

## Captain Władysław Broniewski's 1921 Report

*Władysław Broniewski became a famous Polish poet in later life. At the time of this report he was a soldier with decent military experience: starting with the Legions in WWI and then fighting through the Polish-Soviet war.*

*The report was written for internal circulation in the military, and hence was an attempt to be objective, at a time when so much Polish writing was anything but.*

*I have mostly stuck with the terminology of the time when translating it, except for machine-guns. Broniewski used the German language method of describing them, so a Schwarzlose M7 (or MG 08/15) is a "light" machine-gun, whereas in English it would be a Medium, or even Heavy, MG. He then describes the Lewis and Chauchat as being "hand-held", where in English they are usually light machine-guns (LMGs). I have gone with the English terminology.*

*All footnotes are mine.*

To the Command of II/1 Leg. IR<sup>1</sup>

Łużki, 7 April 1921

### Combat Experiences

By order of the Command of the 1st Leg. IR I am writing the following sketch of my combat experiences during the war of 1920. The short deadline did not allow me to write it as it should have been done; many things were omitted or incorrectly included. I treat this work as a loose collection of remarks that have come to mind.

In outlining the **general characteristics** of our infantry, I must say at the outset that I consider it to be good, even very good. Its qualities are: courage, offensive spirit and stamina; these qualities, in spite of their undeniable shortcomings, give it high value. I believe it is incorrect to say that our soldier is better on the offensive than on the defensive; the defence of Kiev showed that in every situation he showed great fortitude, perhaps even greater in failure. An officer who gives a soldier moral encouragement and acts by personal example will earn his blind trust and can do anything with him. The NCOs do not play an important role, they do not stand out either in training or intelligence above the level of the soldiers, while the officer has an influence and field of action so great that I do not hesitate to say that a unit is as good as its officers.

The **material** from which our infantry is recruited is overwhelmingly agricultural youth. Craftsmen, workers and urban employees in general account for approximately 20% of the total. This percentage, which was slightly higher at the beginning of 1920, decreased during the year with the losses and the influx of reinforcements. Illiteracy, nowadays barely overcome, reached 70% at the beginning of 1920, with an average of 50%. The number of soldiers able to read and write properly was minimal in each unit; this had a disastrous effect on the demand for clerical staff and NCOs. As the number of Legion and POW<sup>2</sup> non-commissioned officers fell, conscripts had to be promoted, but due to their low intelligence, they were completely unsuitable as NCOs. Such men, promoted most

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<sup>1</sup> 2nd Battalion, 1st Legion Infantry Regiment.

<sup>2</sup> Not prisoners of war, but former members of the Polish Military Organisation (*Polska Organizacja Wojskowa*) which was instrumental in the formation of Poland in 1918. The Legions and ex-POW tended to think that they were somewhat better than the other Polish military (and Piłsudski always favoured them).



often only for bravery, were suitable in battle, but had a moral and mental level that did not stand out above their subordinates. They were also unsuitable for NCO schools, as their low intelligence was unable to comprehend the course material.

As far as the fighting ability was concerned, the morale in II/1 Leg IR was always very high. Each offensive, raid, and or attacking action in general was carried out by soldiers with willingness and courage. The retreat from Kiev did not spoil this; a soldier winning battles then retreating on orders often did not understand the reasons for our failures. I never observed incidents of panic, fleeing from the battlefield, or refusing to obey. But while the “morale” was very high throughout the 1920 war, the “morality” was extremely low. This was mainly due to the often tolerated so-called “redeeming” for oneself, i.e. stealing war booty for private benefit. Taking from the enemy. The main blame in this case lies with the NCOs, who neither by order nor by example counteracted the evil. In general, I consider the lack of moral superiority and influence of NCOs to be the main cause of the lax morality and dissoluteness of soldiers. An officer, even with the best intentions and extremely energetic, cannot control all aspects of a unit. In Operation “Winter”<sup>3</sup>, when companies usually had a full complement of officers, incidents of rape and robbery were rare and vigorously punished. The worst time in this respect was in the defence of Kiev, when the number of officers was very low. During the counter-offensive, our fighting spirit and desire for revenge dulled the material instincts.

As regards **training**, I must firstly note that the work of our staff was inadequate. Nothing was done during the two years of the war of movement to think about the methods of fighting such a war, take that theory and apply it in training. A soldier coming from the rear knew a certain amount of drill but it was largely barracks “drill” – putting clothes “in squares”, putting shoes “at attention”, etc. Those soldiers, however, did not know how to fight. That is, those soldiers did not know how to shoot, how to march, or how to quickly execute tactical formation changes – such areas of training were strangely underestimated by the officers of the staff. I suppose this was influenced by the fact that there was very little exchange of officers between the staff and the regiment, and that the staff officers in many cases were not in the field at all during 1919-20. As for the soldiers who were in the regiment from the beginning, I must point out that their training left much to be desired. A soldier after two weeks of recruit school in Komorowo, then two years of war, had the opportunity to learn how to shoot accurately and judge distances; the more intelligent ones learned this by experience, but the majority continued to shoot badly. (I am mentioning here only the most important areas of training.) The training of the men also contained a number of bad habits, which were remnants of the times of positional warfare. (These habits also stayed with the officers for a long time, and they continued to form the men up in lines). I am speaking here of, above all, of the spreading out of the rifle lines, the efforts to maintain constant communication, and conducting unnecessary firefights.

In general, our soldier had a great **ability to march**. This was due in the first place to practice as, after all, all our actions had it. It should be added, however, that all the marches were made without packs – otherwise I suppose the results would have been much worse. The pace of the march depended on the officer leading the front of the column. So far as the speed of the march is concerned, it is a bad idea to give frequent small rests; a march with only a small number of rests in the first half seems more tiring, but in reality it mechanises the soldier’s body to some extent, so that it is capable of covering greater distances at a time. One should not worry about the increase in the number of stragglers, in most cases a man does not fall behind because of fatigue or the

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<sup>3</sup> The attack on Daugavpils (Dvinsk) that began very early in 1920. He also calls it the “Daugava Offensive”.



difficulty of marching, but for the purposes of buying or plundering. Most of the stragglers, moreover, join the troops a few hours after arriving at the appointed place.

In the Daugava offensive, we did not achieve marching records; on average, the marches were about 20 to 30 km and were done in one go, that is, without a rest for lunch; this had the nice advantage of arriving at new quarters while it was still daylight, which greatly facilitated accommodation. The marching effort in that operation was disproportionate due to the number of roads covered in snow, which often reached above the knees. Columns would then march in one or two lines, using a single path through the snow. In Operation "Józef"<sup>4</sup> marches were almost always combined with combat, so that it is difficult to define the effort involved in the march by the amount of distance covered. However, the effort was great – suffice it to say that the action at Rivne, where, apart from the march from the Wbert River, the soldiers went through three nights of march and two days of battle without a break (I am counting from leaving Tuczyn to the arrival at Klewanie). Record distances were achieved only in the counter-offensive from the Wieprz River and in the last attack on Lida. On the first day of the counter-offensive, we covered 53 km, marching from 4 am to 11 pm, with a two-hour rest in Parczew. In my company, there were 12 stragglers out of 115 riflemen, 7 of whom re-joined during the night. The farthest march was, if I am not mistaken, 63 km, and it ended with a six hour battle for Drohiczyn. In that march I had only four stragglers, even though about 10% of them had no boots. The huge lift in morale was the main contributor to such good results.

Our **march discipline** was usually very poor; this arose mainly from an inadequate number of officers in the units. As I pointed out above, the relatively large number of stragglers came not from a lack of marching ability, but from a relaxation of march discipline. The worst time in this respect was the first phase of the retreat from Kiev. It came about due to the confusion in troops and the inability to prevent abuses.

Our **battle marches** are characterised by speed. Usually they aimed breaking up the enemy forces concentrated behind the front, either near or far. If the principle of an action is to surprise the enemy, then speed and silence are required of a combat march. Both these conditions were gradually achieved by us to a higher degree. In order to achieve the speed, we usually had a senior officer, company or battalion commander at the front – in exceptionally important cases, the vanguard was sometimes led by the regimental or brigade commander. We did not send out flank cover because, firstly, as they were walking in the fields parallel to the column they could not keep up with those advancing along the road, and secondly, they could cause unnecessary alarm when they ran across an enemy post or scouts. During the day the column was protected perfectly well by a few horsemen operating at the level of the vanguard, at night the vanguard alone was sufficient, when it had the normally assigned machine guns. There were cases of surprise from the side, but for that to be serious one needed an enemy more resistant to flanking actions.

Often the success of the action depended solely of the execution of the combat march; the strength of the commander's character was decisive here. It was accepted as a principle that he should act based on the information that had guided the plan and not to deviate from it without clear reasons to do so: that meant disregarding the actions of patrols and their reports that were generally mistaken, to not be halted by minor obstacles and to strive at all costs to reach the planned objective. If after a long battle march an action was to take place, there was no pause before starting it, regardless of the soldiers' fatigue. The action itself caused nervous excitement, which replaced rest, whereas remaining in the launch area might sooner or later alert the enemy and prevent them

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<sup>4</sup> The attack on the Ukraine in April 1920.



from being surprised. In fact in such cases the soldiers fully understood the situation and strained to give their remaining energy, understanding that the fate of the battle depended on it.

When **forming a unit for battle** there was no particular method used in any real sense. A war of movement gives rise to such a variety of situations that early deployment is more likely to expose one to failure more than an apparent unpreparedness for battle. It was a rule learned by experience that troops should remain undeployed until the last moment; this gave the ability to set up the unit as the situation required. The simple fact was that this applied only to offensive operations. We generally avoided frontal attacks, preferring always to flank the enemy, but if a frontal attack was necessary, more attention was paid to the speed of the action than to this or that manner of deploying. If a platoon with a machine gun was alone, it usually advanced without leaving a reserve in a rifle line 6 -15 paces apart. The MG always walked in line with the infantry and was usually on one of the wings. Fire was opened no earlier than at a distance of 500-700 paces, and after opening fire the platoon tried to reach the enemy as quickly as possible, usually without stopping at all, leaving the fire-fighting to the machine gun, which then remained in position and fired at the enemy even over the heads of its own infantry.

Companies mostly operated in echelon, with one platoon generally remaining in reserve. If it was a matter of fighting roughly equal enemy forces, an encirclement was always used, with the decisive blow usually coming from the rear. Thus one platoon led its attack from the flank or front or tied down the enemy with fire, while a second platoon attacked the enemy forces, and a third platoon followed the second platoon at a certain distance as a reserve and was only used to repel counter-attacks. A battalion attack was usually broken up into several episodes of company or platoon action so that the task of the battalion was only to coordinate the individual actions and use the reserve accordingly. As a rule one or two companies were kept in reserve.

In defence, the fire of the MGs played the decisive role. The infantry shot so badly that its fire presented no serious hindrance; so the defence was usually organised in such a way that the points of control over the terrain were stationed with the machine-guns, covering them with a weak line, while the bulk of the infantry was kept in reserve to be used in counter-attacks.

In view of the gaps that always existed between the points of resistance, grouping in depth was used, but this was not always possible due to the excessive length of the sectors given, sometimes reaching up to 15 km. During Operation "Winter" a battalion received on average 5 to 6 km to cover; this was manned with a company placed in each village, or individual platoons thrown out to secure the flanks – but the platoons remained under the orders of the company with which they cooperated. Thus such a section of the battalion was divided into several resistance points with fire support and visual communication between them. If the enemy attack attempted to by-pass them, a reserve company entered the action, placed in a point from which it had more or less equal distances to all companies, and especially to the most point of resistance in the most danger.

To sum up, with regard to the infantry deployment in attack and defence, I state the following: in an attack, between the approach and spreading out, there was no time spent in formal deployment; in the defence, a minimum of troops were deployed so that we were not tied down by the enemy, and the maximum number was in a concentrated reserve, so that the initiative could be taken from the enemy.

In a **firefight** the MGs played the decisive role. The infantry fire was so weak and inaccurate, that only MG fire was an obstacle for the advancing enemy. The war of movement showed the need to increase their number. In the face of the front's vast size and simultaneously the low number of



troops, they were the only thing that ensured that a unit could maintain the sector entrusted to it, as well as providing continuous fire support across the whole line. In II/1 Legion IR there were four machine-guns per company, but this number sometimes turned out to be too low. In general, increasing the firepower of a unit while not overloading it was a concern of every commander in the past war. Our guns generally worked well and shot accurately and played a dominant role in all battles. In attack, usually positioned in the first line, they allowed us to apply the combination of movement and fire, supporting the attacking infantry; in defence, the burden of fire rested only on them.

Of the types used, the “Schwarzlose” MG proved to be the best, mainly due to its lightness and relative convenience when carrying. Besides, it is accurate and precise. In second place I would place the French “Hotchkiss” machine-gun, which unfolds similarly to the “Schwarzlose”, so it is convenient to carry, but it is notably heavier, which makes it difficult to use in a mobile fight. It has very few jams and a damage-resistant design; on top, it has the advantage of not freezing in severe frosts, unlike other systems. I would place the Russian machine gun only in third place – in terms of reliability and precision of shooting it has few faults, but due to its weight and the fact that it cannot be disassembled into parts, it is extremely inconvenient in mobile combat.

Of the light machine guns, I have practical experience with only the French<sup>5</sup> and “Lewis” machine-guns; both systems failed to live up to the expectations placed on them. Their fire was inaccurate; in general, such light weapons cannot be held steady during machine-gun fire. In battle they need great attention paid to the magazines, even the slightest damage or bending cause the MGs to jam. LMGs can act effectively by opening heavy fire at close range, but are of little value as an offensive weapon. We used the Austrian MMGs excellently in practice, taking it usually in the front line and opening fire from a distance of as close as a few dozen paces.

The best type of MG for the conditions of a mobile war I consider to be: of a type similar to “Schwarzlose” in terms of how it folds up, but lighter than “Schwarzlose” sufficient that its weight would allow for precise shooting.

The French MG carts proved to be impractical due to them frequently breaking down and the excessive lengthening of the column with the number of vehicles. The best way seemed to be to transport them on horse packs, which unfortunately the battalion did not have. In practice we usually transported the machine-guns on horse-drawn carts, later on their own light carts with two horses; this way turned out to be quite good because of their ability to move on bad roads.

In firefights, as I mentioned above, the role of the MGs was decisive; the infantry fire meant almost nothing because of its inaccuracy and uncoordinated nature.

It was usually a matter of fighting the enemy’s MGs to give the infantry an opportunity to advance. This created a kind of MG duel, with the infantry advancing while they fought, usually trying to out-flank. Thus the manner of fighting of platoons was similar to that of the French “Battle Group”, incorporating the essential features of the combination of movement and fire. That manoeuvre was generally employed to good effect. In the battles when we were retiring from Budenny’s cavalry, surprise by fire was a common practice; a measure of confidence in the weapon and its effectiveness is provided by incidents of waiting until cavalry charges were at distances of 400 paces (Boryslav, Tushin). Such methods could only be performed when a few MGs were available, as some of them would always fail to fire for whatever reason. During attacks only quickly bringing up a machine gun

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<sup>5</sup> This is presumably the Chauchat.



gave any guarantee of holding the captured position, as the enemy, if it wasn't broken, usually counterattacked; the fire of even one machine-gun brought up in time and in the right place discouraged the enemy from undertaking any counterattack.

We generally entered into firefights with reluctance and only when we had to. Soldiers imbued with an offensive spirit always tried to cross the fire zone as quickly as possible, in order to move on to **hand-to-hand combat**. These generally did not happen, because the enemy refused to stand and either ran away or surrendered. This accustomed the infantrymen to easy success and fixed in him the desire for that way over other methods of resolving a battle. Sometimes however, most often during the fighting for Kiev, there were incidents of hand-to-hand combat. In such fighting, the higher morale of our soldier over that of the Bolsheviks was particularly marked. Bayonets were rarely used. The decisive role was played here by hand grenades and infantry grenade launchers,<sup>6</sup> which, although rarely used, sometimes rendered valuable services. Our infantry was quite proficient in the use of hand grenades; unfortunately, in the final months of the fighting our shortage of them hit us very badly.

Not having specified **manoeuvre methods of combat**, we made use of our combat experience that grew constantly with each passing month. In view of the undeniable superiority in morale of our soldier over the Bolsheviks, taking into account our offensive capabilities, attack was adopted as the principle in both offensive and defensive operations.

The enemy's defensive system consisted in manning the line in such a way that a company with several machine guns were placed at intervals of several kms, mostly in villages; strong reserves were placed behind the line, at a distance of 8-15 km near a road junction. The enemy did not care about maintaining the occupied line; in the face of a decisive attack he usually retreated a few km to new positions, which again were dug in; they simply tried to avoid being broken up and encircled – they were particularly sensitive to the latter. Such a style, although it gave us small territorial gains, led to nothing useful, and entailed us taking losses.

By the Daugava offensive we understood that the aim of a battle was not to capture this or that position, but to destroy the enemy. In the defence of Kiev, a system of breaking up the enemy lines using raids was used; these were usually actions of larger units against smaller ones; the raiding troops, after accomplishing their task, returned to the main line (e.g. battles on the Styr). After a dozen or so days of such battles, during which new enemy detachments had to keep filling the places of the destroyed ones, the enemy withdrew his lines back a dozen or so km (in the way he did in 1919). Sometimes one's own offensive action was halted by enemy counteraction; in this case the following procedure was used: a line of resistance was established, consisting of several points of resistance 1-3 km apart, each manned by a company and with a company in reserve (I am speaking of battalion fighting), and on this line the first enemy attack was resisted. After repulsing the attack, and thus weakening the enemy, we would immediately retake the offensive, in such a way that at dawn one of the enemy's resistance points would be smashed, and a forced march would be made to the rear through the resulting gap in the enemy's front, in order to break up the reserves. This was usually the end of the battle, as the Bolshevik troops remaining in the front line were extremely sensitive to any infiltration or outflanking – when they sensed the enemy deep in their rear they usually tried to escape in panic, rarely attempting to strike at the advanced detachment. There was also another system of attack, in which the enemy line was rolled up after the destruction of one of

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<sup>6</sup> Given that Broniewski seems to only like Austrian weapons, I would guess this is the Granatenwerfer 16 (although perhaps one of the light Minenwerfer systems).





the points of resistance; this system, however, was less favourable because of the tediousness and fragmentation of the battle and the possibility of reserves coming up.

**Infantry actions with assigned artillery** only began to produce good results in Operation “Józef”. This came from the fact that for a long time the artillery could not adapt to the conditions of a war of movement. They tended to position batteries too far from the front lines, wasting time building connections and ranging when they had to act quickly and with some risk. I would also add that artillery fire was very inaccurate, often not placed where the infantry wanted the fire, and not occurring at the desired time. These disadvantages disappeared when artillery was assigned to independent infantry units –battalions or regiments. Junior artillery officers, both platoon and battery leaders, quickly broke from their routines and worked hand in hand with the infantry.

In practice, effective operations turned out to be less dangerous than it would seem to someone familiar only with positional warfare. Batteries often stood in open positions, single guns sometimes fired from the front line of the infantry – which was of great importance as it demoralised the enemy. In offensive actions, the intensity and duration of artillery fire was of little importance; it was more about the [morale] effect, usually saved for the decisive moment of the battle. As a rule, assigned artillery never opened fire before the infantry attack started, in order to allow the possibility of surprise. The moment the infantry broke into the enemy positions, the artillery would open fire, no matter how strong it was, as long as it was not too close (which unfortunately sometimes happened). The artillery was the only arm that could communicate easily, but its commander had to orient himself and give orders on his own initiative. In general, artillery was more valued as a defensive weapon; it was needed when fighting armour<sup>7</sup> and defending points of resistance.

In the battles of 1920, the ratio of one battery to one infantry battalion prevailed. I must state as a matter of certainty that in a war of movement it is necessary that the artillery receive its orders from the infantry commander, and not from the commander of the artillery group, usually located quite far behind the front and having almost no contact with the action.

As far as **mortars and grenade launchers** for infantry are concerned, I can say very little, because apart from short-barrelled grenade launchers I did not have any of these weapons to use. Grenade launchers, if they had a carrying power of 500-600 metres, instead of 300, would be a very good weapon. In the conditions of the past war, at distance of 300 metres an assault was required, so there was no time for fire from grenade launchers. Besides, these grenade launchers are too heavy and inconvenient to carry. Austrian rifle grenades would have been perfect – unfortunately, we did not have any.

As for **organisational changes**, I would consider it advantageous to introduce the following. First of all, I do not like the present reduction of the battalion’s strength to three companies; this limits the battalion’s tactical ability, even though it has the same number of bayonets as in the four-company system. Equipping a company with 12 light machine-guns gives, in my opinion, a reduction in the company’s firepower. It seems to be a paradox, but I base it on the fact that four HMGs in a company shoot well and accurately at the distance of 1,000 metres and further, while the limit of accuracy and doubtful accuracy of LMGs is 400-500 metres. If the company instead of 12 LMGs received 6 MMGs, i.e. machine guns of the “Schwarzlose” system with a light base, it would undoubtedly be more beneficial.

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<sup>7</sup> This is probably referring largely to armoured trains, but perhaps armoured cars as well.



The lack of **infantry cannons**, which are often very useful, was felt painfully. It would be desirable to have at least two infantry guns per battalion.

For reconnaissance and communication it is necessary to have a mounted unit attached to the battalion. Such a unit was formed during the counter-offensive and it rendered invaluable services to the 2nd/1st Legion infantry in all our combat marches, performing the role of lookouts and side guards, so tiresome for infantry, and often performed certain tactical tasks on its own. (It was actually formed of infantry mounted on horseback; they were characterised by an insensitivity to fire which I have never seen in cavalry. The ability to cross space quickly helped them to close with the enemy at speed; these methods were partly copied from Budenny's cavalry).

In concluding this sketch I will add a few more words on the **characteristics of the enemy**. I am not going to speak of Communist troops, or of elite troops in general, which undoubtedly have a fairly high combat value, but of the average conscripted troops. They are unintelligent soldiers, unwilling to fight, ill-equipped and ill-nourished. These conditions contribute to the fact that they surrender so readily. However, he is of material that could be made into a good soldiers under certain conditions. The men are quite brave and physically resilient, but lack commanders and motivation. In combat the Bolsheviks lack expert commanders, with the result that the initiative almost always rests in our hands. They also lack NCOs to command patrols, which were very rarely sent out. At least a company was used when seeking intelligence; their reconnaissance usually did not reach the line of our outposts.

In an attack the Bolsheviks exhaust themselves very quickly, which could often be exploited; on occasions, after seizing an outposts or after partially breaking into our positions, our unit – much smaller than the Bolsheviks – would move decisively and quickly to counterattack, especially from the flanks, and achieve complete success (e.g. at Lanckorona). The Bolsheviks are so sensitive to being outflanked that usually our detachment, just by appearing on the flank or rear, would cause panic and the enemy's retreat. On the other hand, upon seeing any disorientation or lack of decision on our part, the Bolsheviks would take advantage of this immediately, moving to counter-attacks and then became even bolder. In general, if we drove the enemy out of their positions without destroying them and then did not pursue them, the enemy – having calmed down – would counterattack.

The enemy cavalry is much better in combat than the infantry. It shows quite a lot of courage and initiative, sometimes combined with audacity. However, it always relies on demoralising the enemy and, as long as the latter does not panic but defends itself calmly, the Bolshevik cavalry usually withdraws to seek fortune on another sector. In battles with our better infantry, the Bolshevik cavalry could not match us, in spite of the sometimes enormous improvement in the morale of the Bolsheviks during Budenny's successes. In battle their cavalry was reluctant to charge, but was very mobile and always looked for a way around. It was equipped with a large number of machine guns, and LMGs in particular were of great use with its fighting system. Their cavalry tried to avoid decisive battles, especially when attacked by us, but if they felt they had superior strength, would attack boldly.

Budenny's cavalry was equipped with a considerable amount of horse artillery, which acted efficiently and courageously, in contrast to the field artillery, which presented little combat value. In general, the Bolsheviks had few and bad artillery pieces, and after the counter-offensive their numbers dropped to a minimum. Instead, the role of artillery was replaced very well by armoured trains, of which the Bolsheviks had very many, and good, ones; sometimes three armoured units operated simultaneously on a single track. The Bolshevik armoured trains were far superior to ours





in risky ventures and daring raids. The latter were always too sensitive to the possibility of being cut off and only supported infantry actions very briefly, or not at all during deeper excursions. The Bolshevik armoured trains were all the more troublesome because they placed their artillery well. In the Daugava offensive, our artillery was incapable of fighting the armoured trains; the battle of Wyszki will serve as an example: for three days the Bolshevik armoured trains stood 500 metres in front of our line, unhindered by the fire of our artillery. The Bolshevik trains were most effectively countered by tearing up or undermining the track to their rear.

The Bolshevik army had major shortcoming in its provisions. Due to the lack of field kitchens, their soldiers received provisions in kind, and often did not receive them at all. This caused insurmountable difficulties in the areas unable to feed the army, and elsewhere caused bitterness and hostility among the local population.

The reasons for our victories and failures are difficult for me to put into this short sketch. I consider the main reason for our victories, usually achieved with smaller forces than those of the enemy, to be, above all, the greater motivation of our soldiers over those of the Bolsheviks. Another important factor was the relatively large supply of good lower-level commanders. By taking the initiative into our own hands, we did not allow the Bolsheviks to use the forces at their disposal. We pre-empted their actions, attacking as they were reforming, and breaking up even one group would cripple the enemy's plans.

I consider the reason for our failures to be primarily the lack of reserves, and the poor defensive system of some units. Instead of grouping in depth, a thin line was stretched out, which was forced to retreat once broken into one or two places. I also suspect that in other units that low morale contributed to the failures. It is difficult for me to talk about that, as I remained in the 1st Legion Infantry Division and witnessed only good morale in our soldiers. We were never forced to retreat due to a direct attack on our units; we only retreated when our wings retreated.

In conclusion, I can say that a soldier led by a good officer is capable of defeating an enemy several times more numerous.

Captain Władysław Broniewski

