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Fortification of the Łódź Army in 1939.

Plans and execution

In this thesis, the author originally intended to present the final effect of the works that were performed on the particular division sections situated within the territory of operation of the Łódź Army in 1939. However, as it quickly became apparent, that would be at most an extensive presentation of the author's research results obtained so far.

An analysis of literature and source material has definitely changed the original intention. A wider picture of large scale preparations executed from the central level in the General Inspectorate of the Armed Forces, ministries, Inspectorates of the Armies and in the field had begun to emerge from brief extracts such as orders, guidelines, screeds and memories.

The final effect visible in 1939 was the result of operational preparations, field studies, logistic concepts, and relevant engineering works. The results of the study allowed the author to verify the subject of the thesis. The subject no longer relates to the effects of the works – the presentation of the number of bunkers constructed, trenches dug, demolitions made, obstacles or field mines exclusively. The thesis itself elaborates on the decisions and actions taken by the General Inspector and Łódź Inspector of the Armed Forces with the aim of the best preparation for defending the territory reaching from Glinno to Rozprza, and further to country border.

While working on this dissertation, the author utilized two primary research methods – inductive and deductive, with the dominance of the first one, used on direct source extracts. General conclusions were reached most often through the analysis of particular sources. The indirect deductive method was utilized slightly less in the research. This thesis has a chronological-thematic structure and consists of an introduction, six main chapters, a conclusion and appendices. The sections of the thesis reflect on its specific aims.

In the first Chapter, the author presents the experiences with and the conclusions from the use of field fortifications during World War I, their particular forms and the concepts of their utilisation. This presentation is based on theoretical views, designs and works of the Higher War School, and the achievements of Polish fortification designs. Furthermore, this chapter briefly elaborates on the generally applicable laws acts such as acts, ordinances or military engineering regulations.

In the introduction to chapter two, presented are the fortification utilisation concepts in Poland and their significance in Polish war strategies. Then the author proceeds with a description of different aspects of the development of fortification designs, either from the tactical or technical scope. This chapter elaborates on the thus far marginalised concept of the evolution of the utilisation of field fortification. It should not escape attention that throughout the twenty years between the two World Wars, the technologies used in field fortifications were constantly evolving. The changing aspects of field fortifications were either the appearance of particular elements, such as, for example the passage from trench with crossings to ditches with cavities, as well as the form of the fortifications, such as the shift transition from resistance posts to defence sectors system, which is ultimately ignored in contemporary literature. The arrangement of the defense on infantry division level and lower command levels was also utterly interesting and worthy of elaboration. The technologies used in 1939 on Łódź territory cannot be discussed without the understanding of the factors determining the choice of the fortification and the strategies it was used for.

The primary focus of the third chapter is the in-depth analysis of the territory that was to be the base of operations of the Łódź army in the first days of the war in military and geographical terms, based on prior engineering works. The use of the elaborations produced in the General Inspectorate of the Armed Forces, including the assessments of endangered directions, allowed the author to correlate the topography of the terrain with the concepts of the utilisation of this territory for upcoming military operations. The evolution of the concepts developed in the General Inspectorate of the Armed Forces are utterly interesting. The extent of the danger imposed on Poland from the direction of so called 'Silesian entrance' exerted a decisive influence on the diagnosis of the problem and the nature of the developed solutions.

The following chapter describes an in-depth analysis of the plans and tasks that were given to Major General Juliusz Rómmel, first as the Inspector of the Army, and later as the

commander of Łódź Army. At first, it aims to explain the significance of the Łódź Army for the general foundations of the *West* plan. In further sections, the author elaborates on the topic of the formation of the army, assigning its primary objectives and the developed concepts of the defense of Łódź sector. A rarely discussed topic of the relations between the Inspector of the Army and the commander of the District of Corps no. IV, which exerted a significant impact on the pace and nature of the preparation works were also explained in this chapter. The chapter is concluded with threads on the structure of the Łódź Army and the ultimate plans for its role on the battlefield.

The fifth chapter presents the field studies conducted until March 1939 on the territory from which the Łódź sector was extracted three years before. It emerges that this was considered as early as during the preparation of the defense plan S 24/25 and 26/27, in which the sectors designated for the construction of fortifications, the exact forces and means necessary to complete these plans were specified. In the early 30's this territory was a point of interest of Major General Stanisław Burhardt-Bukacki, who was responsible for the Wieluń direction as part of the South Poznań sector, and Major General Leon Berbecki responsible i.a. for the Częstochowa and Piotrków directions as part of the Silesian sector. After 1936, when the Łódź sector was extracted, Major General Juliusz Rómmel took the responsibility for the field works within it and conducted them until the dawn of war. This chapter is concluded with an attempt to determine the significance and role of the Łódź fortifications in the general fortification strategy.

The final Chapter of the thesis elaborates on the relevant engineering works conducted after the March mobilization. Obviously, the works were required extensive planning, logistic, and organisational actions. In practice these were calculation of needs, estimation of costs of their completion, field planning, workforce and technical staffing, obtaining of required materials, and proper supervision over these works. This chapter is concluded with a brief evaluation by the people responsible for the particular works.