

Black Cavalry Battles.

10 Cavalry Brigade / 1st Armored Division. From Poland to Wilhelmshaven.

Rzeszów, 8.09.1939 - Łańcut, 9.09.1939.

Historical introduction

The Polish Army planned to modernize its cavalry through motorization since the 1920s. One of the advocates of creating armored and motorized units was General Tadeusz Jordan-Rozwadowski, the General Inspector of Cavalry. Poland had traditions of using motorized and armored forces. In September 1920, a motorized group (armored cars and about one and a half battalion mounted on trucks with motorized battery artillery) made a deep raid on Kowel, capturing the town poorly defended by the surprised Bolsheviks. Such a raid could be called a Guderian style raid, but Heinz Guderian was an unknown Reichswehr officer then.

Bearing in mind the necessity of modernizing the cavalry, the first unit of this kind was motorized in 1937, ie the 10th Cavalry Brigade. Unfortunately, due to the resistance of the brigade cadre, the 20th Uhlan Regiment was removed from brigade roster, and replaced with 24th Uhlan Regiment from Kraśnik (so called White Uhlans because of the white rim on the uhlan caps). The 10th Mounted Rifles Regiment from Łańcut remained in the brigade. Both cavalry regiments were motorized but kept their traditional names, banners and pennants colors. The 10th Mounted Artillery Squadron was dismantled, and the brigade received a squadron of motorized artillery (a 75 mm gun wz. 97 battery and a 100 mm wz. 14/19 gun battery), but it was mobilized only for the war by the 1st Motorized Artillery Regiment in Stryj. Eventually two tank companies (one with light Vickers Es, and one with TK reconnaissance tankettes; Initially, the brigade possessed a light tank battalion with 7TP tanks, but it was moved to the Commanders-in-Chief reserves, and replaced by a company of training Vickers E tanks formed in Żurawica), an AA battery with 4 40 mm wz. 36 guns, an anti-tank guns squadron (18 37mm wz.36 AT guns) and a reconnaissance division, with a squadron equipped with TK tankettes, were added. The fact that the most of the cadre were cavalrymen provided justification for the Brigade's name. Especially since its tasks did not differ from the tasks of traditional cavalry. The first Brigade commander after its motorization was Colonel Antoni Trzaska-Durski. On the 31st October 1938, Colonel Stanisław Władysław Maczek, the former divisional infantry commander of the 7th Infantry Division in Częstochowa took over as the Brigade commander.

Terminological note: The 10th Brigade was officially called the 10th Cavalry Brigade (without the unofficial "Motorized"). The widespread addition of "Motorized" is informal, albeit firmly rooted in consciousness.

Notes on event description.

This description includes the activities of both units (ie the 10th Cavalry Brigade and the 4th Light Division) which fought for Rzeszów and Łańcut on 8th and 9th of September. Hence, this description must be simplified at some points.

We have tried to show the actions of each of above units separately, unless they fought with each other, then they are described together. The author intended that as a help to understand the actions of both commanders and the maneuvers of those two units.

Names abbreviations

In the description the following abbreviations will be used:

- MB - mountain brigade,
- CavB - cavalry brigade,
- HAS - heavy artillery squadron,
- HAR – heavy artillery regiment
- MAS - motorized artillery squadron,
- MD - mountain division,
- LD – light (*leichte*) division,
- ID - infantry division,
- PzD - armored (*panzer*) division,
- ReccS - reconnaissance squadron,
- ReccTC - reconnaissance tank company,
- LTC - light tank company,
- LAR - light artillery regiment,
- IR - infantry regiment,
- ReccR - reconnaissance regiment,
- MRR – mounted rifles regiment,
- UR - uhlan regiment,

Concentration

On August 15th, 1939 the 10th CavB, mobilized in alarm procedure, was deployed west of Cracow, in the Bronowice - Wola Justowska - Liszki - Skawina area. The Brigade was placed in reserve of the commander of the Army "Cracov" commanded by Gen. Antoni Szyling. It had three tank companies - one tank company (121st) with Vickers tanks and two tankette companies (Independent 101. ReccTC and squadron of tanks in ReccS).

The troops of the German Army XVIII Army Corps commanded by Gen. Eugene Beyer concentrated in August on the Slovak State territory, in the Orava in the Namestovo – Tvrdosin - Trsten area. The Corps consisted of 2th AD, 3rd MD and the Viennese 4th LD, formed after the Anschluss among others from the elements of the Austrian *Schnellen Division*. Its division commander was Major General Alfred von Hubicki, in a way, a colleague of Colonel Maczek. Both during the First World War they served in the Austro-Hungarian army as officers of

mountain troops and now they were commanding motorized units.

The 4th LD (*Leichte Division*) was actually a motorized division, with a battalion (squadron) of armored cars and a tank battalion.

The XVIII Corps task was to strike from Orava along the Rabka - Myślenice axis and from the east side of the Tatra Mountains (parts of the 9th ReccR) to cut off of the Army "Cracov" from the eastern part of Poland.

September 1st

"The whole valley from Orava is filled with hundreds of tanks, armored cars and trucks moving towards Jablonka, Spytkowice and Czarny Dunajec. Do not get me wrong, the 1st KOP regiment will do the job of Leonidas, but you must think about your wings and rear."

Colonel Janusz Gaładyk, commander of 1st MB to Army "Cracow" commander, Divisional General Antoni Szyling.

The 4th LD practically controlled, without any resistance on the Polish side, the area near Nowy Targ until the evening of that day (patrols entered the city that evening) however, it did not manage to capture Rabka.

The 10th CavB received its first oral order around 10am. Because of the threat of the German wedge of the 14th Army (and precisely by the XVIII Army Corps) cutting between Army "Cracov" and Army "Carpathia" Gen. Szyling immediately activated his motorized reserves, sending the Brigade north of Nowy Targ (Jordanów - Mszana Dolna area). In the evening the Brigade took positions in the vicinity of the Jordanów – Skomielna Biała. The first contact with the enemy happened in the area of Skomielna. The Brigade - together with the 1st MB – faced three German divisions, including the 2th PzD and the elite 3rd MD of General Eduard Dietl (the same with which the Podhale Rifles of General Bohusz-Szyszko will fight in Narvik).

September 2nd

In the morning the 4th LD hit the defense position of Raba Wyżna - Sieniawa and encountered a stubborn resistance of the 1st MB. On the left wing the 2th PzD was fiercely fighting with the 10th CavB for Jordanów and Wysoka. Till the evening the main forces of the 4th LD entered Rabka. The pace of the attack wasn't very impressive.

From the previous day the 10th CavB occupied positions opposite the 2th PzD, having the 1st KOP IR of Lt. Col. Wójcik, who had combat contact with the 4th LD, on its left side. After heavy combat the 24th UR together with 16th MAS and anti-tank artillery, lost Góra Wysoka and Góra Ludwiki, and the ReccS took delaying positions closing the road to Jordanów. The main units retreated to the new position. The 10th MRR blocked the Chabówka - Myślenice road, which led directly to Kraków. The loss against a crushing superiority of the enemy was no detriment, and Colonel Maczek skillfully used the mountain area to delay the opponent.

September 3rd

The first clashes between the two former Austro-Hungarian "highlanders" took place near Skomielna Biała. The German 11th MRR hit along Chabówka - Lubień road on the positions of

10th MRR at Skomielna Biała. The German actions were directed at the gap between 24th UR and 10th MRR. The German infiltration was held in check with the fire of 16th MAS, but it was hit by counterbattery fire, and had to change positions.

In the afternoon, the commander of the Polish 10th MRR Col. Bokszczanin, having used all available reserves withdrew his regiment north of Tenczyn, thanks to a counterattack of the 121st LTC. Meanwhile the main forces of the 4th LD marched towards Mszana Dolna and Kasina, moving around the 10th CavB positions from the east. A fight ensued for Mszana Dolna with the 1st KOP IR supported by two AT platoons, a platoon of TKF tanks and motorcyclists from ReccS. The 4th LD assault led to disorganization of the KOP regiment and a serious threat to Mszana Dolna - Kasina Wielka - Tymbark - Nowy Sącz/Wiśniowa – Dobczyce bearing.

The maneuver was designed to bypass the 10th Brigade's resistance and circumnavigate its position from the eastern side of Luboń Wielki massif. The *Leichte Division* stayed for the night in the area between Mszana Dolna, Kasina and Rabka.

Meanwhile, the remainder of the 10th Cavalry Brigade, i.e. the 24th UR, motorized artillery and reconnaissance squadrons were to defend the direction of the Jordanów - Tokarnia, also leading using side roads on Myślenice. The 24th UR did not encounter strong enemy pressure on that day.

The German maneuver intended to circumvent the position of the 10th Brigade and then march north-east. This resulted in the counter-maneuver of the Col. Maczek's unit. A maneuver, which is considered a masterpiece of command arts, especially since it was performed at night and relied on moving through dozens kilometers of blocked roads to appear where you were needed, and completely surprise the Germans in the morning. About this below.

On that day, the brigade was attached to the Operational Group "Boruta" commanded by General Mieczysław Boruta-Spiechowicz.

September 4th

An analysis of the enemy's actions prompted Col. Maczek to take the following action. He left the 10th MRR reinforced with the KOP Wołożyn battalion a howitzer battery from the 16th MAS and AT weapons on the road from Tenczyn to Lubień - Myślenice - this regiment was to continue to delay the enemy in the direction of Myślenice. The rest of the brigade was to perform a night 40-60 km march and together with the 1st KOP ID hit the 4th LD from Kasina Wielka, whose right column went around Luboń Wielki and occupied Mszana Dolna for the night. The thrust to Limanowa-Nowy Sącz was performed by Gen. Dietl 3rd MD. A part of *Leichte Division* approached Lubień through Tenczyn. The second part of it was supposed to attack Lubień from Mszana Dolna, and it actually did. Meanwhile, the German I squadron of the 10th MRR together with Dietl *gebirgsjäger* headed for Kasina Wielka.

About 9am the 24th UR with the 121st LTC and two platoon of TKS tanks, after a night maneuver from Jordanów, reached their starting positions north of Kasina Wielka. The attack captured the hills north of the village and Kasina itself, which forced the Germans to retreat. The Polish attack triggered a counterattack of the German 10th MRR with artillery support. The German counterattack recaptured the village and the hills.

As Col. Maczek wrote in the report, *“The operational effect of this attack, however, was greater than the tactical effect, in the form of completely stopping the movement of the 4th LD on this sector for 24 hours”*.

It is worth mentioning that there were no larger Polish units east of the Kasina meridian and two Mountain Brigades from Army “Carpathia” defended themselves parallel to the axis of the Germans' potential march.

Meanwhile, the Polish 10th MRR occupied the hills north of the village of Lubień, on the route from Chabówka to Myślenice. Till the afternoon it repulsed the attacks from 4th LD. Around 3pm the regiment withdraw north, to Pcim. The first line defense was organized by the KOP Wołożyn battalion which was attacked by another German assault. It almost end up with a catastrophe. The battalion was attacked by the Germans and began to disorderly retreated northward. The 10th MRR commander's intervention stopped that almost rout and stiffened the front with reserves in the shape of two mounted rifles squadrons. The KOP battalion was withdrawn north, into the Stróża village, and the HR squadron, held another attack and under cover of the night, ducked back to Myślenice, using side roads through the mountains. Meanwhile, there was another panic among the KOP infantrymen, who collapsed after being attacked by tanks after dark. Col. Bokszczyński collected whom he had at hand, because at that time the regiment's cars were refueling in Myślenice, and again rescued the situation, despite one of his HR squadrons also retreated north from the city.

In the evening, Col. Maczek received reinforcements in the form of the improvised reserve 156th IR (according to the mobilization plan this regiment was to be set up in the universal mobilization for the 45th ID; in fact, it was formed from improvised units), the 5th HAR and the KOP Wilejka battalion. With planned reinforcements, Col. Maczek once again thought of a counterattack, this time along the Myślenice – Lubień route. But the counterattack order had to be limited to Brigade's units only, because the planned use of the 12th IR and the 3rd squadron of the 6th LAR was canceled by Gen. Spiechowicz, and this was due to the general situation of the Army “Cracow”.

September 5th

Realizing the counterattack plan, the KOP Wilejka battalion made a planned bypass through the mountains on the road between the Stróża and Pcim, where it inflicted a great deal of losses to the Germans, and then it withdrew. The 10th MRR moved along Myślenice-Lubień road towards Stróża, from where it dislodged the Germans in a meeting engagement. Coming closer to the hills south of Stróża, the regiment readied for another assault when an order to stop the counterattack arrived. The town of Myślenice, located at the regiment's rear, was captured from the west by the German 7th ID, which meant cutting the regiment off its transport assets and from the brigade in general. The regiment, using side roads through the mountains, withdrew on foot to their trucks. As a result, its strength decreased from 800 to about 500 men.

The 24th UR withdrew from Kasina Wielka on the Wiśniowa–Dobczyce route. In the evening the regiment further withdrew to Łapczyca through Łapanów, bypassing Dobczyce, which was defended by the 71st Anti-Aircraft Artillery Battery. This battery repulsed an attack of German tanks with direct fire. The ReccS, guarding the brigade left wing in Skrzydlina, was attacked around 8pm. Meanwhile, the Germans captured Dobra (a village on Rabka-Limanowa route) in

the south. The squadron, under the enemy's pressure withdrew north, to Szczyrzyce and further to Góra Św. Jana.

Bearing in mind the increasing difficulty of withdrawing, Col. Maczek ordered the Brigade to concentrate in the vicinity of Nowy Wiśnicz on the next day.

“The Brigade came out of this battle culled and tired – the men were had about an hour of sleep for 5 - but morally strong, trusting in its value, and completely cured of tank psychosis. The appearance of tanks on the opposite side does not bring out fear, but a zeal of a hunter hunting for prey”.

Colonel Stanisław Maczek.

On the previous day night, the commander of the 4th LD was ordered to hit Dobczyce on the Kasina Wielka - Wiśniowa route, but in the morning of the 5th of September new orders came and the Division completely changed its attack axis and was directed towards Dunajec river to the area between Nowy Sacz and Zakliczyn. The German Command intended to deepen the encirclement of the Army “Kraków”. Deployed on a broad front the Division reached Dunajec and began to search for convenient crossings. Under Zakliczyn (down the river from Nowy Sacz) there battle in which the Polish 4th company of the 38th IR from 24th DP repulsed the attack of the 9th ReccR. Other patrols of the German division arrived over the Dunajec near Wojnicz (even further north, on the Bochnia-Tarnów route, crossing the main east-west axis). Some subunits clashed with 24th HR near Skrzydlina, while others northeast of Kasina Wielka with Brigade's ReccS. The Division was developing a pursuit on a broad front and gained momentum.

At this point, the great Beskidy epic of the Little Brigade ends. For 5 days it stem the pressure of a much stronger opponent, blocking his coming out into operational area. However, Maczek's motorized cavalry dam burst on the 5th of September, and the German 4th LD was began to gain momentum in its march east. The conditions in which the 10th Brigade - with flanks hanging in the air - had to delay the German march towards the San river have changed. The terrain was no longer an ally of Colonel Maczek's uhlans and mounted riflemen. The pace of the march began to count. In the campaign's next phase, the brigade has also fully demonstrated its value as a motorized unit.

September 6th

The 4th LD began to cross the Dunajec. The 9th ReccR, with one Mounted Rifles squadron was to Wojnicz. This maneuver cut off the Army “Kraków”, including the 10th CavB from the most convenient way to the east (the equivalent of the modern A4 highway), and also directed these units to the only left available bridge on Dunajec in Radla, north of Tarnów. The II squadron of the German 10th MRR hit north from Zakliczyn to Wróblowice, from where it was repulsed after some fierce fighting by the 2nd battalion of the 38th IR (24th ID). Using the fact that the left wing of the Polish 24th Division was suspended in a vacuum, the Germans from the II squadron of the 11th MRR started a deep flanking maneuver towards the rear of the Polish division, through Gromnik to Tuchowa, although the Wróblowice - Gromnik sector was guarded by the I and II battalions of the 17th IR from the 24th Division. There probably was a battle, but it didn't hampered the German raid.

The 10th Cavalry Brigade concentrated in the vicinity of Nowy Wiśnicz. In the afternoon the

Germans started to threaten Bochnia, lying in the brigade's rear. There was an attack on the brigade headquarters, and that immediately caused the decision to retreat northeast to Dunajec crossings. Bochnia was bypassed from the east by moving on dirt roads to Radłów, but the 24th UR and the 10th MRR, cut off from the brigade's headquarters, had trouble breaking out from the encirclement, but during their withdrawal east they met Major Franciszek Skibiński, the Brigade's chief of staff, who directed them to Radłów on the Dunajec.

September 7th

The 4th LD continued to circumvent the position of Polish 24th ID over the Dunajec. The German activities coincided with tragic consequences of Army "Carpathia" orders. Because the left wing of the 24th ID hung in the void, the commander of this army General Kazimierz Fabrycy ordered the division to retreat from Dunajec to Wisłoka river, another major water obstacle on the way east. The Polish division began its march before dawn on September 7 and continued it throughout the day. The 4th LD main forces attacked from the south on the Tarnów–Pilzno line. The "Brehmer" Gruppe (Col. Brehmer, commander of the German 10th MRR) changed its axis of attack after some time and turned to Pilzno. North of Tuchowa the units of "Brehmer" Gruppe routed the Polish 3rd battalion of the 17th IR from Rzeszów and the 2nd battalion of the 38th IR from Przemyśl. The 38th Regiment was also disrupted by artillery fire of the German 102nd LAR. The 4th LD finished the day in Tarnów-Pilzno-Jodłowa area.

The 10th CavB started that day concentrating its troops on the Dunajec river near Radłów, north of Tarnów. The brigade was to be the reserves of the Operational Group "Boruta" of Gen. Boruta-Spiechowicz. After Col. Maczek's intervention (the brigade was constantly involved in combat activities since September 1st, and in combat from September 2nd), the Group Commander agreed to deploy the Brigade around Radomyśl Wielki, on the eastern side of Dunajec, about 45 km from the river. A small group led by lieutenant Wasilewski, the motorcycle platoon leader from the 10th MRR reinforced with a platoon of AT guns and 7 Vickers tanks was left on the west side. Due to some difficulties (the tanks were struggling with technical problems) the motorcycle platoon set off alone for reconnaissance and reached Wojnicz from the north, where German presence was found. Then, the platoon returned to Radłów and participated in the defense of the village. The Vickers tanks from the 121st Company which finally appeared, also participated in Radłów defense and they made a counterattack at some point. The main forces of the Brigade rested and reorganized in the vicinity of Radomyśl Wielki. The burning problem was the lack of fuel - it was impossible to refuel in Tarnów, which was already occupied by the Germans. The closest safe place to refuel from the railroad tank cars was the Brigade's garrison in Rzeszów.

September 8th – the road to Rzeszów

The 4th LD, after finding out that the units of the 24th ID had retreated from Wisłoka river, started a pursuit in the general direction of Pilzno-Dębica-Ropczyce-Rzeszów. Approx. 11.15am the 9th ReccR entered Ropczyca, taking POWs and capturing 1 gun. Approx. 1.15pm the Regiment again moving as a vanguard reached Trzciana. The German division moved using several routes. The 9th ReccR and the II squadron of the 11th MRR used the Ropczyce-Trzciana-Rzeszów route. The I squadron of the 11th MRR set out from Sędziszów Małopolski on the Nockowa-Zwięczyca route and the I squadron of the 10th MRR used the Bratkowice-Rudna Wielka route.

The leading 9th ReccR reached the outskirts of Rzeszów around the 2pm, where it encountered resistance from the 10th CavB, already known by the Germans as the Black Brigade, from the black coats of the Polish uhlans and mounted riflemen.

After receiving the change of orders for delaying the enemy to gain time to organize defense on the San river, the 10th Brigade was forced to cross the 4th LD marching axis. At 3.30 in the morning the leading units of the Black Cavalry set off from Radomyśl to Rzeszów on the Mielec-Kolbuszowa-Głogów Malopolski route, bypassing the road which the 4th LD moved east, from the north. In the rearguard the ReccS, the 121st LTC and a squadron of tanks from the ReccS set off. Roads, clogged by refugees caused excessive usage of the already exhausted fuel. The LTC and the tanks from ReccS broke off from the brigade on the way (the Vickers tanks later took part in the battle of Kolbuszowa and never rejoined the brigade), and the ReccS reached Głogów Malopolski only in the evening. The Brigade's main forces, reached Rzeszów and surrounding areas early in the afternoon of September 8th, when Gen. Hubicki's troops have not yet reached Trzciana. Col. Maczek planned to defend the Brigade's garrison and its reconnaissance and anti-tank squadrons till the evening in a double purpose: he intended perform the task of delaying the enemy on the road to San and additionally to resupply his already small stocks of fuel. The existing two bridges on Wisłok (a road and a rail one) were, in the vicinity, the only convenient permanent crossings through this river, which flows in a fairly deep ravine, so in spite of not too much depth it is difficult to cross. In that time Wisłok river was the eastern boundary of the city - the right bank of the river rises mildly but clearly as the slope of a hinge called Pobitno, whose name may be taken from a defeat of the Bars Confederates in a skirmish nearby. To this day there exists the, so called, Confederate Mound. Another bridge was downstream at a distance of a dozen or so kilometers, and just north of the city, the river turns 90-degree east in the direction of Tryńcza, where it reaches San. Due to the need to refuel taking positions in Wisłok and Pobitna was not considered, although it would be very convenient from a tactical point of view. Therefore, it was decided to defend the city. Defense of Rzeszów was entrusted to 24th UR. Its 1st squadron with a HMG and AT platoons took positions on a hill west of the city in the vicinity of brickworks and tannery (now Baranówka residential area). The 2nd squadron with some AT guns took positions in a sector northwest of the city, west of the Staromieście (Old Town) district, which is located higher than the city center. The 3rd squadron led by lieutenant Romuald Radziwillowicz with a HMG and an AT platoon was placed in the southern edges of the city, from the village of Boguchwała, and the 4th squadron took positions as the regimental commander's reserve near the Bernardine church. One platoon from the 3rd squadron of uhlans was deployed as a security crew on the bridge. The 1st battery (75 mm cannons) of the 16th MAS provided support for the regiment. An unexpected artillery support for the regiment and the brigade came in the form of two separate artillery batteries. In Rzeszów found themselves, as a result of transport problems, the 1st howitzer battery of the 60th HAS, which according to the mobilization plan was be the reserve of the Army "Cracow" commander and the 1st battery of the 40th LAR, which was formed for the 36th Reserve Division (Army "Prussia"). These three artillery batteries took positions in Staromieście, near the existing till today Dairy School. The 10th MRR stood on the southern and western outskirts of the Rudna Wielka village, forming an overhang over the Ropczyce-Rzeszów road and shielding it from the north side of the march of 4th LD units (ie from Bratkowice side). The regiment was supported by one squadron of the AT Squadron and the 2nd battery of the 16th MAS (100 mm howitzers). The transport assets were left in Rzeszów in Staromieście – for security reasons - which meant that the regiment had to march about 6 km to its trucks. The Brigade HQ, the 101st ReccTC and the AA battery, were

probably located on the southern outskirts of forests south of Głogów Małopolski. The transportation assets were left in Rzeszów, also in the vicinity of Staroniwa railway station, where they took fuel from three railroad tank cars.

September 8th – Battle for Rzeszów

A patrol sent west to Dębica made the first visual contact with the coming at Rzeszów 4th LD units. This allowed to set up an ambush and destroy the enemy vanguard and elimination of 6 combat vehicles (most likely armored cars, since the 9th ReccR was advancing from Dębica) Approx. on 3.30pm bombing raids of the 77th Assault Regiment on Rzeszów took place, which caused, among others, losses among the motorized equipment of the 4th squadron of White Lancers. The first attack were carried out by the 9th ReccR on the positions of the 2nd uhlán squadron defending the northern area of Rzeszów and the road to Głogów Małopolski (communication with 10th MRR). This attack was repulsed. About 4pm the Germans carried out an attack from the west (generally from Dębica). This attack was also repulsed, by the 1st uhlán squadron, with the support of the AT platoon and artillery. A strong German reconnaissance strike (here the German I squadron of the 10th MRR was attacking) was also directed on the mounted riflemen positions north-west of Rzeszów, however, it was repulsed by the riflemen from the Polish 10th MRR. Around 4.30pm from the south (along the Strzyżów-Zwięczyca-Rzeszów road towards the position occupied by the 3rd uhlán squadron) the units of the German I squadron of 11th MRR appeared. The commander of the Polish squadron, Lieutenant Romuald Radziwiłowicz organized an ambush in which the German picket fell into. According to the squadron commander, 2 armored cars and 5 trucks carrying infantry were destroyed. That ambush brought the fire of around three batteries of artillery and a mortar company on the squadron positions. But it didn't cause any damage on the perfectly camouflaged uhlán squadron. Two squadrons of German motorized cavalry rushed to the attack but they were repulsed using machinegun fire and the support of the light and heavy batteries (Lt. Radziwiłowicz recalled that the observer lieutenant guided the fire very calmly and skillfully). Once again the Germans fired mortars and firearms at the Polish force and again failed. The second attack came around the 6pm and again it did not break the squadron's defense, but the German positions moved closer to the positions of Polish uhláns, and one of the Polish 81mm mortars was destroyed (one of the uhláns was killed, two were injured). The concentrated German fire started to take its toll on the defenders. Walking around the main position of the squadron, moving along the Wisłok and using the thickets, the Germans forced the withdrawal of the 2nd platoon of the 3rd squadron, which made Radziwiłowicz withdraw from the originally occupied positions.

Buildings of a settlement called Kolonia were located at the squadron's rear, which, together with trees, did not give many fields of fire. Therefore the 3rd squadron couldn't use its heavy machine guns, and primarily counterattacked with grenades and Browning BAR rifles. Eventually the squadron's actions were backed up by the fire from the machineguns placed on the floor of the brickworks buildings, which allowed the Polish squadron to break away from the enemy and seize the ultimate defensive position near the steam mills and the water harbor. Around the 20th the squadron was reinforced by its own 3rd platoon, pulled from the bridge on Wisłok.

Around 8pm, the German attacked again, this time on the took positions of the 1st uhlán squadron on the outskirts of Staromieście (northern defense sector). This attack was also repulsed. Meanwhile the 2nd squadron in the middle defense sector, withdrew to the western

edge of Rzeszów, and after dark the 10th MRR left Rudna Wielka and marched on foot to Staromieście to its transport assets. Brigade logistics units were sent back through Trzebowisko-Łąka to Łańcut.

In the meantime, also around 8pm, the German mounted riflemen again attacked the 3rd uhlán squadron of Lt. Radziwiłłowicz manning positions on the southern defense sector of the city. As the squadron's commander recalled, he let the loudly behaving Germans come at assault distance and then, using the support of all his 9 heavy and 5 light machineguns, attacked surprised enemy with bayonet and grenade. The Germans didn't took the fight and in panic returned to their starting positions, calling for the artillery barrage fire. The Polish uhlans returned to their previous positions and started cleaning their weapons.

The Polish 10th MRR- after reaching their trucks – moved through the city and passed the bridge on Wisłok on its way Łańcut (the peacetime garrison of the regiment), where it arrived around 1am. The rest of the Brigade's units were also pulled out of their position and crossed Wisłok. As last, the units of the 3rd White Uhlans squadron, which repulsed another German attack trying to capture the bridge at 2am, crossed the Wisłok in the morning of 9th of September. After their crossing, sappers, made an unsuccessful attempt to blow the bridge (their explosives were too weak), and then the 24th UR set up another delaying position on the road between Rzeszów and Łańcut.

The battle for Rzeszów died out. The 10th CavB has been successful in holding the city since early afternoon until the night and delaying the march of the German 4th LD towards San river, the last major water obstacle on the route to Lwów.

September 9th – the combatants plans

The 24th UR left Rzeszów as last and took up delaying positions in the vicinity of Krasne, Kraczkowa and Krzemienica villages (located between Rzeszów and Łańcut). The 10th MRR of Col. Bokszczanin crossed Wisłok before midnight and went to his peacetime garrison in Łańcut. The line squadrons took positions in buildings on the western edge of the town. cities. The Brigade's artillery, light tank company and probably the heavy howitzer battery of Cpt. Łyzicki were placed in the park of the Łańcut Castle. The Brigade ReccS stationed in the Albigowa village, 4 km south of Łańcut and covered the Brigade's southern flank. The White Uhlans, after crossing the positions of the MRR, were to be placed in the Brigade's reserves in Głuchów (between Łańcut and Przeworsk). Col. Maczek's intentions were to further delay the German march towards San along the Rzeszów-Łańcut-Przeworsk-Jarosław route. After crossing the San, the Brigade was to placed in reserves.

At approximately 8am the 4th LD units crossed the Wisłok. General von Hubicki planned to divide his division into three columns - two pursuit units and one reserve column. The "Iwand" Pursuit Group, ie I squadron of 10th MRR, a tank company, an artillery battery and an armored cars squadron was to reach Radymno by the San river moving through Tyczyn, Jawornik Polski and Pruchnik. This Group therefore circled entirely the positions of 10th CavB from the south, without encountering any resistance on its way.

The "Vichytil" Pursuit Group consisting of the I squadron of the 9th ReccR, two artillery batteries and two armored cars squadrons was to reach Radymno using Łańcut-Markowa-Kańczuga route.

This Group was to also bypass Przeworsk and Jarosław from the south (especially Jarosław was a big town) but it had to cross Łańcut and there just turn southeast.

The remainder of the division, including the Division's three mounted rifle squadrons, was to follow successively behind the two Pursuit Group in readiness to support them.

September 9th – the Battle of Łańcut

Around 6am, the Germans launched an attack on the delaying positions of the 24th UR. This attack was repulsed, and the Germans had to commit a motorized cavalry squadron with tanks and artillery. The White Uhlans vanguard moved back to the village of Krasne, on the positions of their 1st defense line (manned by the 1st and 3rd line squadrons of the 24th regiment, a HMG squadron, and a platoon of TKS tanks). When the German approached, Col. Dworak ordered to withdraw those units southeast. Around 1:00 pm, the Germans moved towards the 2nd defense line (the 2nd and 4th line squadrons and a HMG platoon), whose units after momentary resistance crossed the positions of the 10th MRR in the Łańcut's western edge, and after that the Uhlans went to the village of Głuchów (east of Łańcut) to the Brigade's reserves. About 3.30 pm the units of the "Vichytil" Pursuit Group attacked Col. Bokszczanin's riflemen and were repulsed. Resistance encountered on the outskirts of Łańcut triggered the decision to circumvent Łańcut from the south, through the village of Albigowa occupied by the Brigade's ReccS.

The Squadron's task was not only to secure the southern flank of the Brigade but also to recon the enemy. The Squadron's commander sent three patrols to the villages of Dylągówka, Husów and Handzlówka. The main forces of the heavily weakened Squadron stood at the fork of the Albigowa-Markowa roads. A rifle platoon, under the command of Lieutenant Otton Saxl, with an attached TKS-D self-propelled anti-tank gun was sent to the village of Dylągówka. At about 4pm the 1st squadron of the White Lancers which was withdrawing from Krasne approached the Squadron's positions in Albigowa. After 4pm from the road from Kraczkowa to Albigowa the German cavalry supported by a tank platoon tanks and an armored cars platoon began to appear. Only luck caused that the Squadron's commander Maj. Świącicki, who was going to Łańcut to the Brigade's headquarters, wasn't killed and he was able to get away from his car that was shattered by a shell.

The German armored vehicles, entering the valley in which Albigowa is located, came across the Polish antitank defense and was temporarily stopped. Major Świącicki's soldiers, occupying the eastern shore of the Sawa stream, watched how the German cars were scurrying in the village and the dismounted cavalry prepares for an attack. Suddenly, from the Dylągówka area sounds of violent struggle were heard. Someone forgot to notify Lieutenant Saxel's platoon that the Germans were approaching Albigowa from the west. The Lieutenant's platoon bumped into the Germans, and in that battle lost the self-propelled TKS-D anti-tank gun, a Praga RV truck, a Fiat 518 car and 2 Sokół motorcycles. On foot, the platoon retreated to Markowa, where it was not given a moment of respite and was order to set up a choke point at the entrance to the village. The Germans using confusion struck the Squadrons positions, but they were repulsed. Nevertheless, Major Świącicki was seriously afraid of whether or not, his heavily culled squadron is able to withstand further enemy pressure. He sent a runner to Col. Maczek asking for support and ammunition, which was running out. Col. Maczek used his only reserves, the 101st LTC of Lt. Ziemski, for a counterattack. A couple of the company tankettes were armed with 20mm cannons. The TKSes set off from Łańcut to Albigowa and hit the flank of the Germans who were

preparing for an attack. The ReccS attacked the Germans at the same time. 7 German tanks were damaged and the Germans were pushed back to Kraczkowa. Around 6pm, the battle has subsided.

At the time when ReccS defended Albigowa, the Polish 10th MRR, with artillery support, especially the direct fire of the 1st battery of the 40th LAR repulsed the German dismounted cavalry and tank attack on the western outskirts of Łańcut. The Germans started to encircle of Łańcut also from the north, between the hills on which the town lies and the Kraków - Lwów railway line. The 10th MRR commander extended his defense to the Łańcut railway station, while the Brigade commander ordered the 101st LTC another counterattack, this time north, towards the railway line. The armored "cockroaches" of Lt. Ziemiński once again did their job discouraging the Germans to attack the town from the north. The Germans, having Łańcut encircled from three sides, were preparing to storm the city on the 10th of September. But, Col. Maczek did not intend to defend the town longer than till the evening.

In the evening, at first the 24th UR from Głuchów and then the other units defending Łańcut set off east, towards Jarosław. As last, Łańcut left the 10th MRR, which was attacked by the Germans who assaulted the town. Good knowledge of its peacetime garrison allowed the cut off regiment HQ and the 4th squadron to reach its trucks drive east, towards Przeworsk. The ReccS withdrew from Markowa to Gać and to Przeworsk. After some adventures, most of the 10th CavB units (but not all) reached Jarosław on the west bank of the San river well after midnight . Meanwhile, the "Vichytil" Pursuit Group practically encircled Łańcut. The reinforced in the meantime "Iwand" Pursuit Group - instead of turning north to capture the undefended Przeworsk - continued to head east and around 8.30pm it reached the San near Radymno (it reached the San river east from Jarosław and cut off the 10th CavB from Przemyśl and from the road to Lwów through Mościska-Gródek Jagielloński, pushing Col. Maczek's squadrons to the north).

"Everything has its end. Due to everyday battles the ranks are already very thin. The tired men want even one day of rest, even one night of sleep. Ever since the beginning of the war, every day it's the same: battle all day, march all night. Although you can sleep on the car, but the ride usually lasts only 4-8 hours. Such a seated sleep is not worth much, but always gives some rest. In any case, the soldier is more rested than in infantry or cavalry." Lt. Ludwig Ferenstein, officer for special tasks for the 10th Cavalry Brigade commander, September 10th, 1939.

To be continued...

Literature used to create the game and the above historical introduction:

- Bączyk N.: *4. Dywizja Lekka w kampanii polskiej 1939 r.*; Nowa Technika Wojskowa nr specjalny 7;
- Czarnota M.: *Bitwa o Rzeszów - wrzesień 1939 r.*; <http://www.rzeszow.pl/miastorzeszow/historia/rzeszowskie-historie-i-historyjki/bitwa-o-rzeszow-wrzesien-1939-r> ;
- Dalecki R.: *Armia "Karpaty" w wojnie obronnej 1939 roku*; Rzeszów 1989;
- Majka J.: *Brygada Motorowa Płk. Maczka. 10. Brygada Kawalerii 1937 – 1939*; Rzeszów 2004;

- Surdacki R.: *24. pułk ułanów w obronie Rzeszowa (8-9.IX.1939 r.)*; Nowa Strategia nr 2/2013.

Sławomir Łukasik