

MICHAEL O. LOGUSZ

**BATTLE
OF
BRODY**

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VETERANS' NEWS

**P. O. Box 279, Stn. "D", Toronto, ON
Canada M6P 3J9**

Addresses of Representatives:

AUFC -- H.O.
49 Linden Gardens
Notting Hill Gate
London, W2 4HG
ENGLAND

Mr. S. Wasylo
4 The Hollows
Silverdale
Nottingham, NG11 7FJ
ENGLAND

Mr. N. Vesotsky
46 International Ave.
Salisbury North
S. Australia 5108

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FORWARD

In honor of the 50th Anniversary of the Battle of Brody, Visti Kom-batanta is publishing a special anniversary edition. This edition honors the men and women who, in the years of 1943-1945, served nobly in an effort to bring peace, justice and tranquility to a nation shattered by both Nazi and Soviet rule.

Fifty years ago, a determined group of young soldiers deployed from the Neuhammer Training Camp in Silesia to the Eastern Front. Their primary mission was to engage, repel and destroy the red horde menacing their sacred homeland; their secondary mission, to counter the present German influence. In essence, the "Ga'icia" Division's plan was to engage all hostile ideologies, both from the east and west, and to secure an independent Ukrainian nation in the aftermath of World War II.

In the following pages, the Battle of Brody is presented. Written by author Michael O. Logusz, this battle is depicted from a soon to be released book titled "Between Two Hammers: Galicia's Iron Lions and Their Quest For Freedom."

*C'est la Guerre!
Michael O. Logusz
Manhattan, New York
June,
1994*

A BOUT THE BOOK

Between Two Hammers: Galicia's Iron Lion and their Quest For Freedom

This is the account of a battle on the Eastern Front. It is based on actual recollection of participants and military documents.

In literary form, it describes the heroism and suffering of young soldiers who took up arms in the hope of securing an independent Ukraine.

May their deads never be forgotten.

Note: All personages in this book are real people. An asterisk (*) beside the name indicates that the person requested anonymity, and the author has given him an alias.

THE EASTERN FRONT: 1943-44.

In order to properly understand what the Division was facing the Summer of 1944, it is important to follow the sequence of events which arose on the eastern front from early 1943 to July 1944.

On 31 January 1943, when newly promoted Field Marshal Friedrich Paulus emerged from the basement ruins of a Stalingrad department store serving as his headquarters, to surrender what remained of the battered 6th and part of the 4th Panzer Armies, Nazi Germany was facing a disaster which had seldom been experienced by any nation. Continuing to advance rapidly, Soviet forces recaptured Rostov and further north, began to approach the Eastern Ukrainian city of Kharkiv. To hold Kharkiv, Hitler personally ordered General Hubert Lanz, Commander of Armeeabteilung Lanz, to the Fuhrer's headquarters in Rastenburg, Prussia.

Fully aware that if Kharkiv fell, Ukraine would be lost - along with its agricultural and mineral wealth, and determined to keep the conflict within Russia proper, Hitler personally ordered the mountain general to "Hold Kharkiv to the last man!"

Although determined to carry out the Fuhrer's explicit orders, Lanz' forces were limited in strength. What further complicated Lanz' mission was that he had no control over the elite: SS-"Leibstandarte Adolf Hitler", "Das Reich", and "Totenkopf" tank divisions promised to him by Hitler. Commanded by SS-Obergruppenfuhrer Paul "Papa" Hausser, the SS -divisions were to help defend Kharkiv. But Hausser, noting a dangerous situation, withdrew on 15-16 February to the south and southwest of Kharkiv in defiance of Lanz' and Hitler's orders.

Determined to regain control Hitler, on 17 February, flew to Army Group South's temporary headquarters located in the city of Zaporizhzhia (approximately 45 miles south of Dnipropetrovsk), on the Dnieper River. Such a front line visit by the Fuhrer was rare. But because Hitler needed a face-to-face conference with his generals to fully grasp the situation, a quick meeting was held in an airport hanger.

Prior to his arrival at Zaporizhzhia, Hitler was furious. But perhaps the lengthy flight and sub-zero weather calmed him down, because at Zaporizhzhia, Hitler immediately learned that Soviet spearhead forces were approximately 35 miles away. To make matters worse, no front stood between Zaporizhzhia and the enemy. On 18 February, Field Marshal Manstein outlined his plan to repulse the Soviets and recapture Kharkiv. Initially, Hitler had planned to dismiss Manstein, but because he needed a victory to attract world attention, the Fuhrer only listened.

On 19 February, Manstein struck. That same day, as Hitler flew back to Berlin with a bomb underneath his plane which failed to detonate as a result of a frozen mechanism, Manstein's forces moved rapidly. By 18 March, against odds of at least one against ten, Manstein's brilliant counter-offensive was carried out. In a counter-offensive, now regarded as one of the finest in military history, Manstein not only successfully restored the Eastern front's southern front line to its June 1942 position, but simultaneously retook Kharkiv.

In a desperate effort to bolster the German forces and their faltering allies with the hope that victory could yet be attained, Hitler launched Operation "Zitadell" (Citadel). Aiming to strike fear into Stalin's state but repeatedly postponed, by the time it was launched on 5 July 1943, the Soviets had ample knowledge of it and by 13 July, had exhausted Hitler's forces. Beside some recaptured territory, nothing positive was gained by this offensive.

Massively reinforcing their forces, the Soviets immediately went on the counter-offensive, pushing towards Kharkiv. On 3 August, they officially commenced the "Fourth Battle of Kharkiv." As before, Hitler demanded the city to be held, but so drained were Hitler's forces after "Zitadell" that on 27 August 1943, Kharkiv yielded to the troops of the Voronizh, Steppe and Southwest fronts. As Germany's battered forces pulled out, its hardliners knew that while after Stalingrad there was still some chance, with Kharkiv's fall the beginning of the end of the Third Reich was imminent.

Kiev fell on 6 November 1943. By January 1944, the Dnieper was successfully forged both north and south of Kiev. In the north, Soviet forces thrust towards the Baltic states while Finland began to seek a way out of the war. South of Kiev, at Cherkasy-Korsun a successful breakout was achieved, but in the Crimea poor evacuation plans combined with a lack of aggressive leadership in the German navy's Black Sea Fleet resulted in an unsuccessful evacuation of Sevastopol and the Crimean Peninsula.

By March 1944 Soviet forces began to strike deeper into the Western Ukraine which, prior to 1939, was under Polish rule. Like the Finn's, the Rumanians and Bulgarians also began to seek a way out of the war. Excluding the Byelorussian front, which jutted into Soviet Russia, Stalin's forces had recaptured a tremendous amount of territory.

Desperate now more than ever to reestablish and solidify the Eastern front, and angered by the loss of the cities of Nevel and Rivne, on 8 March 1944, Hitler issued Fuhrer order 11.¹ This new order was designed to turn certain towns and cities with road, rail, and communication lines into "fortresses." These "fortresses" were to be amply stocked with arms, food, and ammunition. Although advancing Soviet forces would initially bypass such "fortresses," their critical locations would soon force the Soviets to contest the

occupants. Once contested, much Soviet manpower and materiel would need to be diverted to secure such locations, and by the time a location was secured (if at all) and any damage repaired, a "fortress" would slow an advance. Altogether, twenty six towns and cities were designated as "fortresses."² Among which were Ternopil, Kovel, and Brody.

In March 1944, the advancing Soviets encircled the German 1st Panzer Army in southwest Ukraine. On 25 March, Fieldmarshall Manstein met with Hitler at Berchtesgaden, Bavaria. Throughout the afternoon they quarrelled about the fate of Hube's surrounded 1st Panzer and how to counter the Soviet thrust nearing southeast Galicia.

Manstein proposed to extradite Hube's army in the vicinity of Kamianets-Podilskyi (southeast of Ternopil' and Buchach). Hitler agreed to it, but refused to release any additional troops to assist the panzer army's breakout. At a second conference held after midnight, Hitler authorized the movement of the 2nd SS-Panzer Corps, comprising the "Hohenstauffen" and "Frundsberg" tank divisions, from Northern France to Galicia.

On 2 April, Soviet Fieldmarshal Zhukov issued a brutal surrender offer to the 1st Panzer. Zhukov warned that if the army failed to surrender, it would be destroyed and every captured officer would be executed in front of his own men. But on 5 April, the 2nd SS-Panzer Corps ripped into the Soviet front, retook Buchach, and dashed towards Hube's Army. Simultaneously, Hube struck to the southwest towards Khotyn' but then veered northwest towards Buchach. Close Luftwaffe air support and reinforcement (seldom seen in 1944) ensured a successful breakout. By 10 April, nearly twenty divisions, with much of their materiel, had made their way to safety. By operating behind the Soviet lines, Hube's Army severely hampered the Soviet supply and communications lines, tied down innumerable number of Soviet forces, and during its breakout had successfully destroyed sizable Soviet forces. In the end, the breakout had actually helped to stabilize the front. On 17 April, the 1st Ukrainian Front received orders to go on the defensive.³ Until mid-July 1944, it remained that way.⁴

1 Ziemke, *From Stalingrad to Berlin*, p. 277; Cooper, *The German Army*, p. 473.

2 *Ibid.*

3 Sergei M. Shtemenko, *The Soviet General Staff At War, 1941-1945* (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1981), Book II, p. 48.

4 For excellent accounts and maps of 1943-44 combat on the eastern front, see Brigadier General Young, ed., *Atlas of the Second World War* (London: Widenfeld and Nicolson, 1973); Ziemke's, *From Stalingrad to Berlin*; Chant's, *Hitler's Generals and Their Battles*; *Russian Combat Methods of World War II*; *Marshall Zhukov: An Outstanding Military Leader* (Moscow: Planeta Publishers, 1987); and Alex Buchner's, *Ostfront: The*

THE SOVIET ARMY

Despite its heavy losses, by the beginning of 1943 the Soviet Army's strength actually rose.¹ At the time of the Battle of Kursk in July 1943, Germany's eastern front intelligence estimated that Soviet Russia's military strength stood at 5,755,000.² But on 1 January 1944, Germany's intelligence placed the Soviet strength at 5.5 million.³ Russia, however, classified its front line strength at 5,568,000 with a further 419,000 in the Stavka reserve.⁴ Together, the combined strength totalled over 6,000,000. To make matters worse, Germany's eastern front intelligence estimated that while its own strength (even with expansion) would be declining, the Soviet strength (including casualties) would not only maintain itself, but would actually rise. This was attributable to the fact that Soviet Russia's population was considerably higher in 1941 than initially estimated at the outset of Barbarossa, and more eligible men reaching the 17-18 year age mark were found in the Soviet Union than in Germany. Additionally, manpower was also being secured from the far reaches of Siberia and Mongolia, and from regions previously occupied by German forces.⁵

In addition to its increased personnel strength, by the close of 1942, the Soviet Army had begun to massively increase its front line fire power. Its rocket launcher brigades (first established in its inventory at the close of 1942) were not only expanded by the conclusion of 1943, but were also reinforced with 26 independently formed rocket divisions.⁶ Further expansions were also made in the armored and aircraft field. This was attributable to the fact that between July and November 1941, 1,360 industrial sites were disassembled and shifted deeper into Siberia and Central Asia, along with most of the management and workers.⁷ In spite of the fact that for a period of time Soviet Russia's western territories and Ukraine with its agricultural and mineral wealth were occupied, the Soviet Union not only continued its industrial production but even surpassed that of Hitler. By the conclusion of the war, Stalin was more than correct when he boasted that he had won his so called "battle of machines." Nearly 80,000 tanks, 16,000 self-propelled guns, and 98,000 artillery pieces were produced along with mass numbers of small arms.⁸

Lend-lease assistance, mostly from America, also bolstered the Soviet war effort. Between 22 June 1941 and 20 September 1945, the Soviet Union acquired no less than 409,526 trucks and jeeps (mostly the "Studebaker" truck); 12,161 armored vehicles; 325,784 tons of explosives; 13,041 locomotives/rail-

way cars; approximately 1,798,609 tons of foodstuffs,⁹ and vast amounts of tires, steel, fuel, aviation fuel, and high-grade machine tools. All totalled, Soviet Russia received nearly 10.2 billion dollars worth of war goods.¹⁰

In organization and tactics, the Soviets progressed continuously. Whereas before tanks were relegated to the infantry, by 1943 compact groups of tanks and mechanized infantry organized into corps and armies began to appear.¹¹ These tank and mechanized forces enabled Soviet armies to move rapidly, strike decisively, and exploit any breakouts with tremendous firepower and speed.¹² Close air support was increasingly developed and improved upon. While of course it would not reach the level of America's strength, Soviet airpower in 1944 posed a far higher threat than it had just one year earlier. In 1944, every Soviet front had at least one air army for support.

The average strength of an infantry (rifle) division stood at 9,000-10,000; a guard infantry division had a strength of 10,000-12,000. All the way down to company level, an increase in automatic, semi-automatic, mortar and hand held anti-armored weapons enabled a company to possess stronger firepower than that possessed by a German company. With regard to quality, however, Soviet infantry was still inferior. Frequently in the midst of a battle, Soviet armies acquired much "infantry" through forced conscription. Untrained, poorly armed and equipped, these "soldiers" were forced to quickly master the art of combat and survival. Needless to say, many perished, but many survived. In due time, the survivors were afforded proper training, arms, equipment and were incorporated into regular or guard rifled, mechanized, or even airborne units. Regardless of how elite a Soviet infantry division was or was not, if one takes into consideration that by 1944 many German divisions were no longer in full divisional strength,¹³ leadership and soldier qualities were degraded, and arms, ammunition and equipment supplies were low - a haphazardly organized Soviet infantry division, reinforced at the last moment with untrained men, could still pose a threat to any weak German force. This is especially true if the Soviet division was bolstered with additional armor, air and artillery support.

In the opening months of the war, "Generalissimo" Stalin (who achieved every military order except the wound badge), had a nasty habit of interfering in military affairs and turning everything into a disaster. However, Stalin eventually admitted that he was no military genius and began to grant his generals freedom in strategic planning. Excluding rare appearances, such as in August 1943 when he threatened his general staff if they failed to secure Kharkiv, Stalin stayed out of military matters.

In the area of leadership, the Soviet armies tremendously improved their tactical abilities. This was largely due to the purges of the 1930's and to the

high military losses initially incurred in 1941 and 1942. With positions opening up in the higher levels, a number of exceptionally gifted leaders, many under the age of forty, who were less politically motivated but had a better understanding of newer concepts in modern warfare, assumed positions of leadership.¹⁴

1 According to Lucas, *War on the Eastern Front*, p. 49, the strength of its infantry divisions rose from 175 in June 1941 to 513 in 1943. Unlike the German divisions, these divisions were raised in near or full strength.

2 Ziemke, *From Stalingrad to Berlin*, p. 144. This was actually a gain of about 1.5 million men since September 1942.

3 Ziemke, *From Stalingrad to Berlin*, p. 214. Simultaneously, from the period of July to October 1943, Nazi Germany lost nearly 1,000,000 men. Of this strength, fewer than half were replaced. See also Seaton, *The Fall of Fortress Europe*, p. 61.

4 *Istoriia Velikoy Otechestvennoy Voiny Sovetskogo Soiuza 1941-1945* (Moscow: 1960-1963), Vol. 4, p. 20; Ziemke, p. 214.

5 Simultaneously, with the withdrawal of the Italian, Hungarian, Rumanian, Bulgarian, Finnish, Spanish and other nationalities, Germany's manpower strength would plummet further. See also Ziemke, *From Stalingrad to Berlin*, pp. 213-217.

6 Ziemke, *From Stalingrad to Berlin*, p. 146.

7 John Campbell, ed., *The Experience of World War II* (N.Y.: Oxford University Press, 1989), p. 158.

8 *Ibid.*, p. 159. See also pp. 160-162. Certain small arms weapons systems, such as the Ppsh submachine guns, were not only improved upon but no less than 5 million were produced during the war. See also Duncan Crow, ed., *Armored Fighting Vehicles of Germany* (N.Y.: Arco Publishing Co., 1978), p. 2. In addition to quantity, the Soviet's began to produce arms, tanks and equipment which quality wise, surpassed that produced by Nazi Germany. See Ziemke, *From Stalingrad to Berlin*, p. 501; Lucas, p. 47; and Hart, *History of the Second World War*, p. 486.

9 Ziemke, *From Stalingrad to Berlin*, p. 501.

10 *Ibid.*; Hart, p. 486. See also F.W. von Mellenthin's, *Panzer Battles* (University of Oklahoma Press, 1955), p. 278. Von Mellenthin was an eastern front Wehrmacht general.

11 A tank corps comprised a strength of approximately 189 to 200 tanks with a personnel strength of 10,500; a mechanized corps maintained a strength of around 189 tanks but its personnel strength (primarily mechanized infantry) stood at 16,000. See B.H. Lidell Hart's, *The Red Army: 1918-1945; the Soviet Army, 1946 to the Present* (N.Y.: Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1956), pp. 314-315; and Colonel Richard N. Armstrong's "Battlefield Agility: the Soviet Legacy" in *The Journal of Soviet Military Studies*, No. 4, December 1988, p. 506. Hereafter referred to as SMS with appropriate year, number and page.

12 Major General Ivan Krupchenko, "Tanks in the Offense" in *Soviet Military Review* (Moscow: Krasnaya Zvezda Publishing House). September (No. 9), 1971, pp. 40-43; and Colonel N. Kobrin, "A Tank Army in the Offensive," in *Soviet Military Review*, January

(No. 1), 1976, pp. 47-49. Hereafter referred to as *SMR* with appropriate year, number and page.

13 Although the problem was already identified in 1941, Field Marshal Guenther von Kluge once again raised the issue in 1943 and 1944 that, in addition to dwindling divisional strengths, troop qualities also depreciated. See also Ziemke, *From Stalingrad to Berlin*, pp. 215-216.

14 Hart, *History of the Second World War*, p. 487.

THE FIRST UKRAINIAN FRONT

On 15 May 1944, Marshal Ivan Stepanovych Konev assumed command of the 1st Ukrainian Front.¹ Originally, the 1st Ukrainian Front was known as the Voronizh Front and Steppe Front. But on 20 October 1943, shortly after entering Ukraine, the two fronts were merged together and redesignated as the 1st Ukrainian Front²

In the early summer of 1944, Konev's 1st Ukrainian Front was assigned the mission of breaching the German defense in Galicia, overrunning western Ukraine, routing the main forces of Army Group North Ukraine's 1st and 4th Panzer Armies, and pressing into Poland and Rumania proper.³

1 Lev Shankowskyi, "Biy Pid Brodamy v Nasvitleni Sovets'kykh Dzherel." (Battle at Brody in Current Soviet Sources), *Visti*, 1963, No. 1, p. 9.

2 *Ukrains'ka RSR u Velykii Vitchyzniani Viini Radians'koho Soiuzu, 1941-1945 rr*, Vol. 2, p. 492. See also Map No. 10 between pp. 344-345; General Sergei M. Shtemenko, *The Soviet General Staff At War*, (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1985), Book 1, p. 255; *Marshal Zhukov*, p. 151.

3 Shtemenko, *The Soviet General Staff at War*, Book 1, p. 299; Colonel General David Dragunsky, *Pages From the Story of My Life: A Soldier's Memoirs* (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1983), pp. 175-176; Colonel A. Zvenzlovsky, *The Lvov-Sandomir Operation*, "SMR, 1974, August, No. 8, p. 50; Erickson, *The Road to Berlin*, p. 231; Colonel M. Polushkin, "L'vovsko-Sandomirskaiia nastupatel'naia operatsiia 1-go Ukrain'kogo fronta v tsifrah (13. 7-29. 8. 1944 g.)" in *Voenno-Isstoricheskii Zhurnal* (Military Historical Journal) (Moscow: 1969), No. 8, p. 54; Marshal Konstantin Rokossovsky, "Operation Bagration," in *Battle's Hitler Lost and the Soviet Marshalls Who Won Them* (N.Y.: Jove Books, 1988), p. 129. For an entire review of "Operation Bagration" see Chapter 8, pp. 127-140; I.S. Konev, *Zapiski Komanduiushchego Frontom 1943-1945* (Memoirs of a Front Commander, 1943-1945) (Kiev: Izdatel'stvo politicheskoi literatur'i Ukrain'i, 1987), 244. For a fairly detailed analysis and viewpoint of the Lvov-Sandomir Operation by Konev, see "L'vovsko-Sandomirskaiia Operatsiia," pp. 236-304.

ARMY GROUP NORTH UKRAINE

Army Group North Ukraine (AGNU) was created on 5 April 1944.¹ Commanded by Field Marshal Walther Model, AGNU was to defend the northwestern Ukraine, eastern Galicia, and the northern/central Carpathian region. At first, it was commanded by Field Marshal Walter Model, but in June 1944, Colonel General Josef Harpe assumed command. Army Group North Ukraine's front stretched from the base of the Pripjat marshes in the vicinity of Kovel, to a point just south of Kutly in the Carpathian Mountains. Its strength consisted of 35 German infantry and field security divisions, 10 Hungarian divisions (primarily concentrated in the 1st Hungarian Army),² 8 panzer and 1 motorized division.³ Although this strength might seem impressive, if one takes into consideration that very few of the German infantry divisions exceeded a strength of 10,000,⁴ none of AGNU's panzer divisions were in full strength; the Luftwaffe's air support was negligible at best; and the Hungarians were far to the rear seeking a way to extricate themselves out of the war; AGNU faced a difficult mission. What especially compounded the situation was that the elite 2nd SS-Panzer Corps, refitted within Army Group North Ukraine in anticipation of another summer offensive, was ordered by Hitler on 11 June to return to Normandy.⁵ With its return to the west, a large and effective armored force was lost by AGNU.

Yet Army Group North Ukraine's mission was of essence. It was to defend what was left of Ukraine, protect Lviv's critical road, air and rail center, protect the vital oil region of Drohobych and Boryslav, and ensure the Soviet forces did not advance into Czechoslovakia and the plains of southern and central Poland towards Silesia.⁶ Any further German defeats and withdrawals from the remainder of Ukraine and Galicia would result in severe military, political, economic and psychological setbacks for Nazi Germany.

Galicia lies on a central plateau and upland belt which, in elevation (excluding the Carpathian and Crimean mountains), is higher than most of Ukraine. A series of major rivers, such as the Buh, Dniester, San, Zbruch, Seret, Strypa, and Styr, along with numerous streams and tributaries, bisect the whole of Galicia. The land is characterized by rolling, hilly terrain with patches of forested areas and wooded ridges rising up to 600 feet. Swamps and deep ravines, with occasional high hills (suitable for observation) are also found. Galicia's roads frequently cross the tops of dams and dikes, and heavy rains often swell streams and creeks, turning roads and adjacent fields into quagmire. Realizing the importance of Galicia, and determined to hold the rapidly moving Soviet juggernaut from advancing into the European plateau and Poland proper, the Germans established a strong defense.

From the Polissian swampland to the Carpathian Mountains and around a series of rivers such as the Buh, Strypa, and Styr, the Germans constructed a defensive zone of fortifications extending (from east to west) three lines in depth. As always, terrain played a major factor in determining the depth of this defense which averaged out to be 25 to 30 miles. Much of this defense hinged on the so-called "Prinz Eugen Stellung" (Prinz Eugen Position), which stretched southeastward from the vicinity of Kholm into the region of Ternopil. Within this defense zone, a series of designated forces were instructed to hold the forward two defensive lines and "fortified" centers, while the armored forces were kept in reserve approximately 10 miles behind.⁷ In the event of a Soviet attack, these armored forces would only be committed to bolster an area or position threatened to be overrun or to counterattack any Soviet armored forces weakened in their attempt to break through the German defense. Along with the armor, any forward infantry companies or battalions not being attacked could contribute to the defense by marching rapidly into a designated location and assisting its defenders. The German defense of Galicia was centered (as always is the case) on four strict defensive characteristics: preparation, concentration, disruption and flexibility.

Theoretically speaking, the plan was excellent. If properly administered and executed, it could have yielded results. But as with any plan, weaknesses were to be found.

Following Hitler's dismissal of Manstein on 30 March,⁸ Field Marshal Model took over. A soldier of great drive, ability and power, Model undoubtedly did not have enough time to properly acquaint himself with the situation. As with any new commander, Model would propose changes and additions to the defense plan. Unfortunately, once such changes begin to reach the lower units (especially battalion and company levels) and training changes must be made to meet the new defense missions, confusion and problems frequently arise. If sufficient time is not allowed to resolve any difficulties, unpreparedness in warfare equals disaster.

According to former Wehrmacht General Frederick von Mellenthin, former Chief of Staff of the 4th German Panzer Army, General Model "was prone to interfere in matters of detail, and to tell his corps and army commanders exactly where they should dispose their troops."⁹ Certain commanders found this very irritating. Complicating the situation was this order issued by Model: "Forward lines are to be held at all costs, artillery and armor are to be disposed in rear along a defensive line showing no gaps; if the enemy breaks through, he must be met with obstacles everywhere."¹⁰

But a number of commanders, such a Panzer General Hermann Balck, deferred. Balck, whose 48th Panzer Corps was to operate in the vital Lviv-Ter-

nopil sector (and the scene of major battles in 1914 and 1916) argued that the forward line should be thinly manned in a series of outposts; as for the main defensive line, it should be far to the rear. Such a positioning would keep the brunt of the infantry out of the range and massive firepower of the Soviet artillery. Mellenthin, Balck, and others also felt that the order requiring the forward lines to be fully manned through the night, with the majority of the troops at daybreak retiring to the main position, had to be changed. This procedure was only wearing out the troops and could possibly expose them to dangers when on the move. To increase firepower, Balck also believed it was better to concentrate the artillery and anti-tank guns as mobile reserves instead of just deploying the guns in long defensive lines.

At first, Model refused to accept these proposals, but eventually gave in. Although the infantry was disposed in the new manner, at the time of Konev's offensive, the accepted regrouping of artillery and anti-tank guns was not yet accomplished.¹¹

To complete its defense, Army Group North Ukraine was to be reinforced. However, as was always the case, reinforcement was no easy matter. What especially compounded the problem was that on 6 June 1944, the western allies had landed in France and that same month on 22 June, the Soviets launched Operation "Bagration", a major offensive in Byelorussia.¹² Striking an over-extended and thinly held bulge protruding far to the east, Stalin's armies advanced rapidly. Disgusted with Field Marshal Ernst Busch's defense of Byelorussia, Hitler relieved Busch on 28 June and ordered Model to take over the defense of Army Group Central. Model would still retain his position as commander of AGNU; however, with his transfer to the central sector on 29 June, Colonel General Josef Harpe, commander of the 4th Panzer Army and Model's deputy, assumed command of AGNU in Model's absence. With the temporary transfer of Model to the central sector, AGNU lost a very capable commander. Likewise, it would be difficult for Harpe to direct both his army and the entire AGNU at the time when Konev struck.

To halt the threatening Soviet advance into central and northern Poland, Lithuania, and East Prussia, AGNU was ordered to dispatch six divisions (three armored)¹³ north to the Central front. Likewise, because of the Soviet offensive in Byelorussia, no German units would be able to be diverted south to assist AGNU in its operations against the 1st Ukrainian Front.¹⁴ As was always the case, whenever a front gave up any of its forces, frequently many weeks or months (if ever in many cases) ensued before the forces were returned or replaced. Therefore, at the time of the Soviet offensive, AGNU did not man its defense with a strength of "40 divisions, two brigades and other units totalling 600,000 men, 900 tanks and assault artillery, 6,300 cannon and

mortars, and 700 aircraft as attested in the 1980's by Soviet Colonel Panov;¹⁵ rather, when the 1st Ukrainian Front struck, AGNU's strength consisted of thirty-four infantry divisions, five panzer and one motorized divisions, and two brigades.¹⁶ Virtually all were under strength.

On paper, a German infantry division of 6 infantry battalions was authorized a strength of 12,000 men; a division of 9 infantry battalions was authorized approximately 15,000 men.¹⁷ But in reality, by the end of 1943 many infantry divisions were operating on unauthorized strengths.¹⁸ Excluding certain Waffen SS and Wehrmacht divisions, for the greater part German generals operated with understrength divisions and brigades.

In addition to the fact that most of the infantry divisions were understrength, AGNU's 1st and 4th panzer Armies were "panzer" in name only. In 1944, a panzer division was authorized up to 125 tanks.¹⁹ But, excluding certain Waffen SS and a few Wehrmacht panzer divisions, most panzer divisions had tremendous difficulties in maintaining their authorized tank strengths, and due to combat losses frequently had fewer than 100 tanks.

On 22 June 1944, the corps composition of 4th Panzer Army stood as such: 13th Corps, 42nd Corps, 56th Panzer Corps, and a reserve (numerically unidentified) corps consisting of the 213th Field Security Division. The 1st Panzer Army's corps composition consisted of the 24th Panzer Corps, 46th Panzer Corps, 48th Panzer Corps, and 59th Corps. To these two armies, OKH designated the 3rd Panzer Corps as a reserve which contained the 20th Panzer Grenadier and 5th SS "Wiking" Divisions.²⁰ Minor changes, however, occurred between 8 and 15 July and on the eve of Konev's thrust the composition of the 4th Panzer Army stood as such: 8th Corps (a battered corps diverted from the 2nd Army which previously was holding a front in the southwestern part of Byelorussia within the bulge of Army Group Center); 56th Panzer Corps, 46th Panzer Corps (brought over from the 1st Panzer Army), 42nd Corps, and Rear Reserve Corps. As for the 1st Panzer Army, it was commanded by Colonel-General Erhard Raus and its corps composition stood as follows: 13th Corps (previously with 4th Panzer); 48th Panzer Corps; 24th Panzer Corps; 59th Corps and AGNU's 3rd Panzer Reserve Corps transferred to the 1st Panzer Army by OKH. Again, it is noteworthy to mention that although both armies were classified as "panzer", in truth neither of the two armies was even close to being a true panzer army. Although a number of the corps' were also designated as "panzer", in actuality they existed as infantry corps. Excluding the 16th and 17th Panzer Divisions within the 4th Panzer Army's 46th Panzer Corps, and the 1st and 8th Panzer Divisions within the 1st Panzer Army's 3rd Panzer Reserve (shortly afterwards these two panzer divisions were diverted to the 1st Panzer Army's 48th Panzer Corps headed by General Hermann Balck),

no additional panzer divisions or brigades were found.²¹ As for tank strengths, 16th Panzer listed a strength of 22 tanks and 17th Panzer 21 plus.²² Simultaneously, within the 1st Panzer Division, there existed 34 Mark IV and 27 Mark V "Panther" tanks.²³ The 8th Panzer was regarded as the strongest with 9 Mark IV's and 68 Panthers.²⁴ All four panzer divisions did possess some mechanized (self-propelled) anti-tank guns, but these were limited. For the greater part, the 4th and 1st "Panzer" Armies' infantry and panzer corps consisted of a number of jaeger (hunter) and understrength infantry divisions. Except for the 1st Panzer Divisions "1" rating,²⁵ the remainder of the 4th and 1st Panzer Armies divisions fell into a "2" and "4" rating. And with such forces, AGNU was to stop the Soviet thrust.

1 Ziemke, *Stalingrad to Berlin*, p. 286. The conversion, however, began on 30 March 1944. But on 5 April, Hitler officially renamed Army Group's 'South' and 'A' into Army Group's 'North' and 'South' Ukraine. In all, AGNU's front stretched for a distance of 219 miles.

2 Organized during the winter of 1943-44, the Hungarian 1st Army appeared in the spring of 1944 on the Galician front. Despite some very good soldiers and a relatively solid Hungarian cadre with eastern front experience, a lack of arms, equipment and transport, as well as an inability for both Hungary and Nazi Germany to provide that army its essential needs, prevented the Hungarian 1st from developing into a formidable force. Increasing dissatisfaction with Nazi Germany, along with Hungary's uncertain future political situation, also took its toll.

In a desperate effort to prop up the Hungarians, AGNU placed the Hungarian 1st under its own operational and tactical control, and dispatched a number of German liaison officers to influence military operations and ensure tighter supervision and control of the Hungarians. Of course, such a move offended the Hungarians, provoked opposition, and further deteriorated a relationship which, realistically speaking, was never strong from the beginning. (See Mueller-Hillebrand's, *Germany and Its Allies*, pp. 214-219). Destined to reinforce the Galician front, in the very end the Hungarian 1st Army not only failed to bolster AGNU's defense but in actuality drained some of the AGNU's desperately needed manpower and material.

3 Ziemke, *From Stalingrad to Berlin*, p. 319. However, on the eve of Konev's offensive, this strength would drop as will be seen.

4 Throughout 1943 and 1944, General Guderian complained that many of the newly created divisions were not only understrength and below par of those raised previously, but the formations also consumed excessive amounts of transportation and logistical support. Ashley Brown, *Modern Warfare, From 1939 to the Present Day* (N.Y.: Crescent Books, 1986), p. 91.

5 Alexander McKee, *Last Round Against Rommel: Battle of the Normandy Beach-head* (N.Y.: Signet Books, 1966), pp. 162-163; *Biy Pid Brodamy*, p. 135; *World War II*, Vol. 12 p. 1554.

6 Stalin constantly emphasized the fact that Silesia was "Gold!" Ivan Konev, *Year of Victory* (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1969), p. 5. See also David Dragunsky's, *A Soldier's Memoirs*, pp. 175-176. According to Lt. General Ivan I. Dremov, a former eastern front commander, the Soviets considered it critical to liberate the remainder of Ukraine, enter the Carpathian region, force the Vistula River, and bring the war into Poland proper. (I.F. Dremov, *Nastupala Groznaia Bronia* (The Formidable Strength Advanced)(Kiev: Izdatel'stvo Politicheskoi Literatur'i Ukrain'i, 1981), p. 90.

7 According to Colonel Andre Sidorenko, Germany's forces, following their defeat at Stalingrad, changed over to a deeper positional defense. The main defense line, established about 5 to 6 miles (8-10 km's) from the forward edge, was about 2.5 to 3.5 miles (4-6 km's) in depth and the second 1.5 to 2 miles (2-3 km's) in depth. These two lines usually made up the so-called tactical defense zone. Up to 80 percent of the defender's strength was concentrated within the lines. See "Development of the Tactics of Offensive Battle from Experiences of the Great Patriotic War," *Soviet Military Review*, No. 10, October, 1979, p. 20. For a German analysis of how Galicia's terrain, especially how the Dniester and Buh Rivers were incorporated into the defense, see "European Russia: A Natural Fortress" in *Terrain Factors in the Russian Campaign*, pp. 4-5.

8 Dupuy, *Encyclopedia of Military History*, p. 1115; Ziemke, *From Stalingrad to Berlin*, p. 286; Seaton, *The Fall of Fortress Europe*, p. 99; *World War II*, Vol. 10, pp. 1344-1345. 2 April 1944 is the date cited that Model assumed command of AGNU. (p. 1345).

9 Von Mellenthin, *Panzer Battles*, p. 281. Mellenthin's observation was substantiated by General Balck who commanded the 48th Panzer Corps found within AGNU. See *World War II*, Vol. 10, p. 1345.

10 Mellenthin, p. 283.

11 *Ibid.*, pp. 283-285. For an analysis of what type of commander Model was during this period of time, see Seaton's *The Fall of Fortress Europe*, pp. 137-138.

12 Operation "Bagration" was divided into two phases. The first phase was to be launched in Byelorussia on 22 June 1944, and the second phase was to be launched in the Western Ukraine in mid-July. As for the code-word "Bagration", it was named in honour of Prince Peter Bagration, an Imperial Russian Army officer who fought Napoleon's armies in 1812. Of interest to note is that despite a massive amount of planning, no one came up with a code-name. Even when on 20 May 1944 Lieutenant General Alexei I. Antonov, Chief of the Operations Department and Deputy Chief of the General Staff, placed his signature indicating approval of the plan submitted to him several days earlier, he somehow failed to note that a code-name was missing. Shortly afterward, Stalin was briefed on the Byelorussian aspect of the plan. At the conclusion of the briefing, Stalin stated that a code-name had not been mentioned and he asked the assembled commanders and briefers for its name. At this time, everyone just stared at one another. Sensing that none had been provided, Stalin suggested "Bagration." Embarrassed into silence, Stalin's assembled officers immediately accepted the name.

13 Erickson, *The Road to Berlin*, p. 231; Shankowsky, "Biy Pid Brodamy v nasvitlenni soviets'kykh dsherel" in *Biy Pid Brodamy*, p. 56. One of the reasons why the operation was launched in Byelorussia was to divert forces from the Western Ukraine and Galicia northwards. According to Ziemke, *From Stalingrad to Berlin*, AGNU immediately lost three

panzer and two infantry divisions as a result of the Soviet offensive in Byelorussia. According to *World War II*, AGNU was ordered to deploy to Army Group Center four panzer and three infantry divisions. (Vol. 12, p. 1659). Undoubtedly, such an order was issued but regardless, it is known that in addition to the three panzer divisions immediately dispatched, another panzer division, the 5th SS "Wiking", was also transferred to the Byelorussian front. In the end, AGNU dispatched a total of seven divisions (four panzer/three infantry) to Army Group Center.

Needless to say, the transfer of these divisions (but especially the four panzer divisions) would seriously weaken AGNU in its effort to halt the 1st Ukrainian Front's upcoming offensive. See also Seaton, *The Fall of Fortress Europe*, p. 135.

14 Marshal Konstantin Rokossovsky, "Operation Bagration," in *Battles Hitler Lost*, p. 137; personal discussion with Yuriy Krokhmaluk.

15 Colonel B. Panov, "Lvov-Sandomir Operation" in *Selected Readings in Military History: Soviet Military History, Volume I: The Red Army, 1918-1945*. (U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, 1 January 1984), p. 374.

16 Erickson, *The Road to Berlin*, p. 231.

17 Ziemke, p. 506.

18 Cooper, pp. 485-490. Perhaps this explains why in 1944 Hitler was known to utter "I need more divisions!" (Ibid., p. 485). See also Liddell Hart's, *History of the Second World War*, pp. 485-486.

19 Ziemke, *From Stalingrad to Berlin*, p. 506. According to Mitcham, *Hitler's Legions*, by 1943, each panzer division was authorized a strength of approximately 165 tanks. (P. 21). But in actuality, none of the panzer divisions on the eastern front at that time had so many. (Ibid). According to Cooper, 1944 was a dismal year for Nazi Germany's panzer force. Despite the increase in tank production, unit strengths continued to decline. An armored division was fortunate if it possessed over sixty tanks. (See the *German Army*, pp. 487-488). According to Walter Kerr, because of severe losses in the spring of 1942, Nazi Germany was forced to reorganize its panzer force. Now, a typical German panzer division's armored strength was reduced to the point where it was authorized only one regiment of 130-150 tanks. See *The Secret of Stalingrad* (N.Y.: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1978), p. 53.

20 W. Victor Madeja, *Russo-German War: Summer 1944 (Destruction of the Eastern Front)* (Penn.: Valor Publishing Co.: 1987), p. 62.

21 Ziemke, *From Stalingrad to Berlin*, p. 319, acknowledges that prior to 22 June 1944, AGNU had a total of eight panzer divisions. However, on p. 330, Ziemke concedes that AGNU lost (as a result of the Soviet offensive in Byelorussia) three of its panzer divisions. (Ibid). AGNU's charts of 8-15 July 1944 reveal a total of five panzer divisions. (1st Panzer, 8th Panzer, 16th Panzer, 17th Panzer, and the 5th SS "Wiking" Panzer). As well, the charts reveal that the 5th SS "Wiking", posted in the 4th Panzer Army's Rear Reserve, was departing. (See also Madeja, *Russo-German War: Summer 1944*, p. 62). At the time the 1st Ukrainian Front struck on 13 July, the brunt (if not the entire) 5th SS -Panzer Division "Wiking" had departed. In actuality, excluding the independent 509th Tiger Tank Battalion, on the eve of Konev's offensive, AGNU's panzer strength had dwindled to four panzer divisions. (1st Panzer, 8th Panzer, 16th Panzer, and 17th Panzer). Various accounts and

sources, as well as AGNU's charts for the period of 8-15 July 1944, substantiate this. (See also Seaton's *The Fall of Fortress Europe, 1943-1945*, p. 138. According to Seaton, AGNU's strength had fallen to a strength of twelve Hungarian brigades and 31 German divisions of which four were panzer. But in addition to this, as verified by a host of former German commanders, eastern front veterans and postwar historians (see Buchner's "Brody: XIII Army Corps. An End in the Pocket," in *Ostfront: 1944*, p. 223), all of AGNU's four panzer divisions were operating on unauthorized strengths.

22 Madej, *Russo-German War: Summer 1944*, p. 62. The "+" symbol indicated that reinforcements were on the way, or that a full accounting was not yet completed. Regardless of the true number, the 17th Panzer Division's tank strength was considerably short of its authorization. According to Major Heike, a former Divisional staff operations officer, the 4th Panzer Army possessed no more than 40-50 tanks and it was a "panzer" army only in name. Wolf-Dietrich Heike, "Biy Pid Brodamy" in *Biy Pid Brodamy*, p. 135. According to Bohdan Stasiv, "Tragediia Pid Brodamy" (Tragedy of Brody), *Visti*, 1992, No. 3, p. 53, "when it came to armor, the Germans altogether had few tanks."

23 Madej, p. 62.

24 *Ibid.* For a breakdown of the various divisions and units found within AGNU's armies in June-July 1944, see pp. 62-63.

As for its personnel strength, a German "Kraftegegenubertellung" and "Front und frontnah" chart of June 1944 reveals that AGNU possessed a troop strength of 437,000, with an additional 196,000 in reserve. The reservists (supposedly) were posted near the front. This figure was also substantiated in a personal letter to the author by Colonel David M. Glantz. (Letter of 17 March 1992).

However, it must be remembered that prior to the 1st Ukrainian Front's offensive in July 1944, no less than seven entire German divisions (as well as various specialists and military personnel from other units and AGNU's depots) were dispatched to Army Group Center to assist that group in reestablishing a front line. Although it appears that no figures are available as to the number of soldiers departing AGNU, if one takes into consideration that the average strength of a German division was between 8,000 to 10,000 soldiers, with the departure of no less than seven divisions, it may be safely assumed that a strength of no less than 50,000 to possibly as many as 60,000 soldiers were dispatched from AGNU. With their departure few, if any, were immediately replaced. Needless to say, in the upcoming battle many a commander regretted that AGNU had lost such a critically needed combat strength.

25 In order for the German High Command to maintain a better understanding and working knowledge of the strengths and capabilities of its division's, a numerical system was developed and utilized. Beside each division's number and/or name, a number was inserted. "1" indicated the best: the division was capable of offensive and defensive missions; "2" indicated a limited attack capability; "3" showed only full defensive capabilities; and "4" indicated a limited defensive ability. A "?" adjacent a division showed that its capabilities were unknown.

KONEV'S PLAN

Unlike Stalin who advocated Zhukov's previous proposal to advance in Lviv's direction with one single massive thrust, Konev and his Chief-of-Staff, General Vasilii D. Sokolovskiy,¹ proposed a double thrust - one from an assembly area in the vicinity of Lutsk and Dubno towards Rava-Rus'ka/Yaroslav and the other from an assembly area in Ternopil towards the Galician capital of Lviv.² Both Konev and Sokolovskiy feared that a single thrust, even if massively supported, could be repulsed by AGNU. Therefore, Sokolovskiy, a first-rate military historian, hatched a plan based on a military event which occurred from 23 August-2 September 1914 in Galicia.

In the summer of 1914, General Nikolai Ivanov's south western Russian Front (comprising the 3rd, 4th, 5th and 8th Imperial Russian Armies), advanced towards Lemberg (Lviv) from the east and northeast. On 23-24 August, Austria's 1st Army repulsed the 4th Russian Imperial Army northeast of Lemberg. Several days later, Austria's 4th Army repulsed the 5th Russian Army. But on the southern flank (east/southeast of Lemberg), the Austrian 3rd Army (with elements of Austria's 2nd Army), was repulsed towards Lemberg by Russia's 3rd and 8th Armies. Falling back on Lemberg, the Austrian's were unable to re-establish a front because northeast of Lemberg, the 5th Russian Army (under renewed leadership) suddenly penetrated itself between Austria's 1st and 4th Armies. Abandoning Lemberg, the Austrians retreated west in hopes of establishing a new front. Because General Ivanov's southwestern front maintained a rapid advance, Austria's armies were unable to re-establish the Galician front. With such a two-thrusted envelopment, Imperial Russia, had, by mid-September, secured the whole of Galicia. Recalling how such a two-thrusted blow had rapidly overrun Galicia before, both Konev and Sokolovskiy began to incorporate Ivanov's successful strategy into the Soviet basic principle of land warfare which advocates violent, sustained, and deep offensive actions hinging on three major areas: a) seizure of the initiative at the outset of hostilities; b) penetration; and c) to drive deeply and decisively into an enemy's rear. But in order to achieve tactical success, both Konev and Sokolovskiy knew that a breakthrough of the first and second defensive zones would have to be rapidly achieved in order to begin a massive disruption of the German defense system. This, in turn, would create an advantageous condition for committing the reserve (or second echeloned) armored and mechanized forces into battle to develop the initial tactical breakouts into an operational one. Afterwards, continuous, non-stop troop movements would seize river crossings, defeat enemy reserves, and overrun fuel, supply, and communication points; thus achieving important objectives. Once such massive forces were injected into the German rear, it was anticipated a collapse would ensue.

But for such a high-rate of advance to be achieved, everything hinged on a rapidly executed breakthrough. And that is why a two thrust blow was advocated.

Half-heartedly, Stalin gave in to Konev's proposal for a two pronged Galician thrust³ - one towards Rava-Rus'ka and the other, towards Lviv. Because this was the only time during the entire Soviet-German conflict that one entire Soviet army front was assigned the mission to destroy an enemy army group, to ensure that Konev would be able to rapidly overrun Galicia and at long last carry the war into Europe proper, STAVKA massively reinforced Konev's 1st Ukrainian Front.⁴ By 13 July 1944, Konev's front had approximately 1,200,000 officers and men, nearly 2,200 tanks and self-propelled guns, some 14,000 guns and mortars, and well over 3,000 aircraft.⁵ According to Konev's own calculations years after World War II, the 1st Ukrainian Front had 80 rifle (infantry) and cavalry divisions; 10 tank and mechanized corps; approximately 16,000 artillery and mortar pieces; about 2,000 tanks and self-propelled guns; and 3,250 combat aircraft.⁶ In troop strength, the 1st Ukrainian Front accounted for 1,110,000 personnel.⁷ Retired British Army Colonel Albert Seaton cited 1st Ukrainian Front's strength as consisting of no less than 840,000 men, 14,000 guns, 1,600 tanks and self-propelled artillery pieces, and 2,800 aircraft organized around 80 infantry divisions, 10 tank or mechanized corps, and a number of brigades.⁸ And Lt. Colonel Mykhailo Lishchyn's'kyi, a former Divisional officer, cited that Konev had 80 divisions, 6 cavalry divisions, 10 tank and mechanized corps, 4 specialized tank brigades, and 1 corps of Czech communists. As well, over 1,600 tanks and over 13,900 artillery and mortar pieces exceeding 76mm were found.⁹ To this, 10 partisan formations and no less than 53 specialized detachments and a number of highly-trained snipers were inserted to cause havoc. Totalling no less than 9,000 men and women,¹⁰ these forces bolstered the regions communist insurgency in the late spring of 1944 to no less than 12,000 fighters found within 11 guerrilla groups and 40 independent detachments.¹¹ Their mission was to support the front's thrust by striking communication, supply, rail centers, roads and key personnel.¹² In the end, a total of seven infantry armies (1st Guards¹³, 3rd Guards, 5th Guards, 13th, 18th, 38th and 60th); three tank armies (1st Guards Tank, 3rd Guards Tank¹⁴, and 4th Tank¹⁵), and two independent mechanized cavalry groups "Baranov" (consisting of the 1st Guards Cavalry Corps and 25th Tank Corps), and "Sokolov" (6th Guards Cavalry Corps and 31st Independent Tank Corps), were found within Konev's 1st Ukrainian Front.

In addition to the strong armored concentrations, a number of "artillery" divisions were also dispatched to Konev's front. Such divisions, which contained their own permanent planning, fire direction, reconnaissance, forward fire support observers, intelligence and liaison personnel, were centered around

approximately 210 artillery pieces utilized especially for offensive operations. Such artillery divisions were provided to the following armies: 1st Guards Breakthrough Artillery Division - 13th Army; 3rd Breakthrough Artillery Division - 5th Guards Army; 3rd Guards Rocket Barrage Division - 1st Ukrainian Front; 13th Breakthrough Artillery Division - 1st Ukrainian Front; and the 17th Breakthrough Artillery Division operated with both the 5th Guards and 60th Armies.

To ensure success along the "Rava-Rus'ka" Axis Konev authorized (in the vicinity of the town of Lutsk) the establishment of the "Lutsk Assault Group." This group encompassed Gordov's 3rd Guards Army, Putkov's 13th Army, Katukov's 1st Guards Tank Army, and General "Baranov's" mechanized cavalry group. A combined strength of 14 rifle divisions, one tank army, a mechanized corps, a cavalry corps and two artillery divisions were supported by Col. General Krasovskiy's 2nd Air Army; to ensure success along the "Lviv" Axis Konev assembled (north of Ternopil) the "Lviv Assault Group." This encompassed Moskalenko's 38th Army, Kurochkin's 60th Army, Rybalko's 3rd Guards Tank Army, Lelyshenko's 4th Tank Army, and "Sokolov's" Mechanized Cavalry Group. From amongst the 3rd Guards, 13th, 38th and 60th armies, 32 specially formed "shock assault storm" battalions were formed to penetrate AGNU's front.¹⁶ Air support was provided by the 2nd Air Army as well as elements of the 8th Air Army.¹⁷ And on Konev's left flank (facing westward), Colonel-General Grechko's 1st Guards and Lt. General Zhuravlev's 18th Army were established. These two armies had the mission of covering "Lviv Assault Group's" left flank or, on order, reinforce any breakthroughs by the "Lviv" group, or push southwest towards the city of Stanyslaviv (currently Ivano-Frankivsk). As for Zdanov's 5th Guards Army, along with the 47th Independent Rifle Corps (with a strength of six rifle divisions), these forces served as the 1st Ukrainian Front's reserve.¹⁸

According to Colonel Panov "nearly half of the infantry divisions, three tank armies, as well as artillery, engineer and various special units, were transferred into the Lutsk-Ternopil [assembly area] sectors in the period of 24 June to 7 July 1944. As a result, this massing of manpower and equipment and the deep operational formation gave the 1st Ukrainian Front considerable superiority over the enemy in the sector of the breakthrough and ensured favorable opportunities for following up the operation."¹⁹

Colonel Panov was correct in his observations that the 1st Ukrainian Front had developed a "considerable superiority" over the German enemy. And his estimates of "five-fold in manpower, six-fold in artillery, and four-fold in tanks" are also correct.²⁰ Realistically speaking, especially in the breakout sectors, Konev's forces had very high superiority ratios.

To conceal his plans, marshal Konev imposed strict secrecy. All movement and staging orders were coded, all couriers were closely escorted by NKVD agents and combat police and deception was extensively utilized.²¹

Front movements were also carried out to fool German observers and intelligence into believing that the main thrust was going to evolve from the vicinity of the 1st Guards and 18th Armies. It was hoped that such movements would develop a false impression that not two, but rather four (two infantry and two tank) armies, along with an independent tank corps would be staging northeast of Stanislaviv. Galicia's forested and swamp areas were utilized extensively to conceal approach's and assembly areas. To cite an example, the extensive forests east of Lviv were utilized in June 1944 for the purposes of concealment in establishing the assembly areas. In areas where swamp and marshy terrain was found, Soviet engineers laid corduroy roads.²²

On 7 July 1944, Konev's attack plans were flown from his 1st Ukrainian Front headquarters to Moscow's Stavka for final inspection. Two air supported blows - separately orchestrated but massively inflicted - would be launched no more than 45 miles apart. Once the German front was shattered, its defenders would be denied the ability to effectively deal with an onslaught of men and materiel moving rapidly on two axis. To ensure the breakout would occur, the 1st Ukrainian Front assembled 56 of its 84 infantry rifle divisions, over 90 percent of its armor and up to 65 percent of its "God of War" artillery into the two assembly areas.²³ Although the 1st Ukrainian Front held a frontage of 440 km's, both axis' were to strike at a combined front of no more than 26 km's (16-17 miles). Per kilometer, no less than 200-300 guns were emplaced.²⁴ And once a breakout was achieved, Soviet planners hoped to achieve a depth of 220-240 kilometers.²⁵

None of the front's tank armies or mechanized cavalry groups would be committed in the initial breakthrough; rather, a full twenty-four hours would elapse before any armor was committed. This would only occur after the infantry broke through and achieved operational depth. Konev's date of attack was set for 14 July 1944. To ensure his troops received a good rest, all preparations were to cease by 12 July.

On 10 July 1944, Stavka approved Konev's plan.

1 Konev's right hand was the gifted General Sokolovskiy. According to contemporary Soviet writers, it was Sokolovskiy who implemented and developed the July 1944 Lviv-Sandomir Operation. A gifted tactician, Sokolovskiy characterized the operation by high mobility, aviation, and deep penetration. See Colonel A. Orlov's "Marshal Vasily Danilovich Sokolovskiy, 80th Birth Anniversary" in *SMR*, July (No. 7), 1977, p. 43.

2 P.N. Lashchenko, *Iz Boia v Boi* (From Battle to Battle) (Moscow: Voennoe Izdatel'stvo Minnisterstva Oboron'i SSSR, 1972), pp. 278-279; Erickson, *The Road to*

Berlin, p. 231; Colonel Armstrong, "Battlefield Agility" in *SMS*, December, 1988, p. 508; B.H. Lidell Hart, *History of the Second World War*, p. 581; and Konev, *Zapiski komanduiushchego frontom 1943-1945*, p. 245. For Konev's analysis and viewpoints of the Lvov-Sandomir Operation, along with his role in the operation, see "L'vovsko-Sandomirskaia operatsiia" pp. 236-304.

3 Until the very end, Stalin leaned in favour of Zhukov's original proposal of one massive shattering strike towards Lviv. To resolve the matter once and for all Stalin, on 22 June 1944, ordered Konev to appear personally in Moscow with his operations officer. Although the two-pronged thrust had not yet been finalized, on 8 July, Konev and Sokolovskiy briefed Stalin, Zhukov, and several members of STAVKA and the Politburo. (See Ian Grey, *Stalin: Man of History* (N.Y.: Doubleday and Company, 1979), p. 397). Stalin, who was in a neurotic state when briefed, only paced up and down; continuously, he proposed and defended Zhukov's proposal. Eventually, Stalin relented. But Stalin warned Konev that he (Konev) was personally responsible for it and that the operation would be conducted without any mishaps. (Konev, *Zapiski komanduiushchego frontom 1943-1945*, p. 249).

4 Indeed, Konev's forces were so massively reinforced that Zhukov actually proposed to Stalin to shift some of the 1st Ukrainian Front's strength northward to the other fronts. But Stalin totally refused. Insisting on the importance of overrunning Galicia and penetrating into Eastern Europe proper, Stalin maintained Konev's strength. (Grey, *Stalin*, p. 397. See also *Marshal of the Soviet Union, G. Zhukov: Reminiscences and Reflections* (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1985), Vol. 2, p. 284).

5 Colonel Anrei Zvenzlovskiy, "The Lvov-Sandomir Operation," *SMR*, No. 8, August, 1974, p. 51. According to Colonel N. Svetlishin, the 1st Ukrainian Front, which Konev commanded from May 1944 until the conclusion of the war, contained 10-12 armies with a troop strength of 1,000,000 to 1,200,000; 15,000-17,000 guns and heavy mortars; 2,500-3,300 aircraft and 2,200-3,500 tanks. Colonel Svetlishin, "(Konev) Commander of Unbending Will" in *SMR*, December 1967, No. 12 (36), p. 49.

6 Portuhal'skiy, *Konev*, p. 135.

7 *Ibid.*; Gregory Zhukov, *Marshal of the Soviet Union*, Vol. 2, p. 284. According to *World War II*, Konev had 16,213 artillery pieces and rocket launchers, 1,573 tanks, 463 assault guns, and 3,240 aircraft. As well, Konev's front possessed some of the most experienced tank commanders. (See Vol. 12, p. 1659).

8 Colonel Albert Seaton, *The Russo-German War, 1941-1945* (London: Prescott C. Tinling and Col, Ltd., 1971), p. 446; and *The Fall of Fortress Europe 1943-1945*, p. 138. According to Zhukov, the 1st Ukrainian Front's strength comprised 80 rifle (infantry) divisions, 10 armored and mechanized corps, 4 separate armored and self-propelled gun brigades and 3,250 aircraft. *Zhukov, Marshal of the Soviet Union*, Vol. 2, p. 284.

9 Lt. Colonel Myhailo Lishchyn's'kyi, "Nastup Sovets'koi Armii i Boi Pid Brodamy" (The Soviet Army Advance and the Battle at Brody), in *Surmach* (England: 1968), No. 1-4 (38-41), pp. 22-23. (While serving in the Division, Lishchyn's'kyi held the rank of Waffen-Obersturmfuhrer. Shortly after World War II, he was promoted to the rank of Podpolkovnyk (Lt. Colonel) by the Ukrainian Government in Exile).

10 Panov, *Lvov-Sandomir Operation*, p. 377. According to "Partisan Combat Methods" in *Russian Combat Methods in World War II*, "prior to large-scale Russian

offensives, strong bands would often migrate to areas that the Red Army soon hoped to take. Prior to the beginning of the large-scale Red Army offensive in East Galicia in July 1944, for example, numerous bands worked their way into the Carpathian Mountains southwest of Lviv, which were among the objectives of the Soviet operations." (Chapter 16, p. 103). "The bands were generally organized into groupments of from 3,000 to 5,000 men each. Smaller groups, varying greatly in strength, comprised of at least 100 men. Attached to each groupment was a number of these smaller partisan groups." (*Ibid.*, p. 104). (It is important to note that women fighters also served in these bands).

11 *Velikaia Otechestvennaia Voina v Fotografiiakh i Kinogo Kutelkakh, 1944* (The Great Patriotic War in Photos and Cinema, 1944) (Moscow: 1979), p. 361.

12 Panov, *Lvov-Sandomir Operation*, p. 377.

13 Predecessors of the Soviet Guards was the Red Guard. According to Soviet historians, in the Russian Civil War of 1918-22, the Red Guard displayed constant selfless heroism. During the Battle of Smolensk in August and September 1941, certain Soviet units also exhibited constant selfless heroism. As a result, on 18 September 1941, four Soviet rifle divisions were retitled as "Guard." Others followed. On 21 May 1942, a Guards Badge was instituted and Guards military ranks were introduced. (See Lt. Colonel Victor Mikhailov's, "The Soviet Guards" in *SMR*, September 1981, No. 9, pp. 37-38 *Shtemenko*, Book 1, p. 451.

14 Only the most gifted, daring, and mission minded generals were chosen to command tank armies. General Pavlo Semenovych Rybalko was one such commander. Following World War II, Rybalko was appointed Chief Commander of the Soviet tank forces. Until his sudden death on 28 August 1948, he played an instrumental role in the development of Soviet armor and armored warfare.

15 On 17 March 1945, the 4th Tank Army was awarded the honorary title of "Guards".

16 "Pror'iv na Rava-Russkom..." in *Velikaia Otechestvennaia Voina 1944*, p. 363.

17 General D.T. Yazov, *Vern'i Otchyzne* (Faithful to the Fatherland) (Moscow: Voennoye Izdatel'stvo, 1988), p. 253; Aviation Marshal S. Krasovskiy, "2-ia vozgushnaia armiiia v L'vovsko-Sandomirskoi operatsii" (the 2nd Air Service Army in the Lviv-Sandomir Operation) in *Voenno-Istoricheskiy Zhurnal* (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo "Krasnaia Zvezda"), 1964, July No. 7, p. 31; Shankowsky, *Biy Pid Brodamy*, p. 58. Shankowsky also cites that prior to the July 1944 offensive, the 8th Air Army, commanded by General Zdanov, was also brought in. In all, no less than 9 aviation corps' were found to include the 9th Guards Air Division where some of Soviet Russia's leading airmen and aces were found. (*Ibid.*); Von Hardesty, *Red Phoenix: The Rise of Soviet Air Power 1941-1945* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution, 1982), p. 222, cites that as many as 1,500 to 2,500 combat aircraft were concentrated in the breakthrough zones during the Lvov-Sandomir operation. For a breakdown of what was found within the 2nd Air Army and 8th Air Army, see Appendix 7, pp. 245 and 247; and *SSSR v Velikoi Otechestvennoi Voine 1941-1945*, p. 590 cites the 2nd Air Service Army was extensively utilized.

18 Erickson, *The Road to Berlin*, p. 232; Panov, *Lvov-Sandomir Operation*, p. 376

19 Panov, p. 376.

20 *Ibid.* According to World War II, "One of Marshal Konev's advantages was that his forces were so powerful and so numerous that he could give his offensive two centers of gravity." (Vol. 12, p. 1659). During the summer of 1944, Soviet artillery was utilized

effectively. See "Artillery" in *Russian Combat Methods in World War II*, Chapter 4, pp. 19-21.

21 Major General V.A. Matsulenko, A.A. Beketov, A.P. Belokon, and S.G. Chermashentsev, "Operational Camouflage In the Offensive Operations of 1944" in *Camouflage, Operational Camouflage of the Troops, Camouflage of Actions by Ground Force Subunits, A Soviet View*. (Translated by the U.S. Air Force, 1976), pp. 87-100. For a detailed example of how the 1st Guards Army conducted its deceptive and camouflage measures, see Appendix 5. "Plan of Operational Camouflage in the Zone of Operations of the 1st Guards Army in the Lvov-Sandomierz Operation (4-20 July 1944)," pp. 162-165. See also Armstrong's, *SMS*, p. 506.

22 "Operations in Forests and Swamps. A Historical Perspective" in *The Soviet Motorized Rifle Company* (Washington, D.C., p. 91; "Combat Under Unusual Conditions. Forest Fighting" in *Russian Combat Methods in World War II*, p. 78.

23 Colonel Zvenzlovsky, "The Lvov-Sandomir Operation" in *SMR*, No. 8, pp. 51-52; Lt. Colonel Lishchyn's'kyi cites that 70% of the Soviet infantry and 90% of its armor went into the two Soviet assembly areas. "Nastup Soviets'koi Armii i Boi Pid Brodamy" in *Surmach*, 1968, pp. 23-24; and "Ot L'vova do Sandomira" (From Lviv to Sandomir) in *Velikaia Otechestvennaia Voina 1941-1945*, p. 304, 70% of the 1st Ukrainian Front's infantry and 90% of its tanks were concentrated at the breakout assembly areas. For an analysis of what Konev inserted into the two breakout groups, see *Zapiski komanduiushchego frontom 1943-1945*, p. 245.

24 Konev, *Zapiski komanduiushchego frontom 1943-1945*, pp. 245-246. According to Konev, the Lutsk group would attack a front of 12 kilometers; the Lviv group would strike a front of 14 kilometers (*Ibid.*) In "Vhliad v problemu Ukrain's'koi Dyvizii i ii velykoi bytvy pid Brodamy" (A Viewpoint in the Problem of the Ukrainian Division and its great battle at Brody) in *Byi Pid Brodamy*, p. 105, Lishchyn's'kyi substantiates Konev's observation that two massive blows would be conducted at a distance of 12 and 14 kilometers for a total of 26 kilometers. See also Colonel Orlov's, "V. D. Sokolovsky" in *SMR*, 1977, July, No. 7, p. 43.

25 Zhukov, *Marshal of the Soviet Union*, Vol. 2, p. 284. According to Colonel-General G.F. Krivosheev, "L'vovsko-Sandomirskaiia Strategicheskaiia Nastupatel'naia Operatsiia" (The Lvov-Sandomir Strategical Advance Operation) in *Grif Sekretnosti Sniat. Poteri Vooruzhenn'ikh Sil SSSR v Voinakh, Boev'ikh Deistviakh i Voenn'ikh Konfliktakh* (Secrets Removed: USSR's Armed Losses and Strengths in Wars, Military Activities and War Conflicts) (Moscow: Voennoe Izdatel'stvo, 1993), p. 204, the Lviv-Sandomir Operation was divided in two phases: the first phase would be characterized by penetration, encirclement, destruction of enemy forces by the Soviet forces advancing on the Rava-Rus'ka and Lviv axis' and the liberation of towns and cities such as Lviv, Rava-Rus'ka, Peremyshl, Stanislaviv and others. This phase would last from 13-27 July 1944; during the second phase, exploitation of the breakout with an emphasis to cross the Vistula River in the vicinity of Sandomir (Sandomierz) located in Poland proper and approximately 110 miles south of Warsaw. This phase was to last from 28 July-29 August 1944. In all, the operation was to last 48 days. The 1st Ukrainian Front was to advance on a front of 440 kilometers, and attain a depth of 350 kilometers. (For additional information on the strengths of the 1st Ukrainian Front, see p. 205).

At the conclusion of the war, the Soviets classified their operations into a defensive/offensive category. Of the 55 major operations, the Lviv-Sandomir Offensive fell under such a category:

Fourth Year of the War

No. 38.

Name of operation/Date Conducted: Lvov-Sandomierz, 7/13-8/29.

Fronts, Fleets, Detached Armies: 1st Ukrainian Front.

Spatial Range* (in k's): 48 300 350

*Spatial Range comprised 48 days; a front line range of no less than 300 kilometers; and a depth of 350 kilometers. For the above, see Colonel Vasily P. Morozov and Captain Aleksey V. Basov, "Important Soviet Military Operations of the Great Patriotic War" in *The Soviet Art of War*, ed.'s Harriet Fast Scott and William Fontaine Scott (N.Y.: Praeger Co., 1982), p. 119.

WEDNESDAY, 28 JUNE - WEDNESDAY, 5 JULY:

As the Galician Division's soldiers boarded the trains, most believed they were bound for Stanislaviv. Although the initial intention was for the Division to be posted to Stanislaviv, Germany's Eastern Front intelligence began to detect the Soviet buildup northeast of Brody.¹ To reinforce the Brody front, the Division was diverted from the OKH's 3rd Panzer's Rear Reserve Corps,² and instead posted to Arthur Hauffe's 13th Army Corps.³

An infantry corps within the 4th Panzer Army, Hauffe's Corps was holding the Brody front. Although disgruntled voices within the Division tried to rescind the order, it was to no avail; the Division was headed for Brody.

Meeting with Hauffe and his Chief of Staff, Colonel Kurt von Hammerstein, the Division's advance party (including Heike), were told the Division would occupy a reserve secondary position behind the 13th Corps' front line divisions. Until the 13th Corps commander and von Hammerstein actually met the Division's representatives, neither had ever heard anything of such a foreign Division. Because the Division's effectiveness status was rated with a "?" mark beside it, Hauffe did not know what to make of it. Nevertheless, he was more than glad to have it assigned to him because Hauffe's corps at the time consisted of General Oscar Lasch's 349th Infantry Division,⁴ General Georg Lindemann's 361st Infantry Division,⁵ Major General J. Netwig's 454th Field Security division,⁶ and Lt. General Walter Lange's "Corps Abetlung C" (Corps Formation C) consisting of the 183rd, 217th and 339th Infantry Divisions much reduced by casualties.⁷ Altogether, 13th Corps was holding a front of 50 miles.⁸ Although impressive on paper, 13th Corps' strength stood

at approximately 25,000. Reinforced with the "Galicia Division," 13th Corps strength rose to approximately 35,000.⁹

Upon returning to Galicia, the Division simultaneously reentered UPA territory.¹⁰ Always closely monitored by the Ukrainian insurgency, the Division was now a target for the Ukrainian insurgency which was desperately hoping to recruit the Division's manpower with their arms and equipment for its underground army. The UPA planned to accomplish this by establishing contact with Divisional members as well as by taking in deserters.

Yet, there were few deserters. Although the vast majority of the Division's personnel were receptive to and supportive of the UPA, they were not interested in furthering their cause by serving as guerrillas. However, constant contact was maintained between both forces. By utilizing the UPA's intelligence service, the Division was able to obtain much information on Soviet strengths, dispositions, and activities in regions occupied by Red Army forces.

There were also fears that upon reentry in Galicia, large scale desertions could occur by men seeking a way to visit or assist their families. This justifiable concern was especially raised by the ominous fact that the Soviet front line was now in Galicia proper and the evacuation of East Galicia was underway. Under such conditions, men could very well respond to a strong urge to leave behind their units to assist families in need. And yet, it soon became apparent that this fear was unjustified for very few fled to their families; of those who did, the majority returned after a brief visit and an assurance that all was well. To alleviate unnecessary anxieties, provisions were made to permit the Division's members brief visitation periods. A number of men who resided locally were granted permission for daily or overnight visits. Overall, in Galicia the problem of desertion never reached a dangerous level; undoubtedly, this was attributable to unit cohesion, pride and unity.

After travelling through Yaroslav, Peremysl, Horodok, Lviv, and Busk, the Division arrived at Ozhydiv, a town located about 43 miles northeast of Lviv and 22 miles southwest of Brody. Because the Division arrived at various times of the day, unloading was done around the clock and conducted on the outskirts of the railway town. During the unloading, the Division's personnel were constantly under the threat of sudden Soviet air attacks. Arriving on 1 July, Liubko Zmak,* a member of the 31st Regiment, marched no more than 2 miles from Ozhydiv when Soviet "Ilyushin" aircrafts suddenly appeared to strafe and rocket the troops; Leo Smerenko,* upon arrival late on night, took no more than several steps from the train when suddenly, descending parachute flares, followed immediately by the piercing screams of falling bombs, turned night into day and peace into hell. As the men raced for the safety of a nearby forest, the massive sounds of exploding bombs shook the entire area.

In anticipation of possible Soviet air attacks, the Division had installed some of its anti-aircraft to protect Ozhydiv's railway. The moment Soviet aircraft came flying in, they encountered intense ground fire. And Markian Fesolovych, a member of the 20mm gun crew serving within the Division's 88mm gun battery, along with the other 20mm gun crewmen, was more than ready. Since their departure from Neuhammer, Markian and the others stood a constant guard over the two railway flatbeds carrying the Divisions indispensable 88's. At Ozhydiv, as the men unloaded the 88's, "Ilyushin" aircraft once again flew in; yet, effective small arms and antiaircraft fire kept the aircraft from destroying the guns.¹¹

In desperation, Soviet pilots sometimes dropped their bombs from high altitudes; for the greater part, the bombs just exploded and dropped debris upon the men. For most, it was also their first combat experience.

Following one such air raid, an unexploded bomb was discovered inside a railway car. Because the device lay inside a car full of small-arms ammunition and mortar rounds which stood inside a railway depot, it was impossible to detonate the device without destroying the valuable contents as well as most of the railway station. Therefore, the Division's bomb and explosive experts, headed by Bohdan Tyr,* were called in to handle the matter.

Carefully sliding the partially opened railway car door a couple of feet, Bohdan entered the car. Aiming his flashlight into the dimly lit car, he noted the scattered boxes within the center and the loose rounds of ammunition lying around. Cautiously approaching the center, he detected the bomb's tail and a beam of light entering a hole in the roof. From its size, Bohdan knew that a sizeable bomb, possibly a 1,000 pounder, had entered the car. "Oh well," thought Bohdan, as the old saying goes "the bigger they are, the better they are." Needing room to work, for the next couple of hours Bohdan and his assistant carefully removed the ammunition boxes around the bomb. But as they cleared the area, they noticed the bomb's markings - it was American made. For Bohdan, this was bad news, for he knew that the unexploded device was not only more destructive than a Soviet bomb but worse, Bohdan had not received much training on how to deactivate and dismantle an American made bomb.

Painstakingly, barely breathing, Bohdan disassembled the device. His fingers moved with the ease of a feather, his eyes observed everything. Constantly, he listened for any unusual internal noises. Throughout the whole ordeal, not once did Bohdan ever panic, flinch or give up. As he commented to his assistant, "A bomb is just like a woman. Treat her right and she won't explode in your face." After 12 hours of intense labor, Bohdan succeeded in deactivating the device.¹²

1 Contrary to what some Ukrainians believe, the Soviet build-up did not develop as a result of the Division being posted into Brody's vicinity; rather, it occurred as a result of Konev's and Sokolovskiy's plan for a two-pronged thrust to penetrate the front of AGNU and to achieve operational depth. According to *World War II*, 13th Corps mission was to cover Lviv from the Brody region. (Vol. 10, p. 1341).

2 Despite the fact that AGNU's charts for the period of 8-15 July 1944 reveal the Division was posted into the 3rd Panzer Reserve Rear, in actuality, the Division never entered the 3rd Panzer Reserve Rear because with its arrival to the eastern front, the Division was immediately posted to the 13th Army Corps.

3 Heike, *English ed.*, pp. 36-37; *German ed.*, pp. 91-94; *Ukrainian ed.*, p. 65; Klietmann, p. 194; Yurkevich in *Boshyk*, p. 78; Buchner, *Ostfront 1944*, p. 238; General Pavlo Shandruk, "Brody" in *Biy Pid Brodamy*, p. 25; Roman Krokhmaliuk, *The Glow*, pp. 97 and 98; From the Editors: "Fakty Pro Ukrain's'ku Dyviziiu" (Facts About the Ukrainian Division), *Visti*, 1985, No. 4, p. 25; Ren, *My Life's Mosaic*, p. 168-170, and personal discussion with Yuriy Krokhmaliuk. Incorrectly, *Stein*, p. 186; and Reitlinger, *The SS*, p. 203, cited the Division as being in the 14th Corps; nor was the 13th Corps a "cavalry" corps as stated by former Divisional Chaplain Nahayewsky in *A Soldier Priest Remembers*, p. 80; and neither was the Division ever a part of 8th Corps as stated by Petro Savaryn in "U 70-Richchia Vymarshu USS-v na Front Stanytsi Bratstva k. Voiakiv 1-oi UD UNA u St. Keterins" (In the 70th Anniversary of the March of the USS (Ukrainian Sichovi Striltsi) to the Front; In the 40th Anniversary of the Battle of the 1st Ukrainian Division, UNA (Ukrainian National Army) at Brody; In the 30th Anniversary of the Brotherhood of the former Soldiers of the 1st UD, UNA in the St. Catharines Post), *Visti*, 1984, No. 5-6, p. 19.

The 13th Infantry Corps (not to be confused with the 13th SS Corps) was formed during 1936-37 in Wehrkreis XIII. Nuremberg was its home station. In September 1939, the 13th Corps fought in Poland as a part of Blaskowitz' 8th Army serving in von Rundstedt's Army Group South. In central Poland, the corps participated in the encirclement of a sizable Polish force between Osorkov and Lavitch, west of the Vistula River. In 1940, it participated in the western campaign. Committed to the eastern front, it fought in Russia and in the defensive battles north and west of Kiev. In early 1944, 13th Corps was on the southern sector. Destroyed at Brody in July 1944, the corps reappeared as a part of "Corps Felber" in the Ardennes in late 1944 or early 1945. Disappearing in the Ardennes in early 1945, it never resurfaced.

4 The 349th was formed on 25 November 1943 from Kampfgruppe "Kamalkueste" and elements of the battered 217th, 376th, and 384th Infantry Divisions. At first, it was employed in the west of the construction of rear and coastal defense positions. In March 1944, the 349th was deployed to Galicia. Surrounded at Brody, it broke out but as a result of heavy losses, was disbanded on 1 August 1944. On 14 September, it was reformed but on the following day, 15 September, the 349th was incorporated into the 567th Infantry Division. Deployed to East Prussia on 19 December, the 349th was incorporated into the 551st Volks (People's) Grenadier Division. The Division ceased to exist in Prussia.

5 Organized in the fall of 1943 in Denmark, the 361st Infantry Division was dispatched to the eastern front in March, 1944. Encircled at Brody, elements succeeded in

breaking out, but the brunt of the 361st was destroyed. A number of its soldiers were captured. Withdrawn into Poland, the remainder of the 361st was returned to Germany. Shortly afterwards, the 361st was reorganized as a Volksgrenadier Division. It participated in the Arnhem battles against the Allied "Market-Garden" Operation, and fought in eastern France. Posted to the Vosges Mountains, the 361st Volksgrenadier incorporated the remainder of the 553rd Volksgrenadier Division (minus its headquarters) but in turn, the 361st Volksgrenadier was incorporated into the newly forming 559th Volksgrenadier Division in January, 1945. Although plans were initiated to re-establish the 361st, nothing ever became of it.

6 Formed in March 1941 in Wehrkreis VIII from the 454th Infantry Division, the 454th Field Security conducted anti-guerilla and rear area security missions in northern Ukraine and Byelorussia. Combat included battles with the UPA. Attached to the 13th Corps in early 1944, the 454th Security at first successfully defended Rivne, a critical railway center, but constant enemy pressure forced it to withdraw. Encircled at Brody, its survivors were disbanded.

7 Formed 5 November 1943 in Ivankov, Russia, from the battered remains of the 183rd, 217th and 339th Infantry Divisions, Corps Formation C (Korpsabteilung) had, at best, the equivalent fighting strength of one infantry division. The retention of the divisional titles was maintained strictly for deceptive purposes to portray a large number of divisions, and, hopefully, deceive the Allies as to their real strength; additionally, the "divisional" titles were maintained because it was planned to rebuild them once again into divisional strength. (Cooper, *The German Army*, p. 490; and Seaton, *The Fall of Fortress Europe*, p. 55). According to a number of former German generals and staff officers, a Korpsabteilung was defined as such: "A provisional unit of divisional strength formed by three weakened infantry divisions, each organized into one regiment." (Chapter 2, "Flank Attack" in *German Defense Tactics Against Russian Breakthroughs*, p. 18. Once established, the new division was designated Korpsabteilung and was distinguished by a letter, such as A, B, C, etc. Chapter 15, "The Organization of Special Units" in *Military Improvisations During the Russian Campaign*, p. 86. Yet, despite the fact that the so-called Korpsabteilungen proved to be an emergency measure that sometimes proved helpful in deceiving the enemy, and the provisional corps had the combat value of an infantry division and, on occasion, fought well, in the long run they actually proved to be more of a handicap than an asset. For a further analysis of the advantages and disadvantages of a Korps-abteilungen, see pp. 86-87).

8 In 1943-1993, p. 19, a front line distance of approximately 30 kilometers (18.6 miles) is cited; Heike, *English ed.*, p. 38; and "Biy Pid Brodamy" in *Biy Pid Brodamy*, p. 130, cites a distance of nearly 36 kilometers.

Such a distance, of course, was not only too extensive but actually, violated the German Army's defensive doctrine regarding a defensive length. Depending upon the terrain and the estimated strength of the defenders vs. attackers, a 1944 division with a strength of 10,000 normally held a frontline distance of 6,600 to 11,000 yards or, approximately 3.5 to 6.5 miles. (*Handbook On German Military Forces*, TM-E30-451, p. IV-21). Realistically speaking, what the Division was covering was not an exception. As acknowledged by a number of former eastern front German commanders, "by 1944, a frontage of 30 miles for an infantry division no longer caused even a raised eyebrow." (See Section IV: "Operations At River Lines" in *Terrain Factors In the Russian Campaign*, p. 25.). In addition to

overextended divisional front lines, along much of the German 1944 eastern front entire gaps remained open between various divisions and army corps. These gaps arose as a result of overextended frontages and manpower shortages. (For additional information on Retrograde (Withdrawal) Movements, see Chapter 9: "Delaying and Blocking Actions" in *German Defensive Tactics Against Russian Breakthroughs*, p. 57).

9 Volodymyr Kubyovych, *Encyclopedia of Ukraine* (Munich: Shevchenko Scientific Society, Inc., 1955), Vol. 1, p. 177. According to 1943-1993. The 1st Ukrainian Division, p. 19, 13th Corps strength stood at 32,000-35,000 soldiers. Of this strength, one-third was from the "Galicia" Division.

10 In the summer of 1944, UPA Group "Druzhynnyky" ("Companions-at-arms"), under the command of Commander "Chernyk," operated in Brody's region. (Ren, *My Life's Mosaic*, p. 165).

In *UPA and the Division*, p. 76, UPA historian Lev Shankowsky alleges that initially, Germany's military command planned to commit the Division to the vicinity of Kolomyia (Carpathian Region). "Unfortunately (for the UPA), this plan was never carried out. The Germans understood that to utilize the Division in this area, in which the UPA was quite strong, was a number one risk for them. At this time, in the Carpathians, in addition to the officer's school "Oleni" and the non-commissioned school "Berkuty," there existed no less than 12 organized UPA companies in addition to other UPA elements." Therefore, concludes Shankowsky, "the Division was unexpectedly committed to the Brody area where UPA's strength was minimal." (*Ibid.*). Simply stated, Shankowsky claims the Division was redirected to Brody because of Nazi fears that in the event the "Galicia" Division was posted to a heavy UPA region, it would desert in entirety to the insurgents.

Regarding this observation, Shankowsky is totally incorrect. To this day, no World War II German or Ukrainian documents, along with credible witnesses, can substantiate that the Division was posted solely to Brody because of fears that its soldiers, if posted into a heavy UPA region, would defect in mass to the Ukrainian insurgents. In a personal discussion with Yuriy Krokhmaliuk, the former Divisional staff officer stated that in the aftermath of World War II, he had also heard "how the Division was going to desert to the UPA but just as it was about to cross over, it was surrounded (by Soviet forces)." Krokhmaliuk acknowledged that most of the Division's soldiers were sympathetic to the UPA. But many of the Division's soldiers volunteered to serve in a conventional unit as a result of an unwillingness to serve in the insurgency; therefore, had suddenly an announcement been made to "flee to the UPA!" the possibility exists that many (if not most) of the Division's soldiers would have opposed this move. Militarily, it would have been impossible to conduct a massive desertion without losing the brunt of the Division's artillery, anti-aircraft weaponry, heavy equipment, vehicles, etc. Simultaneously, a massive desertion would have jeopardized those left behind in Neuhammer, those serving in the Replacement Regiment, and those attending Europe's various schools. Politically, it would have placed the Ukrainians in a very awkward situation at a moment when some positive measures were finally being exerted from the Nazi occupant; and at the moment it would have denied the Ukrainian liberation movement its sole access in obtaining conventional military training, arms and equipment.

11 One of the first units to arrive was the Division's anti-aircraft. Immediately, the AA established positions around Ozhydiv. (Bohdan Nebozhuk, "Brody," *Visti Kombatanta*, 1992, No. 2, p. 72. For another interesting account of how the Division's anti-aircraft

defended Ozhydiv's railway station and the Division's embarkation point, see Markian Fesolovych's, "Na Oboroni Stantsii Ozhydiv" (Defending the Oshydiv Railway Station), *Visti*, 1972, No. 3, pp. 28-30).

12 By the close of the war, Bohdan would dismantle exactly 35 more bombs - 23 Soviet and 12 western Allied; additionally, 95 artillery, rocket and mortar shell, some of which were buried into the ground by guerrillas for mine warfare, were successfully removed or deactivated by him. Bohdan also discovered numerous mine fields and potential mining sites and, together with his team, identified, disassembled, removed, or destroyed with explosives well over 50,000 mines and unexploded devices.

Bohdan's expertise with explosives did not conclude in 1945. In civilian life, he worked as a licensed demolitions explosives construction specialist, and helped to develop and perfect the technique of urban demolition. With the emergence in the late 1960's and early 1970's of various leftist revolutionary movements such as the Weathermen, Bohdan voluntarily taught bomb safety and removal techniques to various U.S. police departments, state agencies, and to Reserve/National Guard forces. Despite his forced retirement as a result of rheumatism in his hands and, as he jokingly says "show me an old man who can see, hear, smell, and touch like he should!" Bohdan's fascination with explosives always remained strong.

THURSDAY, 6 JULY - TUESDAY, 11 JULY:

As it moved into the line, the Division's mission was to occupy a secondary position behind the Styr River within the Prince Eugene defense system to bolster the 13th Corps front. It was also hoped the Division would continue its training.

Spanning from north to south to the southeast, the Division manned a position 24 miles in length¹ and occupied the following area: 1) Northern Sector - From Stanyslavchyk to the main Lviv-Brody highway south on Razhniv stood the 31st Regiment. Its regimental headquarters at Turie. The Division's 3rd Artillery Battalion reinforced the regiment. Chaplain Bohdan Levyts'kyi served as regimental chaplain; 2) Central Sector - The 30th Regiment was established from Zabolotsi to Sukhodoly, located southeast of Zabolotsi and Holoskovychi. The 30th Regiment occupied a position between the Lviv-Brody highway's southern shoulder and the northern shoulder of a secondary highway which ran north/northeast from Sasiv and Pidhirtsi past Sukhodoly to Brody. Regimental headquarters was established east of Chekhy. Artillery Battalion 2 reinforced the regiment. Chaplain Josyf Kladochnyi served as regimental chaplain; and 3) Southern Sector - Held by the 29th Regiment, its line ran from the vicinity of Sukhodoly to the Seret River. Regimental headquarters was located southeast of Yaseniv. The regiment was reinforced with the 1st Artillery Battalion. Chaplain Mykhailo Levenets served as regimental chaplain. Divisional headquarters was located north of the main highway but south of

Sokolivka. To maintain control of the Division's 4th Heavy Artillery Battalion, Divisional headquarters posted the 4th in the vicinity of Kadovytsi. Chaplain Vasyl' Leshchyshyn served in the artillery and Chaplain Volodymur Stetsiuk served on Divisional staff.

The Division's supply trains were located north of Ozhydiv and the main highway, and the Fusilier Battalion was positioned east of the 29th Regiment, across the Styr River. The Field Replacement Battalion was located west of Ozhydiv in Busk's vicinity, approximately 13 miles west of the front line. Unlike the brunt of the Division which detrained at Ozhydiv, the Replacement Battalion arrived by rail to the village of Krasne, on 7 July 1944,² thus being one of the last units to arrive. The Division's strength, as of 30 June 1944, stood at 346 officers, 1,131 NCO's and 13,822 men for a total of 15,299.³ Of this strength, 10,400 deployed eastward as cited by Yuriy Krokhmaliuk.⁴ Various Ukrainian sources quote figures of at least 10,000 to 10,300 but rarely over 11,000⁵ while Heike estimated a strength of "around 11,000 men."⁶ But the figure of "20,000 trained soldiers defending its freedom in front of the approaching hordes and external enemy"⁷ is inaccurate. Leadership-wise, the brunt of the senior ranking officers from battalion command and higher were German; however, the majority of the platoon and company commanders were Ukrainian.⁸ Approximately 150 Ukrainian officers deployed with the Division.⁹

As for its command structure, the Division's command was centered around such senior ranking personnel:¹⁰

DIVISIONAL COMMANDER: General Fritz Freitag; adjutants SS-Sturmbannfuhrer Georgi and SS-Hauptsturmfuhrer Finder;

SECTION 1 A: Major Heike;¹¹ adjutant SS-Obersturmfuhrer Michel;

SECTION 1 B: SS-Hauptsturmfuhrer Shaaf;¹²

SECTION 1 C: SS-Hauptsturmfuhrers Niermann & Wiens,¹³ Waffen-Hauptsturmfuhrer Ferkuniak, and SS-Obersturmfuhrer Schenker;

SECTION II A/B: Waffen-Hauptsturmfuhrer Paliiv, SS-Obersturmfuhrer Steinghorst;

SECTION III: SS-Sturmbannfuhrer Ziegler, SS-Hauptsturmfuhrer Herman, Waffen-Obersturmfuhrer Stadnyk.

SECTION IV A: SS-Sturmbannfuhrer Zultzbach, SS-Obersturmfuhrer Meyer;

SECTION IV B: SS-Obersturmbannfuhrer Dr. Specht;

SECTION IV C: SS-Obersturmbannfuhrer Dr. Kogen;

SECTION IV D: SS-Obersturmbannfuhrer Meyer;

SECTION V: SS-Sturmbannfuhrer Behrndt;

SECTION VI: SS-Sturmbannführer Zoglauer, SS-Obersturmführer Lenhardt¹⁴, and Chaplain Stetsiuk.¹⁵

The moment the Division occupied its sector within the Prinz Eugen defensive system, UPA's regional leadership immediately warned certain Ukrainian Divisional officers that, whether the Germans realized it or not, AGNU had placed the Division into a "sack". UPA's intelligence was fully aware of the two major Soviet assembly areas located to the northeast and southeast of Brody. The UPA stated that Brody would not be an objective but rather, commencing in mid-July, two main blows would be simultaneously directed along two axis' - one from the north towards Busk and the other from the east towards Zolochiv. The UPA also warned that Konev's front possessed approximately 1,800 tanks and armored vehicles and no less than 1,000 attack aircraft of which most were found in the two assembly areas. UPA's intelligence also concluded that in the event the Soviets succeeded in rupturing the front, "the Division could be engulfed in an ocean swarming with armor."¹⁶ Knowing this, the UPA decided to officially warn the Division and even, the 13th Corps. It is not known, however, if 13th Corps headquarters was warned. But as attested to by Ren (who himself was on the Brody front), UPA's intelligence proved to be totally accurate.

Although the Division was in a secondary position and 6-8 miles behind the main front line, this did not necessarily indicate that it was totally exempt from danger. Aerial attacks, long-range rocket and artillery fires, as well as infiltrators, snipers, saboteurs and enemy agents, all posed a threat. On 9 July, SS-Hauptsturmführer Hans Wagner, who commanded the Artillery Regiments 3rd Battalion, was killed in action (it appears SS-Hauptsturmführer Guenther Sparsam assumed command). To ensure the Division was properly dug in, Divisional engineers supervised and assisted the various units with the construction of bunkers, trenches, and communications.

As stated earlier, the Divisions fusiliers were positioned ahead of the Division's front line east of the Styr River with the mission of screening the Division's front and right flank. And its men were so close to the main front that they were the first to actually make contact with the enemy by encountering its patrols and infiltrators.¹⁷

Exhaustion completely engulfed fusilier Stefan Huk. * Awake for nearly 48 hours, his body screamed for rest. Positioned hours before to occupy an observation post several hundred meters in front of his unit, Stefan was to warn his company by telephone, small arms fire, or a green night flare of any possible enemy activities to his front, sides and rear.

Stefan had no objections about his assignment and, as a matter of fact, looked forward to it. But when posted, he was told that anywhere between 11:00

p.m. and midnight, he would be relieved by one or two members of his squad. After being relieved, Stefan would retire to his tent, grab something warm to drink, and catch a good night's sleep. Looking at his watch, Stefan noted it was 3:00 a.m.. Angrily, he swore mentally and wondered for the 1,000th time what had happened to his relief. Feeling a chill, Stefan covered himself with his camouflaged poncho.

Suddenly, the sound of a snapping twig brought Stefan to his full senses. Straining his ears, he listened hard. His eyes searched ahead. Momentarily looking upwards, Stefan noted through the opening of the trees the myriad of stars and the peacefulness of the night. He wondered if his mind was playing tricks.

After several minutes, Stefan concluded that probably an animal had caused the noise, and he began to settle down. But there was another sudden scuffle of brush and Stefan instinctively knew that only a two-legged animal could cause this particular sound. He wondered if possibly someone from the Division of fusiliers was ahead. Of course no one was supposed to be out there, but here anything could happen. Continuing to strain his ears, he heard a barely audible voice. Clearly, it was a human talking. Though he could not make out the language of whoever it was, Stefan hoped that they were his comrades.

The sound of a Russian exclamation proved Stefan wrong. Continuing to lie still, Stefan hoped that they would just crawl past him and pose no problem. But another split-second scuffle directly in front of him verified Stefan's fear that hostile company was heading his way.

Stefan knew they were probes and that one of their duties was to capture someone on guard or in the rear and bring the captive back for interrogation. From a captured man, even a low-ranking soldier, NKVD interrogators could extract much information. They always had methods. Stefan knew that stories of NKVD officers placing a revolver against the side of a man's kneecap and firing were true. As the screaming man would curl up in agony on the ground amongst other captives, the NKVD interrogator would turn to the rest and calmly say "Now, I believe you are willing to talk!", and talk they would. Stefan also knew that if he survived such an ordeal, the chance of a later execution or worse, a 20 to 30 year sentence in a Siberian slave labor camp, was virtually guaranteed. Stefan was not going to let them take him. Realizing they were too close for him to just turn around and run, Stefan knew that he would have to take them on by himself. "This is really great," thought Stefan, "the whole division is in back of me and I've got to do this by myself!"

Estimating that they were no more than fifteen to twenty feet in front of him, Stefan decided to let them come in for about five more feet. Then he would

throw forward a "potato masher" stick grenade, spray everything with his MP38-40, and get the hell out.

Again, he heard a barely audible sound. He almost ceased to breathe as his hands slowly uncapped the aluminum cap of the hollow stick grenade. He felt for his close combat knife and wondered how ironic it was that here the Division had such modern weaponry and yet, the engagement could end up in a primitive cave-man type of struggle. Removing the cap, he slowly pulled its ring, extended his arm to the rear and chucked forward the grenade. The moment he threw it, he covered his helmet with his hands and awaited the blast.

The last thing he heard before the massive blast which seemed to rock the whole world was the Russian shout of "GRENADE!" Within split seconds of the blast, Stefan unleashed a deadly spray of 9mm fire to his front, left and right sides, and again to his front. Emptying the MP's magazine, Stefan leaped to his knees, pulled out his handgun, and proceeded to shoot until it was empty. Grabbing his flare with trembling hands, he fired it also. Then he raced back.

Stefan ran like hell. Flares exploded above him, and another massive explosion was heard to his rear. Fearing that someone from his own side might shoot and kill him as he ran in, Stefan filled the night air with yells of "DON'T SHOOT! THIS IS STEFAN! I'M COMING IN! DON'T SHOOT, YOU BASTARDS, I'M COMING IN!" Suddenly a pair of hands grabbed Stefan. Immediately, he saw that it was his officer and NCO. So overwhelmed was Stefan that when he opened his mouth, he could not even talk. Assisted to the rear, Stefan regained his composure.

At the crack of dawn, three dead NKVD police troops and one Soviet regular, who undoubtedly was a scout assisting the NKVD, were found lying to the front and left of where Stefan had laid just hours before.

1 In addition to manning a position almost 24 miles in length, the Division occupied an area where few, if any, defensive positions were found. Knowing that if the Soviets attacked and penetrated the front the Division would have to stop their advance, the Division immediately began to construct primary, secondary, and even supplementary defense positions. In addition to that, the Division established observation points, target reference points, fields of fire, engagement areas, supply areas and constructed obstacles.

2 Yuriy Krokhmaliuk, "Polevyi Zapasnyi Kurin' Pid Brodamy" (The Field Replacement Battalion at Brody), *Visti*, 1952, No. 2-3, p. 12.

3 *Bender and Taylor*, Vol. 4, p. 48. This figure included those in the Division, and those on military, convalescent, and emergency leave or schooling. It did not include those in the Replacement Regiment based in Wandern, or those undergoing recruit training within the Replacement system.

4 Personal discussion with Yuriy Krokhmaliuk. In Roman Krokhmaliuk's book *The Glow*, p. 99, Roman cited that a strength of over 11,000 soldiers deployed to the eastern

front. However, in a personal interview with the author, Roman conceded that his previous figure was incorrect and that approximately 10,000 actually deployed.

5 From the publishers: "Fakty Pro Ukrain's'ku Dyviziui" (Facts About the Ukrainian Division), *Visti Kombatanta*, 1985, No. 4, p. 23. Again, this figure is slightly overestimated.

6 Heike, *English ed.*, p. xxiii.

7 "Tym, Shchto Vpaly..." (To Those Who Fell...), *Visti*, 1961, No. 3, p. 43.

8 Personal discussion with Yuriy Krokhamliuk; Reverend Kleparczuk, "Druha Bol'shevyts'ka Okupatsiia Brides'kogo Povitu 1944 r." in *Dorohamy i Stezhkamy Bridshchyny*. (Unpublished memoir). A number of Ukrainians also served on Divisional staff, and each regiment and battalion staff had Ukrainian officers. (Personal discussion with Yuriy Krokhamliuk).

9 Reverend Kleparczuk. Undoubtedly, Reverend Kleparczuk's figure also includes the Division's chaplains and doctors which held a military rank.

10 Dmytro Ferkuniak, "Komandnyi Sklad Shtabu Dyviziui" (The Division's Command Staff), *Visti*, 1965, No. 4 (20), pp. 25-26. Ferkuniak was a former captain in the 1st Ukrainian (Galicia) Division. For additional information on the Divisional staff, as well; as a breakdown of what constituted the Division prior to and in the aftermath of the Brody Battle, see Yuriy Krokhamliuk's "Organizatsiia 1-oi UD UNA" (The Organization of the 1st Ukrainian Division, Ukrainian National Army), *Visti*, 1963, No. 3 (11), pp. 15-18.

11 Heike, who was posted into the Division from the Wehrmacht, kept his Wehrmacht non-SS rank.

12 Also spelled as Shaaf. Two unidentified Germans also served alongside Shaaf.

13 Despite his military rank and position in Staff Section 1C, in actuality Wiens was a Russian and Polish speaking gestapo agent who was posted into the Division to neutralize the Division's "Bandertes." (Those who allegedly were sympathetic to the OUN or UPA). Unknown to the gestapo, Wiens (a German who had resided in eastern Europe for a number of years prior to the war) had very strong pro-Russian, pro-Polish, but especially pro-communist sympathies. A sadist who despised Ukrainians but especially the Galician volunteers, Wiens was a man who could never be trusted and he was also despised by a number of his fellow Germans. UPA's agents operating within the Division identified Vins as a Soviet agent. He disappeared at Brody. For an interesting analysis of the various personalities of the German staff officers serving within Divisional staff, see Ferkuniak's "The Division's Command Staff," *Visti*, 1965, No. 4, pp. 26-29.

14 Lenhart's position was also described as that of a standard bearer. (In Ukrainian, "Bunchuzhnyi"). In itself, "bunchuzhnyi" is not a rank. However, a personal designated as a standard bearer also helps to maintain a unit's personnel records and deals with matters pertaining to the safety, health, and welfare of a unit's soldiers.

15 *Visti*, 1965, No., p. 26, Ferkuniak cites Chaplain Nahayewskyi as being posted on Divisional staff. At the time when the Division deployed to the eastern front, Nahayewskyi remained behind in Neuhammer. Captain Steciuk was posted to Divisional staff.

16 Bohdan Pidhainyi, "UPA - Dyviziia "Halychyna" - Nimtsi" (The UPA - the "Galicia" Division - the Germans), *Visti*, 1990, No. 3, p. 65; Yevhen Pobihushchyi-Ren, *My Life's Mosaic*, p. 166; personal discussion with Yuriy Krokhamliuk.

According to *Vashchenko*, UPA's intelligence was fully aware of the massive Soviet buildup in the Lutsk-Ternopil areas, and had accurately concluded that the Division was being positioned into an exceptionally dangerous area. Efforts were made to inform certain Ukrainian Divisional officers of the upcoming dangers, but rapidly moving events, and the fact that the UPA could not operate freely within the 13th Army Corps and AGNU, thwarted UPA's efforts.

17 According to Mykola Fylypovych, at Brody the Fusilier Battalion contained such a command: Battalion Commander - SS-Hauptsturmführer Karl Bristot; 1st Co. - Waffen-Obersturmführer Mykola Horodys'kyi; 2nd Co. - Waffen-Obersturmführer Stepan Huliak; 3rd Co. - Waffen-Obersturmführer Petro Duda; 4th Heavy Co. - Waffen-Obersturmführer Roman Bojcun. "Z Fiuziliramy Pid Brodamy" (With the Fusiliers at Brody). (Unpublished memoir). In addition to these officers, one German adjutant and one German supply officer and two Ukrainian assistant company commanders - Waffen-Obersturmführer's Stefan Shuhan and Mykhailo Danylko, rounded out the battalion's officer personnel. (Ibid.).

WEDNESDAY, 12 JULY 1944:

By 12 July, the Division was established in line. Because of a slight reorganization by Army Group North Ukraine, on 8 July, the 13th Corps was transferred to the 1st Panzer Army.¹ Now, the Division was a part of the 1st Panzer Army. Excluding those left behind in Neuhammer and in Europe's various schools, the Division was in place with a strength of 10,400.² The Division's three infantry regiments, however, were not in full strength in the sense that each one of the regiments 3rd battalion was left behind in Neuhammer.³ But in contrast to the other infantry divisions within the 13th Corps (or for that matter, within the Panzer Army), the Galician Division was equal and, compared to some of the other 1st Panzer and AGNU divisions, actually surpassed their strengths. But when it came to arms and equipment, as General Lange himself noted "the Galician Ukrainians were well armed and equipped."⁴

12 July was spent as the other days - further digging in and training as best as possible. But as the night sky engulfed the Division and its men settled down for rest, the following day would begin a new chapter in the Division's history.

1 Madeja, *Russo-German War, Summer 1944*, p. 62; personal discussion with Yuriy Krokhmaliuk.

2 Personal discussion with Yuriy Krokhmaliuk.

3 In a personal discussion with a Roman Krokhmaliuk, the three non-committed battalions maintained a combined strength of 1,750.

4 Lange, *Korpsabteilung C* (Vowinkel, Neckargemund, 1961), p. 104. In personal discussions with Yuriy Krokhmaliuk, Veryha, and other members of the Division, all attest that the Division deployed to the Eastern front as a well-armed and equipped formation.

THURSDAY, 13 JULY:

Initially, Konev had planned to strike on 14 July in the direction of Rava-Rus'ka. But because Hitler allowed the 4th Panzer Army's 42nd Corps to retire from a minor bulge jutting towards Torchyn (a town approximately 52 miles north of Brody) to shorten the front line, Konev immediately moved to exploit the situation when informed of the German move.¹

Hoping to shatter the German withdrawal and thus create a space for the 1st Ukrainian Front's tank armies, Konev ordered Gordov's 3rd Guards Army to pursue, strike, and overrun the withdrawing force to achieve a massive disruption. But because Gordov's army moved inefficiently, the 42nd Corps was able to halt in place and repulse the 3rd Guards thrust.

Yet, 3rd Guards continued to press forward. By mid-day, a small sector of the 42nd Corps' front line began to collapse, and the 46th Panzer Corps 291st "Elk" Infantry Division, defending a sector adjacent to the 42nd Corps right (southern) flank was massively struck.² By mid-day, a small sector of the 42nd and 46th Corps' front line began to collapse.

To rescue the situation, the 16th and 17th Panzer Divisions moved immediately in counterattack, but heavy Soviet air attacks slowed all movement. From their secondary positions, the Division's troops could hear the distant battle and they noted the intensified enemy air activity as numbers of Soviet aircraft flew over their positions to and from their missions. Throughout the day, 48 year old Waffen-Obersturmfuhrer Julian Temnyk, who served as the anti-aircraft battalion's Chief Battery Officer, repeatedly engaged the aerial threat along with the Division's anti-aircraft gunners.

Sensing an upcoming danger, Mykhailo Tomash* field stripped and thoroughly lubricated his own MG42 and a MG34 which Stefan Kolko* has requisitioned earlier at Ozhydiv. But as Mykhailo worked on his two machine guns in the darkening late evening hours of 13 July, elements of the 336th and 322nd Rifle Divisions from within the 15th Soviet Rifle Corps, 60th Army, quietly began to occupy their pre-designated attack positions in preparation for a major thrust.³ And approximately 1.5 to 2 miles behind them, the 1st Ukrainian Front's tanks and independent artillery units began to occupy attack positions in preparation for their attack.

1 P.M. Portugal'skyi, *"Marshal I.S. Konev"* (Marshall I.S. Konev) (Moscow: Voenizdat, 1985), p. 140; Panov, *Lvov-Sandomir Operation*, p. 376; *Shtemenko*, Vol. 2, p.

69; David Irving, *Hitler's War* (N.Y.: Viking Press, 1977), p. 656; Ziemke, *From Stalingrad to Berlin*, p. 332; *СССР 1941-1945*, p. 589; *Marshal Zhukov*, p. 164; Buchner, *Ostfront 1944*, p. 223; *World War II Encyclopedia*, Vol. 12, pp.'s 1659-1660, cite 13 July 1944 as the date Konev commenced the Lviv-Sandomir Operation.

2 "Proryv Na Rava-Russkom" in *Velikaia Otechestvennaia Voina* (The Great Patriotic War), 364.

3 Lashchenko, *From Battle to Battle*, p. 299; Major-General K.V. Sychev and Colonel M.M. Malakhov, "*Nastuplenie 15-vo Strelkovogo Korpusa s Pror'ivom Podhotovlennoi Oboron'i Protivnika Iuzhnee Brody (14-22 iul'ia 1944 g.)*" (Offensive of the 15th Rifle Corps in the Breakthrough of the Prepared Defenses of the Enemy South of Brody (14-22 July 1944). (Hereafter referred to as *Offensive of 15th Rifle Corps*). (Moscow: Voenizdat, 1958), p. 38. For a detailed account of the 322nd, 336th and 148th Rifle Divisions, as well as the 15th Corps, see pp.'s 7-59. See also Robert G. Poirier and Albert Z. Conner, *The Red Army Order of Battle in the Great Patriotic War* (Ca.: Presidio Publishing Co., 1985), p. 139.

The immediate mission of the 15th Rifle Corps was to attack the front at a distance of 5-6 k's (3.1-4 miles), penetrate it, seize Hills (Heights) 375 and 396, and advance and destroy all enemy forces in the vicinity of the villages and towns of Tros'tsianets Mal'i, Skvariava, Kruhiv, Perepel'nyky, Koltiv and Sasiv. Once the corps reached the highway which ran from Sasiv southward to Zolochiv, its subsequent mission was to advance westward to a line north and south of Skvariava. If successful, 15th Rifle Corps would create a sufficient penetration to enable the brunt of Rybalko's 3rd Guards Tank Army to achieve operational depth. (See *Offensive of the 15th Rifle Corps*), pp..pp. 7-10.

FRIDAY, 14 JULY:

Taking a risk, Konev moved Putkov's 13th Army into the weak spot and immediately 13th Army began to exploit the 3rd Guard's initial minor gain. Following a bitter fight, by the end of the day the town of Horokhiv (north of Brody and within the first German line of defense) fell to Putkiv; yet, the 13th Army, on account of tough resistance and counterattacks, was not able to move rapidly into the second line of defense.

Determined to break out towards Rava-Rus'ka, and to possibly relieve some of the pressure against the attacking Soviet forces north of Brody, the Soviet 38th and 60th Armies began to press forward that same morning south of Brody in the early hours of approximately 4:00 to 5:00 a.m.¹ But their attempt was quickly terminated by a heavy night rain and thick fog which tremendously reduced visibility. Unable to operate in such conditions, the offensive south of Brody was halted for the moment. Excluding minor activities on the part of several units, all other movement was halted as well.

Simultaneously, that same morning, as the 38th and 60th Armies pressed forward, the Division's 30th Regiment was ordered to advance southward toward the vicinity of Pidhirtsi, an area west of the Soviet 60th Army.² To this

day, it has never been officially explained why the 30th alone was dispatched or what the logic was behind such a manoeuvre. But undoubtedly, the 30th's relocation was a result of the early morning Soviet activities, along with German needs to reinforce their front south of Brody.³

North of Brody, the 4th Panzer Army's right wing began to collapse. As verified by Soviet chronicles, the 291st was so massively struck by Putkov's 13th, elements of the 3rd Guards and by air attacks, that "established on the edge of the defense, [the 291st] was unsuccessful in extruding itself from its first positions and was completely routed."⁴

Following the lifting of the rain and fog, Konev immediately resumed the offensive previously canceled as a result of the inclement weather. After a massive artillery and air attack, which commenced at approximately 2:30 p.m.,⁵ Moskalenko's 38th and Kurochkin's 60th Armies attacked at 4:00 p.m. The two armies advanced on a front of almost 10 miles and attacked the 48th Panzer Corps' northern sector. 48th Panzer Corps' 357th Infantry Division (with a number "3" rating) and the 349th Infantry Division (with a number "2" rating) were especially hard pressed.⁶ Continuing to press forward in the face of stiff resistance, by the end of the day, across a front of approximately 10 miles, they achieved minor, but critical, penetrations from 1 to 5 miles. To counter the 38th and 60th Armies' advances and to bolster AGNU's front south of Brody, the 1st Panzer Army committed its tactical reserve. This reserve consisted of the 1st and 8th Panzer Divisions (within the 3rd Panzer Reserve) and the 14th "Galizien" Division.⁷ All three divisions were to counterattack.

Although the Galician Division was notified in the late hours of 14 July, its 30th Regiment was already on the move. By now, its mission was defined: it was to advance southward from Kadlubytzi towards Pidhirtsi's heights and to a point approximately 6 miles east of Sasiv. Once south of Sasiv and the Buh River, the regiment would immediately strike southeastward towards Koltiv to seal the 60th Army's penetration.

Commanded by SS-Obersturmbannführer Forstreuter, the 30th Regiment consisted of a regimental staff, Klokker's 1st and Wittenmeyer's 2nd Battalion and the 13th Company.⁸ Accompanied by the 4th Artillery Battalion and supported by various signal, engineer, anti-aircraft and support personnel, its entire strength (along with the attachées) stood at 1,903.⁹ Excluding the regimental staff of 12 officers (67 of whom were Ukrainian), the Battalion staff of 4 officers (3 of whom were German), and the 13th Company's staff of 3 officers (one of whom was German), each of the line companies only had one or two officers. The lower ranking officers were primarily Ukrainians from Galicia.¹⁰ A total of 34 officers (14 German) and 116 NCO's (35 German) were found within the regiment.¹¹

Leading the way was the regiment's 2nd Battalion. Utilizing the region's secondary roads, the battalion's soldiers passed through villages and farms and encountered friendly civilians. Because 14 July was an exceptionally hot day with the sun blazing down upon the heavily laden soldiers, the cool water and milk offered by a supportive populace refreshed the regiment's soldiers both physically and spiritually. Until now, all had gone well. By mid-day, the 30th had reached Pidhirtsi. Except for the distant rumbling of the war's battles, it actually seemed as if the 30th was on an outing.

But not for long.

As it departed from Pidhirtsi and advanced in a southeasterly direction enroute to Sasiv, the 30th Regiment encountered a stream of disorganized and demoralized German troops retreating westward. As Galicia's volunteers marched alongside the retreating mass, it seemed as though the once mighty and proud Wehrmacht was now on its deathbed.

Here and there, men carried stretchers loaded with the wounded; others walked with bandages around their heads. Many no longer carried arms. Amongst the masses, lone trucks and motorcycles ambled slowly. As the retreating mass surged westward in hopes of escaping the Soviet onslaught, their naked eyes clearly betrayed the weary stare of defeat as amongst them voices exclaimed "Alles ist kaput!"¹²

From the moment the Galician troops encountered the retreating Germans, it was immediately apparent that the Division's troops were far more superbly armed and equipped than those of the Wehrmacht. As Michael Lehmann pressed forward alongside the retreating men, he noted not only that the Germans lacked the superb camouflage gear worn by the Galician troops, but that the Division's arms and equipment were of a higher quality than those possessed by the Wehrmacht. Lehmann noted the anti-aircraft fold-down sight on his MG42 was not found on any of the retreating German machinegunner's weapons.

Continuing to advance southeast, the Division's troops encountered the leading vanguard of the Soviet thrust. It has never been properly established whether the 30th's leading vanguards encountered the Soviet front's Combat Reconnaissance Patrols, their Forward Security, or other troops. But because it is known that contact was minimal and that the Soviet force, consisting of only a handful of tanks and mechanized troops, was repulsed, the 30th undoubtedly encountered Konev's 1st Ukrainian Front scout/reconnaissance.

Knowing that the enemy thrust needed to be repulsed and that with each passing moment the enemy was gaining in strength, the 30th Regiment hastened preparations for its attack. As the regiment's soldiers marched forward and

readied for action, they, as well as all those within the Division, would soon experience the true meaning of the word Armageddon.

Flying in at tree-top level, Ilyushin aircraft bombed, strafed, and rocketed the columns of the 30th Regiment. Years later, Ostap Velyn* would recall how a perfectly intact head, with its helmet strapped firmly in place, flew past him like a soccer ball. Another casualty, minus both legs, sat calmly in the middle of the road as if nothing had happened. When a medic ran up, the wounded man refused his assistance, picked up his MP38/40, placed its barrel into his mouth, and pulled the trigger.

Again at tree top level, Ilyushins flew in. But this time, as the planes surged in they were met by a fusillade of small-arms and machinegun fire. A four-barrelled 20mm anti-aircraft gun swung into action, its red-hot barrels filling the sky with tracer rounds as the weapon unleashed hundreds of rounds of ammunition.

The noise was overwhelming. The shouts of orders, the screams of men, the piercing mechanical shrieks of incoming aircraft engines combined with the constant chatter of machineguns, small-arms fire and explosions, creating a scene reminiscent of Dante's Inferno. Within this hellish nightmare, vehicles and wagons burned, terrified horses galloped past the dead and dying, and explosions shook the ground. Yet, amidst this carnage, soldiers stood with MG34's, MG42's, submachine guns and rifles. Aiming their weapons at the incoming "flying tanks," Galicia's Iron Lions struck back. Another explosion ripped one of the 1st Battalion's light ammunition trucks into pieces. As thousand of sparks flew skyward, the devastating explosion vaporized its driver. With deep sorrow, regimental Chaplain Josef Kladochnyi administered the last rites to the dying.

In the evening hours of 14 July, the 2nd Battalion reached the so-called "Dark Forest" between the villages of Lukavets, Kryhiv and Koltiw, where the battalion encountered a small group of Wehrmacht soldiers led by an officer. Whether this was a coordinated link-up or just happened to be a chance encounter has never been explained and will probably never be known. But in response to inquiries of "where is the Bolshevik?" the 2nd Battalion's soldiers received the reply: "Everywhere!" Needless to say, such a response brought home the reality of the situation. To ensure that he was ready for instant action, Lehmann once again lifted the feed tray of his MG42 upwards to ensure that no sand or debris was within the chamber to cause the weapon to jam. Because the 30th Regiment's 2nd Battalion became the Division' first unit to reach the damaged front near Koltiw, the 2nd has rightfully gone down on record as the first unit to reach the front.

From the vicinity of Koltiw to a point slightly northeastward towards the Lukavets, the 2nd Battalion's companies occupied the following area: Waffen-Obersturmführer Myroslav Malets'kyi's 7th Company, closest to Kryhiv, covered the battalion's right flank; Waffen-Obersturmführer Iyruniak's 5th Company covered the center; Waffen-Obersturmführer Petro Sumarokiv's 6th Company covered the left flank and the road which ran from Lukavets to Peniaky; and Waffen-Obersturmführer Mykhailo Makarevych's 8th Company, with its heavy weapons systems, centered itself in the rear between the 7th and 5th Companies.¹³

For the moment, the 2nd Battalion's right (northern) flank was not covered. But ahead of the Battalion stood a force of 40 Wehrmacht soldiers commanded by a 1st Lieutenant. Shortly after 6th Company occupied its position at daybreak, a group of withdrawing German soldiers, headed by a Lieutenant, decided to abandon their positions and retire westward. Stumbling into the 6th Company, the officer informed Sumarokiv that approximately 2 miles in front of his company a sizable Soviet force supported with three T-34 tanks was cautiously approaching his position.

To this day, it has never been properly explained whether the 2nd Battalion occupied a defensive position or what possibly could have been an assault position prior to an attack on Koltiw. Undoubtedly, in the period of 13-15 July, some confusion did exist and possibly neither the 2nd battalion's leadership, Divisional headquarters, 13th Corps, nor even AGNU knew what was fully transpiring in Koltiw's vicinity. Because on 14 July, what was soon to be known as the "Koltiw Corridor" was still in the process of being expanded by Soviet forces, 13th Corps or AGNU could have ordered a series of defensive positions constructed in the vicinity of Koltiw to contain and prevent Soviet forces from expanding the "corridor" into a major breakout. And once sufficient firepower could have been brought down into the "corridor," a massive destruction of enemy armor and personnel would have ensued. But if the 2nd battalion was momentarily utilizing the area as an assault position prior to counterattacking into the corridor, cover from ground and aerial observation was of the essence. This explains why a wooded area was chosen.

1 Various morning times are cited, but all correspond to approximately the 4-5 a.m. period. According to Lashchenko, the 322nd Rifle Division's 1087th Regiment's 1st Battalion, following a 30 minute artillery preparation, attacked at 5 a.m., to secure Hill 396.0. (Lashchenko, *From Battle to Battle*, p. 299).

2 Divisional historian Veryha cites the Division's 30th Regiment actually received its marching orders in the late evening hours of 13 July to advance to the area of Sasiv. (Vasil Veryha, "Pershyi Den' Boiv Pid Brodamy" (The First Day of Battle at Brody) (Toronto: *Kalendar-Almanakh Novoho Shliakhu*, 1984), p. 103; but cites 15 July as the date the 13th

Corps ordered the remainder of the Division to counterattack the communist breakout developing in the area adjacent to Koltiw. (See Veryha's "Dmytro Paliiv - Voin i Patriot" (Dmytro Paliiv - Warrior and Patriot)), *Visti Kombatanta*, 1968, No. 5-6 (36-37), p. 43.

3 According to Bohdan Pidhainyi, a former Divisional officer, the 30th Regiment was notified at approximately 11:30 p.m., 13 July, that it was to conduct an immediate forced infantry march into the area of Koltiw-Lykvets to establish a defensive line to counter the Soviet thrust by no later than 4 a.m., 15 July. Pidhainyi, "Dva Shliakhy - Odna Meta" (Two Roads - One Objective), in *Brody*, p. 62.

According to Pavlo Sumarokiv, Wittmeyerr (who commanded the 30th Regiments 2nd Battalion), held a quick battalion briefing at the command post shortly after 9 p.m. (13 July). During his briefing, Wittmeyerr informed his company and staff commanders that the 30th Regiment was to immediately march to occupy a defensive position in the 'Dark Forest' between Lykvetsi and Koltiw to assist the Wehrmacht in halting the Soviet penetration in the vicinity of Koltiw. Immediately following the briefing, Sumarokiv's 6th Company (along with the entire 2nd Battalion), commenced its march at 9:30 p.m. (Pavlo Sumarokiv, "V Otochenni Pid Brodamy. Proryv 2-ho Kurinia 30-ho Polky U.D. Halychyna." (In the Encirclement at Brody. The Breakout of the 2nd Battalion, 30th Regiment, Ukrainian Division "Galicia."), *Visti*, 1961, No. 103, p. 70.

4 *The Great Patriotic War*, p. 364.

5 Although on p. 300 in *From Battle to Battle*, Lashchenko mentioned that at 1430 hours (2:30 p.m), 14 July, a heavy pre-attack bombardment took place, on the previous page (299), Lashchenko also mentions how the 322nd Rifle Division's 1087th Regiment's 1st Battalion attacked to secure from the German's Height (Hill) 396. Undoubtedly, Lashchenko is correct in his observations because certain Soviet divisional and corps commanders, realizing that Konev would soon be ordering an attack south of Brody once the fog lifted, began their own preparations to improve their position prior to Konev's main attack.

6 The brunt of the Soviet attack fell on the 349th's 913th Infantry Regiment.

7 Veryha, "Pershyi Den", p. 103; Offensives of the 15th Rifle Corps, p. 11; I. Konev, "Zavershenie Osvobodzennia Sovetskoi Ukrain' i i Vykhod na Vislu" (The Complete Liberation of the Soviet Ukraine and the Appearance on the Vistula) in *Military History Journal* (Moscow: Red Star Publishers, 1964, No. 7, p. 10.

8 The regiment's 3rd Battalion remained behind at Neuhammer.

9 Personal discussion with Veryha, 3 November 1987. See also Veryha's, "Spomyny. I Znovu Neuhammer" (Remembrances. And Again Neuhammer), *Visti*, 1978, No. 4, p. 71.

10 *Ibid.*

11 *Ibid.*

12 Incorrectly, some members of the Division maintain the view that the German front fell back as a result of the assassination plot against Adolf Hitler. Remembering that the attempt to kill Hitler occurred in the afternoon of 20 July 1944, and that Konev's attack commenced on 13 July, the retreating troops encountered by the advancing Divisional soldiers stemmed from Konev's blows, and not as a result of any assassination attempt.

13 World War II German doctrine emphasized that a battalion on the defense (in European type terrain), should occupy a defensive area from approximately 880 to 2,000

yards. In turn, the battalion sector was subdivided into several company defense areas. Generally, each company held an area extending over 400 to about 1,100 yards (average was 750 yards) in length and 300-350 yards in depth. As always is the case, terrain and a battalions manpower strength dictated defense distances. Within a defense area, troops organized a defense against an attack from any direction. Main, and alternate, positions were prepared for each weapons system and if time permitted, mines, obstacles, and wire were also placed. Because the Galician Division was following German military doctrine, it appears that the 30th Regiments 2nd Battalion (as also the 1st Battalion), occupied a defensive area ranging from about 1,000 to 2,000 yards in length.

SATURDAY, 15 JULY:

Between the hours of 5:00 and 7:00 a.m., the 30th Regiment's 1st Battalion appeared. Immediately, 1st Battalion occupied an area east of Sasiv facing Koltiw almost adjacent (but slightly south) of the 2nd Battalion's right flank. As previously experienced by the 2nd Battalion, the 1st Battalion found few pre-established Wehrmacht defensive positions; however, several German NCO's and one officer did officially hand over the area to be defended to the 1st Battalion's command.

1st Battalion established itself in the following manner: Waffen-Obersturmfuhrer Bohdan Pidhainy's 3rd Company, located to the left of Koltiw, covered the Battalion's left flank and the road which ran from Koltiw to Sasiv; Waffen-Obersturmfuhrer Berezovs'kyi's 2nd Company as well as the Battalion's 1st Company, commanded by Waffen-Obersturmfuhrer Rozanetz, occupied positions extending towards the 2nd Battalion; and the Battalion's 4th "Heavy" Company, commanded by Waffen-Obersturmfuhrer Pospilovs'kyi, provided one platoon to each of the 1st Battalion's three line companies. To ensure proper control, Pidhainyi positioned himself in Bohdan Tarnawskyi's 1st Platoon which commanded the best view. Amongst the Ukrainians were also found a handful of surviving Wehrmacht personnel left over from the previous day's battle. Directly ahead of 1st Battalion stood the village of Koltiw, now occupied by Soviet armor accompanying the 60th Army's 15th Rifle Corps.

What especially made the situation difficult for the 30th's troops was that there was very little knowledge about enemy strengths, dispositions, and possible identities. As well, neither Heike nor the regional commander had any time to conduct a proper route reconnaissance and terrain study. One should also consider that enroute to Koltiw's vicinity, the 30th Regiment (already understrength to begin with) suffered some casualties from enemy air. But there would be no time to lament these circumstances.

Following the penetration of the 349th German Infantry Division's right and the 357th Infantry Division's left wings, the 15th Rifle Corps moved the bulk of its strength forward to continue a strong momentum. After a short but intense artillery preparation, at approximately 8:30 a.m., the 60th Army's entire 15th Rifle Corps, commanded by Major General Petr Bakulovich Tert'ishni, attacked.¹ As Tert'ishni's rifle corps surged forward, its 336th Rifle Division suddenly encountered the "Galicia" Division's 30th Infantry Regiment in the vicinity of Kruhiv and Lis Oshovyts'a slightly east/southeast of Koltiw.²

Commanded by Colonel Mikhail A. Ignachev, the 336th Rifle Division was a battle experienced division in full strength. Prior to the 336th's advance, Colonel Ignachev conferred with his divisional Chief of Staff, Lieutenant-Colonel Andrei D. Nikitan, about the critical importance of a successful attack. To ensure success, it was agreed that in the upcoming attack, in addition to utilizing all three of the 336th Division's Infantry Regiments (the 1128th, 1130th, and 1132nd regiments), the 336th's entire 909th Artillery Regiment, armor support from Rybalko's 3rd Guards Tank Army, as well as additional firepower from the 1st Ukrainian Front's independent artillery, rocket, and air units would support the 336th Division's attack. In all, the 336th possessed a total of 373 artillery pieces and heavy mortars.³

Because on the previous day, the Soviets had only created a gap in the German line and they were fully aware that speed and power were of essence to achieve a successful breakout both north and south of Brody, the Soviets struck hard.

"HURRAH!!! POBEDA!!! HURRAH!!! Ripping into the 2nd Battalion, the 336th's regiments were determined to expand the gap. Malets'kyi's 7th Company was especially hard pressed. To assist the 7th, Makarevych ordered his 8th Company's heavy machineguns and mortars to engage those Soviets advancing toward the 7th Company. Totally disregarding the explosions of numerous hand grenades, gunfire, and even their own artillery and mortar fire, the Soviets continued to surge forward. Determined to hold, Malets'kyi did the unexpected - he counterattacked! Despite the heavier odds, 7th Company was not only holding its own but actually began to repulse the attacking Soviets.

Realizing that their attack was not faring well, the Soviets shifted the focus of their effort upon the 5th and 8th Companies. 7th Company continued to be engaged, but by late morning, both the 5th and 8th Companies were under tremendous pressure as well.

But Soviet efforts to overrun the two companies proved unproductive. Skillfully directing the 8th's weapon systems to their maximum, Makarevych continued to inflict grave losses upon the advancing foe.

Despite their losses, the red mass continued to surge forward. Observing that the advancing Soviets had begun to surge through and approach the 8th Company's position and realizing that if his company was overrun then the entire Battalion's critical weapons systems would be lost, Makarevych grabbed an MG42 and charged forward. Single handedly, he mowed down large numbers of the attackers. Exhausting his ammunition, the giant warrior stood up and swung his machinegun like a club. Only when he was repeatedly shot and bayoneted did Makarevych go down.

During this time, Petro Sumarokiv's 6th Company remained unengaged. Excluding some personnel dispenses to assist the other companies, the 6th had not fought. This was not to be the case for long.

In an attempt to secure the main road and possibly outflank the 2nd Battalion from the left, the Soviets cautiously probed their way forward. Utilizing the several T-34 tanks previously reported, a small Soviet infantry force approached the 6th Company. But they failed to spot the company's well-camouflaged and concealed positions. Detaching itself from the probing force, one of the three tanks moved slightly forward and paused to observe.

Undoubtedly, its crew felt no pain as the 6th grenadiers turned the steel hulk into a raging inferno. Well placed rifle shots dropped Soviet infantrymen. From a well-concealed position, Lehmann unleashed short, but deadly, bursts of machinegun fire. Although the communist force withdrew, they soon returned in full strength. By mid-day, the entire 2nd (and 1st Battalions) were fully engaged, and more enemy tanks appeared.

With smoke protruding from the rear of its engine compartment, the T-34 slowed to a crawl. But not for long. As it crawled forward, the explosion of a hand grenade thrown blew away a section of the tank's front right track and immediately, the disabled tank halted sideways in front of the men. Suddenly, the turret's hatch popped open, and from within emerged a helmeted bearded trooper with a Ppsh 41 submachinegun in hand. Exposed from the waist up, he shouted "SMERT FASHISTAM!" and unleashed a long fusillade of 7.62mm rounds. As he sprayed, the other turret's hatch flung open, and a dark skinned Asiatic tanker popped out, flinging a grenade as far as he could. Its explosion immediately ripped the life out of two Galician troopers lying on the ground. Miraculously, a third trooper, standing upright, survived the blast. Firing his MP38/40 from waist level, the Ukrainian NCO attempted to silence the turret's tankers. But before he could raise his 9mm fire further upwards, the Ppsh 41 gunner released a salvo of hot rounds which terminated the NCO's life.

"HURRAH! STALIN!" "RATATATATATA!!!" Another burst. And another dead Ukrainian NCO. "HURRAH!" "RATATATATATA!!!" A long burst silenced two more. Running out of ammunition, the Red gunner threw

down his Ppsh into the turret and accepted from someone inside the tank a previously captured German MP38/40. Raising the weapon to his shoulder, the Red tanker took aim and sprayed 16 year old Ihor Borak who, with an anti-armor hand grenade, had disregarded his German NCO's shouts to stay under cover and had raced forward to get closer to the tank. The son of parents slaughtered by NKVD terrorists in 1941, Ihor left behind a 5 year old sister, Marichka, in Lviv's orphanage.

Ihor's NCO swore. "GOD DAMN IT! GOD DAMN IT! WHY DIDN'T HE LISTEN TO ORDERS?" To ensure that no one else would attempt such a feat, he immediately shouted "NOW! EVERYONE! STAY DOWN! STAY CALM!" "RATATATATATA!!!" Russian shouts of "YOU GALICIAN BOURGEOIS PIGS!" intermingled with the gunfire. Standing on the commander's seat inside the tank with the rest of his body lying on the turret, the tanker had good vision and was difficult to engage. His counterpart, who was now behind the turret, only popped up now and then to fire a handgun or fling a hand grenade.

"VAROOM!" Another explosion. Men cried out for help. Others screamed. As the constant chatter of "RATATATATATA!!!" "HURRAH! STALIN! HURRAH! DEATH! DEATH! DEATH!!!" filled the air, a trooper, who could take no more, stood up. Instantly, hot slugs cut him down. "GOD DAMN IT!" shouted the German NCO, "STAY DOWN! EVERYONE! NOW!" Someone shouted "GOD! PLEASE HELP US!" But to these words the NCO only replied "HE WON'T HELP YOU! NO SON-OF-A-BITCH WILL HELP YOU! SO STAY DOWN! STAY DOWN!"

"RATATATATATATATA!!!" Russian shouts of "DEATH! DEATH! YOU GALICIAN DOGS!" again intermingled with gunfire.

Ivan Wosniak could take no more. Crawling rapidly to the rear for at least 100 meters, he then stood up and circled wide. As he approached the edge of the clearing, he resumed crawling. Reaching the clearing, Wosniak slightly parted the brush and surveyed the scene.

He saw the front of the tank, and its two gunners. One was lying partly on top of the turret, while the other was squatted behind it. Wosniak realized, however, that they were some distance away. Taking aim, he carefully sighted. Observing the rules for a long shot, Wosniak first aimed at the enemy firing from the top of the turret. Exhaling half of his breath, he slowly squeezed. "CRAACK!" Wosniak's KAR 98 rifle recoiled into his shoulder. Without pausing, he automatically ejected the spent round, slammed in a fresh one, took aim at the Asiatic soldier and fired. Slamming in another round, Wosniak saw the commander standing fully upright, his hands clutching his face. Taking a quick but careful aim at his heart and lung area, Wosniak, who himself was

now standing fully upright, squeezed the trigger. The commander collapsed into the interior of the tank. Squatting back down, Wosniak removed his remaining rounds and inserted a fresh five-round clip into his rifle. As he reloaded, he noted an eerie silence.

But not for long. As the smoldering fire turned into a blazing inferno, an internal explosion tore the rear deck apart. As flames began to consume the iron monster, a lone figure suddenly emerged from within. Shouting "COMRADES! BROTHERS! TAKE ME!" the man stood on the tank's turret with his arms extended upwards. He pleaded for mercy.

Standing up, Wosniak placed his rifles sights on the tanker's heart and lungs. "God! Can I do it?" As he pondered, the German NCO's shouts of "KILL HIM! KILL HIM! NOW! KILL THE BASTARD! NOW!" filled the air. Wosniak held his breath, and his aim.

"COMRADES! PLEASE!"

"KILL HIM!"

"COMRADES! PLEASE!"

"KILL HIM!"

"COMRADES! PLEASE!"

"NOW! GOD DAMN IT! KILL HIM! KILL THAT BASTARD! NOW! NOW! NOW!"

Madness reigned in the air. Sweat poured out of every pore. Wosniak trembled. He felt hot, cold, sick, angry, sorry, resentful, and hurt. As the insane screams of "KILL! KILL!" combined with "COMRADES! PLEASE! PLEASE!" filled the air, Wosniak did not know what to do.

But he did not have to wait long. Within seconds, another internal explosion rocked the tank, shot a sheet of flame upwards and engulfed the tanker in a ball of flame. Hearing his screams - and imagining his pain - Wosniak fired.

Lowering his rifle, Wosniak looked upon the carnage. A burning tank, its Asiatic Crewman lying dead beside it. Here and there lay dead Galician troops. Disgusted, Wosniak threw down his rifle. He thought of his dead friends. And he thought of what he had just done. Putting his face in his hands, he broke down and wept.

As the Division's two battalions fought to hold their positions, the 4th Panzer Army's right wing began to collapse. So massively struck was the 291st Infantry by Putkov's 13th, elements of the 1st Guards Tank Army and air attacks, that its fighting effectiveness ceased to exist. The situation became especially acute when earlier on the 15th, Konev committed the bulk of the 1st Guards Tank Army to further exploit the initial gains and thus achieve a

breakout. To ensure success north of Horokhiv, in the vicinity of Volodymyr-Volyns'k the 1st Guards Tank Army's 1st Tank Brigade conducted a successful diversion. After drawing the bulk of the 16th and 17th Panzer Divisions into its sector, the brunt of the 1st Guards tank Army immediately struck south between Horokhiv and the northern perimeter of the 13th Corps.⁴ By now, it was apparent that a major Soviet breakout was in the process of developing north of Brody.

On the 15th, General Hermann Balck's 1st and 8th Panzer Divisions counterattacked south of Brody.⁵ Ripping into Moskalenko's 38th, assault groups from both the 1st Panzer and elements of the 8th Panzer not only halted the Soviet thrust in the vicinity of Oliiv (approximately 20 miles northwest of Ternopil), but actually began to repulse the 38th.⁶ North of Oliiv, however, the brunt of the 8th Panzer failed to obey its movement orders to move directly through a forest on a pre-established and rehearsed route. Totally disregarding Balck's specific orders forbidding any mass troop movements on any road outside of a forested area, the 8th's divisional commander decided to save time by moving in the open. Observed in the open, the 8th Panzer was immediately pounced on by Krasnovskiy's air force.⁷ By the end of the day, nearly 2,000 sorties were directed against the 8th Panzer.⁸ As Balck raged in fury, the 8th went up in flames while Kurochkin's 60th Army's 15th Rifle Corps, supported by tanks, artillery and air strikes, created a small "corridor" (approximately 18 miles south of Brody) up to 10.5 miles in depth (18 km's) and about 2.5 to 3.5 (4-6 km's) in width in the vicinity of Koltiv and Trostianets'.⁹

But unlike the breach created north of Brody, the Soviet "corridor" created in Koltiv was the only one which had breached the second German defensive line. Sensing a major breakout could possibly be achieved in Koltiv's vicinity, Konev personally re-established himself in Kurochkin's advanced command post, located in what was now referred to as the "Koltiv corridor."¹⁰ Though a brave move, Konev's decision was a risky one because artillery and mortar shells rained all around Kurochkin's forward command post.

Under tremendous pressure, the 48th Panzer Corps' northern sector (or left flank, if facing eastward) began to collapse. If not contained, the Soviet breakthrough would not only achieve operational depth, but simultaneously could endanger the 13th Corps by encirclement. Realizing this, 13th Corps understood that it was now largely up to them to make a strong effort to halt the Soviet thrust. Since 13th Corps could not remove any of its front line forces and its right flank was already embroiled in the conflict, the Corps' effort would have to be undertaken by its only reserve - the 14th Waffen SS.¹¹

As the Soviets were attempting to break through the German defense and Balck's panzer divisions were counter-attacking, the Galician Division (minus

its 30th Regiment) was moving towards the "Koltiw Corridor." Konev concluded that although some success had been achieved, overall, his frontal attacks were faring badly.¹² To rectify the situation and achieve the desired breakthrough, Konev needed an immediate exploitation. Realizing the keys to a successful exploitation are speed, pressure, and audacity, Konev, in the evening hours of 15 July,¹³ decided to commit both the 3rd Guards Tank and 4th Tank Armies into Koltiw's "corridor" during the same time as the "corridor's" flanks were being pressured by AGNU's counterattacking reserve forces. Konev's decision to achieve operational depth by conducting this action is interesting because this was the only time throughout the entire German-Soviet War of 1941-45 that such a move was made.¹⁴

In retrospect, however, Konev's decision was sound. Although it involved a tremendous amount of risk, in every sense the decision ideally fit the situation. Because AGNU had committed the bulk of its reserves against the Soviet forces threatening to break through both north and south of Brody (but especially in the area of the Koltiw "corridor"), the Germans lacked sufficient forces to defend their depth. Konev also knew that the German panzer divisions had minimal armored strengths. When informed that the 8th Panzer was massively struck, the 1st Ukrainian Front's commander concluded that overwhelming force moving rapidly could barrel its way through. With Konev's decision to commit armor into the "corridor" to achieve a breakthrough, the beginning of the end of AGNU was ensured.

Indeed, Konev's decision was risky. To begin with, Kurochkin's 60th Army had only partially succeeded in creating a breakout. Against a number of disorganized weak German units and the Galician Division's two battalions with their minimal attached support, the 60th had encountered very stiff resistance - so fierce that years later, General Lashchenko would recall how "inserted fresh forces from the enemy's depth organized a strong defense against the breakout forces."¹⁵ Continuing on, the former 322nd Divisional Staff officer also recalled how "the enemy was retaining [holding on to] his position in the vicinity of Koltiw. The German enemy established a threat and menaced the flanks of the 3rd Guard's Tank Army and our 15th Rifle Corps."¹⁶ Although Lashchenko does not cite specifically which enemy forces were offering stiff resistance and threatening the flanks, one of the key units participating in this action was the Division's 30th Regiment.

By the evening hours of 15 July, Koltiw was fully ablaze. Throughout the entire night, flames rose hundreds of feet upward, creating a massive eerie glow which lit up the countryside for miles around. Not one building remained intact. Amongst the crackling burning wood and collapsing fiery walls lay Koltiw's civilians who earlier had failed to flee.

Yet the battle was far from over. Throughout the night, Soviet shouts of "HURRAH!!!" constantly intermingled with Ukrainian screams of "SLAVA!!!" along with the constant deafening roar of incoming shells, explosions, gunfire and clanking sounds of armor.

1 According to Veryha, the Soviets struck the 30th at approximately 8 a.m. (*Pershyi Den*, p. 106). But according to General Lashchenko, *Iz Boia v Boi*, p. 305, the Soviets attacked at 8:30 a.m., following an intense artillery preparation. Remembering that Veryha uses an approximate time and at that time Lashchenko was a staff officer within the 322nd Rifle Division, regarding the time, Lashchenko is undoubtedly correct.

2 General Petr Kurochkin, "Pror'iv oboron'y protivnika na l'vovskom napravlenii" (Breakthrough of the Enemy Defenses in the L'viv Direction), *Military History Journal* (Moscow: Voenizdat, 1973), p. 28. According to Kurochkin, "elements of the 14th Infantry Division SS "Galicia," accompanied with assault weapons and tanks from the 300th Assault Brigade, concentrated in the area of Koltiv and strove to break the efforts of the 15th and 23rd Rifle Corps at Nushche." See also "Nastuplenie 15-vo Strelkovogo Korpusa s Proryvom Podgotovlennoi Oborony Protivnika Iuzhnee Brody (14-22 iuulia 1944 g.)" in *Offensive of the 15th Rifle Corps*, p. 40. (See also maps 2, 3, and 4). Various other Soviet war-time sources cite they encountered the Galician Division's 30th Regiment on 15 July 1944.

3 *Offensive of 15th Rifle Corps*, pp. 14, 17 and 19. According to *Offensive of 15th Rifle Corps*, the 336th Rifle Division's organic artillery regiment was reinforced with 36 152mm heavy artillery pieces from the 33rd Artillery Brigade; 20 57 mm and 40 76mm (for a total of 60) guns from the 7th Guards Anti-tank Brigade; 24 76mm guns from the 408th Artillery Regiment; 53 82mm and 15 120mm heavy mortars; 14 76mm, 4 105mm, 12 122mm artillery pieces from the 359th Rifle (Reserve) Division; and 35 120mm heavy mortars from the 9th Mechanized Corps' 616th Mortar Regiment. (See p. 17).

4 Colonel David M. Glantz, *The Soviet Conduct of Tactical Manoeuvre: Spearhead of the Offensive* (England: Frank Cass and Co., 1991), pp. 170-172.

5 Army Group North Ukraine's organizational charts for 8-15 July 1944 reveal both the 1st and 8th Panzers to be within the 3rd Panzer Reserve Rear.

6 *Zhukov*, Vol. 2, p. 284; Ziemke, *From Stalingrad to Berlin*, p. 332.

7 The Germans did anticipate a heavy ground attack, but all were surprised and shocked by the Soviet Air Force's massive, and overwhelming, air superiority. Until now, few of Germany's Eastern Front veterans had ever seen or experienced anything like it. See Seaton's, *The Russo-German War*, p. 446; and *The Fall of Fortress Europe*, p. 138.

8 *Panov*, p. 376. According to *СССР 1941 - 1945*, "the (German) enemy lost up to 75% of its armor," p. 590. In the aftermath of World War II, General Mellenthin would acknowledge that in addition to the armor loss, "all hope of counterattack disappeared." See *World War II Encyclopedia*, Vol. 12, p. 1659. For a detailed account of the Soviet air war in the Lviv-Sandomir Operation, see Marshal of Aviation S. Krasovskiy's "2-ia Vozdushnaia Armiia v L'vovsko-Sandomirskoi Operatsii" (The 2nd Air Army in the Lvov-Sandomir Operation) in *Military History Journal*, 1964, No. 7, pp. 34-41.

9 Zvenzlovskiy, *Soviet Military Review*, 1974, No. 8, p. 52; Shtemenko, Book 11, p. 470, cites the corridor as being "nearly 6 km's wide." However, the corridor's length and width would be expanded. Colonel Armstrong cited the corridor was 6 kilometers in width and 20 kilometers in depth. (*SMS*, December, 1986), pp. 506-507. Colonel Seaton cites the Koltiv corridor was 3 miles wide and 10 miles deep. *The Fall of Fortress Europe*, p. 138.

10 Shtemenko, *Book 11*, p. 470.

11 According to *Ready*, p. 369, the Ukrainians began to counter-attack. Prior to this, they had successfully repulsed Soviet cavalry charges; Veryha, *Pershyi Den*, p. 113, states that the 29th and 31st Regiments received their marching orders in the evening of 15 July.

12 According to Colonel Zvenzlovskiy, Konev's thrust was slowed because "the enemy command committed on the second day his operational reserves - two tank and one infantry divisions - the counterattacks followed one after another. The advance of the Soviet forces was slowed down." Zvenzlovskiy does not identify the two tank or infantry divisions, but the infantry division he refers to was the 14th Waffen SS "Galicia" Division. See Zvenzlovskiy, *The Lvov-Sandomir Operation*, p. 52. Years later, Marshal Zhukov would acknowledge that "(the offensive) initially did not proceed as well on the Lviv sector as the Front Command and GHQ had expected"; and "on the Lviv sector, our troops advanced slowly." *Zhukov, Marshal of the Soviet Union*, pp. 285 and 290. See also Erickson, *The Road to Berlin*, pp. 234-235.

13 *Lashchenko*, p. 306.

14 *Panov*, p. 376; Colonel Armstrong, *SMS*, December, 1986, pp. 507-508. According to Colonel Svetlishin, Konev's decision demonstrated that as a commander, Konev was "resolute, daring and capable of taking a calculated risk." *SMR*, 1967, December, No. 12, p. 50.

15 *Lashchenko*, p. 306.

16 *Ibid*, p. 307.

SUNDAY, 16 JULY:

At 3:00 a.m. during a meeting with Konev, Rybalko personally requested from Konev authorization to commit his 3rd Guards Tank Army into the corridor.¹ Although Kurochkin's 60th and a small part of the 3rd Guards Tank were still battling to expand the corridor's penetration, and the corridor itself was not wide enough for a massive thrust, Konev authorized the remainder of the 3rd Guards Tank to advance forward. To ensure success, that same morning Konev also ordered Baranov's cavalry-mechanized group to advance through Putkov's 13th Army. Once this was achieved, Baranov's force was to strike southwest towards Derevliany, a town approximately 30 miles west of Brody. If successfully accomplished, Baranov's group would not only further disrupt the German defense, but most importantly, would deny AGNU commanders the ability to reinforce the Brody front. And in the event of a German withdrawal, Baranov's group would bar the way.

Driving through the corridor in a single column, leading elements of Rybalko's armored strength began to exit out into open terrain. Clearly, it was becoming apparent that if this corridor adjacent to the 13th Corps southern sector was not sealed and the breach developing in the 46th Panzer Corps (north and adjacent to the 13th Corps where earlier Konev had inserted the 1st Guards Tank Army and Baranov's cavalry-mechanized group) was not plugged, massive Soviet forces would pour through and encircle the 13th Corps from behind. To avert such a threat and to prevent further Soviet advances, AGNU's high command, fully aware of the fact that it was in no position at this time to conduct a major withdrawal, renewed its attempts to seal the corridors; but especially the one south of Brody. If successful, a renewed attempt would stop the 1st Ukrainian Front's advances, isolate Rybalko's tankers, upset Konev's plan, and buy time for the German defense.

The moment the 30th Regiment moved on 14 July, the remainder of the Division was placed on full alert. On the 16th, the Division's 29th and 31st Regiments received orders to link up and assist the 30th.²

To seal the corridor once and for all, German forces would strike the corridor at its southern sector. Simultaneously, the Galician Division's main mission was to strike the northern boundary and establish a blocking position east and southeast of Sasiv to deny the enemy further access into the Sasiv Valley and AGNU's rear. To accomplish this, piece-meal regimental attacks would no longer be carried out; rather, the entire Division would be utilized. And as the Division advanced forward to counter the Soviet attack, it marched against "a mass phalanx of [Soviet] tanks, attack aircrafts and dive bombers."³

From the north, the 31st Regiment began to conduct a forced tactical march of approximately 15 miles southeastward through Turie, Sokolivka, and Oles'ko into quickly designated assembly areas south of Pidhirtsi. The 29th Regiment⁴ was to move rapidly from Yaseniw to an area west of Maidan. Along with the regiments, all of the Division's units would advance southeastward. Because the remainder of the 13th Corps was on the line and could not move, the effort to penetrate into the expanding corridor from the north to seal it would be accomplished primarily by the Division. Air support was again promised, but everyone knew that the Luftwaffe could not be counted on.

The moment the Division moved, Soviet aircraft again pounced upon the regiments.⁵ Simultaneously, the 29th Regiment, enroute to Maidan, encountered enemy tanks for the first time. In response, the Division's anti-aircraft units poured massive amounts of firepower into the skies. On this day, anti-aircraft batteries 3 and 7, under Waffen-Obersturmführer Mykhailo Freithariv (a former participant in Ukraine's 1918-21 War of Liberation)

recorded their first kills. As flaming aircraft and dead parachutists plummeted downward, other ground troops were drawn into a battle with Soviet armor.⁶ Never would Yaroslav Smyl* forget the terrifying noise of clanking armor, and the clang of metal against metal as fired rounds from PAK anti-tank guns and panzerfausts slammed into the 6th and 7th Guards Tank Corps and the 9th Mechanized Corps found in Rybalko's 3rd Guards Tank Army. And Waffen-Hauptsturmführer Ostap Chuchkevych, who commanded division's independent anti-tank company, attached to the 29th Regiment, displayed exceptionally strong and courageous leadership. Repeatedly, Chuchkevych hurled himself into tough situations and under his personal guidance, enemy armor began to burn. For his gallantry, he was later awarded the Iron Cross 1st Class.

Under such adverse conditions, and steadily taking casualties, the men arrived into their assembly areas. Between 6:00 and 7:00 p.m., a heavy downpour momentarily quieted the front as the 29th and 31st Regiments prepared for their attack.

As for the 30th Regiment, hours earlier Freitag ordered Forstreuter's battered 30th to withdraw approximately 3 miles to the northwest of Koltiv, behind the Buh River's northern bank in the vicinity of Ruda-Koltivskaia for immediate reorganizational and resupply purposes.⁷ Outnumbered at least five to one, and against superior firepower, the 30th's attempts to contain the Soviet thrust and seal the enemy corridor had failed. It is important to note, however, that certain individual companies did succeed in containing - and delaying - the 15th Rifle Corp's attack. But attempts to totally contain the Soviet thrust failed as the 30th Regiment's artillery and communication support diminished and German air support was unavailable.⁸

As the 30th withdrew, retiring from the battle, the Regiment left a number of its dead behind. From its leadership, such losses were recorded - From the 1st Battalion: Rozanetz (1st Co.), killed; Berezoivs'kyi (2nd Co.), killed; Pospilovs'kyi (4th Co.), killed; Pidhanyi, who commanded the 3rd Company, as well as his executive commander, NCO, Bohdan Tarnawskyi, were both wounded. From the 2nd Battalion, such casualties were recorded: Iuryniak (5th Co.), missing; Sumarokiv (6th Co.), who, wounded in the arm, refused evacuation and following first-aid treatment, continued to lead; Malets'kyi (7th Co.), along with his senior German NCO, Rehn, were both wounded and evacuated; and Makarevych (8th Co.), killed.⁹ But by no means would the 30th's time in hell be over. Once reconstituted to a desired level of combat effectiveness, the 30th would go in again. But for now, it would serve as a Divisional "reserve."

His MG42 red hot, with its belt containing no more than 20 rounds of 7.92mm ammunition, Peter Lehmann raced uphill to the remains of what had

once been a building. Reaching the ruins of a wall heavily pockmarked with holes from tank, artillery, and heavy machine-gun fire, Lehmann stopped besides the smoldering wall. He immediately noted the dead lying around. Exhausted and covered with sweat, the grenadier knelt down to rest. This way, he would pose much less of a target.

But the moment he looked downrange, he spotted Red troops pouring into the ruins of the once flourishing town of Koltiw. "Shit!" thought Lehmann, "it's like an army of ants!" The sole survivor of what was once a proud platoon in the 30th Regiment's 2nd Battalion's 6th Company, Lehmann, a Galician of German ancestry, knew he had to move. Although the 30th Regiment was supposedly in the process of withdrawing across the Buh between Sasiv and Koltiw for reorganizational purposes, nothing here resembled what could be perceived to be an easy withdrawal. Lehmann had been fighting since the terrible morning of 15 July when the 30th had advanced into the Soviet thrust, or perhaps when the Soviets had advanced into the Galician thrust - or both had thrust into each other. "Shit!" thought Lehmann, "what difference did it really make?"

Running along the side of the blazing building towards what remained of its rear, Lehmann turned and immediately came face-to-face with an exceptionally well-armed and equipped three man Soviet mortar team. "RATA-TATA-TATATATA!!!" Lehmann dropped all three. But he took no more than one step forward when he spotted a very young Komsomolyk trooper with a Ppsh 41 lying on the ground behind a few rocks several meters away. Apparently, the three had left the youth to cover their rear.

Rolling on his back, the Komsomolyk attempted to raise his weapon upward to blast Lehmann. Instantly realizing that if he ran backwards he would perish, Lehmann instead screamed and charged forward. Kicking the Ppsh out of his enemy's hands, Lehmann then smashed his left boot into the youth's stomach. Utilizing his MG42 as a club, Lehmann brought it straight down onto the youth's head.

Lehmann struck hard. So hard that he actually shattered the youth's helmet. Continuing to scream, he repeatedly raised the MG upwards to strike the Komsomolyk. Only until he shattered the MG in half did Lehmann cease to strike. Looking down, Lehmann saw no head or face, only a shattered mass covered in blood, blotches of which splattered the nearby rocks.

Noting the dead youth's water flask suspended from his belt, Lehmann removed it and gulped down its contents. Throwing the flask aside, he picked up the Komsomolyk's weapon and ran to his next engagement.

That evening, the 31st and elements of the battered 30th attacked eastward towards Kruhiv (a village located southeast of Koltiw) and Lukavets' (a town

located almost 6 miles east of Koltiw). Simultaneously, the 29th attacked towards such villages and towns as Holubytsia (on the northern bank of the Seret River), Peniaky (on the Seret's southern bank), Huta Peniats'ka, and Huta Verkhobuz'ka.

If one takes into consideration that the regiments launched their attacks immediately following a forced infantry march (particularly the 31st Regiment, which force-marched no less than 20 miles) during which they had encountered heavy aerial and ground attacks, then their attacks demonstrated that the Division's personnel possessed a true "winning spirit." This may also serve as an example to dispute any postwar accounts of "low morale."

Fighting the entire night of 16-17 July, the Division did achieve some measure of success. Throughout the night, the Division's artillery, including its "heavy" 4th Battalion, and 88mm Flak (anti-aircraft) Battery, rained numerous shells in support of its infantry, fusiliers, and engineers. As blackened, burned hands slammed shell after shell into hot breach blocks, Mykhailo Lobach was amazed at how the numerous nightflares, parachute flares and star clusters, along with the flash of the guns, could turn night into day. So bright was the countryside that on more than one occasion objects and men could actually be seen hundreds of meters away. By attacking and shelling the corridor, the Division did delay - and possibly momentarily halt - the advance of certain Soviet units.

As tough as the situation was for AGNU and the newly inserted Galician Division, Konev's 1st Ukrainian Front was also experiencing its share of hardships. In a desperate effort to break through both north and south of Brody, Konev had committed the brunt of his Front's strength, yet advances were limited in depth and gains were measured in yards. As Konev's casualties rose, the need for an immediate breakout rose urgently. Regardless of its impressive strength, the fact remains that no military force can sustain a lengthy struggle with heavy losses. Realizing this himself, Konev pressed his commanders to achieve a breakout.

But in order to achieve a breakout, more information was needed. This was especially true pertaining to enemy units, strengths, and dispositions. Sensing that a newly inserted force was holding up the advance, the 52nd Rifle Corps - a Soviet Army Corps within the 38th Army operating south of Brody and adjacent to the 60th Army - ordered its divisions to send forward reconnaissance/scout troops in pursuit of such information.

One of those assigned the mission of gathering information was Senior Lieutenant Baskakov. As a scout platoon leader within the 52nd Rifle Corp's 117th Guards Rifle Division, Baskakov was also given this specific order:

"Podat' lazuka!" ("Give us a speaker!" or simply, produce a prisoner from whom information could be extracted).

As recalled years afterwards by Gregory Krivokhizhin, a scout/reconnaissance soldier within Baskakov's platoon, since the crossing of the Dnieper River, all had gone well. Soviet forces had advanced rapidly, most of Ukraine was secured, and a rapid thrust and takeover of Poland was anticipated. But south of Brody, all of that changed when the 1st Ukrainian Front's advance was halted by a newly inserted force.

Repeatedly, Baskakov's efforts to secure a prisoner ended in failure. After four attempts, not only was no prisoner secured, but to make matters worse, eight reconnaissance scout soldiers were killed. For the scout platoon, these were indeed heavy losses and, in addition to the physical loss, these were very demoralizing ones also.

Realizing the critical importance of securing vital information, Baskakov's men decided to make one more attempt. Spotting what appeared to be an officer accompanied by two soldiers near a farm house, the reconnaissance troops opened fire and charged forward. Grabbing the officer, they withdrew under heavy counterfire directed against them from those within the farm house.

But as they ran back, the officer suddenly died. Baskakov returned empty handed. Regardless, on the following day, the Soviet command received the following vital information: 117th Guards had encountered elements of the combat SS.

Krivokhizhin does not specify exactly which Waffen SS formation was encountered. But because at that time the Galician Division was the only Waffen SS formation operating south of Brody (or for that matter, the only Waffen SS division on that entire front) against the 1st Ukrainian Front, it is obvious that Baskakov's troops had encountered the Galician Division and with it, tough resistance and heavy losses.¹⁰

In the concluding hours of 16 July, the situation was as follows: the Division was still attacking the "Koltiv corridor" from the north, German forces were attacking it from the south, and General Wolfgang von Kluge's 357th Division (48th Panzer Corps) was fighting to hold a front east of Trostianets' Malyi adjacent to the corridor.

¹⁰ Erickson, *The Road to Berlin*, p. 235. According to *Lashchenko*, p. 306, the decision had been made by Konev himself at the end of 15 July. In "The Complete Liberation of the Soviet Ukraine and the Appearance on the Vistula," Konev provides this information: that although the 60th Army had not yet reached its objectives, Rybalko's 3rd Guards Tank Army

began to move on the morning of 16 July, despite the fact that some of Rybalko's armor was already committed on 15 July to support the 60th Army. (*Ibid.*) Konev also states that Rybalko personally called him at 3 a.m. on 16 July for authorization to commit the remainder (and brunt) of the 3rd Guards Tank Army into combat. See *Military History Journal*, 1964, No. 7, p. 10.

2 In his memoirs, *Heike* does not specify where the order originated from; undoubtedly, it either came from the 13th Corps, from the 1st Panzer Army Headquarters, or even from AGNU.

3 *Heike, English ed.*, p. 41.

4 On 1 June 1944, the 29th Regiment was organized in the following manner: Regimental Staff; Headquarters Company. 1st Battalion - Battalion Headquarters with four line companies: 1/29; 2/29; 3/29; 4/29; 2nd Battalion - Battalion Headquarters with four line companies 5/29; 6/29; 7/29; 8/29; the 13th Company of field artillery was organized around three platoons of 75mm light guns and one platoon containing two heavy 150mm artillery pieces.

Additionally, 14th Anti-tank Company was organized around two platoons armed with 37 mm guns, anti-tank teller mines, panzerfausts/panzerschreks and anti-armor hand grenades and two platoons armed with 75mm PAK guns was found. Every platoon had a machine-gun section. Within the entire regiment, the "panzerjager" company was the only fully motorized company. Its troops rode in the 1.5 ton, V-8, air-cooled Styr-Daimler-Benz truck produced under the "Schell-Programm," and the "Protzkraftwagen" (Kfz. 69), a 6-wheeled light truck which towed either the 37mm or 75mm gun and an extra ammunition trailer.

Excluding the 4th and 8th "Heavy" Companies (organized with additional mortar and machine gun support), each line company was organized around 4 platoons - 3 rifle platoons, each platoon with 3 rifle squads), and 1 "grenade-throwing" platoon. Two 80mm mortars (with one horse driven 2-wheeled wagon containing extra mortar ammunition) was found within each 4th platoon. Each line company was commanded by no more than 1 or 2 officers, and averaged 148 soldiers (officers including).

On 1 June 1944, the 29th Regiment was commanded by SS-Standartenfuhrer Friedrich Deern. The regiment's 1st Battalion was commanded by a Galician Ukrainian, Waffen-Hauptsturmfuhrer Myhailo Brygider with one German adjutant; the 2nd Battalion was commanded by SS-Hauptsturmfuhrer Wilhelm Allerkampf. At the time of deployment, the entire regiments line, artillery and anti-tank companies were commanded by Ukrainian officers, who also served in staff positions. Out of 42 officers, 34 were Ukrainian and 3 German. (Yuriy Krokhmaluk, "Obsada Starshyns'kykh Funktsiyi v 29. Polky 1-oi UD na 1-oho Chervnia 1944 r." (Officer Leadership Positions and Functions Within the 1st Ukrainian Division's 29th Regiment on 1 June 1944), *Visti*, December 1951 - January, 1952, No. 12 (14) - 1 (15), p. 13; and Liubomyr Ortyns'kyi, "Pikhotnyi Polk 1. U.D. Organizatsiina Skhema i Zavdannya Poodynoklykh Funktsiyi" (The Infantry Regiment of the 1st U.D. Its Organizational Scheme and the Mission of Its Independent Functions), *Visti*, December 1951 - January, 1952, No. 12 (14) - 1 (15), pp. 12-13). Ortyns'kyi, who served in the 29th Regiment and deployed to Galicia in late June 1944, substantiates Krokhmaluk's officer roll call of 1

June 1944. And when the 29th Regiment deployed to Galicia in late June 1944, it deployed with its 1 June standing. (Personal discussion with Yuriy Krokhamliuk).

In a post-war account published by former 29th Regimental Chaplain Mykhailo Levenetz, Levenetz also substantiates Krokhamliuk's writings and verifies that Brygider commanded the 29th Regiment's 1st Battalion and Alerkampf commanded the Regiment's 2nd Battalion. For a detailed account of the 29th Regiment in combat, see Levenetz' "Z Arkhivu 1-oi U.D." (From the Archives of the 1st Ukrainian Division), *Visti*, July, 1951, No. 7, pp. 5-9.

5 According to Lishchyns'kyi, a former Divisional officer and Brody veteran, the Division incurred heavy casualties from air attacks. "Nastup Sovets'koi Armii i Boi Pid Brodamy" (The Advance of the Soviet Army and the Brody Battles), *Surmach*, (Great Britain: Association of Ukrainian Former Combatants in Great Britain, 1968), p. 25. For an excellent account of the difficulties experienced by the Division's anti-aircraft personnel at Brody, see Arkadiy Veremenchuk's "Brody-Polon-UPA" (Brody-Captivity-UPA), *Visti Kombatanta*, 1993, No. 2, pp. 70-74.

6 According to Lishchyns'kyi, Rybalko's armored thrust was preceded by intense Soviet artillery and air attacks. *Surmach*, 1968, p. 25.

7 Heike, *Ukrainian ed.*, pp. 76-78; *English ed.*, pp. 44-45; personal discussion with Yuriy Krokhamliuk and Veryha.

8 Veryha, *Pershyi Den*, p. 112.

9 Ren, *My Life's Mosaic*, p. 173; Heike, *English ed.*, pp. 44-45.

10 G. Krivokhizhin, "Budni Razvedchika" (Routine Reconnaissance Scouts), in *Zvezdy Soldatskoi Slavy* (Stars to Soldier Glories) (Kiev: Izdatel'stvo Tsk Lksmu "Molod", 1980), pp. 21-29.

MONDAY, 17 JULY:

Dawn. As heavy fighting continued to rage both north and south of Brody in Koltiv's vicinity, Konev moved in additional fresh tank and mechanized forces. In the north, the 1st Guards Tank Army (with orders to strike towards Rava-Rus'ka) would further breach the efforts of the 13th Army and Baranov's Cavalry Mechanized Group while simultaneously, south of Brody, Lelyshenko's 4th Tank Army would reinforce the 3rd Guards Tank Army. Konev's actions not only placed more pressure on the front but as well, made it increasingly difficult for the counterattacking forces to "plug-up" the two now rapidly expanding breaches.

By mid-morning, heavy concentrations of enemy infantry and armor began to surge forward. From an observation point atop Hill 416 near Volokh, at approximately 10:30 a.m., the 29th's Regimental Commander, SS-Obersturmbannfuhrer Deern, personally visited Mykhailo Dlaboha, who was observing the countryside.

Immediately, Dlaboha informed Deern that the enemy was renewing its effort but that the 29th Regiment had not been informed of fresh concentrations developing on its front. Although the enemy was shrouded in a late morning mist, Dlaboha further informed Deern that the 29th was not yet fully positioned defensively, and that he was going to open fire to disrupt the enemy, thus warning the 29th of an upcoming action. Without waiting for any orders or guidance, Dlaboha called for one artillery round.

"Mister, have you gone mad? What the hell are you doing?" demanded Deern.

"Ivans come. I have to fire!" replied Dlaboha.

An argument ensued. Deern threatened Dlaboha with death, but as Dlaboha began to direct the fire of his Battery, as well as the fire of the whole 2nd Battalion of the Artillery Regiment, Deern finally realized that Dlaboha was not firing on either the Wehrmacht or the Galician Division, but on Soviet forces.

Well placed artillery rounds decimated an advancing communist penal unit. At first, the criminal unit maintained its momentum, but as more incoming rounds shattered those who pressed forward to kill and pillage, their momentum suddenly broke and they fell back.

But efforts to escape proved fruitless as NKVD police troops commenced fire on those who reeled back. Adjusting his sights, Dlaboha carefully plotted the NKVD's location. Again notifying his Battery, Dlaboha called for one round; within seconds, he heard its flight hundreds of feet above him. Exploding within meters of where Dlaboha estimated the NKVD stood, he shouted only one word - "FIRE!"

The battery rocked. Outgoing rounds pierced the air. Exploding shells tore enemy trucks into pieces. As Dlaboha viewed flames rising upwards and pieces of trucks flying hundreds of meters in every direction, the artillery officer knew that his men were ripping the life out of the NKVD. "That's right, boys, pour it on!" Outgoing rounds continued to rain death and destruction.

With his decision to insert another tank army into Koltiv's vicinity in order to expand the corridor and achieve a breakout and operational depth, Konev also created some serious problems for the Galician Division. But the worst was yet to come. That same day, he also moved the 1st Ukrainian Front's strategic reserve. From this combination of armored and reserve strength, certain units were immediately brought up against the Division. As the Division began to face additional fresh forces with superior odds, firepower and combat experience, the estimated initial one to three ratio of odds now rose to even higher levels. It has never been ascertained, nor will it ever be, what odds the Division faced on 17 July. Realistically speaking, odds of at least one against

five or six may be considered accurate, although some claim that even this figure is too low. In addition, if one takes into consideration the massive aerial and ground firepower the Soviets possessed, the odds tremendously favored the attackers.

That same day, the 357th Division collapsed, while the Galician Division was forced strictly over to the defensive. Again, it is important to note that certain individual companies did succeed in outflanking the corridor and striking into it. But attempts to seal the gap failed as the Division's artillery and communication support diminished, while German air support was unavailable.¹ So until AGNU could somehow dispatch immediate reinforcement to establish blocking positions, nothing else could be done.

But the battle was far from over. As previously it had been critical to seal the corridor, now it was equally imperative to hold it in order to prevent Soviet forces from expanding it.

Occupying a hilltop position northeast of Kruhiv, Mykhailo Tomash and his two assistants quickly dug two foxhole fighting positions. Mykhailo's position, which held him and his assistant gunner Stefan Kolko, along with their two machine guns, an MG34 and MG42, was slightly larger than the position situated about 100 feet to Mykhailo's right and occupied by Pavlo Budka. Lack of time prevented the threesome from constructing overhead cover for their positions, but their dug-out positions were tightly packed in the front and sides by sandbags.

From his vantage point, Mykhailo had an excellent view. Directly to his front and left, the ground sloped downward into a slight valley, and then rose upward to a series of small hills. Except for a handful of trees, the terrain was open. To his front and right, approximately 300 meters away, stood a sizable wooded knoll. This wooded area could provide cover, but once anyone emerged from it, they would have to advance downward and then uphill through open terrain. But before anyone could occupy Mykhailo's hilltop position, they would first be forced to encounter Mykhailo, Stefan, and Pavlo.

Myhailo held an ideal position. From it he could cover hundreds of meters of terrain. After establishing their positions, the three were personally visited by Myhailo's company commander. The 4th Heavy Company leader had a reputation throughout the entire infantry battalion for taking care of his men. Upon arrival, he not only brought some cans of food and water, but seeing that extra ammunition could be needed, he immediately ordered more. An incredible supply of 20,000 rounds showed up. As Stefan unrolled strap after strap, he jokingly remarked "I think we've got enough to stop an army!" Mykhailo just laughed at his friend's remark, but deep down, he hoped that Stefan's remark did not foreshadow what was to come.

But Stefan's remark proved right. It didn't matter that further to the left and right other Galician machine-gunners has established positions. The might of the 99th Rifle Division was coming their way, and it was Mykhailo's machine gun team which barred its way.

"HURRAH! HURRAH!" From the woods to his right and from across the hill to his front, Mykhailo saw the brown-clad figures surge forward, totally intoxicated with the idea of overrunning the hill. "OH GOD!" shouted Stefan, "it looks like a whole regiment's coming at us!"

Mykhailo remained calm. Firmly grasping the MG42 in both hands, he decided to first engage the group coming out of the wooded area. But before opening up, he would permit them to advance for about another 50 meters. After engaging them, he would deal with those to his front. Glancing momentarily at Stefan, Mykhailo exclaimed "Get ready!" and peered through the sight of the MG42. His plan was to fire a "Z" pattern at the first group. Such a pattern, fired from the right to the left, and then upwards at an angle to the right and again to the left, would not only drop the first row, but some of the attackers in the center and rear. Once this was accomplished, Mykhailo would then fire a reverse "Z", move the weapon a couple of feet to his left, and use the same pattern on the other group.

He sighted carefully. With his left hand, he released the weapon's safety and with his right, he released the weapon's bolt forward. Quickly resighting, he slowly squeezed the trigger.

The weapon thundered. "RATATATATATATA!!!" As the red hot 7.92mm rounds ripped into the body of a charging soldier and shoved him backwards, Mykhailo slowly swept the group with a "Z" pattern. As the cries of "HURRAH!" subsided, the group's survivors, stunned by what they had just experienced, immediately retreated, in total chaos, to the safety of the woods.

"God," thought Mykhailo, "how beautifully that worked." He raised the weapon upward, placed it approximately two feet to his left, sighted, and repeated his maneuver of a few moments ago. Within seconds, he noted that the second group's survivors were also quickly retiring uphill to seek cover over the hilltop.

But there was no time to savor any victories. Within seconds, the first group's disorganized survivors, linking up with newly arrived reinforcements, charged out of the woods. Shouting "HURRAH! POBEDA! HURRAH!" they pressed forward in renewed strength and determination. Aiming at them, Mykhailo fired and began another "Z" pattern. But before he could totally sweep over the group, his weapon fell silent. Ammo! realized Mykhailo. "Need to reload! Pass it down! Grab the MG34!" Shouting "GUN ONE, DOWN!", from Stefan he heard "GUN TWO, UP!" As Mykhailo reached for the second

machinegun, he also heard the shouts of "HURRAH!" rising over the crest of the hill. "Shit!" thought Mykhailo. "Gotta work faster, the other group's coming in!" Sighting on a group, he heard the quick staccato shots of Pavlo's KAR 98 rifle and the bolt's action. "Not bad, Pavlo. Not bad at all!"

Mykhailo aimed. He fired. He fired again. And again. And again. He ripped both groups into pieces. As he fired, the crack of enemy small-arms fire filled the air, mortar and artillery rounds dropped all around and chunks of earth rained down. "RATATATATATATATA!!! RATATATATATATATA!!!" The weapon's hot slugs acted as an invisible wall. Men dropped singly, in two's and three's and on occasion, in clusters; yet the living continued to press forward, jumping over the dead and dying until a 7.92mm round or burst silenced them in turn. "HURRAH! HURRAH! POBEDA!" "Easy," thought Mykhailo. "Easy. Let them come in. East. NOW!" He squeezed the trigger. Nothing. Instantly, Mykhailo pulled on the bolt and squeezed. Again, nothing.

Shouting "Jammage!" Mykhailo was about to pass the weapon to Stefan, but before he could do anything, Pavlo's shout of "Let me clear it!" was heard. Jumping out of his position, Pavlo raced towards Mykhailo. Mykhailo saw the folly in this. But before he could stop him, the boy was on his knees beside the weapon lifting its feed tray cover. But that was as far as he got. Within a second, a rifle bullet struck Pavlo squarely on the right side of his head. Collapsing over the weapon, several more rounds ripped into his body.

Pulling Pavlo's body and the jammed weapon into the position, Mykhailo ducked down just in time as more enemy bullets flew overhead. "EEEEEEEEEEEEEEEE!!!" Another mortar round came screaming in and exploded nearby. "VAROOM!!!" Chunks of debris and dirt rained down on them. "My God!" cried Stefan, "He's Dead!" But Stefan had no time to ponder his friend's death. Reaching for the jammed weapon, he began to extract the jammed round with a knife. Mykhailo could not fail to notice Stefan's burned and bleeding hands; pieces of flesh actually hung here and there. As Stefan worked, cursing the jammage, Mykhailo picked up Pavlo's body and, as much as he hated to do it, laid it in front of the position. This way, Pavlo's body would provide some extra protection.

Turning around, Mykhailo saw six Red Army soldiers charging in from behind. "Stefan! Six coming in from behind!"

Replying "Stay down!" Stefan quickly pulled the pin out of an egg-type grenade, and tossed it no more than several feet outside the hole.

The explosion rained more debris into the hole. But immediately following the blast, both men stood up - Mykhailo with an MG and Stefan with a P-38 pistol. And before the attackers were silenced for eternity, the last thing they saw was two men pop up and spray lead.

Squatting back into the fighting position, Mykhailo asked "How do you think they got behind us?"

"WHO THE HELL KNOWS! WHO THE HELL CARES!" screamed Stefan as he worked to unjam the weapon. "WEAPONS UP!" "EEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEE!!!" "VAROOM!!!" "EEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEE!!!" "VARO-OM!!!"

More incoming rounds tore up the ground. As Mykhailo and Stefan lay in the foxhole, hands covering their ears and heads, their bodies rolling with the blasts and convulsions, both men knew that unless a shell exploded directly within their position, neither would die.

"HURRAH! POBEDA! HURRAH!" Mykhailo wondered how much more he could take. Removing the weapons bipod, he placed the red-hot barrel on Pavlo's body. The weapon's firing pin had shattered hours before, but the chamber was so hot that as rounds entered it, a combination of heat and exploding rounds set the bullets off.

Mykhailo sighted. Again, he wondered how much more of this he could take. His body was covered with sweat, his face blackened by grime, sweat, and burned powder. His mouth felt hot and dry and his burned hands ached while his head and ears rang from the constant noise and exploding shells. Yet, he maintained his self-control.

"HURRAH! HURRAH!"

"Easy. We'll start with another 'Z'." "RATATATATATA!!!" RATA-TATATATA!!!"

"AAAHHHHH!!!" Screams of collapsing men told Mykhailo that once again, he was on target.

Through the entire day and night, Mykhailo and Stefan fought. As they fought, the constant screams and noises of "HURRAH! POBEDA! HURRAH!", "RATATATATATATA!!!", "AAAHHHHHH!!!", "RATATA-TATATA!!!" "EE-EEEE!", "GOD DAMN!!!", "VAROOM!", "HURRAH! HURRAH!", "EASY, STEADY, EASY, NOW!", "RATATATATATA!!!" "AAAHHHHHH!!!", "GUN ONE DOWN!", "GUN TWO, UP!", "EE-EEEEEEEE!!!", "BASTARDS!", "SHIT!", "VAROOM!", "GUN TWO DOWN!", "GUN ONE UP!", "HURRAH!", "RATATATATATATA!!!" never abated.

Throughout the hot day of 17 July, tough defensive battles were fought. Fierce battles especially raged for the villages and towns of Holubytsia, Peniaky, Huta Peniats'ka, Huta Verkhobuz'ka, Maidan Peniats'kyi, Kruhiv, Sukhodoly, Koltiv, Opaky, Lukavets' and a host of other locations as Soviet forces repeatedly thrust forward and the Division was determined to hold; throughout the countryside, farms and settlements burned and the smoke and crackle of burning wood could be seen and heard well into the night.

Charging towards Huta Peniats'ka, Chaplain Volodymur Stetsiuk saw a grenadier fall. Rushing to his aid, the Chaplain attempted to assist him. Suddenly, a German NCO rushed up and told the Chaplain to move. Refusing to leave the dying grenadier, the Chaplain was shot dead by the NCO. Because this incident was witnessed by a number of soldiers, the NCO was later "killed-in-action."²

By way of information extracted from prisoners of war, intercepted radio messages, and unit identification markings on vehicles, the following units (in part or completion) were identified as operating against the Galician Division: the 68th Guards Rifle Division;³ the 99th Rifle Division;⁴ the 336th,⁵ 322nd,⁶ and 148th Rifle Divisions⁷ which comprised the 15th Rifle Corps,⁸ and the 6th Guards Tank,⁹ 7th Guards Tank,¹⁰ and the 9th Mechanized Corps.¹¹ The 23rd Independent Rifle Corps,¹² as well as elements of the 52nd Rifle Corps¹³ along with a part of the 102nd Rifle Corps¹⁴ and the 17th Guards Rifle Corps,¹⁵ also fought the 13th Corps, and its elements saw action against the Division. "Sokolov's" cavalry-mechanized group¹⁶ (comprising the 31st Independent Tank Corps¹⁷ and the 6th Guards Cavalry Corps¹⁸) also fought the Division. These various divisions and corps belonged to the 3rd Guards Tank Army¹⁹; 13th Army;²⁰ 38th Army;²¹ 60th Army²² and the 1st Ukrainian Front's Strategic Reserve.

In several instances, elements of the Division were taking on entire Soviet divisions. By 17 July, the 29th Regiment was battling the entire 68th Guards Rifle Division reinforced with artillery, armor and air; and the 31st Regiment fought the entire 99th and no less than half of the 336th Rifle Division, also massively reinforced. For reinforcements, the two regiments utilized the Division's fusiliers, the independent anti-tank company, and as much of the Division's artillery as possible. But when one takes into consideration that none of the Division's regiments were in full strength, and no air support was available, what reinforcement became available, could not even come close to equalling the Soviets' strength.

In addition to the artillery regiments found within each Soviet rifle and tank division, a number of independent rocket and artillery divisions were utilized by the 1st Ukrainian Front, including the 7th Breakthrough Artillery Corps²³ (comprising the 1st Guards Breakthrough Artillery Division²⁴ and the 3rd Guards Rocket Barrage Division²⁵), found within the 13th Army; the 13th Breakthrough Artillery Division;²⁶ and the 17th Breakthrough Artillery Division.²⁷

Besides battling the regular infantry, artillery, rocket, armored, mechanized and cavalry units committed by the Soviets, the Division also

fought "booty" Ukrainians forcefully pressed into service as "reinforcements,"²⁸ NKVD police troops, penal battalions,²⁹ and specialized troops.³⁰

Bombarded with overwhelming firepower, repeatedly strafed, bombed and rocketed by low and high flying aircraft, massively struck by enemy armor reinforced with mechanized, criminal penal battalions and NKVD troops, the Division began to fold. What especially saddened the soldiers was to encounter untrained men and boys, some as young as 15, who were gathered up by the communists in Galicia's regions and, with no training whatsoever, were pressed into "volunteer" battalions. Brutalized and terrorized to the level of being no more than beasts of burden, such "volunteers" began to make a regular appearance on the battle field, and frequently spearheaded Soviet attacks. Eventually, members of the Division actually encountered family members among such "volunteers."³¹

"HURRAH!" Looking up, Myron Baran* saw a Red Army soldier, with a bayonet protruding from the tip of his Tokarev rifle, charging towards him. Instantly, Myron knew that he would have to go one-on-one with the charging threat.

Rising up from his prone position, Myron faked to his right, moved to his left, and with his KAR 98 rifle, thwarted the thrust of the Tokarev. Simultaneously, he raised his right leg to ankle height and tripped the incoming trooper. The moment the Soviet trooper fell forward to the ground; Myron turned, fired, pulled back the rifle's bolt, slammed in another round and fired again. The fact the Myron had just killed his first human being was bad enough, but the worst was yet to come.

Staring at the fallen corpse, Myron noticed the man's wallet lying approximately ten inches from his upper right side; apparently, as the man fell forward, his wallet had slipped out of an inside coat pocket. Placing his rifle down, Myron picked up the wallet. Inside, he saw the man's photograph, his membership in the 23rd Guards stamped with an official seal, and a folded letter. Opening it, he saw it contained a photograph. Tears welled up in his eyes. "MY GOD!" cried out Myron, "What have I done? What have I done?"

As he read the letter, Myron noted that it was addressed by a woman to Ivan Hopenko, a Ukrainian who hailed from the Kharkiv region. Its opening lines read: "My dear husband. It has been over half a year since we have last seen each other, but very recently, we had our second child. For months, although you have been away, you have waited with me. At last, our child has arrived. It is a baby girl, two months old, beautiful and healthy. I am enclosing a photograph of her with me, and our little Markian."

As tears continued to run down his cheeks, Myron looked at the photo of the Ukrainian woman sitting with a baby in her lap and little Markian standing at her side.

Squatting down beside the dead man, Myron carefully reinserted the letter with the photo back into the wallet. Muttering "Tovarysh, please forgive me!" he pushed it back underneath the deceased man's coat. Myron not only felt the tremendous burden of having killed a fellow Ukrainian, but also sorrow that his action had inadvertently resulted in a new widow and two fatherless children.³²

On 17 July, the Division's front line - which was initially established on 15 July slightly southwest from Litovysi over the Seret River past Peniaky, Lukavets', Kruhiv and to the outskirts of Nushche on a front of approximately 6 miles - began to fall back under severe pressure. And with the collapse of the 357th German Infantry Division and the insertion of additional Soviet forces into the corridor, the Division was not only pressed from the front, but was now forced to establish and defend a line on its right flank west of Koltiiv towards the town of Sasiv located south of the Buh River. Again, the 30th Regiment found itself heavily engaged on the front line. But continuing enemy pressure, and the incorporation of fresh divisions, such as the 359th Soviet Rifle Division³³ west of Koltiiv to strike northwards, forced the Division to move its line further westward. By midnight, the Division's front line faced eastward from the vicinity of Sasiv to Pidhirtsi and north of Zahirtsia at a distance of approximately 8 miles. Under the best conditions, no division should ever hold such a lengthy sector. But neither 13th Corps nor the Division had any choice.

1 Heike, *English ed.*, p. 44.

2 In a personal discussion with Yuriy Krokhamliuk, the former staff officer stated that up until his death, the chaplain revived, assisted and administered the last rites to many a wounded man, both Divisional and enemy, until his death at the hands of a German NCO. But in *A Soldier Priest Remembers*, former Divisional Chaplain Nahayewskyi, who upon the Division's return to Neuhammer, made a strong effort to pinpoint the exact cause of Stetsiuk's death, provides a slightly different version. According to Nahayewskyi, a German NCO informed him that although he was not fully aware of the details, it was brought to his attention that a German officer (and not a NCO) had shot Stetsiuk. This incident had supposedly occurred as a result of Stetsiuk's refusal to leave a transport carrying some of the wounded during a heavy onslaught of communist tanks, Katiusha rockets and aircraft. But the NCO who related the account to Nahayewskyi either did not reveal more (or perhaps Nahayewskyi did not provide further details), on what exactly happened. If the NCO's version is correct, perhaps the officer who issued the order feared that if Stetsiuk would refuse to retire, others would also stay behind; hence, he was shot. (See *A Soldier Priest Remembers*, pp. 77-78, 84).

Yet, In Roman Krokhmalik's book, *The Glow*, a slightly different version is provided. According to Roman, Stetsiuk was executed on 7 July 1944 in the village of Terebezha near Zolochiv. This execution was allegedly carried out because the Chaplain failed in his duty to assist the wounded on the front line. (See *The Glow*, p. 250). But in a letter dated to *Visti Kombatanta*, dated 30 March 1978, Reverend Myron Holovins'kyi, a former neighbor and close friend of Stetsiuk and his family, stated he had been provided three versions:

a) After the Division had been surrounded at Brody, a German General (Holovins'kyi could not recall his name), assembled a number of officers amongst whom was Chaplain Stetsiuk. In the ensuing discussion Stetsiuk, who was known to be a very truthful and straightforward person, expressed doubt that a breakout could succeed. Angered by the Chaplain's remark, the general ordered the priest to be shot;

b) Ordered on a patrol, Chaplain Stetsiuk refused and some general ordered the chaplain to be executed;

c) Stetsiuk feared to assist the wounded. For this, he was executed.

Regarding the third version, Holovins'kyi totally disregards it and believes something close to one of the first two versions occurred. Holovins'kyi also emphasized that it must be remembered that Stetsiuk is not alive to defend himself; therefore, the whole truth will possibly never be known. Holovins'kyi also emphasized that since Chaplain Stetsiuk was a courageous and spiritually conscientious individual, nothing would have stopped him from assisting those in need. (For the full letter, see *The Glow*, p. 251). Dr. Laba also received a copy of Holovins'kyi's letter.

3 Formed initially as the 96th Mountain Rifle Division in Vinnytsia in Kiev's Military District in December 1923, the 96th Mountain Division was reformed as the 14th Guards Rifle Division in January 1942. That same year in July (possibly in Baku), the 96th was raised again but after Stalingrad, in February 1943, was renumbered and retitled as the 68th Guards Rifle Division. From March 1943 until July 1944, it served with the 17th Guards Rifle Corps, 38th Army. The 68th evolved around the 196th, 199th, and 102st Rifle Regiments and 138th Guards Artillery Regiments.

4 Regarded as a crack division under the command of Vlasov in August 1940, the 99th was formed in Uman, Kiev's Special Military District between 1936-38. Winner of the "Challenge Red Banner," and designated by General Timoshenko in August 1940 as "the best division in the Red Army," under Vlasov, the 99th retook Peremyshl in July 1941, thus being the first Soviet division to strike a success against the German invader. Further combat occurred in Ukraine and Russia. Destroyed at Izyum (Kharkiv region), in May 1942, the 99th was raised again at Balachov, in the Volga Military District in August, 1942, from the divisions survivors. After combat in Stalingrad, the division was reformed as the 88th Guards Rifle Division in April 1943. Raised again in May 1943 around the 99th Brigade, the 99th remained an independent division. In January 1944, the 99th was posted into Ukraine and into the 1st Ukrainian Front's Reserve. Because the 99th Division was still regarded as a crack outfit, it was designated by the 1st Ukrainian Front to serve as a spearhead force.

5 Formed in Gorkiy, Moscow's Military District in November, 1941, around the 1128th, 1130th, 1132nd Rifle Regiments and the 909th Artillery Regiments, that same month the 336th Rifle Division was posted into the 60th Army. The following month (December,

1941), the 336th participated in the Moscow counteroffensive and with the 5th Army, retook Mozhaisk, a critical road and rail junction approximately 70 miles west of Moscow. Throughout 1942 and 1943, the 336th fought in Russia and Ukraine with the 5th and 61st Armies. In January 1944, the division reentered the 60th Army and was posted to the army's 15th Rifle Corps.

Further combat actions included Ternopil where the Division's 1130th Regiment received the honorary title of "Ternopil." Divisional titles included "Zhytomyr" and "Katowice."

6 The 322nd was formed at Gorkiy, Moscow's Military District in July 1941. In December 1941, the 322nd Rifle Division (serving first within the 10th Army and later the 16th Army), participated in the Moscow counteroffensive. Surrounded at Sukelnichi in February 1942, the 322nd successfully held its position until its relief in August 1942. In January 1943, it was posted into the 60th Army's 15th Rifle Corps. Further combat actions included Kursk, the Pripet River Front, Kiev, Zhytomyr, and Ternopil.

7 The recipient of several Orders of the Red Banner, the 148th Rifle Division was raised in the Volga Military District in mid-1941. Initially posted to the Soviet reserve, in September 1941, the 148th was deployed to the Central Front. In January 1943, it was committed to the Voronezh Front. That same year in the month of July, the 148th, as a part of the 18th Guards Independent Rifle Corps, 13th Army, fought in the Battle of Kursk. Crossing the Dnieper River in September 1943 with the 18th Guards, in July 1944 the 148th was posted to the 60th Army's 15th Rifle Corps. Prior to the commencement of the 15th Rifle Corps' advance on 14/15 July, the 148th's entire 326th Artillery Regiment was dispatched to the 336th Rifle Division to assist the 336th's attack. As for the division's 496th, 507th and 654th Infantry Regiments, beginning on 16 July, its personnel were committed as reinforcements for both the 322nd and 336th Rifle Divisions as well as Rybalko's armored units. Throughout the German-Soviet War, the 148th remained as an independent division and it served in various armies.

8 Identified first in Finland with the 13th Red Army in December 1939, the 15th Rifle Corps served and fought throughout Russia and Ukraine. Notable battles occurred at Kiev in September 1941 where the corps was encircled but succeeded in breaking out; Pavlograd (February 1943); and Kursk in July 1943. In March 1944, the 15th Corps fought at Ternopil with the 60th Army but it also briefly reinforced the 13th Army. The 15th Rifle Corps' two organic divisions were the 322nd and 336th Rifle Divisions. But in anticipation of the summer offensive of 1944, in July the rifle corps was reinforced with the 148th Rifle Division, an independent rifle division.

9 Initially, the 6th Guards Tank Corps was known as the 12th Tank Corps. The 12th was formed in Moscow, Moscow Military District, in May 1942. Combat actions included Kharkiv in February and March, 1943. Badly mauled by Manstein's winter counter-offensive which recaptured Kharkiv in March 1943, the 12th was pulled from the front and reformed. Recommitted into combat at Kursk in July 1943, on 26 July 1943, the 12th Tank was reorganized as the 6th Guards Tank Corps. Posted into the 3rd Guards Tank Army in November 1943, the 6th Guards Tank fought at Kiev, Fastiv, Zhytomyr, and Ternopil. The recipient of the Lenin Order, the Red Banner and Bohdan Khmelnytskyi awards, the 6th Guards Tank Corps was regarded by Stavka as one of its most elite tank corps.

10 Along with the 6th Guards Tank Corps, the 7th Guards Tank Corps was also formed on 26 July 1943. The 7th Guards Tank Corps, a highly trained and combat experienced tank corps, was initially organized in Byelorussia in 1938 from an experimental mechanized infantry corps. Following a period of combat on the Bryansk Front, in October 1943, the 7th Guards Tank was posted into the 3rd Guards Tank Army. It fought at Kiev, Fastov, Zhytomyr, and Ternopil. The 7th Guards Tank Corps was also regarded as a highly elite tank corps.

11 Identified as a reserve army corps in the Kiev-Zhytomyr area within the Kiev Military District, the 9th Mechanized Corps was mobilized in June, 1941. Throughout 1941-1943, the 9th Mechanized Corps fought in Ukraine and Russia. In September 1943, the corps was incorporated into the 3rd Guards Tank Army and in the following months of October and November, fought in Kiev and Zhytomyr. In the spring of 1944, the 9th Mechanized Corps was committed into combat to repulse the efforts of the 2nd Waffen SS Panzer Corps in its advance toward the encircled 1st Panzer Army. Removed from the front, in June 1944, the 9th was reconstituted and placed into the RVGK reserve. However, it was immediately reposted into Rybalko's 3rd Guards Tank Army and remained in that army until the duration of the war. During the summer offensive of July 1944, it fought side-by-side with the 6th and 7th Guards Tank Corps.

12 Formed in Byelorussia's Military District in August 1939, the following month the 23rd Independent Rifle Corps entered Poland. Fought in Finland with the 13th Army; reactivated in Transcaucasia in 1940 as the 23rd Mechanized Corps, in July 1941, the 23rd Mechanized Corps was utilized as a nucleus for the 45th Red Army. With the incorporation of the mechanized corps into an army, a new 23rd Independent (but non-mechanized) Rifle Corps was raised. First appearing on the Voronezh Front in January, 1943, the 23rd Independent fought throughout Russia and Ukraine with various armies. In January 1944 the rifle corps was posted to the 60th Army but in June 1944, was redirected to Byelorussia to participate in Operation "Bagration," the Soviet code name for the destruction of Nazi Germany's Army Group "Centre." Reshifted into the 60th Army in July 1944, it arrived in time to participate in the Lviv-Sandomir Operation.

13 Organized in the Siberian Military District, in June 1941, the 52nd Rifle Corps was incorporated into the 24th Army. Appearing on the Smolensk Front in the summer of 1941, the 52nd repeatedly held its own. In September 1941, a couple of its divisions were the first to receive the honorary title of "guard." Further combat actions included Kursk in July 1943, and the southwest Ukraine in the winter and spring of 1944. During the Lviv-Sandomir Operation, the 52nd Rifle Corps served in the 38th Army.

14 First identified in the summer of 1944, in July 1944, the 102nd Rifle Corps served in the 13th Army along with the 24th and 17th Rifle Corps.

15 Appearing at the Battle of Kursk in July 1943, the 17th Rifle Corps displayed outstanding gallantry. Decorated as a "guard" corps, further combat actions included Kharkiv (August 1943), Kiev, the Dnieper crossing in September 1943, and the southwest Ukraine in the spring of 1944. Posted to the 1st Ukrainian Front's reserve, during the initial breakout, the 17th Guards Rifle Corps was subordinated to the 38th Army. Its most elite division, the 68th Guards Rifle, was one of the first divisions to be committed into combat.

16 "Soklov's" Mechanized Group was formed in late 1943 by the incorporation of the 31st Independent Tank and 6th Guards Cavalry Corps. During the Lvov-Sandomir Operation, General Sokolov's group reinforced Rybalko's 3rd Guards Tank Army.

17 The 31st Independent Tank Corps was established in July 1943 from elements of the 1st Tank (soon to be redesignated "guards") Army. The 31st first fought at Kursk in July 1943 and in the following month (August, 1943) fought with the 1st Tank Army at Kharkiv. Reappearing in July 1944 in the 1st Ukrainian Front, along with the 6th Guards Cavalry Corps the 31st Independent Tank Corps comprised "Sokolov's" Mechanized-Cavalry Group.

18 Previously known as the 7th Cavalry Corps, the 6th Guards Cavalry Corps first appeared in Northern Donets in February 1943. Throughout the first half of 1943, the 6th Guards Cavalry Corps remained in reserve status in Novy Oskol. Appearing in August 1943 in Stavka's Western Fronts Reserve, the 6th Guards Cavalry Corps participated in the Korsun-Cherkasy Operation of January 1944. Shortly afterwards, it appeared near Rivne and in February 1944, was posted into the 1st Ukrainian Front. Along with the 31st Independent Tank Corps, the 6th Guards Cavalry Corps comprised "Sokolov's" group. A powerful force, in January 1944 it was identified with the following units: 8th Cavalry, 8th Rifle and 13th Guards Divisions; 136th, 154th, and 250th Tank Regiments.

19 The first experimental combined-arms army ever developed in the communist world, the 3rd Guards Tank (formerly the 3rd Tank Army), was organized in May 1942 with three tank corps, three rifle divisions, and an independent tank brigade. Commanded by P. Romanenko, it fought at Tula in 1942, bypassed Kharkiv in February 1943, but was almost totally destroyed in the "Krasnograd" Pocket southwest of Kharkiv in March 1943. Withdrawn from the front and reformed in Plavsk, Russia, it participated in July 1943 in the Orel Operation. Along with the 40th Army, was the first to reach the Dnieper River in Kiev's vicinity. Retitled as "guards" in November 1943, the 3rd Guards Tank Army fought in Kiev's vicinity, and in March 1944, fought the 4th Panzer Army in Shepetivka. In May 1943, Rybalko assumed command which he held until the end of the war. In January 1944, the army was composed of the 6th Guards Tank Corps, 7th Guards Tank Corps, and the 9th Mechanized Corps which served as a reserve in Kiev's Special Military District. Each tank corps had three guards tank brigades and one guards motorized rifle brigade while the 9th Mechanized Corps had three mechanized brigades and three tank regiments. In addition to the 6th Guards, 7th Guards, and 9th Corps, the 91st Independent Tank Brigade, commanded by Colonel I. I. Yakubovskiy, as well as engineer, artillery, anti-tank, rocket, communication and support personnel, bolstered the 3rd Guards Tank Army to a strength of approximately 60,000.

20 Activated as the 13th Army by Trotsky in March 1919 from a "Group of Forces" composed of die-hard Marxist revolutionaries, foreign interventionists, and red-guardists, the 13th was de-activated in November, 1920. Re-activated in June 1941, it went into the RVGK reserve system that same month. The 13th fought at Smolensk, Moscow, Bryansk, Kursk, Dnieper River, Kiev, Zhytomyr, Rivne, Shepetivka and Lutsk. In July 1944, it contained the 24th, 27th, 102nd Rifle Corps and the 1st Guards Breakthrough Artillery Division.

21 Activated in August 1941 around the 8th Mechanized Corps, that same month the 38th took a beating at Lake Ilmen. Annihilated at Kharkiv in September 1941, it was rebuilt shortly afterwards. Further combat occurred on the Bryansk and Kursk fronts. From October

1943, the 38th was committed into various defensive and offensive sectors. Entering Ukraine in November 1943, the 38th frequently acquired its manpower from "booty" Ukrainians forged around NKVD police battalions. In July 1944, the 38th Army was organized around the 52nd and 107th Rifle Corps.

22 Activated in Moscow's Military District in August 1941, the 60th was redesignated as the 3rd Shock Army in December 1941; shortly afterwards, it was again redesignated as the 3rd Reserve Army. Again redesignated as the 60th Army in July 1942, the army was placed in Stavka's Reserve. (RVGK). Committed to the Voronezh Front in January 1943, the 60th fought at Kursk, Kiev, the Yashnohorodka Bridgehead, Korosten, Zhytomyr (where its headquarters was overrun by the 48th Panzer Corps in December 1943), Rivne, and Ternopil. In July 1944, it consisted of the 15th, 23rd, 28th Rifle Corps' and the Independent 148th Rifle Division. But for additional reinforcement, the 106th Rifle Corps was posted to the 60th Army. In July 1944, the 60th was commanded by Colonel-General Petr A. Kyrochkin.

23 First identified at Kursk in July 1943, the 7th Breakthrough Artillery Corps saw action in Bryansk, Bukrin and Kiev. It was incorporated into the 1st Ukrainian Front in June, 1944, and in the following months was posted to the 38th Army.

24 On 1 March 1943, the 1st Artillery Division was reformed and on that date, was redesignated as the 1st Guards Breakthrough Artillery Division. In July 1943, it fought at Kursk in support of the 13th and 70th Armies. Further combat actions included Hlukhiv, the Dnieper River crossing, and Kiev with the 60th Army. During the Lvov-Sandomir Operation, the 1st Artillery was posted to the 13th Army.

25 In July 1944, the 3rd Guards Rocket Barrage contained the following units: 4th, 19th, 32nd Rocket Barrage Brigades and 312th and 313th Guards Rocket Regiments. That same month, the 3rd GRBD served as a reserve within the 1st Ukrainian Front.

26 First appearing in Kiev in November 1943, the 13th Breakthrough Artillery Division remained in Stavka's reserve for the duration of the war. Placed into Konev's front in late spring of 1944, in June 1944 the 13th Breakthrough Artillery consisted of such units: 42nd Light Artillery, 47th Howitzer, 88th Heavy Howitzer, 91st Heavy Howitzer, 101st Heavy Howitzer and the 17th Rocket Barrage Brigade.

27 Formed in March 1943 in Moscow's region as the 17th Artillery Division, that same month the 17th Artillery served with the 8th Army. With the inclusion of the 97th Heavy Howitzer and the 108th Super Heavy Howitzer Brigades, the 17th Artillery Division was redesignated as the 17th Breakthrough Artillery Division. From August 1943, it fought in Orel, Kiev, Zhytomyr, and served in the Korsun-Shevchenkiv's'kyi Operation. In the spring of 1944, Stavka assigned the 17th Breakthrough Artillery into Konev's 1st Ukrainian Front. Further redesignations took place but in June 1944, it consisted of the 37th Light Artillery, 39th Gun Artillery, 108th Heavy Howitzer Artillery, and the 22nd Rocket Barrage Brigades.

28 To cite as an example, approximately 40 percent of the 38th Army's infantry was composed of "booty Ukrainians." (See Ziemke's *From Stalingrad to Berlin*, p. 279). But according to the Red Army Order of Battle, in March 1944, 80 percent of its infantry was composed of "booty Ukrainians." (See page 55). Although of course various sources will cite various figures, it may be correctly stated that no less than 50 percent of the 38th Army's

infantry was composed of "booty Ukrainians" prior to the Soviet offensive of 13 July. And during the fighting, it is known that other armies, such as the 60th Army, replenished its ranks with conscripts which received nothing more than a rifle, a pair of army pants and jacket and fifty to one hundred rounds of ammunition. With no training whatsoever, the terrified conscripts were thrown in to reinforce units depleted by combat casualties.

29 Directed by General Abukomov, penal battalions were found in every Soviet rifle division and most armor and mechanized corps also contained one or two penal battalions. Organized from nonpolitical criminal conscripts, the units were led by volunteer NKVD police officers. For those who volunteered to lead such units, the rewards were very high. Its police officer commanders, however, wore the uniform of regular army officers. Possibly this was used as a disguise but regardless, most (if not all), knew it was the NKVD, and not the army, who supervised the units. Penal battalion conscripts received no training, and were only armed prior to an attack. Their sole purpose was to draw enemy fire and exposed their positions. Promised vodka, loot, and the enemy's women, penal battalions surged forward under the NKVD police coercion. Unless ordered otherwise, penal battalions never took prisoners. Seriously wounded or injured penal personnel were always shot by their officers or NKVD personnel.

30 To cite as an example, at Pidhirtsi and Knyazhe, Soviet troops in camouflaged smocks were encountered. Either these were airborne, specialized troops or both. If so, they possibly were from the 2nd Guards and 6th Guards Airborne Divisions which, in the spring of 1944, were identified in the Dniester River area with the 1st Ukrainian Front.

31 Personal discussion with Yuriy Krokhmaliuk, Ostap Velyn, and various other former Divisional soldiers. According to L.Z., of 12 prisoners captured south of Brody, one older "soldier" reported to his captors that his son was serving in the Division (L.Z., "Remembrances, 38 Years...", *Visti*, 1982, No. 5-6, pp. 54-55). And according to S.M., "Spomyny, Horiachi Dni Pid Brodamy" (Remembrances: The Hot Days at Brody), *Visti*, 1979, No. 3, pp. 43-44, "from Kamyanets-Podilskyi a number of Ukrainians, many well into their 40's, were also captured (by Divisional troops). In fear, these "booty Ukrainians" pleaded to remain with their Ukrainian captors for they feared death or mistreatment if handed over to the Germans." According to Yuriy Krokhmaliuk, "whenever at Brody our soldiers captured any Ukrainians forcefully pressed into the Soviet army, they released the poor and miserable looking conscripts to return home. In some cases, medical care, food, and other provisions were even provided to the returnees."

32 Myron Baran never fully recovered from his experiences. Months of intense inner reflection and visits to the chaplain did help, but the pain obviously remains to this day. "The day I die, is the day I will forget!" is how Myron explained it.

33 Raised in October 1941 in the North Caucasian Military District, the 359th Rifle Division fought in November 1941 with the 28th Army. In December 1941, it was held in reserve status with the 39th Army. In December 1941, it was committed into Rzhev (northern Russia) and the Kalinin Front and saw action in both places. In January 1944, the 359th was moved into Ukraine and placed into the 47th Independent Rifle Corps; in turn, this corps served in both the 40th and 6th Guards Tank Army's and fought at Korsun-Cherkasy. In July 1944 and 359th, still within the 47th Independent Corps, was placed in the 1st Ukrainian Front's reserve. At first, the 359th was held in reserve. But with the intensification of the fighting in Koltiv and its area, the 359th was committed to reinforce the breakout forces.

TUESDAY, 18 JULY:

On the morning of the 18th, the Division's 14th Field Replacements Battalion was forced to withdraw. Positioned slightly north of Busk on the Buh River, until that morning, the Battalion had only trained. On one or two occasions, enemy aircraft did make brief appearances but excluding that, nothing had occurred. As the Battalion's soldiers queued for breakfast, the rattle of machine-gun fire was suddenly heard. "Wehrmacht's already training," muttered a German NCO as he munched on his cereal.

But suddenly, the thunder of a tank's cannon and the abrupt appearance of enemy armor exiting out of the forest's treeline announced a vary grim situation to the men.

"RATATATATATA!!!"

All scrambled for cover. Those who earlier had cursed their misfortune for being assigned to a unit which had remained inactive while the Division was in combat now cursed the enemy appearance and wished that the Soviets had never arrived. Although armed, many of the men lacked ammunition for their weapons and only a few had any anti-armor weaponry.

Fortunately for the replacement battalion, the Soviets were not interested in a fight and as quickly as they had arrived, they moved on. Immediately, the replacement battalion notified Divisional headquarters (now located almost 2 miles west of Pidhirtsi) by radio of its encounter and, along with its commander, Kleinow, and some rear area German units, the battalion quickly withdrew westward.¹

When Rybalko's tankers linked up with Baranov's mechanized corps in the vicinity of the railway town of Krasne and Busk (approximately 30 miles east of Lviv and 40 miles southwest of Brody), in addition to achieving a successful breakout, its commanders, whether they realized it or not, were ahead of an army corps that not only was being battered, but one that was now encircled.²

One of the simple, golden rules of warfare is "Don't get yourself surrounded." But if a unit should find itself in that unfortunate position, its options are either to remain in its current location until relieved and rescued, or conduct an immediate breakout from encirclement. Needless to say, a decision must be made immediately.

In the case of the Galician Division, as well as the remainder of the 13th Corps, a breakout was the only option available. This was especially true in view of the fact that both the 1st and 4th Panzer Armies were beginning to fall back. While the 4th Panzer would certainly assist the Corps in its breakout

attempt, realistically speaking, the brunt of the effort had to be conducted by the encircled Corps.

A breakout is strictly an offensive operation undertaken by those surrounded in order to escape. A force is considered totally encircled only when its supply, reinforcement and ground evacuation routes are completely severed by an advancing enemy. The purpose of conducting a breakout is to allow the encircled forces to re-establish contact with their respective armies, to avoid destruction and capture, to regain freedom of movement, and to survive for future operations. Realistically speaking, survival was of the essence for the Galician Division, more so than for the remainder of the Corps.

When a force is initially surrounded, this does not mean that it is necessarily surrounded by a vastly superior enemy strength, nor that it will be immediately struck. Because Soviet military doctrine stresses momentum, speed, and deep penetration, its advancing forces frequently bypass a surrounded force and leave it behind to be dealt with by the secondary, or "mopping-up," forces. Yet in order to breakout, a surrounded force must deceive the enemy as regards to its composition, strength, and intent; conduct a successful reconnaissance; organize breakout, support, flank, and rear guard forces; organize a security force which can be rushed to any critical sectors; and concentrate sufficient combat firepower at its breakout points. Speed is of the essence, and all of the above must be accomplished with no wasted time.

At the time of its encirclement, the "Brody Pocket" covered a sizable distance. It covered an oval shaped area running from the northwest to the southeast of 25 miles, and from its southern center at Bilyi Kamin to the north at Turie, approximately 14 miles with an average distance (from east to west) of about the same.³ According to Soviet sources, eight divisions were encircled,⁴ but others cite differently.⁵ Inside the Brody Pocket, General Hauffe's 13th Corps was made up of these units: General Oscar Lasch's 349th Infantry Division; General Georg Lindemann's 361st Infantry Division; Major General Johann Netwig's 454th Field Security Division; General Fritz Freitag's 14th "Galicia" Division der Waffen SS; and General Wolfgang Lange's Corps Abteilung C (Formation C), consisting of the 182nd, 217th and 339th Infantry Divisions. If one takes into consideration that the whole of Formation C equalled a strength of no more than one division, then Veryha's estimate of four German divisions and one Ukrainian (Galician) Division is correct. Various sources have cited the 13th Corps' strength from no less than 32,000 to 40,000⁶ but at the time of encirclement, its strength was already reduced.

Regardless of the exact strength, on 18 July, about 7,000 of these men were from the Galician Division,⁷ the majority of whom were holding and defending the southeastern section of the pocket within an area from east to

west of almost 8 miles and ranging approximately 6-7 miles for north to south. Within this area, heavy defensive fighting continued for Koltiw, Sasiv, Bilyi Kamin, and the overlooking heights of Pidhirtsi. A town located on higher terrain with distant views, Pidhirtsi held the key to either victory or defeat. If held in enemy hands, Soviet forces would not only be able to have a vantage point from which to direct heavy firepower down upon the Division, but for that matter, upon the entire 13th Corps. Concurrently, this higher terrain could (and was) utilized by the division for target acquisition and flank security for its own defense as well as that of the 13th Corps. As a result, for a couple of days, Pidhirtsi repeatedly changed hands.⁸

Apart from the town, an old castle also stood on the hill. Built by Galicia's ancient rulers to repulse Mongol and Tatar invasions, for centuries the castle was contested by many defenders and attackers. Charging up the slope towards the castle with an explosive packet in his hand and an MP38/40 in his right hand, combat engineer Vasyl Soroka* was amazed that no one ever seemed to learn anything from centuries of warfare. Rushing to a wall of concertina wire, Vasyl dropped to his knees, lay flat on the ground, carefully placed the packet into the wire, and set its fuse. Observing several huge boulders to his rights, Vasyl first rolled towards them, and then leaped behind them for cover.

"VAROOM!" A massive explosion rocked the wire. Removing his last remaining smoke grenade, Vasyl popped its fuse, and hurtled it as far as he could beyond the wire. Then, he sprayed 9mm slugs into a huge hole in the castle's wall. Lifting his weapon upwards, he emptied the remainder of the magazine into the upper part of the ancient structure.

Thick clouds of dense smoke heralded to the grenadiers that the wire was breached. "SLAVA!" Charging over the crest of the hill, the grenadiers scrambled through the gap. To cover them as best as possible, Vasyl quickly inserted another 9mm magazine into his MP and sprayed a Soviet soldier who was attempting to hurtle a hand grenade downward from the upper part of the castle. Falling backward into the castle, his grenade exploded inside. "Hopefully," thought Vasyl, "the blast took out a few more."

"SLAVA! SLAVA!" Reaching the solid five-foot thick wall at the base of the castle, grenadiers hurtled several grenades inside. Following the blasts, the grenadiers immediately rushed in. Now, the battle for the castle would be concluded with close-in combat. And such hand-to-hand combat, between Soviet paratroopers, guardsmen and NKVD personnel versus the 14th Waffen SS, frequently took a turn for the worse. Weapons were handled as clubs; handguns were fired at point-blank range; and knives, daggers, bayonets, as well as bare hands, frequently decided the outcome.

Throughout the whole ordeal, the Division's communications, supply, support, veterinarian and medical units worked long hours under tremendous pressure. Waffen-Untersturmfuhrer Doctor Volodymyr Kischko, along with other members of his veterinarian company, constantly went up and down from one column to another inspecting, treating, and tending to the Division's horses. In addition, Dr. Kischko and Stefan Balko, the company's medic and a former veterinary student, eased many soldiers' psychological strain. Losing a beloved animal is always painful, but to lose an animal in combat is all the more so. On more than one occasion, both Kischko and Balko had to console a grieving soldier as a pistol or rifle was fired to end the suffering of a wounded or injured horse or mule.

The Division's communications personnel constantly strove to establish, re-establish, and repair communications. Constantly on the move, they laid many miles of wire, repaired radios, and directed communications by various means. Especially compounding the problem was the fact that at first, numerous artillery and bomb blasts blew sections of wire, which needed to be repaired or replaced immediately. But with the disappearance of the communications commander, Wolfgang Wuttig, and increased enemy pressure along with Soviet infiltrators and guerrillas who began to cut wires and destroy communications, the situation only worsened. At Brody, on more than one occasion, as a communications soldier "walked" the wire to find a break, he would come face-to-face with enemy personnel. The Division's communications, however, had begun to break down before the encirclement.

The Division's engineers worked around the clock under tough conditions, performing numerous offensive and defensive missions. Especially in the area of Kryhiv, Lukavets', Koltiw, Peniaky, and Huta Peniats'ka, where the 29th and 31st Regiments were withdrawing under constant enemy pressure, engineers laid many mines and obstacles. As best as they could, they assisted friendly units in their withdrawals. As combat soldiers, Divisional engineers tore apart hastily constructed enemy positions, attacked enemy armor, and supported Divisional counter offensives. Attacking an enemy tank with a teller anti-armor mine, engineer Ivan Koval successfully scrambled aboard the tank, placed the device underneath its turret, and rolled off the tank's rear deck. But as he stood up to dash away, the tank's turret turned in his direction and sprayed him with fire. The moment Koval fell, a blast tore the turret apart.

The Division's workshop company, under Waffen-Hauptsturmfuhrer Leonid Martyniuk and Theodore Vynnyk, repaired equipment, radios, vehicles, wagons, and artillery; frequently, this was accomplished under enemy aerial and ground attack. The fact that the workshop company was destroyed attests to the difficult conditions it encountered.

Operating along with the Division's repair company, were its food, bakery, and meat butcher sections. Never would Waffen-Untersturmfuhrer Shuhan forget how at the end of a day, after repulsing another Soviet thrust, he would turn around and see, standing a short distance behind, a field cook decked out in a white apron and even, a white chef's hat. Cupping his hands around his mouth, the cook loudly announced, "Boys, dinner time!" As the goulash wagon was ready to serve a meal, it was apparent that while Shuhan's company was fighting, the cook had been setting up to feed the company. Until surrounded, the bakery, butcher, and food platoons held their own. But they began to collapse as food supplies failed to reach the corps and its divisions. In the upcoming breakout, its personnel fought as regular infantry.

Virtually unknown is the fact that the Division's one or two "Feldgen-darmerie", or military police platoons, were destroyed at Brody. This occurred one night while they were defending the Division's headquarters. In World War II on the eastern front, it was not uncommon for a divisional, corps, or even an army headquarters to come under attack. Specially designated Soviet soldiers or guerrillas (and in some cases both) were frequently assigned the mission of destroying a headquarters and killing its personnel in order to create havoc by crippling a unit from within.⁹ Throughout the night of 18 and 19 July, military police personnel, along with Divisional headquarters personnel, fought a battle with one such specialized force. At daybreak, approximately 30 dead enemy personnel, all armed but some in civilian attire, lay around the headquarters. Among them lay a woman; it was believed that she had been the group's commander.

Under the direction of medical officers such as Drs. Koldewskyi, Panasiuk, Farion, Prokopovych, Tymchyshyn, Mykhailo Hryhorchuk, Zenon Lokach, Roman Turko, and Anatole Pyrozhytskyi, the Division's medical personnel worked around the clock to provide medical care to wounded and injured personnel. The fact that the Division's hospital was clearly identifiable by Red Cross symbols did not deter any attacks against it. Throughout the battle, the Division's medical personnel and its ambulances were constantly fired upon. At Brody, the Division's two ambulance platoons, along with its personnel, were destroyed. To prevent total destruction, the Division's hospital was relocated to Pochapy by 18 July.¹⁰

Never faltering from their mission, the chaplains gave their best. Frequently, they were observed walking over a battlefield to assist those in need. And later, many a man attributed his survival to a chaplain's friendly smile, assurance and support. But as with the other units, the chaplains also paid a price. At Brody, Chaplain Vasil Leshchyshyn was killed;¹¹ Ivan Durbak was

reported missing and presumed killed;¹² and Josyf Kladochnyi was reported as killed but in actuality, he was wounded and captured.¹³

By the end of 18 July, the Division's 29th Regiment, with its commander wounded and its leading personnel dead or missing, ceased to exist as an effective force. In the vicinity of Pidhirtsi, the 29th's staff made a valiant stand alongside the regiment. Of a strength of 275 personnel assigned to the 29th's regimental headquarters company, only 7 were accounted for after Brody.¹⁴ All surviving 29th personnel were incorporated into the 30th and 31st Regiments.¹⁵

In the early evening hours of 18 July, the OUN lost one of its most effective operatives - Ostap Rudakevych. Born in Lviv, Rudakevych entered the Polish Army in 1931 where he served in its artillery. He also graduated from an NCO academy and several specialist courses.

Following his discharge from the Polish Army, Rudakevych returned home. He became active in a Ukrainian cultural revival movement and joined the OUN. At first he served as an OUN courier, but later in Cracow, he began to provide the OUN's Cracow based operatives military lectures.

Threatened with arrest, Rudakevych fled to France. There, he obtained employment with a Ukrainian newspaper, the "Ukrainske Slovo" (Ukrainian Word). Shortly after the outbreak of the German-Soviet War, Rudakevych returned to Galicia. Renewing his activity with the OUN, he was posted to an OUN cell in the eastern Ukrainian city of Kharkiv where he conducted anti-Nazi propaganda and helped to smuggle and conceal Ukrainians sought by Nazi authorities. In the spring of 1943, he left Kharkiv for Galicia to enlist in the Division. Armed with a false identity, Rudakevych entered the Division under the alias of "Andriy Levchyk." Following recruit training, he was dispatched to an artillery school in Beneschau, Czechoslovakia. Returning to the Division as an honor graduate, Rudakevych deployed to the front as an artillery observer. But on 18 July, as "Andriy Levchyk" proceeded to inspect an observation point, a communist sniper killed him.

1 Krokhmaliuk, "Pol'ovyi Zapasnyi Kurin Pid Brodamy" (The Field Replacement Unit At Brody), *Visti*, 1952, February-March, No. 2-3 (16) (17), p. 12. That morning, Krokhmaliuk was one of those whose breakfast was interrupted by the appearance of enemy armor.

2 According to Panov, operational depth was achieved toward night-fall on 18 July; additionally, "some units of the 3rd Tank Army reached the region of Drevlyany, where they made contact with General Baranov's cavalry-motorized group and completed the encirclement of eight enemy divisions in the region of Brody." Panov, *L'vov-Sandomir Operation*, p. 376; SSSR 1941-1945, p. 592. By this time, Soviet forces had advanced approximately 30-50 miles. See also *Marshal Zhukov*, p. 164; General S. P. Platonov, *Vtoraia Mirovaya*

Voina, 1939-1945 (Moscow: 1958), pp. 598-600; Ziemke's, *From Stalingrad to Berlin*, p. 322; and *Velikaia Otechestvennaia Voina*, p. 364.

3 Soviet sources reveal the pocket encompassed such an area: from the west to the east, 15.5 miles; from north to south, an average of 13 miles. The pocket lay north of the Buh River, with the village of Bilyi Kamin (on the Buh River), at the base of the pocket. According to Colonel V. Kravetz, the 13th Corps was surrounded within such an area: Ozhydiv, Oles'ko, Huta, Maydan, Opaky, Ruda, Khyl'chyts'i, Kniazhe, and Krasne. However, as a result of intensified enemy pressure, by 19/20 July, the corps' area would shrink considerably. Now, 13th Corps base would lie adjacent to Bilyi Kamin. Colonel Kravetz, *Surmach*, (1964), No. 1-2 (25-26), p. 7.

4 Panov, p. 332; *Marshal Zhukov*, Vol. 2, p. 285; and *Marshal Zhukov* (Moscow: Planeta Publishers, 1987), p. 164; *СССР 1941-1945*, p. 592.

5 Ziemke, *From Stalingrad to Berlin*, p. 322, cites five German divisions and the Waffen SS "Galicia" Division. Yuriy Krokhmaliuk "Materialy Do Istorii 1-oi Ukrains'koi Divizii" (Sources for the 1st Ukrainian Division) cites seven German divisions. Krokhmaliuk's figure is correct if Lange's "Korps Abteilung C's" three divisions and the Galician Division is included in the numerical figure. (See *Visti*, 1978, No. 3 p. 35). Veryha, *Along the Roads*, p. 186, cites after several days of heavy fighting, the Soviet units on 18 July encircled the 13th Army Corps consisting of four German divisions and the fifth, the Ukrainian Division "Galicia." Robert Goralski, *World War II Almanac, 1939-1945* (N.Y.: Putnam's Sons, 1981), pp. 333-334, cites that in Western Ukraine in 1944, five divisions were trapped west of Brody.

6 Seaton, *The Russo-German War*, p. 447; and *The Fall of Fortress Europe*, p. 138, cited 13th Corps strength from 35,000 to 40,000. Undoubtedly, the figure Seaton utilizes was that of 13th Corps prior to the Soviet movement of 13 July. At the time of encirclement, no less than a third of the corps strength was already eliminated. (Personal discussion with Yuriy Khokhmaliuk).

7 Krokhmaliuk, *The Glow*, p. 99. In a personal discussion with Yuriy, the above figure was corroborated.

8 According to Ren, the moment the 29th Regiment's two battalions advanced to Pidhirtsi, they came under heavy and constant enemy attacks. Yet, on 17 and 18 July, against heavy Soviet attacks reinforced with artillery and armor, the 29th held its own. But as its casualties mounted, the 29th was forced to withdraw. Between the morning hours of 6 and 8 a.m., 18 July, the 29th began to retire towards Oles'ko. (Ren, *My Life's Mosaic*, pp. 178-179). Ren, however, does not provide an exact time of date of Pidhirtsi's fall. But his account is substantiated by former Divisional Chaplain Levenetz. According to Levenetz, "throughout 17 and 18 July the Soviets advanced all day and night." Chaplain Levenetz stated the 29th's 1st Battalion was to commence its withdrawal on 24 hours (midnight) 18 July, and the 2nd Battalion was to withdraw four hours later commencing at 4 a.m. Levenetz, *Visti*, 1951, No. 7 (9), p. 5.

9 Presently, these elite troops are known as spetsnatz. "Spetsialneye Naznachenneye Voiska" (Specially Designated Troops). Missions include the elimination of high-ranking military and/or civilian personnel.

10 To cite an example of the difficult conditions the doctors laboured under: after examining the 29th Regiment's 1st Battalion's 1st Company commander, Waffen-Obersturmführer Lishchynsky, Dr. Volodymyr Prokpovych concluded that to save the commander's life, he would have to amputate the shattered right arm to retard further gangrene. With shells exploding nearby, and lacking proper medical supplies, Prokopovych conducted the operation. Following the operation, Lishchynsky was placed on an auto transport with several other wounded. He reached safety and survived. "Surgeon Volodymyr Prokopovych, *Visti Kombatanta*", 1981, No. 1, pp. 65-66.

11 Chaplain Leschyshyn's death was confirmed.

12 Although Chaplain Durbak was classified as "killed-in-action," his "death" was never officially verified. Serving with the Division's medical unit, the Chaplain was last seen assisting the wounded at Pochapy, where the battered medical battalion reestablished itself for one last time. Because Chaplain Durbak never reentered the Division (or the UPA) in the aftermath of Brody, it was assumed that he was either killed in the last hours of fighting or, in the event the more seriously wounded were ordered to be slaughtered after the field hospital was overrun, the possibility exists the Chaplain, in the process of protecting the wounded, was himself murdered. In the event this occurred, his body would have been thrown along with the others into one large unmarked grave.

But in the 1950's, stories began to surface in the west that the former chaplain not only survived, but was practicing his faith deep in the Carpathian Mountains. Chaplain Durbak was also reported as being seen in Siberia near China's northern border, as well as in various regions of Ukraine. Of course, the possibility exists that Chaplain Durbak might have ended up in the Gulag system; if so, he might have been moved around to various camps and regions which explains the various different sightings. A rumor also emerged in the late 1980's that Chaplain Durbak was living in Ukraine under an alias, but stories also surfaced that in approximately 1991, an aged - and senile - man passed away in the Carpathian Mountains. Prior to his death, this man claimed to have been a priest who witnessed combat on the eastern front.

13 Chaplain Kladochnyi's entire ordeal will be presented in the book *"Between Two Hammers: Galicia's Iron Lions and Their Quest for Freedom."*

14 Vasyl Sirskyi, "Molod Druhoii Svitovoi Viyny" (The Youth of the Second World War), *Visti Kombatanta*, 1988, No. 1, p. 79. Although some ended up in the UPA while others successfully evaded capture by hiding out, the majority perished. In a personal discussion with Yuriy Khokhamliuk, the former Divisional staff officer acknowledged that the 29th Regiment took the heaviest losses of the three regiments.

15 After Deern was wounded, regimental command fell to Deern's adjutant, SS-Sturmbannführer Weiss. But in the aftermath of World War II, Chaplain Levenetz cited Deern's adjutant was a Sturmbannführer named Dietz. Levenetz, "Z Arkhivu 1-oi U.D." (From the Archives of the 1st Ukrainian Division), *Visti*, 1951, No. 7.

WEDNESDAY, 19 JULY:

Historically speaking, 19 July may be cited as the date of the German collapse.¹ By this date, AGNU had no chance of containing the Soviet breakout. Konev's forces were in full motion, and the entire momentum was in Soviet hands.

The 13th Corps immediately planned on a breakout. To accomplish this, the Corps' perimeter was withdrawn closer to the Buh River, major assault groups were formed, remaining supplies quickly distributed, all unnecessary supplies and equipment were destroyed, and blocking positions were established. Simultaneously, as the Corps was to move southwest, the remnants of the 8th Panzer Division, now commanded by von Mellenthin, along with elements of the 20th Panzergrenadier, were to attack northeastward.²

Severe problems, however, immediately set in. To begin with, communications problems not only developed within the encircled Corps, but a lack of effective communications prevented General Balck from establishing proper contact with Hauffe. Von Mellenthin, meanwhile, having personally briefed; the 8th Panzer's regimental commanders on the physical and psychological importance of withdrawing the 13th Corps out of the pocket, and proposing to attack at dawn on 18 July, was shocked to learn that instead of advancing, certain commanders were withdrawing.³ Von Mellenthin immediately dismissed certain commanders and personally re-organized a relief. But critical time had been lost.

At the same time that AGNU and the 4th Panzer Corps was planning to extradite the 13th Corps, the Soviets were quickly reacting to the whole situation. When on 18 July they realized that a whole Corps was surrounded, they immediately decided to destroy it. Whether this decision arose out of the fact that one of the surrounded divisions was Ukrainian, or because the 13th Corps still posed a threat to further Soviet thrusts to the west, or because of the Soviet military strategy which advocated the destruction of any sizable surrounded force, or a combination of the above reasons, Konev's front (with Stavka's full approval) moved in for the kill.⁴

Realizing this, the 13th Corps hastened its preparations. No novice to encirclement, General Lange quickly dispatched reinforced patrols west and southwest to determine breakout routes and terrain conditions, and to establish contact with friendly forces. In the meantime, the Galician Division was holding the Corps' northern, and part of its southeastern, sector. But late that night, at approximately 10:00 p.m., the Division lost Pidhirtsi when Soviet troops, shouting "HURRAH!" poured into Pidhirtsi's flaming ruins on the outskirts of which the 29th Regiment's 2nd Battalion, and other Divisional units were quickly reorganizing themselves.

With the Corps' withdrawal to the southern sector, Soviet forces crossed the Krasne-Brody railway line north of Oles'ko, and began to strike the bulge eastward from the vicinity of Krasne and Busk. Breaking through, they not only created chaos within the center of the corps pocket, but also reinforced those units pressing against the Division from the north. To make matters worse, on 19 July, another Soviet rifle division, the 359th, was inserted against the pocket.³ Crossing the Buh, it struck northward into the Division's southern salient.

By now, the Division was not only exposed to the danger of military destruction but also to something which every commander fears on a modern day battlefield - fatigue. And on a modern day battlefield, exhaustion, stress and hunger, if not controlled, can destroy units just as quickly, if not sooner, than enemy activity.

According to Heike, surviving unit commanders (who by 19 July had themselves reached exhaustion levels) began to call in that they were unable to hold on to their positions much longer. It became apparent that a way had to be found to control fatigue, yet the volunteers continued to resist. Calling upon their deepest inner reserves, they found that extra strength needed to carry them through. Whether this was attributable to training, fear, mission awareness, or because the Division was fighting in its homeland, can only be surmised.

Linking up at Oles'ko from the north and west, Konev's armor immediately struck to overrun the town. Capturing Oles'ko would enable Soviet forces to outflank the Division's troops battling in Pidhirtsi's vicinity, approximately 4.5 miles to the east. But hopes of a rapid capture quickly faded as Olesko's streets and the rolling fields adjacent to the two quickly turned into an inferno of burning armor as one enemy tank after another went up in flames. Rushing into Oles'ko with PAK guns, panzerfausts, panzerschreks, teller mines and even Molotov cocktails, the Division's fusiliers once again demonstrated more than enough tenacity and bravery against superior odds. At point-blank range, fusiliers stalked and engaged Soviet infantry and armor. Frequently, their technique was as follows: well-camouflaged fusiliers would allow the enemy tanks to pass through them. Once the tanks were engaged by those further behind, the bypassed fusiliers would "hunt" the enemy's armor from behind. This anti-armor "hunting" technique, largely developed and perfected by the Waffen SS on the eastern front, proved to be very effective. Needless to say, it demanded composure, nerve, and inner strength to operate behind and amongst enemy armor. But within the Division, Bristol's fusiliers were noted for that.

"RATATATATATA!!!" "RATATATATATATA!!!" "BOOM!!"
Rocking on its suspension, its barrel emitting smoke, the T-34 prepared to send another round in Shuhan's direction. "BOOM!" As another red-hot tank shell

flew no more than three feet over his head, Shuhan could actually feel its heat but in a sense, was relieved the tank was unloading its munitions on him, and not on his men. Squeezing his body a close to the ground as possible, Shuhan braced for more. "RATATATATATATA!!!" "Ping, ping, ping, ping, ping, ping, ping!!!" More hot rounds tore up the ground ahead of Shuhan or deflated upwards from his helmet. "BOOM!" Another red-hot round flew over. "That's right, you son-of-bitches, waste another round!" As the round exploded behind Shuhan, raining more earth and debris upon him, he felt assured that his position was actually safe. Shuhan knew the T-34 could not depress its barrel anymore, while distance and angle made it difficult for the gunner to strike Shuhan.

Ceasing to fire, the tank stood in place. An eerie silence filled the air, but not for long. Revving its engine, the tank moved slowly backwards. Shuhan immediately knew that by moving back, the behemoth's gunner would at last be able to fire a round squarely into him. "O.K. Gotta Move!" Shuhan's first thought was to just race across the field, and chance it. But deep down, Shuhan knew the golden rule: "If you dash for cover, no more than five seconds. If you need more than that, stay put, or look for a closer spot." And Shuhan was not going to break that rule, especially after witnessing how two soldiers had been killed by bursts of enemy fire after they had abandoned a relatively safe position in order to run a short distance. Spotting a natural semi-depression enlarged by a heavy mortar or artillery round, Shuhan reasoned it would not take him more than three or four seconds to race for it. As well, by moving forward and actually into the tank's direction, Shuhan would once again deny the tank's gunner the ability to further depress his barrel to strike him. Tensing his body, Shuhan leaped and ran forward. As he ran, his right hand firmly gripped an anti-armor grenade and his left hand firmly gripped an MP38/40 and the strap of a small rucksack. "One second, two seconds, three seconds, four seconds, HIT!" "RATATATATATATATA!!!" The moment Shuhan plopped to the ground's depression, enemy bullets flew over. Chuckling to himself, Shuhan was delighted that the tank's crew was having such a hard time in eliminating him. Also, he knew that the tank did not dare move forward, for its crew feared that the fusilier with his grenade and possibly a teller mine inside the bag, could easily devastate them. "If I can just hang on!" thought Shuhan, "I'll beat this son-of-a-bitch yet!"

"BOOM!" Another round screamed over Shuhan. "That's right, you Leninist whores, just keep on firing!" And so it went, for several hours; yet not once throughout the ordeal did the almost middle-aged fusilier panic, or doubt his success. Shuhan's body, acting in concert with his mind, moved as if he were still a youth, and he prided himself on the fact that due to his actions, his men escaped harm.

Shortly before dusk, Shuhan heard the roar of the behemoth's engine. Backing up several feet, the tank turned around. The moment it did, Shuhan raced to his left, seeking cover in another depression. Spying a small wooded clump, he ran for it, and crawled in. Shuhan's camouflaged jacket and trousers blended perfectly with the terrain. Lying still, he only listened. With darkness setting in, Shuhan pulled out his thermos bottle, sipped some coffee, and consumed an iron ration. deciding to sleep, he instructed his mind to awaken him at 3 a.m. After placing his MP on his chest with a finger on its trigger for instant action, Shuhan fell into a deep and restful sleep.

After a quick meeting with his divisional generals and a number of high-ranking personnel, Hauffe approved a southwesterly breakout. To achieve maximum success, a slight re-organization took place. The breakout, which was to take no more than three days, was to follow such a plan: Corps Abteilung C (now redesignated as Kampfgruppe or 'Battlegroup C' but still commanded by Lange), would also include a large part of Lindemann's 361st Infantry Division. Along with Lasch's 349th Infantry Division, Battlegroup C would secure the town of Bilyi Kamin (adjacent to the Buh River), and overrun Hill 366. Continuing to advance south/southwest, a river- crossing site would be secured at Pochapy on the Zolochiv River; immediately afterward, Hill 257 (approximately 1.5 miles southwest of Pochapy and Kniazhe) was to be secured for flank protection.

At the same time this would be occurring, Lasch's 349th Infantry Division (adjacent to Corps Abteilung C's left flank), would take Sasiv (south of the Buh River and almost adjacent to Hill 334) and Hill's 334 and 274 (Hill 274 was immediately north of Khylychyski) between the Buh and Zolochivka Rivers to ensure flank protection and to expand the breakout corridor. Simultaneously, as the breakout assault forces were moving, Netwig's 454th Field Security Division would be holding the Corps' right flank and part of its rear. Within the corps' inner perimeter would be assembled the supply and service units, Corps headquarters, and several battlegroups from Lindemann's 361st to be rushed to whatever critical sectors needed reinforcement.⁶ Once the breakout was achieved, Task Force C and Lasch's 349th would move first, followed by the 454th and the Galician Division bringing up the rear guard. Through such a "funnel," it was hoped that by the second day, Battlegroup C and Lasch's 349th would link up with Balck's 48th Panzer Corps on the Lviv-Ternopil Highway between the towns of Liats'ke and Zolochiv; on the 3rd day (but hopefully still on the second), the corps' two remaining divisions, along with its supply and services, would also pass through the "funnel" and the highway into the hands of the 48th Panzer Corps.

At no time was this decision based on subsequent Ukrainian criticisms that "this was a plan to deliberately leave the Division behind in order to enable the Germans to escape." Additionally, it must be noted that those German forces conducting the breakout had a mission just as essential (and in the initial breakout phase possibly more so), as those holding the flanks and rear. Considering as well that the 13th Corps would be fighting to the southwest and the Galician Division was in the pocket's eastern/ southeastern sector, under such circumstances there was no possibility for the surrounded and pressured corps to conduct a major re-positioning. For military reasons, it was only logical for the Galician Division to fall in last.

13th Corps attack hour - 3:30 a.m., 20 July.

1 *CCCP, 1941-1945*, p. 592. In a personal discussion with Yuriy Krokhamliu, it is generally recognized that after 19 July, AGNU's chances of containing the Soviet offensive had ceased to exist.

2 Heike, *English ed.*, p. 47; cites the 8th Panzer and the 20th Panzergrenadier were brought up for an attack to assist the 13th Corps. However, Heike indicates that increasing enemy pressure forced the two divisions to withdraw. (*Ibid*). Hence, their efforts to assist the encircled corps in the long run proved largely ineffective. *Mellenthin*, pp. 286-287, cites only the 8th Panzer as being used. In addition to the above forces, it was later reported (but never officially confirmed), that a reinforced battlegroup was hastily raised around the 18th SS "Horst Wessel" Panzergrenadier Division's 40th SS Panzergrenadier Regiment to assist in the defense of Lviv. (*Klietman*, p. 215). Commanded by SS-Surbannfuhrer Ernst Schafer, little is known of its efforts, but allegedly, a "Kampfgruppe Schafer" did assist the 8th Panzer in extraditing the 13th Corps. See also *Bender and Taylor*, Vol. 4, pp. 171-172. According to *Ready*, p. 370, several German units, such as the 18th SS Division and an understrength Waffen SS French assault brigade, were utilized to assist the 13th Corps breakout.

3 In his memoirs, von Mellenthin (p. 286), cites the evening of 17 July as the date when he attempted to reach the encircled corps by radio, 17 July as the date of his briefing, and 18 July as the date of the attack to relieve 13th Corps. Although von Mellenthin is correct in his sequence of events, he erred on his dates, and is off by one day. All sources cite 18 July as the date of the encirclement.

4 In addition to using freshly inserted divisions such as the 359th Rifle Division, various other air and ground forces, including NKVD combat police troops, attacked the encircled corps. According to Colonel Anderson, one entire tank corps from Rybalko's 3rd Guards Tank Army was committed to contain the encirclement. *SMS*, December 1986, p. 507.

5 Personal discussion with Yuriy Krokhamliuk and other members of the Division.

6 At this time, the "Galician" Division also organized its first breakout groups. These were formed in the event the escape route was sealed, or a flank needed reinforcement, or certain key terrain features needed to be retaken as the Division itself proceeded through the "funnel."

THURSDAY, 20 JULY:

Problems, however, arose well before the attack hour. Within the 13th Corps, communications were poor. To reach Balck's 48th, and AGNU, was almost impossible. And General's Lange and Lasch had no knowledge of Soviet strengths, dispositions and intents. Patrols dispatched earlier returned with limited information; what was received portrayed a grim situation. A sudden, but heavy rain turned roads into mud and swelled creeks. And the Corps' commander, General Hauffe, lay dead.¹

Assuming command of the 13th Corps, Lange was aware of the continuing Soviet effort against the Galician Division which was covering the Corps' left flank. Therefore, he dispatched some German units, initially authorized for the breakout, to assist the Division.

Prior to this breakout, a delegation of Ukrainian insurgents appeared at Freitag's headquarters with a proposal to assist the Division. What exactly was discussed, and what the UPA proposed, is not certain. The UPA most likely wanted to save the Division, but as it turned out, Freitag declined their offer. By no means, however, did the UPA totally retreat. Well before meeting with Freitag, the UPA's guerrillas had begun infiltrating the region to gather up any Divisional personnel and as much of its arms and equipment as possible.

Following a short delay, at 5:00 a.m., Battlegroup C attacked. Passing through Bilyi-Kamin and over the Buh, the corps' right wing (moving south/southwest), crossed the Zolochivka River and secured Belzets'; southeast of Bilyi-Kamin, the battlegroup's left wing fought a tough battle for Hill 366. After securing the hill and a handful of Soviet anti-tank guns, the Germans quickly turned these weapons against the Red Army. By 9:00 a.m., the initial breakout had succeeded.

With its flanks momentarily secured, the center of Battlegroup C surged forward. North of Pochapy, a tough battle ensued with Soviet armor but very quickly, no less than 20 enemy tanks were destroyed. Rushing into Pochapy to battle the entrenched Soviets, engineers scrambled to repair and reinforce the bridge. During this time, one of the corps' first supply columns, moving up to pass through the "funnel," approached Bilyi Kamin. But immediately at dawn, at approximately 7:00 a.m., Soviet aircraft appeared to blast the column. The sole defender of the column was one of the Galician Division's anti-aircraft batteries assigned to protect its own vehicles. Throughout the morning, the battery shot down no less than 25 enemy aircraft. But so intense were the air attacks that the column, as well as the anti-aircraft, were totally destroyed. Never would the anti-aircraft survivors forget the screams of the wounded as they burned alive inside their ambulances, and when Waffen-Hauptsturmführer

Porfirii Sylenko² came through Bilyi-Kamin on his way to Pochapy a couple of days later, he would never forget the twisted and burned medical column he encountered, and the awkward positions of the burned bodies lying around. In some instances, the victim slumped half-way out of a vehicle. "Rather than being called Bilyi Kamin (White Stone), this place should be called Kryvavyi Kamin (Bloody Stone)," thought Sylenko.

At approximately 12:00 o'clock, Lange's forces secured Pochapy and Hill 257; simultaneously, Battlegroup C's left wing was now fighting in and around Zhulychi. Satisfied so far with the breakout results, and determined to exploit the initial success, Lange ordered the Battlegroup's right wing (on the hill mass of 257), to take Knyazhe, while the left wing was to push towards the village of Khylychysy (on the Zolochivka River) to capture the elevation overlooking the village and river.

But whether Lange realized it or not, the corps' breakout forces were now beginning to penetrate into the Soviet rear.³ Such an advance would cut Soviet communications, endanger its supply system and effectively prevent Soviet reinforcements from assisting those units already beyond Busk. In the end, 13th Corps' breakout could actually help to stabilize the front. Realizing this threat, but still determined to destroy the corps, Konev's front immediately countered Lange's breakout. The end result was a massive head-to-head confrontation.⁴

To contain the breakout, the 1st Ukrainian Front's air forces flew one massive sortie after another. So vicious were the air attacks that in the annals of the German-Soviet War, seldom were such air attacks experienced. These attacks were not only directed against Corps Formation C's attacking breakout units, but were also aimed against the artillery batteries north of Bilyi Kamin supporting the breakout. Such constant and uninterrupted air attacks, combined with heavy usage of the new 80 pound shrapnel bombs compacted into bundles which exploded and hurtled shrapnel with devastating effect, destroyed men, horses, wagons and light vehicles within areas of 100 by 100 meters. Such explosions not only shattered units physically, but also morally. Because Germany's Luftwaffe was virtually invisible, Soviet airmen encountered only ground fire.

By 5:00 p.m., Lange's ground thrust began to die out. Although the right wing reached Knyazhe, Lange's forces encountered dug in Soviet armor, airborne, and guardist units. Difficult to extract and outflank, and lacking proper artillery and aerial support, the Germans were unable to overcome the resistance. Simultaneously, Lange's left wing and the 349th encountered heavy Soviet forces rapidly arriving from the southeast which immediately challenged Lange's forces for Zhulychi and the high ground to its north. To prevent the Soviets from recapturing Hill 366 and close the gap, certain attacking units were

immediately re-directed to assist Lange's left wing and help defend critical terrain. But of course, once this happened, the main effort was weakened. Clearly, Konev's front was determined to block any further movement.

As the villages and towns of Pidhirtsi, Bilyi Kamin, Belzets', Zhulychi, Yasenivtsi, Sasiv, Pochapy, Knyazhe, and Khylychyski burned, and as massive, violent, and high-pitched battles surged back and forth around the countryside south of the Buh and Zolochivka Rivers, the situation to the north of the Buh was just as brutal for those attempting to hold the 13th Corps' flanks and rear while simultaneously, preparing to follow the breakout forces.

North of Sasiv, the 31st Regiment began to collapse. With its regimental commander dead, and much of its officer and NCO leadership eliminated, the regiment began to fall back towards Ushnia, Cheremoshnia (two towns located directly east of Bilyi Kamin), and Bilyi Kamin. As for the battered 29th, its efforts to hold the ancient town and castle of Oles'ko, from which such defenders as Roman Ostashevsky were able to view everything to the north, south, east, and west, were proving unsuccessful. Preparing to withdraw, they buried those who earlier had fallen in shallow graves. Stefan Hladiy (4th Co., 1st Bn., 29th Rgt.), Fedir Salanyk (3rd Co., 1st Bn., 29th Rgt.), Waffen-Untersturmfuhrer Danylyshyn, Ivan Kopczuk, Peter Bacher (who hailed from Brody) - these were just some of the names placed into eternal rest.

Throughout that day, the surviving batteries of the Division's artillery continued to assist the pocket's eastern defenders and those to the north withdrawing from Oles'ko. Repeatedly, the artillerymen plastered all approaches and intersections in the vicinity of Pidhirtsi and Oles'ko to ensure a successful withdrawal, while the fusiliers covered the withdrawal.

After his personal encounter with Soviet armor, Shuhan linked up with his men. But Shuhan's hopes for an uninterrupted disengagement and withdrawal from Oles'ko to the south of Pidhirtsi suddenly ended with the sound of clanking tank treads. "Sons of bitches can't leave me alone!" thought Shuhan. As the 29th's rear guard, fusiliers, and support personnel sought cover, they observed the enemy armor circling and positioning themselves for the kill.

Fear gripped the men. Looking around, Shuhan noted that very few of the men possessed anti-armor weaponry. With only their small arms, they stood no chance.

"BOOM!" "VAROOM!" Dirt and debris rained down on the men. 'RA-TATATATATA!!!' "BOOM!" "BOOM!" "RATATATATATA!!!" Hot 7.62mm slugs tore up the ground, incoming rounds destroyed trees and tore natural cover - and men - into pieces. For Shuhan and the rest, the end seemed in sight.

Suddenly, out of the blue, a well-camouflaged light-supply truck appeared. Totally covered with brush, and driven by the fusilier battalion's German supply officer, the truck appeared just at the critical moment. Seeing earlier that the fusiliers were beginning to run out of anti-armor and small-arms ammunition, and knowing that the supply system had broken down, the German officer drove his motorcycle into the center of the pocket in search for critically needed panzerfausts and ammunition. Jumping out of the truck, the officer shouted "Boys, over here! Quickly, let's unload these crates!" and ran to the rear of the truck. Immediately, two fusiliers jumped onto its rear and tossed the truck crates onto the ground while others, along with the German officer, ripped the crates apart. In some cases, the crates were not even opened; simply, rifle butts and bare hands tore them apart. Years later, Shuhan would recall the sight of fresh blood on several of the crates.

"Here! Take two! Everyone! Take Two!" The moment a crate's cover was opened or ripped apart, its four panzerfausts disappeared. Shuhan's machinegunner, noting an MG34 on the back of the truck, reached for it. Quickly opening the boxes of ammunition adjacent to it, he linked the 100 round straps together and, fully armed, followed Shuhan.

The moment a man had a couple of panzerfausts and some extra ammunition, he raced off to engage a tank. Within minutes of the truck's arrival, Soviet tanks began to explode into flaming pyres. Well-aimed panzerfausts struck home, and a circle of burning tanks surrounded the trapped men. Of the approximately 30 tanks which had surrounded the group, Shuhan counted no less than 16 burning hulks while the remaining tanks withdrew. Cheers of joy rose from the defenders.

Standing approximately 15 feet in back of the truck amidst a pile of broken cases, the German officer, undoubtedly aware that he had done a good job, reached into his pants pocket for a pack of cigarettes. Facing the truck and looking down the road, he never saw the T-34 which suddenly popped up in his rear.

In his attempt to warn the officer, Shuhan raised his hand, but the officer only waved back. He probably felt no pain as the T-34's red-hot tank shell ripped him in half, tore into the truck, and with a massive explosion, literally blew the blazing truck a good 200 feet down the road.⁵

Curses and screams rose from the men. Angrily, one soldier after another fired his panzerfaust at the T-34. It didn't matter that the tank was totally consumed by flames - panzerfaust rounds continued to devastate the hulk.

In a small wooded grove between Bilyi Kamin and Pochapy, Lange met with the various corp's commanders. Freitag, Heike, Beyersdorff, Sylenko, Dolynskyi, and Paliiv represented the Division.⁶

Lange spoke directly and to the point. Acknowledging that the breakout forces had overrun their first objectives but then had run into problems, Lange persisted in an immediate renewed effort. He firmly believed the Soviets were rapidly gaining strength. Although admitting that a night's rest would benefit the troops, he pointed out that the lost time would enable the Soviets to further gain strength by the crack of dawn; additionally, the Red Air force would appear at the crack of dawn. Therefore, Lange hoped for a night attack to reach the Lviv highway between the towns of Yasenivtsi and Liats'ke (west of Zolochiv). Everyone supported Lange.

Lange was then briefed by the other commanders on their current situations. But when his turn came, Freitag stated he was in no position to give an adequate report because "I believe the Division is no longer under my control!" and promptly handed in his resignation.

Freitag's abrupt reply not only demonstrated a complete lack of professionalism, but rudeness and stupidity as well. A highly embarrassed Heike could not believe what he was hearing. And Lange, who was anticipating an intelligent and realistic account, frowned in disapproval and disdain upon Freitag. At this moment, Waffen-Hauptsturmführer Dolynskiy informed Freitag and the others that certain Divisional units were still available. Accepting Freitag's resignation, Lange posted him to the 13th Corps Headquarters, while Lindemann was given command of the Division.

Although for the moment such a move placed the Division under a more fit commander, as noted by Ren himself, Lindemann was hindered by the fact that he was unfamiliar with the Division, its commanders, and the full scope of its current situation.⁷ However, Ren credits Lindemann for his efforts in withdrawing the remains of the Division out of encirclement and destruction.⁸

Besides the fact that Freitag had put his commanders in a negative light, demonstrating nothing but contempt for the Division, his accusation that the Division was uncontrollable was totally false. True, within the perimeter the Division had received a pounding, but it was far from a complete annihilation. From the beginning, battered units were constantly reformed and pressed into other units,⁹ the Division's supply and support had functioned reasonably well; no major panic had set in; no desertions to the other side were reported; fusiliers were still rushing from one sector to another and another to bolster a unit or front, and the Division's remaining anti-aircraft and artillery were still operational. Throughout the whole ordeal, not one Divisional officer had approached Freitag with a suggestion to surrender. And unlike Lange and many other high-ranking officers who, with a rifle or Schmeisser in hand, personally fought and in some cases died side by side beside their men, Freitag was seldom seen.

So little, in fact, was seen of Freitag that within the pocket, a rumor emerged that Freitag had flown out of the pocket in the Division's airplane.

If Freitag harbored any doubts about the Division's ability to hold out, he should have at least consulted with Heike. If he feared his Division was collapsing, and if he were a true soldier, Freitag should have replied to Lange's inquiry in such a manner:

"General Lange, our situation is as such: Our Division has taken a blow, but we've got units operating. Some of my commanders, assembled here, can provide you detailed reports. Although we will continue to do the best we can, I fear we may not be able to hold out. As a result, I am asking you for some additional assistance. In the meantime, I propose to break the Division into a number of kampffgruppens which will continue to assist the corps' breakout, hold any necessary flanks and corridors, and then withdrew once the bulk of the corps was out. As for me, I will attach myself to one such group."

By such an honest appraisal, Freitag would have demonstrated loyalty, concern, and some measure of optimism, while instilling some additional pride at a critical moment and maintaining morale. Instead, Freitag chose to create an attitude of enmity towards himself which, months later, he possibly regretted.¹⁰ Needless to say, Freitag's words were never forgotten. In the following days, when Dolynskyi met Lange by chance during the breakout, Lange remarked "Your division has a strange commander!"¹¹

By the end of the day, the Division's 31st regiment collapsed. SS-Obersturmbannführer Paul Herms, along with most of his staff, was killed north of Sasiv. Lying on the ground and feigning death, staff soldier Mark Tork* would never forget how Soviet officers went around and administered the coup-de-grace to the wounded. Robbed as he lay feigning death, Mark prayed in silence as two Russians removed his boots, and then began to argue over who should get his pants. The argument, however, was never resolved because suddenly, the Division's fusiliers came storming in, saving Mark's life. He later recovered his wallet from a shot and bayoneted commissar. As with the 29th Regiment, the 31st's remaining personnel were incorporated into the various units. Late that day, continuing efforts to defend or retake Opaky, a town approximately 4 miles east of Sasiv, ceased.

In a pitch black forest deep in the Carpathian Mountains, Vashchenko met with UPA's general, Roman Shukhevych. Realizing that the 13th Corps' chances in conducting a successful breakout were nil, a discussion arose on a course of action to assist the Division's personnel.

But efforts to assist the Division would not be easy. Aside from the fact that 13th Corps was surrounded by a ring of Soviet steel, Konev was quickly dispatching reinforcements to contain and destroy the entire corps. "It will not

be easy," stated Shukhevych, "but every man, every gun, every round that we can gather up will benefit us. So let's do it, and do it now!" With such words, UPA-West was ordered to extradite whatever Divisional personnel it could.

1 Realistically speaking, the exact date of Hauffe's death is not known but it appears that 20 July is the date. It is known that on 19/20 July, General Lange assumed command of the 13th Corps because Hauffe was nowhere in sight. But in the 1960's, a German priest, Chaplain Bader, who officiated in the 454th Field Security Division, returned to West Germany from Soviet captivity. According to the former chaplain, he (Bader) saw General Hauffe on the afternoon of 22 July in the northern part of the town of Kniazhe. Bader described the general as being in a state of depression. According to Bader, Hauffe remarked such words: "Their (the Soviet) superiority is too great, there's no sense in going on. We can't continue to allow the men to be slaughtered uselessly. Perhaps we'll wait until night. The situation is hopeless!" For an interesting account of Bader's experience, as well as what occurred within the pocket in the final hours, see Buchner's, *Ostfront 1944*, pp. 234-236. According to Heike, *English ed.*, p. 51; and "Biy Pid Brodamy," in 1943-1993. *The 1st Ukrainian Division*, p. 21, it was reported that General Hauffe was killed in an ambush at Holohory, a town south of Kniazhe. But neither Heike's nor the Division's description of Hauffe's death is clear; it appears that the information pertaining to Hauffe's death was presented to either Heike (or the Divisional Staff) in the aftermath of the Brody breakout. In a personal discussion with Yuriy Krokhmaliuk, the former Divisional staff officer stated that to the best of his knowledge, General Hauffe was no longer in command when the first breakout attempt commenced on 20 July. According to Nahayewsky, *A Soldier Priest Remembers*, p. 83, General Lange was already in command of the encircled corps on 20 July because Hauffe was dead. Since it is known that General Hauffe never entered Soviet captivity, he probably was killed. Regardless of the exact date, it is known that from 20 July onward, Hauffe was no longer in command. Incorrectly, *World War II*, Vol. 12, p. 1660, cites that Hauffe was taken prisoner on 23 July.

2 Sylenko broke out; his 17-year-old son, Mykola, was killed-in-action toward the end of the war.

3 Personal discussion with Yuriy Krokhmaliuk. See also *Laschenko*, pp. 318-319; and *СССР, 1941-1945*, p. 592. On that day, the 1st Ukrainian Front liberated various sizable towns and cities such as Volodymyr-Volynskyi, Rava-Rus'ka, Peremys'l, and Zboriv. But as this was happening, "west of Brody, Soviet forces were conducting a battle to eliminate the surrounded forces and prevent elements of the opposing forces from breaking out of encirclement." (*Ibid.*)

4 Indeed, it turned out to be one of the most vicious battles on the eastern front.

5 Neither Shuhan nor Yuriy Krokhmaliuk could recall the officer's name. By his actions, the supply officer not only demonstrated true loyalty to the unit, but saved many lives as well.

6 Heike, *English ed.*, p. 98; *Ukrainian ed.*, pp. 88-89; *The Glow*, p. 98; Nahayewskyi, *A Soldier Priest Remembers*, pp. 80-81; personal discussion with Yuriy Krokhmaliuk.

7 Ren, *My Life's Mosaic*, p. 177.

8 *Ibid.*

9 Personal discussion with Yuriy Krokhmaliuk, Veryha, and Velyn. Heike, *English ed.*, pp. 45-46 also substantiates this.

10 Heike, *English ed.*, p. 48.

11 Krokhmaliuk, *The Glow*, p. 98.

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At 1:00 a.m., with no preparatory artillery fire, Battlegroup C's right wing pressed forward once again. Reaching Pochapy at approximately 5:00 a.m., Lange quickly established a forward command post. There, he was informed that Battlegroup C's right wing had captured Knyazhe but because of a heavy Soviet counter-attack, lost the town. As for the left wing, reorganizational problems, combined with sporadic night fighting, had delayed its attack time until 4:00 a.m. But once reinforced with groups of men from the other divisions and some assault guns, the left wing successfully advanced from its starting positions in Khylychyt'si vicinity into Yasenivtsi. At last, 13th Corps had reached the main highway.

Communication problems, however, prevented the assault groups from notifying Lange of what had transpired. Under orders to establish contact with the 48th Panzer Corps, and realizing the dangers of halting the advance, the left wing's commanders decided to continue to press forward. Moving directly southward, south of Yasenivtsi (and virtually adjacent to the village of Zalisie), Hill 412 was secured.

Continuing to push southward, the advancing force reached the town of Zhukiv, located approximately 8.5 miles south of Yasenivtsi and the main highway. There at last, 13th Corps left wing established contact with the 1st Panzer Division while the right wing renewed another attack on Knyazhe, but again failed to secure the village. As Battlegroup C's assault soldiers fought and died around Knyazhe, other groups east of Knyazhe successfully bypassed the Soviet forces and broke through. Advancing quickly to the highway, they crossed it east of Liatske, bypassed Hill 412 and, after a rapid southwestward march of approximately 5 miles, established contact with Balck's 8th Panzer near Holohory.

Lange, however, had no knowledge of this either. And although a breakout had been achieved, by noontime the Soviets had immediately closed the escape corridor with heavy forces, reinforced Knyazhe, and were attempting to retake Hill 257. As for Lasch's 349th Infantry, a division again earmarked for the breakout, it once again encountered severe problems south/southeast of Zhulychi. Aside from a very limited number of its personnel who somehow ended up with Battlegroup C, the 349th, forced to a standstill, was being systematically destroyed. And excluding the limited number of personnel who

had succeeded in running the gauntlet and breaking out, the bulk of Battlegroup C, the 349th, 454th and the 14th Waffen SS were still inside the pocket that was rapidly shrinking in size.

That day, the remainder of the 454th Field Security collapsed. Never a strong division, with only two security regiments, one reconnaissance, anti-tank, engineer and signal companies, what remained of the 454th was incorporated into the various 13th Corps units. As for the remaining units within the pocket, their situation only worsened as ammunition shortages developed and constant enemy aerial, ground, artillery and rocket attacks continued to compress the pocket's size. With anti-aircraft and artillery pieces running out of ammunition or simply destroyed, it was becoming virtually impossible to counter Soviet aircraft and ground batteries. And by now, it was not even uncommon for Soviet armor to suddenly appear within the pocket, causing mayhem.

Totally disregarding the wagon filled with wounded, the heavy KV-85 rolled slowly forwards. "RATATATATATA!!!" "RATATATATATA!!!" Its machine-guns fully blazing, the tank clambered upon a crowded wagon, crushed it, then neutral-steered over the wreckage to ensure that everyone and everything was destroyed. The iron behemoth then continued forward.

"RATATATATATA!!!" "RATATATATATATA!!!" Struck with 7.62mm rounds, two more horses whinnied, stood up on their rear legs, and then collapsed into a heap. Attempting to escape, the wagon driver jumped off, but the moment his feet touched the ground, 7.62mm tank bullets tore him apart. Collapsing on top of the dead horses, the man lay for no more than several seconds before the incoming KV-85 crushed the two dead animals and one human into the ground. Bursts of fresh blood was seen splattering out from beneath the tank treads.

Suddenly, the steel monster's turret swung rapidly to its left. A slight distance off the side of the road beneath a couple of trees, stood a military ambulance with its distinct Red Cross symbol. Aiming its barrel, the KV fired a round into it. A high velocity shell tore the ambulance into pieces and silenced forever its medical crew. Spinning its turret a full 360 degrees, the tank's co-axial machinegun sprayed everything within range. Revving its engine, the KV pressed forward and continued to unleash more death and destruction.

A chaplain, who could take no more, appeared from behind a wagon. Standing directly in front of the tank, he raised and held upward his cross. "RATATATATATATA!!!" Hot slugs killed him instantly. An anti-tank PAK team, swinging into action, fired at the iron monster. Striking too high, the round angled off the turret. But before the crew could re-adjust and fire again, the KV shattered the PAK and its crew with one well placed shot. Then, someone

fired a panzerfaust round at the steel behemoth, but missed. Exploding beside the tank, the round only challenged the KV crew to move again.

"RATATATATATA!!!" "RATATATATATATA!!!" 7.62mm slugs dropped more men and horses. A supply officer, his legs shattered from the machine-gun fire, attempted to crawl away. But he crawled no more than several feet when the incoming hulk flattened him into the ground. "BOOM!" Another round flew into a maintenance repair truck. Its driver, or what was left of him, emerged shrouded in a circle of flame. Falling to the ground, the torched human stood up, extended his burning arms sideways, took several steps forward and collapsed in a burning heap.

For those on the road, the end seemed in sight. But suddenly, a lone figure was seen snaking his way amongst the carnage toward the steel behemoth. Clutching a satchel charge in his right hand, the figure was identifiable as a member of the Division by the Galician lion patch on his camouflaged smock. Clambering aboard the tank's rear deck, he jumped towards its turret.

Lying on the turret's top, the grenadier hung onto a hatchet's handle as the tank's crew repeatedly spun the turret and slammed it to a stop in a vain attempt to throw him off. Failing to open the turret's hatch, the grenadier tied the satchel to the base of the turret. Removing from his boot his remaining stick grenade, the figure pulled its pin, shouted "SLAVA UKRAINI!" and leaned the grenade beside the satchel charge.

A massive explosion tore into the turret. Within seconds, the entire KV was consumed in one massive flame. Indeed, the fire was so intense that hours late, the surrounding countryside was still lit up by the burning pyre. As for the grenadier who tore the tank apart, he was never seen again.

Failing once again in another concentrated effort to break out, and fully aware that if an immediate breakout did not occur, then all would be lost, Lange insisted on another attempt.

But unlike previous efforts, the upcoming breakout would be conducted by a number of independently operating battlegroups. What worried Lange and his commanders, however, was that a number of these battlegroups would be conducting what every military commander has always feared and hated since the advent of organized warfare: frontal assaults.

Readying himself and his men, Evstakhyi "Stasho" Il'nyts'kyi wondered how the breakout would go. By profession a first-rate mechanic, "Stasho" had previously served as a corporal in the Polish Army. In the closing days of the German blitzkrieg, "Stasho," along with elements of various battered Polish units, broke out of a series of German encirclements to retreat successfully into Rumania. In 1940, as an NCO in the reformed Polish 1st Infantry Division based in France, "Stasho" once again fought the Nazis. But as previously in

Poland, the German blitzkrieg overran western Europe. Along with a number of other Polish, Moroccan, Belgian and French Foreign Legionnaires, "Stasho" fought a successful rear guard operation at Dunkirk. It was because of soldiers such as "Stasho" that many a fellow allied soldier - Pole, English, French and others - escaped via the English Channel to England.

Unable to escape, "Stasho" was forced to surrender. But several days later, he fled from German captivity in northern France. Knowing that there was a Ukrainian emigre organization in Paris, "Stasho" made his way there. Concealing him, the Ukrainian emigres also provided him with an alias and false papers. In 1941, "Stasho" returned to Galicia and found employment as a postal worker. In 1943, the former allied soldier enlisted in the Division. Now, as section leader, "Stasho" calmly briefed his men on what to expect during the upcoming breakout.

Since it had become apparent that an organized corps effort would no longer be feasible, time was running out, no relief force was in sight, and communications were virtually non-existent, it was now hoped that a breakout could be achieved by a series of battlegroups. Rapidly striking the enemy, certain groups would tie down the Soviet forces, while others would bypass to breakout. Because the road from Bilyi Kamin to Pochapy was devastated, blocked by columns of burned out and battered vehicles, and with massive Soviet air attacks relentlessly continuing, it was obvious that the corps would not be able to drive its remaining vehicles, heavy equipment and artillery out of the pocket. Orders were thus issued to destroy all remaining vehicles and heavy equipment.

The plan was as follows: those 13th Corps units operating north of the Buh would fall back to Bilyi Kamin and cross the Buh River. Once crossed, any remaining bridges would be destroyed. Such a move would shorten the line, reduce the distance to the southwest, and relieve much ground pressure against the corps from the north. Once south of the river, the battered formations would reorganize themselves into battlegroups. Discarding all unnecessary equipment, the groups would arm themselves as best as possible, rest, and prepare to break out. But in the meantime, as the Buh was to be crossed, flank and rear security around Bilyi Kamin had to be maintained.

But as the corps' northern perimeter withdrew into Bilyi Kamin to cross the Buh, Soviet forces continued their relentless attacks in an effort to secure Bilyi Kamin and trap and destroy the remaining forces north of the Buh. By evening, the battle was spilling into the burning town of Bilyi Kamin, where the Division's fusiliers, bolstered by survivors from other units, were holding out as long as possible to enable others to cross the Buh through Bilyi Kamin.

"Mama! Mama! I can't see. I can't see!" A little girl, no more than four or five years of age, stepped out of a burning cottage into the street. Her tiny hands clasping her eyes and forehead, she screamed in agony as blood ran down her cheeks.

Both sides immediately ceased to fire. Continuing to scream, the little girl walked halfway out to the center of the street, stopped, and just stood. "Mama, Mama. It hurts!"

An eerie silence prevailed. Only the crackle of Bilyi Kamin's burning and simmering wood could be heard. As the child stood in the middle of a row of flaming and smoking buildings, she once again cried out.

Suddenly, a medical Waffen-Rottenfuhrer's voice was heard as he shouted "I'll get her!" Dashing from his position of safety, he ran up to the child, swept her into his arms, and turned to run back. But his attempt to remove the child to safety was suddenly ended by the burst of an enemy submachine gun. The very same hot rounds which ripped into his back and exited his lungs, simultaneously took the life of the little girl.¹

¹ Krokhmaliuk, who recounted this episode to the author, could not recall the name of the soldier who died attempting to save the child. It is believed, however, that the soldier who rushed forward was a medic from the 29th Regiment who, somehow, became attached to the fusiliers.

SATURDAY, 22 JULY - MONDAY, 24 JULY:

Throughout the early morning hours of 22 July, within a pocket approximately 4-5 miles from north to south and about the same from east to west, the battered 13th Corps prepared for its breakout. With the last troops out of Bilyi Kamin, the town was no longer within the pocket and the pocket's northern border was on the Buh River's southern bank, where, its survivors quickly prepared for the breakout.

Realizing that he would pose a burden and a threat to the survivors of the 31st Regiment's 1st Battalion's, 1st Company, SS-Hauptsturmfuhrer von Salzinger, its wounded company commander, committed suicide. After hearing the gunshot, Leshko Zur* came over and gently covered the officer with a poncho.¹

By now, a number of the groups were no longer composed of just men from a specific unit. Excluding the fusiliers and the survivors of certain artillery batteries who remained intact, the remaining Divisional and Corps' regiments and battalions began to collapse, its survivors finding themselves incorporated into mixed battlegroups. Soon, infantrymen, artillerymen with or without guns,

anti-aircraft gunners, mechanics, communications personnel, cooks, and others from various Divisional units found themselves compacted together. Additionally, a number of the Galician Division's personnel found themselves mixing in with some of the German battlegroups. Such groups were either led by those who held the highest rank or, regardless of rank, exhibited an ability to lead.

Lange planned to strike at 3:00 a.m. But one of the problems frequently encountered by a breakout of this type is that no one would be making a concentrated effort to secure any flanks or key terrain. Communications, as well, were virtually nonexistent. Simply stated, once a group began its move, it would continue until it either successfully broke out, or perished. The wounded, if not carried out on someone's shoulder or on a stretcher, were simply left behind. It is known that a number of the wounded were brought to Pochapy where, in a church located in the town, a temporary makeshift hospital was established. But when those at Pochapy realized that the only way out was by attacking through the Soviet ring, simultaneously, it was realized that, excluding a limited number of the wounded personnel which could be evacuated, the majority would have to be left behind. Those Divisional troops which passed through Pochapy would never forget the sight of the wounded and injured as they lay around Pochapy's church, awaiting to be taken inside for treatment.² As the brave medics and doctors treated the incapacitated, Chaplain Durbak was observed amongst them. Refusing to depart with any of the breakout groups, the brave chaplain was last seen assisting the wounded. To this day, his fate remains unknown.³

As the Galician Division's troops prepared to breakout, a final effort was made by certain Divisional commanders to utilize as much as possible of the Division's remaining firepower. Orders were issued to bring up any remaining artillery and heavy mortars.

After crossing the bridge at Bilyi Kamin, Dlaboha's men worked their way south towards Pochapy. Along the way, they passed columns of stranded, destroyed and smoldering vehicles and wagons. Frequently, they also encountered groups of demoralized German soldiers who sat motionless by the side of the road, or milled around, simply waiting for the enemy to gather them up. Clearly, it was now becoming evident that a large part of the 13th Corps was beginning to disintegrate in defeat. Dlaboha was proud of the fact that out of the entire artillery regiment, his battery was the only one that still maintained its four artillery pieces.

Observing his soldiers pulling and pushing the artillery pieces, Dlaboha wondered what they were made of. For the last five days, he had dragged them through hell and yet, throughout the entire ordeal, not one man had complained or faltered.

"Damn," thought Dlaboha, "they were good." Tough 16 and 17 year old kids, a former boxer, a middle-aged ex-Austrian soldier turned accountant who lied about his age to enlist, a former NKVD officer, and a UPA guerilla fighter who, just two days earlier, had confided to Dlaboha that he had infiltrated the Division to learn about artillery and how, near Stanyslaviv in April 1943, he had killed two gestapo agents." But then, Dlaboha momentarily reflected on men such as Spyrydon Hrybenko, Vasyl Dobushchuk, Ostap Dovhan, Vasyl Sahaidachnyi, Roman Levandivskyi, Boryslav Dolyk, Yuriy Kolodynskyi, Volodymyr Valyi, Ivan Wynnyczuk, Yuriy Bohoniuk, Myhailo Batiuk, Chaplain Vasyl Leshchyshyn... "Oh God," thought Dlaboha, "its endless."

As soon as Dlaboha's men set up their four 105mm guns adjacent to several other guns, Dlaboha briefed his men on what was to transpire.

At dawn, another Corps breakout was authorized. Prior to the forward charge of the assault groups, the remaining artillery would saturate certain designated areas in the vicinity of Knyazhe. Because of a lack of ammunition, the preparatory fire would be short but intense. Once the remaining shells were fired, the artillerymen would latch on to an assault group. By then, it was hoped that a breach in the enemy line would be achieved; if not, the artillerymen would have to fight their way through. To ensure a rapid breakout, the guns would be destroyed and all remaining horses released. Dlaboha was saddened at the prospect of destroying the guns, a weapons system which had well served his men first in northwestern Ukraine and now, at Brody. But seeing that there was no alternative, explosive packages with timers were prepared. Realizing also that for the last five days he had not slept a wink, and had subsisted only on cigarettes and a handful of iron rations, Dlaboha laid down beside one of his guns.

At approximately 4:50 a.m., Dlaboha rose. His body trembling from sheer exhaustion and a high fever, he noted his men were already standing beside their guns. "0456, 0457, 0458, 0459, FIRE!" At exactly 5:00 a.m., Dlaboha's gunners unleashed their remaining salvos. Within moments, distant explosions were heard.

Setting their timers, the men blew their guns. Merging with a group of German and Divisional survivors, the self-composed battlegroup surged forward. Unlike many who lost their will to fight and survive, the battle group struck hard. Near Knyazhe, at point-blank range, Dlaboha sprayed a Soviet submachine gunner. Dropping the empty MP38/40, Dlaboha instantly reached for his remaining stick grenade, pulled its pin and with his remaining strength, hurtled the device into a hastily constructed blocking position. Screams, followed by silence, told Dlaboha the grenade had struck home.

Collapsing to the ground, Dlaboha attempted to stand up. Exhaustion, however, prevented his body from doing so. The end seemed in sight for the artillery officer but suddenly, he felt his body being heaved over someone's shoulder. Carried to safety, Dlaboha survived the ordeal.

Having secured Khylychyski, the mixed battlegroups continued to surge forward toward Knyazhe. Among them was Waffen-Sturmabfuhrer Paliyenko. With a transmitter/receiver radio strapped to his back, and armed with a clipboard, map, pencil, compass, and a pair of binoculars suspended from around his neck, Paliyenko, adorned in a peasant cap, actually looked more like a schoolteacher on an outing rather than an artillery battalion commander charging into battle. But there was nothing timid about the soft-spoken and very patient man who seldom displayed anger. Hitting the ground hundreds of meters in front of Knyazhe, Paliyenko immediately searched for targets. Using a couple of the Division's artillery pieces and two Tiger tanks which earlier had reached the breakout forces, Paliyenko immediately suppressed two dug-in T-34's. Spotting another T-34 inside a building, he called for an artillery round, adjusted its impact, called in for two more rounds, and watched as the well-placed rounds tore the T-34 apart. Running another hundred meters forward, Paliyenko spotted a dug-in infantry position and a tank to its right. Accurately estimating its location, Paliyenko requested another single round and watched as it exploded in the midst of the enemy position. The moment Paliyenko shouted the command "FIRE!", Galicia's gunners unleashed a handful of rounds, killing everything in Paliyenko's sight.

Suspecting that the stone ruins of a demolished school building could well be concealing enemy snipers, Paliyenko transmitted its location to the artillerymen, noted with approval the way the young voice on the other side repeated its locations, and waited for the artillery round's flight. The moment the round struck, a well concealed T-34 went up in a ball of flame. Spotting two more tanks, Paliyenko called in their locations. Informed by the youthful voice that only two more explosive and four smoke rounds remained, Paliyenko instructed the gunner to "Wait one!" Because earlier Paliyenko had personally established contact with the two tanks and they had been monitoring his activities, Paliyenko requested the tanks to suppress the enemy armor.

With no less than six tanks demolished, and at least several positions demolished, the Soviets began to withdraw from Knyazhe. Informing the two-gun battery of their deeds, Paliyenko requested the remaining rounds to be dropped outside of Knyazhe amongst the fleeing foes and the remaining smoke rounds dropped on the edge of Knyazhe. Paliyenko undoubtedly regretted that there was no more smoke to cover the assault groups attack, but at least some

smoke was better than none. Waving to the battlegroup to press forward, the artillery officer observed their thrust.

"SLAVA!" "SLAVA!" Charging forward, the primarily Ukrainian battlegroup quickly dug out the remaining Soviets, retook Knyazhe and continued to surge beyond the town. Until the Soviets returned and re-occupied the town, Knyazhe no longer barred the way. As he stood up, Paliyenko reached underneath his camouflaged smock, and felt the stickiness of blood. As several soldiers rushed up, he ordered them to move on, and then collapsed.

Unfortunate events, however, continued to plague the 13th Corps. Although another penetration had been achieved, the bulk of Balck's 48th Panzer Corps was nowhere in sight. To make matters worse, as the encircled troops broke out, they only broke into masses of Soviet forces pushing westward. Such a situation forced those who broke out to continue fighting.

Correctly assuming that a rescue effort from Balck of AGNU would not arrive in full strength and that AGNU was probably itself withdrawing, Lange ordered the Corps' remaining personnel to retreat as rapidly as possible toward the southwest. How many received the order will never be known, but undoubtedly every survivor now understood that the only way out was to fight in a southwesterly direction.

Approaching Yasenivtsi from the west, Waffen-Obersturmführer Karatnytsky and a number of his men set fire to a small building in order to create a smoke screen. Simultaneously, Waffen Hauptsturmführer Dmytro Ferkuniak's group, with their nine machine guns set up on a railway embankment, commenced fire on the eastern edge of Yasenivtsi in an attempt to pin down any defenders. Behind Ferkuniak a Wehrmacht officer, Major Ziegler, covered Ferkuniak's group while Waffen Hauptsturmführer Chuchkevych provided flank protection to the east of Yasenivtsi. These four battlegroups, with a combined strength of approximately 1,000 Waffen SS, Wehrmacht and Field Security personnel, were rapidly moving southward during the night to reach and cross the main Lviv-Zolochiv Highway. Once across, in the area of Zalisie's thicker woods and rough terrain, better natural cover and protection would be found. But at least for now, it was just as critical to break out.

Until the 1,000 strong armed force had arrived to Yasenivtsi at approximately 4:00 a.m., all had gone well. South of Pochapy, the escape corridor had narrowed to a distance of no more than 150-200 meters, but no problems were encountered.⁴ Proceeding swiftly and quietly, the four battlegroups moved with one group forward, two in the middle, and one in the rear. Carrying only personal weapons, anti-armor weaponry, and as much ammunition as possible, the leading force automatically bypassed any danger the moment it encountered enemy forces. The others followed suit.

But at Yasenivtsi, a night battle ensued. In difficult hand-to-hand combat, the enemy was finally dislodged. By 7:00 a.m., all four groups crossed the highway and reached Zalesie and Hill 412 where they paused to rest. But they were quickly interrupted by the appearance of one German fighter-bomber. Mistaking the soldiers for a Soviet force, it strafed and bombed the men. Following the attack, everyone laughed when someone said "Oh, well. The High Command did not lie. They said the Luftwaffe would arrive!"

After nightfall, the groups continued to push southward. Sometime during the night of 22-23 July, in Zhukiv's vicinity, the leading group encountered a motorcycle courier who informed the men that the Germans were withdrawing from Zhukiv. For the remainder of the night, the men quickly marched westward. At last, in the morning, the groups linked up with the retreating German front and with a Galician battlegroup led by Chaplain Myhailo Levenets' consisting of 120 well armed men. For those who broke out, it was a jubilant encounter. But from an initial strength of approximately 1,000 men within the four groups (of whom about 750 were from the Galician Division), roll call revealed only 430 men. Most were lost either at Yasenivtsi or during the attempt to cross the highway.⁵ The casualties included Waffen-Untersturmfuhrer Paschak who shot himself after being wounded in action.

In desperate and intense combat, the Division's soldiers, as well as those from other divisions trying to break out, continued to surge forward. Through their efforts, 13th Corps divisions constantly kept the pressing enemy at bay, re-opened escape routes, and although continuously taking casualties, simultaneously extracted a toll from the attackers. Through burning villages and towns, such as Bilyi Kamin, Belzets, Ostriavets, Skvariava, Pochapy, Knyazhe, Khylychty, Liatske, Yasenivtsi, Zolochiv, Stinka, Holohory, Luni, Zhashkiv, Zhukiv, Vyshnivchik and Plenykiv; the Division's and Corps' troops ran through a gauntlet of hell.⁶ In an attempt to contain the breakout, Soviet airmen flew no less than 2,340 air sorties.⁷ At Zhukiv and Holohory, blocking positions were successfully established, temporarily preventing the Soviets from decisively halting the breakout and finishing off the 13th Corps. Realizing that efforts to prevent a total breakout were failing, and that the Division's and Corps' troops were pushing into the 1st Ukrainian Front's rear and communications, Konev stopped some of the front's units from pushing westward, instead redirecting them east into such areas as Bilyi Kamin, Krasne, Pochapy, Holohory and Zhukiv. But as the freshly committed units arrived, they only encountered determined groups of men bent on breaking out. Such was the case of the 91st Independent "Proskurov" Tank Brigade. Part of Rybalko's 3rd Guards Tank Army, the 91st was stopped in its tracks and redirected back eastward. Passing south of Krasne in the vicinity of Ostrivchik and Skvariava, the 91st, after crossing the Zolochivka River, drove headlong into Bilyi Kamin

to seal the escape corridor. But there, the independent tank brigade took such a pounding that it ceased to exist. Days later, the bullet riddled body of one of its commanders was found lying atop a devastated burned out tank.⁸ As its armor joined the graveyard of Soviet armor throughout that region, 13th Corps and Galicia's volunteers once again demonstrated that even in defeat, they could strike a severe blow. But in such fighting, it was not only self contained battlegroups that displayed success; on occasion, one man alone could demonstrate it.

As the battle raged in and around the ruins of Zhukiv, rifleman turned sniper Oleh Dir* was not only fighting his own kind of war, but was actually in a position to alter the course of events.

Dir did not care to shoot at individual Soviet soldiers. After all, he reasoned, these guys were just like him and the rest - "Nothing but a bunch of poor bastards just caught up in this madness." But when it came to Soviet officers, and especially the hated NKVD and their commissars, Dir sought them out with a passion. Continuing to lie in the smoking ruins of what was once a school house, Dir scanned the battlefield and momentarily reflected upon the events which had brought him there.

By nature, Dir was not a violent person. He considered his upbringing a normal one and, if it hadn't been for the war, he might have continued his studies as his uncle had desired. Dir was no more than three years old when an accident had taken his father's life, yet, practically speaking, Dir was never without a father. Although Dir and his mother resided in another part of Lviv, and there was no blood relationship between him and his "uncle", the latter was always helping out. Later, when he married and had a daughter of his own, the man still continued to treat Dir as if he were his own son. Dir tremendously respected his uncle and through the years, grew exceptionally close to him.

But all of that changed in the madness of 1941. Awakened one early Saturday morning in June by the cries of his aunt, who had suddenly arrived, Dir learned that just hours before, the dreaded NKVD had arrested his uncle and that now, the woman was desperately seeking refuge for herself and her eight year old daughter. To make matters worse, throughout that awful month of June nothing was heard about the man's fate. Mass arrests only continued, and from day to day the family feared for their own fate.

But late one evening towards the end of June, Dir dared to leave the house and go outside. Standing in the deserted street, he thought he heard the rumble of an explosion in the distance. He wondered if this had anything to do with the air squadron which he had momentarily spotted the day before, or with the strict Soviet curfew prohibiting anyone from leaving their homes or apartments. Regardless, on the following day, as strange-looking vehicles with black and

white crosses rolled into the city's streets, Lviv's citizenry realized what they had suspected all along - that hostilities had at last erupted between Europe's two major totalitarian powers. Along with the German arrival, Lviv's inhabitants would soon learn the fate of those arrested.

Leaving the little girl behind with their neighbors, that afternoon Dir accompanied his mother and mother's sister to Lviv's Brygidky prison where, it was rumored, the NKVD's prisoners were kept. As the threesome approached the center and made their way through the large crowds which had preceded them, they came upon a horrifying sight.

Inside Brygidky's courtyard, the screams and wails of Lviv's women could be heard as they walked among the rows of dead and identified their loved ones. Closely following his mother and aunt, Dir watched as they would lift a blanket, peer at a face, and gently restore the blanket over the victim's face. And so it went until they found the man they sought. As the two women grasped each other for comfort and strength, Dir only stared at the corpse. Clearly, it was evident that his uncle had been beaten - a man who had never harmed anyone and had always sought to live his life in peace. Continuing to stare, Dir experienced mixed emotions of grief, anger, frustration and hurt.

But in those nightmarish days, the young man would only witness more harshness. He tried to remain strong for his mother, aunt, and the little girl. Yet, the insanity only continued and sometimes, it seemed to worsen. Dir noticed how at first the original German occupiers appeared to be a decent lot of men who seemed sympathetic to Lviv's citizenry, assisted its populace, handed out candy to little children and viewed the Brygidky massacre with horror and contempt. But the original occupiers did not stay for long, and as they left to push further eastward, another group of occupiers arrived. Wearing a different type of uniform, the new occupiers came only to rule - if anyone failed to comply with their demands, swift arrest ensued.

For nearly two years following the murder of his uncle, Dir continued to live with his mother, aunt and cousin. He tried to be a father to the little girl, but as much as he tried, he could never bring back those carefree days of family life. For Dir himself, life was also uncertain and he secretly feared that one day he might be hauled off to one of Germany's dreaded "volunteer" labor programs. He considered running away, but where could he possibly go? As for linking up with the UPA, the idea of being a guerrilla fighter, although romantic in theory, in the harsh light of reality offered only an ugly way of fighting and surviving. He sometimes wished that he could obtain a weapon. But what good was a weapon without proper training? And besides, in the last year or so, while life under the German occupation was far from secure, the harshness of its earlier days had somewhat abated. Perhaps, hoped Dir, Hitler

would some day come to his senses, and after destroying the imperialistic communist state, would pull out of Galician and allow its people to live in peace.

Yet there was no way Dir could have known that Hitler's eastern campaign was progressively turning for the worse. True, Dir had heard about Germany's defeat at Stalingrad, but that was so far away and besides, Germany's propagandists continued to boast of victory. So for the moment, Dir reasoned he would stay out of trouble, take care of his family, live life one day at a time and hopefully, the situation would eventually improve.

But one day in late April 1943, as he was returning home from work, Dir spotted a proclamation. Addressed to Galicia's youth the poster proclaimed "that the time has come for us to bar the road to the Ukrainian land from our eternal eastern enemies with a steel wall," and to "volunteer into the ranks of the SS Rifle Division Galicia." Since the poster also proclaimed that "only arms will decide the fates of nations," Dir realized that at last, he had a golden opportunity to strike out against those who would attempt to harm him or his loved ones. Noting when and where the physicals would be given, Dir promptly decided to be there.

Six feet tall, blond-haired and blue-eyed Oleh Dir had no trouble enlisting. Upon receiving his call-up card, he told his weeping mother and aunt that he would enlist. Shortly afterward, Dir reported to the reception center from which a train took him to Heidelberg.

Dir excelled at Heidelberg, as he later would at Neuhammer. His physical strength, above normal to begin with, only increased. He also shot well; so well that he astonished his instructors. No matter how far out the targets were, Dir hit them all. His vision, co-ordination and reflexes were superior and, under "Feldwebel" Walder's guidance, were sharpened in skill and precision.

Walder was the epitome of a true professional. An ex-sniper himself, the German NCO strongly recommended to Dir's company commander that Dir be utilized in a sniper/anti-sniper role. What Dir especially admired in his feldwebel was the man's honesty. The night before Dir left to return to Galician, Walder confided to him that Hitler was nothing but an idiot, and his policies were morally wrong. The next day, as both men exchanged their goodbyes, Dir knew that he would never forget his instructor.

Continuing to scan the battlefield, Dir firmly grasped his Gewehr KAR 98 rifle. Manufactured in 1938, when weapons craftsmanship was at its peak, the rifle was 43.6 inches in length, and was well-balanced with a weight of 8.6 pounds. Its 7.92mm heavy ball round packed quite a punch. With a velocity of 2,476 feet per second, the round was accurate up to 800 meters. Whether Dir utilized its 4 power "bmj" Hensoldt scope, or shot through the rifle's front barley and rear tangent V sights, the weapon was equally precise. The turned-

down bolt handle could be worked both easily and swiftly, and its chances of jamming were virtually non-existent. "If there was anything good about Hitler's Germany," thought Dir, "it was the fact that it produced some excellent arms."

Dir's ash-covered splinter camouflage suit merged perfectly with the ruins. In addition to his rifle, he carried two handguns: a Walther P38 9mm and a 7.62mm Tula Tokarev he obtained from the corpse of an NKVD police officer whom he had eliminated from an incredible range of 600 meters. Inside his right pants pocket, Dir carried a low-gravity paratrooper's knife and a few boxes of 7.92 ammunition, while his hand-sewn left cargo pocket held a canteen of water, one folded handkerchief, and several iron rations. Extra 7.92mm rounds were carried in a pocket sewn inside his jacket and a camouflaged 1944 forage cap covered his head. Since nothing should hinder his movements because the slightest delay could kill him, Dir discarded his rucksack, blanket, poncho, mess kit and webbing. He took his mission seriously, so seriously that for extra camouflage he even covered his scope and parts of his rifle and cap with pieces of material torn from a burlap bag.

Dir knew that his task was not easy. And a successful sniper has to possess special skills - namely, the ability to be a loner. While of course a sniper does belong to a company or battalion, and therefore works with a team, ultimately, the sniper is a loner. On a modern-day battlefield, he often operates alone.

To be alone with one's own thoughts, fears and doubts; in heat and cold, in hunger and thirst, in pain and comfort; to be alone while stalking and fighting, and to possibly die a solitary death requires a special kind of physical and psychological courage. Alone, the sniper "hunts" his prey. And because he is alone, all of his senses - his vision, hearing and smell; his intellect and co-ordination, combined with a strong determination to succeed, must be stronger, sharper and more finely tuned than those of the average soldier. A sniper cannot hate his enemy, for hate will inspire him to eliminate as many of his opponents as quickly as possible and only cause him to err. And in combat, the slightest mistake could easily take a man's life - especially if he is alone.

Some have condemned sniper warfare as morally and ethically wrong. But warfare itself is morally and ethically unjust. And during those hot July days at Brody, Dir's extraordinary sniper skills proved to be of tremendous value, saving many a fellow soldier. Continuing to lie in the smoldering ruins, Dir remained invisible, yet, he maintained a commanding view of the whole area.

Searching first to his front and left, Dir spotted a group coming in from the northeast. Identifying it as a Galician group heading southwest, Dir also noted that they were carrying a couple of wounded men on stretchers.

But as he scanned to his right, he spotted a much larger Soviet group heading straight toward the Ukrainian force. Realizing that in a matter of minutes the superior Red Army force would intercept and probably overwhelm the smaller group, Dir readied for action.

Dir knew that in some ways he was in an advantageous position. He was on higher terrain, the smoking rubble offered protection, and the setting sun, behind him, completely prevented the blinded Soviets from accurately firing back. Noting their organization and type of weaponry, Dir was especially struck by the fact that the group was headed by just one officer. Dir calculated that once the officer was dropped, the rest would scatter, thus making it easier for him to hold them off and simultaneously provide extra time for the friendly group to escape.

Dir estimated the Red Army force to be about 500 meters away. He observed the distant tree tops and noted no natural movement. "Good!" thought Dir, "very little to no wind." He intended to allow the Soviets to advance another 200 meters before opening up. Slowly zeroing in on the officer, Dir set his sights on the commander's chest. Simultaneously, his mind automatically raced through the rules for an effective shot: "good, firm grip, place the sights, watch them, breathe deeply, exhale half of it, hold the rest but not for long, maintain the Hensoldt's post sight on him, watch him, and very, ver-ry softly squeeeeeeeze" - the crack of the rifle shattered the silence, and as the red-hot 7.92mm round ripped through the Soviet officer's heart and lungs, Dir instantly ejected the spent cartridge, rammed in a fresh round, sighted, and slammed a round squarely into the face of a Soviet soldier who had sought shelter in a slight depression behind a tree and was searching for Dir through a telescopic Mosin-Nagant. So automatic were Dir's actions and so finely honed were his skills, that he moved without pausing to think as he performed his solo ballet of war.

And so it went. Day and night. From point-blank range to distances beyond 500 meters. (Note: Snipers were known to drop personnel at 500 meters and longer. However, it took special skills). Dir dropped Soviet officers, snipers, tank commanders, machine gunners, communist guerrillas and NKVD personnel. Virtually every round fired struck home. Entire enemy platoons, companies, and on several occasions entire battalions were held up by his skills. With repeated success, Dir covered withdrawals, breakouts, and retreats. Because of him, many a soldier escaped from the bloody Brody encirclement.

"HURRAH!" "HURRAH!" From all sides, Soviet troops descended upon Lubomyr Zach* and his squad. A 30th regimental NCO, known to Lubomyr under the nickname of "Siy," whipped out a P-38 pistol and immediately shot and killed six incoming troopers. After emptying his handgun, Siy reached for

his remaining egg-type hand grenade, pulled its pin, pressed it against his body and charged into a communist officer. The ensuing explosion ripped them both apart. Suddenly struck, Lubomyr lost consciousness.

Awakening hours later, Lubomyr found himself lying in a wooded knoll north of Bilyi Kamin with other wounded men, mostly from the Division. As he lay, he heard Russian voices. Surrounded by Soviet soldiers, Lubomyr had no means of escape and within moments, he was approached by several of them.

Fear gripped Lubomyr. He wondered if they would release him, as earlier he had released several of his prisoners. But that would not be the case. After stripping him of his possessions, the Soviets lifted him up to his feet, and along with the others who could still walk, Lubomyr was marched off. As he wondered what would become of those who could not stand up, a long burst of Soviet submachine gun fire provided the answer.

Along with the others, Lubomyr was marched eastward. After a while, they reached an army headquarters. Following a brief wait, Lubomyr and another prisoner were taken inside, where they came face-to-face with Konev and Sokolovskiy. Lubomyr would never forget how everyone just eyed them. Finally, Sokolovskiy broke the silence.

"These are all young boys, and on top of everything, all are volunteers!" Apparently, the 1st Ukrainian Front's headquarters had already received news of the Galician Division, and had ordered a few of its prisoners to be brought to the rear. When their Division emblem, the lion patch, was noticed, an order was given to have it cut off. Then Lubomyr chanced to see that his own wallet was lying on a field table where its contents were being carefully examined. Following a brief detention, Lubomyr was pushed back outside to join the remaining prisoners.

Marched further to the east, Lubomyr reached a number of railway cars standing on a single track and was ordered into one of them. The moment he entered its sweltering heat, the heavy doors clanged shut. Finding a spot in the semi-darkness, Lubomyr laid down and attempted to sleep. His trip from one hell into another was about to begin.⁹

Shouting "Gentlemen, this way! Quickly, this way!" Freitag caught the attention of Sylenko. Standing beside Lange and an automobile in the village of Knyazhe, Freitag urged Sylenko's group to move rapidly southward.

Knyazhe was devastated. Its streets and yards were filled with dead soldiers, civilians and horses. Virtually every building was burning or smoldering. Wagons, vehicles, and destroyed T-34's and KV's lay scattered about. From the positions of the corpses, it was apparent the fighting had been close with much hand-to-hand combat. Desperate for a drink of water, Sylenko

thought about the stream which flowed through Knyazhe. Approaching it, he changed his mind when he saw it was full of enemy bodies.

"They attempted to fall back, but seeing that they could not escape through open ground, sought cover in it. Doesn't matter, we got them all!" With these words, a German non-Divisional NCO informed Sylenko about what had happened.

South of Knyazhe, the terrain sloped slightly downward and then upward toward a small forest. To stay in Knyazhe was impossible. Just moments before, a Soviet plane had come streaking in, dropping its payload of 80-pound bombs, and killing just about everything in sight. Never would Sylenko forget the sound of single pistol shots by wounded soldiers finishing themselves off. Directing his battlegroup southward, Sylenko pushed on.¹⁰

Until now, the Division's fusiliers had been fighting the Division's battle. They had been constantly rushed from one critical sector to another and repeatedly, their actions had altered the course of events.

But that was in the past. Now, south of Knyazhe, the fusiliers were fighting their own breakout battle. Led by leaders such as Waffen-Obersturmführer Danylko, the fusiliers once again demonstrated skill in adapting to a difficult situation. Danylko was the epitome of a true combat leader. Adorned in a camouflaged outfit, with belts of ammunition draped around his body, his hands firmly grasping an MG42 machinegun, and a pistol tucked into his waistband, the fusilier officer actually looked like the God of War. Quickly organizing a breakout force of 200 soldiers, Danylko assured the group that success was in sight with such words: "We're going forward! We're going to where there is life, freedom and love!"

And fight they did. Ripping into a Soviet mechanized and NKVD police battalion with a savagery, power, and determination that one can only possess at such a time, the fusiliers totally devastated the threatening force. They shot, bayoneted, clubbed, stabbed and killed with their bare hands. Well placed anti-armor rounds tore enemy tanks and vehicles into pieces. Since earlier, the fusiliers had not been granted any quarter, they now responded in kind. Charging into an NKVD police trooper who towered well over six feet, Chester Tush * would never forget the steel teeth and the smell of sweat and cheap liquor as he plunged a close-combat knife deep into the massive hulk. As the trooper fell forward, Chester actually came face-to-face with him. Propping him up with his left arm, Chester attempted to remove the knife. But the knife had penetrated so deep into the NKVD trooper's upper abdomen that Chester was unable to pull it out.

Dropping the trooper to the ground, Chester noted blood on his hands. Momentarily, he considered removing the corpse's NKVD lapel pin. But after

wiping his blood covered hands on his camouflaged fatigue pants, Chester reached only for the deceased man's Ppsh 41 and its spare drum of ammunition. After all, reasoned Chester, hell could hold many more NKVD men.

Along with the other survivors of the 29th Regiment's Headquarter's Company, Vasil Sirs'kyi probed cautiously toward Pochapy from Bilyi Kamin. At approximately 5:30 a.m., Sirs'kyi's group was totally encompassed by a morning fog so thick that one could barely see beyond several meters; yet, from Yaseniv's direction, the men noted that a heavy battle had erupted.

After reaching Pochapy, Sirs'kyi and the others readied for action. By now, the fog had lifted, and from Pochapy's higher elevation, Knyazhe could be seen. Sirs'kyi could not fail to notice the terrain between Knyazhe and Pochapy - it was pockmarked with holes from thousands of shell-bursts and bombs.

At Pochapy, Sirs'kyi saw the Division's remaining anti-aircraft personnel. Until now, they had done the best they could. But with their remaining guns totally out of ammunition, the anti-aircraft personnel blew their guns; from now on, they would fight as infantry. Obtaining a heavy machine gun from a German soldier, Sirs'kyi passed it on to Kul'chytskyi, an anti-aircraft standard bearer, who prepared the weapon for combat. Someone's command of "Machinegunners! Anti-tank gunners! To the front!" was heralded.

Sirs'kyi knew the big moment was approaching. As well, everyone knew that in and around Knyazhe were dug in Soviet troops. But as Sirs'kyi readied his weapon, he noticed the Soviet prisoners, now unguarded, just milling around. It was obvious that amongst them, there were those who feared to return to their own side.

"O.K. Let's do it!" With these words, the battlegroup moved forward. En route to Knyazhe, Sirs'kyi's battlegroup encountered a German battlegroup accompanied by one tank. Its commander, a high ranking Wehrmacht officer, addressed Sirs'kyi's group: "Gentlemen, our situation is tough, but not impossible. Together, let's storm Knyazhe!"

Storming into Knyazhe, the battlegroup encountered success. Clambering aboard an overturned railway car, Sirs'kyi proceeded to fire upon a group of Soviet soldiers who, shortly before, had dug themselves in at the edge of Knyazhe. Others, under various shouts such as "SLAVA!" charged forward. A Soviet sniper killed the Wehrmacht officer with one well-placed shot; within moments, the same sniper who had just killed was himself killed as various members of the battlegroup returned his fire. Noting the deceased officer's cap lying alongside him, Sirs'kyi covered the German soldier's face.

After proceeding through the outskirts of Knyazhe, the combined German-Ukrainian battlegroup halted to rest. Among them were six wounded

soldiers - four Ukrainians and two Germans. Since no one wanted to leave them behind, it was decided to bring them along. But suddenly, an automobile, its top open, appeared. Driven by a chauffeur, its sole occupant was a German army captain. Seeing the wounded, the captain hopped out of the vehicle and helped to place the wounded into the auto. As rapidly as it had arrived, the vehicle continued southwest to Maidan, with Sirs'kyi and the others following quickly on foot.

Enroute to Zhukiv, Sirs'kyi's group encountered another group. Amongst them was Deern, the 29th Regiment's commander.

The end, however, was not yet in sight. In the following days, Sirs'kyi would only know the screams of "HURRAH!" "SLAVA!," the sounds of incoming rounds, explosions, whining bullets, and the screams of the dying. At point-blank range, Sirs'kyi shot and killed Soviet regulars. In hand-to-hand combat, he slashed and fought his way through. Sirs'kyi was determined to survive, and if he had to kill the devil in hell to do so, then he would. Finally, after nearly two weeks of intense combat, Sirs'kyi reached safety.¹¹

Through the remaining day and night hours of 23 and 24 July, the remnants of the 13th Corps broker out.¹² Excluding those who perished and the bulk of the wounded, as well as those who lost the will to participate in a breakout and were left behind, 13th Corps' battle was ended. For those who remained, escape was now virtually impossible. But before moving in for the final kill, Konev's forces unleashed a massive fusillade of firepower into a highly contained area.

The ground trembled and tore into shreds from the numerous blasts. Buildings, vehicles, trees, horses, wagons - and humans disappeared in huge blast of fiery red and orange explosions. So many shells rained in that virtually every foot of ground was struck. As Soviet gunners slammed in shell after shell into red-hot breach blocks, their senses totally numbed by the awesome noises, its gunners were determined to pulverize everything within their designated target areas. Indeed, so heavy and frantic was their fire that some Soviet gunners actually collapsed from heart failure beside their guns.

It was bad enough for the Red gunners. But for those who were on the receiving end, it was far worse. Theodore Rukh,* for example, never could have imagined that such a hell could exist.

Lying in a roadside ditch obscured by huge trees, Theodore was relieved that he had found some shelter. He did not want to abandon his wagon, but when he saw two supply wagons with drivers and horses directly in front of him disappear in huge blasts, Theodore knew that he had to leap off his wagon and seek shelter. As he lay in the ditch, massive explosions rocked everything. Looking up, he saw a smoking crater where just seconds before his wagon and

two horses had stood. It was clearly apparent that some enemy spotter or aerial observer was doing an excellent job of calling in ground fires.

More screams of incoming shells warned Theodore to remain in the ditch as massive explosions ripped everything into pieces. "God!" shouted Theodore, "Please help me!"

But there was no help, or reprieve, as raining shells continued to explode all around. With cordite and smoke filling his nose and lungs, Theodore became nauseous and craved to get up and escape. Realizing, however, that death was virtually guaranteed if he stood up, Theodore remained in the ditch.

Shells continued to rain in. Earth, stones, gravel, wood, and other debris rained down upon the grenadier. Without respite, the thunderous barrage showered death and destruction. Theodore lost consciousness.

Awakening hours later, he was surprised to find himself alive. Lifting his head, he saw that his helmet was gone. Apparently, as he had laid unconscious, the concussion from an explosion had blown it away. Rising slowly to his feet, Theodore observed his tattered clothes. Along with his helmet, his weapon had been blown away.

Theodore detected an eerie silence. Numerous craters pockmarked the terrain, causing the earth's ash covered surface to resemble a lunar landscape. Not one tree, or even tree trunk, remained standing. The road had been completely obliterated. As for the small settlement which Theodore had passed by before driving into hell, it no longer existed. Nothing existed, nothing at all. Armageddon had come and gone.

Dejected, exhausted, and unsure of what to do, Theodore crawled into a crater and fell into a deep sleep. He remained there until a roving UPA patrol came upon him, awakened him, and took him into their ranks.

When the sun finally set on 23 July 1943, the "Battle of Brody" was over. In the following day or two, Soviet mop-up forces battled with individuals and small groups but for the greater part, the battle was over. In honor of the Soviet victory, it is reported that Stalin personally ordered a twenty-four artillery gun salute in Moscow.¹³

At the end of July 1944, the Division had completely withdrawn from Galicia. Until the conclusion of the war almost a year later, the Division would never again operate in Galicia, Ukraine, or any part of the Soviet Union. Consequently, in its second year of existence, the Division could not have been "shooting, raping and robbing civilians, most of them Jews, in the neighborhood of Lvov," nor could it have been conducting "mass shootings, hangings, beatings, tortures, and medical experiments on live victims," as falsely implied by Kurt Fleischmann.¹⁴

1 L.Z., "38" pokiv (38 Years), *Visti*, 1982, No. 5-6, p. 55.

2 According to Bohdan Levytskyi, en route through Pochapy, he witnessed rows of wounded lying adjacent to Pochapy's cemetery and its church. At the moment, the church was being utilized as a makeshift hospital. Doctors and medical orderlies were seen taking care of the wounded. Until the last moment, strong efforts were made to evacuate the wounded. But after 22 July, when it became virtually impossible to conduct any further evacuations, those not removed were overrun by Soviet ground forces. See Levytskyi's, "Pochapy" (in *Brody*) (N.Y.: East Side Press, 1964), p. 10. It is important to note that by this time, the UPA had dispatched a number of medical nurses and orderlies, some of them girls no younger than 15 and 16 years of age, into the battle area to assist the wounded. UPA's personnel were observed at Pochapy. UPA's medical service also made an effort to evacuate a number of the wounded and injured into its underground. Under very adverse conditions, UPA's personnel also displayed true humanitarianism. UPA's medics treated not only the wounded soldiers of the Galicia Division, but as well the German and captured Soviets who required medical assistance.

3 It is known that Chaplain Durbak never entered the UPA.

4 Ren, *My Life's Mosaic*, pp. 174-175. The corridor was, however, expanded on several occasions. See also Heike, *English ed.*, p. 51.

5 In the following weeks and months, a small number of the missing reappeared. Most, however, perished.

6 Levytskyi, "Pochapy (Prolom z Okruzhennia)" (Pochapy (Breakout from Encirclement)), in *Brody, 1944-1964*, pp. 10-11. According to Reverend Kleparczuk, the main breakout was through Pochapy, Belzetz, Skvariava, and Knyazhe. "Dorohamy i Stezhkamy Bridshchynny" (Fording through the Encirclements Roads and Paths), p. 213. In a personal discussion with Yuriy Krokhmaluk, the former Divisional staff officer substantiated the breakout largely occurred through these places. See also Heike's, *English ed.*, 47-53; *Ukrainian ed.*, pp. 99-104.

7 *CCCP, 1941-1945*, p. 593. According to this Soviet source, throughout the entire day of Saturday, 22 July, Soviet forces fought to eliminate the encircled forces in the vicinity of Brody. Although the Soviet source cites the encircled enemy lost much of its personnel and equipment, it is clearly evident that the fighting was also very difficult for the Soviets by the number of air sorties flown that day against those inside the pocket. (*Ibid.*)

8 Apparently, what remained of the 91st Independent Tank was simply just incorporated into other Soviet tank units. A close examination of Soviet military units in various Red Army Orders of Battle reveal the tank brigade to be non-existent from August, 1944.

9 For a fascinating account of L.Z.'s capture, imprisonment, and escape, see "38 Rokiv" (38 Years), *Visti Kombatanta*, 1982, No. 5-6, pp. 53-55; and *Visti Kombatanta*, 1983, pp. 74-76.

10 For a personal account of the difficulties experienced during the entire Battle of Brody to include the breakout phase, see Sylenko's, "Za Proryv z Otochennia" (Breakout From Encirclement), in *Brody*, pp. 255-264.

11 See also M. Vysots'kyi's, "Spomyn: V. Richnytsiu Boiu Pid Brodamy" (Remembrance: Hand-to-Hand Combat at Brody), *Visti Kombatanta*, 1978, No. 3, pp. 63.64.

12 Contemporary Soviet sources acknowledge that heavy fighting occurred in Knayzhe. See *Lashchenko*, pp. 318-319. According to Laschenko, just in Knyazhe's vicinity alone hundreds of prisoners were recorded.

In the final stages of the breakout battle, various authors acknowledge that there was a considerable amount of hand-to-hand combat. This is substantiated not only by Yuriy Krokhmaliuk, Veryha, and a host of Divisional Brody combatants, but as well by contemporary sources such as Madej's, *Russo-German War: Summer 1944*, pp. 56-58; *Ready*, p. 370; and the German Wehrmacht communiques of 18-23 July 1944. See *Ostfront 1944*, pp. 236-238. *World War II Encyclopedia*, Vol. 12, p. 1660, accurately described the Brody pocket as a "moving pocket from which several thousand men managed to escape during a night attack of hand-to-hand combat." And because such pockets always pose as a threat to an opponent, strong efforts will be taken to eliminate any sizable force from disrupting an attacker's rear. Needless to say, such fighting frequently develops into close-in and very harsh combat.

13 Veryha, *Along the Roads*, English synopsis, p. 186.

14 Kurt Fleischmann, "Conspiracy to Conceal" in *World War II Investigator* (London: England, 1989), Vol. 1, No. 10, p. 10.

AN EVALUATION OF THE DIVISION'S CASUALTIES AT BRODY

Arriving in Lviv several days before the Galician capital fell on 27 July 1944 to the troops of the 1st Ukrainian Front, Yuriy Krokhmaliuk was shocked to learn from the Military Committee that he, as well as the other 10,000 soldiers of the Division, had been "killed-in-action."¹

As Krokhmaliuk examined the lengthy lists of those reported killed, he not only found the names of many soldiers that had successfully broken out, or had not even been surrounded (such as those in the Division's Replacement Battalion), but found his own name as well. Stepping back outside, Krokhmaliuk saw crowds of people surrounding those who had accompanied Krokhmaliuk; all were inquiring about loved ones within the Division. Indeed, the crowd was so large that Krokhmaliuk had a difficult time in re-entering the military automobile.

Slowly driving westward through city streets filled with civilians fleeing in the same direction, Krokhmaliuk was not only distressed and angry about the fact that many of those listed killed were actually alive but, worse, that many families were already informed of their "losses."

So how many were actually killed at Brody? What are the true figures?

"Biy Pid Brodamy" cites that of 11,000 soldiers in the encirclement, 7,000 soldiers and officers were lost. From these, the greater portion were killed, wounded, or fell into communist hands [prisoners of war];² Savaryn cites

"7,000 lost at Brody;"³ "from 11,000 Divisional soldiers and officers, only approximately 3,000 returned from encirclement;"⁴ "of 18,000 men roll call revealed 7,000 as missing;"⁵ "14,000 went into combat, and 3,000 returned;"⁶ "approximately 2,000 returned;"⁷ and "for the ideological armed struggle against the Bolshevik occupation of Ukraine, duty called upon the flower of the youth - 7,000 at Brody."⁸ Svoboda, a Ukrainian newspaper dated from 2 August 1952 cited "7,000 fell for an ideology,"⁹ while the Encyclopedia of Ukraine cites "7,000 killed or captured."¹⁰ An article appearing in an emigre journal regarding the Brody Battle cited "that within the encirclement, over 7,000 of our soldiers were killed;"¹¹ and an article appearing on 29 May 1991 in the city of Lviv cited "that from 11,000 Divisional soldiers, at Brody 5,000 perished, and approximately 3,000 remained alive."¹²

Various former Divisional soldiers have also cited various figures. Reverend (former Chaplain) Nahayewsky cites "approximately 8,000 young Ukrainians perished!"¹³ while Volodymyr Molodets'kyi cited "that of 11,000; 5,000 perished at Brody."¹⁴ Divisional officer Lubomyr Ortynskyi cited "around 4,000 perished in the encirclement;"¹⁵ and Yaroslav Tir* stated "almost 10,000 fell!"¹⁶ Numerous other Ukrainian sources cited figures of no less than 7,000 killed-in-action and some, even more. What is the truth?

According to Yuriy Krokhmaliuk, approximately 10,400 troops (including those of the Replacement Battalion) deployed to the eastern front from Neuhammer. Of this strength, 3,000 resurfaced after Brody. Krokhmaliuk state "it is not known how many entered UPA's ranks," but added "a sizable number did end up in the insurgency."¹⁷ But until the conclusion of the war, Krokhmaliuk carefully recorded the number of men who, in the weeks and months following Brody, reentered the Division either in Neuhammer, Slovakia, Yugoslavia, or Austria. Some of them arrived from the UPA; others, incorporated into various German units as they fought out of the pocket, returned once the front was reestablished; and some returned via the Soviet Army. This occurred when after the breakout some returned home, discarded their uniforms, and attempted to hide out. But they were soon drafted into the Soviet Army. After a period of training, they entered Soviet front-line units as replacements. Defecting to the German side at a moment of opportunity, in due time they returned to the Division. On more than one occasion, shouts of laughter, cheers and embracing exclamations were heard in Neuhammer and elsewhere as men returned to their former units. "Stefan, you bastard! Welcome back! We thought you were killed!" "I was, but hell was too hot for me. So I decided to come back." "Myhailo's back! Great to see you!" and so forth. However, moments of happiness were frequently shattered when a returnee inquired about a brother, cousin, or close friend. After a period of silence, someone's reply of "Stefan, we buried him at Koltiw;" "...he never returned.

No one ever saw him again; "...unless he ended up in the UPA, he's probably dead," erased all moments of jubilation.

As attested to by Krokhmaliuk, in the ensuing months after Brody, slightly more than 2,300 returned; altogether, with the 3,000 who returned initially, slightly over 5,300 in total made it back to the Division.¹⁸ However, this figure does not include those who remained in the UPA until the end of the war, and continued to fight within the insurgency until well into the 1950's;¹⁹ nor does it include those who returned home and succeeded in hiding out; or those who remained in a German unit until the war's end.²⁰

Yuriy Krokhmaliuk emphasized that the Division committed slightly over 10,000 soldiers to Brody, where it encountered massive Soviet ground and aerial forces and yet, in excess of 5,000 succeeded in breaking out with many others ending up in the UPA. If one takes these figures into consideration, then it becomes clear that under extraordinarily tough conditions, the Division executed a successful breakout, rather than being destroyed at Brody, as is the popular belief. As for the number of those killed-in-action at Brody, the former Divisional staff officer cites a figure of no less than 1,600 but not over 2,000.²¹ But as Krokhmaliuk himself stated, this figure does not include the number of those captured, who later perished deep in the interior of Russia's slave labor camp system.

Krokhmaliuk's observations and figures are closely substantiated by his brother Roman, according to whom 10,050 men were deployed to Brody.²² Deducting the 3,000 returnees, the wounded who were evacuated prior to encirclement, the estimated number of those who ended up in the insurgency or returned home, in the end a figure of 2,690 were either killed-in-action or severely wounded.²³ While, of course, this was a huge and tragic loss, it is far lower than the losses assumed by many.

In regards to the Battle of Brody, the Soviets have also provided various figures. But, as usually was the case, their figures were very inflated and were submitted solely for purposes of propaganda. According to one post World War II account, at Brody eight German divisions were destroyed and 38,000 officers and soldiers were killed and 17,175 were captured.²⁴ But this figure is obviously tremendously exaggerated because prior to Konev's offensive, the entire 13th Corps, to include the "Galicia" Division, totalled no more than 32,000-35,000 men.

For many years following World War II, no proper figures were available. But with the emergence of "glasnost" and a desire by many Soviet historians to at long last share historical information in an objective manner (unpermissible previously by Soviet authorities), at long last accurate and objective accounts, as well as new information, began to surface.²⁵

One such account, originating covertly in Lviv in the late 1970's but finally appearing overtly in 1989, reveals that UPA Colonel "Kaluna" cited a strength of "almost 3,000 Divisional members reinforced UPA's ranks following the encirclement."²⁶ It is now known that others also attempted to enter UPA's ranks, but failed to do so. In one instance in August 1944, a strength of at least 300 Divisional soldiers attempted to enter the UPA in the Carpathian Mountains. After establishing contact with a commander named "Hutsul," the soldiers moved to their rendezvous point. Falling into an ambush, no more than 50 escaped.²⁷ According to Vashchenko, no less than 3,000 Divisional soldiers entered the insurgency. Although in the following weeks and months some left to return to the Division, a high percentage stayed on. In the post-war period, some perished. But some returned to western Europe and later emigrated while others returned home and, in due time, blended into the populace.²⁸

According to Yuriy Krokhmaliuk, the "Galicia" Division's soldiers could fill UPA's ranks in such ways: desertion from the ranks during travels to the homeland; by escaping under certain circumstances (i.e. Kampfgruppe "Beyersdorff"); or during the Brody battle and afterwards.²⁹ In his 1975 study, Krokhmaliuk cited "it may be ascertained, that many of the Ukrainian [Galicia] Divisional soldiers took full advantage of the chaos within the encirclement and entered the ranks of the UPA under the condition to avoid capture."³⁰

Krokhmaliuk is correct in his assertion that "many" Divisional soldiers ended up in the UPA; however, Krokhmaliuk is unable to provide a figure.

Divisional soldiers usually entered the UPA in platoon or group strengths; fewer entered as individuals. But the Divisional soldiers did tremendously bolster the insurgency. According to Krokhmaliuk and UPA documents, following the Brody battle, such newly composed UPA companies were formed: Lisovna; Burlak; Rydachiv; Dryzhynnyky; Halaida I; Halaida II; and others.³¹ Within such companies, up to 50 ex-Divisional soldiers frequently provided the nucleus while new volunteers rounded out the strengths.³² This figure, however, did not include the numerous individuals who served on various battalion, divisional, regional, and even, in Shukhevych's command structure.

Such was the case with Wolodymyr Yurkevych and Vasyl Hvozdetyskyi, a.k.a. Emir Kor. In the case Yurkevych, who enlisted in the Division in 1943, in July he left on the first transport to Heidelberg. After completing his recruit training, in October 1943 Yurkevych left for the Lauenburg (Pommern) NCO Academy. In March, he returned to the Division (now at Neuhammer) as an NCO where he immediately assumed a Platoon Sergeant's position; within weeks, Yurkevych was sent to an officer's school at Kienschlag (Bohmen-Mahren). In July 1944, he returned to the Division at Neuhammer as a senior NCO, with orders to be promoted to Waffen-Untersturmfuhrer. Taking the last

transport bound for Galicia, that same month at Brody he entered the UPA. Because of his military training, Yurkevych was posted to a regional UPA command headquarters. There he remained until the postwar period.

According to former Divisional officer Major Ren, following the breakout battles, "many soldiers of the 1st Ukrainian [Galicia] Division entered the UPA and new Druzhyny companies were formed."³³ And a former Divisional staff officer, Bohdan Pidhainyi, cites that Divisional staff personnel also entered UPA's main command headquarters.³⁴

Ultimately, it appears that no less than 3,000 to as many as 4,000 entered the UPA.³⁵ Some stayed briefly, but others remained in the insurgency until the war's end. Realistically speaking, German fears of widespread desertion to the Ukrainian insurgency proved correct.

As for Ukrainian sources which cite high fatalities of "4,000; 5,000; 7,000; 8,000 and up," and allege that the Division "was destroyed at Brody," "annihilated," or "obliterated," these sources are grossly exaggerated and are solely based on false assumptions, rumors and propaganda. Compounding the matter is the fact that these Ukrainian sources have erroneously been accepted as valid by a number of contemporary western writers who, in turn, have exaggerated the inaccuracy.

1 Personal discussion with Yuriy Krokhmaliuk.

2 *Biy Pid Brodamy*, p. 157. This figure encompassed the dead, wounded and captured.

3 Petro Savaryn, *Visti Kombatanta*, 1984, No. 5-6, p. 18.

4 "Fakty Pro Ukrainsky Dyvizii" (Facts About the Ukrainian Division), *Visti Kombatanta*, 1985, No. 4, p. 25.

5 Ready, p. 370.

6 "Komisyia Deshena Dlya Rozshuku Voyennykh Zlochyniv" (The Deschenes Commission for the Search of War Criminals), *Visti Kombatanta*, 1984, No. 2, p. 47.

7 I.T., "Biy Pid Brodamy" (Battle at Brody), *Visti Kombatanta*, 1984, No. 3, p. 74.

8 Ivan Kedryn, "Problema Dyvizii" (The Division's Problems), *Visti Kombatanta*, 1958, No. 5-6, p. 15.

9 O. Lysiak, "Biy Pid Brodamy" (Battle of Brody), *Svoboda*, 2 August 1952, pp. 50-51. The figure of approximately 7,000 killed is also substantiated by "Biy Pid Brodamy" in 1943-1993. *The 1st Ukrainian Division*, p. 21.

10 Kubiyovych, *Encyclopedia of Ukraine*, Vol. 1, p. 177.

11 *Detroit Novynyk*, June, 1988, No. 188.

12 Anatoliy Nedils'kyi, "Yak Vy Umyrally, Vam Dzvony Ne Hraly" (When You Were Dying, the Bells Did Not Ring for You), in *Za Vil'nu Ukrainu, (For a Free Ukraine)* Wednesday, 29 May 1991.

13 Nahayewskyi, *A Soldier Priest Remembers*, p. 84.

14 Molodetskyi's figure was cited by A. Nedils'kyi in the 29 May 1991 article appearing in *Za Vil'nu Ukrainu*. (For a Free Ukraine).

15 Lubomyr Ortynskyi, *Brody, 1944-1964* (N.Y.: East Side Press, 1964), p. 9.

16 Personal discussion with Tir.

17 Personal discussion with Yuriy Krokhmaliuk.

18 Personal discussion with Yuriy Krokhmaliuk.

19 Thus, the ex-troops of the 14th Waffen SS hold the longest record for combat activities. See also *Gaucher*, p. 354.

21 Because a small number of the Galician Germans who succeeded in breaking out never returned to the Division, it is assumed they remained within German units.

22 Personal discussion with Yuriy Krokhmaliuk.

23 Roman Krokhmaliuk's review of Reverend Nahayewskyi's book, "*A Soldier Priest Remembers*," in *Visti Kombatanta*, 1985, No. 3, p. 69.

24 Personal discussion with Roman Krokhmaliuk. If one takes into consideration that the Division's Replacement Battalion was in the rear and not encircled, then fewer than 10,000 ended up on the front line. Roman's figures were derived from various military Divisional documents, information obtained from German archives, and returnees from Soviet captivity and the Ukrainian UPA insurgency.

25 *Istoriia Velikoi Otechestvennoi Vojni Sovetskogo Soiuzu 1941-1945* (History of the Great Patriotic War of the Soviet Union 1941-1945), Moscow: 1962), Vol. 4, p. 214; *СССР, 1941-1945*, p. 593, cites 17,000 soldiers and officers were captured.

26 Yet, already in the late 1960's, more accurate and realistic accounts began to surface. This is evidenced by a Ukrainian account. Regarding the Brody encirclement, the Ukrainian account reveals that the surrounded enemy (the Division "Galicia" is also identified), was destroyed and altogether 15,000 were killed and another 2,500 Hitlerite soldiers and officers were captured. *Istoriia Mist i Sil Ukrainskoi RSR, L'viv's'ka Oblast* (History of the Ukrainian SSR's Towns and Villages in Lviv's Region), (Kiev: Holovna Redaktsiia Ukrainskoi Radians'koi Entsyklopedii, 1968), p. 125. While as of date no official figures have been properly determined, the Ukrainian account of 1968 appears to be the closest to accuracy.

27 Vitaly Vynohradskiy, "*I Nastav Svitanok*" (And the Dawn Arose), Lviv: October, 1978), pp. 48, 58; Vasyl Sirskyi, "Dyviziynyky v UPA - Desiatnyk Evhen Smyk" (Divisional Soldiers in the UPA - Sergeant Evhen Smyk), *Visti Kombatanta*, 1990, No. 1, p. 75. According to Sirskyi, Smyk always stated that he only entered the Division to obtain military training, and that once on the front, he would defect.

28 *Visti Kombatanta*, 1990, No. 1, p. 75. Hutsul was either an agent, or someone on his staff was working for the Soviets.

29 Yuriy Krokhmaliuk, "Voiaky Dyvizii "Halychyna" v Ukrainskiy Povstanskiy Armii" (The Division's Soldiers in the UPA), *Visti Kombatanta*, 1975, No. 6, p. 32.

30 *Ibid.*

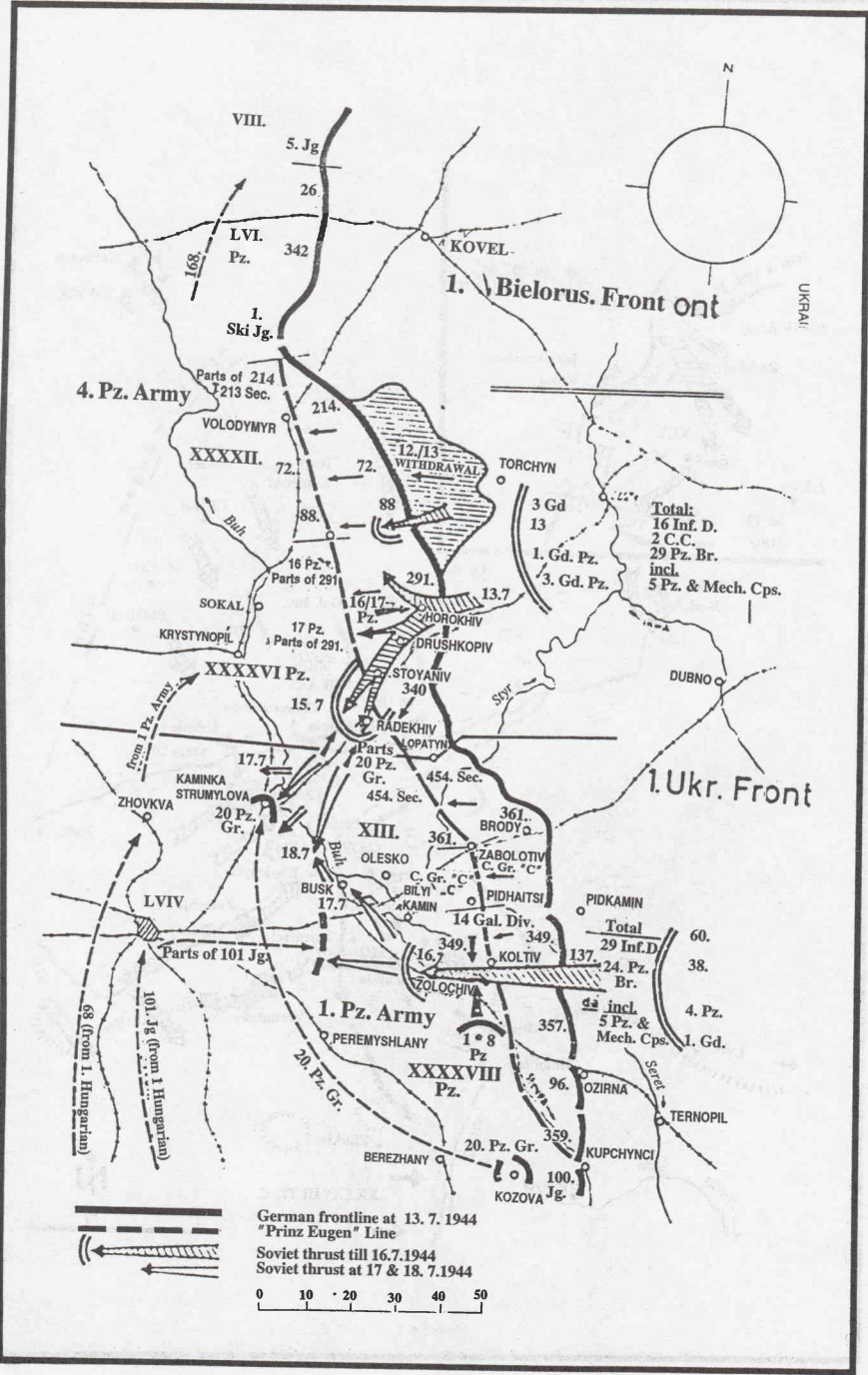
31 *Ibid*, pp. 33-34.

32 *Ibid*, p. 34.

33 Ren, *My Life's Mosaic*, p. 165.

34 *Ibid*, pp. 165-166. In addition to Yurkevych, there was Basil Hvozdetzkyi (alias Emir Kor) who, as a radio communications specialist, was personally posted by Shukhevych to UPA's top command to head UPA's communications.

35 In many of his writings and in a personal discussion, Yuriy Krokhmaliuk cited that "many ended up in the UPA, but the figure is unknown." However, in "Materialy Do Istorii 1-oi UD UNA" (Materials for the History of the 1st Ukrainian Division, Ukrainian National Army), *Visti Kombatanta*, 1978, No. 3, pp. 35-36, Krokhmaliuk cites that "over 2,000 were found within the UPA's units."



UKRAINE

1. Bielor. Front ont

1.Ukr. Front

Total:
16 Inf. D.
2 C.C.
29 Pz. Br.
incl.
5 Pz. & Mech. Cps.

Total
29 Inf. D.
24 Pz. Br.
incl.
5 Pz. & Mech. Cps.
1. Gd.

German frontline at 13. 7. 1944
"Prinz Eugen" Line
Soviet thrust till 16.7.1944
Soviet thrust at 17 & 18. 7.1944

