

# SCENARIO 3: CAVALRY CHARGE

"The Polish Pomorska Cavalry Brigade, in ignorance of the nature of our tanks, had charged them with swords and lances and had suffered tremendous losses." – Guderian, *Panzer Leader*

The story of Polish cavalry gallantly charging steel tanks with lances is one of the most enduring myths of military history. The idea promulgated by Guderian that the Poles failed to grasp that a tank had armour that was impervious to a lance point is a ludicrous suggestion. By 1939 cavalry lances were merely parade ground equipment in the same way as British Guards regiments wore bearskin helmets and red jackets.

The moral of this is to beware of generals' memoirs. Any commander's recollections are liable to be self-serving to some degree, but German and Soviet accounts in particular are riddled with propaganda. This particular tale was invented to ridicule the Poles by suggesting they were medieval.

The real battle on which the myth is based took place in a clearing in the Tuchola Forest on the first day of World War II or soon afterwards. Two squadrons (perhaps 250 men) from the 18th Pomeranian Uhlans screening retreating Polish units surprised and charged a detachment of the German 76th Infantry Regiment attached to the 20th Motorised Division. The charge successfully dispersed the German infantry, but the Polish cavalry was in turn surprised by armoured cars from the 20th Division's reconnaissance battalion and suffered heavy casualties (around 60 men) from machine gun and auto cannon fire.

## FORCES

### POMERANIAN UHLANS

The Pomeranian Uhlans that make up the Polish OOB (Order Of Battle) for the battle of the Tuchola Forest should be drawn entirely from headquarters and cavalry/infantry sections (including transport and tows) of the Polish Cavalry Squadron selector (see page 27). No Polish artillery or armoured vehicles were engaged so should not be included in this scenario for strict historical accuracy.

### 20TH MOTORISED DETACHMENT

The German 20th Infantry Division was formed in 1934 in Hamburg and motorised between 1938 and 1939. It was attached to Guderian's XIX Corps for the invasion of Poland, attacking out of West Prussia into the Polish corridor to the Baltic, and from there in a pincer to Brest-Litovsk.

The 20th Motorised Detachment is split into two forces: infantry and armoured cars. The OOB for the infantry force may be drawn only from the headquarters and infantry choices from the '1939 – The September Campaign' on page 70 of the

## PLAYER NOTES

This is a tricky scenario for both players when considering what units to choose for their armies, particularly because of the uncertainty over game length and the entry of the German armoured cars. The Polish player has to decide whether to use small weak platoons to maximise the number of anti-tank rifles or to tailor an army for a quick kill on the German infantry and hope to hold on with suicidal close combat attacks on the German armour when it arrives.

The German player has a powerful asset in his armoured cars and will be tempted to maximise their number but suppose they are delayed a turn and the game finishes early?

*Armies of Germany* supplement. The German infantry force should use up between half and three quarters of the German points available.

Similarly, the armoured car force may be drawn from the above lists, but consists only of armoured cars (one of which can be given the Command Vehicle rule for +25pts). The German player is not limited to one vehicle in this scenario. He may take as many armoured cars as he allocates points for. The 20th Infantry were actually short of armoured cars in 1939, possessing only a single detachment from its reconnaissance battalion equipped with SdKfz 231 (6-Rad) heavy armoured cars, so if possible this model should be used in the scenario.

## THE BATTLE

Use 'Scenario 4: Hold Until Relieved' from the *Bolt Action* rulebook, with the following modifications:

- The Poles are the attackers.
- The Germans are the defenders. The German 'on table units' and normal reserve units are drawn from the German infantry force. The German armoured car force units are a special Reserve. They may be ordered onto the table on Turn Four if the player rolls a 4+. Otherwise, they may be ordered onto the table from Turn Five.

