In addition, more than 30 men were taken prisoner and four machine-guns were lost.

After withdrawing to around Aleksandrów, the brigade did not have a chance to breathe and sort itself out, as the Poles launched an attack, striking towards Słupno, Cegielnia and Aleksandrów and along the road to Radzymin.

⁷⁶ Original footnote: The details given in Putna's book and his article in *War and Revolution* 3/20 are somewhat inaccurate. The 81st RB had captured a patrol sent in a vehicle by the Polish 21st IB that was dispersed near Wólka Radzyńska not near Małoleka. The arrival of the 10th ID was learned from the prisoners taken, not the driver.



Polish counter-attack

Between 07:00 and 08:00 the Poles, grouped from their starting positions on Heights 104, 101 and at the exit of the road from the forest, struck at the 62nd RB, which was in Słupno and Cegielnia, and at the 61st RB, in the area of the road near Cegielnia. The Polish offensive was very energetic, supported by tanks and artillery fire. The 62nd RB, suffering heavy losses in killed and wounded and losing around 100 prisoners, retreated with the 61st RB towards Radzymin.

The 81st RB, which had retreated from Wólka Radzyńska, barely managed to get out of the Aleksandrów area now, as it had to quickly escape from the front of the advancing Poles, who were pushing rapidly towards Radzymin after seizing Cegielnia.

Around midday Radzymin was lost. The 61st, 62nd and 81st RBs withdrew to the north and north-east of Radzymin, where they halted and brought their troops to order.

News of this setback quickly spread among the troops of the various divisions, arousing excitement in the rear. This mood was further heightened by the activity of the Polish aircraft, which between 12:00 and 13:00 appeared over the battlefield and fired on and bombed all the units, wagons and command posts they could see. This fact is stated by the commander of the 27th Division, who reports the Polish aircraft:

... literally terrorised our rear, carrying out daring raids on the staffs and wagons and firing at every grouping with their machine-guns.

The 81st RB must have emerged from the battle badly battered, and, as Volchanetskiy states, it caused panic and confusion among the other units, which meant that it took a long time to reorganise them. There is no doubt that panic reigned in the rear at the moment the Poles retook Radzymin. That panic was caused not just by the failures of the 81st Brigade, but rather more so by the retreat of the 61st and 62nd Brigades, which was shared by the 81st Brigade.

After capturing the city, the Poles ran out of breath for a further assault and halted on the Radzymin Kościelny – Radzymin line, thus allowing the troops of the 61st, 62nd, and 81st Brigades to sort themselves out. The town was garrisoned with insignificant forces, as reported by the patrols that penetrated Radzymin's streets from the east and north-east.

The sounds of fighting came from around Ciemne, indicating that the units of the 5th and 80th RBs were holding their positions.

Around 13:00 the units of the 81st Rifle Brigade and the 21st Rifle Division entered Radzymin, again without much fighting, and drove the Poles out of the town, who retreated towards Aleksandrów and Cegielnia. The units of the 21st RD occupied the north-western part of Radzymin and Wioska Radzyńska, while the 81st RB remained in the fields west and north-west of Radzymin, linking up to the right with the 63rd RB, whose left wing was in the woods south-west of Mokre.

The commander of the 27th Rifle Division, who received news of the 81st Brigade's failures and heavy losses, at 15:40 (Russian time?) ordered the 79th RB to force march to the Radzymin area and to hold the Łoś – Aleksandrów – Cegielnia line, while he ordered the commander of the 81st RB to group his troops in the Zawady – Dybów area upon the arrival of the 79th RB and to put them in order immediately.

In the meantime, the 63rd Rifle Brigade remained in its previous positions and, probably as a result of the failure of its neighbouring units, did not undertake any assault on Kępiste and Benjamin. The 189th RR remained in the area of Borki – Ruda, and the 188th and 189th RRs in the woods west and south-west of Mokre and in Łoś.

Fighting at Ciemne, Czarna and Wołomin

The Ciemne – Czarna Nowa area was held during the night of 14/15 August by units of the 2nd RD. The 80th RB was to leave that sector and go onto the offensive. In addition, the 27th RD demanded that the 237th RR, which remained near Lipiny, be relieved.



This solution contained some clear serious issues. The 2nd RD was to relieve the 27th RD units nearly 10 km away, in order that they could regroup for an attack that would not link with the positions reached by the 27th RD. This can be explained by the fact that already by 15 August the units fighting at Radzymin were losing their offensive momentum, and more and more often adopting a defensive posture.

On the morning of 15 August, the troops of the 80th Brigade were waiting for the troops of the 2nd Division to complete their move.

The 5th Brigade relieved the 239th and 240th RRs and then stopped: the 13th RR in the area of Cegielnia – Ciemne, the 15th RR in Ciemne and the 14th RR the reserve in the area of Wioska Radzyminska. The 238th RR, on the other hand, was to be relieved by the 16th RR of the 6th RB, which with the 18th RR had previously manned the section between Zagościniec and Nowa Wieś.

While the 80th Brigade was being relieved, the Polish attack began, preceded by artillery fire. Soon the Poles occupied the forest south of Ciemne and attacked that village. The Poles also advanced from above the Czarna River and led an attack through Janków Nowy towards Ciemne and Height 98.

The Polish attack, directed towards the western end of Ciemne, was repelled by units of the 5th and 80th RBs. These units held the Ciemne area, despite several Polish attacks that came from the forest (south of the village) and from the Cegielnia area.

However, in view of the fact that by this time the Poles had successfully occupied Radzymin, some of the units of the 5th and 80th RBs bent their right flank to the dirt road leading from the western edge of Ciemne to Radzymin.

It was worse in the section of the 238th RR. At this time the 16th RR of the 6th RB was completing the relief of the 238th RR and two companies were still to be changed. However the 16th RR was greatly affected by the fire of the Polish artillery and delayed the change under various pretences. The 15th RR of the 5th RB (in Ciemne) behaved similarly. The commander of the 80th RB, Lapin, firmly demanded that the change be hastened.

In the course of this the Poles attacked from the Czarna Stara area. The 16th Regiment could not take the attack and fled. However, the two companies of the 238th RR remained in position and held off the Poles. The 238th RR commander, Zaitsev, seeing the soldiers fleeing, sent a detachment of mounted scouts after them, who drove the troops of the 16th RR back into the trenches. That helped stop the Polish advance.

In the end, the 5th and 80th Brigades remained together in the Ciemne area and the 16th RR together with the 236th RR in the Height 98 – Czarna Nowa section, as their enemy was constantly on the offensive. So the two brigades, from different divisions, did not attack at from morning until evening on 15 August, just defended.

Regrouping of Russian Units

In the afternoon of 15 August, the units of the 2nd, 21st, and 27th RDs did not advance, contenting themselves with repelling the Polish attacks. The 21st Division suffered heavy losses, especially in the 62nd Brigade. The 80th and 81st RBs each had 200 wounded.

The resoluteness and astonishing persistence by the Poles in the assaults was felt very clearly. This was attributed to the addition to the Polish ranks with a volunteer element inflamed with hatred of the Muscovites. Meanwhile the combat value of the Russian troops was diminishing. The 27th Division commander recounts:

The men had reached the final stage of weariness. The moment had come when it was no longer just individuals, but the whole mass lost faith in its ability to face the enemy, faith in the chances of success.

KomDiv Putna stated that the bulk of the soldiers could only defend themselves, as they were no longer capable of offensive action:

The elastic – that had stretched since the crossing of the Bug River – had snapped.



The 63rd RB of the 21st RD was thrown back from the forest south-east of Benjaminów and the Poles retook some of the positions near Ruda and near Height 89 (189th RR). A larger clash ensued in the afternoon in the woods between Height 95 and Mokre. The Poles drove back the troops of the 21st RD (188th RR), but were stopped at a distance of 1 to 2 km from Mokre. A Polish attempt to advance out of the woods and lead an attack through the fields between Mokre and Radzymin was destroyed by units of the 21st and 27th RDs.

The rest of the section between Wioska Radzyńska – Ciemne – Height 98 – Czarna Nowa – Wołomin was generally quiet. From time to time there were smaller clashes, but for the most part both sides remained in a defensive posture.

21st Rifle Division

It was not until late in the evening of 15 August that the brigade commanders of the 21st Division issued their own orders on the basis of an order from the Division Commander (issued at 09:00), which they could not carry out during the day, as they had to repel Polish attacks. In the midst of this, however, the situation changed as the Poles took Radzymin and Ciemne.

The 63rd Brigade commander (HQ in Jaktory House) issued an order at 20:00. The brigade was to repel the enemy from the area of Kępiste – Benjaminów and then advance in the direction of Ostrów and Białobrzegi, to take the section Zagroby – Wieliszew (inclusive).

At this time the brigade had the 189th RR in the vicinity of Sokołówek and north of Ruda, the 187th RR in the village of Łoś and west of Mokre and 188th RR in reserve in Mokre.

The brigade commander ordered the 188th regiment's commander, Yakovlev, to immediately move the regiment undetected to the village of "Nowe Mokre (it does not appear on the map, it is located 2 *versts* west of Mokre)" after the 62nd Brigade units arrived in Mokre and then to the village of Łoś, where he would relieve the 187th RR.

The 187th RR commander, Semushenko [?], after being relieved by the 188th RR, was to proceed immediately to the village of Sokołówek under the orders of the 189th RR commander. The *KomBrig's* intention was to form up with a strong right wing.

The 189th RR commander, Solodov, was to launch an attack with the two regiments immediately after the arrival of the 187th RR towards Kępiste Manor and clear enemy troops from the area of Załubice, Rynia and Wolica. Then the 187th RR would become the brigade's reserve and move 3-4 km behind the brigade's centre, maintaining communication with the troops of the 62nd RB and the 6th RD.

The 189th RR was to advance further through Białobrzegi towards Zagroby. To the left of it, the 188th RR was to advance, after regrouping in Nowe Mokre and Łoś, and attack alongside the units of the 62nd RB in the direction of Benjaminów and Pilawa House.

The 62nd RB, which had suffered heavily on 15 August, was at that time in the area of Wioska Radzyńska, Radzymin and between Radzymin and Mokre together with the 61st RB and units of the 81st RB. The 14th RR of the 5th RB was also in that area.

At 22:45 *KomBrig-62* ordered that, due to the losses sustained, one three battalion regiment should be formed from the whole brigade. The remnants of the 184th RR were to form the 1st Battalion under the 184th RR assistant commander, Sarkin. The 2nd Battalion was to be made from the former 185th RR, under the 185th RR's assistant commander, Egorov, while the regiment's commander was placed at the disposal of the Army. The 186th RR, which had suffered fewer losses, was to be the 3rd Battalion under Shestakov, 186th RR commander. Each battalion was to have four machine-guns, and the detachments of mounted scouts were to be assembled into one unit. The entire brigade was to move as a regiment to Mokre, from where it would advance to attack through Aleksandrów, Wólka Radzyńska, Nieporęt and occupy the Wieliszew – Łajski section.



The 61st Brigade, which was to move to Mokre, was to advance as the division's reserve behind the 62nd RB.

Late in the evening the units of the 61st and 62nd Brigades left Radzymin and regrouped in Mokre and the surrounding area. Radzymin was surrendered after minor clashes between rearguard patrols. The units of the 21st RD did not hand over the previously defended section to the 27th RD, as the 81st RB of that division was tired from the fighting, and the 79th RB (which was to replace the 81st RB) was only just arriving. The 80th RB, which was supposed to replace the 62nd RB, was in no hurry to make the change.

However, the night of 15/16 August was not peaceful. The Poles undertook a new action and advanced, as reported to the 21st Division commander, towards Cisie, threatening the right wing of the 63rd Brigade. The division commander then ordered the 63rd Brigade to strike vigorously in the direction of Ruda, Borki and Siwek and "cut off the encroaching enemy group." The 61st Brigade, after regrouping at Mokre, was to strike in the direction of Benjaminów, Nieporęt, Wieliszew and Łajski. The 62nd Brigade was to advance behind the 61st Brigade as the division's reserve.

With this order, the division's zone of operations was finally separated from the 27th RD. The line of demarcation was from Mokre to Łajski (inclusive) for the 21st RD. The line between the 61st and 63rd Brigades was Łoś – Kępiste – Białobrzegi.

At 23:30⁷⁷ *Kom-Brig-61* (HQ in Wola Raszewska) gave an order for the commanders of the 181st and 182nd RRs, Golaminski and Korovayev, to advance with their regiments from Mokre and lead an attack through Benjaminów and Nieporęt to Łajski, upon receipt. The 183rd RR, under Losev, was to advance as the brigade's reserve. The brigade commanders gave orders to the artillery *division* commanders to support the regiments' attack. The brigade's batteries were to position themselves between the 188th and 189th Rifle Regiments.

However, despite the orders calling for immediate action, it was a long time before the troops of the 21st RD were ready for action.

27th Rifle Division

During the evening of 15 August and night of 15/16 August, the units of the 27th RD were unable to take any offensive action. They had suffered significant losses and were exhausted by the constant fighting. In addition, they were still intermingled with the units of the 2nd and 21st RDs. As a result the evening and night were spent regrouping.

At 15:40 the commander of the 27th RD, upon learning of the losses and failures of the 81st Rifle Brigade, ordered the 79th RB to force march to the area of Radzymin and occupy the Łoś – Aleksandrów – Cegielnia section. The 81st Brigade was to move to the area of Zawady – Dybów, where the commander was to "immediately put the brigade in order." The 80th RB was to relieve units of the 21st RD (in the vicinity of Wioska Radzyńska and Cegielnia).

However, in the evening of 15 August, the units of the 21st RD left the Radzymin area and the two regiments of the 79th RB (the 235th and 236th, while the 237th remained near Lipiny) not only could not garrison the Aleksandrów – Cegielnia section, they did not even attempt to take Radzymin.

Instead the units of the 79th and 81st RB manned the section from Mokre (exclusive) to the fork of the roads north-east of Radzymin and from there to Dybów.

The 80th RB had also lost its willingness to fight. The 239th and 240th RRs, staying with the units of the 5th RB in Ciemne, were attacked in the evening by the Poles. After an artillery preparation the attack came from the direction of the forester's lodge and brickyard. The 5th and 80th RBs fired at the Poles and then withdrew hastily. The 239th and 240th RRs left for as far as Pasek. The 238th RR became embroiled in a battle for Czarna Nowa and had to first repel the Polish attack before marching out of their positions. The 15th RR of the 5th RB withdrew to the Janków Stary area, while the 4th Battery, which was operating with

⁷⁷ 00:30 in Russian time, so on 16 August in their records.



that regiment, was in the Kraszew area. The 13th and 14th RRs retreated with the 5th Battery to Wiktorów – Kraszew.

2nd Rifle Division

Up to this point the 2nd RD units, intermingled with those of the 27th RD, confined themselves to the defence of their positions. It was not until the evening of 15 August that attempts at attacking were made, this time by the 2nd Division units only.

We have already seen the course of the battles of the 5th RB, and will add nothing more here, except to repeat that it, and the 80th RB beside it, failed to advance. It is worth noting that in the fighting near Ciemne several attempts were made to extend a successful defence with a counter-attack, which often started well but ultimately lacked strength.

Around 17:00 the position of the 2nd RD was particularly favourable for offensive action. The 5th and 80th RBs, together with the 16th RR, had repulsed the Polish assaults on Ciemne, Height 98 and Czarna Nowa and proceeded to counter-attack. Although these were unconnected, nevertheless the Soviet side was at times the aggressor along almost the entire stretch.

At 16:30 the 49th and 50th RBs, to the left of the 2nd RD, were attacked in the Majdan – Mostówka area, towards Ossów - Turow. At the time the 6th RB had the 16th RR in the area of Height 98 – Czarna Nowa, and the 18th RR in the area of Zagościniec. The 3rd Light Artillery *division* was in positions in Grabie Nowe: the 5th Battery on the eastern edge of the village, and the 6th Battery on the northern edge. The 6th Battery kept the railway track under fire, trying to fight off armoured trains. It had an observation post in an unnamed manor south-west of Zagościniec. The 5th Battery supported the 150th RR of the 17th RD, operating in the Mostówka area. At 15:30, the 5th Battery, feeling insecure in its position, moved to the north-eastern end of the village of Zagościniec.

The 1st Light Artillery *division* was in reserve along with the 4th RB, and the Heavy *division* (heavy and howitzer batteries) was also in reserve at the Cygów House.

KomDiv-2 decided to support the advance of the 17th RD and moved the 4th RB from his reserve, ordering it at 17:30 to advance vigorously to seize Wołomin Station. The 6th RB was told to send the 18th RR to Nowa Wieś and Wołomin Manor, and 16th Regiment probably to Ulasek. The division's artillery was to support the troops and organise to fight the armoured trains.

The artillery commander now brought the 1st Light *Division* and a heavy battery into the fight. The 1st *Division* had its 1st Battery on the western edge of Grabie Nowe and 2nd Battery on the northern edge of Grabie. The main observation point was on a hill east of Nowa Wieś, while the advanced observation points were for the 1st Battery a couple of railway sheds and the 2nd Battery in Lipiny House. The heavy battery was east of Grabie Nowe, having one observation point shared with the 6th Battery, and the other in the railway sheds with the 1st Battery.

Between 17:00 and 18:00 the units of the 4th and 6th RBs launched the attack. The 16th RR of the 6th RB (together with units of the 5th and 80th RBs) took advantage of a successful Russian counter-attack and moved towards Czarna Stara House and Ulasek. Some of the 16th RR also attacked Height 109. The attack went well and the units of the 16th RR reached the Czarna River and even crossed it. However, they were soon met by a strong Polish counter-attack from the woods between Ulasek and Czarna Stara. The Poles managed to repel the Russians and retake their previous positions.

The attack on Height 109, despite the support of the 5th Battery, did not produce the desired results – Volchanetskiy mentions that the 16th Regiment reached the wire, where it lay down and then withdrew after being fired at by artillery.

The fiercest fighting took place at Czarna Nowa. That fighting tied up the 238th RR, which was only able to follow its brigade after repelling a Polish counter-attacks.

So the result was the attack on the right wing of the 2nd RD not only failed, but we have even seen how the 5th RB had to abandon its previous positions.



At around 18:00 the 4th RB and the 18th RR moved onto the attack. The 18th Regiment occupied Nowa Wieś and then advanced, supported by platoon fire from the 6th Battery. The assault failed when the regiment was stopped by artillery and infantry fire and was unable to reach the Polish positions.

So the 4th Brigade's offensive was also unsuccessful. Heavy fire from the Polish artillery, armoured trains and infantry stopped the Russian troops on the line of Lipiny House to Lipiny village. The 237th RR, which had remained in that section until then, retired to the Pasek area. Between 19:00 and 21:00 a strong firefight continued around Lipiny and Nowa Wieś. The 2nd RD units tried several times to advance and break through the Polish fortified positions, but suffered losses and were rejected.

Results of Operations on 15 August on the Right Wing of the 16th Army

The course of the fighting on 15 August clearly shows that the Poles had the initiative in their hands. Other than the 81st RB in the vicinity of Wólka Radzyńska, the 2nd, 21st, and 27th RDs were put into a defensive posture and lost ground previously gained.

The conclusion is not just that the main divisional assaults failed, but they were not properly organised or were not launched, as it was necessary to repel the Polish counter-attacks. The first assaults of the 2nd RD, as we have seen, also failed.

However, during the night of 15/16 August, the Soviets managed to break out of the chaos created by the shuffling of their units. During that night the 21st and 27th Divisions regrouped, but for perhaps the first time since crossing the Berezina, they did so by retiring rather than in the course of a forward movement.

The results of the fighting in the Radzymin sector were undoubtedly unfavourable for the Russians. One of the reasons was undoubtedly the lack of organised command of the divisions of the right wing of the 16th Army (2nd and 27th RDs) together with the 21st RD. Even the authoritative Soviet history *Grazhdanskaya Voyna* accepts that:

The absence of overall control of the battlefield continued, as before, to unfold unfavorably for us in the Radzymin sector.

The acute shortage of artillery ammunition had been felt as well. The need to replenish the rapidly melting ranks was also an issue. However, the most important factors were the psychological ones, related to the results of the battle during the day.

Thus the 2nd Division, which was making its first attack on the Warsaw bridgehead during that day, quickly lost confidence in success. Volchanetskiy states that, after the Russian attacks were rejected, a rupture occurred in the ranks. The regiments, tired by the battles so far:

... demoralised by the success of the Poles in the 27th Division's sector, lost their offensive spirit.

The *KomDiv-27* reports that 15 August was a day of crisis in the northern sector of the 16th Army. After their bloody experience, the bulk of the soldiers came to the conviction that there was no chance of success. This could not be removed by any measures taken by the commanders and commissars. It was felt that the bridgehead defenders were fighting with fanatical fervour, roused by the proximity of Warsaw. The presence in the ranks of new Polish volunteers testified that the appeals of the Red Army to the Polish working class had failed.

For these reasons, *KomDiv-27* became firmly convinced that not only his division, but also the 16th Army and the entire Front would soon have to retreat.

Meanwhile the Russian high commands did not yet have accurate reports from Radzymin. So *Glavkom*⁷⁸ asked the Western Front about the results of the operations in the Praga area and asked, "is it not in our hands?"

⁷⁸ The HQ of the Soviet Commander-in-Chief (Sergei Kamenev).

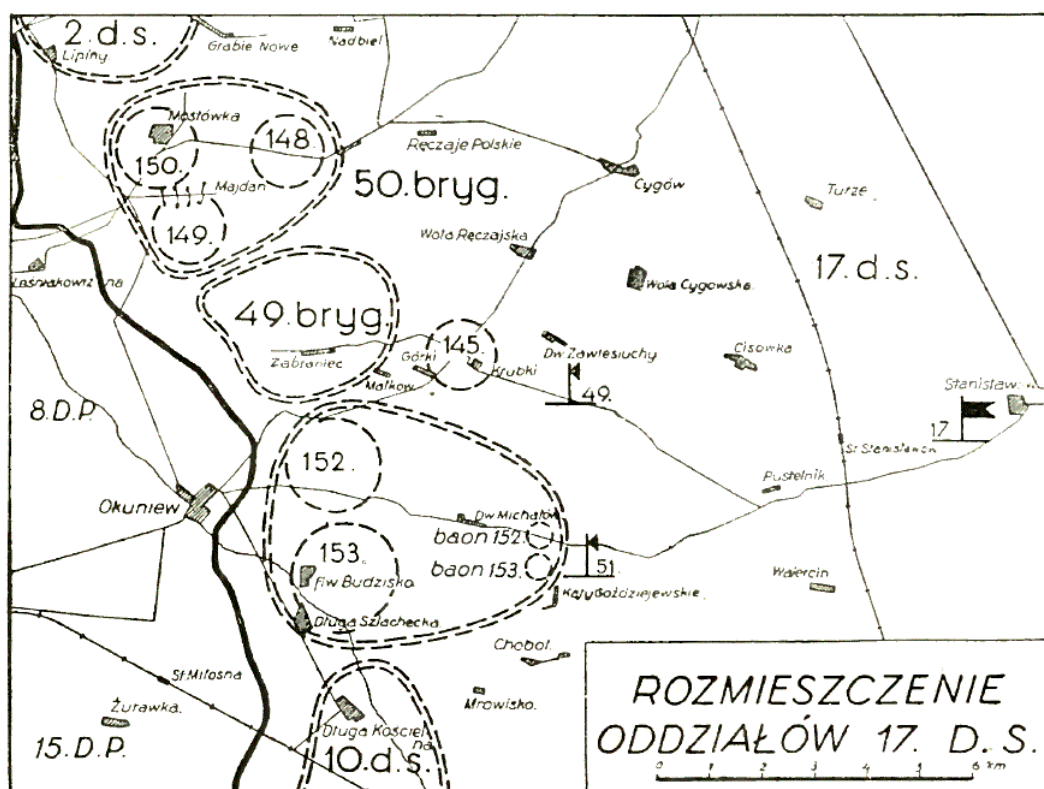


The Other 16th Army Divisions

During the morning of 15 August, the troops of the 17th Rifle Division did not engage in offensive action, just strengthening their positions. It was not until the afternoon that the brigades began to advance. Between 15:00 and 16:00 the 51st Brigade tried to advance (with the 153rd and 152nd RR) towards Okuniew, but was stopped by Polish fire.

In the evening the 50th RB launched an attack, striking from the vicinity of Majdan and Mostówka towards Leśniakowizna (with the 150th RR and 149th RR), but despite bringing part of the 148th RR into the battle, it failed to break the fortified Polish position at Leśniakowizna. The firefight that ensued in this section lasted until the morning of 16 August.

Generalising the results on 15 August, we can say that despite its efforts the 17th Division failed to complete its task and, suffering losses, remained in front of the Polish positions.



Sketch 75: Positions of the 17th Rifle Division units

The division's positions during the day were:

- The 49th Brigade had the 146th and 147th RRs from the Okuniew – Cygów road to Cięciewa (exclusive). The 145th RR remained in reserve in Krubki. The Brigade HQ was in Zawiesiuchy.
- The 50th Brigade manned with the 149th RR from Cięciewa to Majdan (exclusive) and the 150th RR from Majdan to Mostówka. The 148th RR was in reserve.
- the 51st RB, supported by a light artillery *divizion* and the 17th Heavy *Divizion* (two 122-mm guns) had its HQ in Kąty Goździejewskie. Two battalions of the 152nd RR, the third in the brigade's reserve occupied a line from the Okuniew – Cygów road to the Długa River. From the Długa through Budziska Manor to Długa Szlachecka (exclusive) was held by the 153rd RR with two battalions in the line and the third in reserve.⁷⁹ To the left it linked with the 30th RB of the 10th RD.
- The staff of the 17th RD were in Stanisławów.

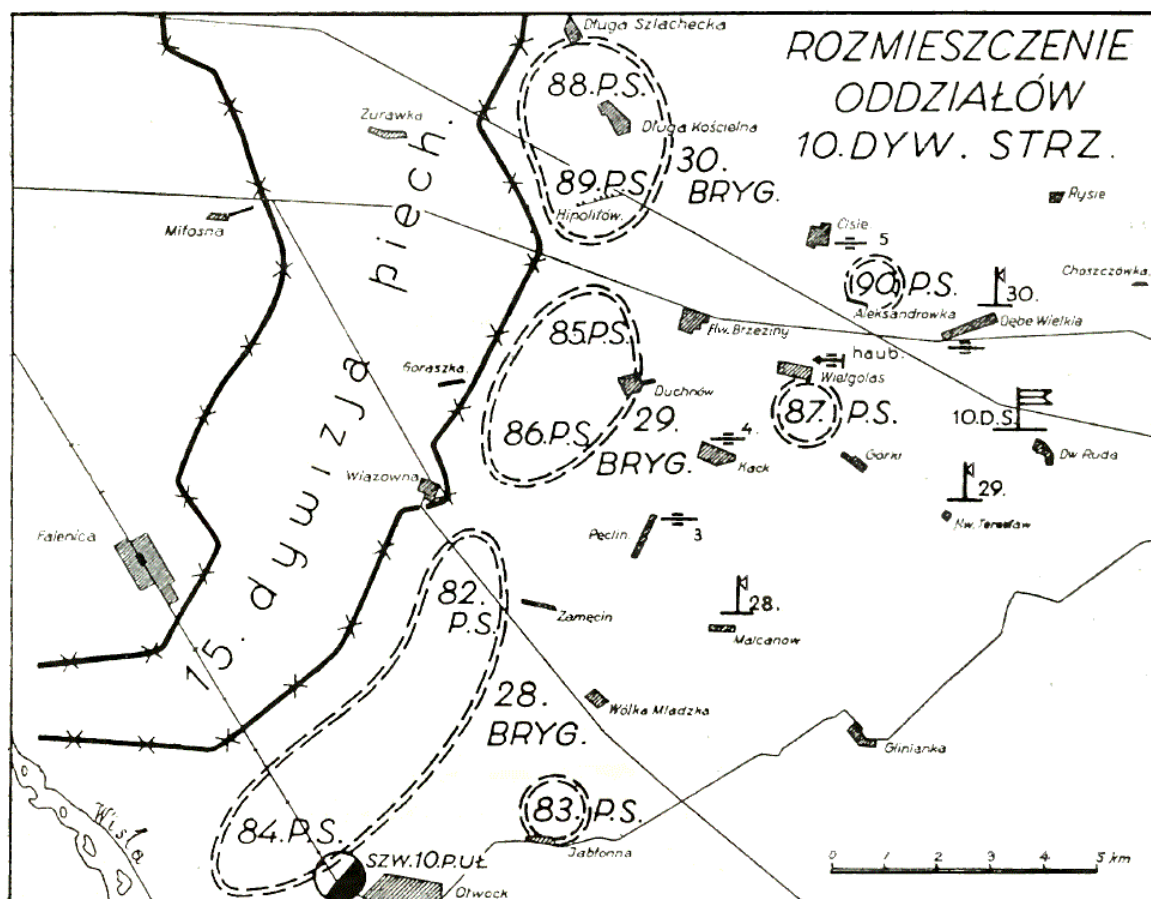
⁷⁹ An original footnote remarks that the 154th RR was not with the division at that time, as it remained in Mińsk-Litovsk. However, this may be a mistake for the 151st RR, which is the one missing from the numerical order.



During the night of 14/15 August, units of the 10th RD approached the front of the Polish positions and launched an attack in the morning.

Several assaults undertaken during the day of 15 August did not produce the desired results. The Poles showed firm resistance and drove the Russian troops back, mainly with concentrated artillery fire. Larger battles ensued at Wiązowna and Boryszew.

The Polish positions were reconnoitred, and large groups of Polish artillery were found in the area of Aleksandrów and Miłosna. Prisoners were taken, who testified that they came from Wielkopolski emergency battalions, the 63rd IR, and 66th IR. That did allow the Russians to ascertain the exact enemy composition.



Sketch 74: Positions of units of the 10 Rifle Division

The positions of the 10th Division were:

- The 28th RB had the 82nd RR from Wiązowna to the mouth of the Mienia and the 84th RR from there to the mouth of the Świder River. The 83rd RR was in reserve in Jabłonna. The brigade HQ was in Malcanów.
- The 29th RB had one battalion of the 85th Regiment from the Mińsk Mazowiecki – Warsaw road to the edge of the forest south of Duchnów, and one battalion of the 86th RR from Antopol to Boryszew. One battalion of the 85th RR was in Duchnów and one battalion of the 86th RR in Golic. The 87th RR was the brigade's reserve. The brigade was supported by the 4th Light Battery (near Kącko) and 3rd Battery near Pęclic. The brigade HQ was in Teresław Manor.
- The 30th RB occupied the section from Długa Kościelna to the Mińsk Mazowiecki road (inclusive) The 88th and 89th RRs were in the front line, and the 90th RR was the division's reserve at Aleksandrówka. The brigade was supported by a light artillery *divizion* and a heavy *divizion*. The 5th Light Battery was stationed at Cisie and the 6th Battery at Brzeziny Manor. The 10th Howitzer *divizion* occupied a position on the eastern edge of Wielgolas. The 122-mm battery was on the road in Dębe Wielkie, and the 6th



Howitzer Battery remained in reserve (not in position) in Choszczówka. The brigade HQ was in Dębe Wielkie.

- The staff of the division, together with a half squadron of cavalry were in Ruda House.

The deployment of the 8th Division's troops on 15 August was as follows:

- The 22nd RB was in the Karczew area, scouting the crossings on the Vistula and at the mouth of the Świder river. The brigade's command was in Karczew.
- The 23rd RB was near the villages of Regula, Podbiel, and Ponurczyca.
- The 24th RB, with its HQ in Osieck, was in the area west of Osieck and carried out reconnaissance along the Vistula River.

The division had been ordered to cross the Vistula River on the section from Świdry Wielkie to Glinka. Apart from reconnaissance of the river, its units did not carry out any actions.

3rd Army on 15 August

On 15 August all the divisions of the 3rd Army fought, either attacking or repulsing Polish attacks, all of them taking place in the areas reached on the evening of 14 August. Despite orders from the Army and the divisions urging the troops to continue offensive efforts, the 3rd Army's attack actually ceased during the day.

At 03:00 the 18th RB of the 6th RD attacked, supported by artillery fire, along the road from Serock to Zegrze, but was held. An effort by the 16th RB, to the right of the 18th RB, despite being reinforced by the 17th RB, also failed to produce positive results.

By the afternoon of 15 August, the troops of the 6th RD had given up and were consolidating in the positions they had taken. It was not until late in the evening that the division launched an attack on the section between Height 105 and Wola Kiełpińska, but they were stopped by artillery and machine-gun fire on the wire of the Polish positions.

The 56th RD, which entered the battle from the Army's rear, tried to fight off Polish resistance between Dębe and Stare Orzechów with the 167th RB, while the 166th RB attacked the north-eastern forts of Modlin, linking up with the 496th RR and the 15th RB.

The course of action for the 5th RD, however, was different. On the morning of 15 August, *KomDiv-5* demanded that his brigades undertake a further assault and reach the Vistula line by midnight, which they were to start immediately. The 86th RB was to advance and take Czerwińsk, while the 13th RB was to reach Wyszogród. The 15th RB was to advance behind the left wing of the 13th Brigade.

The 56th RD, adjacent to the left, was as we have seen to strike with some of its forces against the north-eastern Modlin forts. However, the course of action did not match the intentions. The 86th RB was thrown back behind the Wkra and fought in the area of Lelewo – Czajki, while the 13th RB could not cross the Wkra, and under the influence of the Polish attack was rejected northwards to the area of Miękoszyn – Studzianki.

In these battles, the 5th RD suffered significant losses. It failed to complete its objectives and even failed to hold the areas it had reached so far.

The 3rd Army commander, taking into account the situation, issued at 14:30 an order in which he demanded:



The fighting on the front has assumed a fierce character. The divisions are suffering losses. In addition the Army's reinforcements are moving on foot due to the destruction of the rail lines, and so their arrival cannot be expected earlier than 10 to 14 days from now.

The situation requires the enemy forces to be crushed, for which all means should be used.

At the end of the order, the Army commander ordered as many soldiers as possible be drawn from the rear area units to the first lines, to reduce the number of wagons and such like.

This shows that the senior commanders were still pushing for a further offensive at all costs.



Chapter XVI

Battle of Radzymin on 16 August

Capture of Helenów and Kraszew, and Preparing for the Battles for Radzymin and Mokre

After the capture of Radzymin and Ciemne on 16 August, the Polish unit commanders returned to their HQs, which for the 10th and 1st Lit-Bel Divisions were now quite a long way from the battle line. At the time there were no precise reports on the outcome of the operations and so where the first line was now retaken, but there was a relaxation in the work of the commanders and their staffs. The tension, which had accompanied the operations since 13 August, gradually diminished.

During the night the 10th Division command tried to determine the situation, but it had too little information and some of the reports did not reflect the actual situation. The 1st Lit-Bel Division also did not have sufficient information, but was convinced on the basis of information received from the 10th Division (or from General Żeligowski) that the 10th ID were in the first line in Mokre and Zawady. This is evidenced by the following report on the positions at 01:20:

The 47th IR has three battalions on the section from Leśniakowizna (incl) to Czarna Stara (excl). In the trench positions from Czarna Stara to Pustelnik is the 46th IR, less two companies. From Czarna Stara (incl) to Janków Nowy (incl) is the Nowogród Regt and part of the Mińsk Regt. The rest of the Mińsk Regiment is in trenches on the left wing of 47th IR on the Czarna River. The front line runs on – probably due to a Bolshevik occupation of Helenów and Height 98 -- from Janków Nowy (incl), along the eastern edge of the forest north to Janków Stary and Wiktorów and further along the line of former trenches through Dybów to Mokre. In the Mokre region are troops of the 10th Division. North of Mokre from Height 89 to Rynia is manned by the 48th IR. Further on is the Zegrze Group. No reserves.

By dawn on 16 August, however, the 1st Lit-Bel Division had received news that things were unclear in Mokre, and so the division chief of staff inquired at 04:00 about that to the 10th ID. At the same time Captain Perkowicz reported that the Army had ordered the 10th ID to remain in its current positions until the 11th and 1st Lit-Bel Divisions had sorted themselves out.

It was understandable that the Lit-Bel command was not issuing any orders at the time, as it was still awaiting reports on the completion of the actions ordered on the evening of 15 August. The 1st Brigade had remained in position during the night and did not undertake any action or even establish communication with the Wilno Regiment in Ciemne. It was between 06:00 and 07:00 on 16 August that Colonel Bejnar ordered the 1st Brigade to move towards Helenów.

Capture of Kraszew

After taking Radzymin, the Grodno Regiment moved on towards Wiktorów and Kraszew on 16 August at around 02:00. The 1st Battalion marched at the head, followed by the Technical Company and the 2nd Battalion, with the 3rd Battalion in the rear. The leading company of the 1st Battalion was provided with a rocket to illuminate in front if necessary, as the night was dark.

They marched slowly and cautiously not only because of the night time, but also because of the uncertain situation. The commander of the 1st Battalion had no knowledge of the enemy's positions. After covering a distance of about one and a half kilometres towards Wiktorów, the battalion's column came under machine-gun fire, but this did not cause any losses and did not stop the march for long.

Soon the 1st Battalion reached the vicinity of Wiktorów and here the commander, Lt-Colonel Waskiewicz, stopped the column. A loud bustle and the clatter of horses was heard on the roads between Kraszew and Wiktorów. Voices of command could be made out, and even understood in Russian. Lieutenant Gędźwiłło describes it in these words:

Colonel Waśkiewicz said, "It's the enemy wagons moving away." At that moment we heard some clattering of numerous hooves. They are passing close by the road: it was Cossacks. "Shoot men!" ordered the commander of the 1st Battalion. The company gave three salvos. By



the light of the shooting you could see the horsemen crowded about 80-100 paces away, riding in wild disorder. We shot a few times more. They fled. We moved on.

After this skirmish, which ended with the Russian cavalry unit scattering in all directions, the battalion moved towards Kraszew. The companies accelerated their march and soon approached the village, from where shots were fired (Map 10 in Appendix 3).

The leading 4th Company of 2nd-Lieutenant Sobieszczański, followed by 1st Lieutenant Wagner and the 3rd Company of 2nd-Lieutenant Songin, attacked the village vigorously and captured it. After seizing a dozen or so prisoners, some rolling stock and telephone equipment, the troops pushed on, with the 3rd Company moving to a bridge. There were two cannons nearby, their crews having fled. Between 03:00 and 05:00 the battalion then captured Kraszew and Kasztów, but soon had to leave Kasztów under enemy pressure.

At this time the 2nd Battalion, marching behind the 1st Battalion, received orders to man the trenches in the vicinity of Wiktorów and to establish communication with the units of the 10th Division, which were thought to be located north-west of Dybów. The 3rd Battalion was also stopped its march and was ordered to march back to Radzymin. In the morning of the same day it received an order in the town to march back to Dybów, where it was to man the sector.

The 1st Battalion remained in Kraszew for some time, but eventually it too received orders to withdraw to the vicinity of Wiktorów to the first line of defensive positions. The technical company left for Radzymin.

The 2nd Battalion manned the ordered section without hindrance, but obviously was unable to establish communication with the 10th Division in the vicinity of Dybów, as its patrols found the enemy there.

At dawn of 16 August, the northern and north-eastern edges of the Radzymin were garrisoned by the 1st and 3rd Companies of the 30th Regiment. The 30th Regiment considered its task completed and was waiting to be relieved by the 1st Lit-Bel Division. In the morning, when the 3rd Grodno Battalion and Technical Company returned to the town, the 30th IR companies left for Cegielnia. Company 2/30, which had been sent to reinforce the 1st and 3rd Companies, was just then nearing the town. A squadron of the 3rd HRR under Lieutenant Czuczelowicz also arrived in town from Wioska Radzyńska, and sent patrols to reconnoitre and establish communication with Mokre, Dybów and Kraszew. One of those patrols, sent to the 28th IR, supposedly in Mokre, was taken prisoner.

In the early hours of the morning, when the fighting in the vicinity of Radzymin was getting under way and the real situation was being clarified, Lt-Colonel Rybicki arrived in the town. He had received news of the seizure of Kraszew and the first line by the Grodno Regiment and of the seizure of Helenów and Rżysk by the Wilno Regiment. Seeing that the Grodno Regiment had no reserve, he ordered its 1st Battalion to be sent to Radzymin.

Clash with Armoured Cars near Radzymin

Around 05:00 on 16 August, Lt-Colonel Bohaterewicz, commander of the Grodno regiment, ordered Major Kamiński-Jaśkiewicz, the 3rd Battalion commander, to march to Dybów and man the sector by the river. He also pointed out that the enemy was not on the outskirts of Radzymin at that time.

The 3rd Grodno Battalion set off from the town in a column. At the head marched the 9th and 10th Companies under 2nd-Lieutenant Lipin, along with machine-guns of 2nd-Lieutenant Miciuk. The other companies and the battalion commander moved along the road.

Soon the companies passed the Radzymin cemetery and out of the town. The nearby fields and meadows were empty, the distance was covered by the morning mist. To the left, next to the road, there were still windmills, and further north, against the dark background of the forest, the buildings of Mokre could be seen. No movement was visible on the road. The companies crossed the line of trenches outside the town and came to a fork in the road when suddenly an armoured car was seen on the road, approaching from the direction of Dybów. A moment later a second car was spotted, advancing at some distance. Lipin stopped the companies and sent a patrol forward because he didn't know to whose side the cars belonged.



Soon all doubts disappeared: the first car approached to a distance of 200-300 m, stopped and ... opened machine-gun fire. The Polish soldiers fell to the ground and lay motionless for a few minutes. They then tried to retreat by bounds to the rear, but the heavy machine-gun fire prevented any movement on the road. They had to creep towards a ditch and then under the barbed wire of the trenches to the north-east of the town.

Meanwhile, the Russian vehicles were laying down one set of fire after another. Under the hellish fire, small groups of soldiers made their way through the wires and occupied the trenches, where they took started to fight back.

However, the battalion was very weak (100 to 120 bayonets) and had no weapons that could combat the enemy's armour. It didn't even have hand grenades. So it shot solely at the enemy infantry, which was advancing behind the armoured cars. The idea of blocking the road to prevent the cars from advancing into the town was also suggested. As 2nd-Lieutenant Lipin recalls:

At that time, the platoon sergeant of the 10th Company, Kosierowski, volunteered to barricade the road with *chevaux-de-frise*, which he did with my participation.

The 3rd Battalion remained in that position for a long time, unable to do anything. The battalion commander, seeing his powerlessness, went to the town to seek help. This was around 08:00.

By that time Company 2/30 was rushing to the aid of the troops defending Radzymin, as were the tanks.

News of the enemy's attack from Dybów onto the north-eastern end of the town and of the danger of the armoured cars entering spread quickly in Radzymin. It was a critical time, as there were no troops on hand to support the 3rd Grodno Battalion. The artillery was busy setting up into new positions and observation posts and, anyway, could not fire at the armoured cars, as they were too close to Polish troops.

In order to prevent the cars from breaking into the city, the soldiers of the Grodno HQ rushed to barricade the streets. Several trees were cut from the vicarage garden and everything that could be an obstacle was thrown onto the road from the buildings adjacent to the road. Houses on the edge of the town were then manned and machine-guns were placed in windows of the school building.

In the midst of this the 2nd Company, confident that its own troops were in front, was moving through the town along the road to Dybów. Before reaching the trenches of the 3rd Grodno Battalion, 2nd-Lieutenant Szymanski, stopped his column and went forward himself to check the situation. At this moment all was calm, as the enemy, seeing that the first attempt to break into the city had failed, had stopped firing. The 2nd Company, left under the command of Sergeant Raniecki, waited for orders near the buildings by the road. Raniecki recounts:

And then appearing as if from underground, an armoured car was in front of us at a distance of a few paces, firing at us.

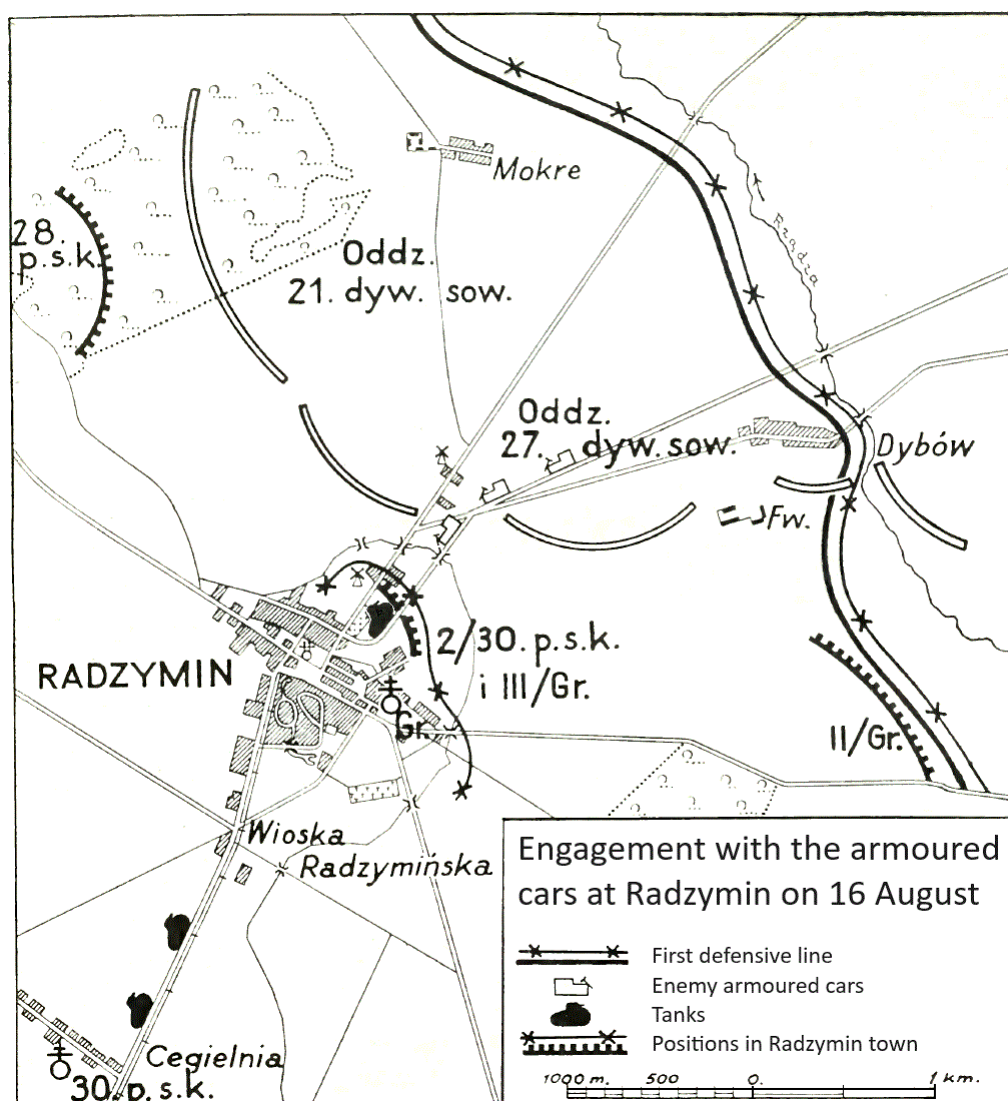
But he did not lose his nerve and quickly moved his platoons to the right and left of the road. It was just in time, as now the enemy artillery began to shell the north-eastern edge of the town. Soon 2nd-Lieutenant Szymański (he had been wounded, but remained in the line) returned to his company, which occupied the trenches to reinforce the town's defence.

Nevertheless, the situation was still unpleasant. Although everyone was sure that the enemy infantry would be prevented from entering the town, it was difficult to fight off the armoured cars, who were moving with impunity on the road. Then news came that a tank would soon arrive to assist. As it turned out, the 3rd Battalion commander, who had gone to Radzymin for help, had alerted the regiment HQ there. Then, as luck would have it, a tank with a cannon had just arrived, moving from the second line into the town. So Major Kaleński-Jaśkiewicz asked the tank commander to rush to the infantry's aid.

Soon the trenches heard the clanking of a tank in the distance, driving from the square towards the cemetery, and the soldiers increased their fire to drown out the noise of the machine. The tank, under the command of Corporal Makowski, was armed with a 37-mm cannon.

An interesting duel took place in front of the eyes of the fighting infantry, between the Polish tank and the Soviet armoured cars, *Avenger* and *Grozny*.





Sketch 77

The tank rounded a bend near the cemetery and crawled straight towards the enemy cars. The caterpillars slid on the smooth roadway with a clatter and soon brought the tank up to the trenches, to within 100-200 metres of the armoured cars. The barrel of the cannon could be seen protruding from the turret, now searching for the enemy. Corporal Makowski fired two accurate shots, one of which hit one of the armoured cars. The enemy lost the will to fight on, and the cars retreated towards Dybów. For a while the infantry took a breather, and the tank turned back to the town, as its platoon had another task waiting.

This calm did not last long, as the cars soon reappeared, betraying their desire to get into the town.

Capture of the First Line around Helenów

During the night of 15/16 August the Wilno Regiment remained in Ciemne. A few dozen paces in front of the eastern end of the village was one of their march companies, which linked to the left with the 1st Battalion (opposite Janków Stary). No link was established to the right. The 2nd Battalion, having sorted itself out during the night, moved closer to the eastern edge of the village. The rest of the regiment and the command remained in the western part of the village.

At about 03:00 on 16 August, the Wilno Regiment commander gave orders for further operations. At 03:25 he sent a message notifying the division commander of the orders.

I report that the village of Ciemne is in our hands and I am there with the 3rd Battalion (reserve), the 2nd Battalion is by road to Helenów, the 1st Battalion that to the villages of Wiktorów and Kraszew.



The regiment is going to occupy the old trenches of Helenów – Kraszew, it is seeking communication to the left with the Grodno Regiment and to the right with the Nowogród Regiment. I will report after reaching the Helenów – Kraszew line.

The village of Janków Stary, according to the inhabitants, has been abandoned by the Bolsheviks. The patrol sent to check it has not yet returned. The enemy is putting up fierce resistance. Our losses are considerable, especially in officers.

The 1st Battalion was given the task of reaching positions in the first line, on the section Wiktorów – Kraszew Dzielny – Rżyska.

Taking advantage of the very dense morning fog it set out between 03:30 and 04:00 (Map 10 in Appendix 3). No particular resistance was offered and, after throwing out some small detachments, it occupied the designated section. It then established a link to the left with the Grodno Regiment. It took several prisoners and three machine-guns. After taking the positions, the 1st Battalion reported that to the regimental commander, noting that prisoners testified that, “a lot of Bolshevik regiments are running away in panic.”

The 2nd Battalion’s attack was very different. After receiving the orders, Lieutenant Orzechowski, the 2nd Battalion commander, had ordered the 8th Company to attack Helenów, to be followed by the rest of the battalion and a company from the regiment’s NCO School.

At dawn on 16 August, the battalion passed the rifle line of the marching company and headed for Helenów. The march company did not receive any tasks but its commander, 2nd-Lieutenant Kijak, joined the attack of his own accord and followed the 6th Company, which headed for the southern edge of Helenów. The 5th and 7th Companies advanced to the northern edge of the village. The movement of the troops took place in complete silence.

Suddenly heavy fire came from the village just as the 8th Company arrived. It was already getting light and a great deal of movement could be seen in the village. Surprised groups of the enemy were fleeing in panic, abandoning their machine-guns and prisoners. However, meeting so many enemy was also a surprise for the 8th Company, and it was so stunned that it withdrew from the village as well, letting the battalion commander know of the situation.

But the other companies, advancing right behind it, immediately increased their rate of march and moved in, occupying the Warsaw bridgehead’s first line.

So the Wilno Regiment easily achieved a considerable success, which was undoubtedly the result of launching the assault just at dawn, when the morning fog prevented observation. After Helenów was taken, the villagers ran out of their cottages, rejoicing at the arrival of the soldiers.

The people of the village spontaneously made a pleasant surprise for our hungry soldiers in the form of jugs of milk and fruit.

After occupying the trenches, the 6th Company took the southern part of Helenów, the march company occupied the centre of the village, while the northern part was held by the 5th Company. Rżyska Manor was occupied by the NCO School company and the protruding headland of the position between Rżyska and Helenów was manned by the 7th and 8th Companies.

At 07:40 the 2nd Battalion commander reported on the occupation of Helenów and the first line positions, notifying that communication with the 1st Battalion had been established but that there was no contact to the right.

Once the positions had been taken, it turned out that there were not enough men to man them properly so some sections were very lightly held. Repairs on the useful shooting trenches and obstacles began immediately, especially as between 08:00 and 09:00 the enemy could be seen moving men in the area in front.

At the same time, the Polish artillery caused trouble for its own side, as it began to shell the positions of the Wilno Regiment in the vicinity of Helenów and Rżyska.



We have already noted that in the morning of 16 August the commander of the 1st Lit-Bel Brigade ordered his troops to leave their positions. Accordingly, units of the Mińsk and 47th Regiments were sent to Helenów, held by the Wilno Regiment. Meanwhile the Nowogród Regiment's commander ordered at 06:50 that the battalions should move to Janków Stary, sending reconnaissance to Kraszew Dzielny and Wiktorów. The regimental commander warned that those localities might already be occupied by the 2nd Brigade.

At around 08:00 the Nowogród Regiment marched in the ordered direction. As the morning went on the situation was clarified and the troops repositioned. This was quite difficult, as the division command still had insufficient knowledge of who was where, and had not settled on a plan for manning the first line.

The Battle for Mokre

During the night of 15/16 August, the 28th IR remained in the woods, with the 1st and 2nd Battalions in position and the 3rd in reserve at Aleksandrów. As we have seen, the 1st Battalion commander sent the 1st Company at night to near Mokre, and it then remained on the edge of the forest in front of the village, maintaining fire contact with the enemy.

At around midnight the 1st Battalion commander received orders to occupy Mokre, but for the reasons we have seen above, Lieutenant Boski decided to proceed with the task at dawn on 16 August. He ordered the commander of the 1st Company to advance on Mokre and supported him on the left wing with the 2nd Company and machine-guns. The 3rd and 4th Companies remained in reserve, and Lieutenant Boski intended to use one of them to attack Mokre from the south-west.

The commanders of the 1st and 2nd Companies, upon arriving near the village, sent out patrols before the attack, which brought back prisoners. The captives said, "that there were a lot of them, but they were retreating."

Soon both companies launched their attack. The 1st Company attacked in an easterly direction, with its right wing 2nd Platoon under Sergeant Angelo advancing towards a sandy hill close to Mokre Manor, securing itself to the right with a section of soldiers. To the left of the 1st Company was the 2nd Company of 2nd-Lieutenant Kulczyński. The attack started well. The 2nd Platoon of the 1st Company drove back a larger enemy detachment and captured a machine-gun, which it immediately placed in the positions it had taken near the manor. The rest of the men also fought off some enemy resistance, the two companies reached the gardens and buildings around Mokre Manor, manning the sandy hills above the road from Mokre to Ruda.

This line was halted as a result of encountering more enemy resistance. Heavy shooting from both sides ensued. The firefight quickly consumed the companies' scarce ammunition supplies and caused losses among the men. The commander of the 1st Company, 2nd-Lieutenant Janus, was wounded and, leaving the line to be bandaged, handed over command of his company to Sergeant Angelo. A rather difficult situation was created, as the enemy not only increased their fire, but became clearly offensively minded. The companies defended their positions. Soon there was a complete lack of ammunition, as mentioned by 2nd-Lieutenant Kulczyński:

There was no resupply of ammunition at all, and in the end we started to run short, especially the HMGs. The privates, sent back for ammunition, did not return. The other companies (3rd and 4th) did not take part in the combat, despite the fact that I asked the battalion commander several times for help.

The commander of the 1st Battalion did not intend to reinforce the leading companies, but wanted to support them with an attack of the 3rd Company, which was to leave the forest and attack Mokre from the south-west. After sending that company, the battalion commander reported to the regimental commander:

I report that the 1st Battalion is attacking Mokre from the west and south. The enemy is holding firm and apparently intends to counter-attack.



Meanwhile 3rd Company commander, 2nd-Lieutenant Hołubski, who understood his task as, “more of a demonstration”, advanced from the forest to the plain stretching south from the village of Mokre. On the open ground, the 3rd Company’s movement was stopped by heavy enemy fire. The company commander reported to the battalion commander that he could not advance any further.

At that time the enemy advanced from Mokre and Łoś along the whole front of the 28th and 29th IRs.

The attack was prepared by artillery fire. One enemy battery was pulled up to Łoś, from where it shelled the positions of the 29th Regiment.

After the first test shots, the battery began a rapid fire on the centre of the line – shells started falling, spreading havoc.

The Russian artillery, whose strength some participants calculated at three or four light and one or two heavy batteries, increased its fire on Battalion 3/29. The heaviest losses were sustained by the 12th Company on the right wing, which, as a result of the withdrawal of the 28th Regiment from Mokre, retreated its left wing to some ditches a few dozen paces back. The company commander, 2nd-Lieutenant Kortylewicz, reported these events to the battalion commander. Lieutenant Pelc, deputising for the battalion commander, recalls this period as follows:

Sensing from the reports of the 12th Company commander that the soldiers were not feeling well, I went to the 12th Company positions to check their condition.

In the midst of this the enemy infantry advanced from Łoś and attacked the right wing of Battalion 3/29. However, the 12th Company threw off the attack and was reinforced by part of the battalion’s reserve.

The 1st and 2nd Companies of the 28th Regiment fared worse, as they initially tried to stop the enemy’s attack, but were out of ammunition. Finally, tired from the sleepless night and exhausted by the battle, they faltered and began to retreat. They were followed by the enemy riflemen.

On hearing that the 1st Battalion’s companies were retreating, the 2nd Battalion’s commander ordered Captain Gordziałkowski to move with the 5th and 7th Companies to a counter-attack. These companies set off, but as they came into contact with the retreating 1st Company they absorbed their loss of morale, and returned to their original positions.

The 1st Battalion commander now sent his 4th Company into action and, together with other companies, stopped the enemy advance. On receiving this news the regimental commander gave the order to break contact with the enemy and retreat 1½ km into the woods.

This ended the first assault by the 28th Regiment on Mokre. The troops withdrew to a line of hills stretching in the forest along the Radzymin – Ruda road and took a long time to get organised for a new action (Map 10 in Appendix 3).

Upon hearing of the 28th Regiment’s withdrawal from Mokre, the 29th Regiment directed the 7th Company, 2nd-Lieutenant Pstrokoński, and then the 6th Company into the gap between the 28th and 29th Regiments. Having received the order, the 7th Company marched out of the lodge by Height 89 and reached a road in the woods opposite a muddy bog where they had met the retreating soldiers of the 28th Regiment. “They were depressed,” recalled the commander of Company 7/29, “and had no ammunition.” The 7th Company took up positions along the road, linking up to the right with the 28th Regiment, and to the left with the 6th Company of the 29th Regiment.

These events took place between 07:00 and 08:00. They soon alerted the brigade and General Żeligowski, making it clear that Mokre was not yet taken.

Counter-attack on Mokre and Dybów

During the night of 15/16 August General Żeligowski did not issue any orders, as he hoped, on the basis of the reports received so far, that his task and that of the 10th Division had been completed – so that on the morning of 16 August the 10th Division would be able to be withdrawn to the Front reserve.



But before dawn on 16 August, news was received of an order to leave the 10th Division at Radzymin, while in the morning reports arrived that the 28th IR had been driven away from Mokre deep into the woods. Later news was also received of a clash with the enemy on the north-eastern edge of Radzymin.

General Żeligowski remained in the Wólka Radzyńska area. It was not until around noon on 16 August that some of his staff moved to Marki, becoming for the first time an operational group HQ for the 10th, 11th and 1st Lit-Bel Divisions.

General Żeligowski dealt with the matter of retaking Mokre, while General Rządkowski, who had left in the morning for Radzymin, sought to control the situation there and launch a counter-attack on Dybów.

At 08:00 General Żeligowski gave a “categorical order to seize Mokre”, with the commander of the 19th Brigade being personally ordered to lead the 28th Regiment in the attack, as mentioned by Lt-Colonel Thomme in these words:

There was nothing for it, one last effort had to be made in person.

At 09:00 General Żeligowski ordered Colonel Szpręglewski to move the batteries closer to the front lines. The course of action so far indicated that the infantry had been deprived of artillery support.

Around this time General Żeligowski probably met with General Rządkowski and gave him part of the 30th Regiment, with the aim of using it in a counter-attack. General Rządkowski left for Radzymin, stopping on the road near Cegielnia and there, at 09:30, summoned Major Muszyński of the 30th IR and ordered him to support the Grodno Regiment on the north-eastern edge of Radzymin with one battalion. Major Kaleński of the Grodno Regiment, who had arrived in the vicinity of Cegielnia, requested assistance.

In the morning two platoons of tanks set off from the vicinity of Height 101 for Radzymin, to be used for an action on Mokre and Dybów, and for the defence of Radzymin.

The organisation of the artillery operating near Radzymin and its tasks remained unchanged from 15 August. In the morning of 16 August, the batteries had almost no communication with the infantry, which had begun operating before dawn.

The need then arose to draw the artillery into a new co-operation with the infantry. But during the late morning the batteries were mostly setting up in their new positions and organising observation posts.

At around 09:00 General Żeligowski demanded that all the batteries be moved to the line Cegielnia – Ciemne, but then at 13:20 he ordered that the heavy ones be left in their previous positions on the second defensive line, the light mobile ones be left in forward positions, and the non-mobile ones be left with the heavy ones. The latter included the batteries that did not have enough horses, and the light mobile batteries included the A/75 and Battery 4/20 FAR.

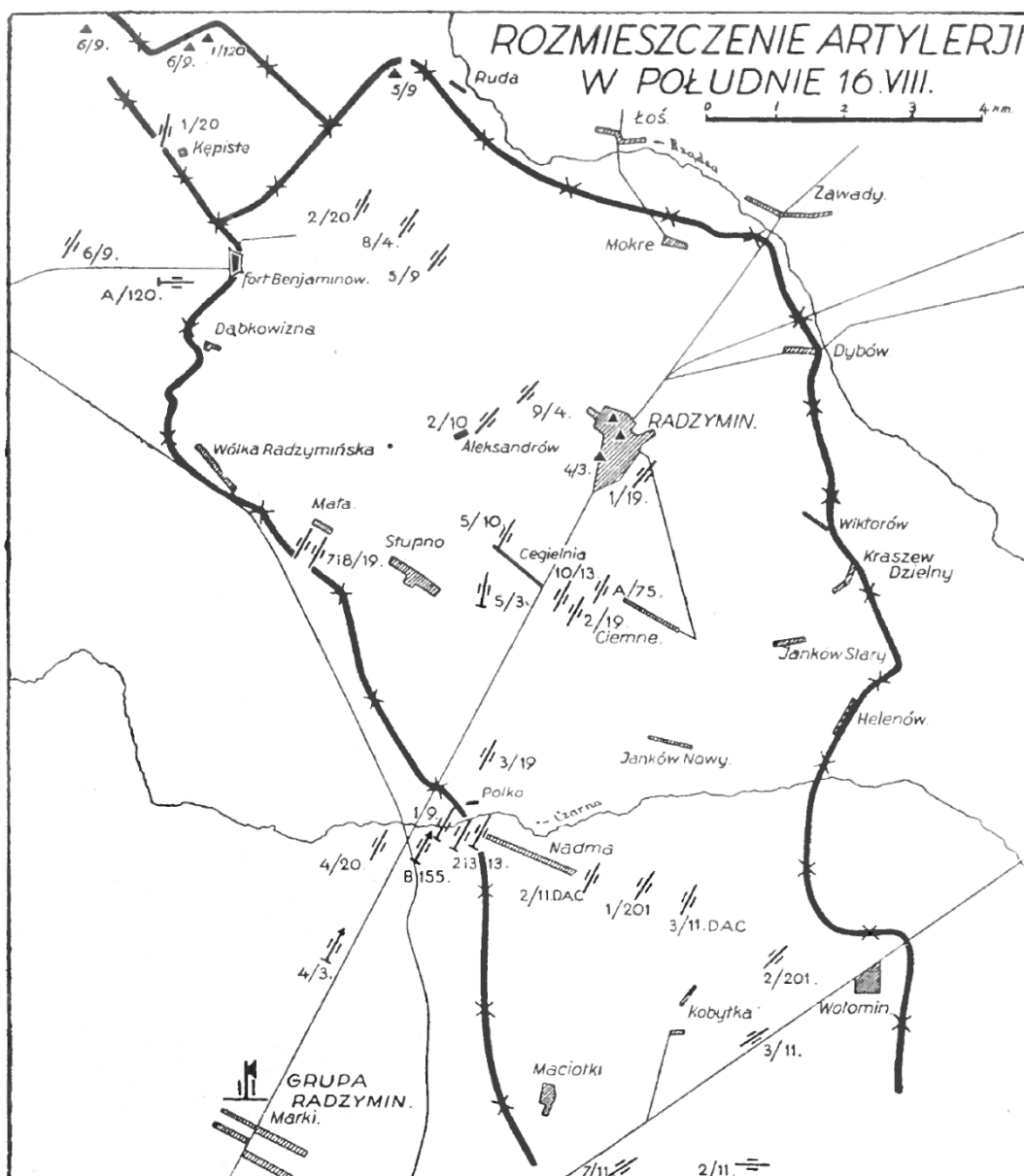
The batteries took up the following positions:

Battery 9/4 FAR to the north-east of the Aleksandrów Manor, and Battery 8/4 moved to the north-east of Benjaminów. The *division* commander, Lieutenant Pilecki, went with the 9th Battery commander, Lieutenant Zwierkowski, to search for an observation point. The point chosen was the church tower in Radzymin, where observers from the 1st Lit-Bel *Division* were already present. The 9th Battery was to fire in a zone from Mokre up to and including the Zawady – Radzymin road.

At 06:00 Battery 2/10 FAR moved its observation point to the Radzymin church tower, and took up a position near Aleksandrów. Once there the battery fired in the sector Mokre – Zawady – Zwierzyniec. During the morning, Battery 5/10 (subordinated to the 30th IR) took up a position in Cegielnia, next to the 30th IR HQ, with an observation point in the Radzymin church tower, and operated in the zone Zawady – Zwierzyniec.

In this way the observation points of Batteries 9/4, 2/10, and 5/10, Lieutenant Pilecki and Captain Bartoszkiewicz were placed together in Radzymin church. Those batteries were able to work to the advantage of the 19th Brigade, with Pilecki having a direct link with the brigade commander, and simultaneously support operations around Dybów and Zawady.





Sketch 78: Positions of the artillery at noon on 16 August

Meanwhile the 7th and 8th Lit-Bel Batteries, which on 15 August had supported the 10th Division, were not given any special task. They remained in positions near Mata and rested all day.

The batteries of the 1st Lit-Bel *Division* moved closer to the battle line in the morning of 16 August. The 1st Battery returned to its 13 August position with the observation point in the church tower and then on the roof of a house at the eastern end of the town. The 2nd Battery took up a position near Cegielnia, while an observation point was chosen in the Radzymin church, but above the presbytery not the tower, which had a view of the ground just north of Radzymin. The 3rd Battery moved to a position north of Półk, with the task of supporting the defence of Helenów. To this end, the battery commander went to the Ciemne – Helenów area to search for an observation point, at which time he was fired upon by a Polish heavy battery.

Battery A/75 moved forward during the late morning and took up a position in the area of the brickyard west of Ciemne with an observation point on the roof of the Radzymin church.

Battery 2/13 HAR initially remained in its former position, putting up an observation point in the tower of the Radzymin church, but then moved to a position in the Nadma area.

Battery 5/3 HAR during the night of 15/16 August took up a position next to the batteries of the 13th HAR, then moved on Colonel Aleksandrowicz's orders the next morning to a position next to Height 94, with an observation point on the tower in Radzymin, from where it fired on Zawady and Zwierzyniec.



The other batteries (4/20 FAR, 4/3 HAR, 1/9 HAR) remained in their former positions. At 09:00 Colonel Szpręglewski was notified of the arrival of Battery 10/13 FAR, which had received an order to leave to Colonel Aleksandrowicz's command, and in the afternoon found itself in the area of Cegielnia.

From the list we can see that most of the batteries arranged their observation at the church. Despite the lack of a general artillery order, any division of tasks, etc., those batteries were able to cooperate effectively with the infantry.

On the other hand, the batteries that remained in their positions and had observation points in the rear, generally fired on the basis of information provided by the divisional HQs and often from a map. What kind of news these might have been is indicated by the fact that at 08:00 Major Rómmel had information from the 1st Lit-Bel staff that the enemy was occupying, "east of Mokre, west of Dybów, west of Kraszew, in the area of Janków Stary and Janków Nowy." At the time some of the batteries began to fire into the area of Ciemne, Helenów and Rżyska and so upon their own infantry.

During the morning of 16 August there was little activity by the artillery, as at that time activities connected with setting up posts and observation were carried out.

The 2nd Lit-Bel Battery was one of the first to fire on Mokre. Its commander, who was just on his way to the town, noticed an opposition counter-attack at that village. As the connection from the tower was not yet ready, Lieutenant Bagieński temporarily took up a point on the roof of a high house near the station, and with a few shells started to accurately hit the enemy advancing from the forest near Mokre. After setting up a point on the church, he noticed the enemy's armoured cars, but could not fire at them as they were already too close to the town. He asked the *division* commander to warn the tanks, which were on their way to the town from the second line.

There was such a squeeze of the observers of various batteries in the church tower that some officers even went up to the roof. When a detachment of enemy cavalry was observed in the vicinity of Mokre, preparing to attack in front of the village, the batteries of Lieutenant Pilecki and 1st Lit-Bel *Division* fired at it and dispersed them. The enemy, who at that time was conducting counter-attacks at Mokre and Radzymin, must have noticed the movement on the towers and roof of the church, as one Russian battery opened fire on it, but not usefully, as it fired shrapnel.

However several shells hit the church, only exploding when hitting the attic, which filled the attic with clouds of dust and caused some confusion in the observation posts.

After that incident, some batteries (1st Lit-Bel and 2/13) moved their observation posts to the roofs of houses on the northeastern and eastern edges of the city.

Course of the Action

About 09:00 Lt-Colonel Thomme, commander of the 19th Brigade, arrived at the 28th Regiment, which at that time had put its men in order and was in a defensive position in the woods, maintaining combat contact with the enemy by patrols. Thomme's job was to see to it that the 28th Regiment's attack was sufficiently well organised. He also tried to reignite the enthusiasm for battle among the soldiers and commanders. One of the participants recalls that Thomme:

... strolled through the troops, gauging the spirit and mood of the soldier and at the same time playing on the ambitions of the officers and soldiers. [He said] that he did not think that a regiment so covered in glory could not throw out the Bolsheviks.

The arrival of the brigade commander (who was also the full-time commander of the regiment) into the ranks of the fighting men had an invigorating effect on them. Lieutenant Żyromski reports:

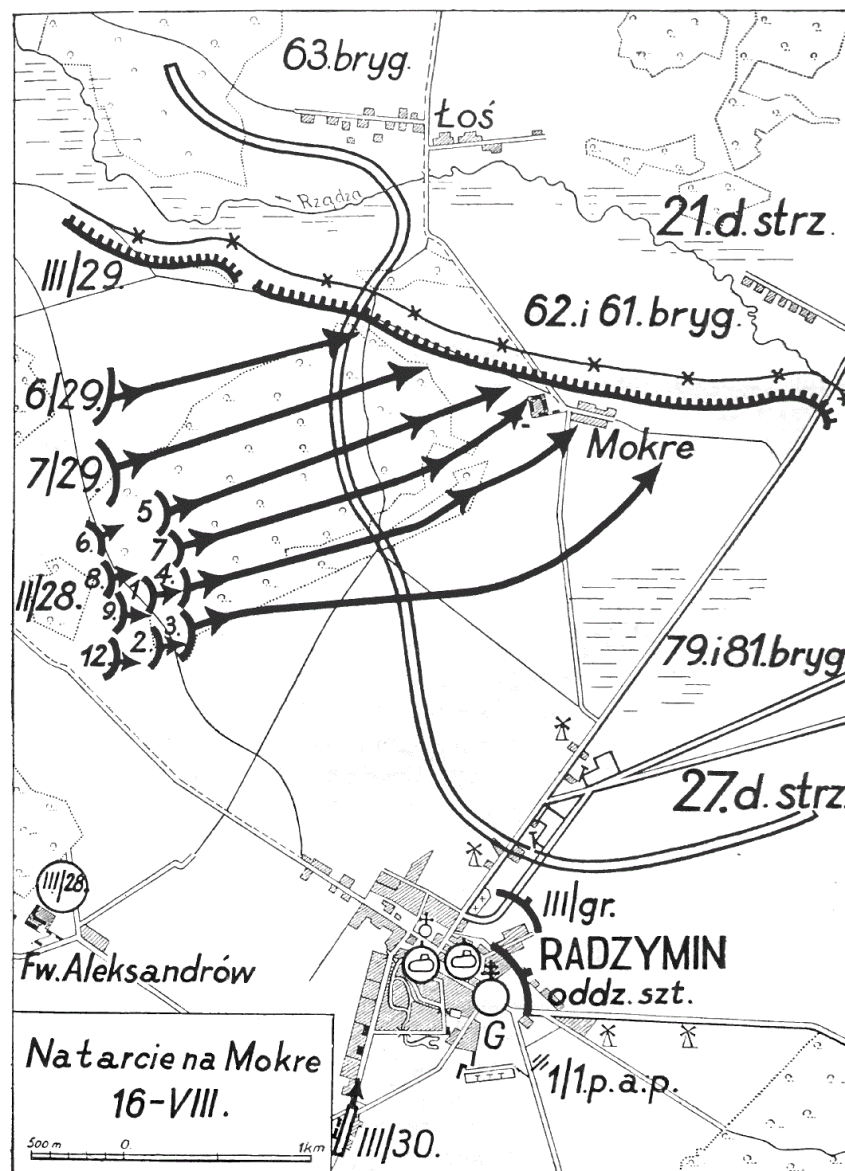
His presence, thanks to the great affection the regiment had for him, made both officers and privates ready to leap into the fire after him.

Thomme then set about ensuring that the 28th IR's attack was supported by artillery. He ordered the batteries to fire primarily on Mokre, and then on Łoś and Zawady, and he writes that he ordered them to:



... fire continuously, no matter whether targets were visible or not ... and this was because both attacking regiments were extremely tired, had suffered considerable losses and, although they were full of faith and hope, further impetus was needed.

He was able to command, through Lieutenant Pilecki, Batteries 2/10, 8/4, and 9/4. Those batteries established close communication with the regiment and sent additional observers to the infantry line. However many other batteries cooperated with the 19th Brigade's assault, as all the batteries that had observation points in Radzymin, and especially those observing from the church, took part in the battle. The commanders knew that a lot of artillery would be firing, and in fact it was announced to the ranks that, "a hundred cannons would be firing."



Sketch 79: Attack on Mokre on 16 August

The assault by the 28th IR was supported by the 29th IR with two companies. The rest of the 29th defended its positions during the time, and its defence was supported by the batteries of the Left Artillery Subgroup.

The 28th IR strongly reorganised its the right wing, which was to advance along the woods to Mokre. The 1st Battalion was to attack in that direction, reinforced by the regimental commander with the 9th and 12th Companies. Lieutenant Boski designated the 3rd and 4th Companies to the first line, and gave the command of the 3rd Company to 2nd-Lieutenant Gryglaszewski, who had just returned to the regiment. In the second line were the 1st and 2nd Companies, and the battalion's reserve was the 9th and 12th Companies.



The 2nd Battalion was to attack the western edge of Mokre with the 5th and 7th Companies in the first line under the command of Captain Gordziałkowski, while the rest of the battalion remained in reserve. The leading companies were reinforced with the 2nd MG Company of 2nd-Lieutenant Rzedzicki and a platoon of the 4th MG Company.

At the starting positions (in the woods around Height 85) the 2nd Battalion's companies linked to the left with the 6th and 7th Companies of the 29th Regiment, which, under Lieutenant Żukowski's command, manned the gap between the 28th Regiment and Battalion 3/29. Those companies were to attack in a north-easterly direction on the wooded sandy hills lying along the Mokre – Ruda road.

In reserve were two rifle companies and the technical company, while all the machine-guns, including the 4th MG Company, took part in the assault.

Between 11:00 and 12:00 preparations were completed and the attack began. Lt-Colonel Thomme recalls that he led the 28th Regiment "all the way" in the attack, remarking:

The battalions deployed picture perfect behind the smoke of the artillery explosions and moved forward in dense waves, shoulder to shoulder.

The rifle lines of the leading companies moved swiftly through the woods, preceded by combat patrols, which rejected any enemy's pickets they encountered. Soon the 3rd Company on the right wing moved out of the woods and came under enemy machine-gun fire in the fields. The enemy occupied the small hills south of Mokre, linking up north with the Mokre garrison. Although the enemy fire was strong, it was indiscriminate and the attackers suffered no casualties. The company quickly rushed forward and ran out of the alders with a shout of "hura!". It was not long before it reached the line of its own forward patrols. The enemy, hit by Polish artillery fire at that time, stopped shooting and withdrew from their positions.

In the first minutes of the Polish attack the observers in the Radzymin church noticed the enemy's movements in the Mokre area, and saw that his infantry and cavalry had begun to retreat. Then the batteries (mainly 2/Lit-Bel, 9/4, 2/10, and 2/13 HAR, but also others) started to cover the Mokre, Zawady and Radzymin area with heavy fire. Between 12:00 and 12:30 the 2nd Lit-Bel Battery fired up to 400 rounds; in Battery 2/10 each gun fired 10-12 shots per minute; Battery 9/4, which fired over 300 rounds, had to cool the barrels with wet bags; and Battery 4/3 HAR fired 123 shots. The effects of this fire were considerable:

... indeed after the first shots the chaos increased and the retreat became panicked.

The attack of the 19th Brigade went magnificently. Company 3/28, having fought off resistance in the vicinity of Height 87-5, was at this time advancing to the north-east. To the left of it, the 4th Company was advancing along the edge of the forest, then having reached Mokre, found itself level with the attack of the 5th and 7th Companies, led by Captain Gordziałkowski.

The 2nd Battalion, its 5th Company having a direct link with Company 7/29 to the left, approached the edge of the forest opposite Mokre Manor. There it concentrated for the assault, and then quickly dashed into the village, from which the enemy was fleeing. This decisive attack gave the companies a sizeable haul, as two machine-guns, some prisoners of war and a lot of war material were taken.

After the capture of Mokre, the 2nd Battalion's companies garrisoned positions to the north of the village.

By this time the 3rd Company had fought off the enemy resistance, located to the south of Mokre, and pushed forward. The company commander, 2nd-Lieutenant Gryglaszewski, ran well ahead on the battlefield and, shouting, "go forward!", headed towards Height 89 east of Mokre.

The 28th Regiment achieved success all along the line. At the same time Companies 6/29 and 7/29, which were advancing to the left of the 28th IR, also drove the enemy out of the woods and with Company 5/28 fought to reach the overgrown sand hills by the Mokre – Ruda road. The enemy, unable to withstand this assault, fled, leaving Company 7/29 with some machine-guns and two machine-gun bases, which Battalion 1/28 had lost in the morning.

The companies of the 29th IR occupied the trenches in the first line, at which time they came under heavy fire from enemy artillery. This fire inflicted losses, especially on the 6th Company, which manned a group of houses by the road in the forest from Mokre to Ruda.



Mokre and the first line trenches in the vicinity of that village were captured. The enemy retreated beyond the Rządza, shelled heavily by the Polish artillery.

In the operational zone of the 28th IR there was a squadron of the 3rd HRR under Lieutenant Czuczełowicz, sent by Lt-Colonel Rybicki to advance towards Mokre and Zawady through the edge of the forest. Czuczełowicz, seeing the enemy fleeing, advanced his squadron to charge, but was stopped by Major Sobieszczak or Lt-Colonel Thomme, who were not yet fully aware of the development of events, and did not want to expose their own infantry to the enemy artillery fire.

Around 02:00 the commander of the 1st Battalion, Lieutenant Boski, reported to his regimental commander:

I report that the village of Mokre has been taken. The Bolsheviks have fled in panic to Zawady. I have halted the companies and am manning the Mokre – Dybów crossroads.

At 14:00 Major Sobieszczak ordered the 2nd Battalion to garrison the trenches in Mokre, the 1st Battalion was to cut the Zawady – Radzymin road and at 14:10 the regimental commander subordinated the 2nd Battalion to Lieutenant Boski.

After the action was completed, the 1st Battalion held the section from the Zawady – Radzymin road, while the 2nd Battalion was in the western part of Mokre. The two companies of the 3rd Battalion left to join the rest of their unit, which had remained in reserve during the assault. The regiment's losses were negligible, with only a few wounded.

Lt-Colonel Thomme received the news from Lieutenant Pilecki that the enemy was fleeing from Mokre and so issued the following order at 15:00:

To Lieutenant Pilecki and all battery commanders – all batteries of the 19th Brigade will immediately open hurricane fire in front of Mokre, Height 92 and Dybów. Fire continuously until further notice.

In reality, however, the artillery had already done its job and was then supporting the action on Dybów, which was also coming to an end.

At 15:00 the 29th IR commander, Captain Rogowski, reported to the brigade commander that his regiment had taken the trenches as far as Mokre and captured two machine-guns.

Upon receipt of these messages, Thomme sent General Żeligowski a short report:

At 13:25, the 28th IR took the village of Mokre by storm at the bayonet, aided by the excellent participation of its own artillery. Details later. So far, 8 MGs and a significant number of prisoners have been captured. The enemy is retreating in panic, leaving a lot of dead and wounded in front of our lines.

General Żeligowski sent this report to the Army at 16:40 as his own, but he corrected the first sentence to: "Mokre, occupied by the enemy this morning, was taken by the 28th IR at 13:25."

At 16:40 Thomme gave orders to organise the defence, and it was planned that the 20th Brigade would soon relieve the 19th Brigade in the first line. The 28th IR commander ordered his 1st Battalion to be relieved by the 3rd Battalion, while two companies of the 2nd Battalion were to remain in the forest west of Mokre, and the rest in the reserve of the regiment, while the 1st Battalion was to go to the reserve of the brigade. Late in the evening, the sector was quiet. The relief was delayed because the 1st Battalion was in no hurry to leave its positions.

The 2nd Lit-Bel Brigade

Simultaneously with the actions in the morning of 16 August near Mokre, a battle at Radzymin and Helenów was in progress.

We left the 3rd Grodno Battalion at Radzymin, the 2nd Grodno Battalion at Kraszew, and the Wilno Regiment at Kraszew Dzielny and Helenów. Of those units, the 3rd Grodno Battalion was in the worst



situation. Although with a tank's help it had thrown back the enemy's attack, including their armoured cars, it did not have peace for long. It should be recalled that its forces were small, while the company from the 30th regiment, which had supported it, soon marched back to its own regiment.

Around 10:00 the enemy launched another attack, again with the help of armoured cars. The Grodno Regiment was not able to react much, as it had neither the forces nor the means, and so its whole action was just passive defence, barricading the streets leading to Radzymin Square from the direction of Zawady and Dybów. No Polish counter-attack could be considered until the arrival of Battalion 3/30, which was just then marching towards Radzymin.

On the other hand, the 2nd Battalion's section near Wiktorów was calm. Enemy attacks were repulsed, and the stripped left wing was secured.

At 12:00 the 2nd Brigade reported to General Żeligowski that:

The Grodno Regiment is securing Radzymin from the north-east, closing the road to Zawady and Dybów at the level of the windmill, then further south with trenches to Wiktorów, having one battalion in reserve in Radzymin and a company of tanks at the northern end of Radzymin.

The Wilno Regiment occupies the line Janków Stary – Helenów (inclusive).

The enemy under cover of artillery fire, and using armoured cars, is carrying out strong reconnaissance.

Dybów is held by the enemy. The situation of the 10th ID and the formation of a right wing is requested.

Having garrisoned the first line, the Wilno Regiment was to organise a defence in a sector from Wiktorów (exclusive) to Helenów (exclusive), but this was delayed, as the Nowogród Regiment did not relieve the companies of the Wilno Regiment in Helenów for a long time.

Between 10:00 and 10:30 the enemy, taking advantage of the woods and bushes to the east and northeast of Rżyska Manor, prepared an attack then struck at the right wing of the 1st Battalion and the NCO School company, which was garrisoning the northern edge of the manor, and also at the 8th Company.

The Polish companies were full of confidence and allowed the enemy to get close before beginning to fire heavily. This broke up the enemy attack.

Soon the enemy renewed the attack, striking in the same direction with considerable forces. However, the enemy groups, advancing westwards, once more came under heavy fire from the 1st, as well as under the flanking fire of the NCO and 8th Companies. Suffering heavy losses from the fire, the attack collapsed again and fled in panic.

The 1st Battalion had several wounded (including the 2nd Company's commander), the 7th Company also suffered losses, as it was in positions with its back to the attacking enemy, being on the protruding bend of the line.

So two enemy assaults ended in failure. The repulses reinforced the confidence of the soldiers in their defence, even though the positions gained in the morning in front of Warsaw were disappointing. After repelling the attack, Lieutenant Orzechowski, commander of the 2nd Battalion, sent:

I report that things are calm in my sector. I am sure that we will repel the Bolshevik attacks, if there are any, so long as the neighbouring units hold on.

After the attacks, other problems occupied the commanders' minds, especially the matter of the inadequacies of the artillery cooperation. The 2nd Battalion commander reported several times that the artillery was firing on his troops. Moreover, a heavy battery fired on the reserve and regimental HQ in Ciemne, about which Lieutenant Tomaszewski recalled that:

The enraged Major Bobiatyński sent all his mounted scouts with the task of finding that battery and slaughtering it. ... fortunately, the battery was not found.



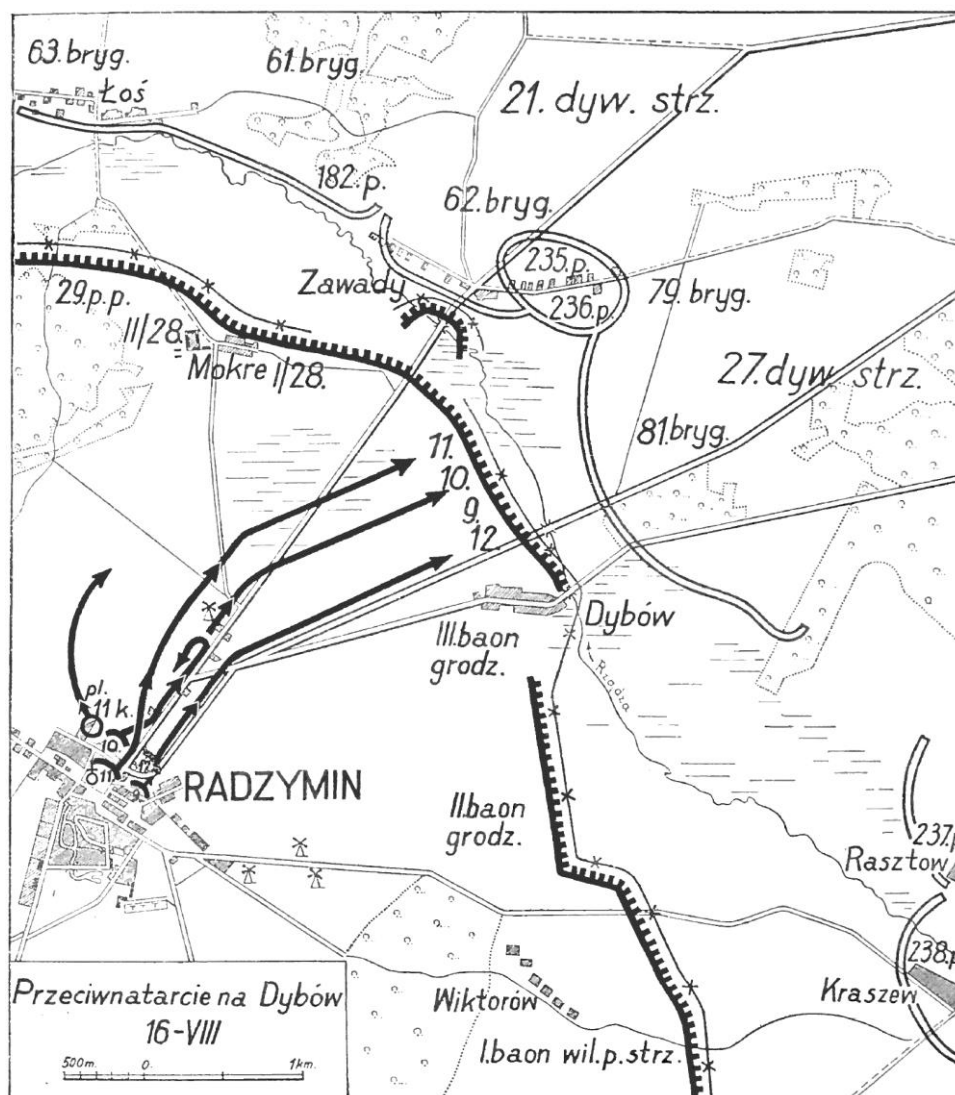
During this time the 1st Brigade took a considerable amount of time during the afternoon to regroup. Eventually, having clarified where it was to be positioned, the Mińsk Regiment was at Helenów and the Nowogród Regiment in reserve at Janków Stary.

The Counter-attack on Dybów

As noted before, General Rządkowski, on the basis of news received from the town, had sent one battalion from the 30th Regiment to be used for the counter-attack at Radzymin.

The command of the 30th Regiment assigned the 3rd Battalion, which had just marched to Cegielnia, where, according to its previous orders, it was to remain at the eastern end and:

... be on standby for support in the direction of Mokre and to cover the regiment from the east (from Wiktorów forest).



Sketch 80 : Counter-attack on Dybów on 16 August

After arriving at Cegielnia, Major Kaleński, the 3rd Grodno Battalion commander, went to the battalion commander, Captain Chodźko-Zajko, and reported that:

The Grodno Regiment has been pushed out of Radzymin and the Bolsheviks are entering the town. The major demands assistance.

Chodźko-Zajko communicated with his commander, from who he received an order to march in the direction of Radzymin, and that he would receive further orders on the way.



So the battalion set off from Cegielnia in battle formation. Meanwhile, orders were received from the 1st Lit-Bel Division, which said that the 3rd Battalion was to hold back the enemy attempting to enter the city from the north and launch a counter-attack in the direction of Dybów.

As the 28th Regiment was grouping for an attack, Battalion 3/30 was just reaching the town. It was now the afternoon of 16 August. The sounds of battle were coming from the north-eastern edge of town. An artillery observer came from the church tower to the battalion commander and informed him that the enemy was not in the city, but was approaching.

Two platoons of tanks were in the town square: one of them was to support the attack on Mokre and the other had not yet received any task, but presumably it was to defend the town. So the first platoon moved off and started an attack from the northern edge of the town, but soon turned back, as it found that its own infantry was already entering Mokre.

At this time some of the artillery was busy shelling the enemy fleeing near Mokre. Other batteries were shelling the vicinity of Dybów and Zwierzyniec as well as the fields northeast of Radzymin. At around 12:00 the 1st Lit-Bel Battery, on the orders of the *division* commander, moved to a position near the Jewish cemetery and shelled the area around Jaktory. Further operations on Dybów were supported by some batteries, but mainly by the 1st Lit-Bel and 5/10 Batteries.

It was in this situation that Battalion 3/10 entered the battle. The battalion's commander didn't have much time to get a more accurate idea of the situation and to agree on actions with the Grodno Regiment, as the situation required a hasty response. He also didn't know whether he would receive tank support.

The battalion formed up with the 10th and 12th Companies in the first line: the 12th Company, reinforced with four machine-guns, was to advance along the street and then along the road to Dybów, while the 10th Company, also with four machine-guns, was to head through the marketplace, along the road to Zawady and then to Zwierzyniec. The 9th Company, with two machine-guns, was to march behind the 12th Company and cover the battalion's right wing. The 11th Company and the rest of the 3rd MG Company advanced behind the 10th Company.

Around 14:00 the leading companies of the battalion reached the north-eastern edge of Radzymin and soon clashed with the enemy patrols, which were thrown back. Stronger resistance was encountered in the vicinity of the cemetery, buildings and windmills on the road to Zawady. The battalion commander ordered four machine-guns from the reserve to be placed in the street, in order to give fire support to the 10th Company attack, and ordered the 11th Company to bypass the cemetery to the west.

Under the influence of that attack, the enemy withdrew from in front of the town. The 10th and 12th Companies moved forward. After going about a kilometre they were stopped by enemy machine-gun fire, from the fork in the road.

The battalion commander established messenger communication with the artillery observers in the tower, asking for fire support, and then ordered two platoons of the 11th Company to extend the left wing of the 10th. He sent one platoon towards the woods at Mokre, with the aim of establishing a link with the 28th Regiment and covering the battalion's flank. The reserve machine-guns were moved to the windmill area, from where they were to further support the attack. The 9th Company was at the cemetery.

These preparations and the halt lasted about half an hour, after which the 3rd Battalion, supported by artillery fire, resumed its attack. However, at the moment of launching, two enemy armoured cars appeared on the road from Zawady, targeting the 10th Company. That company hesitated and began to retreat. Then the Polish tanks appeared from out of the Radzymin houses and rushed to help. The battalion commander ordered the 9th Company to move alongside the tanks.

The battalion, excited by the unexpected help from the tanks, moved to the assault. The rumble of the engines and the clatter of the machine-guns mingled with the shouting of the soldiers. No clash at close quarters took place, as the Bolsheviks (probably stunned by the unexpected appearance of the tanks) hurriedly started to move away in the direction of Dybów. The cars left for Zawady.



The enemy artillery, seeing the critical position of their own units, opened fire on the tanks, which were moving past the trenches near Radzymin. The platoon commander's tank overturned, forcing the crews of two other tanks to rush to his aid. Despite the artillery fire, the overturned tank managed to be placed back upright, after which the platoon returned to the town, as the infantry no longer needed its support.

In the meantime Battalion 3/30, supported by artillery fire, pursued the enemy and around 15:00 took the entrenchments along the Rządza River, from the Zawady – Radzymin road to Dybów. All the companies were in the line (counting from the left wing: 11th, 10th, 9th and 12th) and one machine-gun platoon was at the rear on the Zawady – Radzymin road.

After the positions were taken, communication was established to the left with Company 3/28. A telephone line was run to the regiment's HQ by 18:00. In the assault the battalion suffered minor losses: one or two killed and about ten wounded.

During these actions the 3rd Grodno Battalion was initially in the north-eastern corner of the town, then later it took up the trenches in the vicinity of Dybów.

Around 18:00 General Żeligowski arrived at Battalion 3/30 and promised the commander that it would be relieved. This completed the recapture of the last portion of the Warsaw bridgehead's first line of defence.

The consumption of artillery ammunition of the Middle Artillery Subgroup and artillery of the 10th IR on 16 August is difficult to determine. In any case no more than a unit of fire was used in total.

The following figures of shell consumption are known: 4/3 HAR fired 123 rounds, 3/13 HAR – about 300, 2/Lit-Bel – 400, 5/3 HAR – 51, 5/10 FAR – 189, 2/10 FAR – 169, 9/4 FAR – about 300, and 8/4 FAR – about 300.

The Left Artillery Subgroup fired a negligible amount during the day.

The 47th Regiment on 16 August

On 16 August the sector of the 47th Regiment was quiet. The positions are in Sketch 81.

At around 03:00 the enemy attacked the 14th and 15th Companies quite strongly in the vicinity of the railway track, but the infantry – supported by artillery and armoured trains – rejected the enemy without much effort.

In the morning Company 3/47 manned its previous stretch of 13 August, and established communication with the units of the 1st Lit-Bel Division in Helenów. During the day the 3rd Company was relieved by the 1st Company, which set up outposts on Height 109, on the north-eastern edge of Białełoto and on the Slawek – Zagościec road.

The rest of the day was peaceful for the 47th BRR.

The Right Artillery Subgroup remained at their positions. Captain Osmólski's *division* (1st and 2nd Batteries, 201st FAR) was reinforced by a platoon of the 9th Battery, 11th FAR, which was posted near the first line in the vicinity of Ulasek with an observation post on Height 109.

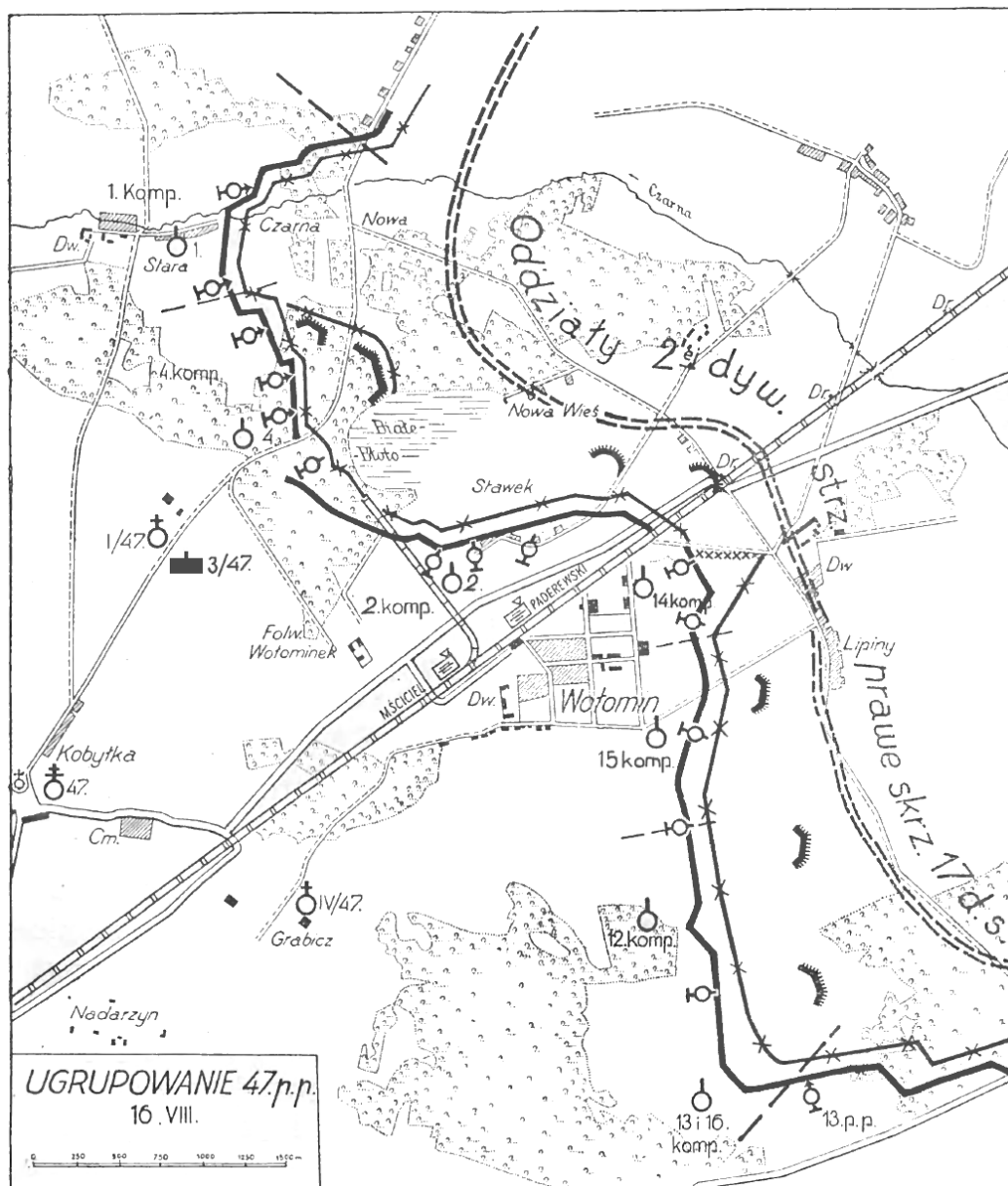
The Right Artillery Subgroup did not fire a unit's worth during 16 August. We have the following data about the ammunition consumption of some batteries: 2/201 FAR – 418 rounds, 3/11 HAD – 130, 2/11 FAR – 130, platoon 9/11 FAR – 35.

Creation of General Żeligowski's Group

On 13 August General Żeligowski's group had been formed by an order from the Army command. It was to consist of the 10th and 1st Lit-Bel Divisions and cover (from 19:00 on 16 August) a sector bounded to the north by the Teodorów – Wólka Radzyńska line, and to the south by the Nadbiel – Ossów line. During



that day the 46th and 47th Regiments were to be detached by 19:00 to be Army's reserve in Pustelnik, while the 48th Regiment was to come under the orders of Colonel Małachowski. The same order appointed Colonel Jastrzębski the commander of the group artillery (he was to be commander of the 10th Artillery Brigade, but at the time commanded the Skrzyszew Artillery Group, supporting the left wing of the Zegrze sector). Lt-Colonel Lipski, commander of the 11th Sapper Battalion was the manager of fortification works in the sector. Note that not all of these orders came into effect immediately.



Sketch 81: Positions of the 47th BRR on 16 August

On the afternoon of 16 August some of the division's staff moved to Marki, and from then on acted as the HQ of General Żeligowski's group, while the rest of the staff remained in Jabłonna-Legionowo. Command of the 10th ID was taken by Lt-Colonel Thomme, who was at the Aleksandrów Manor, previously a staging area for the 19th Brigade staff. Later, the 10th Division's HQ was moved to Struga. The 20th Brigade HQ remained in Cegielnia (also the command post for the 30th Regiment).

Colonel Jastrzębski did not take command of the artillery immediately, and so the batteries of the former Radzymin Artillery Group remained subordinate to Colonel Szpręglewski.

There were also problems with the technical communications. Lieutenant Wilkin, the 10th Division's communications officer, took it upon himself to act as head of communications for the group. In the afternoon of 16 August he was sent to Marki by order of the Chief of Staff and took over the equipment and



connections of the 11th Division's HQ. The 10th Division's Hughes apparatus was in operation by that day. Lieutenant Wilkin mentions the issues of the time:

General Żeligowski's group did not receive any telegraph unit, nor was there a head of communications appointed for the group. In that respect, chaos reigned.

The situation on the night of 16/17 August (from a report by General Żeligowski's group of 03:30 on 17 August) was: on the left wing of the group from Height 89 to Mokre there were two battalions of the 29th Regiment in the line and one in reserve; one battalion of the 28th Regiment was from Mokre to the Zawady – Radzymin road; the 19th Brigade's reserve was two battalions of the 28th Regiment in Aleksandrów Manor; the 20th Brigade had Battalion 3/30 in the line from the Radzymin – Zawady road to the Dybów area; the rest of the 30th Regiment was in reserve (the 2nd Battalion in Cegielnia and the 1st in Słupno); and the 31st Regiment was still the division's reserve. What is striking about this grouping is the rather deep formation.

The positions of the 1st Lit-Bel Division were rather different (from a 1st Lit-Bel Division report of 24:00 of 16 August). It held from the right flank of the 10th ID up to Helenów (inclusive) with the Grodno and Wilno regiments; the Nowogród Regiment was in Janków Stary; a battalion of the Grodno Regiment was in Radzymin as a reserve; the Mińsk Regiment was still on the left wing of the 47th BRR. The Army had ordered that the division was to be filled out as soon as possible. It should be added that with the departure of the 11th Division, new tasks would fall to the Lit-Bel Division.

From the capture of the last section of the first line the battle became quite monotonous. The enemy attacked only weakly and occasionally a burst of shooting broke out, but which was not caused by any real danger.

In the evening of that day and on the following days, more and more military and civilians from Warsaw arrived as spectators, saying they wanted to observe a real battlefield in person.

Radzymin suffered considerably during these days. There were traces of shell marks everywhere on the walls, and they were particularly numerous on the walls of the church and in the market square. Twenty-five buildings in Radzymin burned down, and the mill and brewery were destroyed. Sixteen buildings were damaged. Nine people were killed and nineteen wounded from the civilian population.

Around 18:00 on 16 August General Haller arrived in Radzymin and in the presence of the 1st Army commander and staff he thanked the group for carrying out such an effective action on the town.

8th ID, 15th ID and Zegrze Group on 16 August

The day of 16 August found the 8th Division in positions near Leśniakowizna and Okuniew. The division's reserves remained mainly behind the Okuniew sector (36th Regiment), except for a battalion of the 33rd Regiment in Mokre Łąki. Battalion 2/33 was directed at 01:45 to Kobyłka (by order of the Army) to join the 47th Regiment. Battalion 3/33 was the 15th Brigade's reserve and, on the morning of 16 August, relieved part of the 13th Regiment to enable it to complete the incorporation of reinforcements.

Overall 16 August passed quietly in its sector, although some infantry and artillery fired throughout the day. In the afternoon the commander of Battalion 1/21, Captain Hryniewicz, recalled that the enemy did not show much activity at all;

There was a gradual calming down, one could feel that the danger threatening Warsaw was beginning to disappear.

The division received from Army HQ the results of air intelligence, which said that at 10:30 an enemy column five kilometres long was advancing along the Kałuszyn – Mińsk road, with the head at that time at Wyględówek Manor. That was relayed to the brigade commands, emphasizing that "we expect that this column will head to Okuniew."



At noon the command, at the proposal of the 16th Brigade, asked the Army for permission to launch an attack with two battalions of the 36th Regiment (the Army reserve) and a tank platoon so as to anticipate and expected enemy attack on Okuniew.

The division also approached the Army asking that Battalion 2/33, which had been sent to Kobyłka, be returned to the division. The Army agreed. At 20:00 the division ordered Battalion 1/33 to move from Mokre Łąki to Okuniew, and Battalion 2/33 to stay in Mokre Łąki. Battalion 3/33 was still part of the 15th Brigade.

The division and Army commands agreed to the 16th Brigade's proposal for an attack and the 36th IR's excursion was to take place before evening. Prior to it the troops were prepared in a joint exercise with tanks on the training ground. The action was to be supported by the division's artillery, tasked with firing into the enemy's rear in order to prevent any reserves from entering the battle.

At around 17:30, two battalions of the 36th Regiment and a platoon of tanks marched to Okuniew. General Haller also arrived there to observe the preparation and departure. The axis of the attack was the Okuniew – Cygów road.

Preparations complete, Battalion 1/36 set off in the first wave, with the task of taking the village of Górki, followed by Battalion 2/36, which was to capture the village of Małków.

In the course of the attack, no particular resistance was encountered, as the enemy, "withdrew in panic at the mere sight of our tanks". The advance units pursued the fleeing enemy with fire and took the villages of Zabraniec, Małków, Górki and Krupki, taking only three prisoners and three machine-guns. The enemy troops located in the area of Michałów estate, also began to retreat, bothered by Polish foot and horse patrols.

With their tasks complete, the battalions of the 36th Regiment returned at 23:00 to Okuniew, where they spent the night in the woods and then returned to their previous position in the Army reserve. Polish losses amounted to six slightly wounded.

During the night of 16/17 and the morning of 17 August, the 21st Regiment's sector had almost no contact with the enemy.

In the morning of 16 August, the enemy made several assaults on the 29th Brigade of the 15th Division, but the efforts were in vain, as every attempt to advance was immediately crushed by artillery, which supported the infantry greatly.

According to the diary of the 15th FAR, its batteries fired 1,319 shells on 16 August. The 1st *Divizion* of the 15th HAR. fired 699 shells, Battery 4/201 FAR fired 80 rounds, while the other batteries fired an average of 40-50 shells each.

The other 15th Division sectors had only small clashes between units and patrols in front of the line.

The day of 16 August passed quietly for the Zegrze Group, other than an excursion in the direction of Nuna during the night of 15/16 by units of its left wing.

At about 03:30 Company 2/167 set off from its trenches and headed for Nuna, while Battery 1/10 HAR fired 15 shots in the direction of Lorcin. The company quickly assaulted the village and captured it, but the enemy managed to escape, leaving only one prisoner. The surprise was not exploited as it should have been, as the squadrons of the 11th BRR, which were supposed to co-operate, were late.

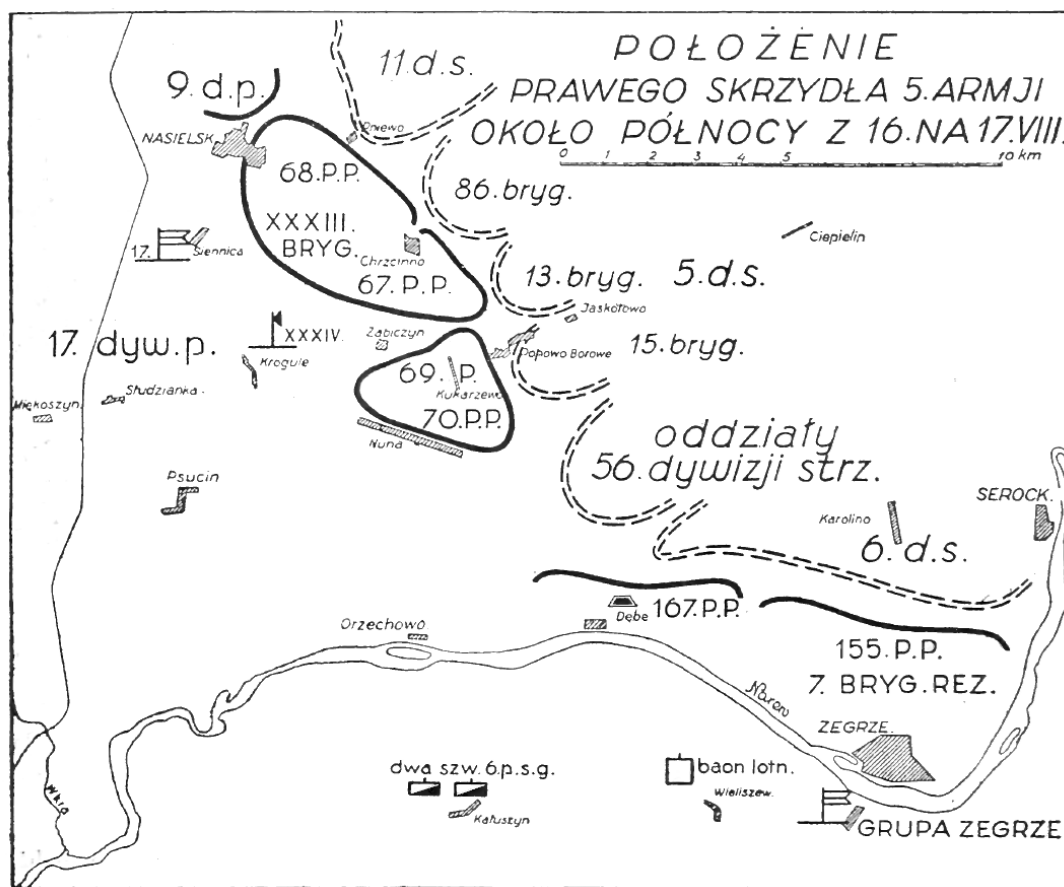
The noise of the melee at Nuna alerted neighbouring Russian units and when two squadrons of the 11th BRR approached the village of Stanisławów, they were met with fire. The commander, Captain Obertyński, rushed the 2nd Squadron up to the village and attacked it, while the 4th Squadron was directed to encircle the village and provide cover from the west.

While doing this the Border Rifles found out that the other Polish infantry had returned back to their positions after the attack on Nuna and so the squadrons also returned. This raid and some clashes in front



of the 167th Regiment made it possible to establish that they were facing troops of the Soviet 56th Rifle Division (499th and 501st RR).

At noon Colonel Małachowski's forces lost the 11th BRR (it left for Warsaw, and its part of the line was covered by two squadrons of the 6th BRR), while the 13th Lancer Regiment and an aviation battalion arrived (at Wieliszew).



Sketch 82: Approximate positions of the right wing of the 5th Army at midnight on 16/17 August

The commander of the Zegrze Group, Colonel Małachowski, taking into account the general and local situation, ordered an excursion by the left wing, while the right wing would make a demonstration towards Serock. The 167th IR commander planned his excursion to be at Huta Manor.

Around 18:15 Colonel Małachowski contacted the Army staff by Hughes, who reported that the Front demanded a vigorous drive in the direction of Pułtusk and Pokrzywnica and, if possible, the capture of Pułtusk during the night of 16/17 August. In the course of further conversation the Army staff officer remarked:

It seems to me that the axis of the Colonel's offensive must be the bridgehead of Serock, and then establishing contact with the right wing of the 5th Army.

Colonel Małachowski informed the Army that he had just ordered an advance on Nuna and Błędostwo and a demonstration on Serock at 19:20. As for launching an attack with the whole group, he claimed that he could not move earlier than at dawn on 17 August, as some of the artillery was without teams, while the 155-mm batteries were without ammunition. The arriving aviation battalion had had no food and was tired from marching.

In response to this the staff officer replied that it was good that the excursion had been ordered, "only change the demonstration to an attack".

Colonel Małachowski, mindful of the Army's demands, issued an order at 19:00 in which he repeated the news received, i.e. that Nasielsk had been taken and the enemy was retreating in panic towards Pułtusk. The group commander emphasised in his order:



Our group has been given the task of actively co-operating with the 5th Army in the pursuit of the enemy in the direction of Pułtusk, and to this end:

The 7th Reserve Brigade will occupy with its right wing the hills to the north of Serock, while with the left wing it will cooperate with the right wing of the 5th Army, carrying out an action on Nuna – Popowo – Jaskółowo.

After occupying the last place, establish communication with the 5th Army units.

Once communication is established, conduct further action in the direction of Błędostwo and Pokrzywnica.

The start of the attack was given by Colonel Małachowski as 21:30. The 48th Regiment, which was subordinated to the Zegrze Group, was given the task of defending the current sector.

In the end it turned out to be impossible to organise the troops in such a short time, and so the attack was not undertaken until dawn on 17 August.

The group's artillery, on the other hand, conducted a slow fire on the designated targets from 22:30 to 03:20 in preparation for the action. The ammunition consumption was considerable, although not as much as in other sectors. The following figures are known: 1/10 HAR – 15 rounds, 4/1 HAR – 7 rounds, 7/16 FAR – 40 rounds, 3/2 HAR – 157 rounds, 5/15 HAR – 31 rounds, 5/1 HAR – 157 rounds, 6/15 HAR – 132 rounds.

The course of further events for Colonel Małachowski's group does not belong to the subject of the study.

Artillery Supply

It was during 16 August that the ammunition supply crisis appeared in all its glory. As we saw many transports of ammunition arrived during the day and almost every hour there were more and more of them. But this ammunition could not be delivered to the front, thanks to some insurmountable difficulties.

General Rodziewicz, commander of the 1st Army artillery, reported during the day:

1) there is no ammunition in Warsaw and, for the needs of the front, it is brought occasionally by wagons from localities close or far from Warsaw, to which it had been evacuated. These transports arrive at the last minute, sometimes even too late, while the batteries have nothing left to shoot with. The Ordnance Department's ammunition stocks are very low, with some important calibres, such as the French 105-mm long-range, almost completely missing.

2) The second reason for the inefficient supply of ammunition is the terrible state of the means of transport.

The railways operate very poorly. It is particularly arduous and difficult to move transports around the ring (when they come from Kielce, Łódź, Kraków, etc.) and to move rail wagons from the Citadel through the Brzeski railway station because the tracks are clogged with wagons. Often whole loaded transports can wait for hours for a steam locomotive.

Colonel Brzoza-Brzezina, who was in charge of ammunition supply, later wrote of these shortcomings that:

During the first days, in order to at least partly remedy the lack of ammunition, it proved necessary to search the wagons that were in Warsaw at the time, using specially delegated officers from the Artillery staff. Secondly, due to the clogging of the tracks and the resulting inability to transport ammunition to the depots, it was necessary to resort to other means of transport than the railway lines.

The inadequacies in supply were also stated by General Kaczyński, head of the Ordnance Department, in these words:

... the greater part of the required ammunition arrived with considerable delays, although it was loaded and dispatched by the relevant Ministry depots immediately. This was, of course, due to the fact that all the stations – and Warsaw in particular – were cluttered with evacuated



rolling stock,⁸⁰ and it was almost impossible to move anything. Suffice to say that it took several days to move a few wagons in Warsaw from the stations on the right bank of the Vistula to those on the left bank.

On the same day the 1st Army reported that it had 281 guns in 74 batteries in position, including: 28 batteries of 75-mm field (110 guns), 9 batteries of French 105-mm (29 guns), 7 batteries of French 155-mm (26 guns), 1 battery of French 120-mm (4 guns), 7 batteries of Russian 76-mm field (28 guns), 2 batteries of Russian 152 position (10 guns), 5 batteries of Austrian 100-mm howitzers (17 guns), 10 batteries of German 77-mm (37 guns), and 5 batteries of German 105-mm (20 guns).

In addition to those there were some “special purpose” guns: 8 Zenith 75 mm⁸¹ guns, 6 Italian 149-mm guns, 6 Italian 210-mm guns, 30 German 90-mm guns, and 10 Russian 152-mm cannons. The above figures are higher than those given previously as they include batteries that did not actually appear in the battle.

The state of ammunition according to this report was:

At the batteries and in the depots, with the exception of the 105 mm guns, for which the stock is 1 day, there is 3-5 days. The 1st Army reserve has enough for of 2-3 days for all guns except for 155-mm and German 77-mm, for which it has 5-6 days.

Army Command On 16 August

In the morning of 16 August there was a relaxation of the nerves and constantly excited work in the staffs. The Army received reports on the course of operations in the evening of 15 August and on the situation in the morning of 16 August which were generally favourable. Under the influence of those reports, which spoke of the 10th Division's attack through Mokre at the enemy's rear (although, as we have seen, this was not actually executed), the assessment of events was consolidated.

The Army situation report stated:

Units of the 10th Division, under General Żeligowski's command, drove the enemy back to the north-east and captured the village of Mokre, thus surrounding the desperately defended Radzymin from the north and west.

Following this, the Front situation report repeated the news:

The 29th IR captured Mokre with a daring attack, which led to the capture of Radzymin.

In the morning of 16 August the Army received the morning situation report of the 1st Lit-Bel Division, which reported the capture of Kraszew during the night.

The 15th Division reported that after the repulse of the evening attacks on 15 August, the night passed calmly until 03:00. At 03:30 the enemy attacked the 29th Brigade, but suffered losses and gave up.

The 8th Division reported that attacks by the Soviet 17th Division had been repelled during the night.

The news received allowed the Army staff to assess the situation as quite favourable.

In the morning of 16 August, the Front, taking into account the reports sent during the night and considering the counter-attack near Radzymin as completed, ordered at 10:05 the immediate withdrawal of the 10th Division and its move by bus to the Kroczewo – Zakroczym area and the 5th Army.

However, news soon came that the 10th Division was fighting in the Mokre area, which caused the Front command to issue an order at 12:17, that in view of the situation in the Radzymin sector the 10th Division could not withdraw for the time being, and the 7th Brigade was sent to the 5th Army.

⁸⁰ As the Poles had retreated in front of the Russian armies, they tried very hard to evacuate as much key materiel as they could, and especially rail equipment. This then clogged up all the storage areas.

⁸¹ AA guns?



News then arrived from the 5th Army, that its right wing (the 17th ID) was leading an attack towards Nasielsk.

At 13:00 the Front Chief of Staff reported to the 1st Army HQ that the attack was “advancing with difficulty” due to the lack of cooperation with the 1st Army’s left wing.

As a result at 13:45 the Army ordered Colonel Małachowski’s group to make advances in the direction of Błędostwo and Nuna in order to tie up the enemy’s forces.

At about 15:00 the Army command ordered a new grouping. The 48th BRR was subordinated to Colonel Małachowski, and the line of demarcation between that group and General Żeligowski’s ran through Teodorów and Wólka Radzyńska. Colonel Małachowski was to use

... every opportunity to co-operate with the right wing of the 5th Army in the direction of Serock and Błędostwo.

The same order reorganised General Żeligowski’s group, to be made up of the 10th and 1st Lit-Bel Divisions, which was to operate in a zone bounded to the left by a line Teodorów – Wólka Radzyńska and to the right by a line Nadbiel – Ossów. The 11th Division (46th and 47th BRRs) was to be the Army reserve in Pustelnik until 19:00 on 16 August. The rest of the 1st Army divisions remained in their previous positions.

Late in the evening, further orders were issued in connection with the results of the 5th Army, which had occupied Nasielsk around 16:00. At 19:20 the 1st Army issued an order which stated that Colonel Małachowski should take advantage of the attack on Nuna in order to establish communication with the 5th Army, and that he should immediately take action to, “capture Pułtusk as quickly as possible”, while the Serock – Wierzbica bridgehead, “absolutely must be held”.

Eventually Colonel Małachowski’s group was transferred to the 5th Army from the 1st Army.

The Front command now demanded that the 1st Army start at attack towards Mińsk Mazowiecki by 06:00 on 17 August. It also ordered that the 1st Army, from dawn on 17 August, should move one brigade to Pustelnik, from where it would leave immediately for the 5th Army, while another was to be there by 12:00 at the disposition of the Front. Due to various difficulties, the 11th Division was given to the 5th Army rather than the originally intended 10th ID.

The orders from the higher commands from the evening of 16 August onwards show that the situation on the Warsaw outskirts was considered to be completely under control, as not only was the 11th Division withdrawn from the line, but the 10th Division was also to be taken out. The minor clashes reported in the evening of 16 August were evidence of a visible weakening of the enemy’s advance.

There was already a conviction that the defensive operations on the Warsaw bridgehead were succeeding. So when during the day engineer Fliederbaum from Paris presented the Chief of the General Staff with a plan for flooding the areas near Warsaw with water – in order to make the capture of Warsaw impossible – General Rozwadowski noted on his application:

Thank you kindly, but in the meantime Warsaw is already defended.

Now, with full confidence in victory, they awaited news of the development of the attack, which – under the personal command of Commander-in-Chief Marshal Józef Piłsudski – had set off from the banks of the Wieprz River. That attack was to win a decisive victory in the Battle of Warsaw.

General Weygand wrote of it:

The day of 16 August is calm here. The Bolsheviks seem exhausted and badly affected by losses to artillery, which they expected neither in such numbers nor so well supplied, and under whose fire they did not hold their ground.

The defensive battle is over and won, and it is known in Warsaw that the counter-offensive has moved at full speed from the banks of the Wieprz.



Chapter XVII

Enemy Operations on 16 August

Soviet 3rd Army

On 16 August the commander of the Russian 3rd Army, taking into account the general position and his directed tasks, ordered the 5th RD to hold on the Wkra and to occupy Modlin Forts Numbers 14, 15 and 16. The other divisions of the army were once again urged to press on and fight the Poles on the Orzechowo – Dębe – Zegrze line.

In the morning *KomDiv-5* ordered the 86th RB to hold the Lelewo – Wólka Góra section of the Wkra at all costs, while the 13th RB was to break Polish resistance with a vigorous assault in the direction of Toruń and, together with the 15th RB, seize Forts 14, 15 and 16. *KomBrig-15* was to throw all his forces into the battle, occupy the forest south-west of Psuckie Wólki and capture the Modlin forts alongside the 13th Brigade.

However the 5th Division was unable to do that, and by the afternoon the 13th and 15th RBs had begun to retreat. The 56th RD was also retiring in a panic. The 3rd Army commander ordered a retreat of the 5th RD to the Siennica – Krogule line and the 56th RD to the Nuna – Stanisławów line.

Throughout the entire section of the Soviet 3rd Army, this day was marked by the Poles taking the initiative, as even on the outskirts of Dębe and Zegrze smaller Polish units attacked the 56th and 6th RDs.

The retreat ordered by the Army did not stop on the designated line. The 11th RD of the 15th Army, neighbouring to the right, abandoned Nasielsk, while by the evening units of the 5th RD were at: Chrcynno – Żabiczyn (86th RB), Żabiczyn – Popowo Borowe (13th RB), and Kukarzewo (15th RB). They received orders to move from there to counter-attack, in order to retake the Siennica – Krogule line and support the 11th RD in retaking Nasielsk. But the 3rd Army units no longer had the strength for offensive action.

At 04:50 of 16 August *KomDiv-21* once again repeated the orders we have already seen, that the 21st RD support the 6th RD attack on Zegrze with a strike towards Nieporęt and Wieliszew, directed to the rear of the Polish group defending the Zegrze area. *KomDiv-21* also ordered the 63rd RB to strike towards Ruda, Borki, Kępiste, and Białobrzegi, while the 21st Cavalry Regiment (given to the 63rd RB) was to clear the Załubice area. The 61st RB retained its previous task, to attack Benjaminów and Nieporęt, while the 62nd RB was to advance behind the 61st Brigade as the division's reserve.

In the morning of 16 August the 21st Division was positioned as follows: the 63rd RB was north-east of Ruda, and in the vicinity of Sokołówek and Łoś; the 61st RB was between Łoś and Mokre and at the western end of Mokre; and the 62nd RB was the reserve in Mokre.

The battle began at the eastern end of the forest near Mokre, which ended with the Poles being thrown back deep into the forest. After the Poles were removed from around Mokre, the brigades prepared for further operations. The light artillery *division* of the 62nd RB took up positions near Łoś and Guzowatka, while the 61st RB's *division* was between Mokre and Zawady. Both began to shell the Polish positions near the Mokre to Ruda road with quite heavy fire.

After that preparation, an infantry attack was launched from Łoś, but soon stalled, stopped by Polish fire. The 63rd RB managed to get close to the Polish positions only near Rudy and Łoś, and then did not move again. The 61st RB, as reported by the *KomDiv* deflected three counter-attacks and advanced towards the forester's lodge (2 to 3 km north-west of Mokre), clashing on its way, "with the stubbornly defending enemy". The 62nd RB remained in reserve at Mokre. To the left it linked up with units of the 27th RD.

Ultimately, the 61st and 63rd Brigades failed to fight off the Polish resistance. The units remaining in Mokre also came under Polish artillery fire at this time.

At noon the Poles prepared (in the forest between Benjamin and Mokre) for another attack and, supported by heavy artillery fire, advanced on Mokre. A fierce battle ensued around the forest near Mokre and near the village, in which the Soviet 61st and 62nd RBs sustained heavy losses and had to retreat to the east bank of the Rządza. At 15:00 the *KomDiv-21* reported to the Army



News has just been received from the commander of the 62nd Brigade that the enemy launched an attack on the left wing of the 61st Brigade and the right wing of the 27th Division and drove them back behind the Struga⁸² River in the Zawady – Dybów section.

After withdrawing behind the Rządza, the 63rd RB positioned itself in the area north-east of Ruda and the 61st RB manned from Łoś to Zawady, exclusive. The stretch of the river near Zawady was manned by the 62nd Brigade (now combined into a regiment), having communication to the right with the 182nd RR and to the left with the 81st RB. The 235th and 236th RRs of the 27th RD were behind the section of the 62nd Brigade.

So, on the fourth day of the battle at Radzymin, the 21st Rifle Division found itself in the positions it had occupied at the start of the fighting on the evening of 12 August.

Soviet 16th Army

In the morning of 16 August, the 27th RD's 79th and 81st RBs were occupying from Mokre to the fork in the road (north-east of Radzymin) The 80th Brigade was near Pasek. Before dawn the 237th RR (it had marched from Lipiny during the night) encountered the enemy in and around Kraszew. After a short battle, the Poles withdrew, and the 237th RR garrisoned Kraszew again. It was then relieved by the 238th RR. The light artillery *divizions* were in positions on the eastern bank of the Rządza, with the 81st RB's *divizion* just east of Zwierzyniec. The heavy *divizion* was east of Dybów.

During the 21st RD's operations at Mokre, the 79th and 81st RBs attacked Radzymin with the support of two armoured cars, *Avenger* and *Grozny*. However, the infantry failed to force their way into the town, even though the armoured cars were quite bold in their approach. At this time, part of the 80th Brigade attacked towards Janków Nowy and Rżysk, but due to heavy enemy infantry fire, only a few groups of soldiers got to the wire, where they were hit or dispersed. The assault was repeated soon afterwards, but was again unsuccessful.

This took place before noon on 16 August.

The 27th Division's commander, Putna, arrived at Dybów, wishing to see the situation in person. Around noon he had a conversation with the brigade commanders. He gave them his assessment, stating that he anticipated a retreat and that measures should therefore be taken to prevent the troops dispersing.

Putna later explained the position of his division in a short sentence:

On 16 August we could no longer push and did not push.

In the afternoon the Poles advanced from Radzymin and, almost simultaneously with an attack on Mokre, struck towards Dybów. Under the impact of this, the 79th and 81st RBs were forced to retreat behind the Rządza.

The 79th Brigade (235th and 236th RRs) retired behind the river and sorted itself out near Zawady, taking advantage of the 62nd RB holding the positions along the river. The 81st Brigade held the area around Zwierzyniec and Emilianów. The 237th RR took up positions near Rasztów and the 238th RR in Kraszew. The rest of the 80th RB remained around Pasek.

At dawn on 16 August, the troops of the 2nd RD were finally thrown at the Polish first line.

The 13th and 15th RRs (5th RB) thrown back by the Poles from the Janków Stare and Wiktorów area, left through Rżyska towards Dobczyn. The batteries that had been operating in that area withdrew: the 3rd Battery to Dobczyn and 4th to Lipka House. Only the 5th Battery remained in its position near Rasztów. Its commander informed the commander of the 16th Regiment (occupying the section on the southern edge

⁸² Actually the Rządza River.



of Helenów and in the vicinity of Height 109), that the enemy was flanking his infantry. The battery was soon threatened by the Poles, who by this time had occupied Kraszew.

The 16th Regiment's commander sent two companies to Helenów, but they failed to hold the village, being thrown out alongside the last of the retreating troops of the 5th RB and 17th RR. The 5th Battery held its ground and was helped by the 237th RR, which retook Kraszew. At 08:40 the battery left for Grabie Stare.

In the remaining positions of the 2nd RD, the troops remained on the defensive, with the Polish armoured trains causing the most trouble and losses. There was a lot of nervousness on the left wing as news came from the neighbouring 17th RD that the Poles might strike. Influenced by those reports, the batteries changed positions several times and only returned to their original positions after clarifying the situation.

The 2nd RD artillery tried to organise a fight with the Polish armoured trains. At 02:00 a heavy battery, after firing 50 shells, slightly reduced the trains' activity. One cannon from the 6th Battery was also advanced onto the railway track near the Lipiny courthouse but, due to the infantry's withdrawal, it returned to the battery.

In the morning, as it was getting light, the Polish infantry and artillery spotted the rifle lines of the 18th RR and 4th RB, which had dug in during the night to the west and along a line of Nowa Wieś – Lipiny House – Lipiny village. A heavy artillery and machine-gun fire fell on the 2nd RD troops and at 10:00 they were forced them to withdraw from in front of the Polish positions.

At around noon the 2nd RD was in the following positions:

- The 4th RB garrisoned the house and village of Lipiny, supported by the 1st Artillery *Divizion* from Grabie Nowe.
- the 5th RB had the 13th RR in Dobczyn – Zagościniec, and the 14th and 15th RRs in Dobczyn. The 2nd Light Artillery *Divizion* was in the Dobczyn – Lipka area. In the afternoon part of the 5th RB returned to the foreground of Helenów;
- The 6th RB took up positions east of Czarna Nowa, in the area of Height 109 (16th RR) and Nowa Wieś (18th RR). The brigade was supported by the 5th and 6th Batteries from Grabie Nowe.
- A heavy battery was in Grabie Nowe, and a howitzer battery continued to be in reserve in Mostówka.

The course of events on 16 August in the sector of the 17th RD was rather monotonous. The division was unprepared to, or rather was no longer able to, prepare a strong attack. The entire day passed in firefights, with the Poles dominating thanks to the firepower of their artillery.

In the evening the Poles made an advance with tanks from Okuniew, directing the attack along the Okuniew – Cygów road. Units of the 147th RR of the 49th RB failed to hold their positions and quickly withdrew to the village of Górki.

In order to repel the enemy, the 145th RR from the 49th RB and a battalion of the 152nd RR were brought into the battle. But they retook their previous positions without a fight, as the Poles had already retreated to Okuniew.

The 10th Rifle Division also had a quiet 16 August. The Russian troops made no major assaults but rather waited for Polish attacks. To prepare, time was taken to fortify themselves in occupied positions, barricading roads and railway tracks to prevent the Polish armoured trains from advancing.

Around 16:00 a Polish armoured train pushed a squadron of the 10th Cavalry Regiment out of Otwock, but the section was soon retaken.

In the evening the 30th RB reported that the Poles attacked it with a much larger force, but without success.



Regrouping the 3rd and 16th Armies

As a result of the general situation on the front of the 3rd and 16th Armies, orders were issued to regroup.

The 3rd Army, taking into account the events in the neighbouring sector of the 15th Army, withdrew the 21st RD to its reserve, ordering it to move to the Ciepielin – Pobyłkowo area by the morning of 18 August. The 56th RD, which up to then had operated between the 5th and 6th Divisions, was to regroup in the Przasnysz – Maków area. The 5th RD was to occupy Siennica – Krogule – Nuna – Stanisławów, while the 6th RD was to continue its attacks (from the Bolesławowo – Szadki Manor – Ludwinowo Zegrzyńskie – Bartowiec line) to capture the Zegrze area.

It would seem from the above that the 3rd Army's orders were of an offensive character. However, that must be an illusion, as the *KomandArm* can't have counted on breaking Polish resistance on the Modlin – Orzechowo – Dębe – Zegrze line with two divisions when the whole Army had not been able to do it.

The 21st Division received the order at 23:15 on 16 August and issued corresponding orders. However it could only leave after being replaced by the troops of the 27th RD, but *KomDiv-27* had no desire to stretch his troops over such a vast line and did not even issue orders to do so.

In the morning of 17 August, the 21st Division reported to the Army that:

The 27th Division has not proceeded with the change and so far has not had directives from the Army commander.

However, we know that the previous lines of demarcation had not been changed, which was also known to *KomDiv-27*.

The 21st RD could not abandon the sector, especially as it reported that on 17 August that between 07:00 and 08:00 it deflected two attacks by dense Polish battalions attacking from the Ruda area. The 63rd RB occupied from Ruda to Łoś, with a mounted post near Załubice and Height 80. The 21st Cavalry Regiment had cleared the area around Arciechów, Wolica and Opole of Polish patrols. The sector of the 61st RB from Łoś to Zawady was quiet. The 62nd RB was in reserve at Zawady.

On 16 August the commander of the 16th Army also ordered the regrouping of his divisions, with a view to preparing for a new assault on the Warsaw bridgehead. This order read:

The enemy took up previously prepared fortified positions on the approaches to Warsaw, namely: on the line of the Mienia – Ostrów – Nadma – Kobyłka – Okuniew – Józefin – Wiązowna Rivers. He placed volunteer units on it and is putting up fierce resistance to our attack, moving to counter-attacks. The general, and especially the political situation, requires us to attack.

I order the lines of demarcation between divisions at 24:00 on 16 August to be: between 27th RD and 2nd RD to be Czerwony Dwór – Duczki – Tuł (inclusive for 2nd RD), and then the previous one; between the 2nd RD and 17th RD to be Ząbki – Małków – Stanisławów (inclusive for 17th RD), and then the previous one; between the 17th RD and 10th RD to be Zbytki – Goraszka – Zamienie – Cegłów (inclusive for 10th RD), and then the previous one; between the 10th RD and the Mozyr Group to be Magnuszew – Łuków (inclusive for 10th RD).

The commanders of the 27th, 2nd, 17th and 10th divisions are to carry out the change of positions as outlined by the lines of demarcation, by agreement among neighbouring divisions, completing the change for the first three by the morning of 17 August, and the last by the morning of 18 August.

At the same time as the realignment is carried out, a regrouping of troops and artillery is to be carried out in order to secure the success of a further assault, with the following being designated as the directions of attack: 27th RD at Pustelnik, 2nd RD at Kobyłka – Ossów, 17th RD at Okuniew and 10th RD at Aleksandrów.

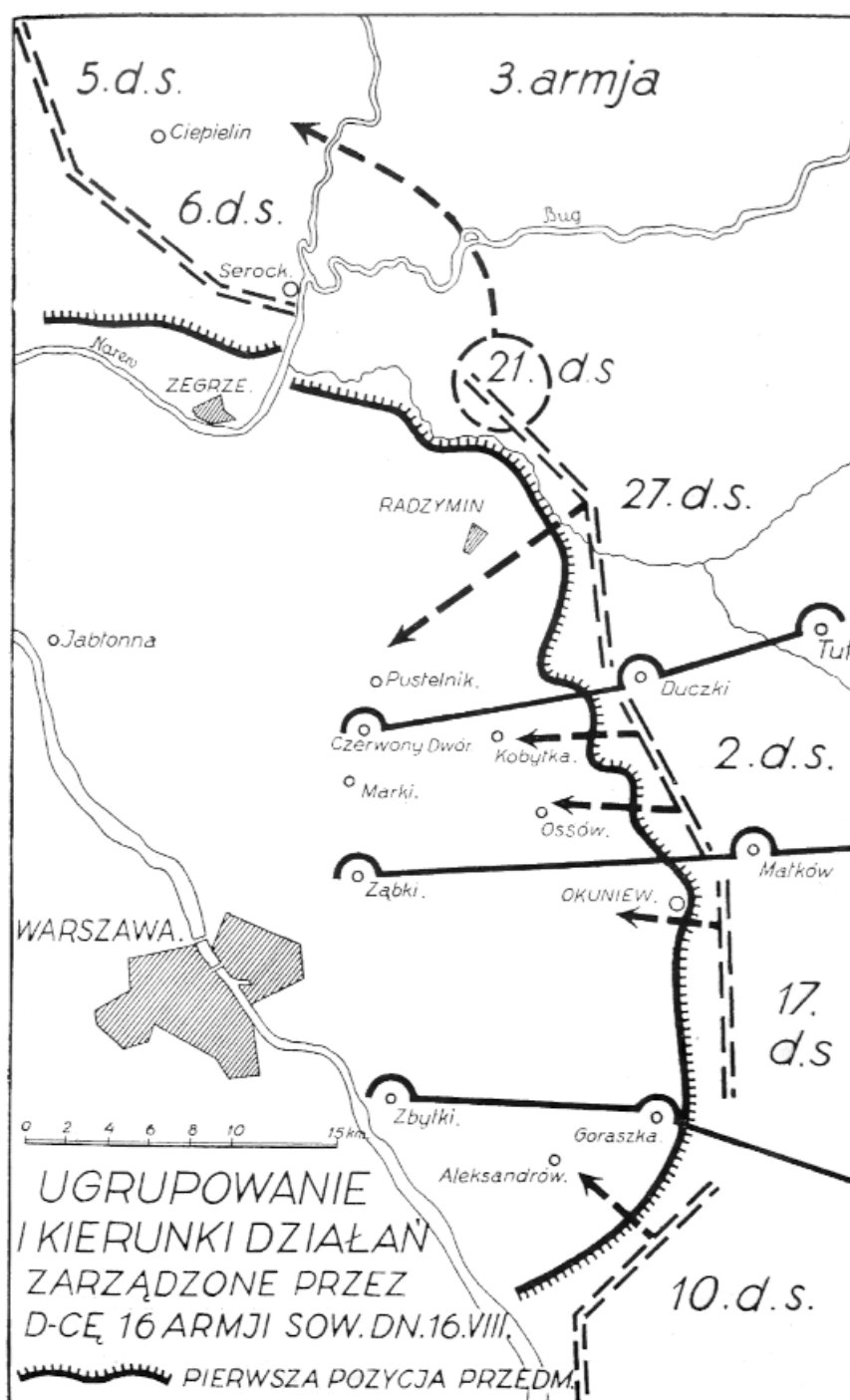


The command of the 8th RD is to regroup after being relieved, no later than noon on 18 August in the area of Grzebowilk – Kołbiel – Siennica as the reserve for the army. Cover for the left wing of the Army and communication with the right wing of the Mozyr Group is to be the task of the 10th RD.

All regrouping should be carried out with all possible stealth. Use the time to complete a comprehensive reconnaissance of the enemy positions.

There was now one division left on the Radzymin sector, the 27th, with the task of striking at Pustelnik. It is clear that that task was beyond its strength.

In the other areas of the 16th Army there was a shift of forces to the south, but nowhere do we see a large grouping for an attack. The effort of the 16th Army was to be done via several assaults, but not in better conditions than before. (Sketch 83). It must be said that the Russians were now on average considerably weaker in front of the Warsaw bridgehead, with the departure to the reserve of the 21st and 8th RDs.



Sketch 83: Positions and lines of attack ordered for the Soviet 16th Army on 16 August



The commander of the 27th RD ordered the 79th RB to garrison Zawady (inclusive) to Emilianów (inclusive) by the morning of 17 August, the 81st RB was to garrison Emilianów (exclusive) to Kraszew House (inclusive), and the 80th Brigade to garrison the Rżyska – Czarna Nowa – Nowa Wieś sector, relieving the right wing units of the 2nd RD.

However, the relief was considerably delayed, as at 02:00 in the night of 16/17 August the Poles advanced on Dybów and at 04:00 on Rasztów. Although those assaults were repulsed, the changes were not made afterwards. We know that the Poles did not carry out any action at that time apart from patrol activity, but the units of the 27th RD thought the Poles would attack and remained in their positions all day.

The 2nd RD received the task of relieving the units of the 17th RD in the Lipiny – Zabraniec sector, and then was to advance towards Ossów and Kobyłka. Its commander ordered the 4th RB to occupy the Lipiny House to Mostówka section of the line and then to advance towards Kobyłka. The 6th Brigade (to be relieved by the 27th Division) received the task of relieving the 17th RD units on the Mostówka – Majdan area and to attack towards Ossów and Turow. The 5th RB was to leave one regiment as the division's reserve in Ręczaje, while the remaining regiments were to reinforce the 17th RD from Cięciwa to Małków (exclusive). That brigade was to co-operate in the assault with the 6th Brigade and secure the division's left wing. The start of the division's advance was to be announced by a separate order.

However the change was not carried out during the night of 16/17 August, as the 27th RD had not relieved the units of the 2nd RD. So the divisions remained in their previous positions, conducting firefights with the enemy. Only the 5th RB moved somewhat to the 17th RD's sector.

In the late afternoon of 17 August, "fearful news" came from the south about the out-flanking of the 8th, 10th and 17th Divisions. At 18:00 the enemy attacked the 5th Brigade, which left its positions fairly quickly. At 19:00 the heavy battery, occupying a position at Grabie Nowe, came under rifle fire from its left and so left the position, departing on orders via Nadbiel to the north-east. At this time the rolling stock was sent to the rear, and a reconnaissance of the retreat routes was ordered.

At 21:00 the 1st and 2nd Light Artillery *Divizioni* began to leave in a hurry, while the 3rd *Divizion* held on until midnight and left in the rearguard of the 2nd RD, taking up positions in Krynica, Tula and Międzyzyleś. So the 2nd RD began its retreat from near Warsaw.

The 17th Division, for reasons explained above, was also unable to carry out the Army's orders. It therefore remained in its own sector.

In the morning of 17 August the brigades of the 17th RD were tasked with preparing strong rearguards to halt the enemy's advance and enable the division's other forces to depart in the direction of Stanisławów and Wólka Czernicka to Siedlce. All rolling stock and heavy artillery was to be sent back.

Around noon the 30th RB, which was adjacent to the left, was attacked by the enemy and thrown back eastwards. At the same time the 51st RB felt the pressure but held its ground. A battalion of the 153rd RR was diverted from the 51st Brigade's reserve, but it only reached Mrowisko and could advance no further. In view of this, *KomDiv-17* ordered the 51st Brigade to withdraw and occupy Michałów – Chobot.

In the evening of 17 August, the 17th RD began its retreat from near Warsaw.

On 16 August *KomDiv-10* received an order from the Army, demanding that by the morning of 18 August his division complete the replacement of the 8th Division, while the 10th Division was to have free troops from the morning of 17 August, so that it could relieve the 22nd RB of the 8th RD in the Karczew area.

KomDiv-10, Kakurin, ordered the 29th RB to replace the right flanking troops of the 28th RB in the stretch from Wiązowna to the mouth of the Mienia River with his regiment during the night of 16/17 August. After being replaced by the units of the 17th Division, the 29th Brigade was to occupy the section from Boryszew (exclusive) to the mouth of the Mienia River, and was to attack towards Aleksandrów, while the 28th



Brigade (after being partially replaced by the 29th Brigade) was to cover from the mouth of the Mienia up to and including the mouth of the Świder. The brigade was to push in the direction of Błoto, co-operating with the 29th RB. One regiment was to be directed to Karczew to replace the 22nd RB of the 8th RD. The 30th RB was to send the 90th RR to Maków as the division's reserve from 16 to 17 August.

The course of action on 17 August, in which the left wing of the Soviet 16th Army was shattered by the Polish offensive, is not part of this study.



Chapter XVIII

1st Army Transition to Offence and Pursuit

The proper subject of this study – the defence of the outskirts of Warsaw – has already been completed. All that remains to be done is to outline the events of 17 and 18 August as the 1st Army units left the bridgehead.

We know that it was anticipated that the 1st Army's wings would attack, primarily due to the developments by the neighbouring armies. The matter of the cooperation of the 1st Army's right wing was raised several times by the Commander-in-Chief in discussions and correspondence with the Chief of General Staff, while the cooperation of the 1st Army's left wing with the 5th Army was regulated by the Northern Front.

In connection with this the Northern Front issued on 15 August an order which demanded that on 16 August the 1st Army hold the enemy with "active operations" in the direction of Wyszaków, starting from 14:00.

The left wing of the 1st Army was to cooperate with the 5th Army towards Serock and Błędostwo, while the right wing of the Army was to:

... with considerable infantry forces, and with the help of all available tanks, armoured trains and armoured cars, take the city of Nowo-Mińsk⁸³ and the railway line in the Kołbiel – Pustelnik area.

This action was also to begin at 14:00 on 16 August.

The Supreme Command Chief of Staff issued other operational directives on 15 August, which were generally in line with the Front orders, except the action of the 1st Army's right wing was postponed until the morning of 17 August. However it still had an attack by armour combined with infantry towards Mińsk Mazowiecki, and an attack by the 15th ID on the Lublin road.

According to this order, the task of the 1st Army was:

To keep the Warsaw bridgehead active, paying close attention around Radzymin.

On the evening of 16 August, the 1st Army will concentrate the available tanks and armored trains in positions near the Brest road so that an attack will be possible in the morning of 17 August, including the participation of infantry, artillery and aviation.

The attack should head to Nowo-Mińsk, and only from there should it turn further according to the situation.

At the same time, units of the 15th ID will strike down the Lublin road to establish communication with the advancing units of the 4th Army.

So these orders transitioned the flanks of the 1st Army to offensive operations. The Front, as a result of the situation near Radzymin, made the action of the right wing dependent on the results of the battle in the centre. On the evening of 15 August, it ordered:

While our first line has not yet been reached in the Radzymin area, the 1st Army will continue its action using tanks and armoured trains.

Until the situation near Radzymin is completely restored, the attack of the right wing of the Army, in accordance with the order of the Front ... will not be carried out.

In the morning of 16 August the Front, believing that the counter-attack at Radzymin had been completed, ordered at 10:05 the immediate withdrawal of the 10th ID and its transfer by buses to the Kroczewo – Zakroczym area, to join the 5th Army. At the same time it signaled the abandonment of operations towards Wyszaków and Mińsk Mazowiecki until further orders. The left wing, on the other hand, was still to cooperate with the 5th Army in the direction of Serock and Błędostwo.

⁸³ The name of Mińsk Mazowiecki until 1916, so it would still have been on the maps.



However during the late morning of 16 August news arrived that fighting connected with the recapture of the first defensive line in the Radzymin area was still continuing. That resulted in the Front ordering, "that in view of the situation in the Radzymin sector" the 10th ID could not retire, so the 5th Army was to receive the 7th Brigade.

At about 13:00 the Front chief of staff reported to the 1st Army that the attack of the right wing of the 5th Army was "advancing with difficulty", due to the lack of co-operation of the 1st Army. In view of this, the Front ordered the 1st Army to order an immediate vigorous attack from the Zegrze – Dębe area on Serock and Błędostwo.

The left wing of the 1st Army was ordered to set off as quickly as possible. At 19:20, the Front subordinated the left wing of the 1st Army (Colonel Małachowski's group) to the 5th Army.

Several Front orders were devoted to the departure of the right wing of the army and the centre, ones at about 18:00, at 19:20 and at 22:23.

The first demanded that the 1st Army undertake at dawn on 17 August:

... a counter-attack on Wyszaków and a tank operation with armoured cars and infantry.

The second ordered the 7th Infantry Brigade from the 4th Infantry Division (2nd Army) to cross the Vistula in the area of Góra Kalwaria by dawn on August 17. It said that further orders for 17 August would be issued after receiving directives from the Supreme Command, but that the 1st Army units were to be ready to undertake the indicated actions in the direction of Wyszaków and Mińsk Mazowiecki.

Finally, the last ordered that the 1st Army was to take action towards Mińsk Mazowiecki at 18:00 on 17 August. Also that by dawn of that day the 10th ID staff and one brigade were to be assigned, and then the rest, to Pustelnik to become the Front reserve. The 7th Infantry Brigade was to move at 06:00 on 17 August (after crossing the Vistula) with its main forces through Karczew and Glinianki to Mińsk Mazowiecki, now coming under the orders of the 1st Army.

Summarising, we can see that in the end the action towards Mińsk Mazowiecki was to begin on the morning of 17 August, but so far it has not been indicated anywhere that the entire 15th ID was to move in that direction. It was to be mainly an armoured strike together with a considerable infantry force. The 15th ID was still pointed down the Lublin Road.

Meanwhile the armies of the Central Front, led personally by the Commander-in-Chief, were progressing in their operation. The divisions moved from the banks of the Wieprz, broke the resistance encountered on the road – only light – and by the evening had advanced a considerable distance north.

At 21:00 on 16 August Marshal Piłsudski talked with General Rozwadowski, who offered the Commander-in-Chief his "warmest congratulations". In the long conversation that ensued, the Piłsudski agreed with Rozwadowski on the actions of the 4th Army's left flank and the right flank of the 1st Army towards Mińsk Mazowiecki. In view of the results of the 14th ID, the marshal ordered the abandonment of the attack along the Lublin road. Rozwadowski reported that the action in the direction of Mińsk Mazowiecki was to begin at 07:00 on 17 August and that, "the Bolsheviks seemed to be fleeing in front of Warsaw," although he did not yet have reliable information confirming that the enemy, influenced by the strike from the Wieprz, had ordered an immediate retreat. Rozwadowski also provided the Commander-in-Chief with a plan for further action, anticipating the departure of the rest of the 1st Army on 18 August. However, Marshal Piłsudski did not want to go that far in his predictions, and pointed out:

The 1st Army is, as you rightly point out, tired after several days of combat, so can indeed go into action the day after tomorrow. I hope that by that time I will have dropped in to Warsaw and will personally communicate with you.

At the end of that conversation Piłsudski remarked:

I am counting for certain on the 15th ID reaching Nowo-Mińsk, and then coming under the command of the 4th Army.



In connection with the above conversation, an order was issued during the night of 16/17 August by the Supreme Command, which the Front received at 01:05 on 17 August.

This order stated that, at the request of the Commander-in-Chief, the action of the 15th Infantry Division on Mińsk Mazowiecki should be accelerated (setting off at dawn). After the capture of Mińsk the division would come under the command of the 4th Army. As for the 1st Army, it was demanded:

Prepare the 1st Army to undertake at dawn on 18 August an attack in the general direction of Wyszaków.

This order was repeated by the Front at 04:00 on 17 August. Then at 06:45 the Front demanded the attack of the 4th ID towards Mińsk Mazowiecki and still at 08:30 the movement of the 7th IB to Warsaw, and in view of the impossibility of drawing the 10th ID to the reserves, gave the 5th Army the 11th ID.

It is striking that the Army issued its orders concerning the departure of the wings very late, or rather, at the last minute. The concept had been suggested as early as 15 August, yet the Army did not order or prepare anything until the evening of 16 August. Only the tanks and armoured trains had received preparatory instructions. Undoubtedly this was due to the fighting on the bridgehead consuming the attention of the Army staff, as well as the several changes in the plans from the higher commands.

The orders for the wings to set off were preceded by announcements and directives sent by Hughes. At about 18:00 on 16 August, an officer from the Army's operations department spoke to Colonel Małachowski, to whom he communicated that the Front demanded a vigorous pursuit towards Pułtusk and Pokrzywnica and the capture of those towns, if possible during the night of 16/17 August. In the course of this conversation the staff officer remarked:

It seems to me that the axis of your offensive must be the Serock bridgehead and then the establishment of communication with the right wing of the 5th Army.

Colonel Małachowski informed the Army that he had just ordered an advance on Nuna and Błędostwo and a demonstration on Serock at 19:20. Moreover, he indicated that the whole group could move at dawn on 17 August at the earliest, due to the fact that some of the artillery was without horses, the 155-mm guns were without ammunition, and the arriving aviation battalion had no food and was tired from marching. In response to that, the staff officer replied that it was good that attacks had been ordered, "but change the demonstration to an attack". In the end though the 1st Army order (dated 16 August but actually sent out between 02:00 and 03:00 and received by Colonel Małachowski at 03:40 on 17 August) ordered:

Colonel Małachowski will undertake an advance on Nuna in order to establish communication with the right wing of the 5th Army, occupying the bridgehead Serock – Wierzbica, ordering strong reconnaissance in the direction of Wyszaków and Pułtusk.

The orders of the 15th ID were issued in a similar manner. It had also not been warned that it would be directed to Mińsk Mazowiecki, and during that very night it was organising an advance towards Wiązowna.

At 20:00 Colonel Stokalski, head of the Army's 3rd Department, spoke by Hughes with the 15th Division's Chief of Staff, Lt-Colonel Łapiński, regarding an action towards Mińsk Mazowiecki. Just how unprepared the 15th Division was for this is shown by the following from the (Hughes) conversation:

(Stokalski) I would ask you to inform me what the division can allocate for the execution of tomorrow's assault on Nowo-Mińsk?

(Lapinski) When is the attack to be made? At what time?

(Stokalski) In the morning at dawn on the 17th. At dawn.

(Łapiński) Honourable Colonel, I have not had any previous notification of an attack. I am only communicated to privately by various ministers, like the Minister to the Prussian Province, then Colonel Mercier.



In the course of further conversation, the 15th ID's Chief of Staff stated that the number of units available for the attack would depend on how soon notice could be given. At the time he was able to use a manoeuvre battalion, the 2nd Kowno Battalion, the Commander-in-Chief's personal company, and he intended to relieve two battalions of the 59th IR and pull them from the line. Łapiński hoped that he would be able to collect a total of up to four infantry battalions and two or three light batteries, but before doing so he would have to cancel the previously ordered advance towards Wiązowna. In the midst of this conversation, Lapinski stressed several times that it was a pity he had not received the order earlier, as the division would have been able to draw down more forces and better prepare for the action.

By midnight of 16/17 August, the 15th ID had still not received orders. In the meantime, at 21:00 the commander of the armoured trains, the commander of the assault unit, Major Matczyński, and the commander of the tank battalion had reported to the 15th Division. At 00:30, the 15th ID's chief of staff reported to the Army that:

The commanders of separate units are waiting for orders, so that it will not start late.

In response, received an instruction that the action was to begin no later than 07:00.

The final order from the Army was not sent out until 17 August, although dated 16 August, and received at 02:10. Its second point stated:

The 1st Army will support the action of the 5th Army by striking through Serock, and the action of the Southern Front by an attack on Mińsk Mazowiecki.

The 1st Army's further task is to tie up the enemy forces and, in the event of their retreat, to undertake immediate pursuit.

The task of the 15th Infantry Division was stated by the Army command as follows:

General Jung will strike on at 07:00 on 17 August from the railway station at Miłosna – Królewskie Bagno in the direction of Mińsk Mazowiecki, reaching the Wielgolas area (the intersection of the railway and the road).

The 15th ID is assigned for this action:

- a) Major Nowicki's armoured group (armoured trains and five tank sections),
- b) an air squadron (10 planes),
- c) Major Matczyński's assault detachment, which will be at Miłosna station at 06:00 on 17 August.

We have seen so far that nowhere had it been mentioned that the entire 15th ID would take part in the operation towards Mińsk Mazowiecki. In the talks between the Army HQ and the division it was agreed that only four battalions of the 15th ID would take part.

It was not until the afternoon of 17 August that the 15th ID staff learned that its task was much more significant. It was noted in the division's diary as follows:

In the course of the action the division command learned of the successes of the 14th Division and that the attack towards Mińsk was not a local one, but the beginning of a general offensive, and the 15th Division was thereafter subordinated to the 4th Army, although no orders were received for further action.

So now Colonel Małachowski's group was to join the 5th Army, while the 15th ID, after capturing Mińsk Mazowiecki, would come under the orders of the 4th Army. The 11th Infantry Division was also transferred to the 5th Army.

This left the entire line from Rynia to Leśniakowizna exclusively held by General Żeligowski (the 10th and 1st Lit-Bel Divisions), who as reinforcements received an aviation battalion, a volunteer cavalry *division* and the 13th Lancer Regiment. General Żeligowski was also to pull one regiment from each division to Pustelnik to be the Army reserve.



The 1st Army was to make preparations to move in the direction of Wyszaków, with General Żeligowski's group setting off via Niegów, and the 8th Division via Cygów.

Events of 17 August

We mentioned that Colonel Małachowski received orders (by Hughes) during the evening of 16 August that his group was to proceed to offensive operations, co-operating with the 5th Army. The colonel reported on the material difficulties of the group but nonetheless, considering the 1st Army's commands, issued his own order at 19:00, which read:

Our group has been given the task of actively co-operating with the 5th Army in the pursuit of the enemy in the direction of Pułtusk, and to that end:

The 7th Reserve Brigade will occupy the hills to the north of Serock with its right wing, while with its left wing it will cooperate with the right wing of the 5th Army, leading the action to Nuna, Popowo, Jaskółowo.

After capturing the last village, establish a link with 5th Army units.

Once communication is established, continue the action in the direction of Błędostwo.

Colonel Małachowski set the start of the advance for 21:30, but it was impossible to move the troops so quickly and the attack was not launched until dawn on 17 August. During the night of 16/17 August, the group's artillery conducted a slow fire on designated targets, consuming more than 500 shells.

The course of further events of that group is no longer the subject of this study.

During the day of 17 August General Żeligowski's group occupied the first line from Height 89 (west of Mokre) to Leśniakowizna (exclusive), with the 10th ID occupying the left (from Height 89 to Janków Stare) and the 1st Lit-Bel Division occupying the right. The 11th ID, whose 47th Regiment was relieved during the night of 16/17 August, finally assembled in the Pustelnik area and in the morning of 18 August left for Jabłonna. The 48th BRR, previously subordinate to Colonel Małachowski's group, joined the 11th ID.

The day passed quietly. From time to time there was some shooting, and at times commanders reported that the enemy was advancing, but in reality nothing serious happened. General Żeligowski recalled:

On the 17th a joyous mood prevailed. Victory was coming from the south and we could sense the enemy's high nerves, manifested by increased fire. There was feverish work in our staffs. The division received several conflicting orders. It was to go via Zegrze to join the 5th Army, then to load into trains, then to force the Bug between Zegrze and Wyszaków.

Many officers from the capital came to the bridgehead. There were also journalists, members of various social organisations, and MPs, but the soldiers were most likely to see visits from ladies bringing gifts.

Captain Chodźko-Zajko the commander of Battalion 3/30, recalled:

An idyllic day passed on 17 August 1920.

In connection with the announced action of the 15th ID towards Mińsk Mazowiecki, at 04:00 on 17 August the 8th ID command ordered the brigade commanders to send:

... strong deep patrols out in front, thus tying down the enemy. If the enemy is found to be retreating, the units will advance to the Michałów – Krupki – Mostówka line.

As a result Colonel Prohaska, commander of the 13th Regiment, ordered the 1st Company to carry out reconnaissance (by platoons) of enemy positions in the Majdan area.

Second Lieutenant Rembalski, commander of the 1st Company, carried out a thorough reconnaissance of the foreground during the late morning of 17 August and reported the results to the regimental



commander. At the same time two companies of the 33rd Regiment were conducting reconnaissance on the right wing of the sector, tasked with reaching the Krubki – Michałów line.

The 8th ID command, anticipating the expected offensive, ordered all troops and rolling stock to be on alert for a march at 18:00. Similar orders also were issued to the 8th Infantry Division's officers.

Around noon the 8th Division's command ordered an advance to Majdan, knowing that by that time the units of the 15th ID had reached the line of Duchnów – Brzeziny – Długa Kościelna, and that by the evening of 17 August the 15th ID was to reach Mińsk Mazowiecki – Okuniew.

Two battalions of the 13th Regiment were to attack Majdan, 2nd-Lieutenant Szperling's 1st Battalion was to strike along the road to Majdan and tie up the enemy, while Battalion 3/33 was to take advantage of this and attack Ręczaje Polskie.

Meanwhile the artillery was asked to move the batteries closer to the front in order to effectively support the operations. The batteries of the right wing subgroup were assigned to shell the Chobot – Mrowisko area, at the request of the 15th Division. One platoon of the left wing battery of the group was sent for the assault on Majdan.

Around 17:00 in the beautiful weather of a hot day, the battalions took up positions on the road from Leśniakowizna to Majdan in secret.

The commander of the 1st Company was ordered to cross the entanglements and approach the enemy positions to a distance of 200-300 m, where he was to hold on until the battalions advanced and launched an attack. The idea was to avoid losses when leaving the trenches and crossing the entanglements from the Polish lines.

Soon the 1st Company advanced through the wire and came under fire at the level of a road junction. A few hundred paces behind the 1st Company, a platoon of Battery 3/8 FAR took up position, while the rest of the battery stood nearby, ready to move out at any moment.

The 1st Company's offensive developed slowly, but eventually it reached a distance of about 250 metres from the enemy's positions.

At this point the rest of the battalion advanced, passing to the left of the 1st Company, and moving forward at a rapid pace. The 1st Company also stood up and, having reached 150 metres from the enemy positions, was urged on for the assault.

At the sight of the attackers, the Russians rose from their trenches and stood in clusters for a while, hesitating, but finally fell back. They were followed by Battalion 1/13, which soon occupied Majdan, capturing three machine-guns and prisoners of war from the 148th, 149th and 150th RRs. Meanwhile, Lieutenant Zdrojewski's Battalion 3/33 quickly crossed the trenches and advanced into battle, heading through the forest west of Zabraniec towards Ręczaje Polskie. After emerging from the forest on its northern edge, the battalion encountered an enemy unit which, advancing from Kolno, took up positions in the muddy meadows south-west of Kolno. Three rifle companies and the 3rd MG Company turned all their fire on this enemy. At that moment, as the commander recalls:

Some of them, wading up to their knees in mud, began to retreat, some fell on the spot, unable to leave.

It was now nightfall as Battalion 3/33 rushed at the enemy, reaching the village of Ręczaje Polskie, where the local people welcomed the soldiers. This episode stuck in the memory of the battalion's commander, who recalls that:

I still had fresh in my mind the unfriendly attitude of the local population during our retreat; so my astonishment was indescribable when the population welcomed the entering soldiers with cries of joy. My first impression was that I was dealing with mad people, because men and women fell to their knees in front of the soldiers, embracing them and kissing their feet.

After the capture of Majdan and Ręczaje, the Polish battalions remained there through the night of 17/18 August. The losses of Battalion 1/13 amounted to four killed and thirteen wounded.



While the advance on Majdan was taking place, two companies of the 33rd Regiment were conducting reconnaissance in front of the right sector, in the direction of Zabraniec and Michałów, while at the same time establishing communication with the units of the 15th ID. It was clearly noticed that the enemy was leaving, or preparing to retreat. The 8th ID reported to the Army that two companies of the 33rd Regiment “drove out the enemy’s rear guards”.

At 22:00 on 17 August the 8th ID ordered the 21st Regiment to relieve the two companies of the 33rd Regiment and to garrison Małków – Michałów – Zabraniec – Height 108 section (exclusive), while the 13th Regiment was to hold the line of Height 108 to Height 98.

The plan of action towards Mińsk Mazowiecki by the 15th ID the expedition as it was called – had been discussed and agreed upon by the staff even before receiving the order from the 1st Army. Around 21:00-22:00 on 16 August a briefing was held at the division HQ, attended by: Major Nowicki, who the Army had given command of all the armour; Major Matczyński, commander of the 50th Regiment’s battalion; Captain Józefowicz, commander of the 1st Tank Battalion; Captain Jenkner, commander of the 2nd Tank Company; and Captain Cerklewicz, commander of the 59th Regiment.

The plan established at the briefing was later included in the division’s orders, and repeated in an order of the 29th IB, issued at 04:00 on 17 August, in accordance with the Army’s order.

General Jung appointed Colonel Wrzaliński, commander of the 29th Brigade, as the overall commander. He received the following troops: Major Nowicki’s armoured group consisting of three armoured trains (*Danuta*, *Mściciel* and *Paderewski*) and five tank platoons; the 9th Fighter Squadron; Major Matczyński’s “assault detachment”; and Captain Cerklewicz’s group consisting of Battalion 1/142 (manoeuvre battalion), the 2nd Kowno Battalion, the Commander-in-Chief’s personal company, a combined battalion from the 59th and 60th Regiments, a platoon of the 2nd Lancer Regiment and the 1st *Divizion* of the 15th FAR. In addition, the 15th Sapper Battalion assigned a sapper company with material for the construction of bridges, intended for the tanks and armoured trains.

The units taking part in the expedition were to take up their starting positions by 06:00 on August 17, with the time of departure set for 08:00. The armoured group, together with Major Matczyński’s troops, with a tank platoon and two sapper platoons were to be at Miłosna Station; Captain Cerklewicz’s group with a tank platoon, were to be on the highway at Konik – Janówek, where Colonel Wrzaliński would be positioned. Major Nowicki was to be in the armoured train *Paderewski*. The division’s communications chief, 2nd-Lieutenant Jasnoch, was to build a link from Miłosna to Zakręt (General Jung’s staging area on the morning of the action) and prepare to rebuild the Zakręt – Mińsk Mazowiecki line.

The whole group was divided into two columns, which were to:

By energetic and quick actions break the enemy’s resistance and, not letting him recover, reach and occupy Nowo-Mińsk.

The 1st Army had divided the operation into two phases: Phase 1 was the occupation of Dębe Wielkie, and Phase 2 was the capture of Mińsk Mazowiecki.

The left column was formed by Major Matczyński, with his “assault detachment”, the 2nd Tank Platoon, 20 lancers and a sapper platoon. It was to advance parallel to the railway track to the north, and from Dębe Wielkie on parallel to the road leading to Mińsk Mazowiecki.

The right column was formed by Captain Cerklewicz’s troops. The axis of attack of that column was the road leading to Dębe Wielkie. From Dębe Wielkie, Captain Cerklewicz was to advance between the railway track and the highway.

The group of armoured trains was asked to support the tanks and infantry and, “possibly outflank the enemy”, while the 9th Fighter Squadron was to fight the enemy with machine-gun fire and bombs.

During the night of 16/17 August, the units of the 15th Division prepared. The 1st *Divizion* of the 15th FAR, after being relieved, by 07:00 was on the road in a column, reaching Janówek with its head. A sapper platoon was assigned to the squadron.



However, considerable difficulties arose with the tanks. Late in the evening of 16 August, the 2nd Tank Company left Warsaw for Rembertów, where it unloaded the vehicles and rolling stock, and arrived at Miłosna Station in the morning. Second Lieutenant Jeżewski's 1st platoon, assigned to Captain Cerklewicz's column, halted at Królewskie Bagno, while 2nd-Lieutenant Karwat's 2nd Platoon, assigned to Major Matczyński, halted at Grabin. The 3rd Platoon was to remain at Miłosna Station for the time being and then follow the 1st Platoon. So the 2nd Company took up starting positions, but the situation with the remaining tanks was worse. It was hoped at the time that the tanks of the 4th Company (one platoon + 3 tanks) and two platoons of the 5th Company would be used in this action. Of those tanks, the platoon of the 4th Company (from Rembertów), which had recently operated with the 8th Division, was the earliest to arrive at Miłosna Station. The 5th Company, which received its orders quite late, moved during the night of 16/17 August from Radzymin to Wilno Station in Praga, where it was to load and depart for Miłosna. However, the company did not receive rolling stock and so drove from Warsaw to Rembertów on caterpillar tracks, arriving there on 17 August at 10:00. At 11:00 the 5th Company arrived at Miłosna Station, where it stopped, not being able to take part in the action due to wear and tear of the equipment and tiredness of the men.

In the course of taking up positions the enemy noticed the increased movement, and between 07:00 and 08:00 his light batteries and one heavy battery began to fire on Józefin and the railway track. It was during this that the 2nd Tank Company unloaded from the train and so, under the fire of the Russian artillery, moved in platoons to the start positions. The enemy also shelled Miłosna Station and the armoured train, which at 05:00 was leaving for the junction of the track with the road to Długa Kościelna. Soon, however, the artillery of the 15th Division started to fire on the spotted enemy batteries.

In the morning of 17 August 17th, the 15th Division had units of the 30th Brigade on the left flank of the position, two regiments of which occupied the section opposite the 59th and 60th RRs, while the third, the 90th Rifle Regiment, was in reserve at Aleksandrówka. The 90th RR was due to leave for the division's reserve, but as the commander of the 30th Brigade feared a night attack by the Poles *KomDiv-10* agreed to leave it with the 30th RB for the night of 16/17 August. In its sector the 30th Brigade had two light batteries and a heavy *division* (batteries of 105-mm and 152-mm) whose task was:

Primarily to fight the enemy's artillery in the Miłosna and Janówek area, along with his armoured trains and armoured cars, whose concentration was observed in the sector of the 30th Brigade.

By 09:00 the 15th Division's preparations for the action on Mińsk Mazowiecki were complete. For various reasons, the launch of the assault had been significantly delayed. Many staff officers from Warsaw arrived at the starting positions, along with journalists, MPs and so on.

Soon the troops moved forward, with the artillery of the 15th Division supporting the attack for some time. The tank platoon advanced in column, as the forest did not allow it to deploy. The 2nd Kowno Battalion was at the head of the attack, and behind it, in the second row, advanced the manoeuvre battalion and the Commander in Chief's company. After the Polish units moved out of the forest, the enemy hit them with infantry and artillery fire. The 1st Tank Platoon, finding the road entrenched and obstructed by entanglements, turned right, deployed and advanced south of it.

The first enemy resistance was broken by tank fire and Battery 1/15, which had ridden out into an open position. After the resistance was broken, the 1st Tank Platoon moved three tanks in the direction of Brzeziny Manor, while the second half-platoon had to bypass an obstacle and so separated from the rest. The 2nd Kowno Battalion advanced towards Brzeziny Manor with three companies and one company towards Duchnów.

During the assault on Brzeziny Manor the enemy fired on the manoeuvre battalion, which was marching behind the 2nd Kowno Battalion. As a result, one company of the manoeuvre battalion and the C-in-C's company was sent to Duchnów. A tank half-platoon also moved in that direction. Battery 1/15 now advanced another platoon to in front of the bridgehead, and fired on Duchnów.



Under the force of the attack, the enemy was forced to retreat: the 88th RR withdrew to Dębe Wielkie and the 85th RR to the Duchnów area. The 81st RR withdrew from the vicinity of Boryszew to Pęcłin. After the withdrawal, the 85th and 81st RRs took up positions on the Mianka River.

Around 12:00 the 2nd Kowno Battalion, advancing behind the tanks, occupied Brzeziny Manor. The three tanks with the platoon leader proceeded to Wielgolas, however, they were slightly delayed going into action as they waited some time for the rest of the platoon to join them.

The action of the left column and the armoured trains was slightly different. Firstly the trains came under heavy enemy artillery fire near Skruda, which stopped its advance towards Dębe Wielkie. The 2nd Tank Platoon of 2nd-Lieutenant Karwat overtook Major Matczyński's unit on its way out, and entered Długa Kościelna, but soon encountered terrain difficulties (dense forest, a river) and from then on operated slowly, unable to support the infantry. The platoon:

... had to constantly manoeuvre to find a way through either the forest or the river, which it was forced to cross twice.

Around 12:00 Major Matczyński reached the Skruda – Długa Kościelna line, fighting the 89th RR of the 10th RD and the left wing troops of the 17th RD. The 15th ID command asked the 8th ID to have its right wing batteries shell the Chobot – Mrowisko area. Meanwhile, the commander of the 17th Soviet RD, in view of Major Matczyński's action threatening the junction of his and the 10th RDs, sent one battalion of the 153rd RR from the rear to Mrowisko.

Major Matczyński then reached the vicinity of Cisie, but encountered greater enemy resistance there and therefore covered himself on the Mrowisko – Wielki Oleksin line. The 2nd Tank Platoon was sent to Dębe Wielkie.

In the midst of this the right column advanced towards Dębe Wielkie, supported by a half-platoon of tanks. The 2nd Kowno Battalion, the manoeuvre battalion and the Commander-in-Chief's company were now introduced into the attack. The assault was successful and around 14:00 Dębe Wielkie was taken. After capturing that village, the units halted for some time, securing themselves from the east and south. The break in action was used by the tanks (the entire 1st Platoon joined back up in the village, where the 2nd Platoon had also arrived) to replenish ammunition and petrol. Battery 1/15, whose activity during this action was particularly effective, was to the south of the church in Dębe Wielki. That battery, together with the 2nd Battery, had so far fired 293 shells.

Thus all the infantry and armoured units were now concentrated in the area of Dębe Wielkie, preparing for further operations.

Up to that point the armoured train group had had a difficult task, as the enemy artillery was very effective. Moreover their movement was limited, as the enemy destroyed and tore up the railway tracks – some places in large sections. The 4th and 5th Tank Companies, which arrived late for the action, remained on the railway carriages and followed the attack, acting as the reserve of the trains.

In the course of the action so far described, aircraft of the 8th and 9th Squadrons fired on any enemy concentrations of infantry, wagons or batteries that they spotted.

Now the Front commander, General Haller, arrived to join the troops advancing towards Mińsk Mazowiecki, accompanied by a large group of officers from various staffs. Also attending was the French General Weygand, who in the course of these operations came under enemy fire.

Meanwhile the commander of the Soviet 10th Division, seeing that he would not be able to stop the Polish advance, ordered the 29th and 30th RBs to retreat to a line of Choszczówka – Podrudzie – Zamienna line. It was already too late though, as in the midst of this the group of armoured trains moved forward and, overcoming considerable difficulties with broken tracks, reached the enemy. This advance caused great confusion in the Russian ranks, who did not manage to destroy the bridges, even though they had already



prepared them for destruction. At about 18:00 the armoured trains drove into the station at Mińsk Mazowiecki.

The help of the local population should also be emphasised. In the local *Kurjer Poranny* an author somewhere near Mińsk Mazowiecki described the events:

From Miłosna station the action was very difficult for the armoured trains. The Bolsheviks were spoiling the track and burning bridges as they retreated. This delayed the advance, and made it necessary to fight continuous battles – helped by the local population, which should be mentioned with great praise and appreciation, as they also helped to repair the track and extinguish fires at the burning bridges.

During this time Polish planes were spreading panic among the enemy, firing from minimum altitude with machine-gun fire and throwing bombs (1,060 kg worth that day) at the enemy's wagons and infantry in the vicinity of Mińsk Mazowiecki.

An hour later the advance units of the 15th Division arrived in Mińsk, and at the same time units of the 14th Division of the 4th Army, which had set out from the Wieprz on 16 August, arrived from Kołbiel.

As we have seen, the 15th Division staff only learned in the course of the action that the entire 15th Division was meant to head towards Mińsk Mazowiecki. So the division's orders were issued rather late, and it was not until the evening that the 29th Brigade advanced towards the Długa Kościelna – Brzeziny – Dębe Wielkie line, while the 30th Brigade was to move to the Glinianki area.

Around 19:00 the 62nd IR set off from the bridgehead via Wólka Młędzka, and the 61st IR via Swierk. During the night the 61st IR clashed with the enemy in the area of Glinianki, and it was only in the morning of 18 August did it manage to crush the enemy, seizing a total of 1,000 prisoners, three guns and a lot of wagons.

The further course of action of the 15th Division is no longer the subject of this study.

Orders for the Rest of the 1st Army to leave the Bridgehead

The preceding paragraphs have described the attack of the 1st Army wings, which then left the composition of the Army. We indicated that the Commander-in-Chief had agreed to the departure of the rest of the 1st Army on 18 August, but that he still intended to communicate personally with General Rozwadowski about that. For these reasons, the Supreme Command issued preparatory orders, emphasising that the actual order to leave would come later. At around 20:00 on 17 August, the General Staff issued an order:

The 1st Army should be prepared to strike vigorously in the general direction of Wyszaków at dawn on 18 August.

However the General Staff had failed to communicate with the Commander-in-Chief and, at around 22:23, ordered a move towards Wyszaków.

Late in the evening of 17 August the Front issued orders for the 8th Division to advance along the Warsaw – Małkinia railway to the Liwiec River, while the 1st Lit-Bel Division was to advance with its main forces along the Radzymin – Wyszaków road towards Wyszaków, and with weaker forces along the northern bank of the Bug. The 10th Division was to follow the 1st Lit-Bel Division as the Front reserve. In addition, the Front ordered the formation of special pursuit detachments, the incorporation of reinforcements, the replenishment of ammunition, the preparation of communications, the retrieval of the wagons on the west bank of the Vistula, and so on.

During the day of 18 August, the Front received an order from the General Staff to put the 1st Lit-Bel Division into reserve and, in connection with this, gave the former task of the 1st Lit-Bel Division to the 10th Division. (The Commander-in-Chief intended a quite different task for the Lit-Bel Division.) So now the 1st Army was greatly diminished in size, with effectively only the 8th and 10th IDs – it was, as Marshal Piłsudski put it, "parceled out".



The 1st Army staff now confined itself to repeating the orders of the higher commands. The order concerning material matters went out at 20:20, while the orders to move out were issued at around 03:00 on 18 August. In the meantime, however, the enemy had long since disappeared from in front of the bridgehead and the pursuit of the rest of the 1st Army was no longer able to catch up.

To conclude, we must summarise the preparations connected with the transition to offensive operations by the 1st Army, i.e. the regrouping and allocation of artillery, sapper companies, communications and health services, and other material arrangements. The bridgehead artillery consisted, as we have seen, of divisional batteries and batteries moved around by the Governorate. In view of the new tasks for the divisions, the need arose to reallocate the artillery.

As a rule, the infantry divisions leaving the bridgehead took their own artillery with them, which was sometimes reinforced with other assigned batteries. However for various reasons, independent of the 1st Army's artillery staff, the allocation of non-divisional batteries changed several times. The final grouping was:

- The 10th ID left with the staff of the 10th Artillery Brigade, the staff of the 10th FAR, the 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th and 5th Batteries of the 10th FAR and with the 1st and 2nd Batteries of the 10th HAR.
- The 1st Lit-Bel Division left with the staff of the 1st Lit-Bel Artillery Brigade (from Modlin), the staff of the 1st Lit-Bel FAR, the 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 7th, 8th and 9th Batteries of that regiment and the 4th, 5th and 6th Batteries arriving from Modlin.
- The 11th ID took with it the staff of the 11th Artillery Brigade, the staff of the 11th FAR, the 2nd, 3rd, 7th and 9th Batteries of the 11th FAR and the 2nd and 3rd Batteries of the 11th HAR.
- The 15th ID left with the staff of the 15th Artillery Brigade, the staff of the 15th FAR, the full three *divizioni* of the 15th FAR and the 1st *Divizion* of the 15th HAR.
- The 8th ID left with the staff of the 8th Artillery Brigade, the staff of the 8th FAR, the 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th, 6th, 7th Batteries of the 8th FAR, the 1st and 3rd Batteries of the 8th HAR, and with the 4th and 6th Batteries of the 1st Mountain Artillery Regiment;
- The 7th Reserve Brigade took with it the 5th and 6th Batteries of the 15th HAR, the 7th and 8th Batteries of the 16th FAR and the 4th Battery of the 1st HAR.
- The remaining batteries were: the 5th and 6th Batteries of the 9th FAR with the 41st IR, the 3rd Battery of the 1st MAR to the 21st ID, the 1st Battery of the 16th HAR to the 16th ID, the 3rd Battery of the 2nd HAR to the 12th Infantry Brigade.
- The batteries of the 201st FAR remained for the time being in the bridgehead,⁸⁴
- The heavy batteries from the Zegrze and Radzymin sectors formed a heavy artillery group under Lt-Colonel Podonowski, and remained in the bridgehead.

The Army artillery command continued to exist, as the Governorate artillery command operated for several more weeks.

In the following days there were minor changes to the above split.

With the transition to offensive operations, preparations were made for the supply of artillery and infantry ammunition. On 17 August the 1st Army's 4th Department issued orders to that effect, instructing that during the day special wagon columns should bring up to the troops a replenishment of ammunition for up to four days' fire for the infantry and up to two days for the artillery.

⁸⁴ They were later assigned to the Volunteer Division, which makes sense as they were Volunteer as well.



The first orders of the head of communications in connection with the planned transition to the offensive were made by 15 August. On that day a platoon of the Heavy Telegraph Company No 1, with 2nd-Lieutenant Podhajski, was sent to Miłosna to set up a reporting depot there, with the task of maintaining communication with the 15th ID (using fixed wires) as soon as that division moved forward.

However, the main detailed orders from the Army head of communications were issued on 17 August. According to those orders:

- The 15th Division was to use, in the course of operations towards Mińsk Mazowiecki, Wire 36 and Reserve for telegraph communications, and Wires 197 and 188 for telephone communications. For communication to the right it was assigned Wire 450 (Mińsk – Latowicze), an unnumbered to Seroczyn. and 489 (Seroczyn – Siedlce). For communications to the left a fixed telephone line without number Stanisławów – Dobrze was assigned.
- The 8th Division was to use for communications with the Army the Reserve wire 46 and the telephone line on Wires 110 and 112 (permanent route Warsaw – Tłuszcz). The field company of 2nd-Lieutenant Winiarski was assigned to the 8th Division's head of communications to assist in the repair of that line. When the 8th Division deviated from the permanent Warsaw – Tłuszcz – Łochów route, Winiarski was to take over at the 8th Division's HQ, and the division's head of communications was to conduct the construction of the field-permanent line from there. The material for the construction of that line was to be supplied to him by Winiarski, who was assigned three light rail cars (draisines). A platoon of the Heavy Telegraph Company No 1, with 2nd-Lieutenant Kucharski, was also to await the marching out order, so as to conduct a thorough repair of the Tłuszcz – Wyszaków route.
- The heads of communications in General Żeligowski's group were told that their allocation of wires would be determined by a separate order.

A telegraph platoon was sent to Marki with 2nd-Lieutenant Sauer, who was given the task of setting up a forward Army reporting point as soon as General Żeligowski's group moved forward. He was to undertake a major overhaul of the Marki – Radzymin – Wyszaków route, while also transporting the necessary material to the divisions by car. As soon as the divisions deviated from the permanent routes, Sauer was to set up telephone stations at those point

In the course of the operations, the division heads were to undertake temporary repairs of the fixed routes.

With the end of the defensive battle on the Warsaw bridgehead, a final order was made for the allocation of sapper companies, which had been brought together to build the field fortifications. On August 16 the Front ordered that the sapper battalions were to be immediately sent back to their respective infantry divisions; the 1st companies of the sapper battalions were to be permanently attached to their divisions, while the 2nd and 3rd Companies were to be commanded by the Army Head of Engineers and Sappers. As a result the Army on 17 August permanently assigned: the 1st Company of the 8th Battalion to the 8th ID, the 1st Company of the 10th Sapper Battalion to the 10th ID, the 1st Company of the 11th Sapper Battalion to the 11th ID, the 1st Company of the 15th Sapper Battalion to the 15th ID and the 1st Company of the 19th Sapper Battalion to the 1st Lit-Bel Division.

The other sapper companies, which had previously been disposed of by the Army HQ, were temporarily assigned to the divisions as follows: the 8th ID had the 3rd Company of the 9th Sapper Battalion and the 2nd Company of the 21st Sapper Battalion; the 10th ID had the 3rd Company of the 10th Sapper Battalion and the 3rd Company of the 18th Sapper Battalion; the 15th ID got the 2nd and 3rd Companies of the 15th Sapper Battalion; the 1st Lit-Bel Division had the 3rd Company of the 19th Sapper Battalion and 1st and 3rd Companies of the 14th Sapper Battalion.

But in the end the infantry divisions leaving the bridgehead took their sapper battalions with them. Soon afterwards the Army head of sappers and engineers ceased to operate, due to the dissolution of the HQ.



The health service, as we saw at the beginning of the study, had made adequate preparations to ensure the smooth evacuation of the wounded and sick. The Head of Sanitation for the 1st Army had a convenient network of normal and narrow-gauge railways, which was exploited in organising the evacuation of those wounded. As a result the motor column was more of a reserve. The head sanitary officer of D.O.G. Warsaw as well as those of other medical organisations also assisted during the period of the defence of Warsaw. We also know that the city's hospitals were prepared to receive up to 8,000 wounded and were able to accommodate the wounded and sick evacuated from the front before sending them back into the country.

As a result the 1st Army was indeed able to do a good job. In contrast, the working conditions were worse for the divisions that had just retreated, sometimes suffering major losses in personnel and hospital facilities. On the whole, however, medical work in the divisions was equal to the task. Overall the effort of the health service during the battle was considerable – the figures indicate this.

The great efficiency in evacuation must be noted. Between 13 and 16 August, the Kalisz station, acting in the role of a regulating station, evacuated a total of 5,659 wounded and sick into the country. That figure does not give an accurate account of all the losses of the 1st Army, since evacuation was still taking place after 16 August, and this number also includes some wounded and sick evacuated from the 5th Army. It does, however, testify to the considerable efforts of the health service during this period.

With the end of the defensive fighting on the outskirts of Warsaw, the 1st Army medical staff had to organise a number of matters connected with preparations for offensive operations. First of all it had to ensure the evacuation of the sick and wounded as soon as the troops left the bridgehead, Then it had to determine the assignments of sanitary units in connection with the departure of the troops from the 1st Army. Finally, during the course of the Battle of Warsaw, the health service underwent fundamental organisational changes and, in connection with that the head of sanitation had to issue his own regulations.

On 17 August, the Warsaw hospitals evacuated a considerable number of the wounded and sick into the country, and by that day there were only 172 wounded and 140 sick left. Warsaw had a large evacuation hospital system, or "evacuation base", able to accommodate up to 8,000 wounded and sick. So on that day Warsaw was again able to receive large numbers of wounded and sick from the front. The division hospitals were finally finishing evacuating the wounded (mostly the severely wounded) and the sick, and, emptying the hospital facilities, were getting ready to move forward.

The chief of the army's sanitary command directed the "Warta" railhead from Warsaw in the direction of Otwock, while the No. 6 Sanitary Depot went from Warsaw to Wołomin, and the No. 1 Sanitary Depot was to follow the advance of the 15th Infantry Division towards Mińsk Mazowiecki. In this way, the evacuation of the wounded and sick from the 15th and 8th Divisions was ensured.

On the other hand, General Żeligowski's group, which, as we know, moved in the direction of Wyszaków, was in a worse situation, as it had no railway in its area of operation. For these reasons the army sanitary chief sent a part of the 31st Sanitary Car Column in that direction.

In conclusion, it will be noted that on 18 and 19 August the army sanitary chief issued orders related to the reorganisation of the health service. He ordered the creation of one sanitary company in each division, and army field hospitals were used to organise them. From now on, each infantry division was to have one "mobile field hospital" and one sanitary company. Accordingly, the 10th Infantry Division was assigned the Field Hospital No. 904 as a part of the sanitary company (the division also had the hospital No. 402), the 1st Lit-Bel Division was assigned the Field Hospitals No. 105 and 305. The other divisions, which left the bridgehead, took with them their field hospitals.

In connection with the transition to offensive operations by the 1st Army divisions, orders were also issued for food supply.

On 18 August the divisions were provided with "N" rations until 20 August and "R" rations for three days. The divisions were to take a replenishment of up to four "N" portions with bread during that day. The divisions were to supply themselves with meat and fat.



By the end on 19 August the divisions reached their provisions in “N” portions. By 28 August they had “R” portions for three days, and bread for three days. On that day the Main Food Office in Praga had 1,700,000 portions of “N” without fat and jam, and 700,000 portions of “R”. The Warsaw Economic Office Zegrze had 160,000 portions of “N” and 20,000 portions of “R”. The Main Food Office bakery had 30,000 portions of bread. On 18 and 19 August, 85,000 portions of bread were sent to the 4th Army in Siedlce. On 20 August, a typical supply train with 150,000 “N” portions of bread and 45,000 portions of “K” left for Tłuszcz.

Losses in the Battle on the Outskirts

Establishing the losses incurred by the units of the 1st Army in the battle on the outskirts of Warsaw encounters considerable difficulties, as there is a lack of sufficient information. We have relied on casualty summaries (based on lists of troop losses) found in the Red Cross information for the period from 10 to 20 August. Those summaries differ slightly from the actual losses, as this study on looks at the period from 10 to 18 August, but we know that there were negligible troop losses from 18 to 20 August. It should be noted that those shown here as missing, and especially those without information may actually have been wounded or in captivity. In any case, these figures will be very close to the losses actually suffered.

The 1st Army’s losses totaled: 150 officers and 4,955 men, of which: 26 officers and 405 men were killed, 3 officers and 134 men died,⁸⁵ 93 officers and 2,650 men were wounded, 6 officers and 743 men were missing and 22 officers and 1,023 men had no information.

The largest losses in relation to its combat strength were suffered by the 1st Lit-Bel Division, while the smallest losses were suffered by the 7th Reserve Brigade and the 15th ID. The 46th and Wilno Regiments took the heaviest losses in officers, while the 46th BRR suffered the heaviest losses in men.

A detailed breakdown of losses looks like this:

Unit	Killed		Died		Wounded		Missing		No info	
	Off	Men	Off	Men	Off	Men	Off	Men	Off	Men
7th Reserve Brigade	–	18	1	10	6	139	–	1	–	94
8th ID	7	105	–	37	15	610	–	166	3	219
10th ID	3	46	–	23	11	497	–	76	1	168
11th ID	6	110	–	23	25	695	5	202	11	252
15th ID	1	23	1	30	5	223	1	116	2	104
1st Lit-Bel Div	8	87	1	6	24	400	–	178	5	176
Other units	1	7	–	7	7	86	–	4	–	20
Total ⁸⁶	26	405	3	134	93	2 650	6	743	22	1 023

The number of missing and without information is very high, but we assess that most of those losses will be wounded and sick – and even some killed. Apart from the 46th BRR, very few soldiers were taken prisoner. It must also be borne in mind that during this period the units received considerable reinforcements who were reluctant to go into battle, making it difficult to determine losses.

All in all, the losses during the fighting for Warsaw’s outskirts were considerable, as we had killed and wounded (not counting those who died otherwise during this period) of 119 officers and 3,055 privates out of a combat strength of nearly 30,000. The ratio is even higher if we take into account the losses for the divisions that bore the brunt of the fighting.

⁸⁵ Presumably this is died of disease or other non-enemy inflicted activity.

⁸⁶ The totals are slightly discrepant with the numbers above for some columns.

