

The Battle of Wołoczyska : 11-24 July 1920

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Pygmy Wars Introduction

As always, this is only a quick and loose translation of the book, aimed at giving people a general introduction to the events at a level of detail almost never seen otherwise in English. It should not be relied upon for anything important.

Colonel Kukiel was a participant in the battle described, being the brigade commander at the key spot. As the book was formally published, rather than just a journal article, I suspect it was reasonably thoroughly checked.

All place names remain in the original Polish, even though they are in the current Ukraine. That makes using the attached, and other period, maps much easier. Smaller places at the time often had quite variable spellings, so do not be surprised if the names have some small variance in different sources.

Non-Polish personal names have been given in the most commonly transliterated form from their original names, rather than via the Polish variant.

Introduction

The Battle of Wołoczyska is a fragment of the overall defensive battle fought between 11 and 24 July 1920 by the right wing of our 6th Army (12th ID) and General Pavlenko's Ukrainian Army on the line of the Zbrucz River. It was a prominent part of that battle, effectively separate from the rest.

Some units of our 12 ID fought on the southern axis of the enemy's attacks, which came from Jarmolińce to Husiatyn, and had Buczacz as their object. That direction, in which the Soviet 41st Rifle Division attempted to break through, was of secondary importance.

The main mass of the Soviet 14th Army, and so its main effort, was from Płoskirów in a direct line towards Tarnopol, Zloczów, and Lwów through Wołoczyska, hitting the main body of the 12th ID with its 60th Rifle Division, then the 8th Cavalry Division, and finally the "Composite" Rifle Division. Here the decisive battle was to be fought.

The battles farther south – between Wołoczyska and Husiatyn, at the crossings at Satanów and Tarnoruda – were only of local importance, with no tactical impact on the course of the Battle of Wołoczyska, affecting both it and the battles at Husiatyn only in an operational sense, through the involvement there of parts of the Soviet 41st and 60th RDs.

Further north, the battles of the 13th ID at Wyszogródek, attacked by the Soviet "Composite" RD, by the 8th CD, by the 9th CD (Osadchiy's cavalry group) and parts of the 45th RD, did at times affect the situation at Wołoczyska, requiring the intervention of the left wing of the 12th Infantry Division, protecting itself from the intended enemy manoeuvre through Wyszogródek to Zbaraż and Tarnopol. The 13th ID maintained the continuity of the front, linking the fighting of the 12th Infantry Division at Wołoczyska with that of the 18th Division at Dubno and Brody, pitted against the Horse Army advancing towards Lwów from the north-east.

The Battle of Wołoczyska can be considered separately and particularly as it represents a unified whole in terms of tactical leadership. Over a very wide front line tactical leadership rested with the brigade commander. The Battle of Wołoczyska was led by the commander of the 12th ID, Colonel Januszajtis, with the forces of the 24th Brigade, as well as other units, subordinated to its commander. Unity of tactical command was maintained at all times. The division commander, through the brigade command, threw into the fray not only the reserve battalions, but also that invaluable reserve – his bold and clear thinking, his unwavering belief in victory, and his never waning energy.

This two-week battle was fought with small forces on both sides. On the Soviet side there were at first 3,000 bayonets and 500 sabres; eventually reaching up to 6,000 bayonets and 3,000 sabres (to which must be added 3 to 4,000 men in march units, added in the course of the battle). They fought against a Polish force varying from 4,000 to 5,000 bayonets, not refreshed by any reinforcements. At the end of the battle, 5,000 bayonets, five batteries and an armoured train fought against 9,000 bayonets and sabres, nine or ten batteries, and five armoured trains.

However while this battle was small in terms of the numbers of troops, it was characterised by being protracted, testifying to the fierceness of the defence, and also by its violent and bloody outcome. We lost at least 1,000 soldiers killed and wounded during it, while the Soviet losses, which by the enemy's own confession were extremely heavy, must have been three times as many. We emerged unscathed after a series of hard struggles, crushing the enemy with fire-power, knocking back its counter-attacks, winning by counter-attack and manoeuvre. But at the moment when we seemed to have a complete victory, we were overwhelmed – exhausted by the victory, and tied down frontally – by the enemy's manoeuvre on our flank and rear, taking the bloodily defended position from us.

The Battle of Wołoczyska is therefore one of those defeats about which the losers can speak without shame. At the same time, it is an example of the defensive battle tactics used by our troops in 1920, with their good and bad sides – an example, I believe, which is quite typical and deserves to be analysed.



I. General Location

Sketch Maps 1 – 3.

The 12th Infantry Division (ID) reached the Zbrucz line with its main forces on the morning of 10 July 1920. This retirement was not the result of a defeat and the division did not feel defeated. Its operations diary proudly recorded for that date: "From the beginning of its withdrawal from the Krzyżopol – Trościaniec – Ładyżyn line, it was an ordered retreat, not a forced one.

However, this retreat took place in the midst of sometimes very heavy fighting. A bloody battle near Bar (near Komarówce and Wołkowińce), fought by the division's right wing, ended with the 54th Border Rifle Regiment (BRR) being pushed southwards by the forces of the 60th Rifle Division (RD) advancing towards Derażnia and the 41st RD heading for Jarmolińce. The advance of the Soviet 60th RD was held back at Derażnia by improvised "groups" of various soldiers in the division, hurriedly transferred to "combat status", and especially by personal bravery.

The 8th Chervonno¹ Cossack Cavalry Division (CD) broke through the gap created at Bar into the rear of our troops during the night of 4 July, reaching Michałpol on 4 July and then moving on through Felsztyn to Płoskirów and Czarny Ostrów. In Płoskirów the 6th Army headquarters was attacked at dawn on 6 July, after which the attackers continued northwards towards Kupiel and Bazalja (Zazulińce). The situation of the 6th Army in the evening of 4 July is shown in Sketch Map 1.

The 12th Division held its ground despite one of its regiments being cut off, losing communications to the right, and the devastation of its rear area by the Cossacks. However, the 6th Army command decided, due to the general situation, to retreat to the Zbrucz River – recommended as recently as 1 July by the Supreme Command. The 6th Army ordered that retirement for 5 July at 18:30 to 23:00 hrs. The retreat was to take the 6th Army divisions to the Zbrucz – Dubno line in three stages, in the formation shown on Sketch Map 1.

It was carried out by the 12th Division under difficult conditions. As well as being under enemy pressure along the Zhmerynka – Derażnia – Płoskirów line, and with a mass of enemy cavalry in its rear, there were peasant uprisings in the Płoskirów area and assaults on the retreating wagons. By an extraordinary effort of energy and valour, the division's officer managed to ensure the evacuation of Derażnia and Płoskirów without major losses in material, and enabled his troops to retreat in an orderly fashion, keeping a threatening posture – ready to fight the Cossacks on the lines of retreat, and also turn to face the enemy units trailing behind. Płoskirów was held for as long as required.

It was not without heavy losses. The 54th BRR, which would rejoin the division only at the Zbrucz River, suffered a great deal. A select battalion of the division's NCO school, and the improvised and stage battalions had large casualties. A large portion of the regimental wagons were lost and damaged. The 52nd and 53rd BRRs had serious fighting. Only the 51st had no major combat during this time – as the division's operations log states, it reached the line of the Zbrucz in relatively good condition. The nervous excitement caused by being completely cut off for several days, the hardships of the march (the 24th Regiment travelled 140 km in four night marches), and finally the dire material shortages, were all keenly felt. However, there was no demoralisation in the ranks. The ties of tradition, sentiment and, for most, origin to Eastern Małopolska, had a strong impact on the men as they reached that province. The divisional history is only too correct in saying: "Standing on the border of the Polish State, officer and private alike were gripped with the thought of defending its independence". The general conviction was that it was impossible to retreat from there, that it not a single inch of ground could be conceded.

Contact with the enemy was broken on the night of 9 July. The exhausted rearguard, Captain Tot's improvised group, was able to move away from the enemy. The 8th CD (Chervonno Cossacks), having previously only met columns of the 12th ID, was on 7 and 8 July to fight columns of the 13th ID further north (at Zazulińce and Wielki Żerebki near Bazalja). The Cossacks were to harass them in pursuit as far as Łopuszna near Wyszogródek, and then suffered a bloody repulse.

¹ *Chervonno* is red, but not the red of the Red Army, which is *krasne*. The "Cossack" reference is to their Ukrainian origins – it was not composed of Cossacks as the term is usually understood.

It was believed that on 10 July the 8th CD might be in the vicinity of Bazalja. The Soviet 60th RD remained in the Płoskirów area through 9 July, and on 10 July presumably reached Czarny Ostrów. Our 12th ID could therefore calmly set up for a defensive battle on the Zbrucz (Sketch Map 3).

The sector of the 12th ID reached from Hnilice Wielkie (inclusive) in the north to Satanów (inclusive) in the south. It was instructed to liaise to the north (left) with the 13th ID, and to the south (right) with General Pavlenko's army. At this point both wings were in the air, as General Pavlenko was still attempting independent operations in the Kamieniec area, while the 13th ID, after heavy fighting with the cavalry, was not able to immediately arrange and man its sector. The 12th ID commander had to immediately extend his right wing beyond Husiatyn and it remained that way until the end.

Even more dangerous was the situation on the left, where the 13th ID was spread out and a step behind. The important direction from Szczasnówka, Białozórka, and Łanowiec to Zbaraż – which was tempting to the enemy because it allowed it to bypass the obstacles of the Zbrucz River and the Miodobory hills and reach Tarnopol from the north – found itself almost unguarded, at the junction of the two divisions.

The divisional commander divided his sector (more than 90 km long, from the dividing line at Kutyskiy to Zbrzyż, south of Husiatyn) into two, and then three subdivisions. The northern sector, from Orzechowiec (exclusive) to Hnilice Wielkie (inclusive), which was to contact the 13th ID along the Kutyski line, was entrusted to 24th Infantry Brigade (IB). It was in the northern sector, extending over 30 km, that the actual battle was to take place.

The southern one reached up to Orzechowiec (inclusive). The more important crossings at Satanów, Tarnoruda, and Orzechowiec, were assigned to the 23rd IB. Below Husiatyn he placed an independent group under Colonel Pażuska consisting of the stage battalions and the 54th Border Rifles.

The positions of the 12th Division on the Zbrucz River is shown in Sketch Map 3.

II. Battle Area

Contour Map

The area of the battle of Wołoczyska is a part of the Podolian Uplands with all its characteristic features: a considerable elevation above sea level, reaching 380 metres in this area, undulating terrain lined with ravines, easily accessible for all types of weapons, providing good approaches in gullies and ravines, and almost completely devoid of forest, which makes it more conducive to attack than defence.²

It is bisected by the Zbrucz River: it has its source near Szczasnówka as a stream, then flows through marshy meadows through Palczyńce and Nowa Grobla; it separates Toki from Ożohowce. Ożohowce towers³ over Toki and the terrain, still rising to the east, which gives an advantage to the attacker from that direction, forcing the defender to extend themselves. Ożohowce is a natural key for the defence of the western bank of the Zbrucz: to the east (Jachnowce –Kupiel), to the north-east (Bazalja), and to the south-east (Manaczyn). From this point the Zbrucz begins to be an obstacle, but only thanks to the numerous ponds into which it spills. Near Wołczkowce its valley narrows considerably and there are two convenient crossings readily available to the enemy, having the eastern bank covered with buildings and much higher. However, the valley can be fired upon longitudinally from the north, from the village of Prosówce, and from the south, from the sugar factory at Frydrychówka. Further south, below Dorofijówka, the Zbrucz emerges into a wide valley. There is no trace of the ponds, marked on the map, which were supposed to fill the Zbrucz valley from Dorofijówka to Wołoczyska. Today it is a wet meadow, but in July 1920 it was dry to cross. While the river is quite deep, it has numerous fords. The difficulty of crossing here depends only on how much firepower the defender manages to bring, exploiting the excellent field of fire. This area can be effectively flanked by machine fire from Dorofijówka, the Zagrobel cordon⁴ and the Frydrychówka sugar

² All the terrain descriptions should be read considering the very flat nature of most of Poland. The “ravines” here are merely shallow valleys in the very gently rolling terrain.

³ Is somewhat higher than.

⁴ I do not understand the reference. There appears to be no place called Zagrobel anywhere near.

factory. It is only south of Wołoczyska that the Zbrucz becomes a serious obstacle in itself, greatly reducing the chances of taking Wołoczyska and Podwołoczyska from the south. Although the terrain generally rises towards the west, i.e. towards the Miodobory hills, the eastern bank of the Zbrucz River towers over the western one everywhere, providing much better vantage points.

The left bank area is traversed by two valleys from west to east. The southern one, a ravine of the Samiec Stream, is usually easy to cross. It enters the Zbrucz just below Wołoczyska, where it separates the Tarnopol – Kamionki – Podwołoczyska road from the Tarnopol – Bogdanówka – Podwołoczyska railway line with a pond and a swamp, making it difficult for the defenders of Podwołoczyska to manoeuvre in the hollow of the position.

On the other hand, if Podwołoczyska is flanked from the north, this valley allows the defender to face north and flank any further advance to the west by the enemy.

The second valley, parallel to that one, is the ravine of the Młyński Stream, which is extended from Skoryki to the west by the ravine of the Wołczek Stream. The Młyński valley below Skoryki is, thanks to its ponds and marshes, a major obstacle. From the defender's point of view, this valley clearly divides his forces fighting for Wołoczyska into two zones: the southern one, where frontal and flanking attack attempts will fail, and the northern one, where circumventing manoeuvres must be countered, and from which one can end in the enemy's rear. In the event of forcing the Zbrucz River between the mouth of the Samiec (at Podwołoczyska) and the mouth of the Młyński Stream (just north of Wołczkowce), the northern zone will provide the basis for a counterattack to the south. If the enemy breaks through in the area of Szczasnówka, Palczyńce, or Ożohowce and Toki and threatens to bypass there, the southern zone will be the basis for a counterattack to the north.

A third valley bisects the northern zone from the north-west to the south-east via Koszlaki – Hołotki – Worobijówka. It plays a role in the fight against any enemy flanking from the north. However, it is not an obstacle at any point.

All three valleys, together with their branches, are good marching routes, favourable to the stealthy advance of an enemy coming from the east, once it has crossed the Zbrucz or bypassed it from the north.

The course of the railway and the road brings attacks from the east towards Frydrychówka, Wołoczyska and Podwołoczyska. The terrain configuration makes it difficult to hold Podwołoczyska without creating an extensive defensive bridgehead on the eastern bank. The arc formed by the Zbrucz from Dorofijówka to Mysłowa, curved towards the west, invites the drawing of a line along the chord of the arc from Mysłowa to the Frydrychowska sugar factory, with a slight convexity to encompass Frydrychowska. The length of this line, 8 to 9 km, would require the entire division to man the bridgehead – given the given strength-to-space ratios, it could therefore only be a line of outposts, conceived as a line of resistance. There is no advantageous line for the main position inside that entrenchment. A bearable one can be drawn between Wołoczyska and Frydrychowska; however, observation points remain on the attacker's side in the case of a withdrawal to that line, and it also gives control of the Wołoczyska gully from the south.

There are good covered positions for the defender's batteries near the eastern edge of the Wołoczyska Ravine. They are not very safe if the enemy breaks through the line of resistance, but the batteries can use all their strength from there and are close to their observation points. If needed, they can move to fire from open positions at very close range. There are more secure positions in the Zbrucz valley and on the right-bank⁵ hills, extending the range by one or two kilometres and risking blindness in the event the links with the observation posts, 3 to 4 km away, are broken.

The hinterland of the natural bridgehead of Wołoczyska is filled with right-bank towns: Mysłowa, where the defender can easily cross the river, flanking an enemy's attack on the bridgehead. Zadniszówka and Podwołoczyska, with the road junction, necessary for bringing up reinforcements and reserves, and for perpendicular movements, the centre of a defensive position, but difficult to hold in the event of the loss of Wołoczyska, due to the shape of the Zbrucz banks, as noted. Finally, there is Staromiejszczyzna, a natural

⁵ A bank's side is determined when looking in the direction of a river's flow. So the "right" bank here is the western side, which is the left side on the maps, as the river flows south.

object of flanking attacks for the enemy forcing the Zbrucz near Wołoczyska, as it is the starting point of the road to Skoryki – an important perpendicular route.

A defender driven from the area of Wołoczyska and Podwołoczyska can exploit the dominant heights east of Molchanowka and Kamionka to stop the enemy advancing directly along the road and track. A second possible line of resistance is found east of the villages of Chmieliska and Kamionka, with an extension to the left towards the village of Korszyłówka. There are good observation points all around (366, 366, 380, 355), good artillery positions, and extensive fields of fire. An enemy pressing from the east will also find many concealed approaches, covered spaces for gathering forces, and blind spots favourable to the advance. The next position is a few kilometres further on the wooded slopes of the Miodobory. The natural centre of the hinterland of the Wołoczyska position is the Bogdanówka – Kamionki road junction.

The part of the southern zone contained between the Samiec and Młyński streams contains high observation points, watching over the crossings opposite the village of Wołczkowce: these are feature 329 north of Staromiejszczyzna, feature 325, and Pieńki Manor (Step)⁶. Holding these points, the defender thwarts both a flank attack from the north on Staromiejszczyzna and Podwołoczyska, and any deeper advance to the rear of the defence, to the Kol. Bogdanówka station and the village of Kamionki. They also cover the Staromiejszczyzna to Skoryki road and maintain communication between the defenders of Wołoczyska and their own forces operating north of the Młyński Creek.

The tactical key of this part of the battlefield is the crossroads near the defunct Skoryki inn (Feature 329) and, behind it, the crossroads on Feature 340 (between the Skoryki inn and the village of Korszyłówka).

All these points played roles in the battles against the enemy forcing the Zbrucz from the Wołoczyska side and penetrating the flank and rear of the advanced positions.

In the northern zone – from the Młyński Stream to the fictitious line of demarcation, coinciding in general with the former Austrian border – the large spaces in relation to the defender's forces provide ample scope for settled positions, defence nodes, lines of resistance and manoeuvres. Toki and Ożohowce, as gateways to the left bank of the Zbrucz River, offer great manoeuvrability. But are very difficult to hold defensively, and this can only be done by manoeuvring neighbouring groups or nearby reserves.

The artillery defending that area has positions on the western edge of the village of Toki, near the village of Worobijówka, and observation posts on Features 330 and 327. From the area of Worobijówka it can easily support any defenders around Pieńki Manor and the Skoryki inn.

Further to the north-west, in the area of the Zbrucz's source, enemy coming from the village of Szybienna towards Zbaraż through Koszlaki and Hnilice Małe, or through Hnilice Wielkie, must be blocked. Hence the need to advance some forces to Koszlaki with flanking support in Hnilice Wielkie, or possibly with a reserve in Hnilice Małe.

As the northernmost observation point, in support of the division's left wing, Feature 347 ("Mount" Jarena, near Urla manor) comes to mind. Some of the defender's artillery must find positions in this area, using the Trochimówka and Jarena heights for observation.

On the eastern side of the Zbrucz River, the terrain is criss-crossed from east to west by two valleys.

1) The valley of the stream which passes just south of the village of Polany limits the southern range of the forces manoeuvring towards Wołoczyska.

2) The valley of the stream, which passes through Korostowa, with its large ponds, forming a series of isthmuses, divides the belt of operations of the forces manoeuvring directly towards Wołoczyska into two routes:

a) the southern, a frontal assault from the south-east on Wołoczyska,

⁶ The Polish word used here is *folwark*, implying an agricultural set of buildings, a grange, of a major farm with a central large residence. It is abbreviated to *Fw* or *Folw* on the maps.

b) the northern, a flanking assault from the north-east through Wołoczyska on Staromiejszczyzna and Podwołoczyska.

These valleys enable the attackers to respond to a sortie by the defenders from their front lines with a manoeuvre from the north or south from covered terrain.

The northern valley protects from an attack by a defender coming out from Toki via Ożohowce to Balkowce or Korostowa.

A ravine passing through the Olszany manor separates the area of the direct battle for Wołoczyska from the vast terrain stretching to the north, which is a manoeuvre area for the attacker. For the manoeuvring masses, the entrance gates among the swampy meadows of the Zbrucz banks are Palczyńce and Szczasnówka. Further north, completely bypassing the Zbrucz's source, the enemy can manoeuvre to Hnilice Wielkie through Lulińce, through the 13th Infantry Division's sector.

Enemy artillery operating against a frontline at Wołoczyska finds excellent positions in the area of the villages of Hołochwasty, Polany, Kopaczewka, Łozowa, Januszowce, and Balkowce, with observation posts on Features 321 and 322. That supporting a flanking assault through Wołczkowce has positions in the gullies between the village of Balkowce and the Olszany manor, with good observation from the hills west of the ravine. That operating on Ożohowce can fire from the village of Jachnowce, with observation from Features 325 and 331. Finally, it can operate on Toki and Koszlaki from the village of Palczyńce, if the other arms have been able to allow it to observe from Trochimówka hill.

From the above picture of the battlefield, some guidelines for its course emerge.

The defender will try to hold the Wołoczyska forward positions firmly, securing himself on the left (north) with reinforcements and reserves against a flank attack coming through the Zbrucz River from Wołczkowce. In addition, he will have a manoeuvre group in the area north of the Młyński Stream, ready to operate on both banks of the stream and able to advance beyond the Zbrucz.

The attacker will launch a frontal assault on the Wołoczyska line, combined with a flanking attack through Wołczkowce, and finally he will throw a manoeuvre group from the north, for example from Szczasnówka, into the rear of the pinned defender.

Our opponent in July 1920 searched for this solution for a long time. Eventually it brought him success after many heavy defeats, thanks to the wearing down of the defence forces.

General Januszajtis wrote

To this day, I cannot understand the narrow-mindedness of the Bolshevik commander, who was unable to take advantage of our weakness at the junction with the 13th ID. Without much effort he could have resolved his situation at the Zbrucz River and made our long defence of the bridgehead impossible by bypassing it with his cavalry from the north. He could not muster any more sense of manoeuvre than forcing the causeway at Wołczkowce with his cavalry under the artillery fire of the front lines ...

In defence of KomandArm-14 it can be said that the idea of a flank attack from the north (via Wyszogródek) came to him at the start and he tried to realise it as early as 14 July. However, at that time he tried to bypass enemy who were not pinned in battle and so who were able to annihilate the flanking attempts with a counterattack. Successive defeats taught KomandArm-14 to combine his efforts.

III. Combat Composition and the State of the Forces

The 24th Infantry Brigade (Colonel Kukiel, adjutant Captain Jasienski) of the 12th Infantry Division was assigned to defend Wołoczyska. It consisted of the 51st and 53rd Border Rifle Regiments (Lt-Colonels Witorzeniec and Zórner); an artillery group (Major Axmann) of the 3rd, 7th, 8th, and 9th Batteries of the 12th Field Artillery Regiment; (FAR) and Sapper Companies 2/12, 2/19 and 2/20. Also available to the brigade commander as a reserve was the 3rd Lwów Stage Battalion (SB), which had accompanied it during

the retirement from the Bug River. In addition, the brigade commander had at his disposal the No. 1 Forward Ammunition Column and the No. 631 Wagon Train.

This initial combat formation was changed and temporarily reinforced:

- a) In the morning on 12 July, Captain Tot's group fought alongside, accidentally and temporarily. It consisted of 2nd Lwów Stage Battalion, the combat part of the division's staff company, a march squadron of the 1st Krechowice Lancers, and the division's field gendarmerie. On the same day the group was disbanded and left its association with the 24th Brigade.
- b) Battery 1/12 of the Heavy Artillery Regiment (HAR) and Sapper Company 1/12, which had retreated with the Ukrainian Army from the Bar area to Borszczów, joined the 24th IB at Podwołoczyska on 12 July, remaining with it until the end of the battle.
- c) Sapper Company 2/19 left on the same day for the sector of the 23rd Brigade.
- d) The 2nd Lwów Stage Battalion was subordinated to the brigade for 14 July, again on 19-20 July (in place of the destroyed 3rd Lwów SB), and finally on 23-24 July .
- e) The armoured train *Piłsudski* worked almost constantly with the brigade. It was absent on 14 July but returned on the 15th.
- f) Battalion 2/42 joined the brigade on 22 July.
- g) From 22 July, the battalions of the 53rd BRR were gradually replaced by those of the 52nd BRR. On 22 July there was one from the 52nd battalion and two from the 53rd. On the 23rd there were two battalions from the 52nd with the regimental command (Lt-Colonel Oświęcimski) and one battalion of the 53rd. On 24 July evening there were three battalions of the 52nd and one from the 53rd.
- h) Battalion 1/50 and a combined stage battalion (from Lublin and Kielce) worked with the brigade on its northern flank from 20 July.
- i) *Divizion 4/4* Horse Rifles came under the brigade's command in the afternoon of July 23.

The fighting forces thus amounted to:

	battalions	batteries	sapper companies	other
Permanent	7	5	3	
11 July	8	4	3	1 squadron (infantry).
14 July	8	5	3	1 armoured train
21 July	8	5	3	1 armoured train
22 July	9 (11)	5	3	1 armoured train
23 July	9 (11)	5	3	1 train and 1 cavalry <i>divizion</i> ⁷
24 July	10 (12)	5	3	1 train and 1 cavalry <i>divizion</i>

The average numbers were:

The infantry line battalions started the battle with 600 bayonets, dropping to 500 from 19 July.

The stage battalions had 400 bayonets,

The sapper companies were 100 bayonets.

The squadrons had 80 sabres or carbines.

The battery were four guns each.

On the Soviet side there was:

- a) The 60th Rifle Division, consisting of the 178th, 179th and 180th Rifle Brigades, each with three rifle regiments and a divisional cavalry regiment (Baylov's Cossacks), as well as three field batteries and a heavy

⁷ A *divizion* is a half-regiment. This one was made up of two horse rifle squadrons and one on foot.

battery. Throughout the battle, the 178th and 180th RBs were facing the 24th Brigade's sector. From 18 July at the latest the 179th Brigade was added.

A column of armoured trains worked with the 60th RD, made up of the *Krasnoarmiets*, *Bela Kun*, *Alekseev*, *Smiert Panam*,⁸ and an ammunition train. There was also column of armoured cars (two noted) and an air squadron (reportedly 7 planes).

(b) The "Composite" Rifle Division consisted of the 21st Rifle Brigade, the 63rd Rifle Brigade, a cavalry regiment (Popov's Cossacks), two or three field batteries, and presumably a heavy battery. From this division the 63rd RB (as far back as 11 July) was in constant combat contact with the 24th IB. At certain times, at the junction of the 12th and 13th Divisions, the 21st RB and Popov's Cossacks were present (especially on 14, 21, 23, and 24 July).

c) The 8th Cavalry Division, also known as the Chervonno Cossacks, was made up of the 22nd, 23rd and 24th Cavalry Brigades, each of two cavalry regiments cavalry, plus a "scout" *divizion* and three horse batteries. Combat with units of this division took place on 14 July, and with the whole division on 19, 20, 23, and 24 July.

d) Units of Osadchiy's cavalry group, otherwise the 9th CD, supposedly faced the 24th IB at the end of the battle. This information could not be verified.

Facing the 24th IB (ascertained by battle contact):

	Rifle regiments	Cavalry regiments	Other
11 July	1		
12 July	2 - 3	1 - 2	
13 July	4 - 6	1 - 2	
14 July	6 - 9	1 - 3	
15 July	7		2 armoured cars, 5 armoured trains
18 July	9 - 10	1	3 batteries , 4 armoured trains
19-22 July	12	7	7 batteries , 4 armoured trains
23 July	12 - 15	8	9 - 10 batteries, 4 armoured trains

The average numerical strengths were:

A rifle regiment was 400 bayonets.

A cavalry regiment was 400 sabres.

A battery was two to four guns.

As a result of constant reinforcements the numbers, despite the losses, tended to increase towards the end of the battle.

Polish forces in the Battle of Wołoczyska should be divided into the army of the 12th ID and the stage battalions.

The 12th ID, formerly the 6th Rifle Division in General Haller's Army, had been excellently trained in Italy and France. It was superbly armed in the French fashion (combat teams equipped with light machine guns, a large number of heavy machine guns, 37 mm cannons, mortars, and French artillery of 75 and 155 mm.)

It had been well tested in 1919 (Gołogóry, victorious march to the Zbrucz River) and in the early spring of 1920 (between Derażnia and Bar). In the early stages of the offensive in Ukraine, it proved its combat prowess on more than one occasion.

⁸ *Krasnoarmiets* is „Red Army Soldier”, the *Bela Kun* was named after the Hungarian Soviet leader and was presumably actually “In Honour of Comrade Bela Kun”, *Alekseev* would seem to be a captured White train (as Alekseev was a White general), and *Smiert' Panam* means “Death to the [Polish] Landowners”.

Its strength was its core of non-commissioned officers and experienced privates from the former Austrian or German service, mixed with American volunteers. It was a battle-hardened, with patriotic, confident soldiers who despised the enemy.

The officer cadres, on the other hand, were very thin from the outset, and not always adequately trained.

Before and during the offensive, the division absorbed numerous reinforcements, almost doubling the infantry's numbers. These consisted of very lightly trained recruits only slightly trained, using various different regulations. These recruits were completely lacking in knowledge of shooting, grenade throwing or hand-to-hand combat, and were unprepared for combat by physically and morally.

Simultaneously with the arrival of these reinforcements, the demobilisation began of American volunteers and older men, not subject to call-up under arms according to the Sejm Act. The dismissal of the 1895 and older cohorts, effected while in the full course of operations, downgraded the fighting power dangerously – the recruits were deprived of instructors and guides, and the officers of an indispensable aide. The older remaining soldiers, those from 1896-99, suffered a blow to morale at the sight of their departing colleagues, in part losing their willingness to serve, and their combat readiness. This was particularly true of the infantry. A report of the divisional commander of 26 June 1920 stated emphatically the severe crisis experienced by our infantry and the dangerous symptoms of that crisis, eliminated with the involvement of summary courts.

In spite of this, the division's infantry survived the sometimes heavy battles of the retreat, coming out of them unscathed and with honour. This was due to the extraordinary efforts of the commanders and the majority of officers, who led from the front and set an example in battle – riding along the lines on horseback while under fire, and leading the assaults – and in this way, supported by the handful of remaining veteran "Haller" privates, carried along and supported the soldiers. Officer losses were incredibly high – one officer for every 10 privates. Therefore there were no junior officers below company commander, and some companies were even led by ensigns, cadets and sergeants. This made an infantry not capable of strong strikes, not very mobile, and not very enterprising. Not held together tightly, it sometimes had failures (hence the great difficulty in carrying out reconnaissance).

The infantry had lost much of its firepower. As a result of incompetent service and a lack of lubricants, a considerable number of the machine-guns broke down. This was especially true of the LMGs, which jammed *en masse*, and were reduced mostly to half their full-time number.⁹ Fire, usually initiated over long distances, was insufficiently effective.

The desperate state of the clothing, especially the footwear, had a bad effect on the infantry's endurance, its marching ability and its morale.

Therefore the general the condition of the infantry of the 12th Division caused its commanders to have serious concerns. But its fierce combativeness, evident during the fighting, exceeded their calculations and hopes.

The artillery maintained its former qualities more consistently. It shot well, was courageously led, and sought out the enemy without being afraid to expose itself. It considered its duty was to nip every enemy attack in the bud and to break up every enemy grouping in advance. While supporting the fighting infantry, it did not hesitate to position itself between the infantry's formations, to fire from open positions directly at the advancing enemy. Thanks to these qualities it was the leading weapon both in attack and defence.

The sappers were well-trained, with a high level of combat readiness. They constituted a sort of select infantry, the last reserve in the most difficult situations.

The armoured train *Piłsudski* had a very high combat value.

⁹ These units being largely French equipped, these were likely Chauchat LMGs, which were notoriously prone to jamming, unless kept scrupulously clean, and to locking up when over-heated by sustained fire.

The Horse Rifles, making up the division's cavalry, were very few in number, but were skilful and daring in reconnaissance, and knew how to fight against vastly superior enemy forces. Used on the southern wing of the division, they would only appear at Wołoczyska at the very end of the battle.

The stage battalions had less fatigued soldiers, but were also less sturdy than the rest of the infantry. Better dressed, better shod, and all around in good morale, they performed no worse than the line soldiers in a short fight, especially on the attacked. Their weak point was their armament: Austrian and Russian weapons for which there was a shortage of ammunition.

Our air force (held at Army level), was focused on Dubno and did not play a role at Wołoczyska.

On the Soviet side, the bulk of the troops fighting at Wołoczyska were from the 60th Rifle Division, which was unquestionably one of the better infantry units of the Red Army. It had a large percentage of former Tsarist soldiers who had survived the World War, and a strong core of Odessa and Kharkiv Communists, which led to it having exceptionally high fighting stubbornness relative to the other units of the Soviet 14th Army. A considerable number of well-served MGs gave them great firepower. Combat discipline was high, with a resistance to setbacks and losses inherent to the Russians.

Soviet riflemen opened fire at excessive distances, attacked without *élan*, and were not eager to engage in hand-to-hand combat. However, as our regimental historical studies clearly state, they were not inferior to our infantry, perhaps even superior in stoic calm and perseverance. They were no worse than many regiments of the former Tsarist army.

The same could be said, more or less, of the infantry of the "Composite" Division (21st and 63rd RBs), although it's reputation in the Red Army was worse.

The Soviet artillery was much inferior to the Polish. It did not exploit situations. Its fire was not very accurate, and was intended more for its effect on morale than losses.

The divisional cavalry, which was bold and enterprising, worked closely with the infantry. It tried to cooperate with it on the battlefield, looking for opportunities to charge a shaken enemy. It manoeuvred to get to the flanks and rear, aiming to inspire panic.

The independent cavalry was represented by the famous division of the "Red Cossacks": the 8th Cavalry Division. Already famous for its raids, which were extremely skilfully led. Its bravery cannot be denied, either in its charges or fighting on foot, although it tended not to seek combat and an opportunity to settle a battle, so much as try to find a way to the rear of our fighting forces. It was most in its element when conducting a raid – the "strategic" consequences of which were greatly overestimated by Soviet commanders, especially after recent successes (e.g. Płoskirów, to which they completely erroneously attribute the 6th Army's retreat to the Zbrucz River).

One of the most serious tools of war in the hands of the Soviet command was their armoured trains, which were both numerous and powerfully armed.

Soviet aviation did not appear in this action.

IV. Setting Up for Battle and Organisation of the Defence

Sketch Map 3

Ordering the 24th IB to take over the defence of the northern subsector of the 12th Division's positions on the Zbrucz River, the division commander ordered one regiment to hold Podwołoczyska and Wołoczyska, with a strong "offensive" bridgehead, the other to deploy in the Medyń – Toki – Koszlaki triangle. At first Medyń was selected as the location for the headquarters, but on the intervention of the brigade's chief of communications, the brigade commander obtained permission to change Medyń to Kamionki. That was a more convenient location in view of the permanent cable to Podwołoczyska and Borek Wielki, the future location of the division's headquarters. With the limited quantities and poor quality of field cable that the division had at its disposal, the existence of fixed connections always played a big role.

This was a mistake. True, the fixed link did not fail at any time, but the commander's place was with one of the regiments: in either Podwołoczyska or Medyń. From Podwołoczyska he could personally direct the defence of the bridgehead; from Medyń he could personally carry out any manoeuvre. The possibilities for manoeuvre explain the original decision of the general for Medyń.

Both regiments were in general position by 10 July: the 53rd BRR at Wołoczyska, the 51st BRR at Toki for the time being, subsequently moving to their positions. The 3rd Lwów SB was moving to Skoryki, as the brigade's reserve. The 3rd and 8th Batteries were moving to Wołoczyska, the 7th and 9th were joining the 51st Rifles. Sapper Companies 2/12 and 2/19 were assembled in Podwołoczyska (on 12 July Company 2/19 would be replaced by 1/12). Company 2/20 was put at the disposal of the 51st BRR (in Toki – Ożohowce).

On the morning of 10 July the brigade commander received verbal instructions from the division commander in Podwołoczyska. He had stayed for the first days in Podwołoczyska to organise the defence, mark out the line of the bridgehead, and establish details relating to the garrison, the use of the artillery, and the use of reserves.

In the operational diary of the 12th Division we read for the date of 9 July:

The division commander has ascertained that all the fortifications established during the [previous] half a year by the Polish 6th ID (the present 12th ID) under French direction have now been completely destroyed, and that the wire has been used for the barracks in Wołoczyska, heavily encircling each object separately....

In another place General Januszajtis writes:

I was met by a tragic surprise. With great effort, expense and knowledge as well as true craftsmanship, the French (Haller 6th ID) had built a beautiful bridgehead at the end of 1919. The entanglements and all the equipment were completely dismantled (!) during the Kiev expedition, in the rear of the operating troops, while the wire was used to fence the internment and prisoner-of-war camp at Frydrychówka. I demanded that the guilty be punished by summary court ... I had counted on the existence of the fortifications: having their excellent plans in the division archives, I took it as the basis of the defence. The disappointment was uncalled for, and I took it as a personal slight.

It happened. The bridgehead, well formed and properly wired, no longer existed. We had to start again. The outline of the bridgehead was established, with a line of resistance points from Mysłowa to the Frydrychówka sugar factory and a rampart encompassing Wołoczyska. Work began immediately, but needed at least 10 days of time.

The garrison of the Wołoczyska defence node was disposed of. One battalion (1/53) was assigned to the line of resistance of the bridgehead, the second (2/53) as a reserve to the bridgehead in Wołoczyska, and the third (3/53) as the brigade's reserve in Podwołoczyska, tasked with providing cover to the north. This battalion also observed Wołoczyska. Both batteries were in the bridgehead, on the eastern edge of Wołoczyska, able to lay down fire on the defences. Battery 3/12 covered from Korostowa to Kopaczówka and Battery 8/12 from Kopaczówka to Mysłowa.

In the northern part of the battlefield, the 51st Border Rifles was grouped as follows: 3/51 in Toki – Ożohowce, supported by Battery 7/12 which was positioned in the Worobijówka area with observation posts on Heights 327 and 330; 1/51 was in Koszlaki, with a company in Hnilice Wieńskie, supported by battery 9/12 positioned near Koszlaki with observation from Trochimówka and Jarena mountains; 2/51 was in Medyń, with the regimental commander and technical company (without the regimental HMGs two battalion guns, and mortars). This grouping corresponded strictly to the system of defence adopted up to this point: the distribution of forces by battalions, two of them advanced to the towns lying on the axes of possible enemy action, with a third kept in reserve. This corresponded to a system of "defence nodes", except that with a given ratio of forces to space, there was no question of these "nodes" supporting each other, nor of them being properly fortified, nor of relief for the cut off node in good time. A battalion that was attacked could only defend itself with a well-timed counterattack. If overwhelmed, it could only retreat to the regimental headquarters, holding back the enemy long enough to give the regiment's commander the time necessary to organise a counterattack by the reserve with the cooperation, if possible, of another

unattached battalion. This was the reality. In theory, the advanced battalions were supposed to defend themselves to the last extremity on the spot, to hold the towns where they were positioned until they fell. This theory demanded impossible and unnecessary things and sometimes led to the destruction of the attacked battalion before help arrived. The concept of a retreating manoeuvre was missing.

The extent of the area entrusted to observation by the 51st BRR and its accessibility meant that space immediately started to absorb the units. The original grouping of 3/51 in Toki – Ożohowce, 1/51 in Koszlaki, 2/51 in Medyń, already formed a triangle of 8 to 11 km on the sides, making it almost impossible to use the whole regiment in one place and at one time. But it was difficult to stop the individual battalions from filling out the space, to prevent them garrisoning too many spaces – which would take so many men that, other than the reserve, the commanders would be left alone with just telephonists and messengers. Gradually this habit of maintaining a continuous line of cover was overcome, and the troops became accustomed to being kept as a whole. This did not happen easily or without friction. Until the end of the battle there would be a issues between maintaining battalion action and the dispersal of forces into independently “operating” half-battalions and companies.

Our defence system suffered from the lack of a significant general reserve – the battalions in Podwołoczyska and Skoryki could only formally be regarded as such reserves. In fact they were, especially the first one, purely local reserves. There could be no question at all of fresh units replacing battle-worn ones. Only towards the end of the battle would the 53rd Regiment be replaced by the 52nd, drawn by down in battalions from the sector of the 23rd Brigade.

The defences were limited, due to the lack of manpower and professional management, to the fortification of the Wołoczyska bridgehead and a hasty wiring around Ożohowce. None of the planned work was adequately completed, interrupted by fighting, and the lack of barbed wire was noticeable. It is to be regretted that during this time no reinforcement of selected points of resistance at the rear, especially in the area south of Skoryki, was undertaken with the help of the inhabitants.

Communication was provided by a fixed cable from Borek Wielkie via Kamionki to Wołoczyska, which worked flawlessly throughout the battle. A double field line was run from the brigade headquarters in Kamionki to Medyń, to the 51st BRR. From Medyń, lines were run to Toki and through Hnilice Małe (with an intermediate station) to Koszlaki. The field telephone was frequently damaged; it was broken twice due to the course of battle. The lack of a reserve line, which should have been run from Zbaraż (from a fixed cable with Tarnopol) along the road to Hnilice Małe, was then felt. A more extensive expansion of the network was hampered by the lack of field cable – much of it had been lost in the retreat.

Other than the wire, communication was effectively maintained by means of bold and reliable horse messengers.

The railway, first to Wołoczyska itself, then to Podwołoczyska station, functioned continuously. Trains with reinforcements and material could be brought up as needed, and the wounded at Podwołoczyska or Bogdanówka were also evacuated by train. Ammunition was supplied through the column in Bogdanówka. The food distribution points were in Bogdanówka and Podwołoczyska.

With the exception of the Austrian and Russian rifle ammunition for the stage battalions, which could not be delivered in time, the supply of ammunition and food was smooth and reliable – there were no shortcomings in that respect.

As can be seen, the divisional command made a major effort to maintain supply and keep up the efficiency of the defending units.

Reconnaissance in the absence of cavalry and aviation – the division cavalry and army aviation were active in other directions – had to be done on foot. The state of our infantry made this reconnaissance ineffective, and whole companies had to be used to make it effective. Information about the enemy was provided by artillery observation, the intelligence service, and especially by the testimonies of prisoners of war, deserters and refugees. Thanks to this, the Polish divisions were always relatively well informed about the enemy, and often even warned of its intentions.



V. First Battles for the Bridgehead

11 July

On 11 July contact was made with the enemy on the northern wing. From Palczyńce we spotted dust clouds moving from Awratyn to Szczasnówka. Infantry reconnaissance moved up from Ożohowce was repulsed by outpost fire.

The forces grouped at Wołoczyska experienced a temporary reinforcement. The division's main rearguard, Captain Tot's group – consisting of the 2nd Lwów Stage Battalion, the march squadron of the Krechowice Lancers, the Staff Company and the Field Gendarmerie – arrived at Frydrychówka and spent the night in the barracks, almost on the very line of resistance. The next morning the group was to march out to Borek Wieńkie.

12 July

The following day at 05:30 Soviet infantry of the 60th RD, in a dense morning fog, approached the line of our posts on the outskirts of Wołoczyska. The attack came from Korostowa, aimed at the left section of the positions between the railway track and the sugar factory.

The outposts of the 1/53 allowed themselves to be surprised, and after a short resistance were pushed back. The enemy encircled Frydrychówka from the north, broke into the settlement, and moved quickly towards Wołoczyska. The entire 1/53 battalion, alerted too late, was in retreat after a while. Batteries 3 and 8/12 were directly threatened at their positions and had to disengage and retreat across the bridge to Podwołoczyska. Alongside the telephone report about the enemy attack, people fleeing, batteries retiring, and carts full of wounded appeared in Podwołoczyska.

The commander of the 3rd *Divizion* of the 12th FAR, Major Axmann, immediately turned back the artillery and led it back to the forward positions. Soon after, when he was aware of the general situation and had issued orders, the brigade commander followed.

Meanwhile, the commander of the bridgehead, Lt-Colonel Zórner of the 53rd BRR, alerted his reserve of the 2/53 in Wołoczyska and asked Captain Tot for assistance. By chance Tot's group was marching through Wołoczyska at the very moment of the enemy's breakthrough. The captain, fully prepared for combat, threw the 2nd Lwów Stage Battalion (Lieutenant Adamski) into the fire, and personally directed the counter-attack.

With fierce fighting the enemy was pushed back to Frydrychówka, which was taken back in a street fight. The Soviet riflemen tried to hold on to the ridge between the railway track and the sugar factory, attacking again and again. After Captain Tot introduced the dismounted 1st Lancer squadron and a flanking counterattack from the south by Battalion 2/53, at 08:00 the enemy began a disorderly retreat through Korostowa to Balkowce, pursued by our artillery fire. The victory was paid for dearly. The enemy left several dozen dead and several prisoners of war from the 533rd RR and many abandoned weapons. But we also had 15 dead and almost 80 wounded. Lieutenant Rudnicki, the brave commander of the Krechowice Lancer March Squadron, died a heroic death.

As a result of the battle, the bridgehead's commander put battalion 2/53 into the line, and 1/53 became the reserve.

On the same day the 1st heavy battery of 12th HAR (155-mm) arrived in Podwołoczyska and took up a position near the railway station, with an advanced observation post at Wołoczyska station (eastern end of Frydrychówka) and a main observation post on Hill 329 north of Podwołoczyska station. The armoured train *Pilsudski* also arrived and took up a position near Wołoczyska station.

Simultaneously with the fighting on the bridgehead, outpost clashes occurred in the advanced positions of Ożohowce. Soviet cavalry, with machine guns, nested in Wołczkowce.

13 July

From 03:00 enemy assaults on the bridgehead resumed, this time duly received by the 2/53. The first push quickly broke down.

At 08:40 a new attack on Frydrychówka, supported by artillery, led to a protracted battle. At the critical moment, the enemy attempted to break the front with the help of a charge by the cavalry regiment of the 60th RD (Baylov's Cossacks). An armoured car also appeared.

The state of the fortification works, hampered by the combats, did not prevent the advance of the cavalry into the bridgehead. However, the attack was shattered by small arms and cannon fire. The concentrated fire of three batteries swiftly swept this regiment, 500 Cossacks, from the field. The 123 Cossacks killed and wounded littered the positions. The regiment called off its attack and did not appear at the front for several days.

Throughout the day the enemy made repeated attempts to attack, always fruitlessly. Our losses were 1 officer and 7 men killed, 2 officers and 28 men wounded.

The brigade commander had already by the previous day turned his attention to the enemy camped in Wołczkowce – about 100 infantry and 60 cavalry. He intended to nip in the bud any attempt to force the Zbrucz at this dangerous point. He therefore ordered the 51st Rifles to make a strong advance from the north, through Ożohowce or Prasowce, to the rear of Wołczkowce, in order to break up that Soviet unit. In the event, two companies of 3/51 were moved for this purpose from Ożohowce through Olszany manor to Wołczkowce. Those companies repelled an attack by the Soviet cavalry, with the support of Battery 7/12 operating from Worobijówka. The aim of the attack was achieved, but the enemy managed to withdraw to Balkowce in time. The assault, carried out with a small force, drove out the enemy but did not destroy it.

Be that as it may, by evening the enemy was in retreat everywhere. The situation was good. The attack on Wołoczyska by the Soviet advance guard had been foiled, and the defence system tested by fire.

The brigade commander and his staff moved to Kamionki permanently.

VI. Cooperation with the 13th Infantry Division

14 July

So far the Soviet assaults, presumably carried out with the forces of one brigade (178th) and one cavalry regiment, gave the impression of the actions of an advance guard, attacking the enemy frontally, tying him up, to enable the main force to manoeuvre. Information from everywhere indicated the area of Bazalja as the manoeuvre's starting point and the presence of a larger cavalry forces in the area of Szybienna and Szczasnówka.

By 12 July the 51st Rifles were already warned of the possibility of a major action, if possible with the whole regiment's forces, towards Szczasnówka. On 13 July the 2/51 moved from Medyń to the village of Hnilice Małe. In the morning of 14 July news came that the 13th Division was under heavy attack, that its front near the village of Kutyski was broken, and the enemy was advancing towards Wyszogródek. Immediate, spontaneous action on the flank of the enemy attack was imperative. The brigade commander ordered a manoeuvre with a force of at least two battalions with two batteries through Hnilice Wielkie to Pliska, Lulińce and Kutyski.

The brigade commander ordered the commander of the 51st Border Rifles to concentrate Battalions 1/51 and 2/51 and Battery 9/12 in Hnilice Wielkie. He placed the 3rd Lwów Stage Battalion and Battery 3/12 at his disposal, brought from the bridgehead for that purpose. To support the action the division officer sent the 2nd Lwów Stage Battalion from Bogdanówka. It was immediately loaded onto carts and transported to Hnilice Małe at 17:00, where, using the existing telephone station and reporting point, the brigade commander took his position for the day. The manoeuvre was covered from the east by the 3/51 in Toki and a 1/51 detachment, which was to remain in Koszlaki. Battery 7/12 remained in the Worobijówka area.

When, at 09:30, the 6th Army HQ requested the 12th Division to strike through Hnilice northwards, to relieve the 13th Infantry Division, an officer of the 3rd Bureau¹⁰ was able to reply with a message about the movements preparing the forces for the desired attack. At 11:00 6th Army HQ reported heavy fighting by

¹⁰ Intelligence.

the 13th Infantry Division at Pieczarna, Wyszogródek and Wierzbowie against the 45th RD, the separate Kotovski Cavalry Brigade, and the 9th Cavalry Division (the so-called Osadchiy Group). In response they received a report on the concentration of Lt-Colonel Witorzeniec in Hnilice Wielkie. At about 13:00 the group set off from that village to Lulińce and Kutyski, with the 2/51 and 3rd Lwów Stage Company, a company of 3/51, and batteries 3/12 and 9/12. The remainder of battalion 1/51 was used to cover the area north and east of the village of Koszlaki.

The Witorzeniec group reached the vicinity of Kutyski village shortly after the attacker broke into Pieczarna. The situation is shown in Sketch Map 4. The 50th Border Rifle Regiment (from the 13th ID) was moving to counterattack. The infantry and dismounted Soviet cavalry were concentrating all their efforts there. Cavalry in large mounted formation was lined up, concealed in the hollows of the terrain, waiting for the moment to gallop into the gap, and as usual dash through the countryside into the interior, with Zbaraż and Tarnopol indicated as targets.

Battalion 2/51 struck at Kutyski, which it captured. Some of the 3rd Lwów Battalion was sent to Pieczarna. To the right, the 3rd Company of 1/51 was advancing to Pliska. Our manoeuvre took place to the rear and flank of the enemy, who, struck from two directions, began a panicked retreat through Moskalówka to the east, and through Bugłów and Wonzułów to the north. That was driven on by the fire of the incomparably bold Battery 9/12 (Lieutenant Sawczyński), which fired at close range from an open position – as on many other occasions, it was ahead of its own infantry. The battery smashed the escaping columns and wagons. When attacked by the Cossacks, isolated, it was defended by the accurate fire of the 3rd Company of the 51st. An energetic move onwards by Lt-Colonel Witorzeniec, executed with all his forces, might have given a major tactical victory, leading to the destruction of a serious enemy force. Unfortunately, a couple of hours of heavy rain significantly weakened the momentum of our infantry, which was content to reach the village of Lulińce, their identified object. The falling night made it easier for the enemy to break away and retreat to its starting area.

This battle was fought against the "Composite" Rifle Division (21st RB) and the 8th CD (Red Cossacks).

While the action was still in full swing, the brigade commander received orders to quickly extract the brigade and bring the engaged forces back to their own sector. This was combined with incidents in the south, at Tarnoruda and Husiatyn. On that day the Tarnoruda advanced position fell to the Russians, and the Husiatyn, lost on 13 July and recaptured on the same day, was again heavily attacked. The 2nd Lwów Battalion was hastily withdrawn to be divisional reserve at Romanówka.

The situation for the enemy caused by the actions of 14 July is explained in the Soviet 8th CD commander's radio message to the 14th Army's command, relayed the following day, excerpts of which we quote:

I report that the 8th CD has attempted to break through in the sector of Wyszogródek and Zbaraż ... Our supply is completely exhausted ... Nothing has arrived ... Not a single thing ... Managed to occupy the trenches and concentrate on this sector ... then was forced to leave ... the infantry of the Composite Division did not break ... will you not see fit to allow me to break through south of Wołoczyska on the 60th Division's sector, or will you order our infantry to break through in the Zbaraż – Wyszogródek sector. Please send maps by aeroplane. KomDiv-8-CD Primakov. Stop.

Our manoeuvre, without any proper tactical impetus, greatly relieved the neighbouring division. But it did not destroy the enemy's forces, which as a result, galvanised by their orders, managed to advance again on 13th ID the following day. Soon after they were to shift their direction of attack to the sector of the 12th ID.

VI. Pinning Battles and a Break in Operations

15 July.

The troops of Lt-Colonel Witorzeniec's group pulled back to their previous positions during the day. However, the 2/51 was to remain at Hnilice Mały, maintaining patrol liaison with the 50th Border Rifles and the 2nd Lwów Battalion left for Romanówka. Battery 3/12 returned to the bridgehead.

The enemy, probably aiming at relieving his forces fighting against the 13th ID, at 10:00 resumed the attack on the Wołoszyska bridgehead, suddenly putting forward his armoured trains. The defence did not expect to see them so soon, due to the main track from Płoskirów having to be repaired. The speed with which this was done is a credit to the efficiency of the Soviet railway formations. With a few shells, the heavy battery forced the "armoured" troops to retreat. During the battle our own armoured train *Piłsudski* arrived and pursued the retreating enemy, getting an accurate shot at an ammunition car of the armoured train *Krasnoarmiets*. In the afternoon the enemy attacked again, this time from the southeast (from Kopaczówka), with infantry and two armoured cars. The attack was broken by artillery fire. Our losses in wounded were one officer and 22 riflemen.

On the northern wing, the 1/51 had a tough fight with the Soviet infantry (21st RB) near the Urle manor.

These assaults were of a rather pinning nature. At most, it was hoped that the surprise advance of the armour might create panic. Meanwhile, the enemy was grouping for a new attack with the 8th Cavalry and Composite Divisions on the 13th ID which developed in the evening and led to its right wing being pushed back again.

16-17 July.

There was a break in operations on 16 and 17 July. The enemy did not attack. Nor did it take advantage of the successes achieved in the Kutyski area, in the 13th Division's sector. The 7th Company of the 51st regiment, pushed towards Kutyski on reconnaissance, managed to establish communication with the 50th Border Rifles. That regiment, with considerable artillery support, regained the lost area. Regardless, there was no combat activity. Only in the south, in the sector of Colonel Pajus, did the battle for the Husiatyn bridgehead (Russian Husiatyn) begin.

The division commander inspected the 53rd Border Rifles and "found that the outposts, as well as the garrison and reserves, were possessed of good spirits".

Everyone was gripped by the news of the terms of the Armistice dictated by England. Its completion was awaited with horror, and was expected at any moment. No setback would be able to kill encouragement and the will to win. The commanders and troops were buoyed up by the news that the armistice line in Małopolska was to be the front line at the time of the armistice. The old border of Galicia had to be maintained at all costs, and not an inch of ground was to be given up.¹¹

The division commander reported by telegraph on behalf of his troops that he was ready to continue fighting to the last breath. He discussed with the brigade commander a plan for an offensive move with a large body from the Toki – Ożohowce area towards Manaczyn, where the enemy's centre of operations for attacking the bridgehead was correctly assumed to be. Unfortunately, the brigade commander did not start concentrating the necessary forces, as he was still preoccupied with the incidents near Pieczarna and Kutyski. In the meantime, a night attack was prepared by the 53rd BRR on Korostowa, where a Soviet infantry regiment was reported to be stationed from all our gathered intelligence.

VIII. The First General Attack on Wołoczyska

18 July.

The raid, launched at 01:30 hit empty space at Korostowa. Five abandoned Cossack horses were taken, but unfortunately no prisoners. Meanwhile, the operational headquarters of the 60th RD, redeployed from Czarny Ostrów to Manaczyn, had prepared a strong attack on the southern flank of the bridgehead. The forces included at least two, freshly replenished rifle brigades (the 178th and 180th) the division's cavalry regiment, two batteries of 3-inch cannons, one of 6-inch howitzers and four armoured trains: *Smiert Panam*, *Alekseev*, *Krasnoarmiets* and *Comrade Bela Kun*. These forces were concentrated some distance out, under the cover of weak units advanced to the line of Polany – Kopaczówka – Korostowa. In the

¹¹ This was a border proposed by Lord Curzon, and came to be known as the "Curzon Line" (although there were several variations of that line). At this time he did not propose a particular line in Galicia, hence the reference to the Poles wanting to be in control of as much as possible.

meantime, the 8th Cavalry Division retired to the Kupiel – Bazalja area for a rest, preparing for a new advance. The 21st and 63rd RBs (Composite Division) were organising in the area opposite the left wing of the 24th IB and the extreme right wing of the 13th ID.

The enemy's intention was to take the bridgehead on 18 July and to tie up as many of our forces as possible in a battle for Podwołoczyska, in order to enable the 8th Division the next day to force its way across the Zbrucz near Wołczkowce and then advance on Tarnopol.

At 14:00 an attack was launched on the right flank of the bridgehead, with a simultaneous attack by the "armour" column and strong artillery support. With the large number of infantry involved, the enemy several times broke beyond our line of resistance. After a fierce battle they were thrown back, but the attack was renewed with fresh forces around 19:00. This time they broke into Wołoczyska itself, and his cavalry threw itself into a pursuit. Batteries 3/12 and 8/12 held out admirably. Battery 3/12 received the charging cavalry with barrage fire with one platoon, while the fire of the second platoon covered its retreat. The charge collapsed and the Cossacks fled. An infantry counterattack retook the lost ground. Another assault by the Soviet infantry reached deep into the bridgehead, but once again two battalions of the 53rd pushed the enemy back with a determined effort. The reserve in Podwołoczyska was pushed up to the right bank of the Zbrucz River, but did not need to engage in battle, which was won by the forces of the garrison alone. In the battle our 52nd BRR joined in with fire from the south (from the hills near Orzechowiec).

Our losses were heavy: at least 1 officer and 123 privates were wounded, but the number of deaths was not recorded.

19 July.

At daybreak the enemy renewed the attack on the bridgehead. The fight inside our lines lasted from 04:00 to 08:00. With great effort the enemy was driven back by the 53rd BRR, whose losses since 18 July had now risen to 250 killed and wounded. The attacks were renewed at 11:00, presumably with the forces of the 179th Brigade, which had been brought down from near Tarnoruda. The defence held out.

However around noon new enemy batteries appeared on the hills overlooking the village of Wołczkowce from the east, and the advanced main posts of the 53rd BRR (around Wołczkowce) and 51st BRR (Pieńki manor) were pushed back by the superior numbers of the enemy infantry. They fell back through Wołczkowce and, crossing the Zbrucz under cover of cannon and MG fire, retreated to their regiments. The enemy crossed the river with infantry and cavalry, under the heavy fire of Battery 7/12 from the north and Battery 3/12 from the south, and also by machine guns from Prosońce and Frydrychówka. The infantry units, having crossed, advanced to Staromiejszczyzna, to the rear of the bridgehead, and occupied Dorofijówka.

The brigade commander ordered a concentrated counter-attack from Podwołoczyska and Medyń. From the south, Lt-Colonel Zörner managed to bring into action only two sapper companies, 1/12 (Lieutenant Gabryłowicz) and 2/12 (Lieutenant Bisztyga), the latter having a very high combat value. From the north, Lt-Colonel Witorzeniec directed the action of the brigade's reserve, the 3rd Lwów Battalion, towards Pieńki manor and Wołczkowce. He slowly pushed the enemy to the river and crossings, still under our flanking fire. The sappers were gaining ground from the south to the north of Staromiejszczyzna. This was the situation at about 18:00.

The enemy at this time introduced into the battle some more infantry, from the 178th RB or perhaps the 63rd RB. Large bodies of cavalry – the 22nd and 24th Cavalry Brigades of the 8th Cavalry Division, some dismounted, some mounted – were gathering in the gullies and basins on the western bank of the river. In spite of their enormous losses, these forces were steadily increasing and preparing for a decisive blow.

On our side the 2nd Lwów Battalion was again pushed up to Bogdanówka by the division commander. At about 19:00 a sudden charge of the cavalry struck the outstretched lines of the 3rd Stage Battalion. Lt-Colonel Witorzeniec, hurrying from Skoryki to Pieńki manor just from the sound of the increased fighting, met the commander of the battalion reporting the complete defeat of his unit. The battalion had been destroyed: a few dozen had been felled by sabres, a few dozen wounded and not killed were taken prisoner, the rest were hiding in terror in tall crops or gullies, then escaping westwards through the countryside.



Lt-Colonel Witorzeniec organised a short defence of the narrow gap between Skoryki and Medyń against the pursuing Cossacks and reported the disaster to the brigade commander.

The situation presented itself to the brigade commander and his aide as shown on Sketch Map 5. The enemy had their 8th Cavalry Division in the area between the village of Skoryki and Feature 329 (Skoryki Inn). His other forces, apparently infantry, were advancing on the rear of the bridgehead in the direction of Staromiejszczyzna.

The enemy's intentions seemed to be:

a) To strike with a large body of cavalry against the rear of the troops fighting at Wołoczyska. In this case the first object of the attack would be Bogdanówka and Kamionki, where the enemy would surely expect to surprise the staff and break up our reserves.

b) Break up the northern group, with the aim of destroying our left wing, completely breaking the link between the 12th and 13th IDs and then to attack Zbaraż and Tarnopol. In this case, the first object of attack would be Hnilice Małe.

c) Taking advantage of the gap between Skoryki and the railroad to immediately throw themselves westward with a column to Borki Wielkie or Tarnopol.

In the first case, the enemy would encounter the 2nd Lwów SB; in the second case 2/51; in the third it might find itself outside the area of our infantry operations and no longer be reached and stopped – however, there was hoped that after a day's effort he would spend the night near Skoryki. All eventualities corresponded to requiring a centripetal action on Skoryki:

1) from Hnilice Małe with Battalion 2/51, possibly supported with other units of the 51st BRR.

2) from Bogdanówka with the 2nd Lwów SB.

The effectiveness of this operation could be increased by a counterattack from the 53rd BRR from the Staromiejszczyzna area, aimed directly at the enemy's rear, and by the operation of parts of the remaining 51st BRR towards the south across the Młyński Stream. The action needed to be carried out as quickly as possible, exploiting the superiority of infantry over cavalry in night fighting.

Hearing Lt-Colonel Witorzeniec's telephone report, the brigade commander agreed with him on a plan of action, with a few interrupted words.

retired with his last reserve, the technical company, to the 2/51 in Hnilice Małe, which had to be immediately telephoned to move to Medyń, drawing there whatever else he could from other battalions of the regiment. Lt-Colonel Witorzeniec Having gathered his forces, he was to strike from Medyń during the night to the south. The brigade commander promised to cooperate from Kamionki with the reserve of the 2nd Lwów SB, already standing ready. At this point the connection was broken. It was 20:00.

The situation near Staromiejszczyzna was tense. Lieutenant Bisztyga, the brave commander of the 2/12 Sappers, was wounded. Battalion 1/53, transferred there from the bridgehead, held on to the line of hills between Staromiejszczyzna and Podwołoczyska with difficulty. The bridgehead units were exhausted from the two-day battle and their morale shaken by the threat to their only retreat route, the bridge over the Zbrucz River.

In a telephone conversation with the division commander at 20:30 the brigade commander did not conceal the seriousness of the situation. He reported his intention to throw the 2nd Lwów SB from Kamionki to counterattack to the north-east direction, which might yield a successful result if Lt-Colonel Witorzeniec struck from the north in time. As for the brigade headquarters, he would move to Podwołoczyska, from where he would try to get enough strength to recapture Staromiejszczyzna and Dorofijówka. An intermediate telephone station would remain in Kamionki, already threatened by the Soviet attack.

All the orders met with the approval of the division commander, who foresaw the possibility of withdrawing the forces, concentrated at Wołoczyska to the 23rd Brigade and moving with the large group thus created in the south to counter-attack towards the north. The division commander did not order that immediate concentration of forces positioned in the south in order to cooperate with the 24th as they were

tied up in battle with the 41st RD for Husiatyn. Its bridgehead, lost during the night of 17 July and recaptured on the same day, was finally lost in battle on 19 July.

At 21:00 the 2nd Lwów SB (Lieutenant Adamski) set off from Bogdanówka along the road to Korszyłówka and Medyń, heading through Feature 340. The brigade's mounted liaison officers were assigned as guides. A clash was anticipated between Korszyłówka and Medyń, around Feature 340.

At the request of the commander of the 53rd BRR, the brigade commander agreed to withdraw the line of resistance of the bridgehead to the ramparts. This order was prompted by the exhaustion of the reserves, which had to be reconstituted at all costs, as well as enemy fire from Staromiejszczyzna and Dorofijówka, demoralizing the men.

The headquarters worked in Kamionki up to midnight,.

July 20.

The positions during the night of 20 July were as follows (sketch Map 6).

On the outskirts of Wołoczyska, the main line was manned by one battalion; the commander of the 53rd BRR was with one heavily worn battalion as the reserve in Podwołoczyska; batteries 3/12 and 8/12 were moved from the bridgehead to that town. In contact with the enemy near Staromiejszczyzna was one battalion of the 53rd and the sappers. The armoured train Piłsudski patrolled in the vicinity of Bogdanówka station.

The 2nd Lwów Stage Battalion made combat contact with the Soviet cavalry's outposts at about 02:00, 2 km northeast of the village of Korszyłówka, on Height 340. It advanced slowly, seeking a link with the 51st BRR.

Lt-Colonel Witorzeniec with 2/51 and the technical company advanced from Hnilice Mały to Medyń, which is occupied by our patrols at 01:00. Battery 7/12, feeling unprotected in Worobijówka after the Cossacks broke into Medyń, left for Toki to join the 3/51. Battalion 2/51's action would therefore take place without artillery support, although the commander of the battalion delayed its start until daybreak.

The brigade commander and his staff set off from Kamionki at 02:00, and at 04:00 stood in Zadniszówka, near Podwołoczyska.

We were struck by the failure of the enemy to exploit the breakthrough made. The Polish commanders therefore feared that the bulk of Soviet cavalry had gone through Skoryki to Terpiłówka and further west.

In reality, the position on the Soviet side was presumably as follows:

The troops of the 60th RD, exhausted by the battle, were resting and reorganising in the Kopaczówka and Korostowa area, maintaining strong combat contact with their advanced units. Part of that division was in contact with us in the Staromiejszczyzna area. The 22nd and 24th CBs (8th CD) were completely exhausted by the battle on 19 July, and with the fall of night were withdrawn behind the Zbrucz. The fresh brigade of the 23rd, which had not been used the previous day, advanced into the Skoryki area and prepared to move in a column at daybreak, covering itself with outposts. Forward patrols advanced to Terpiłówka.

The Poles, as noted, were by no means optimistic about their situation. The division was determined to fight on, even with "Budëny" in their rear, and to not abandon the Zbrucz River. However, all the divisional reserves had already been used, and south of Husiatyn, near Kręciłów,¹² a battle was also being fought on the right bank of the Zbrucz. Therefore reinforcements were requested from the 6th Army. The Army command placed at the disposal of the 12th ID a battalion of the 42nd Infantry Regiment, which was to arrive in Tarnopol in the morning. The 13th Division received the order by telephone:

The Chief of Staff ordered the 12th Infantry Division to actively support us with two battalions. As to how this assistance was to be carried out, the 26th Brigade would communicate directly with the 24th Brigade. The provision of assistance and agreement with the 24th brigade was to be effective immediately.

¹² Kręciłów is actually north of Husiatyn.

As for the form of assistance, there was some difficulty. The Army command demanded the support of at least two battalions for Lt-Colonel Witorzeniec's action against the 8th Cavalry Division, while the 13th Division responded to that order by asking what sector of its front (which had not been attacked for two days) it was supposed to pull out for that purpose. It agreed to relieve the 51st BRR with one battalion in the area of Hnilice Wielkie, thus greatly extending its own sector. The extension of the sector was to remain. However, this did not directly affect the fighting at Skoryki and Wołoczyska, which was over before these shifts were made.

Around 04:00 a battle ensued between the brave battalion 2/51 (Captain Tyczynski) and the Soviet 23rd CB, which was preparing south of Skoryki. One company struck from Medyń towards Skoryki, tying up the enemy's front, while two companies charged into the flank from Bastowka and Chatki towards the east.

The sight of the Soviet *sotnias* lining up to charge did not frighten our infantry. With well-aimed concentrated fire of automatic weapons and its 37-mm cannon it forced the enemy to retreat, Advancing by leaps and bounds from one firing position to another, they drove the cavalry away, not allowing it to make even one charge. At the sound of fire from the Skoryki, the battalion of 2nd Lwów SB began to advance faster, in combat. The two battalions pushed the enemy past the line of Staromiejszczyzna to Pieńki manor. The cooperation of the 53rd BRR was slowly noticed coming from Podwołoczyska.

The enemy resumed the attack on the bridgehead, capturing the abandoned area, and at the same time came to the direct aid of its cavalry, bringing up part of the 60th RD into the battle west of Wołczkowce. A kind of bridgehead was created using the convenient terrain and the fire of machine guns and batteries positioned on the eastern side of the river. At 10:00 the 2/51 launched an assault at that line, in the direction of the Pieńki manor. After a hard day's struggle, it was not until 20:00 that the enemy was completely thrown back beyond the Zbrucz. There is no doubt that the outcome of the battle would have been quicker and infinitely more decisive if the 3/51 had advanced simultaneously with the 2/51 via Pieńkowce, leading to the enemy's rear, while the 1/51 stayed as reserve in Medyń. This would have required exposing the entire area north of the Młyński Stream, but that would have been easy to retake after the victory. Unfortunately, we could not yet afford to take such a break with the lines drawn and defensive nodes designated.

The first general Soviet attack on Wołoczyska was repulsed. The original situation was restored, except for the reduction of the bridgehead. Losses on both sides were very high: 1,500-2,000 on the Soviet side (estimated by prisoners of war) and for the Poles at least 13 officers and 500 privates, of which 12 officers and 370 privates fell to the 53rd BRR alone.

There was no pursuit on the Polish side. It would have been undertaken with a force of one or two battalions, which was too small to risk a new battle in open terrain with a division of cavalry present. Moreover, any pursuit did not look promising in view of the enemy's mobility, not holding fixed positions and not caring about the temporary loss of terrain. Therefore, the Polish side was content with throwing back the enemy. The lack of cavalry was painfully felt.

The 2nd Lwów SB was withdrawn to be the division's reserve, no longer to be used, due to having shot all its ammunition (it had Austrian armaments). The 3rd Lwów SB no longer existed.

Battalion 2/51 remained on the battlefield east of Skoryki (Chaty Mielnickie) with the main lookout in Pieńki manor, reconnoitring with patrols over the Zbrucz River and maintaining contact with the 53rd on the hills north of Staromiejszczyzna. To support the 2/51, a half-battery of the 9/12th was pulled up to Pieńki manor from the Koszlaki defence point.

Battalion 1/51, in Koszlaki and Hnilice Wielkie, was at this time replaced by the 1/50 and the combined Stage Battalion (from the Lublin and Kielce regions) of the 13th ID, and began to withdraw to Hnilice Małe.

The brigade commander, with his staff, returned to Kamionki after the battle.

IX. Attempts to Surprise the Panzers

Battle Near the Village of Palczyńce

Sketch Map 7

21 July

On this day the enemy continued his offensive actions, this time of a smaller nature, aiming at surprising the bridgehead and eliminating our defensive point in Toki. Its forces were moved around: considerable infantry and cavalry units appeared at Jachnowce, Palczyńce and Awratyn.

Six or seven field batteries, one heavy battery, and the artillery of the armoured trains, continuously shelled Wołoczyska and held the hills of the western bank of the Zbrucz River opposite Wołoczyska under heavy fire, hampering our outposts from entrenching there.

In the morning the attack on the bridgehead was renewed. A column of Soviet armoured trains, having fixed the track all the way past Wołoczyska station and Frydrychówka, suddenly emerged from a cutting between Wołoczyska and Frydrychówka, reaching almost the very line of our entrenchments. Under the cover of heavy fire the crew fixed the track further on. Other trains bombarded the bridgehead and Podwołoczyska from Frydrychówka, incapacitating the defence.

The commander of the Podwołoczyska defence point asked the brigade commander to order an evacuation of the bridgehead. The brigade commander resisted that desperate move, which would presumably have meant the collapse of the entire point. He demanded one more attempt to repulse the attack of the "panzers" with the concentrated fire of three of our batteries from Podwołoczyska. The attempt was successful. At the moment when the Soviet panzers were in retreat, our *Piłsudski* arrived, recently sent to help from Podwołoczyska. In pursuit on the completed track, it followed the retreating panzers into the trench, and there fought there had a firefight at point blank range with the train covering the retreat. It captured tools fixing the track and then stood guard at the eastern end of the cutting.

At 13:00 an enemy attack was launched from the direction of Jachnowce on Ożohowce, with a considerable force, apparently belonging to the 63rd RB (Composite Division). At the same time the enemy advanced from Palczyńce to Koszlaki, pushing back the sentries posted by the 1/50 and stage battalions, and began to encircle Toki from the west. Battalion 3/51 thwarted that attack from the east, and prepared for a fierce defence against the advancing enemy. Three batteries supported the Soviet attack.

The commander of the 51st BRR immediately organized a counterattack with Battalion 1/51 (Captain Szostakowski) from Hnilice Małe and Koszlaki, supported by parts of 1/50, the Lublin SB, and a half-battery of the 9/12. After a fierce battle, the enemy was broken, and began a hasty retreat to Palczyńce. That village was taken, with a Soviet battery barely managing to escape, leaving all its ammunition behind. The enemy force at this point was estimated at 400 foot and 350 horse. It left 25 dead on the battlefield.

Thus, the enemy's first attack on the northern wing of the 24th IB was nipped in the bud, but again without destroying the Soviet forces involved. Be that as it may, the defended area was totally under Polish control and the enemy repulsed. The division's commander, knowing the state of total exhaustion of the 53rd BRR, decided to replace it gradually with the 52nd BRR, which had been withdrawn from Tarnoruda and Orzechowiec, and which was one of the division's best regiments. Once the replacement had been carried out, it was hoped to not only to hold on to, but also to extend the bridgehead to its original extent and to concentrate a necessary strike force to deal with the enemy – gathering in the north and frightened off by Szostakowski's counter-attack, but able to resume operations with increased strength.

X. The Second General Attack on Wołoczyska

Sketch Map 8.

22 July

According to the division commander's orders, the replacement of the 53rd by the 52nd BRR began. First to be swapped out was the bridgehead garrison. To this end, Battalion 2/52 was stationed in Podwołoczyska, familiarising itself during the day with the positions it was to man in the evening.

In order to replace those of the 53rd covering Podwołoczyska from the direction of Wołczkowce, Battalion 2/42 was stationed in Podwołoczyska on the same day; and again the change was to be made in the evening. As soon as 2/42nd moved in, 2/51 was to become the reserve of the northern group in Medyń, from where 1/51 had already been sent.

Lt- Colonel Zörner remained the commander of the defence point. His forces reached five battalions on that day.

The day began with a strong artillery fight in the bridgehead of Wołoczyska and near Wołoczyska. Our battery of 1/12 HAR (155-mm guns), with Lieutenant Strutyński in command, scored an accurate shot on one of the armoured trains, causing an ammunition explosion. The Soviet infantry attempted to force its way from the sugar factory side into our positions. They were repulsed.

At 08:00 the Soviet artillery started a massive, rapid fire on Height 325 and Pieńki manor, the positions of Battalion 2/51. Under cover of fire of an intensity rarely seen in the fighting with Soviet Russia, the infantry units of the 180th Rifle Brigade left Wołczkowce, crossed the Zbrucz and advanced towards our outposts, closely supported by cavalry units. The first attack was rejected by the main line – Companies 6 and 8 of 51 BRR. At 13:00 the fire reached its maximum strength. The brave Lieutenant Machniak, commander of Company 8 was killed, and Lieutenant Kaczor, commander of Company 7 was wounded. The artillery observation post was destroyed.

The whole area from Staromiejszczyzna to the Młyński Stream was covered with smoke, hiding the advance of the enemy. Battalion 2/51, was pushed back with bloody losses – Company 6 into the swamps of Młyński Stream and Companies 7 and 8 to the south of Skoryki inn. The reserve, Lieutenant Wójcik's 5th Company, made a counterattack. It was supported very boldly by Lieutenant Sawczynski's 9/12 platoon, which blasted the enemy with cartridges while firing from an open position. Thanks to the efforts of that company – the most outstanding in the regiment – and the heroism of the artillery, the enemy was stopped near Chaty Mielnickie, where a stubborn hand-grenade fight ensued. At the same time Battalion 1/53, deploying pickets at Height 329, was pushed back to Staromiejszczyzna. Sent from Skoryki in a counterattack, the 2nd Company of the 51st was defeated and pushed back towards the south. Communication between the two groups of the 24th Brigade was again broken. Soviet infantry, followed by their cavalry, pushed into the gap between Staromiejszczyzna and Pieńki manor.

On our side, still to be used were the reserves of three companies of the 1/51 in Medyń and battalion 2/42 in Podwołoczyska. This determined the direction of the counterattack.

The brigade commander, upon the first news of the new breakthrough of the front, ordered another centripetal counterattack. In the south, Battalions 1/53 and 2/42 were to strike from Staromiejszczyzna towards Feature 329, and in the north, Battalions 1 and 2/51 from Skoryk towards Height 325 and Pieńki manor, with the task of destroying the enemy forces that had crossed the Zbrucz River. The ordered manoeuvre resulted – after a fierce and very bloody battle, not yet finished by midnight – in breaking the enemy and its retreat to Wołczkowce.

XI. A Blow from the North.

Sketch Maps 9 and 10

23 July

The battle did not end until 04:00, with the enemy completely thrown back behind the Zbrucz. The victory was paid for dearly – we lost three officers (besides the above-mentioned 2nd-Lieutenant Pleskaczyński from the 51st), two cadets, and about 100 privates. On top, our entire forces were entangled in the battle on the southern bank of the Młyński Stream, contrary to our intentions, with long-lasting depletion and fatigue, taking from us any ability to engage in offensive action for at least the whole day of 23 July.

On the bridgehead was Battalion 2/52. On Height 329 was Battalion 2/42. Battalions 1 and 3/53 were marching to the 23rd IB. Battalion 3/52 had already reached Podwołoczyska, and Battalion 2/53 remained there. Battalion 1/52 was to arrive the following day. The command of the defensive point was taken by the commander of the 52nd BRR, Lt-Colonel Oświęcimski from Lt-Colonel Zörner.

Battalion 2/51st was positioned in the area of Skoryki. Battalion 1/52 was in the area of Pieńkowce. Battalion 3/51 remained unchanged in Toki. The 1/50 and the Lublin and Kielce Stage Battalions were in Koszlaki, in Hnilice Wielkie and Hołotki the 1/50th, and the staging troops from Lublin and Kielce. All in all, we had an exceptionally large force, nine battalions on the field of the Battle of Wołoczyska. The dangerous issue was the state of those forces: the easing up and change of command in the south, while the northern group sorted themselves out after the heavy battle.

On the enemy side, the 60th ID was preparing for further action outside the zone of our rifle and MG fire, obscuring the front with demonstrations by smaller units and holding our positions near Wołoczyska, Staromiejszczyzna and opposite Wołczkowce under strong cannon fire – well directed from excellent observation points. Near Wołczkowce Soviet infantry again crossed the Zbrucz River around noon, advancing several times towards the Pieńki manor. Battalion 1/51 was drawn into another battle. It was forced to withdraw the two companies fighting at the manor to Chuty Mielnicki and the Skoryki inn. Further to the right, Battalion 2/42 was pushed towards Staromiejszczyzna, and lost communication with the 51st. The 3/52 was thrown in from Podwołoczyska, restored the situation and communication to the left. Battalions 2/42 and 3/52 held the line of hills east of the Staromiejszczyzna to Skoryki road. However, by evening the Soviet forces that had crossed by the Zbrucz had not been eliminated. On the contrary, during the night of 24 July the enemy pulled up reinforcements and some batteries.

Further north, in the area of Jachnowce – Palczyńce – Szczasnówka, the Composite ID and the 8th CD were grouped for a decisive strike in the morning.

Around 10:00 Soviet infantry units appeared from the direction of Palczyńce on the march to Toki. Soviet cavalry appeared from the east, between Toki and Hołotki. Infantry units crossed the Zbrucz south of Toki near Sobolówka. The "defensive point" of Toki – Ożohowce was cut off and attacked around noon, concentrically from the north, east and south, by the forces of the 63rd Rifle Brigade and cavalry units from either the Composite Division (Popov regiment) or the 8th CD.

Battalion 3/51 (Captain Skowronek), after a desperate resistance, broke through southwards to Worobijówka. The commander of the battalion's 10th Company, Lieutenant Dyduła, was killed, and the leaders of the 9th, Lieutenant Wendekier, and the 12th, Lieutenant Jankowski, were wounded. Losses were 73 killed and 120 wounded.

An interesting moment was the rescue of the 9th Company which, cut off at Ożohowce, threw itself directly southwards on the eastern bank of the Zbrucz, crossed the river at Prosońce and rejoined Polish forces.

At Worobijówka units of Battalion 3/51, heroically supported by Battery 7/12 (Lieutenant Mimsik), tried to resist. They were joined by the Technical Company of the 51st (Ensign Mikuszewski) sent from Medyń. The battle was lost. The commander of the technical company was wounded and taken prisoner.

The situation appeared serious to the Polish command. The enemy attack was tearing apart our forces on the northern wing of the brigade, threatening to outflank it. A strong counter-attack was indispensable.

An organised counterattack was possible from Medyń: the 51st BRR had six to eight companies in a battalion and a half. It would have needed to be combined with the action of the 1/50 and Stage Battalions from the north. But time was needed to prepare such an action – at least four to five hours. Meanwhile, the enemy was pushing south, and his troops were advancing westwards, cutting off Hnilice Male from Medyń.

A second possibility appeared: an immediate counter-attack with the forces at hand. After consultation with the brigade commander, at 14:00 Lt-Colonel Witorzeniec ordered an immediate counter-attack with Battalion 2/51, the only force at hand. All communication with the 1/50 and the Stage Battalions, positioned in the area of Hnilice – Koszlaki had been lost.

The counter-attack was, unfortunately, fragmented. Two companies headed to Worobijówka – Toki to support the 3/51. Two to Hnilice Male, to regain contact with the 1/50 and to attack through Hołotki to Toki from the east. Neither objective was achieved.

A renewed hard fight at Worobijówka ended with our troops being pushed back towards Medyń. The companies of 2/51 sent to Hnilice Male did not send reports. Cossacks appeared from the west near Medyń at 16:00, causing a hasty retreat of our forces to the south bank of the Młyński Stream, where a new battle line was formed with difficulty. With the arrival of 1/51, which left two companies as cover south of the Młyński Stream, and the 2nd Lwów SB from the division's reserve, they managed to recapture Medyń by night and moved their own pickets to the heights north of Medyń (Height 327).

The division commander, on hearing of the unsuccessful battles at Pieńki manor and Tokami, had given the brigade commander the 2nd Lwów SB – unfortunately almost without ammunition. He transferred to Podwołoczyska a freshly arrived march company of the 53rd BRR. Finally, he sent *Divizion 4/4* of the Horse Rifles (Major Skuratowicz) – the division's entire cavalry – with a strength of about 90 sabres and as many bayonets in the foot squadron. Major Skuratowicz's task was to reconnoitre the Soviet cavalry, clearly advancing from the direction of the village of Hołotki towards the south-west, and to re-establish the lost link between the 51st BRR and the forces remaining on the north wing at Hnilice. The starting point of the reconnaissance was the village of Hołoszyńce, where the squadron stopped for the night.

The situation in the evening appeared to be very tense, although neither the brigade nor the division headquarters suspected that in the area north of the Młyński Stream there was, apart from the infantry of the Composite division and its divisional cavalry, the entire 8th Cavalry Division, rested after the setbacks of 19-20 July, and allegedly also parts of the 9th CD (Kotovskii's brigade).

The seriousness of the situation was that our forces had been dispersed in the north, were tied up in the south, and lacked any reserves. There were nominally 10 battalions in the order of battle, but in fact two of them (2/ and 3/51) were only remnants, two were out of communication, one was almost defenceless (Lwów SB) and the main group of four battalions, concentrated near Wołoczyska, was under the debilitating influence of being in a besieged and bombarded defensive junction.

Overnight a general counter-attack was prepared for the following day. Our cavalry established contact with the 2/51st half-battalion in Hnilice Male and gave it the order to strike from the west at Hołotki and Toki. Unfortunately, it was not yet possible to get in touch with the stage battalion and the 1/50, who were with a half-battery of 9/12 and Sapper Company 1/20. It was only known that they had been in serious combat in the evening. That group of our forces was out of our tactical reckoning at that point.

The bulk of Lt-Colonel Witorzeniec's forces – six companies of the 51st BRR and 2nd Lwów SB – were to strike from Medyń towards Worobijówka and Toki, with the support of Batteries 8/ and 9/12 (the latter only two guns, the others being at Koszlaki). Battalion 1/51 would cover that assault from Pieńki manor.

This was to be a final and decisive effort. The forces concentrated in the area of Podwołoczyska were to cover the actions of Lt-Colonel Witorzeniec against a new assault from Wołczkowce. The left wing of the counterattack would be covered by the 4/4 Horse Rifles.

The positions at 22:00 are shown in Sketch Map 9.

24 July.

The enemy started the action that day with new assaults.

His troops, probably part of the 179th RB, attacked the bridgehead with powerful support from armoured trains. The attacks were deflected, with the excellent co-operation of our artillery, especially Battery 8/12 and the *Piłsudski*.

Near Wołczkowce the enemy launched an assault on Staromiejszczyzna with the forces of the 178th RB. Meanwhile, another brigade, probably the 180th, advanced from Pieńki manor, towards Mielnickie Chaty and Skoryki inn, i.e. on the right flank of the 51st BRR. This attack was met by an attack of Battalion 1/51, directed at Pieńki manor. A fierce battle ensued, with the farmstead temporarily in our hands. However, the superior numbers of the enemy finally pushed 1/51 back to its starting points.

The Soviet force, crossing at Wołczkowce, was already estimated at 2,400 bayonets. Four waves of riflemen, each 1000 m long, were advancing on Skoryki. The Soviet cannons, already dragged to the western bank, closely supported their infantry. At the same time, an attack was launched by the forces of the 63rd RB from Worobijówka towards Medyń. Both enemy assaults were repulsed. Battalion 3/52 joined in the attack on the Pieńki manor from the south. After temporarily throwing back the enemy on that side, the 51st BRR rushed into the intended counterattack on Worobijówka, which developed successfully.

On the left wing, Companies 5 and 8 of the 51st BRR moved from Hnilice Mały to Hołotki, where their lead units were attacked by a column of infantry and cavalry marching from Worobijówka and repulsed. At around 08:00 the two companies were attacked by Soviet cavalry units advancing from Koszlaki and Hnilice Małe. Also in combat the same time with Soviet infantry at Hnilice, they began to retreat, fighting their way back to Hnilice Małe. After a short battle for the narrow passage (the bridge over the stream), they retreated further to Nowe Sioło and Szelpaki, then towards Zbaraż. The cavalry units pressed on from the north. Around 11:00 the enemy infantry took control of Hnilice Małe and Koszlaki, from where our 1/50 and Stage Battalions were withdraw towards the west, not regaining contact with either the 51st BRR or 26th Brigade. The Half-battery 9/12 barely managed to escape the pursuit towards Szelpaki. Our cavalry tried in vain to support the attack on Hołotki from the region of Hołoszyńce; then the dismounted squadron garrisoned Hołoszyńce. The horse squadrons scouted and covered the exposed flank of our counterattack from Skoryki towards Worobijówka.

During the afternoon there was an unfavourable turn of events on the right wing. Battalions 2/42 and 3/52 retreated, heavily shelled by artillery, under the onslaught of ever new waves of infantry, to Staromiejszczyzna and the hills west of that village. Communication between the Podwołoczyska group and the Skoryki group was again broken. Battalion 3/53 in Podwołoczyska went to the counterattack, under Captain Homa, who took command of all three battalions fighting there. The position was momentarily improved, but then suddenly an enemy cavalry action rolled up our left wing – the 8th Squadron of the 4th Horse Rifles, gave way under the pressure of a Soviet cavalry brigade in the vicinity of Hnilice Małe and Nowe Sioło. It retired to Szelpaki along the Zbaraż road. Under pressure from infantry units advancing westwards from Worobijówka and pressed from Nowe Sioło in the flank by cavalry, the dismounted squadron left the village of Hołoszyńce at 15:00. The 7/4th and dismounted Squadrons gathered in the Klimkowce – Terpiłówka area, from where they left for Klebanowka at 18:00. A strong column of Soviet cavalry dashed for Obodówka.

Meanwhile, at 16:00 there was a new attack by the 63rd RB on Medyń and Skoryki, with a simultaneous renewed assault by the 60th RD from the east. Our troops were pushed back behind the Młyński Creek. From Hołoszyńce the Soviet cavalry attacked the retreating troops near Skoryki. For the second time in this campaign and not yet the last, the commander of the 51st just managed to break out of the Cossacks' grip. After a fierce battle, with heavy losses, our troops broke through towards the south. At 20:00 they were racing towards Supranówka and Korszyłówka, unable to continue any further operations for the time being. Having fulfilled its military duty the 51st BRR, after a bloody struggle, was removed from all tactical reckoning.

Around 18:00 the enemy moved to a general attack from Wołczkowce towards the hills to the north of Staromiejszczyzna. Battalion 2/42nd began to retreat, taking with it the neighbouring battalions of 2/53 and 3/52. The enemy infantry followed the retreating battalions, overran the bridge over the Zbrucz River and cut off the bridgehead.



A march company of the 53rd BRR was thrown into a counterattack, which rallied the retreating troops. Battery 8/12 perfectly supported the counter-attack. Again the battle moved back beyond Staromiejszczyzna to the hills. The enemy, having used up his reserves, was content to hold the crossings near Wołczkowce. Our infantry and sappers dug in on Height 329. The left flank remained endangered, but Battalion 1/52 had arrived in Podwołoczyska, tired with marching but fit for battle, and it moved to the area of Staromiejszczyzna. However, the commander of the Podwołoczyska defence point did not wait for a successful turn of events, and ordered the withdrawal of the bridgehead at 20:00.

The news was an unexpected blow to the division and brigade commanders, who were calm about that wing, convinced that it even had an excessive concentration of forces on it. They were planning a manoeuvre from Staromiejszczyzna to Skoryki, and in the worst case counting on those battalions, which they could draw on as a reserve. That might salvage the situation on the left wing and allow them to hold the line of the Zbrucz River below Podwołoczyska, with a bend along the Samiec Stream from Podwołoczyska to Klebanówka, and further on in the general direction of Zbaraż.

In any case, in spite of the fact that the bridgehead was lost, the brigade commander demanded unconditionally that the commander of the 52nd BRR hold on the line of the Samiec Stream, while seeking contact on the left in the area of Rosochowaciec with the 51st BRR. Meanwhile, around 21:00, the commander of the 52nd found it necessary to order a general retreat of his five battalions and three batteries along the road to Kamionki.

XII. The End of the Battle

Sketch Map 10.

*"On voit ses maux, mais on ne voit pas ceux de l'ennemi"*¹³. Our position was very poor at 21:00 on 24 July. The Soviets had crossed the Wołczek and were reaching Klebanówka – 3 km from Bogdanówka and 4 km from Kamionki. The 51st Regiment now represented a force of only up to 500 bayonets, and was totally exhausted. A new Soviet attack might have smashed to pieces our forces at Rosochowaniec, Korshiłówka, and Supranówka and cut the line of retreat for the group fighting in the area of Podwołoczyska. In that case our group might then open communications to Skafat¹⁴ and fight on, flanking the enemy's further westward movement. However, the road to Zbaraż and Tarnopol was open. On the other hand, the enemy's advance ceased with nightfall.

The march company of the 53rd BRR (2nd-Lieutenant Szydło) stayed on the battlefield north of Staromiejszczyzna. Not having been informed of the departure of our forces, it held out there until morning and broke through the next day, fortunately only weakly pressed. The *Piłsudski* and Sapper 1/12 also held out in Podwołoczyska until morning. There was no pursuit – even the normally bold Soviet cavalry advanced its tentacles slowly and cautiously the following day. One gets the impression that by the night of 25 July the attacker was as much at the ends of his strength as the defender.

Later on the Soviet newspapers: "Red Army" and "Revolutionary Front" did not conceal at all that the success of pushing over the Zbrucz had been bought extremely dearly.

As things stood, the only possible way out of the situation would have been a retreat from Podwołoczyska to the Miodobory hills, conducted slowly, forcing the enemy to manoeuvre and fight several times. Meanwhile, a newly-formed group of reinforcements would have had to strike from Maksymówka through Lozówka or Łubianki against the Soviet cavalry advancing towards Zbaraż. There was such a reserve of two fresh battalions, a training one and the 1/138. It required their offensive use under a very energetic, separate commander, directly subordinate to the division commander – the commander of the 24th Brigade, exhausted by the hard fighting of his previous groups, would no longer be able to carry out the operations of such a group with sufficient energy and daring. The 13th Division, not under attack, was able to operate concentrically from the north without fear of being suddenly exposed in that area. However on

¹³ We see our own faults/mistakes, but not those of the enemy.

¹⁴ That is with the rest of the division to the south.

24 July, between 20:00 and 22:00, the situation even more critical than it actually was. Moreover, on the flank wing of the 6th Army the battle of the 18 DP for Dubno and Radziwiłłów was equally critical.

The division commander did not lose faith in victory. He was determined to use the 53rd BRR, despite its exhaustion, to create a group for further manoeuvre – that regiment would regain its energy and strength in battles of movement if successful. Confident that the 52nd BRR would hold the bridgehead, he expected that with the forces of the 51st and 53rd regiments he could eliminate enemy activity on the northern wing, especially with the help of the right wing of the 13 ID.

Therefore in the afternoon of 24 July he made a plan for a general counterattack at 06:00 of the next day, with the forces of the Witorzeniec group, on Medyń and Worobijówka. That utilised the two battalions in reserve (training and 1/138) attacking from Maksymówka towards Terpiłówka (or Obodówka), with the forces of the 13th Division attacking from the north on Hnilice Małe and Hołotki. The plan, presented to Army HQ at 18:00, was accepted and sent to the 13th Division.

At about 19:00 Colonel Kessler, Chief of Staff of the 6th Army, used the Hughes apparatus¹⁵ to discuss with the Front command (Captain Wiśniewski of the Operations Branch). He gave a precise description of the state of affairs at Wołoczyska, warning that it might be necessary to retreat, and demanding a decision on whether to use the reserves and the 13th ID to either repel the enemy at Brody, or to turn all those forces to the south in order to repel the enemy who had broken through the Zbrucz. The Front replied:

The Zbrucz must be held, and communications with the 2nd Army established.... In the event of a break in the Front between the 12th and 13th Divisions, the flanks must be rolled back and the holes patched up by counter-attacking with the forces that are arriving. There is no question of retiring from the Zbrucz.... It is particularly important to hold the Zbrucz because of the ceasefire...

This demand to hold everything ruled out manoeuvre.

At 20:00 Colonel Kessler reported again:

I must report the sad news that the Wołoczyska bridgehead has been occupied by the Bolsheviks. Large enemy columns are marching to Obodówka, north-west of Wołoczyska, from Nowy Sioło. We have ordered the 12th Division to bend its wing from Wołoczyska through Klebanówka to Zbaraż, but I doubt whether they will stay on that line, and they will probably move a line of the Miodobory. If so, the 13th will also withdraw to the Zbaraż – Poczajów line, to establish contact with the Szymański group.

In more sad news, in the 18th Division, part of the 36th Brigade withdrew more or less in order to Radziwiłłów, while the 35th Brigade was surrounded and badly beaten... Currently fighting is taking place near Radziwiłłów and Brody... The commander of the Army told me to tell the Front that he now considers it advisable to retreat the Army to a line of the Seret through Tarnopol – Założce and on to Brody. With a lot of cavalry in front of them, it will be difficult for the 6th Army units to retire out of necessity, which might lead to undesirable consequences...

So both wings of the 6th Army were retiring from the battlefield, suffering badly, while the centre of the Army hardly participated at all for the seven days following July 17.

News to leave the Podwołoczyska area came at around 22:00, with a telephone order to retreat to Miodobory, a range of hills 6-12 km west of where our troops were located. The retirement was carried out during the night and in the early morning hours. The Battle of Wołoczyska was over.

¹⁵ A type of teleprinter, using telegraph wires.

XIII. Conclusions

The Battle of Wołoczyska was, as noted, a battle of defence – fought with limited forces on an elongated front, with the task of holding back the enemy on a designated line. The plan of defence was based on a system of defensive nodes, of battalion-strength, as prescribed by the instructions of the Supreme Command. This is how our commanders understood the conduct of a defence. But with the given ratio of strength to space, passive defence could only lead with another annihilation of our forces, widely spread out and so unable to support each other with fire. The only possible way to defend would have been through counter-attacks by neighbouring battalions and reserves, concentrically directed at the threatened point.

Simply repelling the enemy was not enough. Victory could only come by destroying his forces, which was only achievable by counter-attacking in a dangerous direction using a manoeuvre group. Our divisional and brigade level commanders understood this, and so they attempted to concentrate maximum forces at a decisive point. However, a manoeuvre group cannot be created from the forces of one division while at the same time it has to cover a front 90 km wide, unless one breaks with the system of permanently holding given defensive lines. But that old system was not only formally still in force, but in the face of the ceasefire that was about to come had become a kind of moral imperative.

As noted at the outset, the system of defence adopted had a good side as well as a bad side – pinning the enemy troops to the terrain, making it difficult to manoeuvre and concentrate at a decisive point. The persistence of the defence resulted from the orders to remain in position and to recapture any lost positions. As a result, the Battle of the Zbrucz River became a school of defensive fighting for our infantry. In that battle the soldiers surpassed the expectations of both their commanders and themselves – they became true soldiers.

However, the thinness of the forces forced a system of few reserves. The most decisive battles were fought by only a portion of our forces, while the greater part of them, in the more distant 'nodes', stood idle. Thus, the individual battles that made up the Battle of Wołoczyska, were fought by two, three or four battalions, and our victories consisted only in throwing back the enemy, not in annihilating him. The enemy, not tied to the terrain, retained the initiative of action even after suffering a defeat, and was able to impose that on use with later attacks.

Finally, the state of wear and tear on our troops allowed the enemy, putting all his disposable forces into action, to tie up and wear down the defending forces to such an extent that we lost our only means of repelling the attacker – our ability to manoeuvre. At that point, incapacitated, the defenders had to yield to any manoeuvre to the flank and rear of the defences, even when carried out by a single brigade of cavalry. And so we were defeated.

Only the introduction of new reinforcements or breaking away from the opponent could save us from that situation. A successful continuation of the battle could only be carried on in connection with a pause in which a manoeuvre group could be created, and then moving to a form of combat infinitely superior and more secure in a war of movement – the offensive.

**Composition of the 12th Infantry Division
Battles at Wołoczyska (Volochnys'k)**

As at 19 July 1920

12th Infantry Division – Colonel Januszajtis

24th Infantry Brigade – Colonel Kukiel

51st Border Rifle Regiment – Lt-Colonel Witorzeniec

Three battalions

Sapper company

53rd Border Rifle Regiment – Lt-Colonel Zörner

Three battalions

Sapper company

Border Artillery – Major Axmann

3rd Battery, 12th Light Artillery Regiment

3rd Division (7th to 9th Batteries), 12th Light Artillery Regiment

2nd Battery, 12th Heavy Artillery Regiment (155-mm)

Engineers

2nd Company, 20th Sapper Battalion

1st and 2nd Companies, 12th Sapper Battalion

Attached

2nd and 3rd Lwów Stage Battalions

As at 24 July 1920

12th Infantry Division – Colonel Januszajtis

24th Infantry Brigade – Colonel Kukiel

51st Border Rifle Regiment – Lt-Colonel Witorzeniec

Three battalions

Sapper company

52nd Border Rifle Regiment – Lt-Colonel Oświecimski

Two battalions (2nd and 3rd)

Sapper company

2nd Battalion, 53rd Border Rifles Regiment

Border Artillery – Major Axmann

3rd Battery, 12th Light Artillery Regiment

3rd Division (7th to 9th Batteries), 12th Light Artillery Regiment

2nd Battery, 12th Heavy Artillery Regiment (155-mm)

Engineers

2nd Company, 20th Sapper Battalion

1st and 2nd Companies, 12th Sapper Battalion

Attached

4th *Divizion*, 4th Horse Rifle Regiment

Two mounted squadrons, one dismounted

2nd Battalion, 42nd Infantry Regiment

2nd Lwów Stage Battalion

Armoured train *Piłsudski*



**Composition (Conjectured) of the Bolshevik Forces¹⁶
Battles at Wołoczyska (Volochnys'k)**

60th Rifle Division

178th Rifle Brigade: 532nd, 533rd, 534th Rifle Regiments

179th Rifle Brigade: 535th, 536th, 537th Rifle Regiments

180th Rifle Brigade: 538th, 539th, 540th Rifle Regiments

Each regiment was about 500 bayonets, for a total of 4000 to 4 500

Cavalry Regiment (Baylov)

Four squadrons for 500 sabres

Field Artillery Division

Three batteries

Heavy Artillery Battery

Armoured trains : *Bela Kun, Krasnoarmiets, Aleksiev, Smert Panam* (and ammunition train)

Two armoured cars

Seven planes (not seen)

8th Cavalry Division (Chervono Cossack)

22nd Cavalry Brigade: 127th, 128th Cavalry Regiments

23rd Cavalry Brigade: 129th, 130th Cavalry Regiments

24th Cavalry Brigade: 131st, 132nd Cavalry Regiments

Each regiment about 500 sabres, in four squadrons, for a total of 3 000

Staff Scout Division,

Two squadrons

Horse Artillery Division

Three batteries

Composite Rifle Division

21st Rifle Brigade: 61st, 62nd, 63rd Rifle Regiments

63rd Rifle Brigade: 187th, 188th, 189th Rifle Regiments

Each regiment was 400 to 500 bayonets, for a total of 3 000

Cavalry Regiment (Popov)

Four squadrons for 400 sabres

Field Artillery Division [?]

Three batteries

Heavy Artillery Battery [?]

¹⁶ The Directives of the Red Army give very different strengths. On 1 July they have:

	Infantry	Cavalry	Combatants	Guns	MGs
60th Rifle Division	911	121	1 032	18	137
Independent Rifle Division	–	20	874	7	85
8th Cavalry Division	3 070	2 586	5 656	6	116



Appendix 3

Positions of the 12th Infantry Division on the "Zbrucz" Sector

Colonel Pażusia Group

Group Command	Kopyczyńce	
3rd Lublin Stage Battalion	Probużna	withdrawn
4th Lwów Stage Battalion	Probużna	withdrawn
3rd Company, 54th Border Rifle Regiment	Szydłowiec	
2nd Company, 3rd Łódz Stage Battalion	Szydłowiec – Suchodół	
1st Battalion, 54th Border Rifle Regiment	Husiatyn	
3rd Battalion, 54th Border Rifle Regiment	Husiatyn	
6th and 8th Companies, 54th Border Rifle Regiment	Husiatyn	
2nd Company, Training Battalion.	Kuźmińczyk	
3rd Company, 3rd Łódz Stage Battalion	Trybuchowce	
1st Company, Training Battalion	Trybuchowce	
10, 11 and 12 Companies, 4th Guard Battalion [?]	Postołówka	
5th and 6th Batteries, 12th Field Artillery Regiment	Husiatyn.	
Ukrainian improvised armoured train	Husiatyn	

Pażusia's Group would be regrouped after being relieved by the army of General Pavlenko.

23rd Infantry Brigade

Command of the 23rd Infantry Brigade	Grzymałów
8th [?] Company, 52nd Border Rifle Regiment	Satanów
9th [?] Company 52nd Border Rifle Regiment	Krasne
2nd Battalion, 52nd Border Rifle Regiment	Tarnoruda
1st [?] Company, 52nd Border Rifle Regiment	Orzechowiec
2nd Company, 52nd Border Rifle Regiment	Grzymałów
5th and 7th Companies, 54th Border Rifle Regiment	Kozina
Reserve Squadron, 1st Lancer Regiment	Orzechowiec
NCO officer school	Grzymałów
1st Battery, 12 Field Artillery Regiment	Tarnoruda.
2nd Battery, 12 Field Artillery Regiment	Iwanówka
4th Battery, 12 Field Artillery Regiment	Satanów.
2nd Company, 12 Sapper Battalion	Satanów.
4th <i>Divizion</i> , 4th Horse Rifles	Ścianki

24th Infantry Brigade

Command of the 24th Infantry Brigade	Kamionki
2nd Battalion, 53rd Border Rifle Regiment	Frydrychówka
Command of 53rd Border Rifle Regiment	Wołoczyska
3 companies, 1st Battalion, 53rd Border Rifle Regiment	Wołoczyska



3rd Battalion, 53rd Border Rifle Regiment	Podwołoczyska
1 company, 1st Battalion, 53rd Border Rifle Regiment	Wołczkowce
2nd Lwów Stage Battalion	Romanówka
3rd Lwów Stage Battalion	Medyń
Command 51st Border Rifle Regiment	Hnilice Małe (briefly, then Medyń)
2nd Battalion, 51st Border Rifle Regiment	Hnilice Małe
3rd Battalion, 51st Border Rifle Regiment	Toki.
1st Battalion, 51st Border Rifle Regiment	Kozłaki – Urla Manor – Kutyski
3rd and 8th Batteries, 12 Field Artillery Regiment	Wołoczyska
7th Battery, 12 Field Artillery Regiment	Toki
9th Battery, 12 Field Artillery Regiment	Kozłaki .
1st Battery, 12 Heavy Artillery Regiment	Podwołoczyska
1st Company, 12th Sapper Battalion	Wołoczyska
2nd Company, 12th Sapper Battalion	Frydrychówka
2nd Company, 20th Sapper Battalion	Kozłaki
Armoured Train <i>Piłsudski</i>	Wołoczyska
Command of the 12 Infantry Division	Borki Wielkie
Staff Company, Telegraph Company, Staff Platoon, Field Gendarmerie Platoon	Borki Wielkie
Supply Office, Field Court, Field Post Office, Financial Office, Bakery, Slaughterhouse, Supply station of the 12th Division	Tarnopol
12th Ammunition Office	Stryj
Advanced Supply [?] #1	Bogdanówka
Advanced Supply [?] #2	Chorostków
Advanced Ammunition	Borki Wielkie
12th Division Wagon Command	Stupki
Wagon Column #631	Kamionki
Wagon Column #634	Stupki
Wagon Column #626	Grzymalów
Wagon Column #632	Stupki
Automotive Column #11	reorganising in Lwów.
Automotive Column #611	Tarnopol
Field Hospital #607	reorganising in Krakow.
Field Hospital #608	Tarnopol
Field Hospital #202	Tarnopol



Appendix 4

Sources

Communications, operational orders, operational logs, operational files, and intelligence files of the Staff of the Southern Front and of the Sixth Army.

Operational log of the 12th Infantry Division.

Operational log of the 51st Border Rifle Regiment.

Historical-tactical study of the 12th Infantry Division.

Histories of the 51st, 52nd and 54th Border Infantry Regiments, 12th Field Artillery Regiment, the 1st Battery of the 12th Field Artillery Regiment, 4th *Divizion* of the 4th Horse Rifles Regiment and 12th Sapper Battalion.

Personal diary of the commander of the 24th Infantry Brigade.

Oral testimonies of the participants.

An article by P. Petrov in the monthly magazine "Army and Revolution" entitled "Raid of the Chervonno Cossack Division in the Polish Rear".

During the preparation the author used the advice and methodological guidelines of the 1st Deputy Commander of the General Staff, Brigadier-General Józef Rybak, and the handwritten notes of the Commander of the 12th Infantry Division, Brigadier-General Marjan Januszajtis.