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camouflaged so that they can not be discovered from hostile observation posts. The disposition in depth reaches from the front line as far rearwards as the artillery positions, since it is the artillery that represents the objective of the penetrating combat vehicles.

Command posts, positions of reserves, and the most important roads must be first of all protected by obstacles and defensive weapons.

**THE RUSSO-POLISH WAR, 1919-1920.
NONCRITICAL AND CRITICAL VIEWS.***

(PART II)

By Major F. Doring, Infantry

Commissar Kamenew inspected the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Armies on 20 April, 1920, and, not being satisfied with the measures taken, ordered that in the future all reinforcements be sent to the north group (Sixteenth Army).

On the same date a conference of Polish leaders took place at Molodeczno, during which General Majewski, commander of the First Army, suggested an offensive in the direction of Witebsk and Orscha. This was approved and he was directed to take the necessary steps and prepare plans. At a meeting between Pilsudski and the commanders of the Polish First and Fourth Armies on 11 May, the commander of the latter reported a Russian troop concentration in the vicinity of Witebsk, which clearly pointed to an early Russian offensive. Pilsudski, however, did not share this view and directed the Fourth Army to prepare for an offensive on 17 May, in which the right flank of the Fourth Army was to attack towards Zlobin—Rogaczew. But before the Poles were ready to attack, the Russians commenced their offensive. The Russian Fifteenth Army consisted of nine divisions, the Sixteenth Army of six, and the Group Mozyr of two, while four additional divisions were located between Witebsk and Orscha. The Russian plan provided for the Fifteenth Army, making the main effort, to destroy the Polish north flank and then to drive the Polish forces south into the marshes of

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*See RML No. 52, page 43, for first installment of this series.

Pinsk. The Russian Sixteenth Army was to force a crossing of the Berezina and attack in the direction of Igumen in order to keep the Polish in the south from assisting the northern group.

The Russian offensive on the north started on 14 May and drove the Polish Army, which had used all its reserves, to the line: Berezina—Plissa—See—Perebrodje. The Polish high command moved the 17th Division from Lida to Dokoszycy and the 4th Division from Korosten in the Ukraine to Minsk and placed the First Army under the command of General Szeptycki. The mass of the Polish Fourth Army was concentrated on its right (south) flank and could not come to the assistance of the First Army. On 20 May the Russian Sixteenth Army began its offensive and advanced on Igumen.

The Russians reached the line: Zembin—Budslaw—Miadziol by 27 May. A counterattack by the Polish Fourth Army drove the Russian Sixteenth Army in rear of the Berezina again. In the meantime, Pilsudski caused the concentration of the Polish Seventh Army (Reserve Army) under command of General Sosnkowski, in rear of the north flank of the Polish First Army. It was Pilsudski's plan to have General Skierski's group attack from the south and the Seventh Army in a northeasterly direction in order to encircle the Russian forces. But while the Russians were forced back, the encircling did not materialize. When the Poles reached the line: Zembin—Drissa, Pilsudski ordered the advance stopped and the Polish forces took up a defensive position. The first Russian offensive was a failure, but it forced Pilsudski to use all of his reserves and to weaken the Ukrainian front by three and one-half divisions.

In the Ukraine a new and dangerous opponent had appeared. A former Russian noncommissioned officer by the name of Budennij had raised a cavalry division with which he defeated Denekin's cavalry in the winter, 1919-1920. After this he raised his cavalry to 4 divisions of 6 regiments each and a special brigade of 3 regiments. This force left the vicinity of Rostow for the Ukraine, and arrived at Human on 27 May. Budennij's cavalry was recruited from Cossacks of all kinds: Kirgbitz, Tartars, Turcomans, and others. They were mostly a wild lot of ruffians and their brutalities and

excesses of all kinds recalled the old Asiatic invasions of past centuries. This force also had artillery, armored cars, and numerous machine guns, and was therefore an army to be reckoned with. Budennij, who possessed remarkable energy and ruthlessness, preferred to attack by surprise and to avoid all loss. He was a master of rapid movement. On the other hand, he was full of caprice and very obstinate. He executed orders and plans only when it fitted in with his own plans. He excelled in raids and against loosely organized Polish cavalry and at the beginning scored success after success. But when his troops met the better organized corps of General Romml, they could not stand the test. Budennij was not trained in the handling of large units. Although he could claim some great achievements, he suffered not infrequent failure.

We find in Budennij an example that daring and will power do not alone make a great leader. At the conclusion of the operation at Kiew, the Polish troops took up a defensive position (see Sketch No. 3). The Poles were short of reserves, especially after several divisions had to be sent to the north front. Why the Poles took up a defensive position at this time can not be accounted for. Perhaps the improperly trained troops did not permit maneuver and open warfare. During the second part of May the Russians reorganized, received reinforcements, and awaited the arrival of Budennij. It was their intention to start the offensive as soon as the offensive in the north came to a conclusion.

The Russian plan was to have its Twelfth Army and the Group Jakir advance on 28 May against the north flank of the Polish Third Army. At the same time the Russian Fourteenth Army was to attack the Polish Sixth Army. The cavalry forces of Budennij was to effect a breakthrough south of the Russian Group Jakir, then turn north and complete the encircling of the Polish Third Army. This plan was unsuccessful. The attack of the Russian Twelfth Army was repulsed on 28 May. Group Jaker advanced as far as Bjelaja Cerkow, but a Polish counterattack on 30 May drove this group back. The Russian Fourteenth Army apparently did not attack at all.

The commander of the Polish troops opposite Budennij ordered the Polish 13th Division to advance, but recalled this order later; this latter order was received only by parts of

the division. So, on 29 May we find several Polish battalions with artillery advancing in an easterly direction, when Budennij's cavalry, without having any information of the Polish troops, advanced on a broad front (see Sketch No. 5). His 6th Cavalry Division successfully attacked parts of the Polish 13th Division and succeeded in creating a large gap in the Polish front and then advanced to the vicinity of Lipowiec. The 11th Cavalry Division was unsuccessful in its attack on Dzionkow. The 4th Cavalry Division took Nowe Chwastow, but a Polish counterattack drove the cavalry back again. The remainder of Budennij's cavalry (14th Cavalry Division and a reinforced brigade) was in reserve.

Instead of exploiting the success of the 6th Cavalry Division, Budennij attacked on the front: Dzionkow—Nowe Chwastow.

Using all available reserve, the Poles were successful in driving back the 6th Cavalry Division on 31 May (see Sketch 6).

The Russian 11th Cavalry Division, however, was able to break through the Polish lines on 31 May and advanced on Kozatin.

During the night, 31 May-1 June, the commander of the Polish 13th Division moved his reserves and forced the Russian 11th Cavalry Division to withdraw. The Polish Cavalry Division Karnicki attacked in a southerly direction, but was forced back by the Russian 11th and 14th Cavalry Divisions (see Sketch No. 7).

Budennij, having concentrated all his mass (unnoticed by the Poles) on his right flank, attacked during the early hours of 5 June with three divisions in front, and one-half division echeloned to his left rear and broke the Polish front. A counterattack by the Polish cavalry brigade was unsuccessful.

In the meantime the Russian Twelfth Army had crossed the Dnjepr River at and south of Czernobyl. This situation placed the Polish Third Army in a precarious position, especially if Budennij followed orders and moved north, but he moved on the railroad center Kozatin and then via Berdyczew on Zytomir, where a Polish Army had its headquarters.

The Russian Twelfth Army advanced very slowly and on 8 June Budennij moved east and instead of meeting Polish forces, ran into the Russian group Jakir. Budennij now

decided to move on his own and advanced in a southwesterly direction on Starokonstantinow. The Polish high command decided on 8 June to withdraw via Malin—Korosten and take up a new defensive position.

The Russian forces did not press the encircling of the Polish Third Army and a radio message to Budennij to change direction and advance against the withdrawing Polish Third Army was executed too late to be effective. The Polish Third Army was therefore able to withdraw in three columns from its position between 11 and 13 June. On 13 and 14 June the south column met units of Budennij's cavalry, but the Polish 7th Division was successful in driving the Russian cavalry off. Budennij ordered a rest for 16 June.

On this day the Polish Third Army took up a position in the vicinity of Korosten, having contacted on the north with the Polish Group Polesie and on the south with the Polish Group Slucz. South of this group was a large gap. The Polish Sixth Army did not start its withdrawal until 13 June, when it withdrew to the line: Mogilew—Bar—Leticzew—Ljubar (see Sketch No. 4). The Russian Fourteenth Army closely followed the Polish Third Army. Budennij's cavalry being reinforced by two infantry divisions, moved on the Polish Group Slucz.

The Russian Twelfth Army took Owruetz on 20 June and crossed the Slaweczna on 22 June and on 23 June drove the Poles about 12 miles south of Mozyr. On 24 June Budennij drove the Polish Group Slucz back, which forced the Polish Third Army to withdraw in rear of the Ubort. Budennij kept on pressing the Poles, who withdrew to the Goryn. The Polish Sixth Army withdrew its north flank to Starokonstantinow. On 26 June the Russian Twelfth Army attacked Mozyr in conjunction with gunboats, which took the town under fire. On 28 June the Polish Group Polesie withdrew in rear of the Ubort and Ptycz.

The Polish high command now replaced General Listowski with General Rydz-Smigly, and command of the group Slucz was given to General Raszewski. Sketch No. 4 gives the situation at the end of June. Pilsudski notified the army commanders and front groups that no more reserves were available and that they had to depend on their own strength.

Why did the Poles suffer such reverses in the Ukraine?

