

TAC NEWS

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March - April 2003

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POLISH CAVALRY REGIMENT - 1939

A Famous Unit that you can model!



Lets face it. We all love tanks. And many prefer big, late war vehicles. Not that there is anything wrong with this interest, but this issue of Tacnews hopes to offer another fascinating unit, one that we have all heard about, and one that you might not otherwise consider.

We have all heard about the Polish cavalry foolheartedly charging German panzers. Truth be told, the only real instance where the Poles attempted anything like this was one instance in the closing days of the campaign. As substantial remnants of several infantry divisions were racing to cross the border into neutral Rumania, some cavalrymen, seeking to divert the attention of the German pursuers, did "attack" panzers. Indeed, the operation was a suicidal strategic victory: many of the units of free Poles that fought

alongside the Allies for the next 5 years managed to escape due to the sacrifice of the gallant cavalry.

Gallantry and sacrifice were not uncommon among the records of the Polish cavalry units. The geography of Poland, wide open steppes, broken by vast forests, had led to the development of skilled horsemen. Cavalry units had been the pride of the military, gathering the most skilled and ambitious officers. From the Winged Hussars of the 16th century, through Napoleon's Lancers of the Imperial Guard, Poland had a rich mounted history.

The recent history of the Polish state also molded the army that fought in 1939. The Treaty of Versailles had established the modern state of Poland, but war, particularly with Bolshevik Russia, was

required to settle the borders. This war of independence had been waged, significantly, on horseback (so few modern weapons were employed that traditional mounted operations continued to be more survivable). This experience, combined with a struggling economy, led to a military that was antiquated by the standards of other European nations in 1939. The Polish High Command realized their obsolescence. A plan was in place to modernize the cavalry into motorized brigades. When war came in September of 1939, this plan's implementation was still embryonic.

Cavalry was organized into 11 brigades and 12 squadrons of Frontier Guards. 5 of the brigades had 4 regiments ("*Nowogrodek*", "*Pomorze*", "*Wolyn*", "*Suwalki*", and "*Podol*") and 6 brigades had 3 regi-

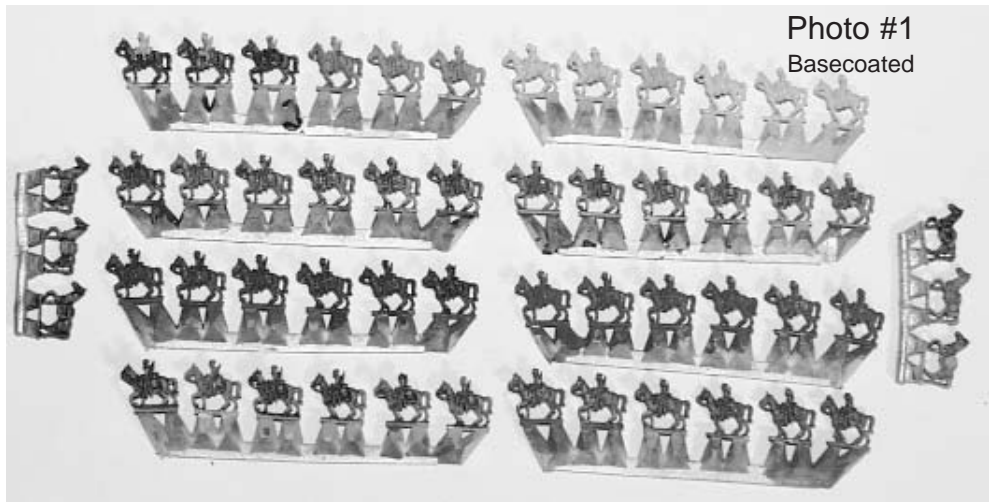
ments ("Podlasie", "Mozowsze", "Wilno", "Kresy", "Krakow", and "Wielkopolsk"). These names primarily noted the region from which the units were recruited.

The Regiment

To command a cavalry regiment in GHQ Micro Armour®: The Game - WWII, you will need the following stands:

- 1 x HQ (Mtd)
- 4 x Cavalry Squadrons
 - each 4 x Cavalry stands
- 1 x Cavalry Support Squadron
 - 1 x 37mm ATG stand
 - 1 x limber stand
 - 2 x Cavalry Support stands
 - 1 x *Taczanka* stand
 - 1 x WZ34 AC stand

Each stand represents a platoon.



This would be a great command for one player, though two could also command it.

PAINTING CAVALRY

When painting GHQ's sprued infantry and cavalry, it is easiest if you paint them while they are still mounted on the sprue ("tree"). This will provide an easy handle while painting them. As always, examine the troops carefully, and remove any vents and part line using a #11 hobby knife. You can remove them

after the paint job is completed.

Most gamers slap some brown, black and white paint onto horses, and figure that they are "good enough." If any old brown isn't good enough for German tanks, then it isn't good enough for horses. Before painting your new command, find some color pictures of horses, and then get paints to match the correct shades.

Begin by basecoating the horses, using several different colors. Use a good sized brush, and paint all of the horses on one sprue the same color. In most units, most of the horses are brown, a few bays, a few black, and very few white. You will need 11 sprues of cavalry, or 2 packs of



Photo #2
After washes

on the same sprue are washed with the same wash. Variety is key here. (Some photos show entire squadrons with horse of the same color, a lengthy tradition.)

The next step is to drybrush highlites onto the horses. Lighter tans, or gray on the bays, etc. really brings out the life in these horses! Some can have white socks, or stripes painted onto their faces.

Once you are happy with the horses, get out some magnification and a fine sable brush and start painting the tack, the saddle blankets, and the men. Uniforms and hats are khaki brown, saddle blankets khaki or gray, rifles and leather (including the tack) are dark brown, and skin (faces and hands) flesh. For the pack horses, the equipment should be a mix of grays, greens, and browns. When all are looking good, paint the bases under the horses medium green. After all has dried well, apply a coat of Testor's Dullcote to matte and protect your horsemen.

GHQ P8 cavalrymen. Photo #1 below shows the different basecoat colors. Set them aside to dry.

The next step is a very simple way to begin adding that realism most gaming horses lack. Mix up some washes of darker browns, or black, and apply them to the horses. Figure #2 shows that not all horses

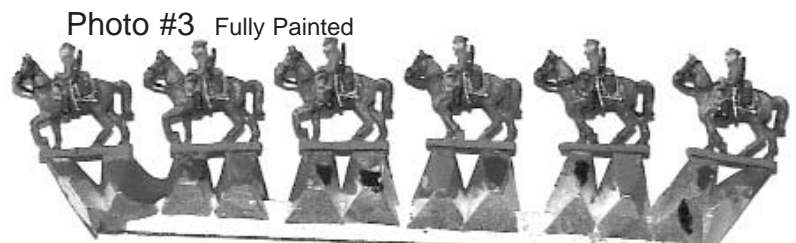
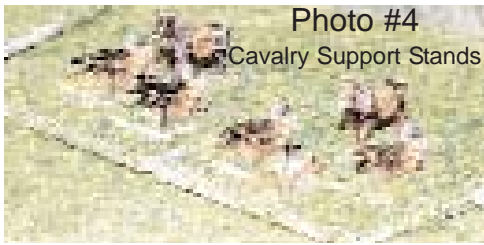
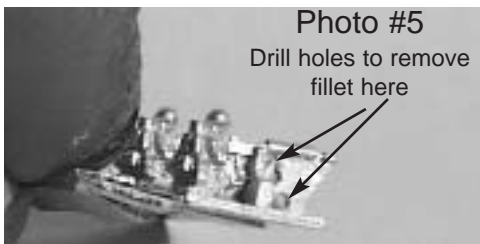


Photo #3 Fully Painted

THE SUPPORT SQUADRON



The heart of the support squadron are the two cavalry support stands. In GHQ Micro Armour®: The Game, support stands represent the heavy machine gun platoons. In infantry units, these are generally represented by 2 machine gun teams: In cavalry units, add a pack horse or two (photo #4).



You can improve the appearance of most heavy machine gun figures by removing the large fillet of metal that connects from the underside of the barrel to the base. To remove it, take a pinvise and small bit (1/16" or less) and drill holes at the inner corners of the fillet (photo #5). Next, score the fillet under the barrel, between the holes along the front of the MG, and along the top of the base. Remove the fillet, and clean up the underside of the MG barrel.

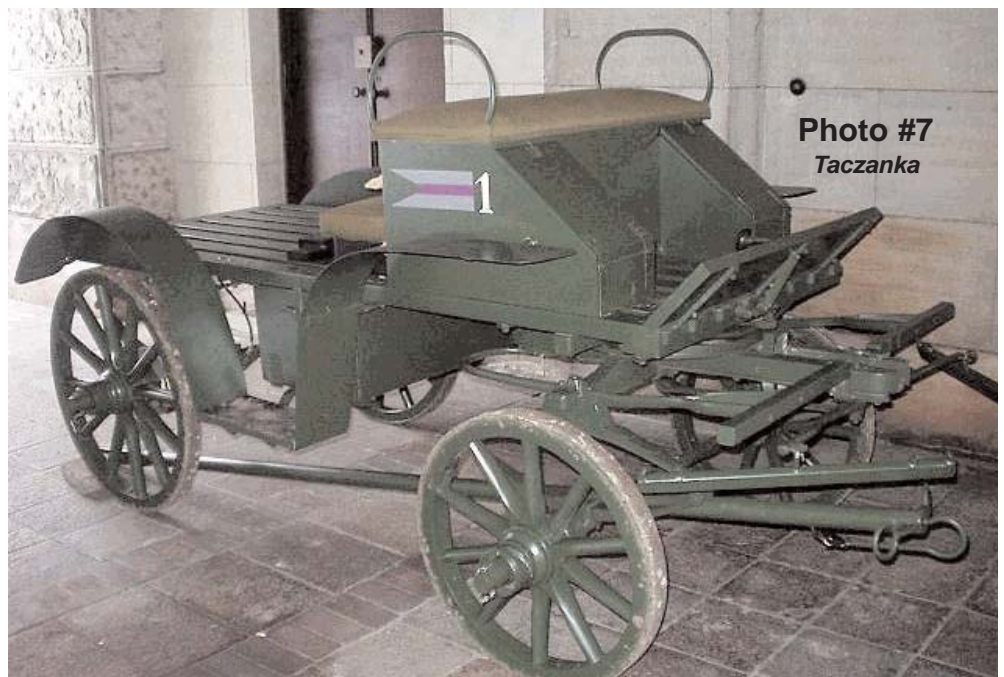
Other elements of the cavalry support squadron are one WZ34 Armoured Car (GHQ's P5), and the gun and limber for a Bofors 37mm Anti-tank gun. Since this model is not currently available, you can use a similar appearing weapon. We used a French 25mm ATG (FR13). Again, mount a cavalryman on the "near-side" (ie. left) of the limber pole, and a packhorse on the "off-

side" (ie. right). This reinforces the fact that this stand is from a cavalry unit.

The final stand in the support squadron is a *Taczanka*. This is a horse-drawn wagon, with a heavy MG on the bed. Again, no model of these is available. Though a German supply wagon can be used, it would be a complex conversion. We scratchbuilt one, using the bed from a Gaz truck, drag pole and wheels from a supply wagon (sliced off using a razor saw), and mounted crew similar to the AT gun. Trim the base off of an MG figure, using wirecutters, knife and file, and then glue it into the bed (photo #6).



The actual *Taczanka* (photo #7) was a very effective weapon, being highly maneuverable while offering heavy fire support. Since this is a vehicle, it can fire over some stands: see the back page of this TACNEWS for details.



BASING YOUR STANDS

GHQ's game system requires 1" x 1" bases. You can use manufactured metal bases, or make your own. One of the most inexpensive sources is 1 foot square linoleum floor tiles. Use a metal ruler to mark off 1" lengths on all 4 edges, and then scribe into 1 inch squares (photo #8). Bend and snap each row into 144 bases. Glue the figures onto each base. Paint the base with tan (earth) colored latex paint, and flock to simulate grass.



MOUNTED & DISMOUNTED?

Treat cavalymen like fast, fragile infantry. In GHQ Micro Armour®: The Game, there is no need for dismounted cavalry stands: if a stand is marked as being in the movement posture this turn, then they are mounted. If not in a movement posture, they are in a firing posture, dismounted and taking advantage of the terrain.

SPECIAL OPTIONAL CAVALRY RULES

WWII MICRO ARMOUR®: THE GAME - WWII

The cavalry "Charge" was left out of the WWII rules because:

- A. They were generally quite rare.
- B. Pulling off a successful charge requires a certain amount of experience. In testing, we found mostly inexperienced players wanted to do them. The results were embarrassing!
- C. They require several exceptions to the standard rules.

A cavalry "Close Assault" simulates a group of mounted soldiers riding quickly up to an enemy position. Throwing a lot of grenades, leaping off their horses and attempting to force the enemy out of that position (dead or alive) by fire and close-combat.

To do this, WWII cavalry carried more grenades than infantrymen. (schlepping around an eight or ten pound sack full of grenades slung across the saddle doesn't encumber a mounted man like the same sack does around the neck of a foot-soldier.) They also carried large-caliber pistols and sabers useful in intimidating the opposition. Lastly, cavalrymen were often (especially the Russians and Germans) armed with machine-pistols or sub-machineguns rather than the traditional carbine. Ergo, the doubling of the "Close Assault" value.

The cavalry "charge" however, is a different creature entirely. The idea here is to sweep the enemy out of his position by "scaring" him half to death with large numbers of screaming men waving long, shiny butcher knives, on the backs of animals that make them (literally) twelve feet tall!

A "charge", therefore should be considered a form of "Overrun". The cavalry stands rush over the top of the defender, then roll for cohesion to see if they lost their nerve. The defender rolls for the same reason (once for each "charging" stand.

- The defenders do not have to pay the penalty they do when being overrun by "Tracked" vehicles.
- Failure in these cohesion rolls has the same result as for other overruns.

If you're clever, you can combine close assaults and "charges" together. You assault an enemy position in turn A with infantry (or cavalry) and produce a gap in his line. Then, anybody that falls back next turn gets caught moving by your cavalry charging through the gap in turn B. Cavalry moves 2.6 times faster than infantry. The bad guys, therefore, must either stand still and be taken out by artillery etc. or run away and be "run down"! The cavalry, then, acts to keep the enemy infantry from moving, forcing them to stand still and be shelled. (anybody out there ever play napoleonics? If you form square to repel cavalry, enemy firepower can cut you to pieces. If you break formation and maneuver, enemy cavalry rides you down.)

Unlike vehicles, cavalry stands always suffer suppression when they charge. The "S" is applied after the overrun is over and before the marker removal phase. This is not an (S), just an S. If the cavalry's cohesion is high enough, or they're lucky enough, you might find that they have recovered from this suppression during the marker removal phase and can form up and move out next turn. More often than not, the charge will have disorganized them and they will have to rally (if they're lucky) before they can be used again.

Since Taczankas are "vehicles" they may fire over intervening personnel stands, non-moving cavalry or non-moving motorcycle troops.

Polish cavalry were trained to establish roadblocks on forest tracks using landmines. When enemy engineers came forward, an ambush would be sprung. They would then mount, retreat, and repeat at the next bend in the road.