

POLISH ARMOUR 1939-45



Text by Krzysztof Barbariski
Colour plates by Terry Hadler

VANGUARD SERIES

EDITOR: MARTIN WINDROW

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To the memory of my father, Capt. Janusz Barbarski,
2nd Polish Armoured Regiment.

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1 Company, 1 Bn., 1st Tank Regt. during an inspection in Wilno in 1920. Company commander Capt. Wladyslaw Kohutnicki is standing on the left of the greatcoated general. Note the use of French ranks and uniform items. (This, and all other photographs in this book unless specifically credited otherwise, are from the Polish Institute and Sikorski Museum collection.)



The Beginnings

The first Polish armoured unit to be formed was the 1st Polish Tank Regiment (1^{er} Régiment des Chars Blindés Polonais) of the Polish Army in France—known as 'General Haller's Army'. The Regiment was formed by the transfer of equipment, officers and other ranks from the French 505th Tank Regiment.

The organisation commenced at Martigny-les-Bains on 22 March 1919, with the regiment ready for action on 1 May 1919. The Polish element of the unit was initially made up of former German and Austro-Hungarian prisoners of war of Polish origin, as well as a large number of volunteers of Polish descent from the American continent.

Initially the Regiment was composed of two battalions, whose companies carried the number of the infantry division they were attached to (I Battalion—1st and 2nd Companies, II Battalion—3rd, 6th and 7th Companies) plus a maintenance/transport section. Equipment consisted of Renault M1917 FT tanks; each company consisted of the company commander's tank, three platoons of five tanks each, an echelon platoon of nine tanks and several reserve vehicles.

Until October 1919 the regiment remained under the command of Col. Jules Maré, the former commander of the French 505th Regiment. On 1 June 1919 the first transports arrived in Lodz, Poland, in readiness for action in the Polish-Soviet War of 1919–1921. Almost immediately 1 Bn. was sent to the North-Eastern Front where, attached to the 14th Infantry Division and subsequently to the 1st Legion Infantry Brigade, it saw action at Bobrujsk (28 August) and Dyneburg (27/29 September). Meanwhile, in Lodz, an armoured centre of sorts had

been established, where schooling of recruits took place and maintenance workshops were set up.

The next year found the regiment again at the front: 1 Bn. at Wilno as part of the North-Eastern (Lithuanian-White Russian) Front, and II Bn. at Kiev as part of the South-Eastern (Ukrainian) Front. By early June 1920 the Fronts began to crumble under the pressure of Red Army counter-attacks. From Wilno and Kiev to Warsaw itself, companies, platoons and individual tanks found themselves almost constantly in action with the rearguard. Tanks were often sent to perform virtually impossible tasks by the commanders of the units to which they were attached, who were ignorant in the use of armour, and of the limitations of the tanks. During the retreat notable successes were scored at Grodno, Lososna and Sokolka with further action at Lomza and Sniadow. The 1st Co. subsequently moved to Warsaw and the 2nd Co. to Lodz, for complete overhaul.

The 3rd Co., which had been in Kiev, was withdrawn as the Front crumbled under the attacks of Budenny's Horse Army. It was then switched from one unit to another, eventually being sent to join the units defending the city of Lwow. In early August, for a period of three days, the battalion repulsed repeated Soviet attacks, eventually holding the left bank of the Seret and thereby slowing the enemy advance on Lwow. During the remainder of the month the battalion saw almost constant action in the defence of Poland's 'eastern capital'.

With the Red Army now at the gates of Warsaw it was decided to mass all available tanks. By 13 August only 33 tanks were found to be fit for



Vickers twin-turret tanks taking part in a march past during the mid-1930s. The crew wear the converted M1915 Adrian helmet.

service, the unit consisting of 2nd Co. plus five tanks, the newly formed 5th Co., and two platoons of 4th Co. In view of the small number of tanks it was decided to scatter them among the defending troops.

Notable success was scored at Radzymin (14–16 August) in support of the 1st Lithuanian-White Russian Div., during which time an armoured group of tanks and armoured trains was formed. The speed of the Polish tank manoeuvres was such that for a moment the armoured trains mistook the advancing tanks for the enemy. On 20 August the armoured group effectively cut off the retreating Soviet 18th Army, on the line Ciechanow-Mlawa. The spearhead of the group reached Mlawa on 21 August, with the Soviet breakthrough expected on 23 August. In the event this took place at dawn on 22 August, with the Corps of Gai-Khan and the remnants of the Soviet 54th Inf. Div. launching their attack on

Wyszyny. During the ensuing struggle one armoured train was hit and the other withdrawn. One platoon of tanks was unloaded from its rail transporters and gave chase briefly, but the tanks got bogged down in marshy terrain. The tanks that had remained in Mlawa saw no further service, due mainly to a lack of fuel and spare parts.

The situation during the Polish-Soviet War differed greatly from that of the Western Front, and did not really give the tank units a chance to prove their worth. The Renaults were too slow for such a mobile campaign and were limited by their short range. Of course, the general lack of understanding of the technical and tactical possibilities of the new weapon did not help. However, in situations favourable for tank warfare both men and machines proved their worth, often playing a decisive part in local actions. To an extent the mixed groups of armoured cars and lorried infantry foreshadowed the mobile warfare of the Second World War.

The Inter-War Period

With the termination of hostilities during the winter of 1920, the battalions of the 1st Tank Regt. were sent to their future garrisons—I Bn. to Warsaw, II Bn. to Zurawica and III Bn. to Poznan. The regimental headquarters, reserve battalion and workshops remained in Lodz. The regiment ceased to exist as such on 11 August 1921, its battalions becoming independent units, with the reserve battalion and workshops being divided between them. A Central Tank School was also formed at this time in Warsaw. On 16 February 1923 the 1st Tank Regt. was re-formed at Zurawica, with the amalgamation of the battalions and the Central Tank School.

Until 1930 armour did not constitute a separate arm of the Polish Army. The 1st Tank Regt. came under the orders of the Infantry Department, with armoured cars considered as part of motor transport troops. Armoured trains, on the other hand, were part of the railway engineers, their training being supervised by the artillery. In 1927 armoured units came under the orders of the Engineer Department, and an Armoured Forces Directorate was formed in 1929. By an order of the Minister of Defence, dated 15 May 1930, the Armoured Forces became an arm in their own right. The new organisation was as follows:

- 1st Tank Regt. in Poznan (II Bn. at Zurawica).
- 1st Armoured Car Group at Brzesc nad Bugiem.
- 2nd Arm. Car Group at Zurawica.
- 1st Arm. Train Group at Legionowo.
- 2nd Arm. Train Group at Krakow.
- Central Tank and Motor School at Warsaw.

On 8 July 1931 the 1st Tank Regt. was renamed 1st Armoured Regt., with II Tank Bn. and 2nd Armoured Car Group forming 2nd Armoured Regt. On 7 August 1931 the 3rd Armoured Regt. was formed at Modlin, with the 1st Armoured Car Group becoming the 4th Armoured Group on 25 August. About this time the Central Tank and Motor School was renamed the Armoured Forces Training Centre.

In 1933 a further re-organisation took place by which the motor transport battalions were incorporated in the Armoured Forces. The new organisation was as follows:



Line-up of M34 armoured cars of the 8th Armd. Bn. at Bydgoszcz, 1938. The crews are wearing the characteristic loose khaki overalls and large black berets, introduced in 1937.

- 1st Tank and Armd. Car Bn. at Poznan.
- 2nd Tank and Armd. Car Bn. at Zurawica.
- 3rd Tank and Armd. Car Bn. at Warsaw.
- 4th Tank and Armd. Car Bn. at Brzesc nad Bugiem.
- 5th Tank and Armd. Car Bn. at Krakow.
- 6th Tank and Armd. Car Bn. at Lwow.
- Tank Company at Wilno.
- Armd. Car Co. in Bydgoszcz.
- The Armoured Forces Training Centre was renamed the Tank and Armoured Car Training Centre, and moved from Warsaw to Modlin.
- In 1935 all the Tank and Armoured Car Battalions were renamed Armoured Battalions, and further units were formed:
 - 7th Armd. Bn. at Grodno.
 - 8th Armd. Bn. at Bydgoszcz.
 - Cadre, 9th Armd. Bn. at Lublin.
 - Cadre, 10th Armd. Bn. at Lodz.

In October 1937 the cadre of the 10th Armd. Bn. became a full strength unit, and a new unit, the 12th Armd. Bn. was formed at Luck. The Experimental Battalion at Modlin was to form the 11th Armd. Bn. under mobilisation plans.

On 1 May 1937 the Polish Armoured Forces were divided into three Groups, the 3rd Group being formed on 1 August 1938. The Groups were composed as follows:

- 1st Armd. Group—1st, 3rd, 8th and 10th Armd. Bns.
- 2nd Armd. Group—2nd, 5th, 6th, 12th and cadre 9th Armd. Bn.
- 3rd Armd. Group—4th and 7th Armd. Bns., 1st and 2nd Armd. Train Groups.



Renault R35 tanks of 1st Bn., 1st Tank Regt., 10th Cavalry Bde., passing through a bombed French village in June 1940. (Author)

Apart from the above Armoured Groups there existed two other large armoured formations: the 10th Cavalry Brigade and the Warsaw Motorised Brigade. The 10th Cavalry Bde., motorised in 1937, consisted of two regiments of motorised cavalry (24th Lancers and 10th Mounted Rifles); a TKS recon unit; an anti-tank unit; a company of Vickers light tanks; a company of TKS tanks; a battery of motorised artillery; an anti-aircraft troop; engineer and signals battalions; a traffic control platoon, and a transport company. The Warsaw Motorised Brigade was to have been of similar strength, but was in the process of organisation when war broke out.

As a result of Poland's military and cultural alliance with France, the majority of senior military staff held to the French view of tanks as infantry support weapons. The relatively fast development of armoured fighting vehicles during

the inter-war period necessitated a revision of these ideas. However, the realisation of such plans was opposed by conservative groups, although it should be stressed that this problem was not peculiar to Poland alone.

In spite of these and other drawbacks modernisation slowly progressed. During the 1920s attempts had been made to improve the Renault M1917 FTs, mainly by increasing their frontal armour and experimenting with new types of track. Later attempts consisted of a new turret design as well as attempts to utilise Vickers-type suspension. It was eventually decided that a sounder policy for Poland would be to purchase foreign tank designs and produce her own modified versions. Of the various options studied, Poland chose the Carden-Loyd Mk. VI and the Vickers 6-ton tank as suitable for modification. In June 1929 Poland purchased 16 tankettes as well as licence production rights.

The Carden-Loyd was developed into several prototypes, with tests in 1930 leading to production by the Ursus plant in 1931. The production model, the Maly Czolg Rozpoznawczy TK, became known simply as the TK. As a result of further improvements production was switched to the new design, known as the TKS. There followed various attempts at providing the TK/TKS series with improved armament and other modifications. However, the majority of vehicles used during the September Campaign were of the basic TK/TKS series.

Poland also purchased 38 Vickers E 6-ton tanks, with production rights following shortly. Utilising Vickers components, as well as fitting new Saurer engines, Poland built what came to be known as the VAU-33 (Vickers-Armstrong-Ursus 33) series. Two basic models were produced: the VAU-33jw. (single turret) and the VAU-33dw. (twin turret). The remaining Type Es were refitted to the new standards.

With further tests, and close collaboration between the State Engineering Institute and the Armoured Forces Research Bureau, a new design was produced. Based on the Vickers type, it became known as the 7 TP. The first production series of the twin-turret version (7 TP dw.) were delivered in 1936. Prototypes of the single turret version (7 TP jw.), armed with the 37mm Bofors



Renault R40 of 2nd Bn., 1st Tank Regt. in France, June 1940. The camouflage pattern appears to be a two- or three-tone scheme using small blotches outlined in a darker colour. (Capt. O. Jazdowski)

September 1939

gun, were ready by late 1936. Production commenced in mid-1938, with a turret extension to accommodate the radio set in company and platoon commanders' tanks. Further attempts at upgrading the 7 TP series were halted by the outbreak of war.

In spite of the general initial apathy towards mechanisation, born of a sentimental attachment to horse cavalry, research had continued in the search for new and better equipment. The slow modernisation of Poland's industry often delayed the implementation of ideas from the design to the production stage. In the mid-1930s a sudden urgency was felt among the military, and attempts were made to undo the damage of previous years. New designs were investigated, visits arranged to view the new armour of France and Italy, and developments in Germany and the Soviet Union studied with interest. In 1937 the Armoured Forces Officers' School was opened at Modlin, and became something of a vogue among those beginning their military service. Interest in the use of armour was also shown by other officers' schools as well as by the Staff College.

Among the myths still repeated about this campaign—the fictional Polish cavalry charges against German tanks, and the alleged destruction of the Polish Air Force on the ground—one still comes across claims that the Polish armour failed to achieve any success against the invaders. In fact, the September Campaign was by no means a 'walk-over' for the Panzers.

Poland suffered from many disadvantages. Geography and economics were against her; and the lack of development displayed by her Army during the inter-war years was to prove a serious handicap, partly due to a romantic attachment to the horsed cavalry branch. Apart from the numerical and technical superiority of the Wehrmacht, and the success of Blitzkrieg tactics, Poland also had to operate on a basis of incomplete mobilisation, due to French and British pressure—only about one third of her total potential manpower was mobilised at the time of the invasion.

To face the German onslaught Poland mobilised the following armoured forces:

- Two Light Tank Bns. (7 TPs)
- One Light Tank Bn. (R35s)
- Two Light Tank Cos. (Vickers)



Renault UE *chenillettes* of 1 Corps Reconnaissance Unit photographed at Perth, winter 1940/41. These vehicles were eventually to carry the Corps formation sign, a white winged wheel on black, as well as the unit code sign, white figure '40' on black.

Three Light Tank Cos. (FT 17s)

11 Armd. Groups (Wz29 and Wz34 armoured cars and some TK/TKSs)

15 Independent Recce Tank Cos. (TK/TKSs)

Four Recce Tank Sqns. TK TKSs

Total strength of vehicles was approx. 450 TK/TKS, including 50 attached for duty with armoured trains; 125 7 TPs, 50 R35s, 55 FT17s, 35 Vickers, and 90 armoured cars.

In spite of the general policy of allocating small units of tanks to various formations, several notable encounters occurred between Polish and German armour. One example was the confrontation on 4 September 1939 between 7 TP tanks of 2nd Light Tank Bn.⁽¹⁾ (attached to Lodz and Prusy Armies) and a German column. The result of this action was the destruction of six enemy tanks and two armoured cars by the 3rd Co., for the loss of one 7 TP. The 2nd Co. took part in an attack, supported by infantry, against dug-in German positions, losing two tanks. Withdrawing with the units of Army Lodz, the 2nd Co. encountered a column of eight enemy armoured cars, two self-propelled guns and lorried infantry, and completely annihilated it. Later on the same day 11 further tanks and six armoured cars were destroyed for two Polish tanks destroyed and five damaged. The remaining two companies (1st and 3rd) of the battalion destroyed four tanks with no losses. Due to the lack of fuel and supplies the battalion saw no further significant action.

¹ Mobilised by 2nd Armd. Bn.

The 7 TP tanks of the 3rd Bn., with an extra company over the mobilised establishment bring the total to 16, accounted for the majority of the 40 German tanks destroyed outside Warsaw on 8 September. However, the next day the unit itself lost some dozen tanks.

The 1st Light Tank Bn.⁽²⁾ (7 TP) saw little action, as it was transferring between Armies. It was withdrawn towards Warsaw, destroying one enemy tank and two armoured cars. Those units that managed to reach Warsaw combined with the Warsaw Motorised Bde., and fought at Tomaszow Lubelski (17 to 20 September). The brigade, fighting delaying actions, was ordered to push through the enemy lines in order to link up with Lodz and Karpaty Armies. In spite of initial successes the attack was hampered by lack of fuel and ammunition.

The TK/TKS units generally shared the fate of the formations to which they were attached. Although there were few tank-vs-tank actions, the tankettes are known to have scored some successes.

The 21st Light Tank Bn. (mobilised by the 12th Armd. Bn.) was *en route* on 1 September and did not reach Army Lodz. It was diverted and eventually ordered to withdraw into Rumania; its 34 Renault R35 tanks crossed the frontier without having fired a shot in anger.

The unit which probably achieved the greatest success in the September Campaign was the motorised 10th Cavalry Bde. commanded by Colonel Stanislaw Maczek. The brigade was planned as a striking force with a large complement of tanks, although by 1939 it had only 12 Vickers and 13 reconnaissance tanks. First attached to Armia Krakow and subsequently to Armia Karpaty, the 10th Cavalry Bde. was entrusted with delaying XXII Panzer Korps south of Krakow. It successfully withstood attacks by two Panzer divisions, ending its campaign south of Lwow. Almost the entire brigade managed to withdraw to Hungary, from where the majority of officers and men made their way to France.

During the September Campaign some 217 German tanks were destroyed, although the majority of these may be attributed to anti-tank and artillery fire rather than to tank-vs-tank action.

Although there are few reports of armoured

⁽²⁾ Mobilised by 3rd Armd. Bn.



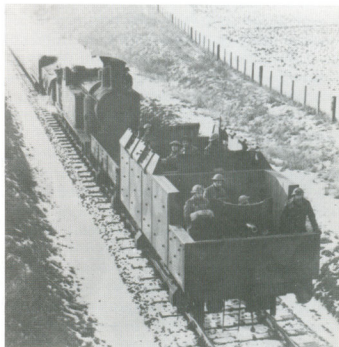
encounters between the Polish and Soviet Armies in 1939, these undoubtedly occurred, although admittedly on a small scale. The following two instances are based on information from the archives of the Polish Institute and Sikorski Museum.

In the first, Michal Polewko writes that he came upon a platoon of six tanks, Hotchkiss and Renault [sic], in the town of Busk. They were crewed mainly by officer cadets from the Armoured Forces Officers' School; and the tanks were those left behind at Luck by the 12th Armd. Bn., now being evacuated from Luck following the entry of Red Army troops into Poland on 17 September.

On 20 September the column which included these tanks was cut by units of the Soviet Army. However, due to the still uncertain nature of the Soviet intervention it was thought that they would not prevent the southward movement of the column. The Polish tank platoon moved forward, and almost immediately came under fire from the Soviet 75mm lorry-mounted guns. The first tank was hit, killing the commander and driver. Two other tanks were destroyed by their crews due to lack of fuel. The remainder managed to escape,

One of the first Churchills supplied to 16th Tank Bde., photographed in early 1942. 65 Tank Battalion's unit code (white '072' on green) is painted above the 1 Corps sign. The bridge sign and 'PL' appear on both inner faces of the hull. (Capt. O. Jazdowski)

An armoured train patrolling the British coastline, almost entirely crewed by 'surplus' Polish officers. The armoured trains were disbanded in late 1943, their crews mainly joining the expanding armoured units.





Humber armoured car of Maj. Zbigniew Dudzinski, commanding officer of 1st Reconnaissance Regt., 1st Armd. Div. at Dalkeith, Scotland, on 29 May 1943. The markings carried include the formation sign, unit code (white '47' on black), red/white/red AFV recognition sign and the tactical sign. Note the Regimental Guidon, topped with the 1st Armd. Div. insignia.

and during the next day supported Polish units against advancing German forces at Kamionka Strumilowa. The writer lost contact with the tanks shortly after this action.

The second report is by Edward Uscinski, who commanded a group of seven TKs and three armoured cars (one fully equipped, one with a machine gun only and the third with no sighting mechanisms). The TKs were from the Armoured Forces Training Centre; being training vehicles they were only thinly armoured, and showed signs of much wear and tear. On 18 September this small unit met up with a platoon of Russian Christie-type [sic] tanks. The result of this encounter was four TKs hit, one TK with damaged suspension, one TK damaged in collision with a Soviet tank, and one armoured car hit. The remaining vehicles made good their escape, but lost the last TK and one armoured car, these being set on fire by civilians of Ukrainian origin. The remaining TK broke down and was destroyed by its crew, while the last armoured car nearly reached the 'Przelec Legionow' gorge. The gradient proved too steep, however, and the armoured car was pushed into

the gorge. The surviving crew members made their way across the Rumanian frontier.

Following the September Campaign many Poles found themselves scattered throughout the neutral countries bordering Poland—Hungary, Rumania and Lithuania—while those who remained in Poland found themselves under either German or Soviet occupation.

In Rumania, some 900 officers and soldiers of the Armoured Forces were grouped together in the internment camps at Ciuciurowa and Calafat. Their first thought was how to make their way to France, where a new Polish Army was being formed. The Rumanian authorities in general turned a blind eye to the movements of the Poles; and this coupled with the Poles' customary ingenuity in the face of adversity, allowed the majority to leave the country. Civilian clothes were procured by various means, and, equipped with passports issued by the Polish Embassy, they made their way in small groups via Yugoslavia and Greece to France.

From Hungary, where troops of all arms were held together in the camps, larger groups made their way to France, generally via Yugoslavia and Italy. However, a proportion of the former internees reached Syria to become the nucleus of the future Independent Carpathian Rifle Brigade. In spite of the traditional friendship between the Hungarians and Poles the situation soon became more difficult due to German diplomatic pressure—although it should be said that whenever possible the Hungarians aided the Poles to the best of their ability.

With the entry of the Soviet Army, allied with Germany, into Poland on 17 September 1939, numbers of armoured troops found themselves in Soviet hands. After almost two years of deprivation and suffering they were to form the core of the future 2nd Armd. Bde. that was to take part in the Italian Campaign.

The number of Armoured Forces officers held prisoner by the Germans was comparatively small. They were mainly confined in the camps at Woldenberg and Murnau. In these camps clandestine courses were held in the hope that the participants would one day take up arms again in the struggle for an independent Poland.

France

On 9 September 1939 an agreement was signed by the Polish ambassador in Paris and the French Government, under the terms of which a Polish division was to be formed on French soil. On 12 September Coëtquidan Camp in Brittany was named as the centre for the formation of the new Polish Armed Forces. On 25 September General of Division Wladyslaw Sikorski arrived in Paris and took command of the Armed Forces. On 30 September he was appointed Prime Minister by the new President, Wladyslaw Raczkiwicz, and on 9 November appointed Commander-in-Chief.

On the assumption that all Poles interned in Hungary, Rumania and the Baltic States would eventually reach France, and taking account of the large Polish community already living there, it seemed possible that some four infantry divisions and a large armoured formation could be formed. During November 1939 the Polish General Staff approached the French with the suggestion of forming a 'light mechanised division'. The French eventually agreed, but stipulated 1941 as the date for completion of formation; this was obviously unrealistic. Meanwhile, towards the end of October, Gen. Stanislaw Maczek arrived at Coëtquidan. As a result of his experience during the September Campaign this brilliant officer was well aware of the need for a strong armoured formation. His first step was to segregate the troops at the main camp, sending the cavalry to Paimpont and the armour to Campénéac. On 2 December the 1st Tank Bn. was formed, followed shortly by the 2nd Bn. in January 1940.

The next step was the formation of a separate armoured-motorised group, which shortly moved south to the Orange area. The 1st and 2nd Tank Bns., the cadres of the 3rd and 4th as well as the Training Centre were located at St Cécile-Les-Vignes, Cairanne and Piolenc. The cavalry (24th Lancers, 10th Mounted Rifles and Training Battalion) were based at Montdragon, Mornas and Bollène. The Group HQ was at Bollène.

Training commenced in earnest with the 1st Bn. receiving ten Renault FT17s, soon followed by a further ten for the 2nd Bn. and a small number for the 3rd and 4th Bn. cadres. Within



A well-camouflaged Crusader of 24th Lancers, 1st Arm'd. Div. photographed during exercises with Canadian units in August 1943. The Crusader was the mainstay of the division until it was replaced by the Sherman in October 1943.

a short time two further cadre units were formed—the 5th and 6th Battalions. In early May 1940, the so-called 'Finnish Company' arrived at St Cécile, joining the 1st Bn. This had been a volunteer unit raised in February 1940 to take part in the Finnish-Soviet conflict, but, with the cessation of hostilities it was sent to join the other armoured units.

With the news of the German invasion of France Gen. Maczek ordered the formation of an armoured/motorised brigade, there being insufficient time to form a light division. The 10th Cavalry Bde. consisted of a tank regiment of two battalions, a motorised cavalry regiment of two battalions, an artillery battery (two troops of 105mm), an anti-tank battery (four troops— $2 \times 25\text{mm}$, $2 \times 47\text{mm}$), an anti-aircraft troop (40mm), a signals squadron, an engineer company, and the usual services. The brigade was transported by rail to Paris (27 to 30 May 1940), with the Brigade HQ being posted to the château at Corbeville and to Orsay. The Tank Regt. was sent to Camp de Satory and the cavalry to Arpagon. The 1st Tank Bn. was almost immediately issued with new Renault R35 tanks.

On 6 June Gen. Maczek indicated that the brigade would be ready for action within seven to ten days. However, on 7 June, the French insisted that the brigade either be sent to the already faltering front or give up its tanks. Gen. Sikorski reluctantly agreed to send the units that were ready, with the remainder to follow at a later date.

Insignia Tables

The following tables of unit code signs marked on armoured vehicles are not presented as a comprehensive Order of Battle, but merely as representative examples of the major units in which armour might be observed. In all tables the unit code numbers quoted were painted in white.

Colour key for all tables:

A = Amaranth red, B = Black, BL = Blue, BR = Brown, G = Green, O = Orange, R = Red, S = Silver, SC = Scarlet, W = White, Y = Yellow.

Table A: Unit Codes, 1 Polish Corps, April 1941

Unit	Background	Code
HQ 1 Corps	B	40
Corps Recce Unit	B	41
HQ 1st Tank Regt.	B	071
1st Tank Bn.	R	072
2nd Tank Bn.	G	073
HQ 1st Rifle Bde.	R	181
Bde. Recce Unit	B	141
HQ 10th Armd. Cav. Bde.	G	287
Bde. Recce Unit	B	241
1st Rifle Bn. (10th Mtd. Rifles)	G	260
2nd Rifle Bn. (14th Lancers)	G	261
3rd Rifle Bn. (24th Lancers)	G	262

Table B: Unit Codes, 1st Polish Armd. Div., Sept. 1942

Div. HQ	B	40
1 Recce Regt.	B	47
HQ 10th Armd. Cav. Bde.	R	50
10th Mtd. Rifles	R	51
14th Armd. Cav. Regt.	R	52
24th Lancers	R	53
10th Dragoons	R	54
HQ 16th Armd. Bde.	G	60
1st Armd. Regt.	G	61
2nd Armd. Regt.	G	62
3rd Armd. Regt.	G	63
16th Dragoons	G	64
HQ Support Gp.	BR	75
1st Mot. Arty. Regt.	R/BL	76
1st A-T Regt.	R/BL	77
1st Lt. A-A Regt.	R/BL	73
1st Rifle Bn.	BR	74

Table C: Unit Codes, 1st Polish Armd. Div., June 1944

Div. HQ	B	40
10th Mtd. Rifles	G/BL	45
HQ 10th Armd. Cav. Bde.	R	50
1st Armd. Regt.	R	51
2nd Armd. Regt.	R	52
24th Lancers	R	53
10th Dragoons	R	54
HQ 3rd Rifle Bde.	G	60
Highland Rifle Bn.	G	61
8th Rifle Bn.	G	62
9th Rifle Bn.	G	63
1st Ind. MG Sqn.	B	64
HQ Div. Arty.	R/BL	40
1st Mot. Arty. Regt.	R/BL	74
2nd Mot. Arty. Regt.	R/BL	76
1st A-T Regt.	R/BL	77
1st Lt. A-A Regt.	R/BL	73

Table D: Unit Codes, 16th Independent Armd. Bde., March 1945

Bde. HQ	R	50
3rd Armd. Regt.	R	51
14th Lancers	R	52
5th Armd. Regt.	R	53
16th Dragoons	R	54

4th Inf. Div., 1945

Div. recce regt., 9th Lancers	G/BL	77
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Table E: Unit Codes, 2 Polish Corps, 1943-45

HQ 2 Corps	B	75
Carpathian Lancers	G/BL	3517
7th A-T Regt.	R/BL	47
HQ 2nd Armd. Bde.	R	171
4th Armd. Regt.	BL/BR	173
1st Lancers	BL/BR	174
6th Armd. Regt.	BL/BR	175
HQ 3rd Carpathian Rifle Div.	B	50
12th Lancers	G/BL	77
HQ 5th Kresowa Inf. Div.	B	50
15th Lancers	G/BL	77
HQ 7th Inf. Div.	B	3750
Reserve Recce Unit	G/BL	3777
Reserve Tank Bn.	BL/BR	3776

2 Corps, August 1945

HQ 2 Corps	B	75
12th Lancers	G/BL	3517
7th A-T Regt.	R/BL	47
HQ 3rd Carpathian Rifle Div.	B	50
7th Lancers	G/BL	77
HQ 5th Kresowa Inf. Div.	B	50
25th Lancers	G BL	77

Table F: Unit Codes, 2nd 'Warszawska' Armd. Div., August 1945

Div. HQ	B	40
Carpathian Lancers	G/BL	45
HQ 2nd Armd. Bde.	R	50
4th Armd. Regt.	R	51
1st Lancers	R	52
6th Armd. Regt.	R	53
2nd Mot. Bn. (Commando)	R	54
HQ 16th Inf. Bde.	G	60
64th Inf. Bn.	G	61
65th Inf. Bn.	G	62
66th Inf. Bn.	G	63
16th Hy. Support Co.	G	64
HQ Div. Arty.	R/BL	40
7th Horse Arty. Regt.	R/BL	74
16th Fd. Arty. Regt.	R/BL	76
2nd A-T Regt.	R/BL	77
2nd Lt. A-A Regt.	R/BL	73

Table G: Unit Codes, 14th 'Wielkopolska' Armd. Bde., August 1945

Bde. HQ	R	50
15th Lancers	R	51
3rd Lancers	R	52
10th Hussars	R	53



This first group consisted of part of the HQ, the 1st Tank Bn., a mixed cavalry group (two lorried squadrons and two motorcycle platoons), an anti-tank troop (47mm) and an anti-tank squadron. Thus, with only one-third strength and no artillery or reconnaissance, this force was to be given the task of a fully mobilised brigade.

On 10 June the 1st Tank Bn. was sent by rail to the Vertuze-Avize area, where it came under the orders of VIII Corps, whose eastern flank it was to protect. The first contact with the enemy came on 12 June at Champaubert, with the brigade covering the gap between the 20th and 59th Inf. Divs. The 13th found the battalion in a wood near Montgivroux, where it suffered two attacks by aircraft, happily with no losses. The battalion was then pushed back by enemy armour while covering the retreat of the 20th Inf. Div. for some 24 hours. Due to almost constant air attacks, the battalion became separated from the rest of the brigade, but after a night march on 15 June it regained contact. Unfortunately the technical company had become separated during the night and was bombed, suffering some losses.

At dawn, under the orders of 42nd Inf. Div.,

No words are needed to describe this photograph! A Sherman of HQ, 10th Armd. Cavalry Bde., 1st Armd. Div., shortly before leaving for France in July 1944.

the brigade moved towards the Burgundy Canal, halting in woods at Chaource. Orders were then received that the brigade was to capture Montbard in order to enable the division to cross the canal. In preparation for the attack fuel was siphoned off from some of the vehicles, which were then destroyed. In the evening the brigade came under attack by German armour near Laignes; the enemy tanks were pushed back but part of the brigade was cut off. Learning that Montbard was already in German hands, Gen. Maczek decided on a surprise attack on the bridge. At 2200hrs the tanks came under enemy fire but continued to advance. With the fire becoming fiercer as the brigade neared the bridge, Maczek received the news that the 42nd Inf. Div. was now moving towards Dijon. He decided to withdraw under the cover of the early morning mist. On 17 June half of the trucks and all but three of the tanks were destroyed in woods near Moloy for lack of fuel. During the night of 17/18 June the brigade moved towards the Loire. Due to the blocked roads it proved impossible to move in



Sherman Firefly of 24th Lancers, 1st Armd. Div., being unloaded for its transport at Embouchure de la Seulle, near Arromanches, on 2 August 1944.

large groups and the brigade was split into small groups which were ordered to make their way to the ports of unoccupied France and board transports for the United Kingdom.

The fate of the 2nd Bn. was somewhat different. It received its complement of Renault R35 tanks shortly after the 1st Bn., but after a few days they were handed back to re-equip the French 42nd Battalion. Replacement tanks arrived in the form of enough R40s to equip only two companies. On 10 June the 2nd Bn. was assigned a sector for the defence of Paris. However, on 13 June it was ordered to join the remainder of the Bde. by rail. Due to damage to the track the tanks were unloaded and continued their journey by road. On 16 June the battalion was ordered by the French 7th Army to protect its right flank, and came under the orders of the commander of the anti-tank

defences of I Corps. The battalion was separated into platoons and assigned a 20km length of front. The French were pushed back past the line held by the Poles, who now faced the advancing Germans alone. As the Corps headquarters had departed and the remaining units were in disarray, the battalion commander decided to act on his own initiative. News arrived from Bordeaux that all Polish units were to make their way to ports to be evacuated to England, and the battalion turned in the direction of Bayonne. Suddenly, orders from the 7th Army arrived, and the battalion was told to halt. No further orders being received, and with the news that the last ship was to leave St Jean-de-Luz the next day (25 June), all the tanks were destroyed and their crews loaded into the remaining lorries and taken to the port.

The remaining cadre battalions and Training Centre were ordered on 16 June to proceed to St Jean-de-Luz for embarkation for England.

The United Kingdom

Transports of Polish soldiers started to arrive in Britain during the last days of June 1940. After landing at Plymouth, the first group, including the cadre battalions and the Training Centre, was sent to Haydock Park. On 25 June orders were issued for the formation of an Armoured Group, comprising elements of the 3rd, 4th, 5th and 6th Bns., the Training Battalion and the Training Centre. The Group was posted to Crawford in Scotland, which was to become the future Polish Armoured Forces Centre.

The 2nd Tank Bn. landed in Liverpool on 30 June and via camps at Lanark and Biggar reached Crawford on 18 July. The small groups of survivors of the 1st Bn., arriving at various ports, were also sent to Crawford.

Initially life was not easy. After suffering two defeats within one year, the Poles now had to put up with poor rations and living conditions, and, above all, lack of news from home. However, following the visit of the President and the Commander-in-Chief on 2 September, conditions improved greatly. By now the camp contained some 200 officers and 1,000 other ranks.

The 10th Cavalry Bde., partly stationed in Douglas (Lanarkshire), and partly in Crawford, was eventually combined and posted to Forfar. One of its duties there became the patrolling of the nearby coastline.

During October 1940 the 1st Polish Corps was formed, with its headquarters in Perth. One of the first units of this new formation was the Corps Reconnaissance Unit, consisting of HQ, two squadrons, one tank squadron, a motorcycle platoon and a signals platoon. Training of the tank squadron was initially carried out on Renault UE *chenillettes* that had been brought over from France. On 1 October, on the orders of the Commander-in-Chief, the 1st Tank Regt. (I and II Bns.) was formed; Crawford Camp was closed and all the Armoured Forces were sent to the Blairgowrie area.

While a debate raged as to whether the first division to be formed would be armoured or infantry, the 1st Tank Regt. was expanded into the 16th Tank Bde., on 19 September 1941. The



The crew of a Crusader A-A tank of 2nd Armd. Regt., 1st Armd. Div., sheltering beneath their vehicle prior to the action at Caen, August 1944. Note the formation sign grouped together with the unit code sign, white '52' on red. (Author)

new brigade consisted of I, II and III Tank Bns., the latter being the former tank squadron of the Reconnaissance Unit; the battalions were subsequently renumbered 65th, 66th and 67th. During the next few months the brigade was strengthened by an influx of volunteers, mainly from South America. On 31 December 1941 the brigade received its first tanks—nine Valentines and 15 Churchills. There followed weeks of enthusiastic training with the new tanks, and large numbers of officers and NCOs attended RAC courses at Bovington, Lulworth and Catterick.

On 26 February 1942 the 1st Armoured Division was formed, with Gen. Stanislaw Maczek as commander. On 25 March the 16th Tank Bde., and the 10th Armd. Cavalry Bde. (14th Jazlowiecki Lancers, 24th Lancers and 10th Mounted Rifles) formed the two armoured brigades of the new division. On 12 August the 16th Tank Bde. was renamed 16th Armoured Bde., and its battalions became the 1st, 2nd and 3rd Armoured Regiments.

The first large-scale exercises took place in early September 1942 and were followed by an inspection by Gen. Sikorski. By the end of 1942 the 16th Armd. Bde. strength stood at 176 officers and 2,482 other ranks equipped with 111 Covenanters and 20 Crusaders.

Further training took place during 1943; during October that year the division was reorganised into the new pattern, single-armoured-brigade division. The new 10th/16th Armd. Bde. was a combination of the two former brigades. It was composed of the 1st and 2nd Armd. Regt.,



Cromwells of 1 Sqn., 10th Mounted Rifles (1st Armd. Div. reconnaissance regiment) moving forward during the fighting at Jort, 15 August 1944. Note the absence of the Allied star which was carried prominently by the Shermans of the division.

24th Lancers and the 10th Dragoons (motor battalion). The 10th Mounted Rifles became the divisional reconnaissance regiment, with the former 1st Reconnaissance Regt. becoming the 1st Independent MG Squadron. The new numbering of the brigade was a compromise between the cavalry and armour 'lobbies'! However, in spite of some protests, the Brigade was officially named the 10th Armoured Cavalry Brigade on 12 October. In late October the division was partly re-equipped, with the armoured regiments receiving new Sherman tanks.

The remainder of the units from the re-organisation, including the 3rd Armd. Regt. and the 14th Lancers, formed the cadre of the new 16th Armoured Brigade. On 15 November 1943 this brigade was incorporated in the 2nd Armoured Grenadier Division, and moved to Catterick. There it was equipped with Crusaders, and continued further training until being moved to Bridge of Allan. In June 1944 the brigade lost part of its complement to the 1st Armd. Div., which was shortly to see action in Normandy.

For a short period of time, the 9th Malopolski

Lancers were attached to the brigade as the third armoured regiment. With the re-organisation of the 2nd Armd. Gren. Div. into the 4th Inf. Div. the 16th Brigade became an independent formation, and the 9th Lancers became the reconnaissance regiment of the 4th Division. (A new regiment was formed in 1945, the 1st Light Horse, and this became the new 1 Corps reconnaissance regiment.)

The brigade steadily increased in strength, due mainly to an influx of Poles who had been forced to serve with the Wehrmacht. In March 1945 the strength was such that the 5th Armd. Regt. was formed, and in May the whole brigade was equipped with Cromwells, Centaurs and Stuarts. The 16th Independent Armd. Bde. did not see action, and in common with other Polish formations became part of the Polish Resettlement Corps, being disbanded in 1947.

In view of the possibility of a German invasion in 1940 and 1941, the British authorities decided that one of the tools of defence could be the armoured train. Locomotives and wagons were armoured and armed with guns of various calibre, as well as machine guns. The Polish Army was asked to consider the possibility of providing crews for armoured trains. The Poles were enthusiastic, as this would give them further

experience, as well as being a method of employing the considerable number of 'surplus' officers. In October 1940 orders were issued for the selection of sufficient numbers of men to crew 12 armoured trains (in four Groups each of three trains).

Broadly speaking, during the course of their existence the Group Headquarters (I-IV) were centred on Brentwood, Exeter, York and Perth, with individual armoured trains stationed in surrounding towns and neighbouring counties. A Group ultimately consisted of between two and five trains, each being identified by letter—A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H, K, L and M. The crews were composed of officers of various arms and services, all wearing the insignia of the Armoured Forces. There were some ten officers to one other rank, with some 35 to 50 being attached to each train. A total of some 550 officers crewed the trains. The task of the trains consisted mainly of armed patrols along assigned lengths of track, gunnery practice, and training on the armoured vehicles of neighbouring British units. With the reduced likelihood of a German invasion the Polish armoured trains were disbanded towards the end of 1943.

North-West Europe

The 1st Armd. Div. received its mobilisation orders on 19 March 1944. Within one month it was fully equipped with new vehicles. During the second half of July the division was moved to Aldershot, where final preparations were made. At the end of July the division embarked at Tilbury and Southampton, to return to France after a four-year wait. On 30 July the first units landed at Arromanches-les-Bains and Courseulles-sur-Mer; and by 7 August the Division was massed near Bayeux, as part of 2 Canadian Corps.

The Corps was to seize the Falaise area, joining up with the Americans advancing in the direction of Argentan, thus surrounding the German forces to the west of Mortain. On the night of 7/8 September the infantry divisions of the 21st Army Group were to attack the German defences, after which 1st Armd. Div. and 4th Canadian Armd. Div. were to advance on either side of the Caen-Falaise road.

The attack was preceded by an aerial bombardment, during which the divisional artillery was hit by American bombs. By noon the infantry divisions, having moved under the cover of darkness, had taken Fontenay, May-sur-Orne, Rœcquancourt, Garcelles-Secqueville and Tilly-la-Campagne. In the meantime the two armoured divisions had come upon heavily defended German positions to the south of Caen, where the advancing tanks came under heavy anti-tank fire: the Polish division lost 40 tanks. The attack that was to have resulted in the capture of Falaise by the evening had only just succeeded in penetrating the enemy lines.

Renewed attacks, this time with the tanks supporting the 3rd Polish Rifle Bde., resulted in the capture of Estrées-la-Campagne, Cauvicourt, Saint Sylvian and Saint Martin-des-Bois.

Further action on 10 August resulted in the capture of Hill 111 and the Chemi-Hausse woods. The next two days saw the division holding its line against repeated enemy attacks. On 13 August it was moved west of the Caen-Falaise road, relieving 2nd Canadian Armd. Div. The next day the attack was again preceded by heavy aerial bombardment, and once again units of the division were hit in error, this time suffering over 200 killed and wounded. The tank advance was halted with only Fontaine-le-Pin being captured.

On 15 August both armoured divisions were moved to the eastern flank of 1st Canadian Army; 1st Armd. Div. was ordered to cross the Dives and

A knocked-out Sherman of HQ Sqn. 2nd Armd. Regt. in Normandy, August 1944. Note the prominent markings on the side of the hull, later frequently obliterated or toned-down. The squadron tactical signs for this particular regiment were painted yellow. (Author)





The crew of a Stuart of the Reconnaissance Sqn., 24th Lancers, 1st Armd. Div., during a brief respite from action in Belgium, September 1944. Note the interesting application of the unit code sign to the rear of the helmet.

cut the German line of retreat near Trun. The division crossed the Dives between Jort and Vendevre, and on 16 August moved southwards towards Trun, reaching Louvagny, L'Homme Coulboeuf and Barou by evening. This was followed next day by the capture of Hills 159 and 259. Subsequent action in the area of Les Champeaux resulted in the capture of the high ground of Hill 262—Mont Ormel (named 'Maczuga'—'the Club', by Gen. Maczek).

On the following day the so-called 'Falaise Gap' was closed, with the division taking up defence positions in the Mont Ormel and Chambois areas toward evening. Contact was made with American units which had advanced on Chambois from the south.

During the next phase of the campaign the division held its position in order to bar the line of retreat of the German 7th Army. This lasted from 19 to 22 August, with the division being cut off from other allied units and surrounded on three

sides by the enemy—on the south by retreating units of 7th Army and on the east and north by German forces trying to open up a path to their cut-off units. During the fierce fighting that ensued over three days supplies were unable to reach the beleaguered units, nor could the wounded and the large number of prisoners of war be evacuated.

On 21 August 12 and 30 Corps crossed the line Falaise—Argentan, reaching the Trun-Chambois level. When 4th Canadian Armd. Div. made contact with the Poles the Germans found themselves surrounded and started to surrender en masse. On 23 August the division was put into reserve in the Grand-Mesnil area, where it remained until 28 August. During the fighting in the Chambois—Mont Ormel area the 1st Polish Armd. Div. took prisoner some 150 officers and 5,500 other ranks, destroying 70 tanks and 500 other vehicles.

On 29 August the division again went into action, crossing the Seine at Elbeuf and pursuing the retreating enemy along the line Elbeuf—Abbeville—St Ômer—Ypres—Roulers—Tielt—Ghent. During the following nine days the division covered some 400km, crossing rivers and

canals, and being almost constantly in contact with the enemy. By 11 September the division was in the Ghent area; its 3rd Rifle Bde. captured the city, and the 10th Armd. Cavalry Bde. fought at Stekene, La Trompe and St Gillis-Waas to the northeast.

On 15 September the division regrouped for the attack on the port of Terneuzen. After fierce fighting it crossed the Axel-Hulst canal, capturing Axel and Hulst on 19 September and Terneuzen the next day.

In the days that followed the division moved along the line Merxplas—Baarle-Nassau—Alphen, reaching Alphen on 5 October. Finding itself now deep inside enemy-occupied territory, it took up defence positions until 27 October, when 1st Canadian Army advanced towards the mouth of the Maas. The division was then given the task of capturing the city of Breda. Breaking through German defences at Gilze and Bavel, units of the division entered the city on 29 October. There followed the crossing of the Mark and Wilhelmina Canals, and the thrust on Moerdijk on 5 November. This area was heavily fortified and mined, and extensive floods virtually restricted all movement to the dykes. These factors slowed the advance, with Moerdijk eventually falling on 9 November. The division then halted to rest and regroup.

In response to the German counter-offensive in the Ardennes a proportion of the Allied forces were withdrawn from the Maas, leaving the Polish division, reinforced by 47 Royal Marine Commando and 1315 RAF Regt., to take on an additional 50km of front. There followed the attack on the Isle of Kapelsche Veer, a German strongpoint and possible centre for a counter-attack. On 7/8 January 1945 it was attacked by units of 3rd Polish Rifle Bde. with little success; this was followed by an attack by 47 Commando on 13/14 January. However, only after a seven-day action by a Canadian infantry brigade with air support was the Isle taken.

The division next went into action on 7 April 1945, with the task of striking towards Emden. On its left was 2nd Canadian Inf. Div. and on its right 4th Canadian Armd. Div. On 8 April the Poles crossed into Germany at Goch, massing at Goor and Coevorden and moving forward on 10



Men of the 24th Lancers re-ammunitioning their 'chargers' at Ghent, Belgium, September 1944. Note the typical appliqué plates welded onto the hull sides, as well as the considerable number of slogans and messages chalked on the hull.

April to the Küsten Canal. The 10th Armd. Cavalry Bde. remained on the canal, with the 3rd Rifle Bde. moving in the direction of Ter Apel—Winschoten.

On 13 April one Sherman, together with one scout car, one jeep and one motorcycle, all of the 2nd Armd. Regt., liberated 1,700 Polish women prisoners of war from the camp at Oberlangen—all of them survivors of the Warsaw Uprising of August 1944. (On a rather personal note, the Sherman was commanded by the author's father, who subsequently married one of the liberated prisoners of war.)

The crossing of the Küsten Canal only succeeded on 19 April, when the enemy defences were broken under a fierce artillery barrage and air support. On 22 April the division reached the Leda, where it was given the task of advancing on the naval base of Wilhelmshaven. The division regrouped, with 3rd Rifle Bde. forcing the Leda at Posthausen on 25/26 April, and 10th Armd.



Column of Cromwells of 1 Sqn., 10th Mounted Rifles passing through a Dutch village. The first tank is that of the squadron commander, flying his black swallow-tailed pennant with white applied squadron tactical sign. Due to the miscellaneous collection of applied track, including some from a Tiger, the formation and unit code signs ('45' on blue over green) are carried on a detachable tin plate.

Cavalry Bde. moving on the Leer bridgehead. The two brigades linked up on 1 May.

On the evening of 4 May the division was on the outskirts of Wilhelmshaven in readiness for the final assault. With the capitulation of Germany the next day, the military and civilian authorities surrendered, and the port was occupied by the 2nd Armd. Regt. and 8th Rifle Battalion.

The 1st Polish Armd. Div., as a formation of BAOR, remained as part of the occupying forces until 1947, when it suffered the fate of the remainder of the Polish Armed Forces.

The USSR

Before concentrating on the Polish armoured units which fought in Italy, a brief outline must be given of how such a large number of Poles found themselves in that theatre of war.

The 'formal' agreement for the annihilation of the Polish State by Nazi Germany and Soviet Russia had been the Ribbentrop-Molotov Pact of 23 August 1939. While the major part of the Armed Forces had been occupied in fighting the German invader, the Red Army marched into Poland on 17 September. Almost immediately mass deportations commenced, and some 1,700,000 Poles (including women and children) had been taken deep into Soviet territory by the time of the German invasion in 1941. There followed two years of suffering—hunger, disease, extremes of climate—in camps, collective farms, factories and mines. As a result of the often brutal treatment the mortality rate, especially among the women and children, was extremely high.

On 22 June 1941 Germany launched her attack on the Soviet Union, and the Polish Government in London suddenly found her former invader among the Allied powers. Thus, instead of seeing her two traditional enemies destroy themselves, she was now under pressure to establish diplomatic relations with one of them. With great courage Gen. Sikorski entered into negotiations with the Soviet Government, realising that this was the only hope of obtaining the release of Polish citizens. The negotiations resulted in the signing of the so-called Sikorski—Maisyky Pact on 30 July 1941. Under its terms Polish citizens were to be freed and a Polish Army formed on Soviet soil. The pact was almost immediately put under strain, with Stalin refusing to recognise the former eastern boundary of Poland.

The formal agreement concerning the formation of a Polish Army was signed on 14 August 1941. Its commander was to be Gen. of Division Wladyslaw Anders, himself a former prisoner of the NKVD at the notorious Lubianka in Moscow. Initially the headquarters of the army were to be at Buzuluk, with the 5th Inf. Div. at Tatishchevo and the 6th Inf. Div. at Totkoye.

Poles began to arrive from all corners of the vast Soviet empire, often by the most incredible means; and in spite of being wasted by hunger and disease all were eager to join the new army. Initial attempts at organisation were hampered by the lack of supplies and equipment, as well as by the shortage of experienced officers who appeared at the recruiting centres.

The Soviet Government began to pressure the Polish Command to send at least one division to the front by October. Due to the physical condition of the majority of the men as well as the complete lack of adequate supplies, the Poles were reluctant to do so. In early October rations were restricted to 30,000; ignoring the civilians, the total of the Army exceeded this figure by some 6,000.

It was in this general atmosphere that Gen. Sikorski visited the Soviet Union in December 1941. As a result of further discussion it was agreed that the Army was now to be expanded to a strength of six divisions, with some 25,000 troops being evacuated to join the Polish Forces in the West. After Gen. Sikorski's departure the Soviet authorities stipulated that the 25,000 could only leave once the divisions were at full strength. During early 1942 the Polish Army was moved south, the new HQ now being located at Yangi Yul near Tashkent. In March rations were again reduced, this time to 44,000. In response to this

news Gen. Anders told Stalin that this figure was to be considered as the strength of the Army, and that the remainder should be evacuated to the Middle East. The so-called 'first evacuation' to Iran commenced on 23 March. As a result of the worsening situation between the Poles and their 'hosts', including the halt in recruitment and a general lack of co-operation, a second evacuation took place in August 1942. It should be noted, however, that many Poles still remained in the Soviet Union either unaware of the agreement, or unable to journey south, or left behind in the course of the long trek.

In early 1943 the news broke of the discovery by the Germans, at Katyn near Smolensk, of the bodies of 4,000 Polish officers. All the victims, their arms tied behind them, had died from a

A well-equipped Sherman ARV of 10th Armcd. Cavalry Bde. Workshop approaching a busy cross-roads during the action for Breda, October 1945. The vehicle carries the formation sign and the unit code sign (white '99' on blue/yellow/red horizontally striped background).





A well-armoured Sherman Firefly of 10th Armd. Cavalry Bde. during the fighting for Moerdijk, November 1944. Note the addition of ammunition boxes to the rear of the turret bustle.

pistol shot to the back of the head. While realising that both the Nazis and the Soviets were equally capable of perpetrating such an atrocity, subsequent enquiries among the survivors of the camp led the Poles to deduce that the Soviets were most likely to be the guilty party. Following the discovery and the demands for an investigation by the International Red Cross, the Soviet Government accused the Poles of complicity with the Germans and broke off relations with the Polish Government.

The origins of the armoured units of the future 2 Polish Corps can be traced back to 1941, when the first units were formed (albeit without equipment) on Soviet soil. On 16 September 1941 the 5th Armd. Bn. was formed at Tatishchevo, followed shortly by the 6th Bn. at Totskoye. With the plans for the expansion of the Army, in January 1942, the two battalions were combined into a centre, and posted to the Karabalty region near Frunze. There training commenced, and it was hoped that assistance would be forthcoming from the Soviet Army Armoured Centre at Frunze. With no co-operation from Moscow, and no plans for armoured forces under the new organisation, the centre was evacuated to Iran during March.

In spite of the Soviet non-co-operation, it was still proposed that an armoured battalion be formed, coming under the direct orders of the Army commander. Work was in hand on this plan when the second evacuation to Iran took place in August 1942. These troops were to become the core of the future 4th Armd. Regt. in the West.

The second regiment of the future 2nd Armd. Bde. was the 1st Krechowiecki Lancers. In late September 1941 cavalry (reconnaissance) squadrons were formed for each division. One month later it was decided to expand these into regiments, and on 18 November orders were issued for the formation of the 1st Krechowiecki Lancers. By the end of February 1942 the cavalry squadrons of the 5th, 6th and 7th Divs. were amalgamated at Otar, with the regiment leaving for Iran as part of the first evacuation in March.

The third regiment of the future brigade, the 6th Armd. Regt., was formed at Totskoye on 17 October 1941 as the 6th 'Dzieci Lwowski' (Children of Lwow) Divisional Rifle Battalion. This battalion was soon moved to Shakhrysyabz, near Bukhara, where it was re-organised as the 6th 'Dzieci Lwowski' Reconnaissance Unit. Leaving the Soviet Union as part of the second evacuation, it arrived in Iran on 22 August 1942.

'A bellowing cow gives little milk'—an optimistic Lt. Janusz Barbarski, 2nd Armd. Regt., 1st Armd. Div., by a tank of HQ Sqn. in Holland, winter 1944/45. (Author) Note—This tank has been illustrated on Plate D1, Vanguard No. 26.



The Middle East

The first armoured unit to be evacuated from the Soviet Union was the Armoured Centre. Landing at Pahlevi, it was sent by road and rail transport to Ahwaz where it embarked for Suez. From there the Centre was transported to Gedera, Hill 69 near Gaza and Bet Girgia, where it was to form the 1st Tank Bn. and Armoured Forces Training Centre. On 14 June the battalion was moved to Cowley Camp in Egypt, where it was met by men of the Carpathian Lancers, who had already seen action at Tobruk and Gazala as part of the Independent Carpathian Rifle Brigade. At Cowley Camp the battalion was introduced to its first tanks—Mk.VIBs. After several weeks of training the unit returned to Palestine, to Hill 69, where the 2nd Armd. Bde. was to be formed. On 4 August the unit was renamed 4th Tank Battalion.

On 26 July the battalion was joined by the 2nd Bn., 1st Lancers, which had also left the Soviet Union during the first evacuation. The new brigade was now strengthened by the arrival of

officers and men from England, as well as former soldiers of the Carpathian Brigade. Both officers and other ranks attended RAC courses at Abbasia and Deir Suneid. On 20 September the brigade was moved to Qizil Ribat, in Iraq, where it was joined by the 6th Tank Bn. (the former 6th Reconnaissance Unit) in October. The training continued with renewed enthusiasm following the arrival of Valentine tanks, as well as several captured Italian M13s.

After inspection by Gen. Sikorski, the brigade was transferred to Taza Khurmatli, near Kirkuk in Iraq, where Gen. of Brigade Bronislaw Rakowski took over command. In September the brigade was again moved, this time to Nuseirat (Gaza), where it received its first Shermans. An inspection by the new Commander-in-Chief, Gen. Kazimierz Sosnkowski, was followed by yet another move, this time to Quassasin in Egypt. Here the brigade was fully re-equipped and took

Challenger of 2 Sqn., 10th Mounted Rifles, moving forward with men of the 3rd Rifle Bde. in Holland, November 1944. The regiment received the Challenger early in that month, in sufficient quantities to equip one platoon of each squadron.



part in further exercises, this time in brigade strength. At this time 2 Polish Corps was already in action in Italy, at the Sangro River, and the men of the 2nd Armd. Bde. were anxious to join their comrades at the front. They did not have long to wait, for in March 1944 orders were received that the brigade was to prepare for action. The 2nd Armd. Bde. embarked at Port Said for Naples, with the equipment being shipped from Alexandria to Taranto.

Italy

After landing in Naples and being reunited with its vehicles, the 2nd Armd. Bde. took part in exercises with the 3rd Carpathian Rifle Div. and the 5th Kresowa Inf. Div. The vehicles were then fully overhauled, and armour was strengthened by the addition of further plates. On 28 April the brigade went into action in Cassino, although only in the shape of a platoon of the 4th Armd. Regt.: the platoon was given the task of crewing three immobilised New Zealand Shermans, with 3 Sqn. of the regiment taking part in a deception

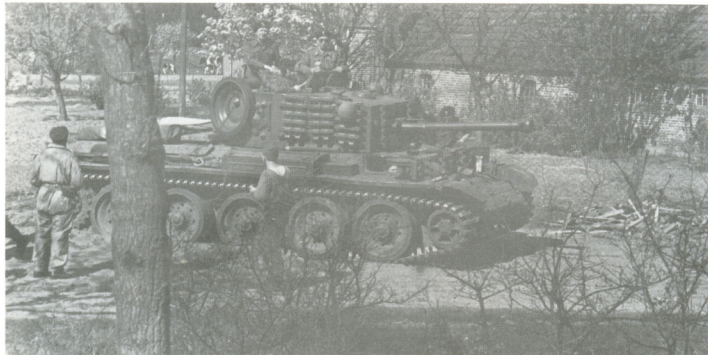
Cromwell of Col. Franciszek Skibinski, commander of 10th Armd. Cavalry Bde., photographed during an inspection of front-line units; Germany, spring 1945. This particular vehicle shows a very neat system of applied track protection.

move in the direction of Aquafondata. On 11 May the tanks of the whole regiment moved forward and opened the path through the Bottleneck to Mass Albanetta, supporting the infantry of the 5th Kresowa Div. at Phantom Ridge, and that of the 3rd Carpathian Div. on Hill 593. During its attack the 4th Regt. had 12 tanks put out of action, of which eight were subsequently repaired. The first Sherman destroyed at the Bottleneck was later incorporated into a monument to the fallen of the regiment. It was unveiled in May 1946; ironically, it has now been reduced to its original hulk by modern-day vandals.

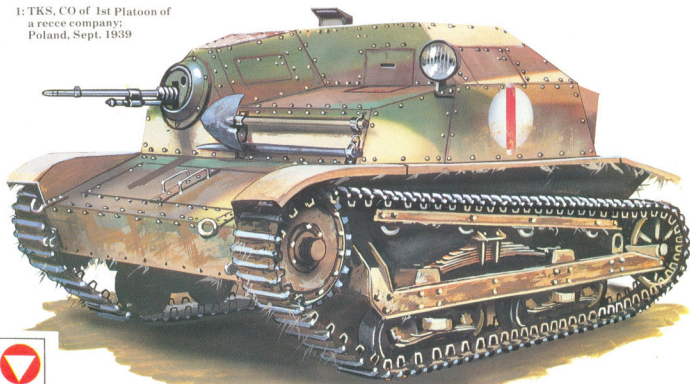
During the next stage of the battle the 6th Armd. Regt. went into action on the slopes of Piedimonte, in terrain totally unsuitable for tank action. The third regiment of the brigade, the 1st Krechowicki Lancers, remained as part of the rearguard. The brigade's losses at Monte Cassino and Piedimonte amounted to 42 killed, with the destruction of some 75 per cent of the equipment of the units that saw action.

The whole brigade was then withdrawn for rest and the replacement of equipment, before being moved, together with 2 Polish Corps, to the Lanciano—S.Vito area on the Adriatic coast.

Units of the brigade went into action on the line Monte S. Giusto—Chienti River and Corridonia, supporting the 3rd and 5th Inf. Divs.: following the sudden German withdrawal the Poles crossed



1: TKS, CO of 1st Platoon of
a recon company;
Poland, Sept. 1939



Tactical
markings—
see
commentary

3rd Lt.Tk.Bn.



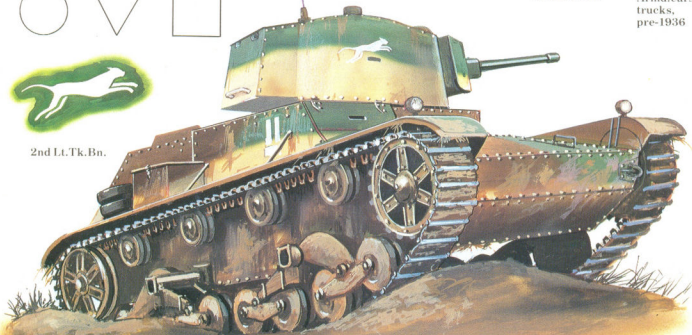
Armd.trains



Armd.cars,
trucks,
pre-1936

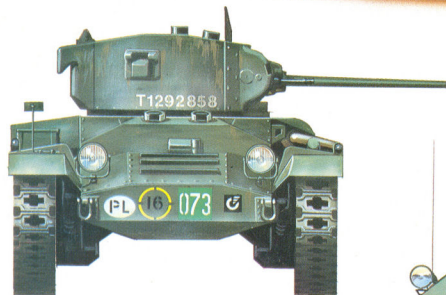
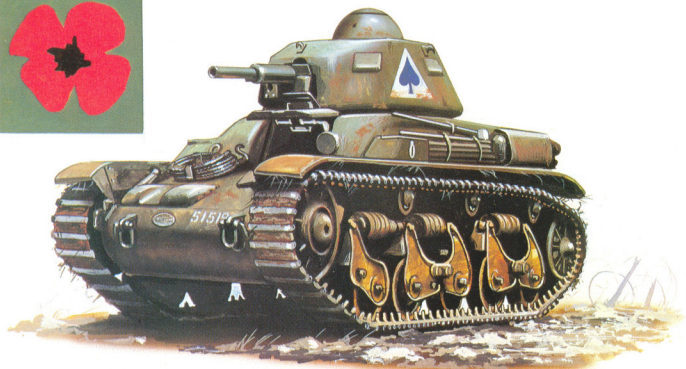


2nd Lt.Tk.Bn.



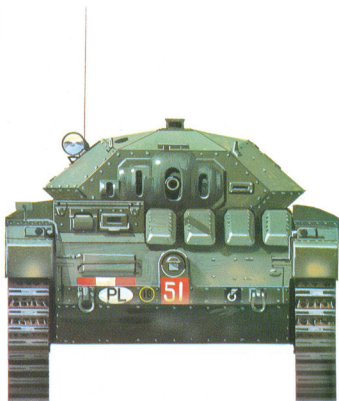
2: 7 TPjw, CO of 2nd Co., 2nd Light Tank Bn.;
Poland, Sept. 1939

1: Renault R35, 1st Bn., 1st Tank Regt.: France, June 1940



2: Valentine, 2nd Tank Bn.,
16th Armd.Bde.; UK, Jan. 1943

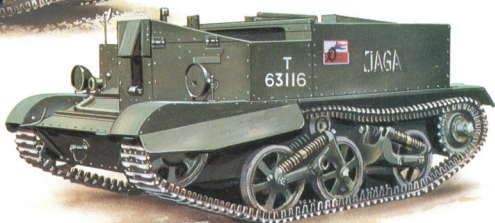
3: Covenant, 10th Mtd.Rifles,
1st Armd.Div.; UK, March 1943



1: Universal Carrier, Ind. Carpathian Rifle Bde.; N.Africa, 1941



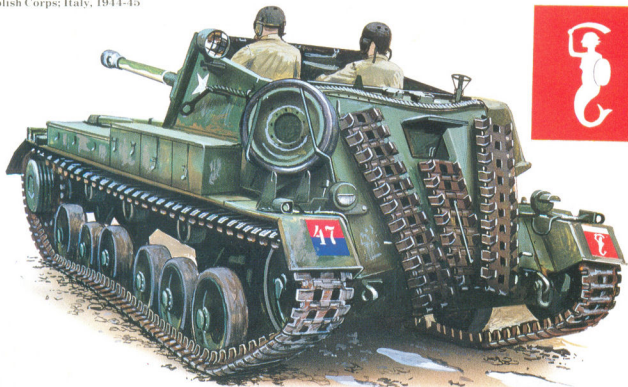
2: Universal Carrier, attached to Armd.Train 'G'; Norfolk, UK, 1942



3: Cromwell of Gen.Maczek, GOC 1st Armd.Div.; Normandy, Aug. 1944



1: Archer 17pdr SP, 7th Anti-Tank Regt.,
2 Polish Corps; Italy, 1944-45



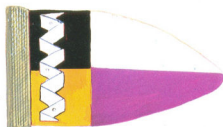
2-8: For pennant details, see commentary



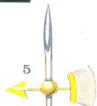
2



6



7



5



3



4



8

1: Jeep, Provost Company, 2nd Arm. Div.;
Italy, 1944-45



2



3



4



5

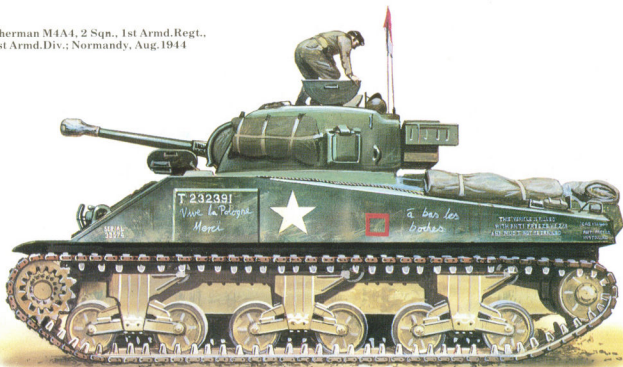


6



7: Sexton 25pdr SP, 1 Tp,
1st Mot. Arty. Regt.,
1st Arm. Div.;
Germany, 1944-45

1: Sherman M4A4, 2 Sqn., 1st Armd. Regt.,
1st Armd. Div.; Normandy, Aug. 1944



KOŚCIUSZKO WARSZAWA

KITUŚ II

MUR

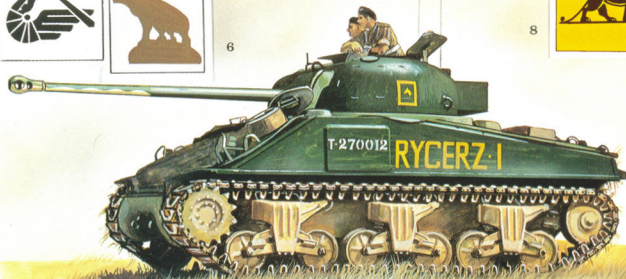
2: Sherman M4A1 (76mm)W, Colour Party,
2nd Armd. Regt.; Germany, May 1946



1: Sherman M4A2, HQ 2nd Armd.Bde.; Egypt, 1943



Formation signs –
see commentaries



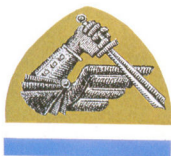
2: Sherman VC Firefly (M4A4), 2 Sqn.,
1st Krechowicki Lancers, 2nd Armd.Div.; Italy, 1944-45



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22

Table of Collar Pennons worn by Polish Armour and Artillery Units on British Uniform, 1940-47

A larger version was frequently flown from aerials of AFVs of these units.

Key: dk - Dark, lt - Light; colour abbreviations are as for unit vehicle code tables; * - pennon also worn on beret, to left of Army eagle; (1) - pennon bore applied regimental emblem, see Plate H; (2) - pennon bore emblem; and beret band piped red.

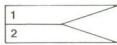
Unit	Formation	Pennon		Colours			
		Type	1	2	3	4	
Armd. Forces		A	B	O			
Armd. Forces Trg. Centre (UK)		A	B	O			
Armd. Forces Trg. Centre (Italy)		G*	A	B	O	dk BL	
HQ 1st Armd. Div.		F	B	O	B		
HQ 10th Armd. Cav. Bde.	1st Armd. Div.	F	B	O	B		
HQ 2nd Armd. Div.		D*	B	W	B		
HQ 2nd Armd. Bde.	2nd Armd. Div.	D	G	B	G		
1st Armd. Regt.	1st Armd. Div.	D	B	R	O		
2nd Armd. Regt.	1st Armd. Div.	D	B	W	O		
3rd Armd. Regt.	16th Ind. Armd. Bde.	B	B	Y	O		
4th Armd. Regt.	2nd Armd. Div.	D ⁽¹⁾	B	R	O		
5th Armd. Regt.	16th Ind. Armd. Bde.	B	B	R	O		
6th Armd. Regt.	2nd Armd. Div.	B	B	BL	O		
7th Armd. Regt.	2 Corps	E ⁽¹⁾	A	B	O	dk BL	
Cavalry		C	A	dk BL			
1st Lt. Horse	1 Corps	D	S	A	S		
1st Lancers	2nd Armd. Div.	C*	A	W			
3rd Lancers	14th Armd. Bde.	C*	Y	W			
7th Lancers	3rd Rifle Div.	F*	A	W	A		
9th Lancers	4th Inf. Div.	E	A	W	A	W	
12th Lancers	2 Corps	D*	A	W	dk BL		
14th Lancers	16th Ind. Armd. Bde.	D	Y	W	Y		
15th Lancers	14th Armd. Bde.	C*	W	SC			
24th Lancers	1st Armd. Div.	D	W	Y	W		
25th Lancers	5th Inf. Div.	D*	W	BL	SC		
Carpathian Lancers	2nd Armd. Div.	C ⁽²⁾	BL	R			
10th Mtd. Rifles	1st Armd. Div.	D	G	W	Y		
10th Dragoons	1st Armd. Div.	D	A	G	O		
16th Dragoons	16th Ind. Armd. Bde.	D	A	W	Y		
10th Hussars	14th Armd. Bde.	H ⁽¹⁾	lt BL				
1st Ind. MG Sqn.	1st Armd. Div.	E	Y	dk BL	W	A	
HQ 1st Armd. Div. Arty.		F	B	dk G	B		
1st Mot. Arty. Regt.	1st Armd. Div.	C	B	dk G			
2nd Mot. Arty. Regt.	1st Armd. Div.	C	B	dk G			
1st A-T Regt.	1st Armd. Div.	F	SC	B	O		
1st Lt. A-A Regt.	1st Armd. Div.	D	dk G	Y	dk G		
7th A-T Regt.	2 Corps	A*	O	dk G			
HQ 2nd Armd. Div. Arty.		C*	B	SC			
7th Horse Arty. Regt.	2nd Armd. Div.	C*	B	SC			
16th Fd. Arty. Regt.	2nd Armd. Div.	C*	dk G	B			
2nd A-T Regt.	2nd Armd. Div.	A*	O	dk G			
2nd Lt. A-A Regt.	2nd Armd. Div.	D*	dk G	Y	dk G		



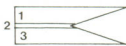
A



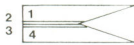
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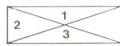
C



D



E



F



G



H

the Potenza River and entered Loreto, advancing to the Musone—the last natural barrier before the port of Ancona.

On 17 July, following a heavy artillery barrage 2 Corps moved forward. By noon the 5th Kresowa Div. had captured M. Della Crescia; the 1st Krechowiecki Lancers and Polish Commandos entered Casa Nuova, and the 6th Armd. Regt.—together with the 7th Queen's Own Hussars—took the high ground at Torto. Towards evening Bogo and Polverigi were in Polish hands with units moving to Agugliano and Offagno.

The next day Polish armoured units reached the coast and the Esimo River, capturing the Chiaravalle bridgehead. Later in the same day Polish units, spearheaded by the Carpathian Lancers, entered Ancona.

There followed battles for the Misa, Cesano Metuario and Foglio rivers, with the capture of Senigallia, Fano and Pesaro. Following these actions 2 Polish Corps was withdrawn to the Chienti Valley, where it remained from 5 September until 9 October.

In October the Corps was again at the front, this time in the inhospitable terrain of the Northern Apennines. The 5th Kresowa Div. opened the way to Galeata, capturing Monte

Grosso and Monte Spino. It then forced the Rabbi and captured several towns including Predappio, the birthplace of Mussolini. This enabled its neighbour on its right flank, 5 British Corps, to capture Forlì on the Via Emiliana.

By mid-November the front had stabilised, with 2 Corps protecting the western flank of 5 Corps during its advance on Faenza. This task was made difficult not only by the terrain but also by fresh enemy reinforcements. The Polish advance moved on the line of the fortified hills: Fortino—Palazzino—Piano—Ricci. This time the van was taken by units of the 3rd Carpathian Div. supported by 4th Armd. Regt.; and the capture of Ricci, on 23 November, enabled 5 Corps to move on Faenza. In further fighting during November and December 2 Polish Corps reached the line of the Senio River.

In early April 1945, strengthened with new 105mm and Firefly Shermans, the 2nd Armd. Bde. moved to the Faenza—Forlì area, where it prepared to take part in the assault on Bologna. The fighting was harsh; the enemy had recently been reinforced with experienced troops, and the terrain, criss-crossed by many canals and rivers and heavily mined, made tank movement difficult. In spite of these problems the Allied units moved steadily forward on the city. On 20 April final orders for the capture of Bologna were issued. However, at dawn the next day, news reached the brigade that the first elements of the 3rd Carpathian Div. and the Krechowiecki Lancers had already entered the city. Within a week the German forces in Italy had surrendered.

Following a victory parade in Bologna the 2nd Armd. Bde. was moved to Loreto, where on 7 June 1945 it was expanded into the 2nd Warszawska Armoured Division. The organisation of the new division, under Gen. Rakowski (the commander of the former 2nd Warszawska Armd. Bde.), was completed speedily, with Field Marshal Alexander taking the salute of its massed units on 15 August 1945.

The euphoria did not last long; 2 Corps was soon to be disbanded, and made ready to leave for England. Upon their arrival, units of the 2nd Armd. Div. were stationed in the York area; and there, after service with the Polish Resettlement Corps, its soldiers passed into civilian life. The

Vehicles and men of the 10th Mounted Rifles during a halt near Leer, Germany, spring 1945. Note the regimental commander's pennant on the first Cromwell (black rectangle with white applied '45').





majority either remained in the United Kingdom or emigrated elsewhere in the Free World, with but few returning to a homeland now occupied by the Soviets.

Other Units in Italy

Apart from the 2nd Warszawaska Armd. Div., the other armoured formation of 2 Corps was the 14th Wielkopolska Armd. Bde., under the command of Col. W. Bobinski. Formed on 12 December 1944 in the South of Italy, originally as the 3rd Wielkopolska Armd. Bde., it was sent to Quassasin in Egypt for organisation and training, returning to Italy in December 1945. The brigade was equipped with various models of the Sherman, as well as the Stuart and several types of armoured car. It did not see action, and suffered disbandment like the other units of 2 Polish Corps.

With the formation of the 2nd Armd. Div. the former 2 Corps reconnaissance regiment—the Carpathian Lancers—became the divisional reconnaissance regiment. Its place was taken by the 12th Podolski Lancers, the former reconnaissance regiment of the 3rd Carpathian Rifle Division.

The 15th Poznanski Lancers, the former reconnaissance regiment of the 5th Kresowa Inf. Div., joined the newly forming 14th Wielkopolska

M10 Tank Destroyer of 1st Anti-Tank Regt., 1st Armd. Div. in position at Hooge-Zwaluwe, Holland, November 1944. The name of this particular vehicle, 'Gdynia P', appeared below the sloping rear turret counterweight. On the original print one can make out, low on the rear hull, the 'PL' sign; an artillery tactical sign of 1 Troop, 2 Battery—blue square with bottom right corner red, bearing white 'A'; and—on the right—white '77' on a red-over-blue square. The divisional sign is not apparent.

Armoured Brigade. Its place was taken by the newly re-formed 25th Wielkopolski Lancers. The other two regiments of the new brigade were the re-formed 3rd Slaski Lancers and the new 10th Hussars.

The remaining armoured unit of 2 Corps was the 7th Armd. Regt., which could trace its origins to the Armoured Centre in the Soviet Union, and after the evacuation to the Middle East, to the Reserve Tank Bn. at Qizil Ribat. Upon landing in Italy it combined with the Cadre Motor Transport and Armoured Forces Centre, becoming the Armoured Forces Reserve Centre; and finally, on 6 August 1944, became the 7th Armoured Regiment, originally envisaged as a training regiment for the 2nd Armoured Brigade. Its 3 Sqn. was the so-called Armoured-Cavalry Squadron, which traced its origins to the former Reconnaissance Unit of the 7th Infantry Division.

The Warsaw Uprising

In Poland the major resistance group was the AK (Armia Krajowa—Home Army). Due to the nature of the underground struggle it was naturally unrealistic to consider the use of captured armour on anything but a small scale. However, the AK examined the possible use of armour and motor transport, working on the basis of the possible capture of enemy vehicles during any future uprising. Apart from sporadic instances in the rest of the country, the main reports of the use of armour by the AK are from the Warsaw Uprising of August 1944.

The pre-1939 3rd Armd. Bn. was re-formed as a clandestine unit within the AK; its work consisted of training suitable candidates for future tank crews. Apart from the 3rd Bn. the three other units that used armour to any degree during the Uprising were a platoon of the 'Radoslaw' Group, the armoured car platoon 'Wydra', and the Warsaw Command Motorised Group.

During the fighting on 2 August 1944 two Panther tanks were captured by the 'Radoslaw' Group. One was virtually undamaged, while the other had been knocked out by a hit from a PIAT, with damage to the turret. Both tanks were moved away from the line of fire and quickly repaired. The tanks were then crewed by members of the 'Zoska' Bn. who had undergone training by

means of captured German manuals. One of the Panthers was officially named 'Pudel', this being the pseudonym of one of the members of the battalion who had been killed; however, the crew christened the tank 'Magda'.

Between 2 and 11 August the two Panthers were used to support the attacks of the AK battalions. On 9 August one of the tanks was knocked out during a German armoured attack, which was eventually repulsed with the aid of 'Pudel'. On 10 August 'Pudel' beat off an attack by three tanks and one armoured car, which was destroyed. The next day it was again involved in the support of the advancing AK battalions, sustained damage and was immobilised. However, it covered the retreat of the 'Zoska' Bn., before being destroyed by its crew.

There is evidence that 'Pudel' carried the following markings on its turret: the Polish Air Force chequerboard marking; the name 'Pudel'; and the lily of the Scout movement—all in line. On the rear hatch were the letters WP (Wojsko Polskie-Polish Army).

Some other instances of the use of armoured vehicles during the Warsaw Uprising were:

During the first days of the Uprising use was made of a captured armoured car of the security type that had been adapted for the fighting. This vehicle carried the markings AK, in large letters on either side of each door.

There are reports of the capture of an SdKfz 231 (or 233), but with no detail of its subsequent use.

On 2 August, during the fighting in the area of the main Post Office, two self-propelled guns of the Hetzer type were captured by members of the 'Kilinski' Battalion. One of these guns was named 'Chwat' ('Gallant Lad') and had this name, together with an Army-type eagle, painted on the glacis. 'Chwat' saw action during subsequent fighting for the Post Office until it was buried by falling masonry.

On 5 August an SdKfz 251 was captured by members of the 101st Company of the 'Bocza' Bn. during the fighting on Royal Castle Square. It was painted with a considerable number of markings which included—a white national eagle; the Air Force chequerboard; the Company number '101'; and the words 'Starowka' ('Old Town') and 'Barykada 5' ('Barricade 5'). There

A Sherman tank-dozer of the 24th Lancers, 1st Armd. Div., expressing a suitable, although incorrectly spelt, sentiment!





are, however, no reports of its use in subsequent actions.

The armoured car platoon 'Wydra' was formed on 14 August following the capture of two SdKfz 251s, one of which was called 'Jas'. On 22 August the platoon was joined by a third vehicle, this being an armoured car built by members of the Underground themselves. It basically consisted of a light lorry chassis with a body constructed from armour plate, which had been obtained from a power station and a safe works and from knocked-out German vehicles. The new armoured car was named 'Kubus'—the pseudonym of the wife of one of the constructors.

'Jas' and 'Kubus' saw action during the fighting for Warsaw University; both supported the attacks of an assault group and later covered their withdrawal, under the fire of advancing German armour. 'Jas' was subsequently renamed 'Szary Wilk' after its first commander, who died in the first assault on the University. 'Szary Wilk' was now strengthened by the addition of further steel plates, and was fitted with a turret mounting a

Line-up of Marmon-Herrington armoured cars of the Carpathian Lancers, with a captured Italian SPA 40 in the foreground: Egypt, May 1942. The markings appear to consist of a red figure 8, and a regimental emblem of a blue-over-red pennon, with two palm trees and a crescent moon, in grey?

machine gun. On 2 September 'Szary Wilk' again led an assault on the University, but was again forced to withdraw. On 6 September, following a heavy German bombardment, the AK units in the Powisle area were forced to withdraw. They were covered by the two armoured vehicles, which were eventually cut off and had to be destroyed by their crews.

There were undoubtedly many other cases of the use of armour by the AK during the Uprising, as well as in other situations elsewhere in the country. The Germans, realising the AK's ambition to acquire armour, in several instances booby-trapped tanks abandoned in areas held by the AK. A notable instance was on 13 August, when a captured tank blew up, killing some 300 people.

Ludowe Wojsko Polskie

The small numbers of pro-Soviet Poles remaining in the Soviet Union after the evacuation of the Polish Army in 1942, together with the handful of Polish Communists who had been living there since before 1939, formed the Union of Polish Patriots (ZPP) in March 1943. In April 1943 the ZPP approached the Soviet Government with the plan of forming a Polish military unit in the USSR. This idea was received favourably, and the first units began to form in May 1943. The troops were recruited from those Poles still in prisons and labour camps, as well as Red Army soldiers of

Gen. Alexander inspecting the Tank Platoon of the Carpathian Lancers in Egypt, August 1942. This platoon was equipped with three captured PzKpfw III tanks. Overall finish appears to have been sand, with the following markings: consecutive numbers 1 to 3 in red, together with the AFV red/white/red flash on the turret sides, as well as (perhaps) a red stripe along the length of the hull and turret top surfaces to aid aerial recognition. The tanks of this platoon were used for training purposes, and did not see action.

Polish extraction. However, many volunteers were those Poles who did not manage to reach the evacuation points when Gen. Anders' units left the USSR. The choice for these Poles was simple: either they could waste away in prison, or do something for their homeland, regardless of political considerations. The shortage of officers, due to the NKVD executions as well as to the evacuations, was met by the use of Soviet officers (which was, of course, of benefit to the Soviet authorities).

The first armoured unit of the Ludowe Wojsko Polskie (LWP—'Polish People's Army') was the 1st 'Heroes of Westerplatte' Tank Regiment. This was expanded to the 1st 'Heroes of Westerplatte' Armd. Bde. on 19 August 1943, and attached to 1st Polish Army. Upon crossing the new Polish frontier the brigade took part in the action at Studzianki (August 1944), in the Praga district of Warsaw in September and in the 'liberation' of Warsaw in January 1945. It later fought at Bydgoszcz, for the Pommernstellung, as well as for



Gdansk and Gdynia. Units of the brigade (13th A-T Regt. and 4th Heavy Tank Regt.), took part in the capture of Berlin.

In August 1944 1 Armoured Corps was formed, consisting of 1st Motorised Inf. Bde., 2nd, 3rd and 4th Armd. Bdes.; an anti-tank regiment, a mortar regiment, the 1st Rocket Battery (M13), and the 26th Anti-Aircraft Artillery Regiment. 1 Armoured Corps fought along the axis Niesky—Bautzen—Dresden, followed by the thrust towards Czechoslovakia, eventually reaching the outskirts of Prague.

Apart from the above-mentioned units of the 1st and 2nd Polish Armies, there also existed the following armoured units: 3rd Training Tank Regt., 6th Independent Heavy Tank Regt., 7th Heavy Tank Regt.; 46th, 49th, 51st and 52nd Armd. Arty. Regiments.

The Plates

A1: TKS reconnaissance tank, 1 Platoon commander of a Reconnaissance Company; Poland, September 1939

This TKS bears the 1936 camouflage scheme of 'sand grey', medium green and dark brown, applied with an airbrush in horizontal swatches. The tactical markings, introduced in the early 1930s and officially in orange on pale blue-grey shapes, seem in practice to have been marked in red on white. The five tanks of 1 Platoon bore a white disc, those of 2 Platoon a white downwards-pointing triangle, and those of 3 Platoon a white square. Platoon commanders' tanks bore a red vertical stripe on the white shape, and assistant platoon commanders' tanks a red shape; the other three tanks displayed the white shape only. The company commander's marking was a white triangle, pointing either upwards or downwards, on a red disc, on a white square. In formations with more than one tank company it seems that red was replaced by another colour for company identification.

A2: 7TPjw (single turret), 2 Company Commander, 2nd Light Tank Battalion (2nd Armoured Battalion); Poland, September 1939

This tank is painted in standard 1936 camouflage. The two vertical white bars identify the company,



A well-armed Morris armoured car of the Carpathian Lancers, seen here as 2 Corps reconnaissance regiment; Iraq, December 1942. This vehicle sports a combined formation and unit code: a white mermaid on red, above the number 357 in white on black, above a white 'Corps troops' bar.

and the horizontal stripe below them, the company commander. We show the battalion's 'leaping wildcat' insignia on the turret, but it may have been overpainted upon mobilisation for war.

B1: Renault R35, 1 Bn. | 1st Tank Regt.; France, June 1940

This battalion received its R35s at Camp de Satory shortly after arriving from St Cécile-les-Vignes. It seems probable that there was no time to apply alternative markings, and that the tanks went to the front displaying their original French 'playing card' platoon tactical markings. The regiment's II Bn., originally equipped with R35s, had them replaced by newer R40s. The poppy is said to have been used as an unofficial marking by 10th Cavalry Bde., carried on the doors of wheeled transport, and apparently sometimes on the white grenade marking on French tanks. It is a pun on the name of the brigade commander, Gen. Stanislaw Maczek; 'maczek' in Polish is the diminutive form of 'poppy'.



A scene during exercises by 2nd Armd. Bde. in Egypt, shortly before it was to join the fighting in Italy. The Sherman is probably in desert finish of Light Mud and Blue-Black. Note the large funnel on the rear of the vehicle.

B2: Valentine, 2nd Tank Battalion, 16th Armoured Brigade; United Kingdom, January 1943

Apart from a few obsolete Mk.VIs, the Valentines were the first tanks issued to the Polish armoured units in Britain. They were used concurrently with Churchills and Covenanters, all eventually being replaced by Crusaders. This Valentine displays markings typical of the battalions of 16th Armd. Bde. at this period, in a line across the front of the vehicle. Left to right: the national marking, 'PL' in black on white oval; the black bridge number in a yellow circle; the unit code number in white on a green background; and the 1 Polish Corps sign, a white winged circle, on a black background. The number T1292858 is applied to both sides of the turret.

B3: Covenanter, 10th Mounted Rifles, 1st Polish Armoured Division; Haddington, UK, March 1943

The markings used prior to the introduction of the divisional sign in August follow the same system as on the Valentine, but with the unit code in white on red, and with the addition of the British red/white/red AFV recognition flash. Squadron tactical markings began to appear on the Polish tanks at about this time, following the British pattern: a hollow diamond identified regimental or battalion HQ; a hollow triangle, 'A' Squadron (in Polish nomenclature, '1' Squadron); a hollow square, 2 Sqn., and a hollow circle, 3 Sqn., the signs being painted in regimental colours in order of seniority within the brigade, in the sequence red, yellow, blue. Some units differentiated between platoons by painting letters or numbers within the squadron sign.

C1: Universal Carrier, Independent Carpathian Rifle Brigade; North Africa, 1941

A typical carrier of the brigade, its overall sand finish showing much wear and tear; the red-white-red AFV flash is displayed on sides and track-guards. On the front is the name 'Wilk' ('Wolf'), above an earlier, overpainted name. On the side the overpainted number T11113 is just visible. The formation sign of a white helmet, cuirass and wing on a red shield was adopted early in summer 1941; it was normally carried on the front left-hand and rear right-hand mudguards or fenders of vehicles, as well as on doors. It was replaced by a silver (grey) suit of armour on a red shield in January 1942, and this was replaced in its turn by the green spruce on the white-over-red background when the brigade was expanded to divisional establishment.

C2: Universal Carrier attached to Armoured Train 'G'; Norfolk, UK, 1942

The four carriers attached to this train all carried a characteristic sign combining elements of Cavalry and Armoured heraldry. Each also carried a girl's name: T63091 'Wanda', T63116 'Jaga', T63122 'Hanka', and T63124 'Baska'.

C3: Cromwell, HQ 1st Polish Armoured Division; Normandy, August 1944

The 'charger' of the divisional commander, Gen. of Div. Stanislaw Maczek; the visible turret crew normally consisted of Maczek and his GSO 3, Capt. Kamil Czarnecki. Finished in British Bronze Green overall, it has a horseshoe mascot fixed to the left trackguard. Turret markings are the name 'Hela' and the number T187921. Along the front hull, from left to right as viewed, are the unit code—'40' on black; the bridge group number in black on a yellow disc; the T-number; and the divisional sign, a black wing and helmet on a black-edged orange disc. Additional signs shown in the detail views are (C4) formation sign and unit code of 9th Malopolski Lancers as reconnaissance regiment of 2nd Polish Arm'd. Gren. Div., normally displayed side by side; (C5) formation sign of 16th Independent Arm'd. Bde.; (C6) pennon painted on the sides of drivers' and hull gunners' hatches on some Cromwells of 10th Mounted Rifles.



Sherman of 2 Sqn., 4th Arm'd. Regt. 'Skorpion' commanded by Officer Cadet Jarzembowski, shortly before moving into action at Monte Cassino, May 1944. Note the additional protective layer of sandbags. In the original print the black scorpion emblem is just visible on the turret side, partly obscured by the periscope and branches of the camouflage.

D1: Archer 17pdr SP, 7th Anti-Tank Regiment, 2 Polish Corps; Italy, 1944-45

The Archer was used in small numbers by this Corps anti-tank regiment, whose main equipment was the M10 Tank Destroyer. This is one of the few 2 Corps tracked vehicles to carry the Corps sign and unit codes. Finish is Bronze Green, faded by the Italian sun, and with the end of the barrel painted in lighter green and white for camouflage purposes. The 2 Corps formation sign, based on the arms of Warsaw, was sometimes seen with a blue rather than a red background, signifying 2 Corps Base.

D2-D8: Pennants

A selection of the many and varied pennants carried by Polish vehicles; the majority were enlarged versions of the uniform collar pennons: (D2) CO, 10th Mounted Rifles; (D3) 2 Sqn. commander, 10th Mtd. Rifles; (D4) 3 Sqn., 10th



Staghound 'Smok' ('Dragon') of the Carpathian Lancers (2 Corps reconnaissance regiment) photographed in Italy in the summer of 1944. Note the combined formation and unit code sign, with white bar at the top. It is just possible to make out the line of red piping above the standing trooper's beret edging.

Dragoons; (D6) 1 Sqn., Carpathian Lancers.

The identification of squadrons followed the pre-war system under which each squadron had a coloured square, and the HQ had a square made up of the different squadron squares. The official, though by no means universal sequence, was red (top left), white (top right), yellow (bottom left) and blue (bottom right).

(D5) Pennant of CO, 2nd Armd. Regt.; this was introduced when the regiment was part of 16th Armd. Bde., 1st and 3rd Regts. having similar patterns. On one side is the dragon of Armoured Forces, which had been used as the brigade sign; on the other is the commemorative badge of the regiment.

(D7) Pennant of Gen. Bronislaw Rakowski as commander of 2nd 'Warszawska' Armd. Bde.

(D8) Pennant of HQ, 2nd Armd. Bde., 2nd Armd. Div.

E1: Jeep, Provost Company, 2nd 'Warszawska' Armoured Division; Italy, 1945

On an overall finish of US Olive Drab are marked the following: red 'Zandermeria' stencilled on white fender, and Polish 'Military Police' stencilled in red on white below the windscreen. White Allied star on bonnet, and number 5626338 on sides. Black on yellow bridge group sign below windscreen. Black plate edged white with unit code '43'; white plate edged black with black stencilled formation sign.

The selection of formation signs as marked on Polish vehicles is as follows:

(E2) 7th Inf. Div.; (E3) 6th 'Lwowska' Inf. Div.; (E4) HQ Polish Army Middle East; (E5) Polish Units Middle East; (E6) HQ Polish Units Great Britain. The 3rd Carpathian Rifle Div. used its familiar green spruce tree on a white-over-red square; and 5th 'Kresowa' Inf. Div. its brown bison on a yellow background.

E7: Sexton 25pdr SP, 1 Troop, 1st Motorised Artillery Regiment, 1st Armoured Division; Germany, 1945

Painted overall Bronze Green, the Sexton bears in the top corner of the frontal armour the skull-and-crossbones of the 'Troop of Death'—see also Plate H12. Below this is the vehicle name 'Breda'; the others in this troop bore the names 'Dytiatyn', 'Jordanow', and 'Zboiska', and the troop commander's Sherman the name 'Stryj'. Below these markings is the divisional sign; and on the right, the artillery tactical sign and unit code. The 7th Horse Artillery Regt. of 2nd Armd. Div. also used Sextons.

F1: Sherman M4A4, 2 Squadron, 1st Armd. Regt., 1st Armd. Div.; Normandy, August 1944

Typical of divisional Shermans early in the NW Europe campaign, this tank has additional armour and stowage bins welded on. The rather bold Allied star and squadron sign were later muted somewhat. Note slogans chalked by the liberated population. The practice of painting names on vehicles was not as widespread in 1st as in 2nd Armd. Div.; four representative Sherman names are shown, including 'Kitus II', the M4A1 (76mm) W number T262411 commanded by Lt. Janusz Barbarski of 2nd Armd. Regt. of this division.

F2: Sherman M4A1 (76mm) W, Colour party, 2nd Armd. Regt., 1st Armd. Div.; Meppen, Germany, 3 May 1946

Commanded by Lt. Jerzy Niewinowski, with WO1 Aleksander Jarzembowski, this Sherman in full parade order still displays the numerous welded-on track plates used for additional protection, and the *trompe l'oeil* painting of the end of the 76mm gun barrel, both reminiscent of its fighting days. The regiment received the 76mm Sherman during the winter of 1944/45. The finish is overall Bronze Green, with a slight sheen from an 'oily rub-down'; the markings are mounted on detachable tin plates—the formation sign and bridge group number on one, the unit code on the other—since the glacis is obscured by the track plates. The Regimental Colour had been presented



Scout car of Reconnaissance Platoon 1st 'Krechowiecki' Lancers, 2nd 'Warszawska' Armd. Div.; Lt. Col. K. Zaorski, the regiment's commander, greeting Gen. B. Rakowski, GOC 2nd Armd. Div. on the Regimental Day—24 July 1945—at Loreto, Italy. The name 'Korsarz II' as well as the diamond, horse's head and letter 'R' are painted yellow. Note the old marking of 3 Sqn. below.

to the unit by the Belgian town of Beveren Waas on 2 March 1946.

G1: Sherman M4A2, HQ 2nd Armoured Brigade; Egypt, 1943

One of the new Shermans with which the brigade was re-equipped in readiness for the Italian campaign, seen during exercises at Quassasin. It is camouflaged in the then-current British desert scheme of Light Mud and Blue-Black, and bears two names: 'Helunia' on the turret, and 'Taza-Khurmatli' on the hull sides. The turret name is that of the tank's 'godmother'—usually a member of Polish Women's Army Corps; the hull name was that of a place which figured in brigade history, in this case a camp of this name in Iraq. The pennants are characteristic of this brigade; two orange-and-black chequered flags identify



Brigade HQ. The Brigade Commander carried one chequered flag above one triangular pennant; the commander of the HQ Platoon flew one chequered flag above one triangular pennant halved blue over brown. Each regiment in the brigade flew a different combination of two pennants in contrasting shapes and colours.

G2: Sherman VC Firefly (M4A4), 2 Sqn., 1st 'Krechowiecki' Lancers, 2nd 'Warszawska' Armd. Div.; Italy, 1944-45

The usual Bronze Green finish, with a length of lighter green above white at the end of the gun barrel. The tanks of 2nd Armd. Bde. carried their names painted in large letters in the regimental

Line-up of Shermans of the 4th 'Skorpion' Armd. Regt. during the parade taken by Field Marshal Alexander at Loreto on 15 August 1945. The tank in the foreground is that of the regimental commander, Lt. Col. Z. Dudzinski. Note the black scorpion on the red diamond of HQ Sqn., as well as the regimental commander's pennant, combining the colours of the squadrons in the four squares: red, white, yellow and blue. The markings on the side of the hull were apparently used for ranging guns.

The Sherman 'Acroma' of HQ Sqn., Carpathian Lancers being carried by a transporter of 2nd Armd. Bde. Workshop; Civitanova, June 1946. The emblem within the white tactical sign is the combined palms and crescent moon of the regiment, often on the blue-over-red pennon. Note the large towing hooks at the rear of the Sherman.





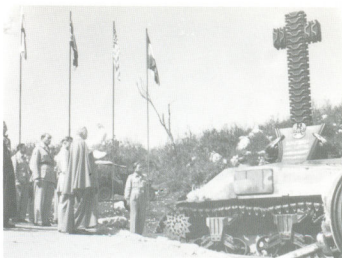
Officers of the 10th Hussars, of the newly formed 14th 'Wielkopolska' Armd. Bde.; Egypt, 1945. Note the hussar knot carried on the beret to the left of the eagle. This regiment was the only Polish unit to wear a gold eagle, buttons and rank badges.

seniority colour—i.e. red, yellow and blue respectively for the 4th Armd. Regt., 1st Lancers and 6th Armd. Regt.; this colour was also used for the squadron signs on the turrets. Regimental emblems were added to these squadron signs, in the manner illustrated in Vanguard 26, *The Sherman Tank in US and Allied Service*, Plate D2: a black scorpion in 4th Armd. Regt.'s red sign, a yellow horse-head in 1st Lancers' yellow sign, and a yellow lion in 6th Armd. Regt.'s blue sign.

The tanks of HQ Sqn. and Recce Platoon had names starting with 'K' in this regiment; e.g. 'Krechowiak', the CO's tank. Tanks of 1, 2 and 3 Sqns. had names starting with 'B', 'R' and 'Z' respectively; e.g. 'Burza', 'Rozmach' and 'Zwyciesca', the three squadron commanders' tanks. The divisional recce regiment, Carpathian Lancers, used white squadron signs enclosing their regimental collar pennon with a palms and crescent superimposed—again, see Vanguard 26. Note that in 2 Corps armoured units did not as a rule carry the formation sign or unit codes, or the 'PL' plate. Allied white stars were usually limited to horizontal surfaces for air recognition.

H: Selection of uniform insignia worn by the Armoured Forces of Poland, 1939–47

(H1) Typical Other Ranks' beret eagle in white embroidery; officers generally had silver wire embroidery, and some regiments retained the metal type.



Consecration of the memorial to the fallen of the 4th Armd. Regt. at the 'Bottleneck', Cassino, May 1946. The Polish armed forces, after six years of armed struggle, now faced a future in exile, having no independent homeland to return to.

Sad farewell: 4th Armd. Regt. Sherman crew handing over their tanks prior to leaving Italy for the United Kingdom in 1946. The Polish armed forces, after six years of armed struggle, now faced a future in exile, having no independent homeland to return to.





'Chwat', the Hetzer captured by the Home Army during the Warsaw Uprising of August 1944, and turned against its former owners. Note the name and Army-style eagle painted low on the glacis plate.

(H2) 1st Armoured Division insignia, based on the 17th century Polish heavy cavalry helmet and wing. The division's other characteristic insignia was the black left shoulder strap, initially worn only by 10th Armd. Cavalry Bde. and from 1943 by the whole division, in memory of the black leather coats worn by the brigade in 1939.

(H3) 2nd 'Warszawska' Armoured Division insignia, based on pre-war Armoured Forces insignia. This was the only formation which used a system of coloured stripes, identifying units, beneath the shoulder patch, similar in proportions to the British 'arm of service' stripe: e.g. white (Carpathian Lancers), red (4th Armd. Regt.), yellow (1st Lancers) and blue (6th Armd. Regt.).

(H4) 2 Corps insignia, worn initially by Corps troops only, but with the transfer of the corps to the UK in 1946 worn by all units above their own sign.

(H5) 14th 'Wielkopolska' Armd. Bde.

(H6) 16th Tank Bde. (former 1st Tank Regt. insignia)

(H7) 16th Independent Armd. Bde.

(H8) Honorary insignia of 1st Armd. Regt., worn on right shoulder; the coat of arms of St Nicolas, Belgium, presented—along with the Regimental Colour—in 1946.

(H9) Honorary insignia, 2nd Armd. Regt., worn as above. The coat of arms of Beveren Waas, Belgium.

(H10) Honorary insignia, 10th Dragoons: the cross of St Andrew and the arms of Lanarkshire, Scotland.

(H11) Honorary insignia, 1 Troop, 1st Mot. Arty. Regt.: this unapproved insignia commemorates 4 Troop, 1st Mountain Arty. Regt. which bore the title 'Troop of Death' after being annihilated at the battle of Dytiatyn in 1920. The first examples of the insignia were improvised using captured German tradition badges.

Two other honorary insignia were worn on the right sleeve in 1st Armd. Div.: the arms of Breda, Holland, by 8th Rifle Bn., and those of Exaarde, Belgium, by 1st Light Anti-Aircraft Regt.

(H12) Beret emblem, worn alongside national eagle by HQ, 2nd Armd. Bde.

(H13) Beret emblem, 4th 'Skorpion' Armd. Regt.

(H14) Beret emblem, 6th 'Dzieci Lwowski' Armd. Regt.

(H15) Beret emblem, 7th Armd. Regt.

(H16) Beret emblem, 9th Forward Delivery Sqdn., 2nd Armd. Div.

(H17) Collar pennon, Carpathian Lancers: this regiment also wore narrow red piping around the

'Kubus', an armoured car constructed by the Home Army and used with some success in Warsaw in August 1944.





brow-band of the black beret above the leather edging.

(H18) Collar pennon, 10th Hussars; (H19) Beret emblem, 10th Hussars

(H20) Collar pennon, 9th Forward Delivery Sqn.

(H21) Collar pennon, 4th 'Skorpion' Armd. Regt.

(H22) Collar pennon, 7th Armd. Regt.

This photograph from Communist sources is described as showing T-34 tanks of the Ludowe Wojsko Polskie, carrying Lend-Lease jeeps 'piggyback', and loading on to barges in preparation for crossing the Vistula. The most common emblem carried by LWP armour was the white-painted eagle of the Piast Dynasty on the turret sides; see Vanguard 14, *The T-34 Tank*.

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Much of this book has been based upon material held by the Polish Institute and Sikorski Museum, 20 Princes Gate, London SW7. Founded in 1945 to house the archives of the Polish Government in Exile and the Armed Forces after the recognition of the Communist government in Warsaw by the other Allies, the Institute is open to the public for viewing and for study purposes. It houses important civilian

and military papers, war diaries, commemorative books and albums, an important photographic collection, and a large number of exhibits relating to Poland, and particularly to her Armed Forces—ranging from 17th century armour, through Napoleonic headgear, regimental colours, and uniforms and insignia of the Second World War to such items as the Enigma coding machine.

Notes sur les planches en couleur

A1: Gamme de camouflage 'gris sable', gris et brun en rayures horizontales, en 1936. L'insigne rouge et blanc identifie le commandant du 1^{er} peloton d'une compagnie de reconnaissance. Les pelotons de cinq chars étaient identifiés par un cercle, un triangle ou un carré. Le commandant de peloton a une rayure rouge, son second un rond rouge et les autres chars le symbole blanc uni. **A2:** Les barres blanches indiquent la 1^{re} Compagnie et la rayure horizontale, le commandant de compagnie.

B1: Les marquages français d'origine ont été conservés par manque de temps avant d'entrer en action. L'insigne sur le pavot n'était pas officiel; il était utilisé par la 10^{ème} Brigade de cavalerie sur les portes des véhicules pour rappeler le nom du général Maczek, en Polonais 'petit pavot'. **B2:** De gauche à droite, les marquages sont: les initiales nationales, le code de poids de pontage, le numéro de code de l'unité sur fond vert et le sigle du 1^{er} Corps polonais. **B3:** Marquages utilisés avant août 1942, semblables à ceux de B2 mais avec le sigle d'unité sur fond rouge et le parement de reconnaissance rouge-blanc-rouge anglais de véhicule blindé. Les symboles d'escadron anglais étaient placés sur la tourelle.

C1: 'Wilk' signifie 'Loup'. Le sigle de la brigade a changé plusieurs fois; à l'origine c'était un casque, un plateau de cuisine et une aile blanche sur bouclier rouge; au début de 1942 c'était une armure argent sur fond rouge et quand la brigade s'étendit à une division, il devint un arbre verdoyant sur carré rouge et blanc. **C2:** Les quatre 'carriers' attachés à cette unité blindée du train porte les noms 'Wanda' (T63091), 'Jaga' (T63116), 'Hanka' (T63122), 'Baska' (T63124); l'insigne est une combinaison des motifs de cavalerie et de blindés. **C3:** 'Hela' (T187921) le char du général Maczek, porte des maquages habituels, y compris le casque ailé noir et orange de la division. Notez le fer à cheval porte-bouclier attaché au pare-chocs.

D1: Il y avait peu de véhicules à chenilles du 2^{ème} Corps polonais portant l'insigne du corps (une sirène) et le numéro de code de l'unité. Notez l'extrémité du fusil en vert clair et blanc. **D2:** Commandant, 10^{ème} Chasseurs à cheval.

D3: Commandant, 2^{ème} Escadron, 10^{ème} Chasseurs à cheval. **D4:** 1^{er} Escadron, 10^{ème} Dragons. **D5:** Commandant, 1^{er} Régiment blindé. **D6:** 1^{er} Escadron, Lanciers des Carpathes. **D7:** Le général Rakowski, commandant de la 2^{ème} Brigade blindée. **D8:** Quartiers-Généraux, 2^{ème} Brigade blindée, 2^{ème} Division blindée.

E1: Le '43' identifie la Compagnie de police militaire; l'insigne, la division. 'Zandarmieria' = police militaire. **E2:** La tête de mort blanche au dessus du nom du véhicule était le sigle de peloton. Les insignes montrés en détail sont: 1; 1^{er} Division d'infanterie; 2; 6^{ème} Div. d'infant; 3; Quartiers Généraux de l'armée polonaise de l'Est; 4; Unités polonaises au Moyen-Orient; 5; Unités polonaises en Angleterre.

F1: Notez les slogans inscrits à la craie sur les chars, par des civils. L'équipement extérieur et le type de couleurs était typique de l'Europe du nord-ouest en 1944-45. Les noms alternatifs montrés ici étaient tous inscrits sur les Sherman de cette division. **F2:** Insigne peint sur les plaques amovibles à cause du grand nombre de maillons de chenilles soudés en super-blindage. Le fanion du régiment, arboré pendant les défilés, avait été offert par la ville belge de Beveren Waas.

G1: Étant aux couleurs du désert, ce char s'entraîne à l'invasion de l'Italie. 'Helunia' était le nom de sa marraine, d'habitude une des femmes du Corps d'Armée Féminine Polonaise, et 'Taza-Khurmatli' était le nom d'un camp en Irak où la brigade avait été basée. Cette combinaison de lettres identifie un char du quartier-général de brigade. **G2:** Notez cette fois encore le canon de fusil en 'trompe-œil' pour décevoir les ennemis. Les noms étaient peints en couleurs différentes selon les unités de brigade: rouge; 1^{er} Régiment blindé; jaune; 1^{er} Lanciers; bleu; 6^{ème} Régiment blindé. L'insigne d'escadron sur la tourelle était accompagné de sigles différents pour chaque régiment: scorpion noir; 4^{ème} Régiment blindé; tête de cheval jaune; 1^{er} Lanciers; lion jaune; 6^{ème} Régiment blindé. Les chars du 2^{ème} Corps ne portaient pas d'insigne de division ni de numéro de code d'unité.

H: Insignes d'uniforme: par manque de place, voir les identifications dans le texte anglais.

Farbtafeln

A1: 1936er Tarnfarbenschema von 'sandgrau', grün und braun, aufgesprüht in horizontalen Streifen. Das rot und weisse Abzeichen lässt den Kommandeur des 2. Zuges einer Aufklärungskompanie erkennen. Die fünf-Panzer-Züge wurden durch einen Kreis, ein Dreieck oder ein Quadrat identifiziert. Der Zugführer hatte einen roten Streifen, sein Stellvertreter eine rote Scheibe, und andere Panzer nur das einfache weisse Symbol. **A2:** Weisse Riegel zeigen die 1. Kompanie und der horizontale Streifen den Kompaniekommandeur an.

B1: Die original französischen Markierungen wurden beibehalten, da sie aus Zeitmangel vor dem Einsatz nicht gewechselt werden konnten. Mohlblütenabzeichen, als inoffizielles Symbol der 10. Kavallerie-Brigade benutzt, und auf den Türen der berärderten Fahrzeuge war ein 'Wortspiel' auf den Namen des Generals Maczek, was 'kleine Mohlblüte' heisst, gezeichnet. **B2:** Die Markierungen von links nach rechts sind: nationale Initialen, Brückengewichtcode, Einheits-Codenummer auf grün, 1. polnisches Korpsabzeichen. **B3:** Die Markierungen, benutzt vor dem August 1942, sind denen von B2 ähnlich, jedoch mit dem Einheits-Code auf rotem Hintergrund, und britischem rot-weiss-rotem Erkennungsschild der gepanzerten Fahrzeuge. Die britischen Schwadronen-symbole waren am Turm markiert.

C1: Der Name 'Wilk' meint 'Wolf'. Das Brigadenabzeichen wechselte verschiedene Male; es wechselte vom ursprünglichen weissen Helm, Brustplatte und Flügel auf einen roten Schild, anfangs 1942 zu einer silbernen Rüstung auf rot und mit der Erweiterung der Brigade in eine Division zu dem grünen Fichtenbaum auf einem weissen und roten Quadrat über. **C2:** Die vier 'carriers', die dieser gepanzerten Zügeinheit angeschlossen waren, trugen die Namen 'Wanda' (T63091), 'Jaga' (T63116), 'Hanka' (T63122), 'Baska' (T63124); das Abzeichen vereint die Kavallerie- und Panzermotive. **C3:** Gen. Maczeks Panzer 'Hela' (T187921) trägt die normalen Markierungen, einschliesslich des orangefarbenen und schwarzen gelagerten Helmbalzschirms der Division. Bemerkte den Hufeisen-Talisman, der am Kettenschutz befestigt ist.

D1: Eines der wenigen Kettenfahrzeuge des 2. polnischen Korps, welches das Korpsabzeichen — eine Meerjungfrau — und Einheits-Code-nummern trägt. Bemerkte, die Spitze des Geschützrohres ist hellgrün und weiss bemalt. **D2:** Kommandeur, 10. Jäger zu Pferde. **D3:** Kommandeur, 2. Schwadron, 10. Jäger zu Pferde. **D4:** 3. Schwadron, 10. Dragoner. Kommandeur, 2. Panzerregiment. **D5:** 1. Schwadron, karpatische Ulanen. **D7:** Gen. Rakowski, die 2. Panzerbrigade kommandierend. **D8:** Hauptquartiere, 2. Panzerbrigade, 2. Panzerdivision.

E1: Die '43' lässt die Feldgendarmarie-Kompanie erkennen; das Abzeichen, die Division. 'Zandarmieria' = Feldgendarmarie. **E2:** Der weisse Totenkopf über dem Fahrzeugnamen war das Zugabzeichen. Die im Einzelnen gezeigten Abzeichen sind (1) 7. Inf. Div., (2) 6. Inf. Div., 3. Hauptquartiere der polnischen Armee im Osten, 4. polnische Einheiten im mittleren Osten, 5. polnische Einheiten in Grossbritannien.

F1: Bemerkte die Wahlsprüche von Zivilisten mit Kreide auf die Panzer gemalt. Aussere Ausrüstung und gesamtes Farbschema ist typisch für Nordwest-Europa im Jahr 1944-45. Die gezeigten Alternativen wurden alle von den 'Shermans' dieser Division getragen. **F2:** Das Abzeichen ist auf abnehmbare Platten gemalt, da eine grosse Anzahl von Ersatzkettengliedern als extra Panzerung anwesend heisst waren. Die regimentale Fahne, für Paraden getragen war ein Geschenk der belgischen Stadt Beveren Waas.

G1: Wüstenfarbenschema, gezeigt von einem Panzer im Training für die italienische Invasion. 'Helunia' war der Name der 'Patin' für diesen Panzer; gewöhnlich ein Mitglied des polnischen Frauenarmekorps — und 'Taza-Khurmatli' war der Name eines Lagens im Irak, wo die Brigade gedient hatte. Diese Kombination von Wimpeln lässt den Panzer des Brigaden-Hauptquartieres erkennen. **G2:** Bemerkte wiederum das Anmalen der Rohrspitze, und die feindlichen Schilder zu beschüssen. Die Namen wurden von den Brigadeeinheiten in verschiedenen Farben gemalt: 4. Panzerregiment, gelb (1. Ulanen) und blau (6. Panzerregiment). Die Schwadronenabzeichen an den Türen hatten in jedem Regiment Abzeichen hinzugefügt — schwarzes Skorpion (4. Panzerregiment), gelber Pferdekopf (1. Ulanen) und gelber Löwe (6. Panzerregiment). Panzer des 2. Korps haben keine divisionellen Abzeichen oder Einheits-Codenummern getragen.

H: Uniformabzeichen — aus Platzgründen siehe Identifizierung im englischen Sprachtext.

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KRZYSZTOF BARBARSKI was born in England in 1947, the son of a tank commander who served with the 2nd Polish Armoured Regiment in the North-West Europe campaign of 1944-45, and of a Polish woman whose captivity in Oberlangen camp was ended by the arrival of Janusz Barbarski's Sherman. By profession

a chartered structural engineer, he spends much of what little spare time he has at the Polish Institute and Sikorski Museum in London, where he holds the post of Honorary Assistant Curator, specialising in uniforms and insignia. He is married, with two daughters, and lives in Surrey.

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