

# Operational Warfare in War College and War Studies University

Having own operational warfare based on deeply rooted domestic military culture and positively verified combat cases, being now historical experiences inspiring next generations, is one of the foundations of the armed forces. Polish art of war in the 20th century developed freely in the Second Republic of Poland: it was a period, when the foundations for Polish operational art were established. Poland, in consequence of a betrayal by its western allies, after World War II found itself in the Soviet zone of influences, and this meant breaking up with the achievements of the Second Republic of Poland, including the art of war. Regaining Independence at the break of 1989/1990 was a distinct turning point in the development of the art of war, and meant the necessity to search for new solutions adequate for the challenges stemming from contemporary geopolitical location, as well as from its defense self-sufficiency. This required a new outlook on operational warfare. The following turning point was the membership in North-Atlantic Alliance and the participation of the Polish Armed Forces in stabilization operations in the Balkans, Iraq, and Afghanistan. Both in the Second Republic of Poland and today, military education of command and staff professionals had a significant impact on Polish operational art.

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## KEYWORDS

art of war, operational warfare, operational art, operational level, operational activity, operational command

Upon regaining independence in 1918, the Polish Army the art of war was not unified in any way. Such situation required developing some basic documents to standardize this issue at the tactical level. Such was the direction of studies and conceptual work on the use of cavalry. Operations were part of a strategy in Poland. General command over an operation belonged to the Commander-in-Chief who was to outline the operation's activities, while operational commanders were to define more detailed warfare activities for large units within a group at higher lever during operations. Such distribution of competences clearly reflects an old, Clausewitz-like scheme of separating the art of war into a strategy and tactics.

In the Polish Army of the Second Republic of Poland, activities between strategy and tactics were not clearly defined as a separate area of

the art of war. For that reason, in place of the term “operational art,” terms such as “operation” or “operational command” were used. The analysis of operations carried out by the Polish Army in the Polish-Soviet war during 1919–1920 indicates that in the newborn Polish operational war the significance of an operation’s objective was most important, and what made tasks “operational” was the commander’s level of independence in decision-making process. The term “operation” meant the art of command, operational command, where planning and organizing an operation relating to the economy of force rule was to immanently focus on the most important operational direction (or directions), without wasting efforts on minor ones, so as the main goal of an operation was to remain in the center of attention of an operational commander and its staff.

Contemporary operational art was to be developed mostly on the basis of Polish experience gained in the wars for independence during 1918–1921. The key to numerous successes of the Polish Army in these wars was a Napoleonic-like maneuver, which differed significantly from the experience of the western front of the World War I, where warfare activities were often frozen for many months in the trenches. The Marshal was fascinated with Napoleon Bonaparte’s art of war. Therefore, years later, Hubert Camon – a French general who specialized in the Napoleon’s system of warfare conduct – wrote that Piłsudski revived Napoleonic art of war.

Both, the then chief at the War College, Colonel Louis Faury as well as many officers of the French Military Mission to Poland were aware of the difficulties stemming from blind transfer of French military solutions to the Polish Army. Hence, Polish military experience, the so-called Polish conditions and the nature of Poles were analyzed in order to find most useful approach. At the same time, the best examples of Napoleonic maneuvers and solutions were reached for and analyzed to ultimately apply the conclusions creating the Polish art of war. Colonel Faury, analyzing the above, considered the experiences of WWI positional warfare as totally useless in the area of Polish operational warfare, while in tactics – as rather rarely useful.<sup>1</sup>

Based on the experience of the Polish-Soviet war and considering the scarce force strength and resources of the Polish Army in the context of vast spaces and long, mostly open borders, it was adopted that the activities of conclusive operational maneuver nature should be applied for strategic tasks, following the example of Napoleonic wars, the first and last period of World War I, but mostly in the Polish-Soviet war. Analyzing the conclusions from war experiences, debates and discussions, it was decided that the future war would be rather of a maneuvering character, requiring fast and mobile forces, an effective commanding.

Operational maneuver – understood as a collection of command’s activities and subordinate teams and large units for disrupting the center of enemy strategic or operational balance with the use of concentrated force of attack on a selected direction – allowed for, to some extent, neutralizing resource and numerical enemy advantage, and maintaining strategic initiative by creating difficult situations.

While considering the potential for activities on the Polish theatre of war, it was emphasized that the most effective form of warfare was to be a brave maneuver on enemy flanks

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1 S. Lityński, *Udział Wyższej Szkoły Wojennej przed 1939 r. w kształtowaniu polskiej doktryny wojennej*, „Bellona” [Londyn], No.1, 1955, p. 30.

and rear. The success was to depend on surprise and quickness rather than on owned force strength. In Polish conditions, war should be conducted in the form of maneuvers, as only a widely applied maneuver could neutralize differences in the relation of forces and material resources. The use of a maneuver was to give Polish forces the freedom of action. In the 1920s, the basis for maneuver activity was to be the following:

– *Searching for a solution of a conflict through unexpected attack supported by a brave maneuver, aiming at a total destruction of main enemy forces;*

– *Concentrating maximum forces in the region decisive for achieving the advantage or at least the balance of forces; as a result, absolute exposition of the areas of secondary significance;*

– *Ultimately, as fast as possible concentration of attack forces before a battle, or sometimes only during a battle.*

*A campaign, resulting from the above strategy, must lead to a maneuver warfare, where the idea of a frontline will not exist. It will be warfare of mobile groups commanded by commanders full of initiative and rational temperament<sup>2</sup>.*

It should however be noticed that the objectives developed under the supervision of Col Faury were not adopted by all French lecturers of the War College, and some of their theses remained at variance with the opinions of Louis Faury.<sup>3</sup>

Years later, these basics were formulated as follows: when potential enemy forces have the advantage, own offensive activity should be preceded by defensive activity. Defense is treated as a transition task, which is to create conditions for conducting maneuvers to lead to a convenient place for a final battle outcome. An attack was to be powerful. Carefully selected and prepared terrain and a former maneuver of part of the forces were to form proper conditions for a final battle on a given direction. Another element was a transition from defense to attack, and the introduction of attack forces on the enemy flank through operational maneuver using the rules of economy of force and surprise. The most convenient form of maneuver could be bypassing or disrupting enemy flanks.<sup>4</sup>

In the 1920s, the idea of operation was first discussed in for example the publications of Colonel Tadeusz Kutrzeba, who differentiated tactical activity from operational one, and indicated that in certain situations and in the conditions of eastern theatre of activity of Polish theater of war (...) *division commanders will start to »operate«, i.e. act accordingly to the doctrine of higher units such as corps and armies.*<sup>5</sup> In mid 1920s, BrigGen Marian Kukiel wrote in *Bellona* in his review of the book by Frederic Culmann on strategy: (...) *Polish military terminology knows the field between strategy and tactics: the so-called field of »operation«, which in part corresponds with Jomini's »logistics«, and in part with Napoleon's »grand tactique«.*<sup>6</sup> Maj Kazimierz Klabisz in his article discussed the maneuver of con-

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2 Ibidem, p. 32.

3 P. Stawecki, *Wojsko Marszałka Józefa Piłsudskiego 12 V 1926–12 V 1935*, Warszawa 2004, p. 83.

4 Idem, *Oficerowie dyplomowani wojska Drugiej Rzeczypospolitej*, Wrocław–Warszawa–Kraków 1997, pp. 42–43.

5 T. Kutrzeba, *Obrona taktyczna i operacyjna*, „Bellona”, vol. 2, 1922, p. 244.

6 M. Kukiel, *Frederic Culmann, Stratégie. La manœuvre stratégique offensive dans la guerre de mouvements*, Bellona, vol. 1, 1925, p. 114.

ducting activity on inferior lines within own group, which should be considered as operational because of its reference to Napoleonic way of conducting activities for the center.<sup>7</sup>

In 1930s, the term “operation” was understood as (...) *warfare activities with a defined detailed objective, within a given campaign*. Such understanding was applied to operation seen as a realization of the next phase, which is (...) *planned or stems from current warfare situation, and which is to lead own forces to the main battle in their best location*.<sup>8</sup> The term “operation” was identified with operational activities. According to the author of the script developed in the War College in 1936 on operational command, LtCol Stefan Mossor, the core of operational activity was (...) *combining several battles, or a series of battles lasting for several days, which were conducted separately on several concurrent directions, sometimes quite distant from each other*,<sup>9</sup> and its essential feature was (...) *a combination of multi-directional activity towards one goal with the use of several groups of different power*.<sup>10</sup>

Hans von Moltke (Senior) is considered a forerunner of operational command understood as operation management. He was perceived as a creator of a modern operation which combined three primary operational factors: force, space and time. It was him who introduced to military terminology an idea of operational command, which meant delegating broad competences to subordinate officers – and they were free to act within the frames of a directive with a clearly defined goal. Most of all, the experiences of Napoleonic wars were often referred to.

In the army of the Second Republic of Poland, a border between tactical and operational activities was defined by agreeing that *a border where cooperation in arms ends*, that is tactical activities understood as a tactics of combined weapons, *is the level from division to an army*.<sup>11</sup> When considering the above, it was adopted that operations were to be conducted by operational units, i.e. operational armies and groups, and sometimes operational activities could be performed by large units, i.e. brigades and divisions, which independently carried out their operational tasks. Today, the so-called “large unit” is an anachronism, and a contemporary name for it is a “tactical unit”.

As to operational groups, it should be indicated that both, doctrinal assumptions<sup>12</sup> and objectives regarding the functioning of what we could define as a contemporary war commanding system, as well as training practice – the War College, for example – differentiated “permanent” operational groups at the time called “independent”, and non-independent operational groups, which were tactical groupings formed when needed to carry out certain tasks. The plans developed towards the end of 1930s assumed that independent operational groups will have an army set of liaison units (two cable phone companies, building compa-

7 K. Głabisz, *Działania z położenia wewnętrznego*, „Bellona”, vol. 10, 1924, pp. 44–57.

8 *Encyklopedia wojskowa*, O. Laskowski (ed.), vol. 6, Warszawa 1937, p. 129.

9 S. Mossor, *Podstawowe wiadomości z dziedziny dowodzenia operacyjnego*, cz. 1, *Zasady operacyjne na tle obecnych warunków wojny*, Warszawa 1936, p. 11; Idem, *Sztuka wojenna w warunkach nowoczesnej wojny*, Warszawa 1938, p. 152.

10 Ibidem.

11 *Encyklopedia wojskowa*, O. Laskowski (ed.), vol. 1, Warszawa 1931, p. 328.

12 *Podręcznik dla operacyjnej służby sztabów*, Warszawa 1928.

ny, radio company, etc.), while non-independent operational groups did not have enough forces and means of command.

There were different operational units. Their potential was based on several large units. In the period of 1936–1937, while developing the “W” mobilization plan, the army set of non-division units of different weapons and an army set of services for each army was established.<sup>13</sup>

Defining army tasks was an obligation of a commander-in-chief. He was to adjust them to specific situation and needs. The way these operational tasks were implemented and allocated to operational groups and army’s large units depended on army commander. According to LtCol Stefan Mossor, *the aim of an independent operational unit is always to defeat an enemy*.<sup>14</sup>

In operational activities, described by LtCol Stefan Mossor as a group of activities providing synergy effect as a result of which it is possible to achieve the goal of operation, a maneuver factor was at the top. Operational maneuver was considered as the only means leading to victory over the enemy, both in attack and in defense. Operational maneuver, which was to disperse the center of operational or strategic balance of an adversary with the help of concentrated force attacking on a given direction, to some extent neutralized the numerical and material enemy advantage, and by putting the enemy in difficult situations – allowed for the freedom of action and for maintaining or gaining strategic initiative.

While considering the potential for activities on the Polish theatre of war, it was emphasized that the most effective form of warfare was to be a brave maneuver of the attack force on enemy flanks and rear. The success was to depend on surprise and quickness rather than on owned force strength. The most convenient form of maneuver was bypassing or dispersing a poorly defended enemy flank. Stefan Mossor emphasized that every guiding idea of an operation should stem from (...) *the awareness of own goal, precise assessment of actual location, and understanding the essence of operational maneuver*.<sup>15</sup> Every maneuver was to (...) *lead to a battle, because a conclusive battle is the goal of every operational maneuver*,<sup>16</sup> and its essence meant the choice of (...) *effective direction and the right moment for attack*.<sup>17</sup> Successful operational maneuver and a conclusion of operation required that the rules of operation be observed, such as: advantage, economy of force, surprise, freedom of action, as well as the maneuver factors, such as: force, direction, outflanking, and a variety of maneuver forms.

In the training practice of the War College, mostly four classic maneuver forms were distinguished: trench battle, one-sided maneuver, two-sided maneuver and a maneuver on interior lines. It was indicated that trench battle should be avoided as being most inefficient, particularly for the weaker side. It was emphasized that a one-sided maneuver directed at enemy flank is characterized by the fact that *it is hard to use it to tie-down enemy troops to avoid wasting time for the chase and ending the victory, which sometimes costs more time and forc-*

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13 R. Rybka, K. Stepan, *Najlepsza broń. Plan mobilizacyjny „W” i jego ewolucja*, Warszawa 2010, pp. XCIII–XCV.

14 S. Mossor, *Sztuka wojenna...*, op.cit., p. 440.

15 Ibidem, s. 400.

16 S. Mossor, *Podstawowe wiadomości...*, op.cit., p. 119.

17 Idem, *Sztuka wojenna...*, op.cit., p. 268.

*es than the victory itself.* A two-sided maneuver enabled a total destruction of an adversary. The result of a maneuver on interior lines was to be a battle, which (...) *is about splitting, when own forces are in minority, the enemy forces into two or several parts, and defeating them one at a time by attacking each part with majority of own forces.*<sup>18</sup>

In his work, Stefan Mossor distinguished a pre-battle maneuver, a maneuver on interior lines and a maneuver on external lines, two-sided maneuver and a single envelopment, and within the latter one: outflanking, forcible outflanking, disrupting and breaking up the flank, outflanking with disrupting the flank.<sup>19</sup> Additionally, the author discusses the issue of operational defense, emphasizing that *operational resolution may only be reached through aggressive action*, and that is why *operational defense may be characterized by passivity only at the beginning, but it commonly ends with aggressive action.*<sup>20</sup>

The then operational command, and especially the activities undertaken by an operational group, were often deeply embedded in tactics. Consequently, those two branches of the art of war intertwined with each other to a large extent, although in theory it was already noticed then that tactics is characterized by the unity of purpose, time, and place of action, while operations have the unity of purpose, but with simultaneous separation of time and place. Seeing these interdependencies, an outstanding staff officer, Col Marian Porwit, stated that *tactics should be in service of operational tasks, but with poor, disproportional armament, operational thought must take into consideration tactical capabilities.* From the scientific point of view, we need to keep in mind the correlation of conclusions, because both tactics and the then developing operational art are elements of the art of war.

Referring to the educational programs of the War College, it needs to be pointed out that according to Jerzy Bugajski, in the so-called “French” period, i.e. between 1921–1928, much emphasis was placed on teaching officers operational matters. Therefore, most 2nd year classes were concerned with army level issues. According to the mentioned researcher, Col Louis Faury wanted the graduates of the War College to have extensive operational and tactical knowledge, which widens horizons and allows for deeper understanding of the nature of the art of war. Assuming that a staff officer is the commander’s closest associate, he adhered to the principle that the staff officer should be at the same intellectual level as the commander, i.e. have full tactical and operational education, allowing for understanding the sense of actions undertaken even on the highest levels of command, in order to conduct staff work according to the supervisor’s intention and guiding principle, and at the same time develop staff officers’ rational and purposeful initiative.<sup>21</sup>

After 1928, the highest military authorities changed their perspective on the role played by staff officers. Due to the clash of many, often radically different, opinions on the role of staffs and staff officers, Józef Piłsudski opted for giving commanders more freedom to act, and at the same time making staffs the executive body. Within that vision, the role of a War

18 Idem, *Podstawowe wiadomości...*, op.cit., pp. 93–114.

19 Idem, *Sztuka wojenna...*, op.cit., pp. 399–435.

20 Ibidem. p. 440.

21 J. Bugajski, *Wyższa Szkoła Wojenna (1919–1939) – placówka dydaktyczna i ośrodek myśli wojskowo-teoretycznej* (typescript), Warszawa 1962, pp. 82–83.

College graduate – a professionally qualified officer – was limited to being the technical assistant of the commander, an expert in planning and organizing the staff's work, including all the phases, stages, and actions connected with the commanding process, the person who knows by heart all the procedures governing the work of the staff, able to put together all the elements of the commander's decision, and perfectly word operational orders. The new commandant of the War College, MajGen Tadeusz Kutrzeba, decided that also generational change influenced the new attitude. In his opinion, in the 1920s most students of the War College were officers with very extensive practical experience gained during the wars for independence fought between 1914–1921, and as a consequence their curriculum included the division – army level. The ever growing number of younger officers, who started coming to the War College towards the end of the first decade of its existence, had to force changes in its educational program. The aim of those changes was to teach graduates staff work so they could be able to become chiefs of division or operational group staff, a unit chief in the army staff, or a regiment commander. Taking the post of the War College commandant, Gen Kutrzeba assumed that before officers are appointed to positions higher than those mentioned, they will have to attend training the Higher Military Studies Center.<sup>22</sup>

It also needs to be emphasized that simultaneously to the changes introduced in military schools, assumptions regarding the use of the armed forces were also reassessed. After a period of following the solutions adopted by the French army, and the compromise between them and the experiences gained during the Polish-Russian War, our own rules of executing tactical operations were eventually developed after several years of analytical studies and experiments. As a result, a new normative document on general tactics, entitled “General Instruction on Warfare” (“Ogólna instrukcja walki”), was adopted in 1931. It specified the views on the character of future wars, the tasks awaiting various branches of the armed forces, and the ways to execute them. The document was approved upon an order given by the chief of General Staff (Ref. No. 2498/III/Wyszk., of October 23, 1930), and reached the armed forces several months later, in 1931. The instruction favored offensive actions as the essence of a maneuver, considered the main and decisive factor of military operations. Its main idea was constant pursuit to execute combat tasks using offensive means, (...) *for only attack gives the predominance of moral strength and only it allows for destroying the enemy.*<sup>23</sup> Formally, the instruction did not go beyond a division level, but in fact, by giving general guidelines, the document also described operational level actions. It is a very important publication also because there is no surviving document regulating the issue of actions undertaken by operational units, or ways of managing operations at the highest command levels. Therefore, we can without doubt accept the thesis put forward by Wiktor Kucharski, that the instruction and its derivatives, i.e. regulations for particular branches of the armed forces, were an interpretation of general doctrinal assumptions on the ways and methods of conducting armed operations.<sup>24</sup>

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22 Wojskowe Biuro Historyczne (*Military History Office* – later: WBH), Wyższa Szkoła Wojenna (War College), Ref.: I 340.1.52, Notes by gen. Tadeusz Kutrzeba of October 12, 1928.

23 *Ogólna instrukcja walki*, vol. 1 (temporary), Warszawa 1931, p. 1.

24 W. Kucharski, *Kawaleria i broń pancerna w doktrynach wojennych 1918–1939*, Warszawa–Kraków 1984, pp. 150–151.

Criticizing that solution today, we need to keep in mind that the main task of the armed forces of the Second Republic of Poland was to build their organizational culture, including the art of war, after 123 years of partitions, or rather after 87 years from the moment when after the Polish-Russian War (1830–1831), the army of the Kingdom of Poland – and with it the Polish art of war – ceased to exist. The process was complex, since the Polish army between 1918–1921 was a peculiar conglomerate of the military culture and the art of war of the occupants' armed forces, and Polish military formations created during WWI, including General Haller's Polish Army, remaining under the influence of the French structural and organizational solutions and the French art of war. This was the model used by the French Military Mission to train commands, staffs, and units of the Polish Armed Forces between 1919–1920. Its assumptions at the time clashed with the reality of the war that Poland waged with Bolshevik Russia on a very specific war theater, extending across enormous, compared to the Western European conditions, territories. It is enough to mention that the Battle of Warsaw was fought in the bend of Vistula river, between Włodawa and Brodnica, and Białystok and Sejny, on the territory equal to the area of Belgium and the Netherlands combined. As for the offensive operation carried out by the Polish Armed Forces between April and May 1920 in Ukraine, its territorial scope was even bigger.

Searching for their own identity in the field of the art of war, the Polish army had to decide on a solution and implement it. This solution was to put main emphasis on creating a uniform basics for tactical use of the armed forces – both as regards general tactics and tactics pertaining to particular branches and services. On the basis of these assumptions, a training system of the armed forces, pertaining to troops, as well as to commands and staffs, was created. This was due to the mass-scale model of the armed forces, imposed at the time by France – Poland's military ally since February 1921. Structural and organizational solutions implemented under the French pressure enforced a strictly specified army strength. Taking into account the Polish population potential, in order to reach a required number of troops in times of peace, two age-groups of conscripts were needed in active service, which clearly meant that the adopted model was in fact a mandatory military service, executed mainly in the form of conscription, and lasting – depending on the branch – from 18 to 24 months. Thus, the then character of the armed forces itself enforced putting most emphasis on tactics in the process of building their strength. The state of Polish economy was one of the many factors due to which the process lasted for as long as twenty years.

Regrettably, next to the positive aspects regarding the development of the Polish art of war, some shortcomings and wrong assumptions must be pointed out. "The General Instruction of Warfare" of 1931, wording the military authorities' ambition to execute combat tasks in a mobile way, pointed to mobile defense as one of the basic forms of large units' defensive actions. Introducing the term at the tactical level at the same time replaced the expression: "operational defense," formerly used at the level of higher units. From then on, general rules of mobile defense were the same for operational units, large units, and detachments. The essence of mobile defense consisted in attempting to resolve the fight with the enemy inside own combat formation, and hold the ground by means of attacks carried out by main forces of the large unit or detachments. The main element of this type of defensive operations was attempting to break enemy forces and channel their movement to places where the battle

was to be resolved by means of the most important mobile defense act, i.e. counter-attack of own main forces. Several years later, an artillery officer, a graduate of the War College, Capt Jerzy Kirchmayer, proved on the pages of *Bellona* that mobile defense in those conditions was a strictly operational concept, while its artificial transfer to the tactical level was for many reasons unjustified. He entirely undermined the essence and the possibilities to conduct this form of defensive operations by large infantry units, and particularly cavalry.<sup>25</sup>

Within the frame of peacetime training, there were also some negative trends, such as marginalizing operational issues. This is reflected in a report prepared in the second part of November 1938 at the Ministry of Military Affairs' General Command Department, on intervisional exercises planned for 1939. Its authors – the head of the department, Col Witold Wartha, and an officer of the department, LtCol Władysław Bieńkowski – stated that: *Strictly speaking, not one of the intervisional exercises organized within the last three years (1936-1938) had a clearly operational character.*<sup>26</sup> Their opinion was shared by the Deputy of the First Vice-Minister of Military Affairs, MajGen Bronisław Regulski, who emphasized this conclusion in the said document. According to the authors, changing the nature of the exercise meant creating an appropriate framework for operational training of higher-level commanders, as well as using fast large units (which meant the motorized 10th Cavalry Brigade). Considering the foregoing, the officers proposed organizing an intervisional exercise on such level already in 1939. They thought it would be advisable to use large units, which had not taken part in intervisional exercises in recent years.<sup>27</sup>

As regards the question of operational art during the 1939 campaign, it needs to be pointed out that according to Col Marian Porwit, operational art became a field that dealt with preparing and conducting warfare determined by strategy, both in the whole theatre of war operations, and also its major directions. The author thought that it was the *function of the commander of the whole war theatre, front-line (army groups) commanders, and the army.* Operational art determined *objectives of actions, as well as tasks and means of large tactical units, i.e. corps, which had been such units for a long time, although in Poland they were erroneously referred to as operational groups until 1939, or sometimes directly divisions.*<sup>28</sup> In peacetime training it was assumed that the operations commander, who *cannot be given*

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25 J. Kirchmayer, *Istota obrony ruchowej*, *Bellona*, vol. 43, no. 3, 1934, pp. 370–396; Idem, *Obrona ruchowa wśród innych form obrony taktycznej*, *Bellona*, vol. 48, no. 6, 1937, pp. 1059–1081.

26 WBH, Departament Dowodzenia Ogólnego MSWojsk. (Ministry of Military Affairs' General Command Department), Ref.no. I.300.22.140, Departament Dowodzenia Ogólnego MSWojsk., Ref.no. 10483/Wyszk.Tj. intervisional exercise of 1939 – report of November 23, 1938.

27 From among large infantry units, they were: the 20th Infantry Division (it did not take part in intervisional exercises since 1933), the 7th Infantry Division (since 1934), and the 26th and the 28th Infantry Division (since 1935), and from among large cavalry units: the Cavalry Division (it did not take part in intervisional exercises since 1937), the Suwalska Cavalry Brigade (since 1935), the Podlaska Cavalry Brigade (since 1934), the Wielkopolska Cavalry Brigade (since 1937), the Pomorska Cavalry Brigade (since 1937), and the Nowogrodzka Cavalry Brigade (since 1934). The First Vice-Minister of Military Affairs suggested using the Krakowska Cavalry Brigade instead of the Pomorska Cavalry Brigade. See: J.S. Tym, *Koncepcja szkolenia operacyjno-taktycznego dowódcztw i sztabów wielkich jednostek prowadzonego przez Wyższą Szkołę Wojenną*, in: *Planowanie wojenne i przygotowania obronne II Rzeczypospolitej. Studia i materiały*, sc. ed. Tomasz Kośmider, Warszawa 2012, pp. 294–296.

28 M. Porwit, *Komentarze do polskich działań obronnych 1939 roku*, cz. 1, *Plany i bitwy graniczne*, Warszawa 1983, p. 25.

*orders hour by hour, day by day, since he operates far away from his supervisor, has to be given, instead of orders, general guidelines on how to act. Within these guidelines, he maintains the freedom of action which the lower-level commander never has.*<sup>29</sup>

Therefore, when evaluating the 1939 campaign years later, Marian Porwit stated that (...) *the concept of operational plan »Z« was against the rules of the art of war, and abandoned the assumptions of the Polish operational doctrine, adopted at the War College and by enlightened army inspectors.*<sup>30</sup> In his opinion, Marshall Rydz-Śmigły took away from himself the chance to command properly, having seven active armies, one reserve army and three local reserves. *Not only because he »barricaded himself« in his headquarters and lost the opportunity to have personal contacts with higher-level commanders and his troops. Already during times of peace he started to execute tasks for his subordinates (not all, but many): not having given guidelines, he had to regulate small details. Interfering with the competencies of commanders subordinate to him, he dampened their initiative. The system was very dangerous, because being the »super-commander« of many armies, the commander-in-chief will forget what he should be doing according to the requirements of his position.* Such system led to the situation, where *the operational capabilities of the commander-in-chief and the army commanders had been hampered, and the latter made peace with carrying out tasks that did not indicate either the objective of action, or the next task, (...) they did not protest against the ban on communicating with neighbors.*<sup>31</sup>

Thus, it is hard to consider operations conducted in the 1939 campaign by particular Polish operational units as operations in the pre-war understanding of their essence. Army commanders, instead of being given freedom to act, executed tasks and directives of the commander-in-chief, and were therefore deprived of operational competencies, which gave their actions the operational aspect. This lack of freedom even meant the necessity to obtain approval of the commander-in-chief to conduct operations whose success required taking an immediate decision.

In the last decade of the 20th, and the first decade of the 21st century, several scientists of the National Defense University studied the issues connected with operational art in the armed forces of the Second Republic of Poland. Some of them announced the results of their research after having finished their military service.<sup>32</sup> One of the remaining group, Col Andrzej Polak, PhD, dealt with the problem of operational groups.<sup>33</sup> The operational aspect of the

29 S. Mossor, *Podstawowe wiadomości...*, op.cit., p. 130.

30 M. Porwit, *Komentarze do polskich działań...*, op.cit., p. 113.

31 Ibidem, pp. 115–116.

32 H. Hermann, *Geneza sztuki operacyjnej*, Warszawa, 1992; Idem, *Operacyjny wymiar pola walki*, Toruń 2004; Z. Matuszak, *Obrona operacyjna w europejskiej myśli wojskowej 1918–1939*, Piotrków Trybunalski 2001; Idem, *Obrona operacyjna w polskiej myśli wojskowej 1918–1939*, Piotrków Trybunalski 2002; Idem, *Obrona operacyjna w wojskowości polskiej w latach 1918–1939*, Piotrków Trybunalski 2004.

33 A. Polak, *Teoria grup operacyjnych w polskiej sztuce wojennej okresu międzywojennego na przykładzie działań wojennych grupy operacyjnej „Bielsko” we wrześniu 1939 roku*, Warszawa 2002. The author conducted research on the development of Polish operational art in the 20th and 21st century. See: A. Polak, *Związki operacyjne w polskiej sztuce wojennej 1918–2008*, Warszawa 2008. Critically on the first study, especially in the context of difficulties in identifying the alleged theory: J. Maroń, *O osobliwościach polskiej historii wojskowości*, Wrocław 2013, pp. 211–213.

Battle of the Bzura was the subject of research conducted by Col Juliusz Tym, PhD,<sup>34</sup> whereas Col Jerzy Zieliński, PhD,<sup>35</sup> as well as the then Col Mariusz Wiatr, Prof, PhD,<sup>36</sup> developed the theory of modern operational art.

In the time when the National Defense University existed, the initially flourishing Operational Art Department was gradually reduced to the institute level. The main reason was probably the process of the university's commercialization. Operational art, with its place somewhere between strategy and tactics within the art of war concept, is unfortunately the least commercial field. While strategic knowledge can be addressed on the civil market to people dealing with politics or administration, and tactics may be of interest to teenagers, NCOs or junior officers, operational knowledge is mainly needed by senior officers with extensive military experience and expertise. Teaching operational art was limited, which created a gap in the system of personnel training. The gap was clearly visible mainly while the Polish Armed Forces were executing allied and coalition tasks, including missions in Iraq and Afghanistan. In the mentioned period only a limited number of officers acquired real knowledge and abilities as regards operational art, mainly on courses and trainings abroad, as well as during service in NATO military structures.

In 2016, the current model of education of the commanding staff of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Poland was revalued. From the very beginning, the War Studies University has focused on education for the needs of modern operating arts. We should note the establishment of the Institute of Operational Art and Tactics, including the Department of Operations. This section was entrusted with the care of the Senior Operational and Strategic Course, the aim of which was to prepare senior officers to occupy full-time colonel rank positions. One of the first executed tasks was modifying the program of the nine-month-long course so that about 70% of its content was operational knowledge. Gradually, they developed the capability to educate single-handedly within particular elements of operational art. In the first year of its existence, the Operational Art and Tactics Institute, run by Col Przemysław Paździorek, PhD, was able to single-handedly educate its students on the process of operational planning. In cooperation with the Joint Special Operations University, there has been implemented an innovative programme of Design Thinking, corresponding to the latest global trends in operational planning, and in 2018, the ability to provide independent training in this field was acquired.

In 2018, after a break of a dozen or so years, an exercise on planning an allied operation executed within Article 5 of the Washington Treaty was organized at the War Studies

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34 J.S. Tym, *Operacyjne aspekty bitwy nad Bzurą. Pierwsza faza bitwy 9–12 września 1939 roku*, „Zeszyty Naukowe Akademii Obrony Narodowej” (Scientific Papers of the National Defence University of Warsaw), No. 4, 2011, pp. 226–246.

35 J. Zieliński, *Polska sztuka operacyjna*, Warszawa, 1994; Idem. *Przygotowanie i prowadzenie operacji obronnej*. Warszawa 1995; Idem, *Zarys teorii sztuki operacyjnej wojsk lądowych Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej*, Toruń 1998. It must be added that many officers dealing with operational art considered very important the opinions of two retired generals connected with the General Staff Academy – Franciszek Skibiński from the turn of the 1960s and 1970s, and Bolesław Chocha from the first half of the 1980s, who were able to write down their thoughts in the period of the Polish People's Republic. See: B. Chocha, *Rozważania o sztuce operacyjnej*, Warszawa 1984; F. Skibiński, *Rozważania o sztuce wojennej*, Warszawa 1972.

36 M. Wiatr, *Między strategią a taktyką*, Toruń 1999; Idem, *Operacje połączone*, Toruń 2006.

University. This year, guests invited to take part and cooperate in the mentioned exercise include partners from Visegrád Group states' military schools, and the strategic partner in the undertaking is the Baltic Defense College, all of whose students are going to take part in this and the following editions. Moreover, an implementation phase has been added to the exercise, which means that the solutions developed by international planning teams will be tested at the War Games and *Simulation* Center, using the JTLS (Joint Theater Level Simulation) system.

As regards the IT support of educational process, another important step forwards has been made: procuring and implementing the TOPFAS operational planning support system used at NATO commands. First graduates of the Higher Operational and Strategic Course trained using this tool are going to leave the school in 2020. It is worth adding that operational training addressed to a wider audience is organized by the institute and the department also within the frame of their cooperation with the Officers' Training Center, which helps to gradually expand their offer of programs. ■

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