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The World War

1914 to 1918

Edited in the

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The Military Operations on Land

Eighth Volume

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The Operations of the Year 1915

Events in the West in Spring and Summer, in the East from Spring to the End of the Year

With thirty-nine Maps and Sketches

Published by E. S. Mittler & Sohn  
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Introduction to the Eighth Volume.

The present Volume VIII describes the operations in the West in the spring and summer of 1915, in the East from spring until the end of the year.

The previous practice of concluding the depiction of events on the various theaters of war at the same time had to be deviated from, as the operations in the East formed internally coherent actions until the end of the year, whose depiction could not be interrupted. This also results in the larger scope of the present volume. The review deals with the position of the German Supreme Army Command on the question of warfare in the East throughout the entire year of 1915.

The inclusion of military formations has been omitted, as a special volume "Military Formations" as a supplement to the overall war work is in progress. The operational volumes will henceforth only provide brief information in footnotes about the respective troop divisions of the armies.

The Historical Commission has entrusted Mr. Major General a.D. Rudolf von Borries in Potsdam and Dr. phil. Hans Rothfels, Professor of History at the University of Königsberg i. Pr., with the review of Volume VIII. The Reichsarchiv expresses its special thanks to both reporters.

On October 31, 1931, the previous President of the Reichsarchiv, Dr. h.c. Hermann Ritter Mertz von Quirnheim, retired after reaching the age limit. He was succeeded by the Director of the Historical Department, Dr. h.c. Hans von Haeften. Oberarchivrat Wolfgang Foerster was appointed Director of the Historical Department.

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Abbreviations.

(Valid only for the notes.)

Army Group .......... = A. Gr.

Army Department ....... = A. Abt. or Abtlg.

Army Corps ........... = A. K.

Reserve Corps ......... = R. K.

Landwehr Corps ........ = Ldw. K.

Guard Corps ........... = G. K.

Group ............... = Gr.

General Command ...... = Gen. Kdo.

Corps Command ........ = K. Kdo. or Kdo.

Commander ........... = Kdr.

Higher Cavalry

Commander ........... = H. K. K.

Cavalry Corps ..... = K. K.

Infantry Division .. = I. D. or Inf. Div.

Reserve Division ..... = R. D. or Res. Div.

Cavalry Division .. = K. D. or Kav. Div.

Landwehr Division .... = Ldw. D.

Landsturm Division ... = Ldst. D. or Ldst. Div.

Replacement Division ...... = Ers. D. or Ers. Div.

Guard Infantry

Division ............. = G. I. D.

Infantry Brigade .... = I. Br.

Reserve Infantry

Brigade .............. = R. I. Br. or R. Br.

Landwehr Infantry

Brigade .............. = L. I. Br. or L. Br.

Landsturm Brigade .... = Ldst. Br.

Regiment ............. = Regt.

Battalion ............ = Btl.

Battery ............. = Bttr.

Squadron ............. = Est.

Cannons .............. = Kan.

Howitzers ............ = Haub.

Mortar ............... = Mör.

Mine Thrower .......... = Min. W.

Pioneer .............. = Pi.

Composite ...... = zsgfst.

Reinforced ............ = verst.

Independent .......... = selbst.

Austro-Hungarian = öst.-ung.

Riflemen ............. = Sch. or Schütz.

Territorial .......... = Terr.

Kuban ................ = Kub.

Coastal ............... = Küst.

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The Operations of the Year 1915

The events in the West in spring and summer, in the East from spring until the end of the year

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I. The Situation of the Central Powers in May 1915.

Map 1 Volume VII, Map 5 and Sketch 1 Volume VIII.

I. The Intervention of Italy.

When General von Falkenhayn, in clear recognition of the threatening

military and political situation of the Danube Monarchy, decided on

April 13, 1915, to launch the major relief attack in Galicia, he believed

he would only temporarily have to forego the realization of his offensive

plans in the West1). The task assigned to Generaloberst von Mackensen,

to force the Russians to evacuate their front in West Galicia up to the

Lupkow Pass, could already be considered solved by May 8 with the

reaching of the Wisłok. Thus, General von Falkenhayn faced the question

of whether to be content with the successes achieved in the East and

now resume his plans against Serbia and in the West. The proposal of

General von Conrad, to exploit the victory on the Galician battlefield by

pursuing the Russians to the San, immediately found his approval2), as

"the opportunity to deal the enemy a blow that cannot be compensated

for" must be utilized3).

This decision meant for some time the abandonment of the offensive

plans in the West. It was to be expected that the enemies would exploit

the weakening of the German front there for major attacks, the outcome

of which remained uncertain given their growing numerical superiority4).

At the beginning of May 1915, there were about 97 German infantry

divisions on the French-Belgian battlefield, while the enemy was estimated

at 110 to 112 divisions, which were on average significantly stronger than

the Germans. In terms of reserves, the Supreme Army Command behind

the Western Front5) had about 7½ infantry divisions, as well as numerous

heavy batteries, so that in the event of an enemy attack, the artillery

combat strength of an army could be doubled in a few days.

1) Volume VII, p. 345 and 360/361. — 2) Volume VII, p. 419 ff. — 3) Volume VII, p. 421. — 4) p. 35. — 5) p. 56.  
† World War. Volume VIII.

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The Situation of the Central Powers in May 1915.

On the Russian theater of war, from the Baltic Sea to Bukovina, 111½ German and A-H¹) infantry divisions faced an estimated 114 Russian divisions²). The strength of the A-H forces stationed at the Serbian border totaled 234,000 men, while the Serbian army was estimated at 210,000 men³). Against Italy, 112 battalions⁴) provided border protection. The forces of the Danube Monarchy, surrounded by enemies, were thus stretched to their absolute limits.

From mid-March to mid-May, nine infantry divisions and two cavalry divisions from the Western Army had been transferred to the German Eastern Front. Whether additional forces could be withdrawn from the western theater of war in favor of the East was something General von Falkenhayn wanted to decide only during the course of defending against the expected enemy attack. His decisive consideration was that returning forces from the East to restore the situation on the Western front had to be avoided if at all possible, as long as operations against Russia continued to show promising progress.

Additionally, the development of the political situation in Italy, Turkey, and the Balkans could have a significant influence on decisions at the Western Front and in Galicia. Therefore, in May 1915, it demanded particular attention from the military leadership of the Central Powers.

The great tension of those days was vividly expressed in the exchange of views between both Chiefs of General Staff. In two letters in quick succession to General von Conrad on April 30 and May 2, General von Falkenhayn urged anew and urgently for concessions to the demands of the Italian government⁵). On May 4, Kaiser Wilhelm supported this approach by taking a similar step with his imperial ally.

¹) The designation "Austro-Hungarian," which frequently recurs in troop specifications and descriptions of battles on the Eastern Front, has been abbreviated to "A-H" in this volume for space-saving reasons.  
²) Along the Romanian border, only A-H gendarmerie posts reinforced by Landsturm were stationed, totaling approximately 9,600 men.  
³) The total strength of the Serbian army was estimated at 232 battalions, 36 squadrons, 536 field guns and about 240 heavy artillery pieces. The Montenegrin forces, which were organized into small individual detachments, were estimated to comprise 53,000 men and 140 guns.  
⁴) Not including the security garrison of the Austrian border fortifications. Details on p. 26/27.  
⁵) Volume VII, p. 343/344.

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Diplomatic Negotiations between Germany, Austria-Hungary, and Italy.

taking a similar step with his imperial ally. The Vienna Cabinet declared itself ready on the same day for new, very far-reaching concessions. This yielding coincided with the termination of the Triple Alliance treaty communicated to the Danube Monarchy by Italy on May 4. On May 5, the extraordinary German ambassador, Prince Bülow, reported from Rome that the Italian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Baron Sonnino, had informed him after learning of the Vienna offers: Just 14 days ago, everything could have been settled with these proposals; to his remark that this was still possible today, Baron Sonnino remained silent. On May 6, the news arrived in Vienna that the Italian Council of Ministers had described the proposals of Austria-Hungary as "not a sufficient basis for negotiation." Subsequently, Emperor Franz Joseph declared in a telegram to Emperor Wilhelm on the same day that he had reached "the utmost limit of conceivable accommodation" with the latest concessions.

The seriousness of the Italian crisis prompted a discussion among the leading statesmen and general staff chiefs of the Central Powers on May 7 in Teschen. The latest news from Rome was somewhat more hopeful. It was said that Italy had indeed concluded a treaty with the Entente on April 26, but reserved a four-week period for decision on whether this treaty should also come into force. Thus, there still seemed to be a faint hope of keeping Italy out of the war.

So far, General von Falkenhayn had evasively answered all inquiries from Austria-Hungary regarding German military assistance in the event of Italy's possible entry into the war; this possibility could only be decided in the "concrete case." Determining for this stance was, apart from the military situation, which made any fragmentation of forces undesirable, above all the effort to induce the Danube Monarchy to remain as accommodating as possible towards Italy until the end.

1) These concessions involved, besides the cession of the largest part of Trentino, also considerable territorial cessions to Friuli including Gradisca, the establishment of an Italian university in Trieste, disinterest of Austria-Hungary in Albania; however, "guarantees against the establishment of a third power" would have to be created there.  
2) Volume VII, p. 343/344.  
3) In fact, the Salandra Cabinet had already committed itself firmly through the treaty of April 26, but had set the conditions that hostilities should not begin for four weeks. The Chief of the General Staff, General Cadorna, declared on May 6 that the army would be ready to march at the earliest on May 20. (Salandra: "Intervento", pp. 174—176 and p. 242.) 4) Volume VII, p. 364.

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The Situation of the Central Powers in May 1915.

to prompt action against Italy. Now the situation had changed. On the Eastern Front, there was hope, thanks to the great successes of the Galician operation, to soon make forces available; the Viennese government had indeed gone to the limits of what was possible in its concessions, perhaps even beyond. This explained why General von Falkenhayn, during the meeting in Teschen, was prepared to send German forces to the Italian border if necessary; however, their extent had to be made dependent on the general situation upon Italy's entry into the war.

Regarding the political outcome of this discussion, Chancellor von Bethmann Hollweg informed Prince Bülow in Rome on May 8 that the Viennese cabinet was ready to "ultimately approve everything."

Moreover, statements by the previously oppressive former Italian Prime Minister Giolitti about the seriousness of the situation finally prompted the Austro-Hungarian and the extraordinary German ambassador in Rome, without waiting for Vienna's consent, to inform the Italian Foreign Minister on May 10 of even further-reaching Austrian concessions. These included the cession of all territories inhabited by Italians in Tyrol and on the western Isonzo bank with Gradisca, furthermore, for Trieste, a declaration as an "Imperial Free City" and a free port, as well as the establishment of an Italian university, and finally, complete disinterest of Austria-Hungary in Albania. Germany declared itself ready to guarantee the loyal execution of these offers to the Italian government.

Although these concessions went significantly beyond those previously made, indeed even beyond what Giolitti had suggested a few months earlier, the Austro-Hungarian Foreign Minister, Baron Burian, subsequently declared his agreement to them to his own embassy in Rome. The question was merely whether the offers did not go too far, and whether the Italian government had not already committed itself too far to the Triple Alliance. Then everything depended on the internal political development in Italy, which still seemed to favor the Central Powers at the last moment; for on May 13, Prime Minister Salandra, due to strong resistance threatening him in the Italian parliament against the war policy, submitted his resignation. However, when it became known on the afternoon of May 16 that the King had not accepted Salandra's resignation, it was clear that the decision for war had been made.

1) See p. 3 note 1.

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Exchange of Views of the Chiefs of Staff on Conducting Operations against Italy.

Although the increasingly significant military success of the Allies in Galicia seemed unable to change Italy's stance, there was hope that it could still positively influence the politically unstable situation in the Balkans. Above all, it was expected that Romania would adopt a more friendly attitude towards the Central Powers. Furthermore, there was renewed hope of finally winning over Bulgaria. The demand to secure a connection with Turkey by defeating Serbia became increasingly urgent due to the major landing operations of the British and French on the Gallipoli Peninsula, as raised by the Ottoman government. To secure Bulgaria's support against Serbia, both Chiefs of Staff agreed on May 12 in Pleß to inform Sofia that they were ready to immediately prepare the campaign against Serbia, given the favorable situation in Galicia and the current favorable water levels of the Danube; however, agreement on Bulgaria's military involvement was a prerequisite. The Bulgarian government was therefore informed by the German Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, von Jagow, of the proposal to immediately send a high-ranking officer to conclude a military convention at the German Great Headquarters, where representatives of Austria-Hungary and Turkey were also invited. However, the response to this offer was delayed due to the threatening developments in Rome. In fact, Bulgaria wanted to make its decision dependent on clarifying the general situation.

Meanwhile, General von Conrad proposed in a memorandum sent to Pleß on May 14 that if Italy's entry into the war became a reality, they should switch to defense in Galicia after reaching the Dniester-San line, but with the available forces — he calculated with ten Austro-Hungarian and ten German divisions — to attack the Italians; he believed that with sufficient German and Bulgarian forces involved, they could simultaneously conduct the campaign against Serbia. However, General von Falkenhayn could only agree to this proposal regarding the defense in Galicia, as he considered a military success in the Balkans necessary due to the Turks' precarious situation. He therefore planned to first attack Serbia and remain on the defensive against Italy in the meantime.

1) Volume VII, p. 364/365.

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The Situation of the Central Powers in May 1915.

On May 16, he made the following counterproposal: In Galicia, apart from the German 11th Army, 17 to 18 Austro-Hungarian and seven German divisions — a total of about 35 divisions — should be freed for the operation against Serbia and Italy. The attack against Serbia should be prepared immediately. Against Italy, Austria-Hungary should take over the cover in Carinthia, Carniola, and the coastal land with about 10 divisions. In Tyrol, General von Falkenhayn was ready to assign the same task to German troops. The Austro-Hungarian and Bavarian fortifications currently there should be placed under German command. To what extent German forces should be deployed in Tyrol could not yet be decided; in any case, efforts would be made to ensure that no advance of the Italians into Tyrolean land would occur.

In his response the next day, General von Conrad maintained that only 20 divisions could be withdrawn as the Galician front; he intended to deploy these against the Italians in a concentrated manner to defeat their 30 divisions, which were expected to advance in the general direction over Villach and Laibach towards the Danube line Vienna—Budapest. However, he did not want to relinquish the defense of Tyrol; it would fall under Austro-Hungarian command in the event of an advance by unreliable German forces. The security against Serbia and, if necessary, against Romania was the responsibility of the Austro-Hungarian Balkan forces.

In response to these statements, General von Falkenhayn repeated his operational proposal, but reduced the forces to be freed in Galicia to only 29 divisions. Including the Austro-Hungarian Balkan Army with 20 divisions, he believed he could use 49 divisions against Serbia and Italy. "Regarding the question of how they are to be deployed," — he wrote on May 17, "I do not want to address it until I have received Bulgaria's response").

1) The assumption that Austria-Hungary had over 20 divisions on the Serbian border was explained by the fact that General von Falkenhayn had learned from a statement by General von Conrad that the Austro-Hungarian Balkan Army was only 240,000 men strong. He now counted these forces among the 20 divisions, mistakenly assuming that most of the units stationed on the Serbian border could also be used against Italy. The Austro-Hungarian Ramstruppe with only 80,000 rifles strong. — See the memorandum of the Austro-Hungarian official war work (Volume II, pp. 277 and 278), according to which the Balkan forces were set up at the beginning of 1915 as an "offensive reserve" for the Austro-Hungarian front, later to serve as a "reserve army for the establishment of a front against Serbia".

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Contrasts in Views on the Conduct of Operations Against Italy.

which will hopefully be the case tomorrow or the day after. In any case,

it can already be said today that it would be possible either to keep

Serbia in check with nine divisions and strike against Italy with 40,

or to launch a short strike against Serbia with 31½ divisions, which

might firmly bind Bulgaria as well as Turkey and thus Romania to us,

and with 17½ divisions at least very sensitively halt the Italian advance

until the Serbian matter is settled."

An agreement on the main issue was not reached. While

General von Conrad maintained his view to "use all available forces

exclusively against Italy for the time being" and considered a

campaign in the Balkans "currently not feasible,"

General von Falkenhayn wanted to reserve his position on the

question of whether to first conduct the attack against Serbia or Italy.

Only through verbal discussion in Teschen on May 18 was a

certain balance of the mutual views achieved: Five

divisions of the Austro-Hungarian 5th (Balkan) Army were to be

immediately moved to the area west of Agram, where they could be

assembled by June 5. At the Serbian border, apart from border

securities and fortress garrisons, only two divisions were to remain,

whose immediate reinforcement by three German divisions from Galicia

was planned. Furthermore, on May 21, the Austro-Hungarian VII Corps

was to be transferred to Klagenfurt, as well as

two German and one Austro-Hungarian division to Marburg-Pettau.

These three were to join the five divisions of the previous Balkan

Army to form the new 5th Army under the command of General

von Borojevic. A newly to be formed German unit, the

"Alpenkorps," was to be subordinated to the Tyrolean

Land Defense Command, General of Cavalry Dankl, and the supreme

command on the entire Italian front was to be transferred to General

of Cavalry Archduke Eugen.

Despite these decisions, which only concerned the urgently

necessary measures at the moment, the German Chief of General Staff

advocated initially conducting a temporally and spatially limited

advance against Serbia. The forces used for this were to be later

used for the planned strike against Italy.

How much General von Falkenhayn's campaign against Serbia was at the forefront of all considerations became evident from the fact that he also endeavored on May 19 to create the conditions for its execution.

1) Letter from May 18, 1915, to the German Chief of General Staff.  
2) On the composition of the "Alpenkorps" see p. 18.

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Agreement of the Central Powers on the Conduct of the Multi-Front War.

The goal, "the final defeat of the Russian offensive power in Galicia," was to be achieved.

To gain clearer insight for future decisions, General von Falkenhayn on the same day requested information on how the Austro-Hungarian military leadership intended to conduct the strike against Italy in detail. He mentioned that, according to his estimate, "the beginning of the decisive battles could hardly be expected before about seven weeks from today," specifically east of the line Graz—Marburg—Agram. The immediate response indicated that General von Conrad anticipated an Italian advance in two directions, over Laibach—Marburg towards the Danube line Budapest—Raab and over Villach—Leoben towards Vienna. He planned to comprehensively attack and defeat the right Italian flank, while the enemy's left flank would be held back by border guards and troops to be assembled in Carinthia. The attack was to be led by the 5th Army, initially assembled with five divisions west of Agram, with three divisions at Marburg. "I expect," emphasized General von Conrad, "the incursion of stronger Italian forces across the border immediately after the declaration of war, probably on May 23 or 24, and must reckon with the 200-kilometer stretch from the border to Marburg—Agram taking three, at most four weeks, so until about June 14, at the latest June 20... However, I am clear that the eight divisions are far too weak for the strike and that everything must be done to immediately follow them with additional forces. By June 20, with full utilization of the railways, about 20 divisions could be assembled in the area of Graz—Marburg and west of Agram, which seems to me the necessary minimum for the decisive battle..."

However, General von Falkenhayn could not agree with these considerations. Given the situation in Galicia, it was by no means certain that 20 divisions would be available for the strike against Italy planned by General von Conrad in the foreseeable future. Under these circumstances, he insisted on deploying the available forces at the border for defense and went to Teschen on the afternoon of May 21 for further discussions. In a detailed exchange, an agreement was reached. Both chiefs of staff now agreed that the operation in Galicia should be brought to a conclusion as quickly as possible. Since it was not foreseeable when this would be the case, the planned dispatch of three divisions each to Marburg and to the Bosnian border was not in question.

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The Situation of the Central Powers in May 1915.

the border was not in question. Furthermore, during the discussion, it was revealed that

General von Falkenhayn assessed the situation on these two theaters of war

much more favorably than the Austro-Hungarian military leadership. He did not expect

an offensive from the Serbs and considered the offensive capability of the Italians to be low;

he expected their arrival in the Marburg—Agram line — as he

mentioned — significantly later than General von Conrad. Since no further reinforcements

were expected, he considered the deployment of the divisions advancing from the

Balkans in the front line at the border to be urgently necessary, to

hold back the Italians at the Isonzo in pure defense. He succeeded in

convincing General von Conrad of this plan despite strong reasons and objections. The slow progress of the offensive

operation in Galicia might also have convinced the Austro-Hungarian General

Staff that a quick arrival of the

local forces for a strike against Italy could no longer be expected.

In this sense, the following telegram was sent to Plesk on May 22:

"Considering the currently united troop forces against Italy, I have decided, after thorough consideration of all circumstances,

to initially observe a defensive procedure against Italy and to move the assembly of Balkan military contingents

and the main body of the 5th Army as well as the forces marching towards Carinthia as far forward as possible, thus relocating the first disembarkations to the Isonzo

and Villach."

After several days of conflicting opinions, the basis for the agreement in the upcoming

battles with Italy was established at the last hour on May 21, and clarity was also gained

regarding the continuation of the multi-front war: continuation

of the offensive of the allies on the eastern

front, defense on all other theaters of war.

On May 23, at 3:30 in the afternoon, Italy declared war on

Austria-Hungary, but not on Germany. The

German Reich leadership limited itself to breaking off diplomatic

relations; in this respect, the Italian government could not be unaware

that Italy, in its incursion into the Danube monarchy, would also encounter

Imperial German troops. As early as mid-January

1915, Prince Bülow had informed the Italian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Sonnino,

that in the event of a war between Italy and Austria-Hungary, "Germany would be found with all its might" at the side of its ally.

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Italy Declares War on Austria-Hungary.

Hungary stated that "Germany with all its strength" would be found at the side of its ally1). If Germany now merely limited itself to breaking off diplomatic relations with Italy, this was due to the desire to maintain, if possible, the supply of raw materials across the Italian border, and especially to consider the relationship with Romania. The news from there did not currently suggest any immediate danger, but Prime Minister Bratianu had told the German envoy in Bucharest, Baron von dem Busche, as late as May 21, that maintaining neutrality would be easier for him if not Germany, but Italy declared war. As the Chancellor informed General von Falkenhayn on May 21, King Ferdinand had assured the German envoy most emphatically that Romania had made no agreements with Italy, "so that Italy's actions would not result in Romania's entry." Although the situation was becoming difficult due to increasing pressure from the Entente, the King hoped to maintain neutrality. "On the other hand, Bratianu seems," the Chancellor continued, "to be conducting negotiations with Russia behind the King's back," which he abstracted. It was also said at Gegenhis Rifis, not to be misled. Our victories in the Carpathians have made a strong impression in Romania. This should initially rule out Romania's entry into the war, but this eventuality is by no means excluded for later. Beldimann3) considers joining "us" to be excluded as long as there is no internal ministerial crisis in Bucharest, for which there is currently no prospect. In any case, an action against Serbia would mean another guarantee that Romania remains calm." Thus, the situation in Bucharest seemed relaxed at the time. The German Chief of Staff therefore tried again to open the way through Romania for munitions transports to Turkey. However, he was not successful even now.

At present, reassuring news was coming from Greece.

1) Telegram from Prince Bülow on January 18, 1915, to the Foreign Office.  
2) Such negotiations have indeed taken place. Given Bratianu's very high demands, Sazonov became suspicious and believed that Romania was deliberately making unreasonable demands to avoid an agreement with Russia and "to evade the war." Fundamentally, the Romanian government had been granted the right to occupy the Danube Monarchy territories inhabited by Romanians by Russia as early as autumn 1914.  
3) See "Official Romania in the World War" (published by the Central Office for the Study of War Damages) pp. 178/179, 185, 207—210.  
3) Romanian envoy in Berlin.

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The battles of the Turks on the Gallipoli Peninsula¹) did not give rise to immediate concerns despite several serious crises. Of the 52 divisions of the Turkish army, eleven were deployed at the Dardanelles. The sent 65,000 French and English troops were unable to make further progress against their tenacious defense. However, it had to be assumed that the final outcome of the struggle depended not least on the unhindered influx of German war materials. However, General von Falkenhayn, based on reports available in Constantinople towards the end of May, gained the impression that the Ottoman Empire would be able to maintain the situation at the straits further on its own strength; thus, a delay in the offensive against Serbia could also be justified from the standpoint of the situation at the Dardanelles.

In the matter of declaring war on Italy, Turkey took the same stance as Germany; the outbreak of war had to be avoided as long as possible, as the political situation in the Balkans was still unclear.

In this development of events, Italy's declaration of war initially had no decisive influence on the military situation of the Central Powers. However, the economic consequences that Italy's entry into the war had for the Central Powers threatened to become noticeable immediately; above all, it was uncertain whether it would be possible to continue receiving supplies across the Italian border.

2. The Intensification of the Economic Situation of the Central Powers and the Submarine Trade War.

In the supply of foreign raw materials, Italy had previously played an important role. A significant portion of American cotton had been imported via Genoa since England declared the North Sea a war zone²). Difficulties that Italy initially posed to this transit were resolved through negotiations by the United States. However, since the declaration of war by Austria-Hungary, Italy also blocked the transit and export trade to Germany. The German economy was now dependent on the sea for the supply of raw materials, apart from the otherwise significant but overall minor supplies from neighboring countries.

¹) Volume VII, p. 364/365. — ²) Volume VI, p. 425 f.

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The Economic Consequences of Italy's Entry into the War.

...neutral countries, almost entirely reliant on their own production and existing reserves. The military administration had sought to address this extremely difficult situation by further implementing previously made measures1). Under the leadership of Major Koeth, who in the spring of 1915 succeeded Dr. Walter Rathenau, who resigned at his own request, at the head of the War Raw Materials Department of the Prussian War Ministry, the official management of war-essential raw materials was to be systematically expanded for a long duration of war. Based on previous experiences, the Raw Materials Department made a clear distinction between the needs of the army and the homeland and sought to increasingly limit the population's needs to the absolutely necessary level. Careful recording of domestic and occupied territories' stocks, systematic expansion of existing and development of new production sources, but above all, regulated distribution of raw material quantities according to the importance of demand were intended to meet the continuously increasing requirements for arming and equipping the army. As a substitute for missing natural raw materials, artificial substances often had to be used, for whose production German inventiveness and science earned great merits2).

The nutrition of the army and the homeland also experienced further restrictions due to Italy's entry into the war. Some food and feedstuffs, which had been suitable for replacing other scarce nutrients in the homeland and had previously been imported from Italy, were now no longer available. The closure of the Italian border was felt all the more harshly as it had already become necessary in the winter of 1914/15 to place the most important foodstuffs under state control; above all, the central management of bread grain had reminded the public of the full seriousness of the situation and prompted measures that affected all sections of the population noticeably.

The blockade of overseas supplies had also already led to a serious shortage of feedstuffs; consequently, large quantities of bread grain and potatoes were used for livestock feeding. Since feeding bans were not sufficient, the Reich government had to order pig slaughters on a large scale, which lasted until May. To prevent a potato shortage in the summer, which would have put the poorest segments of the population in distress, all available potatoes were purchased by a specially established Reich agency.

1) Volume VI, p. 430. — 2) More details in the later appearing Volume II of the special series "War Armament and War Economy".

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the poorest segments of the population had to be put in distress, all available potatoes were bought up by a specially established Reich office. In addition, there was a serious shortage of sugar, which forced requisitions in favor of the army administration. As the oat shortage worsened, the 1915 harvest also had to be requisitioned. Finally, the sugar shortage led to the central distribution of raw sugar. Beyond that, however, it had to be expected that further interventions in the free economy would be necessary to ensure the supply of the army and the population. The supplies from the agricultural areas occupied by German troops have so far significantly facilitated the army's nutrition, and the initiated systematic cultivation of the enemy's fields promised further help for the army with the coming harvest, but could hardly relieve the homeland effectively.

In the Danube Monarchy, too, food difficulties first arose in October 1914, which resulted in sparing the combat strength of the ally. Before the war, Austria and Hungary formed a customs unit, where Hungary's agricultural overproduction covered the missing quantities of essential food and fodder in Austria. However, during the war, Hungary's economic situation became more difficult. Therefore, when the Hungarian government began requisitioning grain, flour, and sugar at the beginning of 1915, while Austria's most important agricultural areas, Galicia and Bukovina, were lost as war zones, Austria was forced to take similar measures as Germany. In lengthy negotiations, attempts were made to continue receiving supplies of food from Hungary and to relieve the Austrian economy in supplying the joint army. Nevertheless, the prospects from Hungary became increasingly sparse. The food situation in Austria also remained a subject of constant serious concern.

In view of this situation, it was a palpable blow to the entire economic life of the Central Powers when one of the few remaining import bridges was closed by Italy's entry into the war. This disadvantage weighed all the more heavily as the overall economic situation in Germany, especially due to the now almost ten-month-long blockade of shipping over the North Sea, had become extraordinarily difficult for four weeks. Another significant exacerbation of Germany's economic situation at this time was the opening of the submarine trade war1).

1) Volume VI, p. 425/426.

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Germany Opens the Submarine Trade War.

Immediately after the outbreak of the World War, the government of the United States of America proposed to the warring nations to commit to the observance of the maritime warfare regulations¹) as unanimously adopted by the powers, but not yet ratified, in the London Declaration of February 26, 1909²). While the German government readily agreed to the American government's proposal, it was rejected by the enemy powers. The reason for this became apparent in the months following the outbreak of the war, as England and France took comprehensive measures to blockade and starve Germany. They used, in particular, an arbitrary handling of the war contraband law in contradiction to the London Declaration, as well as an unprecedented extension of the right to search and seize neutral ships. A particular intensification of the measures aimed at isolating Germany was experienced through the British Admiralty's announcement on November 2, 1914, declaring the entire North Sea a war zone³). This severely crippled neutral trade with Germany.

In view of the dangers this posed to the overall war effort of the Central Powers, the Chief of the German Admiralty Staff, Admiral von Pohl, submitted a proposal to the Chancellor on November 7 to impose a blockade by submarines over the British Isles and the northern and western coasts of France as a countermeasure⁴). The idea of using submarines for trade warfare had not been considered by the leading authorities of the German Navy before the war. However, already in the first months of the war and increasingly after the first submarine successes, the suggestion arose from the submarine front that the most effective way to use this weapon would be against enemy trade. From the beginning, the prevailing view was that it would not be possible for submarines, given the expected enemy surveillance on shipping routes, to observe the forms of cruiser warfare, i.e., with surfaced submarines, to stop enemy merchant ships and inspect their nationality and cargo.

¹) The other events of the naval war during the year 1915 will be uniformly presented in Volume IX.  
²) "Government and War Economy," Volume I, p. 315 ff.  
³) Volume VI, p. 425.  
⁴) Volume VI, pp. 425/26.

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to stop merchant ships and examine their nationality and cargo. As a precondition for a trade war with submarines, the authorization to sink enemy merchant ships by torpedo shot from submerged submarines without warning was contested. A clear distinction between neutral and enemy ships, which was originally considered possible, was questioned when, at the end of January 1915, British merchant ships were officially advised to fly a neutral flag to deceive German submarines. However, the German Admiralty hoped to gradually overcome the difficulties by ensuring that neutral shipping would increasingly refrain from navigating the waters around England with the unrestricted conduct of the submarine war, which on the German side was probably intended solely as a countermeasure against the relocation of the special band and blockade attempt by England. The navy expected the main effect of the submarine trade war to be the deterrence of shipping. However, the idea of conducting the trade war in this way met with concerns from the Reich leadership, which feared complications with neutral powers, especially with the United States of America. In these disagreements, the Chief of the General Staff observed restraint. He contented himself with emphasizing the interest of land warfare in preventing enemy canal traffic. The exchange of views between the navy and the Reich leadership on the political and international legal issues associated with the submarine trade war dragged on until the end of January 1915. It was not until February 1 that the Chancellor, in a meeting attended by the Chief of the General Staff of the Army, declared himself ready to set aside his concerns and accede to the demands of the Chief of the Admiralty. On February 4, after a presentation by Admiral von Pohl, the Kaiser gave his approval to the submarine trade war. Through an announcement by the Chief of the Admiralty, the waters around Great Britain were declared a war zone as a "countermeasure against the violations of international law aimed at obstructing German maritime traffic by England." The submarine trade war was launched with a number of front-line submarines. Objections from neutral powers, particularly the Scandinavian countries, the Netherlands, and the United States of America, against the blockade measures of the Entente and the German countermeasures initially remained largely ineffective.

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The Submarine Trade War in Summer 1915.

Blockade measures by the Entente and the German countermeasures initially remained largely ineffective. A mediation proposal by the American government on February 21, suggesting that both warring parties refrain from the new methods of naval warfare, with Germany giving up the submarine trade war and the enemy powers allowing its food supply, found approval from the German Reich leadership, but was rejected by England.

The English government responded to the German declaration of the submarine trade war on March 11, 1915, by further intensifying its blockade measures. They acted, with complete disregard for the rights and interests of neutral countries, primarily in the direction of intensified obstruction of German trade through the states neighboring Germany, Holland, and the Nordic countries. Germany was to be completely cut off from the world like a besieged fortress, not only to weaken its military but to fatally starve the entire population.

Thus, the submarine trade war continued. On the occasion of the sinking of the English passenger steamer "Lusitania" on May 7, where a number of American citizens lost their lives, serious diplomatic disputes arose between Germany and the United States. The American government protested and demanded for the future that sinkings should only occur after prior stopping and searching of ships, observing all customary precautionary measures to ensure passenger safety. However, the German Admiralty believed it could not comply with this demand without questioning the effectiveness of submarines against the increasingly large number of armed enemy steamers.

The Reich leadership attempted to balance the conflicting interests of politics and naval warfare by imposing restrictions on submarines for the sinking of enemy passenger steamers and allowing unrestricted sinkings only for enemy merchant ships.

The Chief of the General Staff of the Army agreed with this view, stating to the Kaiser on May 31, 1915, that the continuation of the submarine trade war should depend on whether the risk of a war with the United States could be avoided under all circumstances. Consideration for this stance also influenced him regarding the still hoped-for alliance of Bulgaria with the Central Powers, which seemed to be in question if the United States entered the war.

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The Situation of the Central Powers in May 1915.

on the still hoped-for accession of Bulgaria to the Central Powers, which seemed questionable in the event of the United States entering the war.

3. The Recruitment and Ammunition Situation until the End of 1915.

In accordance with the demands of General von Falkenhayn for the provision of new combat reserves, the army administration continued to strive to create new units, as far as the replacement situation and the state of armament production allowed.

In the spring of 1915, immediately after Italy's declaration of war on Austria-Hungary, a unit suitable for mountain warfare was assembled from Bavarian and Prussian troops at the request of the Supreme Army Command, under the name "Alpine Corps," which was expanded into a reinforced infantry division. The formation of its two Jäger brigades was carried out from the Bavarian Infantry-Leib-Regiment and three Jäger regiments, to which a number of Jäger battalions and snowshoe formations were added.

In addition to the 14 infantry divisions already mentioned, which were established in the spring, the Western Army formed infantry brigades No. 183, 185, 187, and 192 (fifteen) during the summer of 1915, which were initially reinforced only by pioneers and signal troops, and later by a detachment of light field howitzers. Due to the strained replacement situation, the desired expansion of these brigades into divisions had to be temporarily postponed, as did the establishment of additional units in the Western Army; for it was unavoidable to undertake new formations while the existing units did not reach their planned strengths due to a lack of replacements.

In the Eastern Army, the 4th Guard Infantry Division was formed in early May 1915, mainly from parts of the Guard Reserve Corps, and at the end of the month, following the already mentioned establishment of the 101st, 103rd, and 105th Infantry Divisions, the 107th Infantry Division was established using the same procedure. In October 1915, they remained there in a similar manner, using existing command authorities and troop units, as well as some new formations, to establish the 108th and 109th Infantry Divisions.

1) Further details, also on the supply of the army with weapons, technical combat equipment, war material, and equipment for air forces and field telegraphs, in the later published Volume IX as well as Volume II of the General Staff's "Conduct of War and War Experiences."  
2) Volume VII, p. 306.  
3) Volume VII, p. 305.  
4) Volume VII, p. 304.  
5) Volume VII, p. 306.  
6) Volume VII, p. 305.

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The Formation of New Units in the Year 1915.

Using existing command authorities and troop parts as well as some new formations, the 108th and 109th Infantry Divisions were also formed.

At the same time, throughout 1915, efforts continued to expand the existing reserve and Landwehr divisions and to establish new Landwehr divisions from already existing and newly created units. By the end of 1915, the number of Landwehr divisions had increased to a total of 20. Alongside this, in the summer and autumn of 1915, there was a reorganization and expansion of a number of previously makeshift units, often named after their leaders. The Posen Corps was formed as the 83rd and 84th Infantry Divisions, the Jastrow Corps as the XVII Reserve Corps, whose two divisions Wernitz and Breugel became the 86th Infantry and 85th Landwehr Divisions, the Dichthut Corps as the 87th, the Menges Division as the 88th, and the Westenhagen Department as the 89th Infantry Division.

By the end of 1915, the German field army comprised a total of 159 divisions — compared to 92 divisions at the outbreak of war1) —, in addition, there were eleven cavalry divisions, whose number had not increased; there were also some independent brigades.

In addition to and often in connection with these new and restructured formations, there was a continuous establishment or mobile deployment of numerous smaller units, combat, stage, and Landsturm troops, columns and trains, military authorities, and service offices. Services for the completion of larger units not yet systematically equipped or — notably the numerous foot artillery, aviation, and technical new formations — to strengthen existing field troops.

Finally, the reserve and training troops also experienced a continuous increase in response to the growing demands placed on them. By February 1915, the domestic infantry reserve battalions had been doubled and equipped with two recruitment depots each. The reserve formations of the other branches of service were also increased or strengthened. Based on very favorable experiences, the army administration continued to attach field recruitment depots to the corps or independent divisions at the front, where the recruits transferred from the domestic reserve battalions completed their training under war-experienced personnel.

1) Including the main reserves of the fortresses, excluding the independent brigades (see "War Armament and War Economy", Volume I, Text Volume, p. 211 and Appendix Volume, Table 18).

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The Situation of the Central Powers in May 1915.

assigned recruits completed their training under war-experienced personnel\*).

The constant expansion of the army organization burdened the re-

placement situation in two ways, as each new formation added to the field army

not only required replacements for its establishment but also for its maintenance.

This burden was all the more pressing as the replacement needs of the existing

field troops were already extraordinarily high due to the unabated heavy losses.

In the summer of 1915, an average of over 300,000 replacement troops\*),

of which about 250,000 men were for the infantry alone, were sent to the field

each month, a number in one month that was nearly equivalent to the strength

of almost five fully war-ready army corps or the peacetime strength of the

German army as of 1913.

A particular difficulty in the replacement situation was caused by the

increasing number of leaves and deferments of conscripts for the war economy.

As other means to address the subsequent labor shortage at home were required,

the army administration was compelled to comply with the requests of the war

industry for efficient labor to a large extent, to ensure the massive and growing

demand for armaments and thus the combat strength of the front. Thus, the

number of militarily fit men deferred from military service had already grown

to well over a million by the summer of 1915.

Although there was not yet any serious threat to the army's replacement

supply, the time was approaching when serious disruptions in the flow of new

replacement troops would have to occur. This point could only be postponed

without harming the other army branches by burdening the replacement

situation as little as possible with the formation of new units. The recruit class

of 1915, including the still available Landsturm I. contingent, was already

exhausted after a few months. By the fall of 1915, the class of 1916 had to be

called up — significantly ahead of time. Maintaining the previous level of

replacement postings was a continuation of economy in meeting ongoing replacement needs, with the expectation that this class, even with the influx of returnees and replacement troops made available through the conscription of deferred individuals and changes in military law, would last at most half a year.

1) In connection with this, until May or December 1915, an infantry replacement   
division was established at the 6th Army Command in Breslau and in Warsaw.   
— Numerous courses for officer candidates were held at all training grounds   
of the Reich army.   
2) About one-sixth of them were returnees.

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The Personnel Replacement Situation.

Economy in satisfying the ongoing replacement needs was to be expected, as this cohort, even including the influx of convalescents and replacement troops made available by conscription of deferred individuals and changes in military law¹), would last at most half a year. Therefore, by the end of 1915, the conscription of the 1917 cohort had already begun.

In this unavoidable worsening of the replacement situation, the Deputy Minister of War, Lieutenant General von Wandel, in full agreement with the Minister of War, Lieutenant General Wild von Hohenborn, who was at the Great Headquarters, insisted, unaffected by various demands from the front, on economizing as much as possible with army replacements. In September 1915, General von Wild explained to the Chief of the General Staff of the Field Army that the replacement supply for the army could only be maintained at the previous level for about another year; circumstances therefore compelled "the greatest economy with the available human material," particularly "in view of the consequences that could arise if the influx of replacements dried up before all war tasks were brought to a favorable conclusion." Army and troop leaders were repeatedly reminded by the army administration to measure their replacement claims only according to truly urgent needs and to limit their demands for new formations as much as possible.

Through the unified regulation of replacement supply in their hands, the army administration, in close cooperation with the Supreme Army Command, was able to meet needs according to urgency. Accordingly, replacement bans were imposed over troop units that were sufficiently supplied, and eventually over entire army fronts for shorter or longer periods. The same purpose of the most economical replacement management was also served when infantry troops, since the summer of 1915, were generally no longer filled to their full planned wartime strength, but only up to a battalion strength reduced to 800 men in the west and 900 men in the east.

Just as much as the provision of armed forces and replacement supply, the maintenance and enhancement of combat power was dependent on adequate coverage of its vastly increasing material needs.

¹) By law of September 4, 1915, the re-examination of conscripts declared unfit for service during peacetime conscription was made possible, who were exempt from military service under previous legal provisions.

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The Situation of the Central Powers in May 1915.

The army's ability to cover its massively increasing material needs was dependent. Specifically, ensuring the supply of munitions remained one of the most serious concerns of the military administration; it also had decisive importance for the further operational decisions of the Supreme Army Command. It was certain that the major offensive in the East and the expected defensive battles in the West on both extensive theaters of war would bring with them an extremely increased consumption of munitions.

In accordance with the demands of General von Falkenhayn, the military administration had been striving with increased emphasis since the spring of 1915 to gradually reduce the mass production of cast iron shells, whose inferiority did not allow the artillery to fully develop its capabilities, and to promote the production of more efficient pressed steel and cast steel shells. This transition initially posed great difficulties, as their production was more challenging than the manufacture of simple cast iron munitions. Thanks to the foresighted measures of the Ministry of War and the capabilities of the German industry, it was possible to overcome these difficulties quickly, so that the delivery of pressed steel and cast steel shells also increased rapidly. Meanwhile, their processing into new munitions and thus the production of munitions in general reached its limit in the available amounts of powder and explosives. Since March, the extensive expansions of the powder factories, initiated in a timely manner by the military administration, had gradually become effective, forming the production of powder, and then also the production of explosives, as the measure for all deliveries. The main difficulty was the lack of saltpeter and nitric acid. Although the production of artificial saltpeter had started in the spring of 1915 with larger deliveries, so that an immediate emergency did not occur. However, the performance of the new factories could only be gradually increased due to numerous obstacles.

The regulation of munitions production was now carried out in such a way that, depending on the situation, the provisions for field artillery or foot artillery were increased or restricted, and weapons of one type of caliber were postponed in favor of the other. For infantry ammunition, due to the high artillery demand, powder production had to be relatively held back, while the subsequent amounts of explosives were needed for the provision of close combat means and for other needs, particularly for the pioneers.

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The Ammunition Situation.

provision of close combat materials and for other needs, namely those of the pioneers.

From May to July 1915, the monthly powder production increased as planned from 2.6 to 3.4 million kilograms, but in the following months, due to a lack of nitric acid and as a result of major disruptions caused by explosions and fires at the powder factories, it fell significantly behind the planned increase rate, so that by the end of the year the monthly output was only 4.3 million kilograms instead of 5. Correspondingly, the following amounts of ammunition were sent to the field in the individual months:

May June July August September October November December

Inf. Ammo Trains (approx. 2.5 million rounds each) 42 45 42 42 42 42 42 45 43 1351/2

Field Artillery Ammo Trains 101 150 157 142 1421/4 1711/4 151 1351/2

Howitzer Ammo Trains (6000 rounds each) 791/4 105 891/2 1041/2 97 126 111 1141/3

Mortar Ammo Trains (2000 rounds each) 271/2 321/2 35 423/4 37 43 471/2 53

10 cm Cannon Ammo Trains (10,000 rounds each) 9 103/4 12 11 13 12 141/4 14

These deliveries were matched by the following ammunition consumption by the field army in the summer months of 1915:

May June July August September Average Consumption

Inf. Ammo Trains 47 43 41 32 47 42

Field Artillery Ammo Trains 133 135 109 98 160 136

Howitzer Ammo Trains 83 93 109 95 111 98

Mortar Ammo Trains 34 39 42 36 45 39

10 cm Cannon Ammo Trains 9 91/2 91/2 101/2 13 10

Ammunition supply and consumption were thus approximately balanced in the months when the main battles took place, with the temporarily higher consumption being covered by still available reserves of the Chief of Field Ammunition Services.

1) An ammo train for field cannons contained 26,880, an ammo train for light field howitzers 12,000 rounds.

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The Situation of the Central Powers in May 1915.

Covered by the chiefs of the field munitions service. The supply difficulties, particularly frequent in the East during pursuit operations, were primarily due to unfavorable supply conditions. Nevertheless, thanks to the efforts of domestic procurement and manufacturing sites, it was possible, albeit with a significant reduction in consumption in quiet combat sections, to adequately secure the high ammunition needs of the main battlefronts.

Since the autumn of 1915, the decline in ammunition demand associated with the waning of battles allowed for the accumulation of larger reserves, while maintaining consumption reduction on all non-decisive fronts, which by the end of the year had already reached a considerable level. Further increases in reserve stocks were anticipated if, by spring 1916, powder production, as planned, had increased to six million kilograms, for which all preparations had been made by the military administration.

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IV. The War Against Russia in Summer and Autumn 1915.

A. The Front of the Commander-in-Chief East until July 2.

1. The Directive of the Supreme Army Command from April 16.

Map 18 Volume VII.

In the communication that the Supreme Army Command sent to the Commander-in-Chief East on April 16 regarding the intended operation in Galicia, it was stated that his cooperation through the longest possible deception and binding of the enemy north of the Pilica was a prerequisite for the success of the operation.

When this directive was issued, the Commander-in-Chief East had at his disposal along his approximately 750-kilometer-long front from the Pilica to the Baltic Sea near Memel 38 infantry divisions, which were stationed everywhere on Russian soil, most densely on the right flank, while the extreme northern flank was almost unoccupied over a stretch of about 200 kilometers. The battles that followed the conclusion of the winter battle in Masuria and were particularly fierce in the foreland of the East Prussian southern border had subsided since the beginning of the month. Strength and combat power, however, were not yet fully restored everywhere, especially in the infantry, and artillery ammunition was constantly scarce. The formation of three new infantry divisions (101st, 103rd, and 105th) from contributions of existing divisions was underway.

In detail, the situation was as follows:

From the Pilica east of Tomaszów to the Vistula halfway between Płock and Nowogeorgiewsk, the 9th Army stood along the Rawka and Bzura. Its front thus advanced 20 to 30 kilometers compared to the neighboring armies. As the successor of Colonel General von Mackensen led

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The Front of the Commander-in-Chief East until July 2.

Whether a decisive or even significantly better result could be achieved with the utmost concentration of German forces remains uncertain. It repeatedly showed that the striking power of the deployed troops was insufficient for blows that penetrated quickly into the depths. Supported by its railways, the enemy could move its troops relatively quickly, supply them conveniently, and reinforce threatened positions in time, while on the German side, every man, every shell, and every ration had to cover about 100 kilometers of land from the German railway to reach the front.

3. Events with the 9th Army, Army Group Gallwitz, and 8th Army in May and June.

Maps 5 and 6, Sketch 12.

After the victory at Gorlice and the German incursion into the area north of the Njemen, the 9th Army¹) had been waiting with the utmost attention for the moment when these successes would also affect the Russian front advancing far to the west, west of the Vistula. Vigorous aerial reconnaissance, patrol activity, and monitoring of enemy telegraphy, however, only revealed the picture of increased movements behind the positions up to the Vistula and offered no indication that the enemy intended to withdraw or significantly weaken his front. He continued to occupy his combat positions. A strong day's march behind these, flyers had identified long-established rear installations at Grojec and Blonie, which were used to approach the Vistula and Warsaw and had connections northwards to the large fortress of Nowogeorgiewsk.

At the beginning of May, the transport of a Russian division²) became known. The necessary contributions for the formation of new divisions of their own balanced what the enemy withdrew, at least. The question of whether to launch an attack was denied, as the forces were insufficient for a major offensive, and small local successes would not justify the inevitable losses. Above all, there was a lack of ammunition, as supplies were extremely restricted due to the increased demand from other fronts. By May 12, the success in Galicia had progressed so far that the enemy also began to retreat before the army detachment north³).

¹) p. 103 f. and 106. — ²) 13th Div. to Galicia. — ³) Volume VII, p. 434.

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Situation West of the Vistula and Preparations for the Gas Attack.

began to retreat. The following day, their left wing approached south of the Pilica to the forward position of the 9th Army north of the river. The 29th Landwehr Brigade, thus freed, was immediately claimed by the Commander-in-Chief East for the battles at the Njemen1). On May 14, the newly established Pioneer Regiment 36 was made available to the 9th Army as a gas unit. Its position seemed particularly suitable for gas release, as it faced east, which corresponded to the prevailing wind direction, and the distance to the enemy trenches was shorter than in other parts of the Eastern Front. The new combat means (alongside experiences made before Ypres2)) were expected to have such an effect with favorable winds that the Army Command hoped to be able to penetrate the Russian positions smoothly. At Ypres, only the forces had been lacking to exploit the unexpectedly favorable local success. The 9th Army now intended to deploy a total of 2½ army corps for the operation; the only question was where the thrust should be directed and what goal should be assigned to it.

On May 16, the northern wing of the Army Group Woyrsch had reached the same level as the right wing of the 9th Army standing at Domaniowice on the northern bank of the Pilica. The simultaneous left turn that this army had executed behind the retreating enemy had, however, only reached as far as the extension of the 9th Army into southeastern Poland; an encirclement of the enemy in the area north of the Vistula had therefore not yet been achieved. Nevertheless, a general retreat of the Russians from this area became a possibility. In such a case, the Commander-in-Chief East did not want to let the 9th Army pursue, but rather withdraw troops to use them at the Njemen, where the enemy at this time apparently attacked with strong forces3), suspected to relieve a possible retreat movement planned in Western Poland. Here, however, the enemy still stood for the time being.

On May 18, the 9th Army reported that it intended to install the gas cylinders in the already so often and hotly contested area east of the Rawka near Sumin, in the section of the XVII Army Corps. In view of the high expectations attached to the effect of the gas, and to maintain the element of surprise, it was decided to forgo artillery attack preparations. With favorable winds, the gas was to be released on the morning of May 23, and if all went well, immediately followed by a breakthrough with 2½ army corps on Blonie.

1) G. 120. — 2) G. 35 ff. — 3) G. 120.

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The Front of the Commander-in-Chief East until July 2.

2½ army corps to break through at Blonie. In contrast, the Commander-in-Chief East determined that "pushing forward to the Blonie position" was less important than "achieving the greatest possible tactical success by advancing southward." In the attack, the main thrust was assigned to the XVII Army Corps, with divisions from neighboring sectors joining on the right and left. The Army Command kept an infantry division and a cavalry brigade in reserve. The Gallwitz Army Group was instructed to engage the enemy with its own operations so that no reserves could be sent to the breakthrough point.

By May 22, preparations were complete, but the attack had to be postponed due to east winds.

Only on the afternoon of May 30 did the weather conditions with favorable winds for the coming night become apparent. The order to prepare for the attack was given; about 12,000 gas cylinders were installed. Of the 52 heavy batteries with the army, about 20 were ready to act in the entire twelve-kilometer-wide attack area. Field Marshal Prince Leopold went to the command post west of Bolimow. On May 31, at 2:30 a.m., the gas was released; the cloud moved towards the Russian positions. Half an hour later, however, the XVII Army Corps reported that the gas had apparently passed over the enemy too quickly, and water teams had been halted by Russian fire. To advance, the infantry demanded thorough artillery preparation. The Army Command called off the attack. Expectations had been disappointed. As early as May 28, the Supreme Army Command had stated in another context to the Commander-in-Chief East: "To carry out our operations against Warsaw, the forces now standing at Bzura and Rawka will suffice if the gas means hold up somewhat to what can be expected from it based on previous performances." However, it had by no means had the effect that the troops had hoped for based on the experiences conveyed to them. They were only equipped with very inadequate gas protection means and therefore had 56 gas casualties out of a total loss of 374 men. It was considered possible that the Russians had been warned in advance and had used protective measures. The main reason for the failure of the still little-tested combat means was seen in the fact that strong, gusty winds had already dispersed the gas cloud, which was not dense enough due to too slow a release and had been lifted and driven too quickly over the foremost enemy trenches.”

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The Front of the Commander-in-Chief East until July 2.

to have been large; they fled when they saw the gas cloud coming").

Upon the report of the result, the Commander-in-Chief East asked on the evening of June 12 about further intentions and offered the choice: either a determined continuation of the attack or the provision of strong forces for transport, considering use north of the Njemen. After the 9th Army had spoken in favor of continuing the attack, the Commander-in-Chief East limited their contributions to the 8th Cavalry Division and ordered the attack to be "vigorously continued." Gas should henceforth only be released with truly favorable winds.

Field Marshal Leopold Prince of Bavaria intended to extend the previous breach southwards to Humlin. The fact that the enemy, according to prisoner statements, had brought about two new divisions into the attacked section was to be welcomed from the standpoint of the overall situation on the Eastern Front. It also did not influence the decision of the 9th Army. They wanted to continue the attack using the gas, from whose effect they had now gained such a favorable impression that they expected an even greater success than on June 12. However, on June 17 and again on June 19, the preparations for the attack had to be abandoned due to a change in the wind. Waiting for the wind with filled gas cylinders in the trench became a severe test for officers and men.

After Lemberg was taken on June 22, the Commander-in-Chief East considered the possibility of further Russian retreats also in West Poland; the 9th Army was initially to keep them in check with increased artillery fire. While the Russians then retreated further on June 24 in front of the right wing of the Army Group Woyrsch and the southern adjoining Austro-Hungarian 1st Army, they still stood before the main front of Colonel General von Woyrsch and the 9th Army. They thus still held a line west of the Vistula, which in its overall course ran from Ilza via Opatowice to Sochaczew, forming a slightly westward-curved arc that could hardly be effectively enveloped.

1) The VI Siberian Corps, which had been stationed there, was soon withdrawn. According to the war diary of the Commander-in-Chief East on July 3, it seemed to have suffered so much from the gas attack that it was initially no longer considered for tactical use. In fact, it was transferred to the battlefront near Lublin and was already deployed there again from July 5.  
2) p. 130. — 3) p. 234. — 4) p. 254.

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Weakening of the 9th Army. — Army Group Gallwitz and 8th Army.

czew represented a slightly westward-curved arc and could therefore

hardly be effectively encompassed. Since this line was still about

60 kilometers from the Vistula and had the strong reception

positions of Grojec, Blonie, and Nowogeorgiewsk behind it, there was

hardly any prospect of corresponding successes west of the

river. The Supreme Army Command therefore recommended, after another unsuccessful preparation for the gas attack on June 28, on the following day, "ruthless" weakening of the 9th Army. The

Commander-in-Chief East ordered the withdrawal of an army corps

as soon as the Woyrsch Army Detachment gained more ground. If the

withdrawal was made dependent on this condition and even now limited to

one army corps, although in the front of the army there were

three active and three reserve divisions, the

leadership now had a different idea than in mid-May; they wanted to follow the

expected general retreat of the Russians with parts of the 9th Army

in a broad front, similar to the Woyrsch Army Detachment set by the Supreme Army Command. Other parts the Commander-in-Chief East wanted to keep free, to retain for the planned offensive over Kowno, being concerned that they, if immediately withdrawn, would likely be claimed by the Supreme Army Command for purposes that seemed less urgent to him. When Generaloberst

von Woyrsch already announced on June 30 that the enemy was retreating

before his right flank, the XVII Army Corps was withdrawn.

Considerations about its use were still pending.

The months of May and June were significantly quieter for the 9th Army

than for the Army Group Gallwitz and the 8th Army,

which were increasingly weakened by withdrawals for the 10th and Njemen Army and for newly forming divisions4). At the beginning of June, when Przemysl was retaken, the attack on both sides of the Njemen made progress, and the new gas attack of the 9th Army was imminent, the Commander-in-Chief East also ordered offensive operations for the Army Group Gallwitz and the 8th Army to "hold the enemy and cause him damage."

1) In total, apart from the newly formed units, the following had been withdrawn since   
mid-April: 6th R.D. to Army Group Lauenstein, 29th Ldw. Br.   
to 10th Army, 22nd I.D. to Supreme Army Command, 8th R.D. to Njemen Army. In   
the front on June 30 were still: 35th, 36th I.D. 49th and 50th R.D.   
2) 133. — 3) As emphasized by General Ludendorff in a letter from De-   
cember 1931 to the Reichsarchiv. Other reports are missing.   
4) G. 104 and 106. — Withdrawals were made: from Army Group Gallwitz   
end of May 9th Ldw. Br. to 10th Army, 2nd R.D. to Njemen Army, end of June 3rd G.D.   
to 10th Army; from 8th Army end of April parts of the 4th R.D. to Army   
Group Lauenstein and b.u. Front; in May about one reinforced Br., end of June 41st S.D.   
to Njemen Army.

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The Front of the Commander-in-Chief East until July 2.

In June, when Przemysl was retaken, the attack on both sides of the Njemen made progress and the new gas attack of the 9th Army was imminent, the Commander-in-Chief East also ordered the Army Group Gallwitz and the 8th Army to undertake offensive operations to "hold the enemy and inflict damage on him." By the end of June, they brought the Army Group Gallwitz, in addition to some territorial gains, a total of 1500 prisoners, but also suffered significant own losses. The gain for the 8th Army was even smaller. It was also not possible to prevent the transport of enemy forces. Overall, the Russians were able to withdraw five divisions of infantry from the East Prussian southern front in June, and since the beginning of May, even 15 divisions, and redeploy them to other fronts.

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B. The Summer Campaign of the Allies in Galicia.

1. The Forcing of the San Crossing at Jaroslaw

from May 14 to 20.

Maps 5 and 6, Sketches 13 and 15.

According to the agreement made by the Chief of the General Staff of the Allied Armies on

May 12 in Pleß, the pursuit operation in Galicia was initially to be continued up to the San-Wisznia

line and against the upper Dniester. It was expected that strong resistance from the enemy would still have to be overcome.

If these sections were firmly in hand, further actions on the Galician battlefield were to be made dependent on the course of events

on the eastern flank. This was of particular importance in view of the uncertain stance of Romania. If it was

already possible through the advance of the right wing of the Austro-Hungarian 2nd Army and the German

Southern Army south of the Dniester to bring the Russian offensive directed against the Austro-Hungarian 7th Army in Eastern Galicia and Bukovina

to a standstill, then the intention was to limit to holding the San-Wisznia-Dniester

section. In this case, General von Falkenhayn intended to withdraw the 11th Army for other use and leave it to the

Austro-Hungarian military leadership to decide whether and to what extent they still wanted to pursue with their own

troops (including the German 47th Reserve Division and the Beskiden Corps). However, if the pressure

from the armies advancing from the Carpathian front proved insufficient

to bring about a decisive change in the situation in Eastern Galicia and Bukovina, the continuation of the operation beyond the

San and Dniester was envisaged, with the right wing

of the 1st Army to take the direction towards Lemberg. General

von Falkenhayn saw in such a development a desirable opportunity

to deliver another blow to the Russians, if they remained capable, that would paralyze their offensive power for a long time. The Austro-Hungarian Chief of the General Staff considered

for this case, as he wrote to General von Falkenhayn on May 14,

even "the energetic joint continuation of the war against Russia

to be necessary, with the minimum goal of regaining the territory of the monarchy and the territory of Russian Poland on the left bank of the Vistula to be ceded to us as compensation for the territorial cessions to Italy."

1) Volume VII, p. 426.

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The Summer Campaign of the Allies in Galicia.

of the monarchy and as compensation for the territorial cessions to Italy, the territory of Russian Poland on the left bank of the Vistula was to be handed over to us." However, the idea of continuing the operation in this way was subject to the reservation dictated by the political situation that Italy's entry into the war and the unforeseeable effects of this event on the attitudes of Romania and Bulgaria could necessitate completely different decisions.

In any case, the next operational goal in Galicia, which was to be pursued regardless of the political dangers lying in the future, was the achievement and securing of the San—Wisznia—Dniester section.

The main thrust was again to come from the 11th Army¹) and be directed against the "San downwards Przemysl"²).

From intercepted radio messages, it was known that the Russian 3rd Army under General Radko Dmitrijew had re-established its front in this section³). The XII Corps was stationed in and north of the fortress of Przemysl. Further San bridgeheads were occupied, at Radymno by the XXI, at Jaroslaw by the XXIV, and at Sieniawa by the III Caucasian Corps. The X and IX Corps had retreated to the San front to the north and into the San—Vistula angle southeast of Sandomierz. The XV Corps was on the march there. South of the 3rd stood the Russian 8th Army under General Brussilow in the line Przemysl—Dobromil and further extending into the northeastern Carpathian valleys. North of the Vistula, the Russian 4th Army under General Ewret had bent its southern flank further back into the area of Sandomierz.

The deployment of the armies set against this new enemy front had been completed as planned on May 13⁴). Generaloberst von Mackensen issued the attack order for the two armies under his command at 6 p.m.: "The 11th Army will advance and cross the San on both sides of Jaroslaw. The 4th Army⁵) will follow on the left across the river and secure the left flank of the 11th Army."

¹) The 11th Army consisted of: Guard Corps (1st and 2nd G. S. D.), X. A. K. (19th, 20th J. S. D.), XXXXI. R. R. (81st, 82nd gr. D.), 11th Bavarian J. D., 56th S. D., 119th S. D., Austro-Hungarian VI Corps (Austro-Hungarian 12th, Hungarian 39th S. D.).  
²) Volume VII, p. 426.  
³) Volume VII, p. 425.  
⁴) Volume VII, pp. 426, 427.  
⁵) The Austro-Hungarian 4th Army consisted of: IX Corps (Austro-Hungarian 10th, Austrian 106th J. D.), XIV Corps (Austro-Hungarian 3rd Mountain D.), Kirchbach Corps (German 47th R. G. D., Austro-Hungarian combined Div. Stöger-Steiner), Austrian 21st S. D., Hungarian 37th and 41st S. D., J. Br. Szende, Hungarian 11th S. D., Austro-Hungarian 42nd R. D.

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The Summer Campaign of the Allies in Galicia.

could have a significant influence on the further course of events. However, the High Command of the 3rd Army hoped to take the southwestern front of the fortress by surprise, and the High Command of the 11th Army was also reinforced in its belief by new aerial reports in the early morning of May 14 that the enemy would not only abandon the San line but also Przemysl.

To cover the southern flank of the attacking 11th Army against the fortress, the 119th Infantry Division of Major General von Behr was advanced immediately north of the San to west of Korzynitf. In front of their front were still detachments of the Austro-Hungarian 3rd Army. The 11th Bavarian Infantry Division under Major General Ritter von Kneußl gained the eastern exits of the forest and mountain terrain northwest of Przemysl. The XXXII Reserve Corps reached the line Kaszyce-Chlopice-Morawinsko in its advance on Radymno. The enemy held advanced fortification groups over the fortress area and apparently prepared positions in the hills west of Rada and forward Ostrow. The two corps set for the main attack on Jaroslaw advanced in sections. The Austro-Hungarian VI Corps had early determined that the enemy strongly occupied the heights south of Jaroslaw and the castle southwest of the city. Field Marshal Lieutenant von Arz wanted to lead his divisions under the cover of darkness to this enemy to attack him only in the morning by surprise. The corps encountered strong resistance. Only the right wing succeeded in advancing beyond Morawinsko in connection with the XXXII Reserve Corps. Elsewhere, fierce battles erupted along the entire attack front, which did not lead to a decision by evening. The Guard Corps had gradually approached the enemy under the increasing impression of only a weak occupation of Jaroslaw. When around noon the leader of the 2nd Guard Infantry Division, Lieutenant General von Winkler, reported that Jaroslaw seemed to be evacuated, the commanding general, General of Infantry Baron von Plattenberg, ordered that both divisions, if the opponent offered no stronger resistance, should take possession of the San line. However, the attack of the 2nd Guard Infantry Division against Jaroslaw also unexpectedly encountered strong enemy. The advance also suffered from the flanking fire effect from Jaroslaw Castle, which the Allies could not wrest from the enemy despite the use of reinforcements from the 2nd Guard Infantry Division; the forward movement came to a halt west of the city. The 1st Guard Infantry Division under the leadership of Colonel Eitel Friedrich Prince of Prussia was Russian posturing over a dead arm of the San north of Jaroslaw and could then only break through against the northern front of the city with its right wing by evening.

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The Attack on Jaroslaw.

retreated over a dead arm of the San north of Jaroslaw and could

only advance against the northern front of the city with their right wing

by evening.

The commanding general of the X Army Corps, General of

Infantry von Emmich, under the impression that the enemy was

continuing the retreat, ordered the pursuit at 11:30 a.m. by the only available

19th Infantry Division — the 20th was marching towards Lancut.

They were to reach the bridge site at Nieleptowice with advance troops. However,

enemy resistance at Wola Buchowska threatened the advance on the left flank,

so Lieutenant General Hofmann decided to initially direct the main force of his

division against this. No serious engagement occurred in the evening.

Given the developments in the battles on May 14 in the center

and on the left wing of the 11th Army, the planned attack procedure

envisioned by the High Command was no longer considered. On the other hand,

the impression had strengthened that the eastern bank of the San could no longer

be won by a surprise success. Rather, further fighting on this side of the

San was to be expected.

In front of the Austro-Hungarian 4th Army, the enemy had retreated behind the lower

Wislok and the San above Krzeszow. The right wing, where the operational

focus lay, reached the San below the Wislok estuary without a fight. The reserve

cavalry (½ 2nd and 11th Cavalry Division) was also moved there. The left army wing

swung to secure the flank against an enemy position identified in the forest area

of the San-Weichsel angle south of Sandomierz.

The Austro-Hungarian 3rd Army had not yet reached the positions of the

fortress area with its left wing. On its right wing, the Beskiden Corps reached

Dobromil in pursuit. The Austro-Hungarian 2nd Army

gained the Carpathian exits on both sides of Stary Sambor.

On May 15, the 119th Infantry Division advanced

security against the northwest front of Przemysl. This freed the

11th Bavarian Infantry Division for the immediate

flank protection of the now also advancing XXXXI Reserve Corps against the San;

they advanced against the Rada stream. Reconnaissance revealed that the Rada position

adjacent to the fortress and the positions further north around Ostrow were heavily

occupied. Against these, the XXXXI Reserve Corps was set for an

attack in the morning with the goal of Radymno-Tuczepy. However, it did not succeed

in advancing before the right wing and the center of the corps, reaching the enemy's main position by evening.

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The Summer Campaign of the Allies in Galicia.

Corps, to approach the enemy's main position by evening. The left wing had to remain bent back against positions at Morawisko, as the southern wing of the neighboring southwest VI Corps was fixed here. For this, it was crucial to first bring down the commanding heights around 264, the key point of the Jaroslaw bridgehead. This was only achieved at 6 p.m. Although fierce counterattacks by the enemy prevented full exploitation of this success, it had the effect to the north that by late evening, Jaroslaw Castle succumbed to the assault of the inner wings of the VI and Guard Corps, thereby eliminating the threat to the flank and rear of the 2nd Guard Infantry Division. The Guard Corps could only advance to attack in the afternoon after extensive artillery preparation against the enemy reinforced from the east bank. While the main forces of the 2nd Guard Infantry Division, due to the constant threat from the south, conducted only a holding battle on their right wing against the western front of Jaroslaw, the 1st Guard Infantry Division was to be deployed from the north for a decisive envelopment of Jaroslaw. This thrust of the right wing of the 1st Guard Infantry Division, joined by the left wing of the 2nd Guard Infantry Division, initially made good progress but then stalled in Jaroslaw. Here, when Jaroslaw Castle fell in the evening, the attack front had already solidified. Only the left wing of the 1st Guard Infantry Division pushed the enemy back over the San and reached the broad and deep main arm of the river west of Goryle. The immediate follow-up over this, which the General Command still hoped for, proved ineffective due to the strong occupation of the east bank overlooking the lowlands without sufficient artillery preparation.

Since the Guard Corps had not succeeded in overcoming the San section the day before, and since the 19th Infantry Division faced considerable enemy forces to the north, the commanding general of the X Army Corps, General of Infantry von Emmich, now expected strong resistance at the San. Parts of the 20th Infantry Division had already been set in motion eastward early. When the directive from the Army High Command arrived at 11 a.m. to continue the attack in conjunction with the Guard Corps, the commander of the 20th Infantry Division, Lieutenant General Ritter and Edler von Detinger, received orders to take possession of the left bank of Niedebrowice. In the course of the afternoon, he repelled enemy detachments that still appeared from the west over the San. The bulk of the division reached the beginning of Ijeszna.

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Below Jaroslaw, the San is reached.

Beginning Ijeszna. The 19th Infantry Division under Lieutenant General Hofmann refrained from a planned attack early in the day against the strong Russian positions in the lowlands between Wisłok and San on the orders of the commanding general. General von Emmich believed that the enemy would abandon their positions opposite the 19th Infantry Division under the impression of the advance of the 20th Infantry Division and the right wing of the Austro-Hungarian 4th Army against the San. Therefore, it was only to secure the attack of the 20th Infantry Division against a threat from the bridgehead of Sieniawa.

The leader of the Austro-Hungarian 4th Army, Archduke Joseph Ferdinand, refrained from forcing the San crossing by his right army wing on the same day, as the Army High Command 11 had responded to an inquiry: "Forcing a uniform advance on the entire front is not intended today... If a corps succeeds in crossing, this forcing will be followed by other corps." The San front of the 4th Army stretched north to the area west of Iwanow. The enemy positions, covered by forests and intersected by numerous streams, in the San-Vistula angle proved to be a resistance zone being expanded here. The addition of reinforcements over Sandomierz to the eastern Vistula bank and the deployment of forces already withdrawn to Sandomierz against the right wing of the Austro-Hungarian 1st Army west of the Vistula suggested the enemy's intention to hold the San-Vistula angle and the connection to their positions on the far Vistula bank. This also seemed to give them the possibility of an offensive from the bridgehead of Sandomierz against the flank of the armies fighting at the San. The 4th Army, on the other hand, initially wanted to limit itself to establishing a "reinforced resistance line" and wait for the reinforcements currently in transport for their own attack.

The Austro-Hungarian 3rd Army moved its left wing closer to the southwest front of Przemysl. The Beskiden Corps, which followed the retreating main Russian forces south of the fortress, encountered strong positions on both sides of Husztow behind Solotwina and Buchta. In this fortified section, which protected the road and railway leading south from Przemysl, strong enemy resistance was to be expected. The Beskiden Corps therefore decided to conduct the attack uniformly the next day.

1) Volume VII, p. 421; — cf. 21st Infantry Division of the 3rd Army, Command VIII, Hungarian 37, and 41st Infantry Division of the 2nd Army.

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therefore decided to conduct the attack uniformly the next day.

The Austro-Hungarian 2nd Army maintained connection with the Besikien Corps and reached

with its right wing beyond Sambor on the Dniester.

Aerial reconnaissance confirmed the impression gained from the hard battles of the 11th Army:

Strong parts of the enemy were still standing west

of the San. Nevertheless, the army command hoped to force the river crossing on May 16.

The difficulties of supply from

the railway points Krosno and Przemyśl, however, necessitated limited

objectives, especially since it was expected that the Russians would bring up reinforcements.

Generaloberst von Mackensen therefore initially aimed only at creating a bridgehead in the line Michalowka

(east of Radymno)—Ryszkowa Wola—Lubaczowka-Bach—Sieniawa,

to gain freedom for further action on the eastern bank of the San.

Under the pressure of the successes achieved on the evening of May 15 west and south of

Jaroslau, the enemy cleared the left bank here during the night. The advancing 2nd Guard

Infantry Division was already in possession of the

entire city of Jaroslau by 7:30 a.m. General Freiherr von Plettenberg had instructed the division

to initially push only strong patrols onto the eastern bank.

However, the division commander, Lieutenant General von Winkler, gained

the view through personal observation that quick and vigorous action was necessary, as the enemy's defense on the eastern bank

apparently had not yet taken firm shape. He therefore ordered at 9 a.m.

to force the crossing. At 2 p.m., the crossing began under the protection of artillery and machine gun fire

with the result that by evening a significant part of the division had gained a foothold on the

eastern San bank. Strong counterattacks were repelled. The 1st Guard

Infantry Division, which had advanced further north to the San, had to postpone the river crossing to May 17 due to the particularly difficult,

widely visible terrain, which made artillery advance during the day inadvisable.

The enemy fortifications against the new section of the Guard Corps

were in the process of being approached, presenting the corps with difficult tasks.

The Austro-Hungarian VI Corps of Field Marshal Lieutenant von Arz had also

followed the enemy, who had retreated south of Jaroslau after nightly counterattacks.

At 10 a.m., the right wing reached Tuczapy under heavy

artillery fire from the eastern bank, and at 2 p.m. the San

assault front of the corps reached the western riverbank. After nightfall,

the left, 12th Infantry Division, was led across the San in the area of the Guard Corps and then directed towards Sobicin, which was heavily occupied by the enemy.

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corps over the San and then directed towards Sobicin, which was heavily occupied by the enemy.

It was still questionable whether the significant partial success achieved by the center of the 11th Army on the battlefield around Jaroslaw could be expanded to achieve the goal sought by the leadership. The decision on this depended very much on the development of events on both army flanks. The XXXXI Reserve Corps of General von Francois had, as soon as the threat to its left flank was eliminated by the advance of the northern neighbor, initiated a rightward swing to attack. Faced with this impending encirclement, the enemy retreated over Tuczepy on the road to Radymno. Only east of Tuczepy did the left wing of the 82nd Reserve Division encounter the northern part of the enemy's main position. After hard fighting in the afternoon, the entire attack line of the XXXXI Reserve Corps came to a halt before this. The intention of the commanding general, General of Infantry von Francois, to continue the encompassing thrust from the north could only be fulfilled after replenishing ammunition. To protect the right wing held at Zamoscie, the 11th Bavarian Infantry Division was pushed up to the Raba. The 119th Infantry Division swung forward to Batycze. At 6 p.m., the Kneussl Corps received the message that an attack against the occupied line north of Przemysl was not in line with the Army High Command's intentions. It would mean a concentration of forces in a direction incompatible with the army's tasks east of the San. Therefore, no more forces were to be used against the enemy at the Rada than required for the protection of the right flank of the XXXXI Reserve Corps. The 119th Infantry Division was to be held back to be available as an army reserve at any time. The Army High Command hoped that Przemysl would soon succumb to the attack of the right neighbor army and wanted to keep the striking power of the 11th Army for the breakthrough over the San downstream from Przemysl with the goal of Rawa Ruska undiminished.

North of the battlefield of Jaroslaw, the 20th Infantry Division now faced the task of forcing the river crossing as soon as possible. In the open lowland terrain, the preparation for this was very difficult. It was only possible to cross at night, despite considerable losses. A bridgehead was established west of Wiazownica. It was the intention of General von Emmich, after further advancing the 20th Infantry Division on the eastern bank, to also bring the 19th Infantry Division into the attack on the enemy still facing them.

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to engage the opposing enemy. Upon receiving the report of the enemy forces advancing towards the crossing point of the 20th Infantry Division, he ordered the 19th Infantry Division to attack on May 17th to divert the enemy's influx of forces there.

At the San Front of the Austro-Hungarian 4th Army, the river crossing was unsuccessful. North of the Vistula, a surprising setback occurred. The Austro-Hungarian 1st Army and the Army Detachment Woyrsch, in their forward movement since May 11th, under multiple local night skirmishes against the northeastward retreating Russians, reached the general line: Koprzywnica—Staszów—Mircze—north of Wisłoka—Gąbin on May 16th. However, on the morning of May 16th, the Russians launched a counterattack against the Austro-Hungarian 1st Army and the southern flank of the Army Detachment Woyrsch, particularly targeting the inner flanks and the weakly secured gap between the two armies. The ensuing battles forced the Austro-Hungarian 1st Army to withdraw its northern flank by up to ten kilometers. This also prompted the 4th Army to hold back its left flank. Behind it, the three approaching reinforcement divisions had reached the beginnings of Debica, Radomysl, and the area east of Tarnow. General von Conrad now redirected one of these divisions (41st Infantry Division) via Szczucin to support the 1st Army. The left flank of the Austro-Hungarian 3rd Army reached just west of Pratkowice. On both sides of the Wisłoka, the attack lines moved closer to the fort line. Further east, however, the attack against the Słotwina—Butcha section did not break through. The line of the Austro-Hungarian 2nd Army extended from here to Kaisersdorf on the Dniester (20 kilometers northeast of Sambor).

On May 17th, the operation of the 11th Army continued as planned. The Kneussl Corps remained in its position according to the guiding idea. The XXXXI Reserve Corps was also forced by a shortage of ammunition to postpone its attack.

1) Austro-Hungarian 1st Army consisted of: II Corps (Austro-Hungarian 4th and 25th Infantry Divisions, 1st Brigade of the Polish Legion), I Corps (Austrian 46th Infantry Division), Austro-Hungarian ½ 2nd Reserve Division. Army Detachment Woyrsch consisted of: Landwehr Corps (3rd and 4th Landwehr Divisions), Landwehr Division Bredow, Austro-Hungarian Group Kövess (Command XII, Austro-Hungarian 16th and 35th Infantry Divisions), and 7th Reserve Division.  
2) Volume VII, p. 434. The army corps formed from the Army Detachment Woyrsch and the Austro-Hungarian 2nd Army has so far been referred to as "Army Woyrsch" (Volume VI, p. 100, footnote 1). With the withdrawal of the Austro-Hungarian 2nd Army, the designation "Army Woyrsch" becomes obsolete again.  
3) Position course for sketch 15.  
4) p. 145.

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if only possible after thorough preparation ... Situation would likely

change significantly if the breakthrough of the 2nd and right wing of the

3rd Army succeeds."

Accordingly, Generaloberst von Mackensen saw his next task in

concentrating as strong forces as possible to expand the bridgeheads on the

eastern bank despite expected resistance. The 119th Infantry Division was

withdrawn as army reserve and moved to the Zarzecze—Jaroslau road. To

secure against Przemysl, parts of the Austro-Hungarian 3rd Army remained

immediately north of the San. The XXXXI Reserve Corps, to which the

11th Bavarian Infantry Division was subordinated, was to initially halt the

attack on Radymno.

The Austro-Hungarian VI, the Guard, and X Army Corps (with the

subordinated 56th Infantry Division) were to expand their attack successes

on the eastern San bank. When it turned out that the enemy had already

retreated during the night, the army command believed it was already

in full retreat westward and ordered at 3 a.m. that the attack corps should

follow until reaching the approximate line Wietlin—Oleschowa—Cetula—

Lubaczowka-Bach. The 19th Infantry Division was to connect with the

4th Army to take the heights of Leszaczow and eastward. However, very

soon reconnaissance revealed that the enemy, under the cover of rearguards,

had retreated to a newly prepared defensive front in the line Wysocko—

Bobrowka—Oleschowa, and that he also held the near edges of the forest

zone south of the Lubaczowka.

The Austro-Hungarian VI Corps was set to attack on both sides of the

Szklo. In this rightward swing, the left wing advanced east of Sobienin at

3 p.m. Then the attack came to a halt. The Guard and X Army Corps

wanted to launch a joint attack after the river crossing at 1 p.m. The 2nd

Guard Infantry Division connected with the allies by evening at Madywiska

and the road west of Oleschowa. The 1st Guard Infantry Division had to

overcome open difficult attack terrain up to the large forest zone west of

Cetula. Its right wing stormed Hutti and Buczyna in the evening. Its left

wing broke into the forest zone in the afternoon, then swung right into the

enemy's rear at Cetula. However, the attempt failed due to stubborn

resistance. On the right wing of the X Army Corps, the regiments of the 56th Infantry Division¹) under Generalmajor Schach von Wittenau threw themselves into combat from a difficult advance on the Russian forest positions and wrested them from the enemy by 3 p.m.

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Strong Counterattack of the Russians against the 11th Army.

The 56th Infantry Division¹) of Major General Schach von Wittenau attacked the Russian forest positions and captured them from the enemy by 3 PM. On the left, the 20th Infantry Division, with its left wing on both sides of the Lubaczowka, joined the advance and reached the forest on both sides of Terebnie by 3 PM, which the enemy voluntarily vacated. Both divisions pushed through the forest up to the Lubaczowka bend. The right wing of the 56th Infantry Division attempted to relieve the Guard Corps by advancing on Cetula in the evening but did not penetrate the village. North of the Lubaczowka, parts of the 20th Infantry Division cleared the river bend up to the area west of Nieliniki. The 19th Infantry Division advanced to cover beyond the bridgehead over Pesachow. The overall result of the day was thus a significant expansion of the bridgeheads.

Thanks to the successes of the X Army Corps, the right wing of the Austro-Hungarian 4th Army crossed the San. It was to advance downstream to open the crossing at Uliczyna and take possession of Sieniawa. The Army High Command expected that the enemy, to prevent the deployment of further forces of the 4th Army on the eastern bank, would advance against the breach point of the army on the San. Therefore, the army reserve was moved there. To preempt the expected Russian attack from the bridgehead of Sandomierz on the eastern bank of the Vistula, the High Command decided to deploy its two available reinforcement divisions (Hungarian 37th and Austrian 21st Infantry Division) to the left army wing for an imminent attack downstream along the Vistula.

The Austro-Hungarian 3rd and 2nd Armies made no progress, particularly due to insufficient ammunition supply.

May 19th already brought strong counterattacks by the enemy against the entire front of the 11th Army in the morning hours. Generaloberst von Mackensen concluded from this that the Russian resistance was growing further; he wanted to move the 119th Infantry Division to Jaroslau and temporarily leave the Hungarian 11th Cavalry Division there to be able to deploy them quickly as needed. However, when General von François reported the beginning of significant enemy artillery deployment against his front and the gathering of strong forces in front of his right wing at 11 AM, the 119th Infantry Division was moved south to Boratyn, and General von François was made available for emergencies.

¹) The infantry of the 56th Infantry Division was equipped with captured Russian rifles.

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provided by François for emergencies. Prisoners reported that the Russian assault was planned for the evening of May 19 or May 20.

The k.u.k. VI Corps attacked with the intention of advancing its center on Wietlin, but gained ground only slowly against Russian forces thrown into battle early. West of the San, the enemy launched a strong relief attack along the road from Radymno at the junction of the XXXXII Reserve and k.u.k. VI Corps, which collapsed by 7 p.m.

Opposite the Guard Corps, the enemy also seemed to have reinforced, particularly with artillery. Additional forces were apparently brought in by rail from Oleszyce. The Guard Corps therefore refrained from continuing the attack, also considering its own ammunition situation. The divisions prepared for defense, as did those on the adjacent Lubaczowka front of the X Army Corps.

Only north of the Lubaczowka was there still the intention to offensively carry out the task of the 19th Infantry Division south of Sieniawa. However, by noon, the army command considered halting this division to use it on the right army wing, which appeared more threatened at the moment. Since it was also important to secure sufficient depth for the bridgehead, the army command refrained from the shift. The right wing of the k.u.k. 4th Army, the 10th Infantry Division, which had crossed to the south bank of the San behind the 19th Infantry Division during the night, occupied Sieniawa, which had been evacuated by the enemy. The joint afternoon attack by this division and the 19th Infantry Division succeeded in expanding the bridgehead around Sieniawa.

The stubbornly resisting enemy was still close by, especially on the commanding Slawa Heights east of Sieniawa. Their fall was a prerequisite for permanently holding the bridgehead. The attack on the Slawa Heights and the southern heights was planned by both divisions for the hour of May 20. Further north on the San front, the enemy had shown lively offensive activity throughout the day. Parts of the Russians, who had crossed north of Lezajsk during the night, were pushed back over the San. Strong attacks occurred in the Ulanow—Nisko area (about 35 kilometers northwest of Lezajsk). But everywhere, the deployment of all reserves was tested without success in repelling the enemy advancing over the San here. Preparations were now made for an imminent attack also east of the Vistula, especially since the situation of the Austro-Hungarian 1st Army was still considered critical.

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Expansion of the Successes at Siennawa.

also established east of the Vistula, especially since the situation of the Austro-Hungarian 1st Army was still considered critical.

In the Austro-Hungarian 3rd Army, the attack of the Beskid Corps made some progress. The Austro-Hungarian 2nd Army was also able to advance its immediately adjacent battlefront.

By May 20, the enemy behaved more cautiously than expected. In all its positions, there was intense fortification. Its artillery seemed to be further reinforced. Across the entire front of the 11th Army, only isolated skirmishes occurred without changing the situation. Only the struggle for the bridgehead at Siennawa was brought to a successful conclusion. Early in the morning, the parts of the 20th and 19th Infantry Divisions deployed north of Lubaczowka had taken control of the heights between Mielnit and the Slawa Heights. Then the left wing of the 19th Infantry Division swung north to support the allies advancing against the Slawa Heights. After extensive artillery preparation, this stronghold also fell in the morning. After such setbacks, the enemy, aided by torrential downpours, quickly disappeared into the large forests east of Siennawa; only cavalry followed them. The captured positions were fortified for defense. On the rest of the San front of the Austro-Hungarian 4th Army, the situation could be improved again. Against its northern front between the San and Vistula, the enemy advanced, partly in individual thrusts, closer.

In the Austro-Hungarian 1st Army, a relaxation occurred. In fourteen days of heavy fighting, this army and the Landwehr Division, reinforced by parts of the Landwehr Corps under Lieutenant General Count von Bredow, managed to halt the Russian attack on May 19 along the line Kopryznnica—Bzielufta—Strykow. The threat of an enemy breakthrough in the gap between Bzielufta and Chybiec was eliminated by deploying parts of the Austro-Hungarian 1st Army and the Landwehr Division Bredow, as well as the Austro-Hungarian 7th Cavalry Division; the Austro-Hungarian 9th Cavalry Division positioned itself as an army reserve behind the army front. The Landwehr Corps also repelled Russian attacks along the line Strykow—Pomorzany. The advance of the left wing of the Landwehr Corps and the Kövesz group came to a halt along the line Pomorzany—Mniszek—Gapinin.

On the front of the Austro-Hungarian 3rd Army, nothing changed except for a local gain by the Beskid Corps. The enemy seemed to be strengthening in front of the inner flanks of the Austro-Hungarian 3rd and 2nd Armies.

The course of the last few days had shown that the advance of the 11th Army east of the San and its simultaneous pressure on the western riverbank towards the southwest severely threatened the Russian defensive front at the San, which was based on the fortress of Przemysl.

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The 11th Army east of the San and its simultaneous pressure on the western riverbank towards the southwest posed a strong threat to the Russian defensive front at the San, which was based on the fortress of Przemysl. This explained the army command's furious enemy counterattacks from the south and east on both banks of the river. To continue operations in the decisive direction to the southeast, Generaloberst von Mackensen had to be careful to free up additional forces. The Chief of the General Staff of the 11th Army, Colonel von Seeckt, had therefore already promised the Emmich Corps a significant extension of its combat front to the right by noon on May 19, in order to release the Guard Corps for the army's disposal.

2. The Events on the Right Wing of the Army until May 19.

Maps 5 and 6, Sketch 17.

The German South Army¹) under the command of General of Infantry von Linsingen launched an attack along the entire line from the Carpathians on May 12 in the direction of Dolina—Stryj—Drohobycz²). The enemy, parts of the Russian 8th Army³), retreated without serious fighting in front of their left wing, as did the neighboring Austro-Hungarian 2nd Army on the left. The center and right wing of the South Army still encountered strong resistance from the Russian 11th Army⁴). While the Szurmay Group and the Hungarian 38th Infantry Division of the Bothmer Corps reached the Wolszce—Unit line, the 3rd Guard Infantry Division under Major General von Friedeburg stormed strong enemy positions west of Zawadka, suffering heavy losses, and pursued the fleeing enemy. Fierce battles took place at the 1st Infantry Division of Lieutenant General von Conta over Hill 927 southeast of Kozinowa, which was only taken at 1 a.m. The Hofmann and Gerok Corps refrained from the ineffective frontal attack with heavy casualties on the Russian trenches occupied in unmediated strength; a planned encirclement in the Swica Valley towards Leopolds dorf did not take place.

¹) South Army consisted of: Gerok Corps (Genkdo. XXIV. R.K.: 48. R.D., Austro-Hungarian 19th S.D.), Austro-Hungarian Hofmann Corps (Austro-Hungarian 55th S.D., Austro-Hungarian 131st I. Br., Austro-Hungarian 12th Fpt. Erzherz. Rgs.), Bothmer Corps (Austro-Hungarian 3rd G.D., I. S.D., Austro-Hungarian 38th I. S.D.), Austro-Hungarian Szurmay Group (Austro-Hungarian 7th T.S., Hungarian 40th S.).  
²) Volume VII, C. 430. — ³) C. 189. — ⁴) C. 189.

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The Southern Army Comes to a Halt Before New Enemy Positions.

(exclusively) continue. Immediate cooperation between it and the Southern Army seemed no longer feasible.

The course of events in the following days did not meet the expectations of the military leadership. It turned out that the enemy was determined to offer strong resistance south of the Dniester.

The relief attack of the left wing of the 7th Army - Rhemen and Litzbicki groups - quickly came to a halt on the morning of May 15 against a strong opponent in the Lanczyn-Pnivon line, east of Jablonitza, at Majdan and south of Perehinsko. The right wing of the Southern Army, the Gerok Corps, also encountered fierce resistance on the forest heights south and southwest of Dolina and had to wait for the arrival of artillery before considering continuing the attack. The gain in territory was greater in the center and on the left wing. The Austro-Hungarian 131st Infantry Brigade occupied Bolechow after a brief street fight and advanced to the Smica. From the Bothmer Corps, the 1st Infantry Division reached the area east and northeast of Siemiginow; the 3rd Guard Infantry Division drove weak enemy forces from Uliczno but stood by late evening east of it on both sides of the railway towards Stryj before strong positions. The Hungarian 38th and 40th Infantry Divisions also found the heights east of Drohobycz occupied; the Austro-Hungarian 7th Infantry Division reached Lisznia. The army reserve advanced to Stynawa nizna. The far right wing of the Austro-Hungarian 2nd Army reached Subalum, thus advancing significantly ahead of the Southern Army.

General von Linsingen still believed he faced only weak rearguards, whose resistance would be easy to break. Consequently, he assigned the corps far-reaching objectives for the 16th. The Gerok Corps was directed towards Nowica-Kalusz, the Austro-Hungarian 131st Infantry Brigade towards Zawada, the Bothmer Corps against the Sulatycze-Nowosielko line, the Szurmay group towards Medenice, and the army reserve towards Bolechow.

However, during the course of the day, it became apparent that stronger Russian forces stood in an apparently continuous, long-prepared line in front of the entire front of the Southern Army, extending from Perehinsko over Spas-Moryszyn-Gaje wyzne to Hruszow, in connection with the positions before the left wing of the 7th Army. The enemy had also established a front in fortified positions from west of Czajkowice to Husatow before the 2nd Army.

The attack of the Southern Army on this new line of resistance of the Russian 11th Army failed to break through anywhere on the 16th. Only individual positions were taken. Thus, the Austro-Hungarian 19th Infantry Division of the Gerok Corps drove the Russians out of Spas; their attempt to envelop the assumed left flank north of Spas by swinging eastward came to a halt before enemy trenches southwest of Janowka.

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Attempting to envelop the assumed left flank by swinging east, they came to a halt before enemy trenches southwest of Janowka. The 48th Reserve Division under Lieutenant General von Hahn focused its attack on the left flank. Field Marshal Lieutenant Hofmann deployed the 55th Infantry Division and the 12th Landsturm Territorial Brigade Bolzano to the left of the 131st Infantry Brigade and moved the main forces of the 1st Infantry Division against enemy positions north of the Dniester. On the following days, the Southern Army struggled in vain to defeat the enemy. Only the 1st Infantry Division achieved a significant local success. After heavy, costly battles, they stormed Lipowice and the Russian positions on the railway embankment northwest of it on the afternoon of the 18th. However, when they attempted to advance northeast together with the left flank of the now fully deployed Hofmann Corps the next day, new enemy resistance soon halted them. The left flank of the division even had to fend off stronger Russian counterattacks on both sides of the railway to Stryj.

The neighboring armies were denied any progress. The right flank of the Austro-Hungarian 2nd Army came to a standstill at the Strywiaz. A sharp Russian counterattack on May 16 and 17 pushed the attacking flank of the Austro-Hungarian 7th Army back to the line Lanczyn—Dyl [997]—Glinik. Simultaneously, the enemy, with ruthless use of manpower, assaulted the bridgehead of Kolomea, whose now reinforced garrison held firm. However, the Russians succeeded on May 19 in breaking into the trenches on the southern Pruth bank at Kumaniczy, from which they were soon expelled. Then a longer pause in fighting occurred on the left flank of the 7th Army. General Freiherr von Pflanzer-Baltin refrained from resuming the offensive for the time being, considering the strength of the opposing enemy.

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Advance of the 11th Army to the Southeast.

3. The Battle North of Przemysl from May 21 to 27. Maps 5 and 6, Sketches 14 and 15.

General von Falkenhayn had recognized from the previous course of operations on the Galician front that considerable efforts were still needed to achieve the next operational goal agreed upon by the allied army commands on May 12, the San-Wisznia-Dnjestr line. On May 18, he informed the 11th Army Command that another use of the 11th Army could only be considered once the enemy had been driven from its current position. The sooner this happened, the more welcome it would be in view of the overall situation. The halt in the attack, which had occurred with the armies of the Carpathian front fighting south of Przemysl after initial successes since May 17, diminished the hope of quickly reaching the Dnjestr-Wisznia line and thus a rapid change in the situation in Bukovina.

General von Falkenhayn saw the most effective means to get the stalled overall operation moving again in an advance of the 11th Army to the southeast. On the afternoon of May 18, still unaware of the day's battles, he initially inquired with the 11th Army Command, "why not advance the VI and Guard Corps further south or southeast to relieve the XXXXI Reserve Corps and the 11th Bavarian Division at Radymno and Przemysl and, in the further course, also the left wing of the 3rd Army southeast of Przemysl." This inquiry coincided with a report from Army Command 1, which expressed the general impression that the enemy was retreating before the center and left wing, but was trying to hold the San from Radymno upwards as well as Przemysl. Before any further major offensive, the reorganization of supplies and the establishment of a new base on the San were necessary, which would take a few days due to the difficult road conditions and the distance from railway centers. The army intended to first attack Radymno and thereby enclose Przemysl in the north. However, the infantry attack on Przemysl was not intended without special orders.

From the response that the 11th Army Command then gave to the inquiry itself, General von Falkenhayn saw that the advance to the southeast he had suggested was already considered by Generaloberst von Mackensen, "as soon as the army corps have gained enough space and freedom of movement to the east."

1) p. 139. — 2) Przylstak and Krosno. p. 146.

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It was anticipated that "as soon as the army corps have gained enough space and freedom of movement to the east." Currently, however, all corps are still engaged with their front to the east. Additionally, the ammunition situation needs to be improved. The Chief of the General Staff of the Field Army then emphasized in a detailed letter on May 19 the decisive importance of a breakthrough by the 11th Army on both sides of the Wisznia to the southeast. "According to the development of recent days," it said, "it is doubtful whether the 2nd, 3rd, South, and 7th Armies will soon reach their goal unless they are relieved by a renewed breakthrough of the 11th Army... I would like to emphasize once again the importance of the issue given the rapid escalation of the military-political situation. The enemy's movements reported yesterday by rail and foot march suggest that he has significantly weakened in front of the actual front of the army. On the other hand, he seems to be strengthening Przemysl and his positions there for political reasons. As far as can be judged from here, it should then be possible to leave a screen against the east and north and to attempt a breakthrough thrust on both sides of the Wisznia with closely assembled main forces."

In his response to this suggestion, the Chief of Staff of the 11th Army, Colonel von Seeckt, pointed out that the 11th and 4th Armies had been attacked on May 19 along their entire front, most strongly over Radymno and south of it. Once the situation is clarified and sufficient ammunition is procured, the proposed breakthrough over the line Zablotsce—Radymno—Lazy would be initiated.

The 11th Army Command intended to have the XXXXI Reserve Corps, Austro-Hungarian VI Corps, Guard Corps, and the 119th Infantry Division ready by May 22 along the approximate line Kaluszce—Malowisko, to begin the attack towards Buczow—Galicia on the 23rd. The 11th Bavarian Infantry Division was to cover against Przemysl, and the X Army Corps was to take over the previous front of the Guard Corps. The Lubaczowka was envisaged as the boundary against the Austro-Hungarian 4th Army. This army was thus assigned another position over its already widely extended front. This could only be done by deploying its last reserves on the right wing of the army. The two reinforcement divisions on the march were therefore diverted to the right. Since a local setback had occurred at Sieniawa on the right wing of the 4th Army, this was not extended to the Lubaczowka, but only to Sady.

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Preparations for the Attack.

In the army order issued on May 20 at 6 p.m., the purpose of the new offensive of the 11th Army was determined to be "to disrupt the rear connections of Przemysl and facilitate the advance of the 3rd and 2nd Armies southeast of Przemysl." This required a pivot of the assault group to the southeast. Accordingly, the attack sectors were assigned. The k.u.k. VI Corps and the Guard Corps were to move to the right. The XXXXII Reserve Corps was instructed to deploy strong forces behind its left wing. The start of the attack could only be scheduled for May 24, as the reliefs at the 4th Army were delayed. This army intended to carry out its assigned cover to the north through its own offensive on Sandomierz. The two neighboring armies to the right, the 3rd and 2nd Armies, were ordered by the k.u.k. Army Command to break through on May 24 as well, continuing the planned attack on the fortress of Przemysl with the inner wings and advancing through the foothills of the Carpathians "up to the railway and road on both sides of Mosciska."

Along the entire front of the allies from the middle of the Carpathians to the area north of the Vistula, a unified attack was to be launched. It was hoped that the pincer attack on both sides of Przemysl would quickly bring down the fortress and then clear the way for gaining the Wisznia–Dniester section.

The Russians remained calm on the entire front until the start of the attack. This benefited the planned course of the relief movement and the replenishment of ammunition supplies. According to the army order of the 11th Army issued on May 22, the artillery firing on May 23 was to be followed by effective firing on May 24 at 6 a.m. The assault was set for 8 a.m. The 119th Infantry Division was to be ready as army reserve at Dobkowice–Bratyn.

The reconnaissance flights conducted in clear weather, supported by photographic surveys, had supplemented the troops' findings about the enemy. The first Russian position, already known, north of the Rada, in the line Ostrow–Wietlin–Madywka–Cetula, was strongly fortified. Behind it, the defense zone was structured, gradually eastward from Rada and San towards Radymno, deeply entrenched. Thus, the bridgehead of Radymno represented a stronghold of special defensive strength. Another position, also adjoining the Rada on the left wing, extended over the narrower bridgehead east of Radymno behind the Wisznia to Lasy and was on the northern wing bent back to the heights of Laszki and Tuchla.

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bent. According to previous findings, the opposing Russian 3rd Army consisted of the XIII Corps (19th, 12th, ½ 81st Infantry and 3rd Don Cossack Division) northeast of Przemysl, the XXI Corps (33rd, 44th Infantry, 16th Cavalry Division) at Radymno, the V Caucasian Corps (3rd Caucasian, 43rd Infantry, 3rd Rifle, 7th Cavalry Division and three Foot Cossack Brigades) northeast of Jaroslaw, and the III Caucasian Corps (34th, 21st, 52nd Infantry and 13th Siberian Rifle Division) at Sieniawa. One had to expect stubborn resistance from the Russians. The enemy's front covered the most important road and rail junctions to the capital of Galicia: from Przemysl via Grodek, from Radymno via Jaworów, and from Jaroslaw via Rawa Ruska to Lemberg. Therefore, the main concern of the army high command was to provide sufficient quantities of ammunition for the attack. Since the supply railway of the 11th Army was only completed to Strzyzow northeast of Jaslo on May 19, all troop and column vehicles and all remaining transport in the country were made available for ammunition transport with the greatest emphasis.

The XXXXI Reserve Corps wanted to focus on the front section north of the railway, which cuts through Ostrow. Here on the main road to Radymno, a series of entrenchments and height 202, which dominates the river junction, formed the key point of the enemy position. The 82nd Reserve Division was to launch a decisive breakthrough against it and open the northern adjoining front from Torbech. The h.u. VII Corps focused its attack on the east bank of the San against Wietlin. The Guard Corps initially wanted to deploy only the reinforced 1st Guard Infantry Division against the area north of Wietlin, between Szklo and Makowisko, while the 2nd Guard Infantry Division was positioned on the main road to Makowisko. It was later to advance over Makowisko to cover the left flank. The reinforced X Army Corps was tasked with protecting the attack to the north. General von Cramon wanted to solve this task offensively by attacking the 20th and 56th Infantry Division through the forests north of Oleszyce to the heights around Cetula, to hold as many enemy forces here as possible. The Lubaczowka front was to remain defensive.

The protection of the right flank of the attacking 11th Army was entrusted to the 11th Bavarian Infantry Division with the Hungarian 11th Cavalry Division under its command. It was to adapt its left wing to the advance of the XXXXI Reserve Corps. At the same time, it was tasked with "encircling the northern front of Przemysl."

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Breakthrough of the XXXXI Reserve Corps.

Speculations about Przemysl fluctuated. Initially, the 11th Bavarian Infantry Division believed in a strong occupation of the fort belt. Then, the impression grew that no significant Russian forces were in the fortress. Intercepted conversations even suggested an imminent evacuation. Other reports stated that the Russians wanted to hold the fortress for political reasons. Initially, the High Command of the 11th Army had no intention of concentrating heavy artillery against the northern front or conducting an attack on the fortress itself without a special order\*). However, when the idea of a forcible capture was considered, General von Kneussl proposed an attack on the northern front. This perspective was already taken into account in the redistribution of heavy artillery. The 11th Bavarian Infantry Division was also instructed to act immediately if the evacuation of the fortress was confirmed. However, the impression remained that the enemy was positioned behind the Rada in the line Mackowice—Bathzize—Walawa intended for the encirclement of the northern front of Przemysl. It was hoped that the pressure from the main force of the 11th Army to the southwest would also bring down this position. To strengthen the 11th Bavarian Infantry Division for its new task, its right flank was relieved by cavalry.

The Austro-Hungarian 3rd Army could only plan the start of its assigned systematic attack on the southwestern front of Przemysl for May 28 due to the late arrival of heavy artillery.

Dense morning fog still lay over the San lowlands when, on May 24 at 6 a.m., the artillery began its effective fire along the entire attack front of the 11th Army. Punctually at 8 a.m., the infantry assault began. The enemy, prepared for defense, had artillery that was considerably larger in number and more richly supplied with ammunition than before. Heavy guns from the fortress area also engaged the front attacking west of the San. The XXXXI Reserve Corps stationed there faced a difficult task. But within minutes, a determined leap led the decisive battle of the 82nd Reserve Division into the entrenchments east of Tuczapy and further against the northern part of Ostrow. This impact in the north quickly overcame the front west of Ostrow. By 8:25 a.m., General von Francois could already report: "Heights west and northwest of Ostrow taken."

\*) p. 147.

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taken Ostrow." Shortly thereafter, the 82nd Reserve Division advanced into the northern part and soon after the 81st Reserve Division into the southern part of the elongated village. Under this bilateral encirclement, the defense in Ostrow completely collapsed. In the northern part of the battlefield, Generalmajor Fabarius set the next line of heights before Radymno as the target for his 82nd Reserve Division and moved his reserves along the main road. The rapid success achieved in a determined direction so shook the Russian infantry that their resistance weakened and they surrendered en masse. The tirelessly advancing infantry of the 82nd Reserve Division reached the heights before Radymno before the Russian batteries standing there in fire could bring up their reserves for rescue. In the infantry and machine gun fire, the teams collapsed. Reserves advancing on the road to Radymno reached the rear of the bravely resisting batteries. After these great successes, mainly due to the determination of the troops, the leadership of the 82nd Reserve Division gained the impression that with decisive action, Radymno itself would soon fall. General Fabarius therefore ordered the continuation of the attack on the place at 9 a.m. Further south, the 81st Reserve Division had encountered new resistance on the heights west of Stolziszow. However, after Generalmajor von Stöcken had his previously held back right wing advance northwest of Zamojce for encirclement, covered to the south by the 11th Bavarian Infantry Division, the enemy defense collapsed so quickly that Russian batteries were also overrun here. Now the 81st Reserve Division wanted to advance with the mass into the southern part of Stolziszow, while the right wing had to cover this advance on the heights north of the lower, deeply cut Rada. Both divisions of the XXXXI Reserve Corps were thus set for the attack on the second enemy position zone at 10 a.m., only two hours after the start of the storm. Flyers had observed numerous marching columns east of Radymno retreating behind the San.

The battle at the Austro-Hungarian VI Corps did not initially proceed as successfully. Although its right wing had joined the rapid victory march of the 82nd Reserve Division south of the San. By 10 a.m., the route Ostrow—Wysocko was reached. Some guns had also fallen into the hands of the Hungarians here. However, the front of the Hungarian 39th Infantry Division in the field marshal's command of Hadik had to be covered, as its left wing remained completely tied up at the San near Adamowka. Because the main attack of the VI Corps on the right bank against Bielstin was not destined for quick success.

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Radzyno is Taken.

Bielstin did not achieve a quick success. Leaning against the San lowlands and the Szklo, the enemy offered stubborn resistance, particularly in entrenchments west of Bielstin. The attack stalled completely here. To get the advance north of the San moving and thus eliminate the flanking fire that was hindering the attack on Radzyno, the artillery of the Hungarian 39th Infantry Division and partly also that of the XXXXI Reserve Corps directed their fire northward. However, this support only affected the combat area immediately east of the San. At Bielstin, the Austro-Hungarian 12th Infantry Division of Field Marshal Lieutenant Kestranek was still held fast for the time being.

The same happened to the left neighboring southern wing of the 1st Guard Infantry Division. Under the effect of enemy flanking fire from Bielstin, it was initially unable to advance. However, a breakthrough further north in the middle between Szklo and Malowisko was successful. Parts turning north soon also cleared the way for the left wing attacking through Malowisko to break through the breach towards Bobrowka. The units of the 2nd Guard Infantry Division deployed here to support the 1st Guard Infantry Division were then reassigned to General von Windler on the left corps wing for unified command.

The X Army Corps had already intended to take the positions around Cetula by surprise attack early in the morning before the start of the general attack, which, according to prisoner reports, was supposed to have become known to the enemy. However, this did not succeed. Made aware by this attempt, the enemy was prepared for defense against the X Army Corps. A unified attack no longer occurred. The right corps wing, the 20th Infantry Division, separated from the Guard by a swamp area, gained some ground towards Olszowa. But the left wing and the 56th Infantry Division were stuck in heavy fighting around Cetula.

Meanwhile, the attack of the XXXXI Reserve Corps on Radzyno had made favorable progress. By noon, the place was in the hands of the 82nd Reserve Division, and the 81st pushed further south into the immediately adjacent village of Stolzowo. During these battles, aerial reconnaissance determined that the road from Radzyno via Duntowice to Zalesta Wola was covered with several side-by-side marching columns. Troops of all arms hurriedly moved over the San bridges east of Radzyno. A wild confusion arose among the masses gathering there. Aircraft, the long-range artillery targeted these welcome objectives.

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Artillery these welcome targets. During the advance of the 82nd Reserve Division through Radymno, intense panic arose again among the Russian infantry, so that more batteries, trying to escape through the city, fell into German hands. Both divisions already believed they could pursue these disintegrating units. However, the enemy positioned itself in prepared positions before the 81st Reserve Division on the heights of the eastern Rada bank. The division reorganized for a new attack, while the right wing was to advance on the eastern Rada bank towards Zadarowice for flank security. By pushing the division towards Stolzson, a noticeable gap had formed between it and the northern wing of the 11th Bavarian Infantry Division, which had meanwhile occupied Zablonce. The execution of the attack proved impossible here, especially as the enemy itself launched a counterattack. The 82nd Reserve Division managed to establish itself on the flat height east of Radymno. However, the attack strength of this division, which had become quite confused in the local combat, seemed nearly exhausted. Its left wing had to remain strongly bent back, as the Hungarians to the north could not follow the rapid attack course. The bridgehead of Zagrody effectively flanked any further advance of the division. Freshly brought-in reserves initially swung east against it, but encountered strong enemy defense there at 3 p.m. Although the attack of the XXXXI Reserve Corps had come to a halt along the entire line, General von Francois still hoped to advance to the San line, possibly even further, today. In response to this intention reported to the army command, the approving answer came at 3 p.m.: "Since the enemy still holds east of Przemysl, a quick advance against its rear is very promising." When it soon became apparent that the Russian command had managed to reestablish their collapsed front between the Rada and the bridgehead of Zagrody, the army command decided to fill the gap that had formed between the 11th Bavarian Infantry Division and the XXXXI Reserve Corps. It was hoped that this would give new impetus to the advance of this corps against the San. At 4 p.m., the order was given to the 119th Infantry Division to advance over Zamostje—Zadarowice. The 119th Infantry Division reached the line Zablolce—Zamosjce only after nightfall.

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Also Great Successes East of the San.

The division only reached the line Zablolce—Zamosjce after nightfall. The gap was closed. Unified action by both divisions against the positions on the heights east of the Rada did not occur. The XXXXI Reserve Corps also postponed the continuation of its attack to the following day. May 24 had been a rest day for the corps. The infantry, advancing with fresh momentum, effectively supported by the accompanying artillery, broke through two enemy defensive belts and thus wrested the strong bridgehead of Radymno from the enemy. In doing so, 52 guns were captured and 9000 prisoners were taken.

The 39th Infantry Division, positioned on the right flank of the Austro-Hungarian VI Corps in the difficult lowland terrain on both sides of the San, could not keep pace with the rapid advance of the XXXXI Reserve Corps. Flanking fire from Wietlin also hampered their attack. It was not until 4 p.m. that the northern exit of Radymno was reached. The bridgehead of Zagrody also halted further advance here, as with the neighboring 82nd Reserve Division on the right. The frontal attack by the Hungarians did not break through. On the battlefield of the 12th Infantry Division, Wietlin, the hotly contested redoubt west of the town was brought down at 11 a.m. with support from the 1st Guard Infantry Division. However, Wietlin itself was still stubbornly held by the enemy. It was only when the division directed its main thrust through the suburb of the town towards the Sbychow—Drejna road and reached it at 2 p.m. that resistance in Wietlin finally collapsed. In the hope that the attack of the inner flanks of both divisions, slowly advancing through particularly difficult swampy terrain between the San and Wietlin, would now gain momentum, the Austro-Hungarian VI Corps received the order from the army high command at 3 p.m. to "capture the line east of Grabowice—Dunkowice—Lazy in connection with the XXXXI Reserve Corps and Guard Corps today." However, this proved impossible. The army high command now emphasized that it was important to "break through from Wietlin via Zagrody to advance on the right bank of the San as soon as possible and thus facilitate the advance of the XXXXI Reserve Corps." "Above all, the VI Corps must soon be able to bring the Radymno—Grabowice road under fire." However, the Austro-Hungarian 12th Infantry Division did not succeed in making significant progress against the strong enemy position between Zagrody and Lazy in the open terrain exposed to flanking. Only directly at the San did the parts of the Hungarian 39th Infantry Division, separated by the river, reach the junction.

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tion the consolidation. The heavy day of fighting had brought the Austro-Hungarian VI Corps 7000 prisoners and 16 guns.

With the favorable turn that the battle north of Wisłim had taken by noon, relief had also come for the right wing of the Guard Corps. The General Command now placed the focus of further operations on it. In the line Dreśina—Adamowka¹), the 1st Guard Infantry Division encountered new strong resistance at 1 p.m. After breaking this, the division pushed towards the heavily fortified Łazy. The enemy responded with fierce counterattacks. Heavy fighting raged here until evening, without significant ground being gained. On the left wing, the 2nd Guard Infantry Division advanced after capturing the heights north of Małowisko to attack Adamowka—Bobrowka. But here too, the enemy launched a counterattack at 6 p.m. Bobrowka was no longer reached. 5000 prisoners were captured by the Guard Corps during the day.

Following the successes of the 2nd Guard Infantry Division at Małowisko, the right wing of the X Army Corps also advanced vigorously in the afternoon. By 7 p.m., the enemy forest positions on both sides of Olchowo had fallen. In stubborn fighting, parts of the 20th Infantry Division pushed through to the edge of the forest, and by 10 p.m. Chodana was taken. The repeatedly fierce battle for Cetula, however, no longer achieved its goal. The command gained the impression that strong Russian forces were still present here and also on the Łubaczówka front. Thus, despite only minor territorial gains, the attack by the Emmich Corps succeeded in holding significant enemy forces here, away from the decision.

The overall result of the day was that the 11th Army had broken through the newly established enemy front over a width of 20 kilometers and gained 5 kilometers of space. Nevertheless, the enemy managed to position itself, leaning on Przemyśl, in a westward-facing defensive position. Prisoner statements revealed that on May 22, the order was given to hold Przemyśl. On May 23, aircraft observed only limited traffic from the fortress in an easterly direction. If this was to be maintained, the 11th Army had to reckon with the enemy continuing to offer the strongest resistance on the connection front protecting the links from Przemyśl. A report made to the Supreme Army Command at 7 p.m., which also reached the General Commands, expressed the Army Command's further intentions to "exploit the success achieved today and to advance with maximum force into the rear of the enemy east of Przemyśl, ... to possibly impede the enemy's retreat over Mosciska."

¹) South of Bobrowka, located north of Sło; not to be confused with Adamowka north of Rabyńmo.

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Counterattacks of the Enemy West of the San.

As the general command received the orders, the army high command expressed its further intentions to "exploit today's success and advance with the greatest possible force into the rear of the enemy east of Przemysl, ... to possibly divert the enemy's retreat over Mosciska." The XXXXI Reserve Corps was to do everything "to enable the 119th Infantry Division to make the promising advance on Medyka."

Since the battles were not yet concluded in the evening, the high command could not foresee what situation would arise the next morning. It was therefore left to the initiative of the subordinate commanders to exploit their previous successes within the framework of the given attack objectives on May 25. Initially, this did not succeed on the right wing of the army. The 11th Bavarian Infantry Division hoped, by advancing in conjunction with the 119th Infantry Division, to roll up the Rada position from the north and then swing into the desired encirclement position opposite the northern front of Przemysl. The 119th Infantry Division had reached the heights east of Zablcce during the night and wanted to advance with its right wing southward along the Rada. However, this attack did not progress by midday, while the Bavarians managed to take Drohojow by surprise. At the XXXXI Reserve Corps, the 81st Reserve Division made its further advance from Zamosc—Stoloszow eastward dependent on the progress of the 119th Infantry Division on its right flank. Since the 82nd Reserve Division also had to repel strong attacks during the night, General von Francois considered a systematic preparation of the attack against the re-strengthened enemy necessary. Above all, the division's advance to the east seemed only possible if the bridgehead of Zagrody on the left flank had fallen.

Here, the nightly and repeated morning assault by the Hungarians had not yet achieved success. A relief through the center of the Austro-Hungarian VI Corps, which did not advance in the open terrain north of the San, was not to be expected. Therefore, Field Marshal Lieutenant Arz emphasized the left wing of the corps to take Lasy in conjunction with the southern wing of the guard. This succeeded at 10 a.m. However, the local battle also attracted further southern adjacent parts. In the gap created north of the San, the corps reserve was now regrouped to the rear of the bridgehead of Zagrody.

The Guard Corps intended a leftward swing in the attack. While the left wing was to hold the heights reached in the morning at Bobrowka, the right was to swing forward over Lazy.

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Bobrowka was to be held, and the right was to advance over Lazy. Once this place was taken, the connection to the VI Corps was achieved without strong enemy resistance. The center of the Guard Corps had to overcome significant terrain difficulties in the swampy lowlands, particularly for the artillery in its development for the attack.

In front of the X Army Corps, the enemy had evacuated the hotly contested Cetula during the night. By 3:30 in the morning, the elevation mass projecting into the Lubaczowka lowland east of the place had been occupied by the 56th Infantry Division. General von Emmich now intended to also prepare the 20th Infantry Division at and north of Chodanie for the advance against the upper Lubaczowka. This connection initially caused some concern at the Army High Command that the bridgehead taken so far could be threatened from the east. However, the concern was soon dispelled, as Ryszkowa Wola and Zapalow were already found free of enemies in the early morning hours. Flyers confirmed at 9:00 in the morning that the Russians had withdrawn their forces to the southeast. The forward movement of the 20th Infantry Division was to take place at noon.

At this time, the High Command of the 11th Army assessed the situation such that the previous good progress north of the Wisznia would also help the attack group on both sides of the San, which still encountered strong resistance east of Radymno. If it succeeded in reaching the San, for which there seemed to be justified prospects, the impact on the enemy in front of the 3rd and 2nd Army had to be felt and force him to retreat. This necessitated continuing the attack of the 11th Army in the chosen direction with all forces.

However, the hopes of the Army High Command were initially not fully realized. The right wing of the army did not make significant progress. In the course of the afternoon, the 11th Bavarian Infantry Division succeeded, under heavy fighting, in advancing its left wing at and north of Andrykow. The 119th Infantry Division advanced on the heights east of Rada but soon stalled again in front of Zadabrowie. Consequently, the 81st Reserve Division, suffering under strong artillery flanking fire on the right wing of the XXXXI Reserve Corps, could not gain significant ground. However, the 82nd Reserve Division resumed the attack against the Swiete-Grabowiec line from the left wing when the bridgehead of Zagrody fell at 4:45 in the afternoon.

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Progress East of the San on May 25.

General von François intended to move the 81st Reserve Division later behind the 82nd to take them out of the fortress's firing range. The Army High Command agreed and directed the corps towards Stubno east of the San and the occupation of Soinica to secure the right flank. The 82nd Reserve Division managed to advance to Swiete despite the onset of darkness. However, they encountered such strong resistance there that the plan to take Swiete and Soinica during the night could not be carried out. The left wing maintained contact with the Hungarians at the San near Grabowice.

As the execution of the tasks of the XXXXI Reserve Corps proved more difficult than expected, the Army High Command was eager to regain a reserve force to assert its intentions if necessary. Therefore, the 119th Infantry Division was ordered to remain at Zablace for the time being.

The battle in the center of the 11th Army brought more territorial gains. The attack by the corps reserve of the Austro-Hungarian VI Corps, which struck the bridgehead of Zagrody from the rear at 4 p.m., brought it down. Subsequently, the 39th Infantry Division advanced on the eastern bank of the San up to Grabowice. The 12th Infantry Division also pushed forward after successfully concluding the battles around Lazy, pursuing the retreating enemy over the Wisznia between Duniowice and Lazy during the afternoon.

The right wing of the Guard Corps was still engaged in combat north of Lazy in the afternoon. The center had already launched an attack against the heights west and north of Laszki at 1 p.m. Despite fierce and openly conducted defense and after lively local skirmishes, the enemy had to abandon Laszki by 4 p.m. In the evening, the center reached both sides of the Silo up to Charytany—Zamecznik. The right wing was also able to advance eastward beyond Lazy without encountering strong resistance. On the left corps wing, shortly after 2 p.m., the forces stationed at Bobrowka advanced to attack Zagrody. Despite heavy flanking fire from the north, the town was secured by 6 p.m.

The X Army Corps completed the intended pivot of its center into the Zapałów—Lubaczowka line during the afternoon without enemy counteraction. Parts of the 20th Infantry Division also participated in the Guard's battle for Zagrody.

1) On the Bobrowka—Oleszyce railway, not to be confused with Zagrody on the battlefield of the Austro-Hungarian VI Corps.

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For the 5th and 4th Army, no decisive combat actions had yet occurred since the beginning of the battle north of Przemysl. Their command area had meanwhile extended across the Vistula, as the 5th and 1st Army was subordinated to them as "Group Kirchbach"¹). On the northern river bank, the enemy had evacuated their positions in front of the left wing of the 5th and 1st Army and the Landwehr Division Bredow on May 22, but had already established new resistance several kilometers further east. After a feint operation on May 24 at the San front, the planned advance towards Sandomierz took place the next day on both sides of the Vistula. However, only some enemy forward positions were overcome. The High Command of the 11th Army requested the 4th Army at 7 p.m. to relieve the elements of the German 19th Infantry Division deployed in the bridgehead of Sieniawa, in order to draw them in for the breakthrough of the 11th Army. The relief was promised for the night of May 27.

The progress of the neighboring 5th, 3rd, and 2nd Army to the right against the road east of Przemysl had been minimal so far. The troops had not been able to meet General von Conrad's demand that the attack of both armies should reach the Mosciska—Przemysl road on May 25. A breakthrough into enemy lines had not occurred. Thus, there was no serious threat to the rear connections from Przemysl from the southern direction so far. This was largely due to the circumstance that strong artillery had to be deployed for the 3rd Army's attack against the western front of Przemysl, leaving only weak artillery available for the thrust of the inner wings of both armies. Additionally, there was an ammunition shortage due to difficult supply conditions in the mountains. It was intended to more closely consolidate the Beskiden Corps and the left wing of the 2nd Army under the command of General von der Marwitz on May 26 to achieve success.

In the evening, aviators observed the departure of enemy columns from Przemysl towards the east and from Balice in front of the right wing of the 3rd Army towards the northeast. It was uncertain whether these movements were to be seen as the beginning of an enemy withdrawal to the east or were intended to reinforce their front, which was under heavy pressure from the 11th Army. In any case, the task remained for all armies to continue their attacks in the established directions with all forces.

¹) In place of the General of Cavalry Baron von Kirchbach, the Corps Command VIII Corps had taken over command of the former Kirchbach Corps on May 22. The former commander of the 5th and 1st Army, General of Cavalry Dankl, was assigned to the Italian front. Cf. p. 26.

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Corps Francois is deployed against the rear of the fortress.

The morning of May 26 brought no significant change for the right wing of the 11th Army. Since the 119th Infantry Division was held back by the army high command, the 11th Bavarian Infantry Division, relying solely on itself, could not advance beyond the Rada. At the XXXXI Reserve Corps, the 82nd Reserve Division continued in a tough, indecisive village fight around Swiete. In front of the Austro-Hungarian VI Corps, the enemy had retreated to a position east of Grabowice—Nienowice—Piaśki. At 10 a.m., they were attacked here. The enemy had retreated from the Guard Corps. Only by noon did the 1st Guard Infantry Division encounter resistance from Zaleska Wola. The 2nd Guard Infantry Division broke through at noon in the march through Mielciz Stary and Korzenica. The enemy stood here in line Łuchla—Mielciz Nowy—Butkowina. General Freiherr von Plettenberg intended to advance the 1st Guard Infantry Division on Chalupki Chotyniecice under the cover of the left flank by the 2nd Guard Infantry Division.

In this situation, Generaloberst von Mackensen gave the following order to General von Francois at 1 p.m.: "Since the XXXXI Reserve Corps can no longer advance in the front, it must now attempt to bring the 81st Reserve Division and, to the left, the 82nd Reserve Division across the San under the protection of the 119th Infantry Division, which is now assigned for this purpose. ... The overall situation urgently requires that the San be crossed today in line Barcz—Nienowice."

General von Francois then ordered the 82nd Reserve Division at 3 p.m. to push through to the southern edge of Swiete. This goal was reached by 5 p.m. From the 81st Reserve Division, the initially available parts and, after relief by the 119th Infantry Division, the rest were to reach the eastern bank of the San via Michalowka during the night, to later advance on the shortest route via Stubno—Bucow against the road Przemysl—Mosćiska and to use the artillery assigned to the division against the fortress connections. During the night, the 81st Reserve Division moved between the parts of the 82nd Reserve Division located on the eastern bank of the San and the Austro-Hungarian VI Corps.

This corps had, by 7 p.m., recaptured Nienowice with the 39th Infantry Division from the enemy and pursued them to Gaje. The 12th Infantry Division, following weak enemy forces, had reached Chotyniec. Thus, a wedge had been driven far to the southeast. Positioned on the left, the 1st Guard Infantry Division advanced through Jaleska Wola under combat with enemy rearguards.

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The 1st Guard Infantry Division advanced through Jaleska Wola under fighting with enemy rearguards. Separated from it by the broad Słozówiedung, the 2nd Guard Infantry Division reached the heights west of Tuchla. As army generals for the X Army Corps, the lower course of the Lubaczowka was established after the 19th Infantry Division was detached from the front and assembled at Jarosław. No more fighting took place here on this day.

The Austro-Hungarian 4th Army had made the attack on Sandomierz on the Vistula dependent on the advance of the German 47th Reserve Division deployed further east. However, this division soon became stuck in strong forest positions. Without significant additional artillery deployment, success was not to be expected here. No successes were achieved on May 26 at the junction of the Austro-Hungarian 3rd and 2nd Armies either.

The allied army commands had planned the later expansion of the San–Wisznia line during their agreements on the continuation of operations on May 12.1) After important parts of this section had now fallen into the hands of the attacking army, General von Conrad ordered on May 26 the expansion of the San line and the captured bridgeheads, adding that this "naturally must not hinder the continuation of the offensive in any way." The Austro-Hungarian 4th Army was to fortify the bridgehead of Sieniawa and the line reached so far in the San–Vistula angle. The 11th Army then ordered the X and Guard Corps to expand their positions by advancing the right wing to Młyn north of the main road to Krakowiec. The Austro-Hungarian VI Corps was to advance north of the Wisznia over Kalników–Zalazie. For the attack group of General von Francois, it was ordered: "XXXXI Reserve Corps with 119th Infantry Division retains the task of advancing south of the Wisznia, which now forms the border with the VI Corps, towards the Medyka–Mościska road. Right border free." The cover of the right flank on the western San bank remained with the 11th Bavarian Infantry Division with the Hungarian 11th Cavalry Division. This gave General von Francois more leeway to push the attack part on the previously gained large bridgehead of the 11th Army against the connections from Przemyśl. The VI and Guard Corps were to follow to protect the left flank positioned to the southeast.

1) p. 139.

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The Francois Assault Group is Weakened.

In accordance with the orders given to him, General von Francois intended on May 27 to deploy his three divisions as soon as possible on the eastern bank of the San for the decisive attack. However, at 11:45 a.m., he called upon the 11th Bavarian Infantry Division to relieve the troops of the 119th Infantry and the 82nd Reserve Division located on the western bank of the San. General von Kneussl, on the other hand, was of the opinion that due to the resulting extension of his division over twelve kilometers, overcoming the enemy's elevated position east of the Rada was no longer possible for him. He considered the involvement of the units subordinated to General von Francois in this task on the western San bank still necessary and presented this view to General von Francois. However, he was convinced that the resistance on the western side opposite the 11th Bavarian Infantry Division would also collapse through the full-force attack on the eastern bank. The Army High Command initially agreed with the measures of General von Francois but decided in favor of General von Kneussl after receiving his statement and ordered at 3:15 p.m.: "XXXXI Reserve Corps is to first secure possession of Sosnica with its right wing, and advance with the left wing over Stubienko to Stubno. After gaining Sosnica, the right wing is to take the direction towards Bucow. The 119th Infantry Division is to follow up to Sosnica. Connection of the 11th Bavarian Infantry Division via Zadobrowce to Drohojow." Under these circumstances, the decisive advance on the eastern bank could only become effective with full force once the Francois group had completed its task on the western bank. The influence of the Przemysl fortress on the course of operations became apparent.

The attack battle of the XXXXI Reserve Corps initiated in the meantime on both San banks remained unaffected by this exchange of opinions. The 119th Infantry Division only wrested the heights immediately south of Zamoscie from the enemy in the evening and maintained connection there with the 82nd Reserve Division. The repeated attacks of this division against the enemy, effectively supported by the artillery of the fortress, had not been successful. Only when parts of the division intervened from the other San bank in the afternoon, was it finally possible to penetrate the northern part of Sosnica. The 81st Reserve Division, now deployed on the flat eastern bank between San and Wisznia, pushed forward with the focus of its left wing towards the southeast. It encountered strong resistance along the Barcza-Stubienko line. Under the pressure of the superior force, the enemy was forced to withdraw from Stubienko at 4:00 p.m. and in the evening also from Stubno.

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In the evening, Stubno also had to be abandoned. The division wanted to advance to Pozdziacz to gain influence over the railway and road from Przemysl—Medyka—Mosciska, however, its striking power was no longer sufficient in the increasingly widening attack space. Its right wing remained stationed at the San River before Barycz, while its left wing was still able to wrest Naklo from the enemy in the evening.

East of the Wisznia, the Austro-Hungarian VI. and the Guard Corps had accompanied the advance of the XXXXI Reserve Corps with echelons from the right wing. In the afternoon hours, the Allies captured Kalnikow and the heights south of the town after heavy fighting. Further north, the line from the eastern edge of Kalnikow—west of Mlyny—height west of Tuchla was conquered, where the planned defensive front was to be established.

On the left army wing, a serious threat was emerging. Already during the night and throughout the entire day, strong enemy thrusts across the Lubaczowka had to be repelled along the entire front of the 20th and the now eleven-kilometer-extended 56th Infantry Division. Particularly in front of the left wing of the 56th Infantry Division at the Lubaczowka bend east of Czerwona Wola, strong enemy forces appeared to be massing. The approach of considerable troops unloading at Lubaczow was reported by aircraft at noon. The Army High Command therefore positioned a regiment from the 19th Infantry Division, which had been withdrawn as reserve, at Piwoda for the right wing of the X Army Corps and made another regiment of the 56th Infantry Division available.

While the left wing of the 11th Army stood firm despite enemy attacks, the Russians achieved a major success north of the Lubaczowka against the bridgehead of Sieniawa. After Czech troops failed during the night and the Slawa Heights were lost, the entire Allied defense completely collapsed. Numerous Austro-Hungarian batteries fell into enemy hands. Reserves were unable to restore the situation. The German X Army Corps, itself under heavy attack, was unable to provide assistance. Thus, the right wing of the Austro-Hungarian 4th Army had to withdraw behind the Lubaczowka and the San after several futile attempts to rebuild the defense east of the San. At 8:45 in the evening, Colonel General von Mackensen approved this arrangement but simultaneously ordered the cessation of the offensive movement against Sandomierz to free up forces for the endangered right wing of the Austro-Hungarian 4th Army. Also on the left bank of the Vistula, the attack of the Kirchbach group and the right wing of the Woyrsch Army Detachment in the Klimontow–Jezow–Stychow line finally came to a halt.

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Successful Russian Counterattack at Sieniawa.

The wing of the Army Detachment Woyrsch in the line Klimontow–Jezow–Stychow finally came to a halt.

Due to these events at the Austro-Hungarian 4th Army, a serious crisis arose for the left wing of the 11th Army. If the army wanted to continue its offensive task, its left flank could not be pushed further. Therefore, at 9 p.m., the army command ordered the 119th Infantry Division to be held at its immediate disposal. This meant a further significant loss of striking power for General von François's mission.

The fronts of the Austro-Hungarian 3rd and 2nd Armies had almost come to a standstill.

4. The Battle for Przemysl from May 28 to June 3.

Map 6, Sketch 14.

On May 28, there was a relaxation at the front of the 11th Army. Under the impression of the bold advance of the 81st Reserve Division on the southern bank of the San, the enemy was retreating before the entire front of General von François. The rest of the army's front held its positions against enemy partial attacks except for a local loss at Kalniów. This made it possible for the army command to release forces to counter an extension of Russian successes at Sieniawa to the western bank of the San and the left flank of the 11th Army. Parts of the 19th Infantry Division were sent to Wola Buchowska. The 119th Infantry Division was moved to Jaroslaw, except for the divisional staff and a reinforced infantry regiment, which were subordinated to the 11th Bavarian Infantry Division, to which two battalions of the Guard Corps were also transferred. The Hungarian 11th Cavalry Division, without its rifle unit, which remained with the 11th Bavarian Infantry Division, was also set in motion to Jaroslaw. Thus, by evening, sufficient reserves were ready at the junction of both armies.

Meanwhile, the enemy had retreated before the right wing of the 11th Army to the line Malowice–Walawa. General von Kneussl followed the enemy accordingly. The XXXXI Reserve Corps also followed the enemy on both banks of the San, where the focus was shifted even more to the eastern bank. Here, the advance troops reached the line Chalupki–Nako. However, at 9 p.m., the army command ordered the 82nd Reserve Division to be halted south of Sieniawa and not to go beyond the line Walawa–Podziaci on the eastern bank. This measure appeared necessary to be able to fall back on the XXXXI Reserve Corps to support the left wing of the army if needed.

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A measure seemed necessary to be able to fall back on the XXXXI.

Reserve Corps to support the left wing of the army if needed.

General von François, however, urged for the continuation of the assigned

attack against the connections of Przemysl as quickly as possible, despite

the significant weakening of his forces caused by the events at Sieniawa,

as he saw the enemy's isolated attacks as a sign of their waning strength,

indicating an imminent evacuation of the fortress. Prisoners had also

reported that strong forces would leave the fortress on May 28. Therefore,

the 82nd Reserve Division was to aim for Walawa—Torki on May 29, and

the 81st Reserve Division for Pöddzacz—Starzawa.

The High Command of the 11th Army also gained the impres-

sion that the enemy no longer intended to seriously defend Przemysl. To

prevent an orderly withdrawal of their forces and resources from the

fortress, it was necessary to force them into a hasty evacuation. However,

given the previous course of attacks, a quick success by the Austro-Hungarian

3rd Army against the fortress was hardly to be expected. Therefore, only

the 11th Bavarian Infantry Division was considered to bring about the

rapid fall of the fortress. Generaloberst von Mackensen ordered this

division to carry out the "shortened attack on Przemysl."

The fortress of Przemysl, located at the deeply incised exit of

the San from the mountains, was surrounded by a ring of modern forts

and intermediate works. In the south, west, and north, these were

advanced far into the surrounding high ground, while on the eastern front

they lay in the widening river plain. Although the hurried demolitions

carried out before the fortress was handed over to the Russians in March

of the year had diminished the defensive capability of the works in some

respects, they did not affect the secure accommodation in the underground

spaces of the remaining armored caverns and observation posts. The

Russians had meanwhile worked on restoring the works and expanding

the intermediate lines, significantly strengthening the obstacles. The

inner fortifications of the fortress were outdated and offered no resistance

to modern artillery.

The commander of the 11th Bavarian Infantry Division, General

von Kneussl, chose the area of Forts X and XI as the target for the attack.

In two sections, two infantry regiments each were deployed under the

command of Generals von Schön and von Behr. To the right, only cavalry secured, while on the left, the rifle detachment of the Hungarian 11th Cavalry Division connected.

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The shortened attack on Przemysl is ordered.

only cavalry, on the left the rifle section of the Hungarian 11th Cavalry Division joined. It was intended to push the infantry to the front line on May 29. The artillery under the command of Major General Zieten was to open fire on May 30, the infantry to reach the assault position the following night and storm on the 31st. The Austro-Hungarian 3rd Army promised a simultaneous attack against the southwest front.

The movements carried out on May 29 and in the subsequent rainy night and the artillery's positioning proceeded without disturbance from the enemy. However, the troops gained the impression that the enemy was still willing to offer sustained resistance in their solid, partly fortified front line.

The XXXXI Reserve Corps was able to advance its right wing on both sides of the San unmolested to the southern edge of Balawa and to the same height as Dallo on May 29. At 4 in the afternoon, the 82nd Reserve Division then brought mortars and 10 cm cannons into position close behind their infantry, opening fire on the railway near Medyka. Thus, at least a disruption of the connections from Przemysl was achieved. The enemy seemed to be concentrating strong forces on the Turczyn Heights opposite the left corps wing. Therefore, parts of the 82nd Reserve Division were moved behind the 81st to Stubno, which also provided a support for the right wing of the Austro-Hungarian VI Corps positioned on Kalników; it was brought forward again. Otherwise, the adjoining front of the VI, the Guard Corps, and the X Army Corps had only weak advances to fend off. However, on the left army wing, the enemy, to exploit their success from Sieniawa, launched strong but unsuccessful attacks against the now extended front of the X Army Corps (56th Infantry Division) up to the San. The Austro-Hungarian 4th Army regrouped its right wing on the west bank of the San.

Given the operational overall situation, it was absolutely necessary to increase the previously unsuccessful pressure of the Austro-Hungarian 3rd and 2nd Armies against the road east of Przemysl to at least pin down the enemy forces located on this front. Already strong parts of the Russian 8th Army had appeared opposite the 11th Army east of the San. Consequently, Generaloberst von Mackensen believed in view of the developments at Sieniawa that he could not afford to use additional forces for the decisive thrust to the south, apart from the XXXX1 Reserve Corps, which could have simultaneously accelerated the fall of Przemysl.

3) Two Austro-Hungarian mountain guns, one Austro-Hungarian mountain howitzer, nine field guns, three light field howitzers, three light field howitzers, one 15 cm gun, four 21 cm, one 28 cm, one 42 cm howitzer, two 30.5 cm mortar batteries, two, three medium and one light mine-thrower units.

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Events at Sieniawa could not be taken upon themselves, except for the XXXX1. Reserve Corps to use further forces for the decisive thrust to the south, which could have simultaneously accelerated the fall of Przemysl. "If Przemysl falls," Colonel von Seeckt stated in an assessment of the situation, "then at least the position before the Wisznia line is resolved. It therefore seems necessary to continue the operations in the initiated manner, thus withstanding the pressure from the east against the bridgehead at Jaroslaw, advancing further from the north and south against the road Przemysl—Mosciska, and taking Przemysl."

The attack preparations of the 11th Bavarian Infantry Division against Przemysl itself proceeded as planned on May 30. At 10 a.m., the artillery began its fire in clear weather. The assault was scheduled for May 31 at 6:15 a.m. General von Francois continued to strive to push his right wing forward on both sides of the San, to bring his heavy artillery further south to effectively impact the connections from Przemysl. If further progress was made towards Podziaca, he intended to also attack the Turzyna Heights, which dominated the battlefield. However, the army command was concerned that such an attack could divert the XXXX1. Reserve Corps from its main thrust direction to the south, and recommended suppressing the Turzyna Heights only with artillery fire from both neighboring corps. While the 82nd Reserve Division managed to advance slightly east of the San during the afternoon, its attack west of the river did not progress well. Opposite the weak Hungarian cavalry riflemen deployed in the area between the 82nd Reserve and 11th Bavarian Infantry Division, the front section from Malkowice was heavily occupied by the enemy. As this posed a threat to the left wing of the fortress attack, the army command instructed General von Francois at 4:45 p.m. to "advance with emphasis on the western bank while maintaining the current position on the eastern San bank" and to take the heights of "Malkowice." The 82nd Reserve was overrun at 8:30 p.m., and Wisznia was also named as a further target. However, decisive progress was not achieved on the western bank of the San on May 30. The Austro-Hungarian VI, Guard, and X Army Corps were able to further expand their defensive positions. The two guard battalions withdrawn to Jaroslaw were moved to Dunlowice out of consideration for the Austro-Hungarian VI Corps, weakened in its combat strength. The new front on the lower Audaczowa was already exposed to strong, repeated mass attacks during the day, in which seven Russian divisions were involved.

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Breaking through the Fort Line of Przemysl.

exposed to strong, repeated mass attacks during the day, in which seven Russian divisions participated. They were completely repelled, mostly in fierce close combat. The crisis here seemed to be overcome.

The Austro-Hungarian 3rd Army had also begun artillery fire against Przemysl on May 30. The assault was likewise planned for the following day. But already by 7 o'clock in the evening, the infantry had succeeded in surprisingly capturing Fort VII at Prałkowce.

In the attack sector of the 11th Bavarian Infantry Division, on the morning of May 31, the infantry that had moved into assault positions found the effect of the artillery fire still insufficient. Therefore, the assault was postponed to June 1, and the effective firing on the intended breakthrough point continued. The 82nd Reserve Division, joining on the left, was engaged in heavy offensive combat west of the San in the morning, attempting to wrest the farmsteads "at Malkowice" from the enemy and to advance southward from Walawa. In this situation, at 2:50 in the afternoon, the Army High Command received an order from the Austro-Hungarian High Command which, referring to the concerning developments at Sieniawa and the enemy force concentrations there, ordered the following: "11th and 4th Armies are to ensure particularly strong establishment of their battle lines and prepare all dispensable forces as reserves for defense. 3rd and 2nd Armies are to continue the attack on Przemysl and against the Przemysl—Rudki line with all determination." The 11th Army High Command interpreted this as the certainly understandable wish of the Austro-Hungarian High Command to recapture the fortress, lost in March despite brave defense, through forces of their own armies. However, it believed it could not comply with this request in the current operational situation, as a sudden abandonment by the 11th Army of the attack on Przemysl and the thrust from the north into the rear of the fortress threatened to bring the entire offensive operation to a standstill — all the more so when shortly afterward news arrived that the allies had given up Fort VII, which had been taken the previous evening. Fully aware of his responsibility, Colonel General von Mackensen refrained from modifying his previous orders. This found its quick and brilliant justification through the behavior of the troops entrusted with the attack on Przemysl.

The new bombardment of the attack front, which lasted until 4 o'clock in the afternoon, was visibly having the greatest effect. The last lucky shot from a 42 cm mortar had shattered the remains of a dangerous trench flank on the western side of Fort XI. Recognizing these favorable circumstances, the assault infantry, beginning from the left flank, advanced from their positions on their own initiative.

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The attack infantry, beginning from the left wing, advanced from their position on their own initiative. The assault was completely successful. The fort line Xa to XI was taken. The surprised Russians had mostly been unable to occupy the parapets in time. Their isolated counterattacks were repelled and numerous prisoners were taken. The attack, immediately carried forward across the Ring Road, reached the heights between Fort X and Dunkowiczki by 5 o'clock in the afternoon. The first, most important step toward capturing the fortress had thus been taken. As support, General von Kneußl was provided with the two Guard battalions stationed at Dunkowice. The next day, the artillery was to prepare for the expansion of the breakthrough to the east. The advance of the adjoining 82nd Reserve Division was essential for this. The Army High Command therefore demanded at 5:45 PM that the XXXI Reserve Corps deploy all available forces to immediately "secure the coverage of the Bavarian division between Malkowice and the San." The artillery of the XXXI Reserve Corps was to be positioned against the fort line Dunkowiczki—Bolestraszyce. All other tasks of the corps, except for the artillery bombardment of the railway at Medyka, were to take a back seat to this. Accordingly, the attack group of the 82nd Reserve Division fighting in front of the "at Malkowice" farmsteads was also reinforced with infantry and artillery from the eastern bank, to be able to continue the attack with full force the following morning.

At the front of the 11th Army east of the San, the expected strong enemy attacks did not materialize.

To ensure more unified combat leadership than before at the common attack front of the 5th, 3rd, and 2nd Armies, the Beskiden Corps was subordinated to the 2nd Army. The attack here was planned for June 2nd.

Enemy intelligence revealed that the Russian force shift to the northeast had also led to a new organization of their front. The Russian 8th Army now extended to the Lubaczowka at Nowa Grobla. In Przemysl, three infantry divisions and three Landwehr brigades were assumed to be present, with a further 18 infantry and three cavalry divisions in front of the 11th Army, as well as eleven infantry and three cavalry divisions in front of the 5th and 4th Armies.

General von Kneußl devoted all efforts to expanding the breakthrough front in the fort belt on June 1st, which was still too narrow for further advancement southward, to both sides, especially to the east, as this would simultaneously increase pressure against the fortress's connections. The attack of the left wing of the 11th Bavarian Infantry Division over Dumkowiczi suffered heavily from flanking fire, as the farmsteads "at Malkowice" on the left flank had not yet been taken by the 82nd Reserve Division.

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The Breach is Expanded.

The infantry division over Dumkowiczi suffered heavily from flanking fire, as the farms "at Malkowice" on the left flank had not yet been taken by the 82nd Reserve Division.

During the night, the enemy launched new attacks against the large bridgehead of the 11th Army east of the San, with particular force against the Lubaczowka front. They were repelled. The unengaged right wing of the Austro-Hungarian 4th Army was able to consolidate with additional reinforcements. Based on this situation, visible at 9 a.m., Generaloberst von Mackensen attempted to move the reserves located on the left wing of the army over Jaroslau on both banks of the San to the south, to use them if necessary to support the fortress attack or the advance east of the San.

At the front of General von Kneussl, the left wing had been able to advance through Dumkowiczi under further heavy fighting. At 5 p.m., the general reported that the enemy could only be pushed back slowly. Meanwhile, the 82nd Reserve Division, supported by artillery from General von Kneussl, had already captured the farms "at Malkowice" from the enemy by noon and pursued them up to the height of Dumkowiczi and east of Wysiatycz. The favorable development of the situation prompted General von Francois to inquire with the army command whether the 82nd Reserve Division should now participate in the attack on the fortress. The decision was made at 2:30 p.m. that only "the effect with heavy artillery against the northern front of the fortress" and "securing the flank of the fortress attack" were the tasks of the division. To make this designation effective, more artillery was brought in from the east bank of the San. The good progress of the 82nd Reserve Division also had to bring significant relief to the left wing of the fortress attack. Around 8 p.m., a work south of Dumkowiczi was stormed by them, and the foreland up to Fort XII was taken.

In front of the entire front east of the San, especially in front of the Guard Corps (including the 56th Infantry Division), the enemy had further strengthened.

Since the previous artillery preparation for the fortress attack of the Austro-Hungarian 3rd Army had not been sufficient, the command of the 11th Army suggested at 7 p.m. to expand the advantages gained so far on the northern front of the 11th Bavarian Infantry Division by allocating infantry from the 3rd Army, in case a quick success with this army was not expected.

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After repelling nighttime counter-attacks, the systematic bombardment of Fort X began in the early morning. At noon, the right wing of the 11th Bavarian Infantry Division stormed this fort, which had been almost completely destroyed by artillery fire yet was stubbornly defended until the end. With its fall, the foundation was laid for continuing the attack southward. To ensure the security of the left flank, General von Kneußl requested the Army High Command at 2:15 PM to allow the right wing of the XXXXI Reserve Corps to advance further against the fortress, contrary to previous orders. Meanwhile, General von François had already independently ordered this. Thus secured on the left flank, the entire attack front under General von Kneußl could push beyond the village after repelling enemy counter-attacks from Zurawica between 4 and 5 PM. This gave the attack an admittedly concerning width of twelve kilometers, without any reserves available. As hard fighting was expected to continue, the Army High Command considered bringing up additional forces from the XXXXI Reserve Corps. At 7:40 PM, it also repeated its suggestion to direct infantry from the 5th and 3rd Armies to support General von Kneußl's attack. "If infantry is not pushed into the breakthrough gap of the 11th Bavarian Infantry Division tonight, this division will not be able to exploit the success further, but will struggle to hold what has been achieved." However, General von Conrad considered the 3rd Army's assault planned for early June 3rd against the fortress's southwest front, whose success was not doubted, to be the most effective support for the 11th Bavarian Infantry Division. Moreover, throughout the day, signs had increased that the enemy was preparing to systematically evacuate the fortress. Early in the morning, airmen had observed columns marching eastward on the Przemyśl—Mosciska road. They had been taken under fire by the 10 cm cannons of the XXXXI Reserve Corps. According to the airmen, the Russian artillery had weakened, with parts of it observed withdrawing. Enemy combat activity on the eastern bank of the San had diminished. Consequently, General von François strove to push further southeast and later attack the Turzyna Heights as well. In response to his inquiry, the Army High Command declared at 12:30 PM: "Advance on Medyka desired as soon as possible." Following this, at 1:30 PM, General von François ordered an advance east of the San in the direction of Torki—Pozdziacz, initially far enough for field artillery to be able to engage the Medyka road. The left corps wing felt its way towards the Turzyna Heights.

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the Russian defense weakened, and they reached the desired next ridge line without encountering significant resistance. The evening aerial reconnaissance confirmed the continuation of the enemy's departure from the fortress and numerous fires, particularly at the Przemyśl train station. The evacuation of the fortress seemed to be in full swing. Therefore, General von Kneussl ordered at 8 p.m. to advance further to the core fortifications and, if possible, to penetrate the city itself, as Major General von Behr had already intended. The artillery opened fire on the core fortifications. The fall of the fortress was only a matter of a few hours.

Indeed, the cavalry of the 11th Bavarian Infantry Division found the works IX a and IX abandoned by the enemy at midnight on June 3. The other adjacent works north of the San were occupied by cavalry of the Austro-Hungarian 3rd Army by 2 a.m. At this time, General von Kneussl, based on reports from his right wing section, assumed that the enemy would no longer hold the inner fort line. He therefore renewed the order at 4 a.m. for the right section of Major General von Schöch to advance into the city center. The left attack section under Major General von Behr, from whom no reports were yet available, was to immediately advance eastward past the fortress over the San to capture the enemy withdrawing from the fortress if possible. At 5:15 a.m., however, the report from Major General von Behr reached the army command directly, stating that Przemyśl had been occupied by his troops at 3 a.m. A guard battalion made available to General von Behr had advanced through the inner fortifications during the night and found the city abandoned by the enemy. General von Kneussl received this report only at 6 a.m., simultaneously with an aerial report that the last Russian infantry had been observed an hour earlier near Przekpana east of Przemyśl and from Torit marching towards Medyka. Further east, long infantry and vehicle columns were moving south of the main road to the east. General von Kneussl now set all his troops on the shortest route over Przemyśl in pursuit. Also, the parts of the XXXXI Reserve Corps located on the west bank of the San had joined the advance of the 11th Bavarian Infantry Division. At 4:45 a.m., the 82nd Reserve Division had occupied the forts located between Zurawica and the San, abandoned by the enemy, and swung further towards the San east of Przemyśl.

1) Total ammunition consumption of the heavy artillery during the attack on Przemyśl in the section of General von Kneussl: 7067 shots.

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Przemysl Falls.

occupied the forts abandoned by the enemy and continued to advance towards the San east of Przemysl. The Austro-Hungarian 4th Cavalry Division of the 3rd Army entered the city shortly before 7 in the morning.

As the inner wings of the 11th and Austro-Hungarian 3rd Army threatened to converge in and around Przemysl, it was necessary to make arrangements for the continuation of operations. At 8 in the morning, the Army High Command ordered the 11th Bavarian Infantry Division to advance to the eastern belt of the fortress and the XXXI Reserve Corps to reach the San south of Bolestraszyce and the line Fort I—Tuzna Heights. The Austro-Hungarian 3rd Army began a rightward swing of its left wing through Przemysl. By noon, the Austro-Hungarian X Corps moved into the city south of the San. In the evening, the lines of the allies stood on and on both sides of the heights of Siedliska. The line Medyka—Bucow was agreed upon as the boundary between the two armies. Up to this line, the XXXI Reserve Corps swung forward at Medyka. Fort I and Poplazka were free from the enemy. The left wing of the corps prepared for an attack against the still occupied Tuzna Heights in the afternoon. At 3 in the afternoon, it was stormed after a hard fight. The enemy still held at the Wisznia and in Starzawa. The expected large counteroffensive against the front of the 11th Army further north did not materialize.

The situation for the Austro-Hungarian 4th Army was still tense. The enemy that had broken in at Lezajsk could not be completely thrown back over the San. An attack seemed to be preparing against the new front southwest of Rudnik. The German 47th Reserve Division of Lieutenant General von Besser was already heavily, but unsuccessfully, attacked on both sides of the Leg. The reserves of the 4th Army were exhausted on the extended front. Following a suggestion from Field Marshal von Mackensen, the Austro-Hungarian High Command decided to immediately transfer the left wing corps of the 3rd Army, the X Corps, to the 4th Army.

Considerations.

The operations of the allies in West Galicia from mid-May to early June had proceeded differently than the leadership had originally planned. The main carrier of the offensive was supposed to be the 11th Army, covered on the left flank by the Austro-Hungarian 4th Army, forcing a crossing over the San in the area of Jaroslau, thus outside the tactical range of the fortress Przemysl, to prepare for the initially uncertain continuation of the operations beyond the river, with its right wing being able to take the direction towards Lemberg.

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rations beyond the river with their right wing to be able to head towards Lemberg. The capture of the fortress, whether by surprise or by planned attack, was the task of the neighboring Austro-Hungarian 3rd Army. Moreover, this army was also to initially focus on cooperating with the Austro-Hungarian 2nd Army in the area southeast of Przemysl.

The objective for the 11th Army was indeed that Generaloberst von Mackensen should concentrate as strong forces as possible in the center for the advance over the San near Jaroslaw and also entrust his weakly held right wing only with defensive flank protection against the fortress. The first impetus for a change in this task came on May 18 from the suggestion of General von Falkenhayn to break through from the bridgehead taken at Jaroslaw to the southeast on both sides of the Wisznia. At that time, there was no intention of an attack by the right wing of the 11th Army against the northern front of the fortress, but rather to cut their rear connections and to relieve the allied armies on the right, whose offensive had almost come to a standstill. However, as much as Generaloberst von Mackensen was also eager to place the main thrust of this suggestion in a southeasterly direction towards Mosciska, it could not be avoided that his right wing now came into close contact with the fortress. Initially, it was believed that they could still limit themselves to closing off its northern front. However, the strong resistance encountered by the 11th Bavarian Infantry Division assigned to this task made Generaloberst von Mackensen find the reinforcement of the XXXXI Reserve Corps, with the cooperation of the 119th Infantry Division, more desirable. From the limited progress of the right neighboring army both against Przemysl itself and in the advance against the area east of it, it then emerged, albeit not inevitably, but understandably, the decision to quickly bring down the fortress by attacking its northern front. To ensure success, the army leader also believed that he could not do without at least indirect support from the XXXXI Reserve Corps. As a result, a considerable part of the original strength of the thrust against the rear connections was lost. To compensate for this and to sharpen the delivery of other objectives, consideration for the precarious situation into which the left neighboring army had simultaneously fallen forbade it. To relieve the northern flank of the 11th Army in this process, even insignificant parts had to be sent to the Francois assault group.

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Thus, the final result fell short of the initial intention emphasized by the Army

High Command and soon pursued by General von François, to encircle the fortress by advancing southeast and thereby capture the garrison along with the rich war material¹). However, this was offset by the decisive fact for the continuation of operations that the obstacle, which had previously hindered the direct cooperation of the 11th Army and its right neighboring army, was finally removed. The shortening of the front freed up forces for other uses. Besides this operational advantage, the fall of Przemysl also represented a new, highly significant moral success for the allied armies.

5. The Russian Southwestern Front from Mid-May to Early June.²)

Maps 5 and 6, Sketches 13 and 14.

By mid-May, the R u s s i a n S o u t h w e s t e r n F r o n t under

General Iwanow, organized into five armies, was ready for new battles between the Pilica and the Romanian border³):

4th Army (General Ewetz: XIV., XVI., Grenadier-, XXV., XXXI.

Corps): 10 infantry divisions, 5 Landwehr brigades,

2½ cavalry divisions;

3rd Army (General Radko Dimitrijew, from May 20 under General Lösche:

IX., X., III. Caucasian, XXIV., XXI., XII. Corps):

20½ infantry divisions, 5 Landwehr brigades, 5¾ cavalry

divisions;

8th Army (General Brussilow: VIII., XVII., XXVIII., VII. Corps):

10¾ infantry divisions, 1 Landwehr brigade, 1¼ cavalry

divisions;

11th Army (General Schtscherbatschëw: XXII., XVIII. Corps): 6¾ in-

fantry divisions, 1 Landwehr brigade;

9th Army (General Letschitzki: XI., XXX., XXVIII. Corps, 2nd and

3rd Cavalry Corps, XXXII. Corps): 9 infantry divisions,

6 Landwehr brigades, 8 cavalry divisions.

¹) During the battles around Przemysl, the attacking troops of  
General von Kneussl captured a total of 8300 prisoners. They also seized  
the guns abandoned in the forts, mostly destroyed, as well as a large stockpile  
of unusable and captured guns.  
²) Volume VII., p. 435/436.  
³) Map 18, Volume VII, shows the front line and army boundaries. The  
composition of the individual armies contains some changes compared to Map 18.

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Already on May 14, the 3rd Army and the right wing of the 8th were attacked. On the night of May 16, the XXIV Corps of the 3rd Army had to abandon the bridgehead of Jaroslaw and retreat behind the San in the Lubaczowka-Mouth—Wielin section. General Iwanow ordered a stubborn defense of the entire front on May 16; at the heavily threatened San line, it was to be combined with a counteroffensive. For this purpose, the transfer of the two left wing corps (XXI and XII) of the 3rd Army to the 8th was ordered, with the 3rd being reinforced by the newly arrived 8th Division of the XV Corps from the Northwest Front. The 8th Army was to advance with parts from Przemysl into the flank of the enemy facing the XXI and XII Corps on the San. The leadership at the focal point of the battle on the Southwest Front thus passed to General Brussilow.

However, on May 16 and 17, a new setback occurred for the 3rd Army; the German 11th Army pushed back the XXIV and XIII Caucasian Corps and crossed the San itself at Jaroslaw and below. General Iwanow was therefore forced to support the 3rd Army with a concentrated corps (3rd Caucasian Rifle Division of the V Caucasian Corps in army reserve at Lemberg, 77th Infantry Division from the Northwest Front, and a cavalry division), which was initially assembled in the area south of Lubaczow. He ordered the enemy to be pushed back over the San.

Although the 8th Army supported this counterattack by advancing particularly against Jaroslaw, it failed on May 19; the XXIV Corps was even pushed in at the Lubaczowka. Into the gap that arose between this and the III Caucasian Corps, General Radko Dmitrijew had to quickly insert the 77th Infantry Division and a large part of his cavalry (7th, 11th, 16th Cavalry Division, 3rd Don and 3rd Caucasian Cossack Division). To further support his left wing, the V Caucasian Corps (3rd Caucasian Rifle Division and two Kuban Foot Cossack Brigades) was also deployed on May 20.

Meanwhile, the position of the 8th Army south of Przemysl was also partially pushed in by the 3rd Army. General Iwanow now saw the situation as so serious that he decided to evacuate the fortress on the night of May 21. However, as the pressure from the Allies increased and the situation of the 3rd Army stabilized, the evacuation was initially postponed. As reinforcements, the 20th Infantry Division from the Caucasus and the 3rd Guard Infantry Division were sent to the Southwest Front.

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The Counterattack of the Russian 3rd Army.

sion and the II Caucasian Corps were brought from the Northwestern Front. The

command over these forces was initially retained by the army command;

the 20th Infantry Division was combined with the 3rd Guard Infantry Division

into the XXIII Corps. On May 24, however, the allies resumed their

attacks on the San Front and during the course of the battles, the XXIX Corps (composed of one division each from the XIV and

XXIV Corps) was pushed back behind Lubaczowka and the V Caucasian

to the line Bobrowka—Lazy; the right wing of the

8th Army (XXI Corps) had to retreat. To its left, the

XII Corps barely held east of the San.

As a result, the Russian army command was compelled

to make the II Caucasian Corps available to the Southwestern Front.

With the transfer of the V Caucasian Corps to the 8th Army, its

right wing now extended to Lubaczowka. Meanwhile, the

continued attacks by the allies and the precarious situation on the

right wing of the 3rd Army prompted General Brussilov to order the withdrawal

of his right wing to the line south of Lubaczowka—Mosziska and

thus also the abandonment of Przemysl for the night of May 27.

However, on the orders of the army command, this measure was

rescinded, and the new commander of the 3rd Army, General Lösch,

achieved a significant local success north of Lubaczowka through a counterattack against the Austro-Hungarian 4th Army.

Nevertheless, it could not be prevented that the German 11th Army north of Przemysl expanded its breakthrough in the

decisive direction to the east: the right wing of the

8th Army had to retreat to the line Zagrody—Mlyny—Kalników.

Still, the Russian leadership did not abandon the attempt to

restore the situation and seize the initiative. General

Iwanow decided, in agreement with the army command, to launch a counteroffensive

along the entire front on the night of June 1.

For this, the 8th Army was reinforced by the army reserve

(II Caucasian, XXIII Corps), the right wing of the 3rd Army by the

XIV Corps (one division from the 4th Army) and the 4th Cavalry Corps.

The 4th Army was transferred to the command area of the Northwestern Front,

so that General Iwanow could devote his full strength to the planned offensive.

However, this only materialized with the 3rd Army on both sides of the San—

the execution also faltered here after some partial successes by the Austro-Hungarian

4th Army. In the combat area of the 8th Army, the fortress of Przemysl

had to be abandoned after stubborn resistance on the night of June 3,

and the front was withdrawn to the line Starzawa—Siedliska. On the orders of the army command, three divisions of the 3rd Army (63rd Infantry Division, 12th and 13th Siberian Rifle Divisions) that were no longer combat-effective were transported to Riga.

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were. By order of the army command, three divisions of the 3rd Army (63rd Infantry Division, 12th and 13th Siberian Rifle Division) that were no longer combat-effective were sent to Riga.

6. The Advance of the Southern Army against the Upper Dniester from May 20 to June 3. Maps 5 and 6, Sketches 17 and 18.

While the attack group of Generaloberst von Mackensen successfully completed its assigned task within the framework of the overall operational action by establishing a firm front on the east bank of the San and capturing the fortress of Przemysl, the German Southern Army also managed to fight its way close to its next assigned operational target, the upper course of the Dniester.

General of Infantry von Linsingen, after the unsatisfactory outcome of the attacks begun in mid-May1) against the positions of the Russian 11th Army south of the upper Dniester, was eager to get the offensive back on track as soon as possible. Having concluded from the heavy fighting of recent days that simultaneous, uncoordinated attacks at several points along the front were unlikely to achieve a decisive success, he decided to form a new attack force and deploy it at an appropriate point for a breakthrough. For this purpose, on May 20, the reinforced 95th Reserve Infantry Brigade of the Gerok Corps and the Austrian 12th Landsturm Territorial Brigade of the Hofmann Corps were to be ready in Bolechow, and the Hungarian 38th Infantry Division was to be ready in Uliczno, whose sector the Szurmay Group was to take over.

However, as the 38th Infantry Division, in conjunction with the 40th, succeeded in wresting the heights east of Drohobycza from the enemy early on the morning of May 20, it was initially left with the Szurmay Group to exploit this success, and only when the follow-up attack by both divisions came to a halt in front of a new Russian position the following day was it withdrawn and positioned northwest of Uliczno.

Based on extensive reconnaissance, General von Linsingen intended to deliver the decisive blow to break through the enemy front at Stryj. On May 23, he commissioned the Bothmer Corps, to which the army reserves were made available.

1) p. 154 ff.

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Unsuccessful Attack of the Southern Army.

Corps Bothmer, to which the army reserves were made available. It was to attack comprehensively with strong wings on both sides and, after capturing Stryj, roll up the fronts to the north and south. Corps Gerok was to take Dolina; the parts of the Austro-Hungarian 19th Infantry Division stationed east of the Czeczwa were withdrawn behind the river to the area of Spas, as their right flank was threatened by Russian troop concentrations near and south of Krasna due to the strong detachment of the 7th Army. Corps Hofsmann was to advance eastward on the left bank of the Swica in the direction of Sokolow, while Group Szurmay, with a strong right wing, was to storm the enemy positions east of Zydaczow and roll up the enemy to the north. The attack was to begin at dawn on May 26, with the 24th and 25th used for the strongest artillery preparation. General von Falkenhayn attached particular importance to its rapid execution up to a full decision, in view of Italy's entry into the war.

However, the Southern Army again encountered such stubborn resistance everywhere that significant successes were achieved nowhere. The division Puttkamer (reinforced 95th Reserve Infantry Brigade and Austrian 12th Landsturm Territorial Brigade) deployed on the right wing of Corps Bothmer east of the Lipowice—Stryj railway was unable to take the particularly strong Russian position here on May 26 despite unfavorable conditions and suffered heavy losses. The 38th Infantry Division attacking in the direction of Stupnica (German composite Brigade Kumme and Hungarian 75th Infantry Brigade) penetrated the forests west of Holobutow but soon came to a halt before new, heavily barricaded trenches on the Holobutow—Gaje woynze line. The continuation of the attack on May 27 also yielded no better results. The enemy was even able to retake a stronghold southeast of Turza mala captured the previous day from Corps Gerok in a counterattack. The attempt to break through the enemy front at Stryj with a comprehensive attack by both wings of Corps Bothmer had to be considered a failure for the time being. Its repetition offered little prospect of success on the right wing in the difficult mountain forest between the Sufiel and the Stryj. On the other hand, more favorable conditions seemed to prevail for the left wing. Therefore, it was to attack again after reinforcement by a brigade of the 1st Infantry Division as well as heavy and heaviest artillery. In the meantime, the infantry had to work closer to the enemy with saps. On the evening of May 29, the Pächern Brigade of the 1st Infantry Division was ready behind the 3rd Guard Infantry Division. Early on the 31st, it was to break through the enemy front at Zawadown near Holobutow and take Stryj.

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The Summer Campaign of the Allies in Galicia.

Break through Holobutow and take Stryj. Then an event occurred that threatened to completely question the attack.

Already on May 28, Corps Hofsmann had to withdraw its center to the left bank of the Swica due to strong Russian counterattacks. Attacked again on the entire front during the night of the 30th and broken through south of Bolechow at 4 a.m., the corps abandoned its positions and retreated to the heights on both sides of Bolechow. Field Marshal Lieutenant Hofsmann believed he could not even hold this line securely with his severely shaken troops and requested reinforcement by five to six battalions during the day.

General von Linsingen faced the question of whether to withdraw these forces from Corps Bothmer and thus forgo the decision sought at Stryj or to carry out the intended attack regardless of the situation at Corps Hofsmann. He decided on the latter, on the suggestion of General Count von Bothmer, considering that it was by no means certain whether the enemy would continue to attack at all, and if he did, whether he would succeed. He ordered Corps Hofsmann not only to hold its positions but to regain the lost ground through attack. Corps Gerok, which had to bend its left wing back to the northern exit of Kniasioluka due to the events at Corps Hofsmann, was instructed not to join the retrograde movements of its neighbor but to bring the enemy to a standstill through counterattack and to support the ordered advance of Corps Hofsmann with all its might. General von Linsingen reported to the Austro-Hungarian High Command that the enemy, according to a just-received report from the 7th Army, was making movements to the west, and that the Southern Army could only continue its offensive successfully if the 7th Army tied down the opposing Russian 9th Army through attack. General von Conrad then ordered the 7th Army to attack with its left wing "to prevent any withdrawal of enemy forces at all costs." Late in the evening, General von Pflanzer-Baltin informed the Southern Army that his left wing would advance over the Pasieczna—Siniowt line on May 31.

The bold decision of General von Linsingen was met with complete success. After 1¾ hours of artillery preparation escalating to the strongest drumfire, the reinforced 3rd Guard Infantry Division broke out of their trenches at 5:45 a.m. on May 31 and in the first assault took all enemy positions from Quitliby to southwest of Stupnica. Over 5000 prisoners and eight guns fell into their hands. Hot on the heels of the fleeing enemy, the right attack group pushed through Stryj to the eastern and northern edges of the city, where hastily brought-up Russian reserves initially offered resistance.

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The Breakthrough of the Southern Army at Stryj.

The right attack group pushed through Stryj up to the eastern and northern edges of the city, where hastily brought up Russian reserves initially halted them. The far right wing of the division took Bratkowce. The left attack group drove the enemy back over the railway to Zaplatyn and over the Niezachowka stream, but could not achieve the day's objective, the line Dobrany—Brigidan. On the right wing of the 38th Infantry Division, the Kumme Brigade, which had followed the retreating enemy to Stupnica, was met south of this village by a Russian mass attack, which could only be repelled after prolonged, particularly bitter fighting. On the left wing of the division and in front of the Szurmay group, the enemy held their position with great tenacity. Only a stronghold southeast of Gaje could be wrested from them by the 40th Infantry Division by evening. No change occurred on the right army wing. The continuation of the enemy offensive feared by the Hofmann Corps did not occur. The left wing of the 7th Army advanced with 24 battalions of the Schönburg group¹ into the area on both sides of Manastur and south and west of Majdan, where they encountered stubborn resistance and suffered heavy losses. In the afternoon, a fierce Russian counterattack from Majdan forced the entire group to retreat to their starting positions.

An order received from Teschen at 2 p.m. outlined once again the task assigned to the right army wing. According to it, the Southern Army was to "secure further advances against the Dniester near Kolodrub and Nikolajow and continue the attack in an easterly direction." The 7th Army was to join from the left wing, which was directed towards Stanislau.

Meanwhile, the left wing of the 7th Army, which had been pushed back to its starting positions, had to fend off heavy Russian attacks, especially east of the Dyl and southwest of Majdan. The enemy also probed with stronger forces in the gap between the Lomnica and Iezcowa valleys on the right wing of the Southern Army. The indentation of the breakthrough at Stryj on June 1 was not yet noticeable among the enemies facing the Gerok and Hofmann Corps and the 1st Infantry Division. The Russians still held their positions strongly occupied here. However, the left army wing was able to make further, in part very considerable, progress. The 3rd Infantry Division drove the enemy on the right bank of the Stryj to the heights at Strzalkow, left of the river from the railway embankment north of Stryj to the northeast and fortified Dobrzany in the evening.

¹) Field Marshal Ljubicic was meanwhile replaced by the commander of the Austro-Hungarian 6th Infantry Division, Field Marshal Lieutenant Prince Schönburg.

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The infantry division pushed the enemy on the right bank of the Stryj to the heights at Strzalkow, left of the river from the railway embankment north of Stryj to the northeast and fortified Dobrzany in the evening. The enemy had already withdrawn from the 38th Infantry Division during the night. Advancing over Brigidau—Kamfno, the division reached Königsa.u at 2 p.m. At the same time, the 40th Infantry Division, still partially engaged in heavy fighting, reached the line Lasowzy—Slonisko. The enemy held its position firmly against the 7th Infantry Division. As the further advance of the 38th Infantry Division seemed to offer the possibility of completely cutting off parts of the northern flank of the Russian 11th Army, this division and the left flank of the 7th were deployed at noon on Horucko. Shortly thereafter, the 2nd Army announced that the right flank of the 14th Infantry Division (five battalions and 1½ batteries) stationed at Woloszca, as well as the Austro-Hungarian 1st Cavalry Division under Major General Baron von Leonhardi, had been ordered to advance on Medenice to block the retreat of the enemy facing the 7th Infantry Division. General von Linsingen, like these forces temporarily subordinated to him by the Austro-Hungarian army command, was also directed towards Horucko in the army order at 11 p.m. The 38th and 40th Infantry Divisions, which were attacking new enemy positions in the Hofeszberg—Opary line in the evening, were to continue their advance northward. The army high command hoped that the right flank of the Russian 11th Army would be destroyed by the next morning. Then the 38th Infantry Division was to be advanced southeast for an attack over the Stryj, with the Szurmay group following, secured against the Dniester on the left.

However, the encirclement of the Russians did not succeed. The 38th and 40th Infantry Divisions did push the enemy back north in the early morning hours of June 2nd, but the 7th Infantry Division allowed them to withdraw unhindered just in time, and the Leonhardi group only arrived west of Lady at 2 a.m., far too late to cut off the enemy south of the Dniester. The Szurmay group was tasked with quickly clearing the southern bank of the Dniester of the enemy, securing it with a brigade of the 7th Infantry Division and the infantry of the Leonhardi group from Nadiatycze to the Bystrzyca estuary, and taking possession of Mikolajow and the crossing at Kolodruby. The rest of the 7th and the 40th Infantry Divisions were to be assembled at Medenice—Hofeszberg. The 1st Cavalry Division was deployed over Medenice—Krynica to Derzow to get behind the enemy.

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The Center of the Southern Army Swings to the Southeast.

However, this directive was not executed. The Russians had once again made a strong front south of the Dniester. Field Marshal Lieutenant Szurmay deployed the majority of his forces, including the entire Leondardi group, for an attack, but was only able to wrest Horucko from the enemy on that day. General von Linsingen disagreed with this use of the 1st Cavalry Division; he again ordered their advance on Derzow. However, the division could only be withdrawn from the front after nightfall; consequently, it only reached the area around Krynica, where the 71st Infantry Brigade of the 7th Infantry Division, tasked with securing the Dniester on both sides of the Stryj—Lemberg railway, had also arrived.

The command of the 2nd Army objected to the extensive deployment of the 1st Cavalry Division to Derzow. They wanted the southern edge of the marshland (Wielkie Bloto) from Serziskow to Bialin to be secured by the 1st Cavalry Division, as they had no more forces available for this. However, the Austro-Hungarian military command decided to keep the division with the Southern Army and assigned the 2nd Army the task of securing the southern edge of the Wielkie Bloto up to the area around Woloszcza. The 38th Infantry Division had marched southeast in the morning, assuming that the 40th Infantry Division had reached Horucko. They reached Wozwonia via Kawko. The left wing of the 3rd Guards Infantry Division captured Lisatycze and Nawoyczah on the afternoon of June 2nd and entered Lesjawor at night. Their right wing and the left of the 1st Infantry Division (Hungarian 76th Infantry Brigade) made only slight progress on the eastern bank of the Stryj. The enemy still stood in full strength before the Hofmann and Gerok corps.

On June 3rd, the situation to the right of the Stryj remained unchanged. Although retreating movements behind the enemy front were observed by aircraft to a greater extent than before, the enemy stubbornly and successfully resisted the attacks of the left wing of the 1st Infantry Division, reinforced by the 95th Reserve Infantry Brigade during the night, and the right of the 3rd Guards Infantry Division. The left wing guard of the 3rd Guards Infantry Division and the Hungarian 38th Infantry Division pushed the Russians further northeast and then crossed the Stryj at Kawyczat and Chodowicze, where the parts of the enemy still holding south of the river were now to be rolled up from the north. The Hungarians thus moved into the gap between the previously separated fighting parts of the 3rd Guards Infantry Division. They prepared for an evening attack on the heavily fortified Gelsenhofer Heights; the left wing of the guard fought its way to Ruda and secured its left flank.

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through the occupation of Wolica and Cuculowce. This made it possible to move strong forces to the right bank of the Stryj, where, according to the directive of the Austro-Hungarian command, the focus of the operation lay. The 1st Cavalry Division advanced south of Bilczevił towards Derzow. The Szurmay Group, with the 71st Infantry Brigade on its right flank against Rudniki, unsuccessfully attempted to take the Russian positions south of the Dniester. The infantry of the Leonhardi Group was even pushed back to the eastern edge of Jady by a counterattack.

Although it had not yet been possible to drive the enemy from the southern bank of the Dniester and secure the crossings at Mikolajow and Kolodruby, the Southern Army Command believed it could look forward to the continuation of the offensive on the right bank of the Stryj in an easterly direction with justified hopes.

7. Operational Considerations and Decisions.

Maps 5 and 6, Sketch 14.

The capture of Przemysl and the associated territorial gain posed the question to the allied command of how the operations should be continued.

For some time, before this result came within reach, General von Falkenhayn, in view of the slow progress of events on the Galician front in the second half of May, had been considering the mobilization of reinforcements. The decision of where to obtain these forces was not easy. The three divisions newly formed in the area of the Eastern Commander-in-Chief — 101st, 103rd, 105th Infantry Division — had just been sent to southern Hungary (from May 24) at the urging of General von Conrad, to be used from there as needed against Italy or Serbia. The Austro-Hungarian Chief of Staff opposed General von Falkenhayn's wish to now bring these divisions to the front north of the Carpathians, arguing that he did not rule out a Serbian attack on Syrmia or Bosnia.

Therefore, there was no choice but to further weaken the front of the Eastern Commander-in-Chief. Already on May 23, General von Falkenhayn had explained to General Ludendorff, who had been summoned to Pleß for a verbal discussion, that major operations in the area of the Eastern Commander-in-Chief were not currently feasible.

¹) See p. 18, 103 and 122/123.

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Considerations on the Deployment of Reinforcements on the Eastern Front.

Falkenhayn explained to General Ludendorff, who was summoned to Pleß for verbal discussions, that large operations in the area of the Eastern Commander-in-Chief were not currently feasible1). The desire to maintain the current front line had to be reconciled with the necessity of withdrawing additional troops for the disposal of the Supreme Army Command. Following the proposals made by General Ludendorff, on May 25, Field Marshal von Hindenburg communicated that the general war situation absolutely required the provision of army reserves on a large scale. For this purpose, five divisions were to be gradually freed from his command area2). Thus, these forces were not immediately available for the Galician theater of war. The Supreme Army Command initially reserved the right to deploy a division of the 9th Army, relocated on June 3 — the Eastern Commander-in-Chief designated the 22nd Infantry Division for this — and the newly forming 107th Infantry Division, whose formation in Thorn was to be completed in early June.

Withdrawing forces from the Western Front seemed risky given the still tense situation there3). Nevertheless, General von Falkenhayn decided on June 1 to take the risk of deploying the XXII Reserve Corps (without the 85th Reserve Infantry Brigade) and the temporarily withdrawn 8th Bavarian Reserve Division from the front to the east4). This ultimately succeeded in making a total of fourteen and a half infantry divisions available as reinforcements for the continuation of the offensive operation in the theater of war north of the Carpathians.

Initially, opinions differed on the point of deployment. General von Falkenhayn expected less impact from an immediate reinforcement of the troops fighting in Galicia than from their indirect support through the deployment of fresh forces at the front north of the Vistula in the command area of Colonel General von Woyrsch. After verbal consultation with his Chief of Staff, Lieutenant Colonel von Heyde, he expressed himself on this matter in a letter to the Eastern Commander-in-Chief on May 28 as follows5):

"... The situation in Galicia is not very promising. Given the low offensive power of our allies and the enemy's daily increasing superiority, we are facing the danger of a complete standstill there sooner or later, which is now even more concerning for us after Italy's intervention, than it was before.

1) p. 122. — 2) See p. 122/123. — 3) p. 73/74. — 4) p. 79. — 5) p. 264/265.

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is even more concerning than it has been so far. Nevertheless, it seems to me that the immediate reinforcement of our troops there is not advisable. Only through the use of an extraordinary amount of blood and ammunition would success be conceivable. However, we have every reason to be economical with both. It is more feasible to consider an operation against the parts of the enemy front weakened by the withdrawal of units, to bring indirect relief. Since the Narew front plays no role in this connection, as any offensive there can easily be brought to a standstill by weaker forces at the swamp section, as General Ludendorff also mentioned in his discussion with me, only the Vistula front south of the Pilica comes into question. In the deployment of reinforcements at any other location, he also saw an "irreparable loss of time"). In my opinion, there is no doubt that an engagement of three to four fresh divisions could break through the enemy Russian line there, bring it to a complete falter, and probably reach the right Vistula bank downstream of the San estuary simultaneously with the enemy. This would also make the San line untenable for the Russians. The deployment of the four divisions could occur relatively quickly and unexpectedly...

The Commander-in-Chief East agreed to these statements on the same day in a factual sense, but declared himself unable to provide new forces beyond the assignments already imposed on him.

From the written statement of the Army High Command 9 received on May 29, it emerged that this considered a breakthrough over Ditrowice against the bridgeheads of Dembno and Jozefow to the Vistula possible with a reinforcement of three infantry and one cavalry division, but regarded the continuation of the thrust beyond the river until effective relief of the Galician front, considering the expected flank threat from Iwangorod, as doubtful. Lieutenant Colonel Heye also represented this standpoint the following day in a discussion in Plesz. Contrary to the view of General von Falkenhayn, the Chief of the Operations Department, Colonel Tappen, considered the deployment of reinforcements with the victorious 11th Army here more dispensable than in the command area of Generaloberst von Woyrsch. He emphasized that the Russians in Galicia, although they had significantly increased in number, were already greatly demoralized under the paralyzing impression of their previous defeats and could be most decisively struck here.

1) p. 265.

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Colonel General v. Mackensen Requests Deployment of Reinforcements at the 11th Army.

He also saw the deployment of reinforcements at any other location as an "irreparable loss of time").

A third possibility was envisioned by the Chief of the Austro-Hungarian General Staff. Although he had acknowledged the necessity of weakening the Russian offensive power through further strikes in Galicia in a discussion with General von Falkenhayn on May 21 in Teschen, he stated in writing on May 23 that the desire to "settle accounts with the Russian forces as extensively as possible" must find its limit in the most urgent demand "not to allow the Italians to advance into those areas, the loss of which would vitally affect the monarchy and make the conduct of the war altogether impossible, thus deciding the war in favor of our opponents." In this fundamental position, General von Conrad was not averse to refraining from more extensive operations on the theater of war north of the Carpathians and to be content with achieving and securing the previously sought operational objective, the San-Wisznia-Dniester line. At the moment, it seemed most important to him to immediately support the Austro-Hungarian 4th Army, which had gotten into a difficult situation due to the successful counterattack of the Russians at Sieniawa. Even in the event of continuing the offensive over San and Wisznia, he promised himself the greatest success if emphasis was placed on the advance of the Austro-Hungarian 4th Army, as he believed that the Grodek fortress would pose extraordinary difficulties to an attack. Therefore, in a discussion with General von Falkenhayn on May 30 in Pleß, he suggested the deployment of reinforcements for this army.

On the same day, Colonel Tappen was sent to the 11th Army High Command in Jaroslaw to obtain its opinion. Colonel General von Mackensen and his Chief of Staff shared the same view as the Chief of the Operations Department, despite the currently undecided battle situation on the San and Wisznia front. In his written statement of May 31, the Commander-in-Chief of the 11th Army argued against the deployment of reinforcements at the Bojowitsch Army Division, stating that an offensive there would come to a halt at the latest after a successful crossing of the Vistula in front of quickly assembled Russian forces and thus would have no effect on the Dniester front. It was then literally stated: "A thrust over Jaroslaw will bring about the intended effect more quickly. It has to deal not with a fortified river barrier, but only with the enemy facing the 4th and 11th Armies."

1) From unpublished war memories of the current Lieutenant General a. D. Tappen. — 2) p. 10.

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River barrier, but only to reckon with the enemy facing the 4th and 11th Armies. This is indeed superior in number to the former. However, the troops of the 11th Army compensate for this with efficiency and can also be reinforced like the 4th Army by troops that will be freed upon the imminent fall of Przemysl and by divisions made available domestically. A thrust over Jaroslau in the general direction of Rawa Ruska is promising if the 4th Army protects the left flank of the 11th and the right Austrian neighboring army allows the enemy standing along the Grodeker Seemeife to break out of its position. Both will be achievable with the existing and the newly anticipated forces, provided that the leader of the 11th Army is allowed to exert direct influence on both neighboring armies."

When Colonel Tappen returned with this position of Generaloberst von Mackensen on the evening of May 31 in Plesz, it was already known there that the first forts of the Przemysl fortress had been stormed and that the Southern Army had taken Stryj. General von Falkenhayn saw in this promising signs of a favorable development of events in Galicia. He therefore decided on June 2, in accordance with the proposal of Colonel Tappen and the position of Generaloberst von Mackensen, to deploy reinforcements with the 11th Army. The Supreme Commander East received orders to transport the 22nd Infantry Division (from June 2 from Lodz, the 107th Infantry Division (from June 5 from Thorn). The deployment of reinforcements from the Western Front also began on June 2. The Austro-Hungarian Army Command was informed that starting June 4, four and a half infantry divisions along with heavy artillery would arrive via the railways over Debica and Jaslo to Rzeszow. "These divisions," it was said, "are intended to carry out operations against the enemy located east of the San until a decision sufficient for our purposes is achieved." The communication to the Army High Command 11 was drafted in almost the same wording.

To the Southern Army, whose left wing repelled the enemy against the Dniester on June 2, the following telegram was sent: "The brilliant course of operations of the Southern Army yesterday and today will hopefully have significant consequences. They could be further enhanced if it proves possible to soon bring a column to the northern Dniester bank and advance downstream there."

1) p. 199. — 2) Half a mortar and 10 cm cannon battalion were transported from Metz on June 4.

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The Operational Plan of the High Command of the 11th Army.

On June 3 at 8:30 in the morning, immediately after the capture of Przemyśl, the Army High Command 11 presented its intentions for the continuation of operations to the allied military commands. It initially proposed the dissolution of the k.u.k. 3rd Army concentrated in the Przemyśl area. The X and XVII Corps were to be transferred to the k.u.k. 4th Army, the German Beskiden Corps to the k.u.k. 2nd Army, and the incoming reinforcements were to be assigned to the 11th Army. Generaloberst von Mackensen requested joint command over all three armies. The initial plan was to have parts of the 11th Army advance north from the bridgehead to facilitate the 4th Army's right wing crossing the San at Sieniawa. After the reinforcements arrived, the continuation of the 11th Army's offensive was planned in deep formation from the line Starzawa—Molodzyce via Starzyska—Rawa Ruska, bypassing the Grodek sector to the north, to encircle it. The 2nd Army was to cover the right flank of the 11th Army by advancing from the line Chlopycze—Mosziska against the line Komarno—Janow, while the same task was assigned to the left flank of the 4th Army. This was to advance with two corps on Rudka (20 kilometers northeast of Lubaczow)—Narol Miasto, with two corps covering the Tanew sector, and the rest covering the San-Vistula triangle.

The allied general staff chiefs agreed in a discussion on the afternoon of June 3 in Plesz with these intentions of the Army High Command 11 and also agreed that the South Army should continue the attack with its main forces in a southeasterly direction against the right flank of the enemy facing the beleaguered k.u.k. 7th Army. On June 4, the new orders were issued. They essentially stated: "Generaloberst von Mackensen with the 11th Army and the still incoming troops continues the thrust south of the Tanew to decisively defeat the enemy facing him. The 2nd Army joins this advance on the right and subsequently takes over the protection of the right flank, the 4th Army the protection of the advance on the northern flank... To ensure influence in this operation, the 4th and 2nd Armies are placed under the orders of Generaloberst von Mackensen for the duration. The South Army advances south of the Dniester against the enemy forces facing the right wing of the 7th Army, to finally defeat the enemy standing south of the Dniester in conjunction with this. It also takes over the security at the Dniester."

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8. The Battles on the Right Wing from June 4 to 13.

The orders from the Austro-Hungarian High Command on June 4 for the German South Army aligned completely with the intentions of its leader, General von Linsingen. He had already reported to the High Command in Teschen on June 3 that his army would launch an attack the next day along its entire front — with the left wing from the line Strzałow—Chodowice—Potkowce — in a southeasterly direction to roll up the enemy before the Austro-Hungarian 7th Army. He had requested the subordination of the left wing of this army under his command. In his rejecting response, General von Conrad stated that the 7th Army was currently being heavily attacked by the enemy and needed all its forces, but that after repelling the enemy's advance, it would forcefully engage in the South Army's offensive.

After a fourteen-day pause in fighting, the Russian 9th Army had resumed its attack against the center of the Austro-Hungarian 7th Army on June 2. While it had only temporarily reached the southern bank of the Pruth east of Kolomea and near Lanczyn, it had managed to establish a firm foothold south of Sadzawka. Through continued advances, it sought to gain ground here on June 3 towards Mühlbächen. The commander of the Austro-Hungarian 7th Army, General of Cavalry Freiherr von Pflanzer-Baltin, deployed all available army reserves to the Czbulla group, which was striving to seal off the enemy incursion in fierce defensive combat. As the situation significantly escalated in the afternoon, an offensive by the left wing had to be temporarily abandoned.

Thus, the South Army was initially on its own. The withdrawal of forces from the front opposite the Gerok and Hofmann corps to the north, observed by aircraft on June 3, also gave hope here for a rapid weakening of enemy resistance. General von Linsingen therefore instructed both corps in the army order issued late in the evening to "turn any beginning retreat of the enemy into a rout through swift and vigorous pursuit." The Bothmer corps was to continue its comprehensive attack against the enemy's right wing south of the Dniester, the Austro-Hungarian 1st Cavalry Division was to advance over Snjatyn to Kuty, and the Surzman group was to defend along the Dniester from Nadiatkow to Kolodrub and with the Hungarian 40th Infantry Division Derzow.

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The Advance of the Southern Army to the East.

Indeed, the enemy abandoned his positions south of Stryj early on the morning of June 4 and retreated eastward. The corps of Gerok and Hofmann, as well as the 1st Infantry Division, followed him in a broad front without initially encountering serious resistance. However, the enemy sought to prevent further advances by the Hungarian 38th Infantry Division, which had taken the Gelsendorf Heights at dawn, and the 3rd Guards Infantry Division, which was pressing from Ruda on Noweziolo against his retreat routes, at all costs. Against the left flank of the Guards, he launched a deeply echeloned mass attack from Zablotowce, which was repelled but succeeded in allowing the Russian forces retreating north of the Swica to escape into the bridgehead of Zurawno. For further pursuit, General von Linsingen assigned Kalusz to the Gerok Corps and Wierzchnia to the Hofmann Corps as daily objectives. The Bothmer Corps was to quickly seize the Dniester crossing at Zurawno, and the 1st Cavalry Division, which had reached Lowczyce by morning on its march to its original target Rechow, was now to cross the Dniester at Holeszow. The 40th Infantry Division, detached from the Szurmay Group's line of battle, was to reach Hnizdyczow today, while the rest of the Szurmay Group was to take over the Dniester security between Hnizdyczow and Tersatzow.

However, these daily objectives were not achieved anywhere. Oppressive heat and heavy dust development on poor roads made the marches extremely strenuous. The Gerok Corps encountered stronger enemy forces east of Holyn in the evening, and the Hofmann Corps at Radowna and Zawada. From the Bothmer Corps, the 1st Infantry Division reached the Swica near and upwards of Lachowice. The Hungarian 38th and the 3rd Guards Infantry Division drove the Russians before them into Zurawno but could no longer seize the bridgehead; the left wing of the Guards took Zablotowce, and their right attack group, which had previously been engaged against the heights southeast of Stryj¹), was drawn to Ruda. The 1st Cavalry Division bivouacked in Zablotowce and Hnizdyczow; their reconnaissance units directed at Hnizdyczow encountered enemies everywhere south of the Dniester. Against the parts of the Szurmay Group remaining west of Stryj, the enemy continued his demonstrative advances, and Horucko fell back into his hands; in the afternoon, he advanced on both sides of the road to Stryj. Field Marshal Lieutenant Szurmay feared a stronger attack and deployed parts of the 40th Infantry Division, which were on the march to Hnizdyczow, for defense.

¹) p. 197.

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the 40th Infantry Division stationed there ready for defense. But here too it was only a deception. Because of it, the 40th Infantry Division had been delayed so long that it only reached the area of Lejzajow at midnight.

General von Linsingen had already issued the order to the 7th Army at 5 o'clock in the morning to join the advance of the Southern Army from the left flank. Although the enemy had continued his heavy attacks south of Sadzawka throughout the night and had broken through here at 4 o'clock in the morning, and although General von Pflanzer-Baltin now saw himself forced to also rely on the reserves of the groups Marschall, Krautwald, and Rhemen to restore the situation, he relentlessly pushed the groups Rhemen and Schönburg to attack in a northeasterly direction upon the news that the right flank of the Southern Army intended to reach Kalusz today. While a relief attack led by the inner flank of the groups Czbulla and Rhemen on the northern Pruth bank in the direction of Lanczyn failed due to strong Russian resistance and the group Rhemen otherwise gained only little ground, the group Schönburg advanced to the line Maniava—south of Perehinsko. However, here they encountered such stubborn resistance the following day that they were unable to make further progress. A Russian counterattack west of Majdan even pushed the attacker back a bit. Meanwhile, the situation of the group Czbulla had further deteriorated. The enemy continuously brought new forces into the fight and was able to expand his breakthrough despite desperate resistance from the defender. During the course of June 5th, he gained a foothold in Modiatyn. General von Pflanzer-Baltin had already made all available forces of the other groups available to Lieutenant Field Marshal Czbulla, besides the army reserve. He did not consider further weakening of the army's eastern flank appropriate. A quick relief from the now stalled offensive of his left army flank was also not to be expected. It could only be brought about by the favorable progress of the Southern Army's operations. In this situation, General von Pflanzer-Baltin therefore saw in the early afternoon hours the need to intervene, if possible, with parts of the southern flank directly in the direction of and beyond Bohorodczany.

General von Linsingen had designated the line Majdan (northwest of Stanislau)—Bukaczowce as the day's objective for his army on June 5th. He expected a decisive success from an advance into the rear of the enemy opposing the 7th Army Pflanzer and therefore ordered the Gerok Corps on the morning of June 5th to "not be deterred by any considerations for the lagging flank of the 7th Army from proceeding as quickly as possible towards Stanislau."

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The Center of the Southern Army Crosses the Dniester.

no consideration for the remaining wing of the 7th Army to prevent the fastest advance towards Stanislau." This directive was also expressly maintained upon the arrival of General von Pflanzer-Baltin's request for immediate assistance. However, the Gerok Corps was no longer able to break the enemy resistance east and north of Holyn on June 5. The Hofsmann Corps also initially made no progress. It was only in the afternoon that it was able to overcome the Russian positions on the heights on both sides of Zawadka and gain ground to the east in immediate pursuit. As a result, the enemy also turned further south on both sides of the Lomnica during the night. However, on the western banks of Nowica, Kalusz, Kopanita, and Tomaszowce, the Gerok and Hofsmann Corps encountered new stubborn resistance the next day, the suppression of which extended in part into the early morning hours of June 7. South of the Swica and the Dniester, the 1st Infantry Division followed the retreating enemy on June 5 and 6 to Dolzka and Slope. The 38th Infantry and 3rd Guard Infantry Divisions entered the stubbornly defended Zurawno on the evening of the 5th and advanced in extremely bitter, costly street fighting to the Dniester. Parts of both divisions followed the fleeing enemy at dawn on June 6 across two makeshift bridges that he had not destroyed in time to the opposite bank, where heavy fire from the hills forced them to dig in. In the afternoon, the enemy's counteraction subsided, and the enemy seemed to be withdrawing. The allies climbed the steep heights and entrenched themselves on both sides of Bakowzin. The left wing of the Guard fought for the crossing at Holeszow at noon. In the afternoon, the 1st Cavalry Division completed the river crossing at Zurawno.

On June 7, the offensive by the Gerok, Hofsmann, and Bothmer Corps was to continue southeast towards Stanislau, Jezupol, and Halicz. The protection of the left flank of the Bothmer Corps was to be taken over by the 40th Infantry Division, which had been brought up to Humara in the last two days and was now to advance via Zurawno to the Nowosielce railway station. Reconnaissance to the north up to the Rohatyn—Chodorow railway was assigned to the 1st Cavalry Division.

While the right wing of the army south of the Dniester advanced during the day with lighter fighting to Majdan, Kudlatowka, and down the Swica section to Wojnilow, the subsequent right march of the 38th Infantry and 3rd Guard Infantry Divisions moved southwest, as heavy resistance on both sides of Nowoszyn had to be broken.

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had to be broken. Consequently, the Hungarians only reached

Bukaczowce and Czernion. The Guard threw their tenacious opponent back

by evening in difficult forest battles over the railway at Szehdyrow and

back over Czernion. They were then to be relieved by the 40th Infantry Division

and march on Czabrow today. However, since this

division only counted 2000 rifles — it had left four battalions for

security against Szybaczow in the Zurawlow—Sniydzow line —

and was also very exhausted from the strenuous marches of the last few days,

immediate involvement of the Guard seemed questionable given the undoubtedly still

combat-ready opponent. It was therefore postponed to the next morning. West of the Stryj

the Szurmay group began clearing the southern

Dniester bank on June 6; they worked their way up to the evening of the 7th to the

enemy's main position Dementa—Ugartsberg. Their right wing

drove the enemy out of Turady and Iwanowce. However, the parts of the 40th Infantry Division that remained south

of Szybaczow, caught in the flank by stronger enemy forces from Molotow, retreated to the

Ruda—Sniydzow line. According to captured prisoners,

these forces belonged to the Russian VI Corps, which was supposed to have been unloaded in Mikolajow on June 4, coming from the

front west of Warsaw.

General von Linsingen considered the reports of stronger

enemy forces south of Szybaczow to be exaggerated. He did not believe in

a serious Russian advance against his left flank and considered its

security by the weak Szurmay group to be sufficient. His

gaze was directed southeast, where a great success seemed to beckon with the intended destruction

of the enemy standing before the 7th Army. If the intended strike succeeded, the army

would indeed have to remain in unstoppable advance; for already since

noon on June 6, the Russian 9th Army sought to escape the impending

danger by retreating to the Dniester. General von Pflan-

zer-Baltin immediately took up the pursuit and with the

Szibulka, Rhemen, and Schönburg groups reached the line Altmaczyn—Hanylowka—Horocholna by the evening of

June 7. The Korda and Marschall groups had also already gained the northern Pruth bank at Nepolokoutz and

Zablotow.

During the course of June 8, General von Linsingen had to convince himself that the operational intention he had in mind was no longer realizable.

1) In fact, the Russian 11th Army had the VI Corps   
and the 3rd G.I.D. from the Northwest Front arrived at the beginning of June.

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The Russian Counterattack on the Dniester.

was to be realized. Before the entire 7th Army as well as the right

flank of the Southern Army, the enemy retreated hastily to the Dniester

without a fight. The divisions of General von Pflanzer-Baltin followed up to

the line Uście—Gwozdziec—Ottynia. The Gerok Corps reached Stanislaus

and Jammica in the evening. Only on the heights west of Jezupol and

southwest and west of Halicz did the enemy resist in reinforced

positions against the troops of Field Marshal Lieutenant Hofmann and

General von Conta. However, against the divisions of the Bothmer Corps

and the Szurmay Group on the northern Dniester bank, the Russians

brought strong forces with numerous artillery to attack.

Fortunately, the ordered replacement of the 3rd Guard Infantry

Division by the Hungarian 40th Infantry Division was not yet fully

completed on the morning of June 8; at Hrehorow and Czeremchow,

four Prussian battalions still stood in the front line. As the

opposing enemy was constantly reinforcing, it seemed inadvisable to

withdraw them now. Two more battalions had to be sent on the news

of the withdrawal of the security forces south of Zydaczow as flank

protection to Holeszow. Under these circumstances, a withdrawal of the

3rd Guard Infantry Division to Sazhorow was temporarily out of the

question. It soon had to be completely abandoned; for against morning

the Russians launched a strong artillery preparation along the entire

front for an attack. While they remained under German defensive fire

at Hrehorow and Czeremchow, they managed to throw back the weak

Hungarian battalions securing up to Bortniki in the first assault and

advance over Molodynce on both sides of the railway to the southeast

and south to Holeszow. As at the same time on the

opposite flank the 38th Infantry Division was pushed back into the line

Rozara—Wizniow, the German center also had to be withdrawn to

Nowoszyn in the afternoon. The gap between it

and the 38th Infantry Division was closed by the 1st Cavalry Division. For

the next day, General Count von Bothmer expected a continuation

of the enemy offensive.

In the angle between the Dniester and Stryj, however, the

situation could be restored during the course of June 8. The enemy, whose

strength had been overestimated, returned to his bridgehead positions;

the previous security line Zuwadow—Snizkow was reoccupied. West of the

Stryj, the Szurmay Group had stormed the Russian trenches on both sides

of the Lemberg railway and the village of Horochow during the night,

but in the afternoon a strong counterattack threw them back to

and beyond their starting positions.

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General von Linsingen did not initially consider the situation on his northern wing as threatening. He no longer credited the enemy with offensive capability, believing rather that their attacks today were only meant to cover the withdrawal of their main forces to Rohatyn. This view was reinforced by an aerial reconnaissance report, which had observed strong columns marching from Bursztyn and Chodorow toward Rohatyn in the afternoon. The Army High Command apparently attached no particular importance to the recurring reports of recent days about the appearance of the Russian VI Corps, previously deployed on the front west of Warsaw, before the Szurmay Group. They abandoned any continuation of the offensive in a southeastern direction, as there was no longer any prospect of intercepting the Russians retreating before the 7th Army south of the Dniester. Instead, they now wanted to swing their right army wing northeast and north, to lead it across the Dniester between Uscie Zielone and Halicz against the inner flanks of the Russian 9th and 11th Armies. This expressed a new operational concept in the deployment of the Southern Army within the framework of the overall operation, which aimed at concentric cooperation with the armies of Colonel General von Mackensen in the northeastern part of Galicia. For this purpose, the Gerok Corps was deployed to Jeziorko, the Hofmann Corps to Slobodka, and the 1st Infantry Division to Bursztyn. The main forces of the Bothmer Corps were to push back the opposing enemy, while the Szurmay Group, too weak for its own attack, was to maintain a defensive position for the time being.

However, this new operational intention did not come to fruition. As General Count von Bothmer had expected, on June 9th the enemy continued its advances against the northern wing of the Southern Army with far superior forces. Before daybreak, they succeeded in breaking through the weak left wing of the Szurmay Group — which counted only 2,400 rifles — at Medenice and Letynia, forcing them to retreat in dissolution to the south and southwest. General von Linsingen, who immediately went to the battlefield to prevent a catastrophe through personal intervention, gained the impression that if the enemy attack continued, which was hardly doubtful, Stryj and thus the only railway line available to the Southern Army would be extremely threatened. He therefore requested the Austro-Hungarian Army Command and the 2nd Army for the temporary assignment of a division to Drohobycz. General of Cavalry von Böhm-Ermolli immediately dispatched the Austro-Hungarian 4th Cavalry Division, reinforced with infantry and artillery, under Major General Berndt to march to Dobrowlany, where it was expected to arrive in the afternoon.

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The Southern Army Halts the Advance to the Southeast.

General von Linsingen, however, did not consider the movements of the troops under Field Marshal Lieutenant Szurmay sufficient to reliably secure his left flank. This seemed assured to him only if the enemy was pushed back over the Dniester, which could only be achieved by deploying stronger forces. Reserves were not available. The divisions of Bothmer's corps stationed on the northern bank of the Dniester were also engaged in fierce defensive battles since early morning and urgently needed support themselves. Under these circumstances, there was no choice but to refrain from continuing the offensive of the right wing of the army in a northeasterly and northerly direction and to focus on defending what had been achieved, in order to free up his main forces for a counterattack to the northwest. On the morning of June 9, General von Linsingen ordered the Gerok corps, which was engaged in an attack on the heights north of Stanislau, to immediately withdraw to Wojnilow and be ready to continue the march there the next morning. Remaining weak security forces were to be relieved during June 10 by the 5th Cavalry Division, previously used with the Marshal group of the 7th Army, which, along with the German officers of the Marshal group command, had already been made available to General von Linsingen at his request by the Austro-Hungarian army command on June 8 and was advancing from Zablotow via Ottynia towards Stanislau. The Hofmann corps, attacking between the Stryjzau and Lomnica, was to dig in where it stood and relieve the 1st Infantry Division on the left bank of the Lomnica; this division was to march to Zurawno. General Count von Bothmer was also assigned the troops fighting between the Dniester and Stryj, and Field Marshal Lieutenant Szurmay was ordered not to retreat any further and to use the Berndt group offensively. General von Linsingen reported his orders to the allied army commands with the addition: "Intention: Flanking march and final destruction of the enemy attacking from the north, then offensive north of the Dniester." In a second radio message, he pointed out the extremely precarious condition of the 7th and also the 40th Infantry Division, which were no longer capable of sustained defense, let alone being used offensively, and considered the deployment of a German infantry division.

General von Conrad, still unaware of these intentions and orders, had expressed in a directive to the 11th, 2nd, Southern, and 7th Armies on the early afternoon of June 9 that the Russian advance against and over the Dniester would neither the attack of the Mackensen group nor the advance of the eastern wing of the Southern Army and that of the 7th Army over the Dniester at and downstream of Halicz be affected, where the enemy apparently was retreating everywhere behind the river.

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The Mackensen group still affected the advance of the eastern wing of the Southern Army and that of the 7th Army over the Dniester near and downstream of Halicz, where the enemy apparently retreated everywhere behind the river. However, it was necessary to limit the Russian advance over the Dniester and prevent any impact against the right flank of the 2nd and the left of the Southern Army. For this purpose, the 4th Cavalry Division was initially set in motion towards Dobropolany. Furthermore, the 2nd Army was to quickly provide a division on its right wing as an army reserve. However, after General von Conrad received reports from the Southern Army during the afternoon about the cessation of the offensive of its right wing and the intended flank attack in a northwesterly direction, he felt compelled to issue new instructions to the 7th Army. On June 9, it had made further progress in the previous direction of advance to the northeast and stood in the evening with the Korda Corps east of Kosmacz, with the former Marschall group, whose leadership had been taken over by Field Marshal Lieutenant Kaiser, at Jasionow Polny, with the Krautwald Corps southwest of Horodenka, and with the Zibulka, Rhemann, and Schönburg groups attacking enemy rear guard positions on the heights between Obertyn and Ottynia. The 7th Army now received orders to swing north with its main forces and continue its offensive over the Dniester at Buczacz—Maryampol; the right wing (the Korda and Kaiser groups), however, was to move between Pruth and Dniester and from Jalezyczki to west of Liczkowce. While the higher command was striving to locally limit the setback on the left wing of the Southern Army through vigorous intervention and to restore the situation by regrouping the forces, the Böhtmer Corps faced an equally severe crisis. Until the afternoon, it had been possible there to repel the Russian masses, who repeatedly stormed against the trenches of the Allies on the northern Dniester bank, without regard for losses. Also on this side of the river, the advance aimed at Zurawno, therefore particularly threatening, of strong enemy forces could be intercepted by deploying the last German reserves at the northern edge of Mlyniska. However, by 6 in the evening, the 1st Cavalry Division deployed at Wijniow was broken through and thrown back in complete disarray to the Dniester. At the same time, the 38th Infantry Division, located to the right, also gave way and retreated to the southern bank at Kozara and Starawies. Against the thus exposed flank of the 3rd Guards Infantry Division and against the bridge at Zurawno, superior enemy forces advanced irresistibly. Forces that could have been thrown against them were no longer available.

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The Bothmer Corps Retreats Across the Dniester.

were no longer available. Thus, the Guard and the remnants of the

40th Infantry Division (around 700 rifles) had to be withdrawn to the positions from the evening

of June 6th, just north of the river. Since the

1st Infantry Division, which had been marching since noon, could not

arrive before the next morning — only one battalion

arrived late in the evening, completely exhausted, in Zurawno — and since it seemed questionable

whether it would be possible to hold back the Russian advance on the right

Dniester bank for long, the heavily pressured Guard could not

be withdrawn by Bothmer from the northern bank during the night and to the

3rd Guard Infantry Division without disturbance by the enemy to behind

the Swica in the area of Tarnawka. To the right of it, the

1st Infantry Division was to deploy, with both divisions resuming the attack

to the northwest the next day. The

38th Infantry Division was assigned to secure the Dniester from Swidowa

to the Swica mouth. General von Linsingen approved these

measures.

The right wing of the Szurmay Group had only laboriously gained

ground against the enemy's superiority by the afternoon. It

retreated to the line Stare selo—Zarika in the evening and reestablished the

connection to the left wing, which had been able to hold north of Königsau.

The 4th Cavalry Division, arriving only in the evening at Dobrowlany,

was ordered to clear the area between Tysmienica

and Bystrzyca of the enemy and then to advance against the rear

of the Russians positioned in the line Hofeszberg—Opary.

During the night, the enemy remained quiet. On June 10th,

he occupied the left Dniester bank vacated by the Bothmer Corps and

cautiously advanced into Zurawno. In the Dniester—Stryj corner, he

advanced during the day beyond the line Zurawno—Potkowce. The

Szurmay Group faced him at close range in the morning, in front of

the 4th Cavalry Division, he held the line Lipowice—Hruszow.

This hesitant behavior in initiating the new operation

of the Southern Army indicated. The German 5th Cavalry Division arriving in the afternoon and north of Stanislau

and the Hofmann Corps were subordinated by General von Linsingen to General of Cavalry Baron v.

Marchtall with the order to immediately attack in case of the enemy's retreating movements. The parts of the Gerok Corps that remained

were left with the 5th Cavalry Division

until the next morning, as the enemy, after a broken-off telephone conversation with the

7th Army, seemed to be planning an attack on Stanislau with one infantry and cavalry division each.

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lery Division seemed to plan an attack on Stanislau. An intense bombardment of the city and the northern villages in the afternoon could be seen as preparation for this.

The Gerok Corps arrived only at noon, heavily fatigued, in and south of Wisniolow. It was to leave a brigade of the 19th Infantry Division there as an army reserve, march the half of the 48th Reserve Division¹) to the Bothmer Corps at Tarnawka, and secure the rest of the 19th Infantry Division and the 38th Infantry Division, now only numbering 1100 rifles, on the Dniester from Kurylow to the Smica estuary.

The Bothmer Corps had to reach the road Zurawno–Noweislio with advance troops by June 10 and proceed northwest over this line the next morning, but in case of enemy attack, immediately strike the enemy's flank with the Szurmay Group. Field Marshal Lieutenant Szurmay was to attack on both flanks and hold his positions in the center. The purpose of the operation, as emphasized by General von Linsingen in the army order issued at 5:30 p.m., was to settle accounts with the enemy before the Szurmay Group and to take the Dniester crossings. The deployment of strong reserves behind the right flank of the Bothmer Corps was deemed necessary for this.

Due to the severe exhaustion of the troops, the ordered movements were slow to start. Only on the morning of June 11 did the right wing of the 1st Infantry Division penetrate the rubble heap that Zurawno had become. Simultaneously, the other parts of the Bothmer Corps crossed the road leading from there to Noweislio and advanced north under constant skirmishes with weaker enemy detachments. While the 1st Infantry Division swung into a strong bridgehead drawn in a semicircle around Mynsifta by evening, the Guard worked its way to the heavily barricaded railway line running east from Jydaczow and approached the fortress-like village of Rogozno; the half of the 48th Reserve Division followed as corps reserve. The 1st Cavalry Division, which had spent the night at Noweislio, crossed the Stryj at Potokrowce and surprised the enemy in the morning, who returned to Cuculowce by evening over the right wing of the Szurmay Group.

On the left wing of this group, the 4th Cavalry Division had already pushed the Russians back somewhat during the course of June 10, then but had to limit itself to holding the line Wroblowice—Hruszow in view of the enemy's strength.

¹) The reinforced 95th R. J. Br. was still assigned to the 1st S. D. (p. 197); the command of the 48th R. D. was taken over by Lieutenant General von Oppeln-Bronikowski on June 8.

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At the same time, the disorganized units were to be reorganized, and the combat strength, which had fallen to about 20,000 German and 25,000 Austro-Hungarian rifles and carbines, was to be replenished by the arrival of reinforcements. Then he wanted to cross the Dniester in a northerly direction. General von Conrad agreed with these intentions the next day. "It will," he added, "first be the task of the Southern Army to reliably bind the enemy forces in front of it even after reaching the Dniester and to prevent any withdrawal against the thrust of the 2nd, 11th, and 4th Armies as well as against the 7th Army."

The main forces of the Austro-Hungarian 7th Army had, according to the new instructions from the army command, turned north on June 10 from their previous northeastern advance direction. While the Schönburg Group reached the Dniester at Maryampol by the evening of the 13th in connection with the right wing of the Southern Army, and the Rhemen and Czibulka Groups pushed the Russian XXX Corps back into the bridgehead of Nizniow, the Kraußwald Corps came to a halt before strong enemy positions south of Czernelica and found itself compelled on June 13 to assist the Kaiser Group, which had established a foothold on the northern Dniester bank at Jezawa and Zaleszczyki on the 10th and 11th, but had since been exposed to heavy Russian counterattacks. The Korda Corps, entrusted with the protection of the right flank of the army, had traveled between the Pruth and Dniester to the east and stood on the heights beyond the Russian border in firm resistance. Its two cavalry divisions, combined into a corps on the northern flank, advanced over Rzawiency another 20 kilometers eastward.

9. Mackensen's Offensive on Lemberg in June.

Maps 5 and 6, Sketch 16.

a) Deployment and Preparations.

While the Southern Army struggled with varying success for control of the Dniester line in the first half of June, the three armies under Generaloberst von Mackensen made preparations to continue the offensive on Lemberg that had been ordered to them. Observations from the aerial reconnaissance conducted after the fall of Przemysl gave the overall impression on the evening of June 3 that the enemy was withdrawing his defeated troops in the direction of Lemberg, while simultaneously bringing in new strong forces by rail and on foot marches approximately to the line Mosciska—Krakowiec—Lubaczow.

1) p. 212.

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Deployment for the Offensive of Army Group Mackensen on Lemberg.

the line Mosciska—Krakowiec—Lubaczow led up. Here, behind the front still held by the enemy at the time, a second fortified position was recognized. Another strong barrier position was formed by the Beresnica (Grodel Position) and as a continuation to the north, the ridge over Niemirow to Narol Miasto, protecting Lemberg. Behind this spatially deeply structured defense zone, the railway Chodorow—Lemberg—Rawa Ruska formed a favorable cross-connection, while six railway lines branched off from it as feeder lines to these new battle fronts. The railway situation was heavily contested on the side of the allies. Only the railway over Sariow, where transports to Przemysl would be possible in the coming days, and over Rzeszow, which would be completed from June 3 to Jaroslau, led into the area of the three attacking armies of Generaloberst von Mackensen. On this latter railway, the transport of reinforcements for the 11th Army and the supply of army needs had to be carried out. The condition of the roads and paths, which were deeply rutted due to heavy use and covered with tough mud due to frequent thunderstorms, added to the difficulties. It was therefore necessary to first establish a solid base for the new offensive of the allied armies. Only then, and after carrying out troop movements from the Austro-Hungarian 3rd to the 4th Army, could operations begin. The following days were thus used for assembling the newly joining forces behind the front of the 11th Army and organizing the three armies into their future battle fronts.

In addition, it was necessary to align the still unfinished combat operations east of Przemysl with the new operational idea. For this, the previous left wing of the Austro-Hungarian 2nd Army was to advance to Mosciska, with the Beskiden Corps advancing to Hobbynia on the left, and the Austro-Hungarian XVII Corps advancing to Czerniawa. The departure of this last corps to the Austro-Hungarian 4th Army was to take place only after its section had been taken over by the Beskiden Corps. The XXXXI Reserve Corps had to swing in up to the Wisznia in line Czerniawa—Starzawa. During the necessary movements for this, the Beskiden Corps already encountered a strongly fortified enemy position on June 4, which then ran from the Sieczna bend over the heights on this side of the Wisznia to Starzawa. The tenacious defensive battle of the Russians showed that it could not merely be about rearguard actions. On June 5, the Austro-Hungarian XVII Corps and the XXXXI Reserve Corps joined forces in front of this front. In doing so, progress was made in the battle for Starzawa. There, the emphasis was on the attack to roll up the enemy position from the north.

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Attack to roll up the enemy position from the north. On June 6, Starzawa and the position south of it succumbed to the assault of the XXXXI Reserve Corps. Czerniawa was reached in the follow-up. This also advanced the left wing of the Austro-Hungarian XVII Corps, which climbed the Buczki Heights southwest of Czerniawa. However, the right wing of the corps stalled before Josefowka. Multiple strong counterattacks by the Russians failed. On June 7, the replacement of the XVII Corps by the Beskiden Corps and the 11th Bavarian Infantry Division was ordered. The initial intention to maintain the pressure from the north through the XXXXI Reserve Corps was abandoned by Generaloberst von Mackensen, as he now assessed the combat strength of the opposing Russians as low. The 11th Bavarian Infantry Division, supported only by the artillery of the XXXXI Reserve Corps, was to attack in the direction of Hodynne-Czerniawa. The main thrust was directed against Josefowka. However, it did not break through on June 8. The Beskiden Corps also achieved only some local successes. On June 9, repeated bloody assaults against Josefowka failed to bring down this stronghold, which also supported the adjacent fronts on both sides. Therefore, Generaloberst von Mackensen decided to halt the attack at the line reached so far and to resume it only with the start of the general offensive. The 11th Bavarian Infantry Division was relieved by the Beskiden Corps and withdrew from the battlefront as an army reserve. The Austro-Hungarian 2nd Army also had to cease its partial attacks, as it had to withdraw forces from its front to protect its right flank against the Russian advance over the Dniester. Thus, it was not possible to achieve the desired starting position for the major offensive near Mosciska in the area east of Przemysl.

In the northern flank of the 11th Army, not everything went according to the wishes of the 11th Army High Command. The enemy advances against the northern front of the Austro-Hungarian 4th Army continued. A strong Russian attack was expected. The situation remained tense here until the arrival of the two reinforcement corps (X and XVII) sent by the 3rd Army. This posed a threat to the Rzeszów-Jaroslaw railway and thus to the entire deployment. Therefore, from the reinforcements rolling towards the 11th Army, the first to arrive, the 22nd Infantry Division, was positioned as support behind the right wing of the Austro-Hungarian 4th Army on June 4.

1) p. 210. — 2) p. 202.

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The Attack Preparations.

However, larger enemy attack operations no longer disrupted the deployment. Rather, Generaloberst von Mackensen was able to describe the prospects for a new offensive as favorable as early as June 7. In front of the 11th and 4th Army, parts of the enemy had been withdrawn southeast against the South Army, and further withdrawals from the front line to the east were observed. The enemy was apparently organizing for defense in depth. On June 10, Generaloberst von Mackensen issued the attack order for the 13th.

Reconnaissance and preparations on the entire front of the 11th Army had already begun on June 6. A partial advance of the 56th and 119th Infantry Divisions, consolidated under the command of General von Behr, was to precede the general offensive on June 12, advancing over the lower Lubaczowka towards Sieniawa to facilitate the crossing of the San by the Austro-Hungarian 4th Army. The main assault group of the 11th Army, the Austro-Hungarian VI Corps, the Guard, and XXII Reserve Corps¹), had the task of breaking through in a northeasterly direction. The X Army Corps was initially to join the attack only with its right wing, covering the left army flank until the Behr Corps could also advance eastward. On the right army wing, the XXXXI Reserve Corps was to overcome the broad Wisznia section, thereby facilitating the advance of both the VI Corps and the left wing of the Austro-Hungarian 2nd Army. The 11th Bavarian Infantry Division, the 5th Bavarian Reserve Division, and the 88th Reserve Infantry Brigade of the XXII Reserve Corps were designated as army reserves. The Hungarian 11th Cavalry Division was to follow at the disposal of the Mackensen High Command behind the right wing of the 4th Army.

The Austro-Hungarian 2nd Army had already received the directive from Generaloberst von Mackensen on June 6 to "keep its left wing as strong as possible, to envelop and roll up the entire occupied Brodyel front from the north, while the advance of the 11th Army south past the mentioned front would make it impossible for the enemy to hold out longer." Accordingly, General of Cavalry von Böhm-Ermolli placed emphasis on his left army wing. Here, the Austro-Hungarian IV and the Beskiden Corps were to be united on June 13 under the command of General von der Marwitz. The other corps were then to join their attack in stages. Opposite the right wing of the 2nd Army, the enemy had already

¹) The 43rd (without 85th R. J. Btl.), 44th R. D. and 107th J. D.

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To counter the bold, expansive actions of the Southern Army, strong forces were assembled in the area around Litwinia for a counterattack. As a flank protection against this, a special combat group under Field Marshal Lieutenant von Kornhaber was formed with the 2nd Army, which was to throw the enemy by June 12, and then rejoin the 2nd Army with the start of the general offensive on June 13.

The Austro-Hungarian 4th Army of General Infantry Archduke Josef Ferdinand was to immediately follow the advance of the left wing of the 11th Army on Sieniawa on June 12, crossing the San between Sieniawa and Ulanow with as strong forces as possible in the direction of Rawa Ruska–Narol Miasto, and take over the cover of the left flank at the Tanew section. For the opening of the offensive over the San, the German 22nd Infantry Division had already been subordinated to the army on June 9, to be deployed on the right wing with the Austro-Hungarian XVII Corps. The corps command ordered the division for June 12 to make a frontal attack over the San on the route Lubaczowka-Mouth–Lezachow. The division commander, Lieutenant General Dieffenbach, however, requested permission to also attack the strong support points identified in the Lubaczowka–San corner from the south, whereupon his division was assigned the area up to east of Manasterz. The division was then to be relieved by the XVII Corps on the night of June 14 and follow the left wing of the 11th Army. Furthermore, Colonel General von Mackensen pointed out to the 4th Army the necessity of a simultaneous frontal attack against the San front. In further advances to the east, he anticipated an offensive thrust by the enemy against the left flank of the 11th Army. "Against this possibility, it is necessary to cover the advance of the 11th Army," Colonel von Seeckt stated in a letter to the High Command of the 4th Army, "for if it has to divert its own forces early, its striking power to the east will weaken." The 4th Army was therefore to initially allocate as few forces as possible for the offensive task at the Tanew section, Archduke Josef Ferdinand intended to accompany the advance of the 11th Army to Sieniawa through the XVII and IX Corps and from there to Cieszanow through the XVII Corps. Two more divisions were to follow in the second line.

The High Command of the previous Austro-Hungarian 3rd Army took over the leadership of the Kirchbach Group on the western Vistula bank, from which an independent Austro-Hungarian 1st Army was formed again.

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The Advance at Sieniawa Succeeds.

b) The Breakthrough Battle of Lubaczow from June 12 to 15.

The advance of the inner wings of the 11th and Austro-Hungarian 4th Army in the river bend of Sieniawa on June 12 achieved the desired success. The left wing of the 56th Infantry Division swung forward in the early morning attack over the Lubaczowka and withstood enemy counterattacks south of the Kotowka Forest during the morning hours. Thus covered on the flank, the simultaneously deep-advancing 119th Infantry Division of Major General von Behr pushed its attack northward over several positions. Relief attacks by the Russians from the woods to the east and west were repelled. The 22nd Infantry Division encountered significant resistance in its advance north of Manasterz, which was only broken around noon by a frontal attack and encirclement from the east. The division then drove the enemy back to the heights southeast of Sieniawa. By 5 p.m., Sieniawa was also occupied. These successes made it possible for the previously unsuccessful crossing of the allied troops over the San to succeed. At Sieniawa, they joined the German battlefront. The 22nd Infantry Division had to forgo the immediate execution of the attack against the Czlawa Heights because its artillery deployed on the western bank of the San could not be in place in time. The bridge built by the allies at Lezachow was only completed in the evening. Against the deep right flank of the 119th Infantry Division at the Kotowka Forest, heavy Russian counterattacks were launched in the evening, which could be countered by timely shifting of forces from the left to the right wing. However, the division was so heavily engaged in the night combat that its immediate relief by the Austro-Hungarian 11th Infantry Division, which had arrived behind the front, was not possible.

In the early morning of June 13, the 11th Army launched a frontal breakthrough. The Guard Corps, positioned in the center of the main assault group, achieved a great success. The 2nd Guard Infantry Division under Lieutenant General von Winkler managed to wrest Tucholka from the enemy by 9 a.m. Advancing, the division captured Kobylnica Ruska by 2 p.m. and seized the heights adjoining to the north. By 5 p.m., the enemy again prepared for counterattack. Under the impression of these rapid successes, even the initially stubborn resistance from the 1st Guard Infantry Division was exhausted.

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matted. This threw the Russians over the Söllo depression in the morning hours.

In the evening, it reached the connection south of Kobylnica Ruska with the neighboring division.

The continuation of the attack by the Guard Corps into the night against the enemy reported in strong positions on the heights on both sides of Wielkie Oczy seemed inappropriate and was omitted. Even so, the deep breakthrough already had a favorable effect on the course of the battle at the connection fronts.

The Austro-Hungarian VI Corps had broken into the enemy's position at Jagrebla and Jalazie. However, only the 12th Infantry Division managed to push further and thereby initiate an encirclement from the north. It was not until around 3 in the afternoon that the resistance also collapsed in front of the 39th Infantry Division. Both divisions then worked their way through to the eastern edge of the large forest zone, where they now encountered new enemy positions at 6 in the evening. The XXXXI Reserve Corps, after initial successes on both sides of the Wisznia near Oltrow and further north, entered into heavy, fluctuating combat. It was only when the 81st Reserve Division broke through Malnow at 9 in the evening that relief came for the heavily engaged 82nd Reserve Division in the Wisznia depression. The evening storming of the Aufowa height north of Malnow created a connection to the allies to the north. To the right, contact with the possession corps of the Austro-Hungarian 2nd Army on the Wisznia was maintained. Its attack overcame the enemy stronghold of Jozefowka. Further advances on both sides of the stream depression to the east were, however, prevented by Russian counterattacks. Even an encirclement initiated from the north only brought the heights on this side of the place into the possession of the attacker.

On the northern wing of the main assault group, the advance of the XXII Reserve Corps under the leadership of General of Cavalry von Falkenhayn encountered particular difficulties, as the enemy positions skillfully flanked each other. The main target of the attack for the 43rd Reserve and 107th Infantry Division was the village of Mielkis Nowy, which had been expanded on several fronts. It was only when the rapid success of the 82nd Reserve Division and the advance of the 107th Infantry Division eliminated the mutual flanking effect of the enemy against the attack on Mielkis Nowy that the village was stormed around noon. As the combat area expanded upon entering the large forests, the 44th Reserve Division was inserted into the center. The right wing of the corps advancing in the mountain forest near Pamfka Niwa was halted by darkness. The left wing was fixed in the evening at Czerniawa, while the enemy position continued to the northwest.

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Great Success on the First Day of Attack.

Initially, only the 20th Infantry Division of the X Army Corps attacked. It encountered strong resistance while advancing over the exposed swamp lowlands. By noon, the right wing, supported by the 107th Infantry Division, gained ground. Simultaneously, the enemy was also driven over the Lubaczowka. In the afternoon, the 20th Infantry Division pushed across this river to the stream section on both sides of Olszówka. This created space for the deployment of the 19th Infantry Division, which was brought up in the second line. In a difficult maneuver to the flank, it overcame the wide Lubaczowka lowlands and continued its attack into the night. At 3 a.m., Wulka Zapałowska fell.

At the front of the Behr Corps, the battle north of the Lubaczowka concluded only in the early morning of June 13. The enemy retreated. The relief of the 119th Infantry Division by the allies was completed by 11 a.m. The division attempted to swing south through the Rotowka Forest for a flanking effect but encountered the enemy in the forest. Thus, it was only possible to advance the inner wings of the 56th and 119th Infantry Divisions east of the forest.

Against Sieniawa, the Russians launched several attacks during the night of June 12 to 13, which were apparently only meant to cover their withdrawal to the east and north. By 7 a.m., the 22nd Infantry Division had occupied the Glawa Heights. In the evening, it was relieved. The line of the Austro-Hungarian 4th Army extended the bridgehead to Piskorowice (ten kilometers northwest of Sieniawa).

Thus, the new offensive operation achieved a promising initial success on the first day. The tip of the breakthrough wedge of the Guard had advanced far to the east, close to the intermediate position determined by reconnaissance: Krakowiec – Wielkie Oczy – Lutowice – Lubaczow. Since the enemy was already moving reserves back to the Grodek–Magierow position behind the front, the Army High Command 11 no longer expected sustained defense in the intermediate position ahead. It hoped that the breakthrough's progress would quickly bring this to collapse. Generaloberst von Mackensen ordered: "The Guard Corps will continue its successful and decisive advance to the heights of the Wielkie Oczy section tomorrow." The center of the Austro-Hungarian VI Corps was directed towards Krakowiec, as was the XXXXI Reserve Corps towards Sarny. North of the Guard Corps, the XXII Reserve Corps was to push further through the forests and ensure the encirclement of Bucznik from the north initiated by the Guard. The X Army Corps was to maintain the connection with the Behr Corps, which intended to conduct its concentric attack in the Kotowka Forest and advance its right wing to Oleszyce.

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Behr intended to maintain his concentric attack in the Kotowka Forest and advance his right wing on Oleszyce. The Austro-Hungarian 4th Army was directed eastward towards Czerkow and northward towards Krzeszow on the San. The right neighboring army was ordered to "continue the attack or begin it most emphatically." Under the impact of the breakthrough of the 11th Army, the enemy had already retreated before the Austro-Hungarian 2nd Army to the general line Strwiaz—Bonow during the night of June 14. They swung right and proceeded to attack this position.

Also from the right wing of the 11th Army, the XXXX1st Reserve and Austro-Hungarian VI Corps, the enemy only positioned themselves on June 14 in the positions on both sides of the Kradowice-Gees. In fierce preliminary skirmishes, the XXXX1st Reserve Corps advanced to the heights on this side of the Szklo. The intention of the Hungarian 39th Infantry Division to relieve the corps of General von Francois south of the lake failed, as they themselves encountered the enemy. The Austro-Hungarian 12th Infantry Division also faced a difficult frontal attack north of the lake. The crossing over the Szklo lowland was opened to them by their left wing advancing with the Guard Corps. They then reached up to the eastern edge of the large lake and at night up to Swidnica.

The Guard Corps unexpectedly encountered particularly strong resistance at Wielkie Oczy. It was not until 4 in the afternoon that the divisions could begin their assault. The 1st Guard Infantry Division under Colonel Eitel Friedrich Prince of Prussia overcame the Berzenitz and extended this success northward. Then the left wing of the division also pushed through Wielkie Oczy. The planned encirclement of the 2nd Guard Infantry Division from the north failed due to the strength of the Bucznik massif. Only after relief by the 1st Guard Infantry Division could their right wing penetrate Wielkie Oczy at 7 in the evening after a hard fight and then connect with the right neighbor. Thus also encircled from the south, the Bucznik fell. Meanwhile, the left wing did not advance significantly further, especially since the situation in the forest zone further north was unclear. Here, the two southern divisions of the XXII Reserve Corps had followed the enemy retreating to the Ladowa Nima height. After a difficult advance, the 43rd Reserve Division of Major General von Runckel took possession of the position there at 7° in the evening. The 44th Reserve Division had already moved into the area south of Lutowka by nightfall, with parts of it turning towards Lutowka. There, the 107th Infantry Division also arrived after driving back enemy rearguards from section to section, having thrown them back, entered the battle at 6° in the evening.

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The Offensive Part Continues to Push Through.

had thrown in at 6 p.m. into the battle. At 8 p.m., the village and the heights further east were taken by storm.

North of the Lubaczowka, the X Army Corps had to endure hard battles on both sides of Olsztyn. When the right wing of the 20th Infantry Division broke through at the Lubaczowka and flanked to the left, the enemy abandoned his position at noon. The attempts of the 19th Infantry Division to extend their nightly success at Wulka Zapalowka to the east and north were met with strong Russian resistance, and progress was only made around noon. In the afternoon, the entire front of the X Army Corps advanced slowly after the heavy fighting. By evening, the connection to the XXII Reserve Corps at the Lubaczowka and the northern forest edge south of Lipina was reached.

The 56th Infantry Division under Major General Schach von Wittenau also broke through the Lubaczowka front and pushed the enemy further north into the forests. Its left wing advanced northwest to support the right wing of the 119th Infantry Division. This reached the southern edge of the Kotowka Forest by evening, gaining possession of Ropa. However, the left wing of the division, like the adjacent battlefront of the allies, advanced only with difficulty in heavy forest fighting. Therefore, the command of the Austro-Hungarian 2nd Army considered it necessary to relieve by advancing north of the Kotowka Forest towards the Czarne Heights. For this, they requested and received the German 22nd Infantry Division. This moved east of the Slawa Heights into the battle line to attack the following day. Downstream, only little ground was gained.

By noon, Generaloberst von Mackensen, under the impression of the Russian retreat in front of the 2nd Army's front and based on reports of marches from the Krakowice—Lubaczow line to the east and northeast, had given the order to pursue up to the Grodek position. However, the further course of the day showed that the enemy had only retreated to a strong position ten kilometers back in front of the 2nd Army and intended to hold out in front of the 11th Army as well. According to prisoner reports, they had positioned 19 divisions. Also, south and north of Szklo and on both sides of the Lubaczowka, a breakthrough into the position had been achieved so far.

The attack of the Austro-Hungarian 2nd Army, which began on June 15, brought only some local successes west of Borowno on the northern flank, with the Beskiden Corps fighting in conjunction with the XXXI Reserve Corps. However, they did not lead to the intended encirclement from the north.

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The left wing of the XXXX I. Reserve Corps reached Morance early at the marshy Szczan. However, the crossing over a dam east of the Krakowiec Lake failed. Further south, after a hard fight, the Russian positions still held west of the Szczan-Albicht were breached. In the evening, the right wing was also able to penetrate the enemy's trenches west of Bonow. From the 5th and VI Corps, the 12th Infantry Division pushed the enemy back beyond the Lipowiec section. The bulk of the 39th Infantry Division was also moved north around the Krakowiec Lake. While its left wing was able to maintain contact with the 12th Infantry Division, the decisive advance of its right wing to the southeast was unsuccessful.

The Guard Corps also continued its attack deep into the enemy's defense system on June 15. The 1st Guard Infantry Division encountered strong Russian positions at the Lipowiec Brook. Supported by its neighboring division from the north, it was able to break this resistance by 6 p.m. and connect with the 2nd Guard Infantry Division, which advanced 20 kilometers beyond Bielkie Oczy to Luzki. The XXII Reserve Corps also drove the enemy back from section to section in the rugged terrain. Despite great marching difficulties, all three divisions reached the Sanadowka section in the afternoon. They had thus significantly expanded the breakthrough of the Guard to the north.

The X Army Corps advanced its 20th Infantry Division along the Lubaczowka. It first encountered resistance at the Przerwa section, which was overcome by encircling from the east bank of the Lubaczowka by 7 p.m. The division then reached Zawadowka with its right wing. The positions east of Lipina had already been stormed by the inner wings of the 20th and 19th Infantry Divisions by 10 a.m. The latter continued to push the enemy further west in open terrain from position to position towards Oleszice and into the woods north of it. The bulk of the 19th Infantry Division then also turned east. In the evening, the X Army Corps encircled Lubaczow, protected by stream depressions, in an arc.

The Behr Corps was still far behind. The 56th Infantry Division attacked the enemy still holding south of Molodynce by noon and relieved the 119th Infantry Division surrounding Kotowka. This division itself, supported by troops of the Austro-Hungarian 4th Army, stormed the strong positions there. In a joint attack by both divisions, they succeeded in the evening in driving the enemy out of his positions around Molodzycz.

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The Enemy Retreats to the Grodek—Magierow Position.

With the joint attack of both divisions, it was possible by evening to drive the enemy from their positions around Molodzycz. At 4 p.m., the high command of the 11th Army had ordered that the 8th Bavarian Reserve Division, which had meanwhile been advanced to secure the deep left flank of the X Army Corps, be directed towards Oleszyce—Zabiala and combined with the adjoining 56th Infantry Division into a corps under the command of Bavarian Lieutenant General Freiherr von Stein. The 8th Bavarian Reserve Division reached Oleszyce with its largest parts. The 119th Infantry Division was to become the army reserve.

On the right wing of the Austro-Hungarian 4th Army, the 22nd Infantry Division, advancing north of the Kotowka Forest, broke through the enemy positions at 11 a.m., simultaneously with the Austro-Hungarian 11th Infantry Division fighting in the forest. Both divisions advanced significantly beyond the Czarna Heights. The rest of the 4th Army's front east of the San pushed north towards the enemy-occupied high positions on both sides of Cieplicze.

In the afternoon, the Mackensen High Command assessed the overall situation of the 11th Army as very promising. At 6 p.m., Colonel von Seeckt issued the following directive to the corps chiefs of staff: “The pursuit operation is progressing well across the entire front of the three armies. The situation has changed in our favor since yesterday, as the enemy has thrown parts of his main forces against us again, thereby offering us the opportunity to defeat him in open field. We will therefore encounter less resistance in the main position he has prepared and may be able to penetrate it with him. In this sense, the pursuit in the combat zones must be relentlessly continued.” To further consolidate the forces of the 11th Army for the breakthrough attack on Magierow, its boundary with the Austro-Hungarian 2nd Army was shifted to the left towards the forest ridge of Rubyn, which simultaneously enabled this army to encircle the Grodek position north around Lake Janow.

Before the Austro-Hungarian 2nd Army, the enemy fled. On June 16, back to the Grodek position. The army followed along the entire line, with the left wing reaching Sądlo. The right wing and the center of the 11th Army also continued the pursuit relentlessly. Driving enemy rearguards before them, the four southern corps reached the line Sądlo—Niemirow and northward despite great marching difficulties. A longer assault battle was required to occupy Niemirow. The commanding general of the XXII Reserve Corps, General v. Cavalry of Falkenhayn, intended during his advance to swing parts northward to engage in the battles of the X Army Corps at Lubaczow to protect his left flank.

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Cavalry from Falkenhayn intended, during its advance, to swing parts to the north to engage in the battles of the X Army Corps at Lubaczow to protect its left flank. The Army High Command did not allow this, as it considered the pursuit to the east more important.

The X Army Corps also managed to overcome the resistance it found in the naturally strong and heavily fortified position around Lubaczow. The 20th Infantry Division was set to attack from the south, the 19th Infantry Division from the west. Positions were stormed and taken shortly after noon. On the heights south of the Solotwa, the enemy set up new resistance. The attack was transferred to the 19th Infantry Division, but due to the advanced time of day, it could not be carried out. The 20th Infantry Division marched eastwards towards Sieniawa. The Hungarian 11th Cavalry Division was moved forward to close the gap between the XXII Reserve Corps and the X Army Corps. In front of the 8th Bavarian Reserve Division, the enemy still held positions north of Oleszyce at the forest edge behind it. The division prepared for a comprehensive attack on both sides. Its left wing crossed the stream section at Zabiala around noon. In the late afternoon, the 56th Infantry Division appeared on the battlefield northwest of Zabiala after a difficult march on deep sandy forest paths. Meanwhile, the Bajon had already taken the enemy positions north of Oleszyce. Both divisions were now to jointly attack the Kubaszyna Forest the next day on the orders of General von Stein. This necessitated a left swing of the 8th Bavarian Reserve Division. During the night, it took possession of Dachnow. Through this bold action, the enemy in the Kubaszyna Forest was surrounded on three sides. Thus, even though the left wing of the 11th Army had not fallen significantly behind compared to the center and the right wing, there was a well-founded prospect that after overcoming the Russian resistance, it would soon join the advance to the east in a staggered formation on the left.

The right wing of the Austro-Hungarian 4th Army reached the forest edges south of Cewkow. Here the enemy still held. Further west, the army advanced over Cieplice. The Army High Command intended to advance north only after expecting a favorable attack on the eastern bank of the San. However, Chief of Staff von Mackensen pointed out that the advance to the east must continue until an enemy attack, and not the fear of one, necessitated a halt.

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The Attack on the Grodek—Magierow Position.

force". Cieszanow was set as the next objective, with echeloning towards Tarnogrod. Upon receiving news that retrograde movements by the enemy had also been initiated on the western bank of the San, the 4th Army was informed: "Accordingly, the advance ordered for this evening... appears facilitated towards the east, and the attack of the forces positioned in the San-Vistula angle appears promising and necessary."

Aerial reconnaissance reports received during June 16 provided clear evidence of the general enemy retreat into and behind the Grodek—Magierow position, which extended northwest to the Tanew sector. Prisoners generally reported severe ammunition shortages among the Russians and emphasized the tremendous moral effect of the German artillery. The infantry replacements were said to have noticeably deteriorated due to short and inadequate training, especially since the training depots lacked rifles. Colonel General von Mackensen pointed out to his subordinate command authorities that "defeated troops" had occupied the new positions. The corps would have to decide independently whether rapid seizure or methodical attack was appropriate. "That a quick decision is advantageous and necessary will be clear to every position." As before, the operational center of gravity remained in the middle of the 11th Army. This was also expressed through the transfer of additional heavy artillery from the left army wing to the Austro-Hungarian VI. and the Guard Corps.<header>c) The Breakthrough of the Grodek—Magierow Position and the Capture of Lemberg. June 17 to 22.</header>On June 17, the Austro-Hungarian 2nd Army probed against the Grodek position. They already succeeded in penetrating into the town of Grodek. However, General von Böhm-Ermolli planned the main breakthrough thrust on his left wing between Kamienobrod and Janow.

For the 11th Army, this day was also marked by sharp pursuit of the retreating enemy. The corps' advance only came to a halt before strongly occupied height positions along the general line Majdan Lake—Magierow—Dobniewice Height. On the left army wing, Corps Stein, whose threatening approach in the Kubaszyna Forest the enemy had timely evaded, reached the heights south of Cieszanow. To maintain connection with the left neighboring army, these heights were not to be crossed initially. Only south of the Swidnica were elements pushed further east to cover the left flank of the X Army Corps. In view of the strength of the height positions, before which the 11th Army now stood across the entire front, extensive artillery preparation before the start of the infantry attack proved necessary.

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across the entire front, extensive artillery preparation was deemed necessary

before the infantry attack began. However, due to the great difficulties

with the roads, the heavy artillery had mostly not yet arrived. Generaloberst

von Mackensen therefore ordered at 10 p.m.:

"The 18th of June is to be used for reconnaissance, deployment, and

artillery calibration. Assault planned for early 19th."

In front of the Austro-Hungarian 4th Army, the enemy, under the influence

of the success of the 8th Bavarian Reserve Division at Dachnow and a

nightly advance of the Allies west of Cewkow, abandoned their positions

south of the San. The right wing of the 4th Army occupied Cieszanow.

Behind it, the German 22nd Infantry Division remained as a reserve

for the 11th Army. Furthermore, the line Ulanow—Tarnogrod, the

Tanew, and the heights of Krzeszow on the San were reached.

On June 18, the two armies of the attack front moved even closer to

the enemy's positions under preliminary skirmishes. The Stein Corps also

reached the same level as the other corps of the 11th Army after partially

heavy fighting near and east of Rudka, while the left wing of the 56th

Infantry Division, which extended over the Brusienka, was forced to

deeply echelon against strongly fortified flank positions northeast of

Cieszanow. The Austro-Hungarian 4th Army reached the Birowa—Tanew

section. Generaloberst von Mackensen did not allow an advance beyond

the Birowa to Narol Miasto to avoid jeopardizing the security of the

11th Army's flank by a possible setback. In the San-Vistula corner, the

enemy seemed to retreat to their last bridgehead in the Rozwadow—Sandomierz

line.

On June 19, the armies launched the decisive attack.

The Austro-Hungarian 2nd Army, whose task was to "push the enemy

standing before it eastward, thus rolling up the enemy Dniester front,"

achieved only local progress against the Dniester and in the area between

it and the Wereszcyca as well as in Grodek. However, on its northern

flank, the 35th Reserve Division of the Beskiden Corps, under the command

of Lieutenant General von Schmerttau, broke deeply into the enemy

positions at Stawki after deploying the entire heavy artillery of the corps.

The attack of the 11th Army brought decisive successes. Its four southern

corps had set out to break through against the Lemberg—Rawa Ruska road

with the intention of splitting the enemy forces. The X Army Corps,

Stein Corps, and the Hungarian 11th Cavalry Division, under the command

of General of Infantry von Emmich, were unified to cover this attack northward against Rawa Ruska.

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Breakthrough of the Guard at Magierow.

Unified by Emmich, they had to cover this attack northward against Rawa Ruska.

The XXXXI Reserve Corps attacked due to the marshy lowlands on both sides of the Majdan Lake with the main focus on the northern flank and gained the heights east of the Sopfina Forest. When further progress could not be achieved, General von Francois deployed his reserves in the center at 5 PM. Here, a breakthrough was achieved at 7 PM, after which the heavy attack further south also succeeded on the eastern shore heights of the Majdan Lake.

For the Austro-Hungarian VI Corps, the initial focus in its difficult advance through rugged mountainous terrain was on gaining the Horodysko Massif. This succumbed at noon to the assault of its two divisions when the encirclement through the Sopfina Forest became effective. In rapid advance, the 12th Infantry Division reached the connection to the Guard Corps at Kunin, while the right corps flank, deeply echeloned, reached the area west of Zabelnia, which the enemy held stubbornly.

Of decisive importance for the intended separation of the Russian forces was the advance of the Guard Corps, as here the shortest route to the road and railway Zolkiew—Rawa Ruska could be reached. The attack of the right-positioned 1st Guard Infantry Division initially did not penetrate the heavily intersected terrain, whereas the 2nd Guard Infantry Division under Lieutenant General von Winckel early on took the heights of Mazuryn dominating the entire attack field and simultaneously advanced further south. The wedge driven forward from the center of the corps towards Magierow then exerted a flanking pressure on the entire corps section. By noon, the enemy resistance had collapsed everywhere. The commanding general, General Freiherr von Plettenberg, soon decided to continue the breakthrough beyond Magierow. Through strong marching performances and fighting against Russian rearguards, it was possible to advance by evening over the railway and the road at Nordowicz. Deep echeloning protected both flanks, as the neighboring troops could not follow so quickly. Already shortly after noon, the 119th Infantry Division had been made available to the Guard Corps. It no longer became active.

The XXII Reserve Corps had placed its main focus on the right wing to maintain the connection with the Guard Corps. The frontal attack initially remained unsuccessful. Only when at 10 AM the rapid advance of the 2nd Guard Infantry Division became noticeable did the 43rd Reserve Division succeed in breaking into the enemy position.

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made it noticeable, the 43rd Reserve Division succeeded in breaking into the enemy position. To relieve the heavily struggling center, the command was forced to also deploy the 107th Infantry Division of Major General von Moser on the left flank of the corps for the breakthrough. But even before they engaged, the southern edge of the enemy east of Wysiecz Castle was torn open, and by early afternoon, they gave way along the entire line. In the pursuit, the right flank north of Lawrykow was able to connect with the Guard, while the left remained positioned south of Rawa Ruska.

General von Emmich had positioned a division composed of parts of the 19th and 20th Infantry Divisions under the leadership of Lieutenant General Hofmann behind the right flank of his defensive front, ready to expand the success of the XXII Reserve Corps northward if necessary. By 4 p.m., this division was advancing on both sides of the Niemirow—Rawa Ruska road, while the right flank of the 20th Infantry Division, corresponding to the advance of the 107th Infantry Division, sought to push eastward. The enemy retreated under the pressure spreading from the south. The X Army Corps was able to advance to the Manasterz—Dobrinowice line by evening. The Stein Corps faced strong Russian positions grouped around the Butszna Forest Heights. On the left flank, there was close combat contact at Rudka. The 2nd Army was expanding its new positions. Three divisions stood as reserves on the eastern bank of the San.

As the success of the breakthrough from Magierow became apparent towards evening, Colonel General von Mackensen reported to the Austro-Hungarian army command that he did not intend to cross the Zolkiew—Rawa Ruska road eastward, but would "continue to pursue the enemy, who had mostly withdrawn northward, and deploy to the left."

Accordingly, on June 20, the Guard Corps was to close up on the main road, while the southern adjoining corps of the 11th Army and northward against the road on both sides of Zolkiew were to continue. North of the Guard Corps, the XXII Reserve Corps was to push its right flank to the road, but otherwise remain in the left echelon to maintain connection with the Emmich group, whose left flank was to swing north around Rudka. General von Conrad agreed with the basic idea of these orders but pointed out that in connection with the attack of the Austro-Hungarian 2nd Army against Lemberg, a swing of parts of the 11th Army against the northern front of Lemberg would initially be necessary.

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The Enemy Retreats to Lemberg.

However, such support was not needed by the right neighboring army. Already during the night, local breaches in the actual Grodek position had been expanded into significant territorial gains. Consequently, the enemy had retreated eastward along the entire line before dawn. The pursuit led the 2nd Army to the Dniester near Mikolajow and to the Szczerzec-Stawczanta section, which the enemy held in connection with Lemberg, as well as directly in front of the city's west front, protected by makeshift works. In the northern wing, the advance of the Beskiden Corps aimed at Kulikow.

Even before the 11th Army, the enemy had retreated on both sides of the breakthrough point of the Guard Corps. The XXXXI Reserve Corps encountered new, very strong positions on the heights around and south of Gliniec by mid-morning. The attack had to be postponed to the following day, as the right corps wing, along with the heavy artillery, was only ready to engage in the evening after an extremely difficult advance through forested mountains. The k.u.k. VI Corps also soon encountered new enemy resistance and had to fend off even stronger counterattacks. Only its northernmost wing managed to reach the great strength in connection with the Guard Corps. This extended its front northward at Dobrošin. An intended advance of the Hungarian 11th Cavalry Division against the Zolkiew-Mosty Wielkie road proved impractical, as the enemy had almost closed its front again before the Guard Corps. The XXII Reserve Corps reached a line forward of Apopozielisko without resistance. Here, only enemy cavalry seemed to be facing them. Marching columns moved eastward from Rawa Ruska. The X Army Corps also advanced without a fight against Rawa Ruska. A composite detachment was sent there. The Stein Corps encountered heavily fortified Russian positions during its northward pivot east of Rudka. Effectively supported by the artillery of the 20th and 56th Infantry Divisions and reinforced by parts of the latter division, as well as the 8th Bavarian Reserve Division from the south, the encirclement of the enemy was achieved. Around 1 p.m., they gave way at the Buskjan Heights. Through skillful expansion of the encirclement movement, the heights further north were also taken in a brisk assault in the evening.

The k.u.k. 4th Army approached the section on both sides of Zlotoń with its right wing.

On June 21, the k.u.k. 2nd Army gained only a little ground to the east. However, it was of decisive importance for the outcome of the battle that the Beskiden Corps of General von der Marwitz, using its entire combat strength, succeeded in breaking into the strong elevated position west of Kulików, which was linked to the northern front of Lemberg.

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With the deployment of its entire combat strength, the breakthrough into the strong elevated position leaning against the northern front of Lemberg, west of Kulików, was achieved. This ensured the desired impact against the northern front of Lemberg.

In the 11th Army, only the two southern corps were still engaged in combat. The XXXXI Reserve Corps advanced with great difficulty on the rain-soaked, steep forest paths through Słwarzawa Nowa and towards Gliniów. This position was stubbornly held by the enemy to cover Zółkiew. The XXXXI Reserve Corps was also reinforced from the army reserve with the 11th Bavarian Infantry Division. The Austro-Hungarian VI Corps, to which the 11th Cavalry Division was assigned, did not break through either. Before the Guard Corps, XXII Reserve, and X Army Corps, the enemy had retreated further north under cavalry cover. At the Stein Corps, there was still contact with the enemy.

In the area of the Austro-Hungarian 4th Army, only local skirmishes took place. The fate of the Galician capital was sealed the following day. During the night of June 22, the Beskiden Corps had been able to expand its breakthrough on the battlefield north of Lemberg in the direction of Kulików. Supported by this strong pressure on the northern front of Lemberg, the other corps of the left wing of the Austro-Hungarian 2nd Army managed to penetrate the works of the western and northern fronts during the morning and advance through this wide breach towards the city itself. The enemy had abandoned Lemberg. The pursuit was conducted up to the line Szczyki—Zapytnow, further north it came to a halt before Russian rear positions at Remenow and Zoltance. On its southern flank, the enemy was now forced to retreat to the approximate line Dornfeld—Krotoszyn. A thrust through Lemberg into the rear of this position aimed at Bobrka was intercepted by the Russians.

Meanwhile, the right wing of the 11th Army had also gained freedom of movement and followed the enemy who had retreated over Zółkiew during the night. The XXXXI Reserve Corps pushed its lines under combat against rear guards up to and beyond Zółkiew and through large forests north to the Seldec section. The 11th Cavalry Division, dispatched from Mosty Wielkie by the Austro-Hungarian VI Corps, was unable to advance beyond Zółkiew despite support from the following Hungarian 39th Infantry Division. At Zameczek, the Austro-Hungarian 12th Infantry Division covered the left flank and maintained contact with the Guard Corps. Opposite the northern front of the 11th Army, the enemy continued to entrench.

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Forces advancing eastward, to avoid diverting more troops than absolutely necessary from the 11th Army for flank security purposes. This intention was not fully achieved. It was already problematic that the left wing of the 11th Army had to lead the eccentric thrust in the river bend of Sieniawa one day before the start of the general offensive to open the passage over the San for the Austro-Hungarian 4th Army. Of the three divisions that preceded this, two — the 56th and the 22nd Infantry Divisions — cooperated with the left neighboring army throughout the operation, while the third, the 119th Infantry Division, eventually pushed through but did not reach the target area for deployment. Also, a division of the army reserve, the 8th Bavarian Reserve Division, had to be used alongside the X Army Corps to protect the left flank. This significant loss of striking power did not have adverse consequences for the continuation of the operation, as after the vigorous breakthrough of the army center at Magierow, the offensive was no longer continued eastward but gradually shifted northward. In this process, the forces staggered backward for flank protection could quickly be deployed in the new front.

Reviewing the overall operation from Gorlice to Lemberg, the Allies' offensive in seven weeks advanced more than 300 kilometers through numerous, temporarily expanded enemy positions with the involvement of local inhabitants, constantly engaging in heavy fighting, culminating in four massive breakthrough battles. The combat losses of the 11th Army amounted to about 87,000 men, including 12,000 dead. What the troops and supply formations accomplished during this time in relentless advance, mostly in scorching heat on mud-covered roads, deep sand, or the worst mountain paths, and the hardships endured in the enemy-evacuated, barely accommodating land, can be placed alongside their combat activity and leadership. In terms of health, particularly dangerous areas with extremely poor water conditions had to be traversed. From the San onward, cholera and typhus appeared, and the Galician dysentery spread. Nevertheless, due to prudent and thorough sanitary measures and the selfless dedication of the medical personnel, the health condition of the armies was such that the course of military operations remained secure.

The bloody and especially the other losses of the Russians were much heavier. More than a quarter of a million prisoners of war, 224 guns, and over 600 machine guns were left in the hands of the 11th Army alone.

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New Crisis at the Southern Army.

224 guns, over 600 machine guns were left in the hands of the 11th Army. The loss of the Galician capital, where the Tsar himself had celebrated as the "Liberator of Galicia" just a few weeks earlier with festive pomp, meant a severe moral loss for the Russian people and their ruler, the extent of which was also unforeseeable in political terms.

II. The Battles on the Dniester Front from June 14 to 22.

Maps 5 and 6, Sketches 17 and 18.

The successful course of Generaloberst von Mackensen's offensive on Lemberg had meanwhile also made itself felt in the course of events on the Dniester Front. Initially, however, the Southern Army faced a new serious crisis when its left wing was hit again by a counterattack of strong Russian forces on June 14. Northwest of Bortniki, Russian guards broke over the Dniester and pushed the 1st Infantry Division of Bothmer's Corps back to the road leading from Zurawno to Szydlaczow; by deploying the corps reserve and with the help of the right wing of the 3rd Guard Infantry Division, it was possible to retake part of the lost ground by evening. West of Stryj, however, the right wing of the Szurmay Group had to be bent back halfway to Tejszarow after further resistance. West of the Lemberg railway, Bildez was lost. The Kornhaber Group on the right wing of the Austro-Hungarian 2nd Army was also temporarily forced to abandon its positions. While the enemy limited itself the following day to holding the ground gained against Bothmer's Corps, it continued its attack on the Szurmay Group with undiminished force and pushed it back in fierce fighting to the line Tejszarow–Letnia. Stryj was once again seriously threatened. General von Linsingen found it necessary to bring in other forces to support his left wing. On the afternoon of the 15th, two battalions of Bothmer's Corps were sent to assist the Szurmay Group. Furthermore, General von Gerok received orders to relieve the Hungarian 38th Infantry Division the following night with the half 19th Infantry Division held back as army reserve in Wosnilo and to set it in motion towards Rudki.

The two Hungarian battalions could be used for a counterattack at Wolica, where the enemy had attacked again on the morning of June 16 and gained ground. In every further advance of the Russians on both sides of the Lemberg railway in the direction so threatening to the Southern Army towards Stryj, General von Linsingen set two more battalions of Bothmer's Corps and three batteries of the 38th Infantry Division in motion towards Wolica and placed these forces under the command of Major General Gentner. The positions that had been given up could be reoccupied in the evening.

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On both sides of the Lemberg railway, in the direction so threatening for the Southern Army towards Stryj, General von Linsingen dispatched two battalions of the Bothmer Corps and three batteries of the 38th Infantry Division to Wolica and placed these forces under Major General Gentner. The abandoned positions could be reoccupied in the evening.

The enemy, under the influence of Generaloberst von Mackensen's offensive, refrained from continuing his attacks south of the Dniester. Calm prevailed along the entire front of the Southern Army. On June 17, the 38th Infantry Division, under General Count von Bothmer, repelled the 40th in their positions on the west bank of the Stryj. Field Marshal Lieutenant von Kornhaber moved the bulk of the 51st Infantry Division across to the right bank of the Dniester and launched an attack at dawn on the 18th as part of the offensive task assigned to the Austro-Hungarian 2nd Army. The left wing of the Southern Army — the Szurmay Group and the 38th Infantry Division — joined in. The enemy retreated to the Dniester under weak resistance and completely abandoned the southern bank the following day. Only the bridgeheads of Zydaczow and Woloczyn remained strongly held. Against the latter, the 38th Infantry Division advanced, gaining ground only slowly. The Szurmay Group followed on both sides of the Lemberg railway to the Dniester and positioned the 40th Infantry Division to the right of the 7th, replacing General Gentner's troops, who withdrew to the Bothmer Corps. On June 20, the 51st Infantry Division completed the river crossing at Kolodruby and reconnected with the right wing of their army, advancing against the Szczerzec sector. Upon receiving this news, General von Linsingen ordered the Szurmay Group in the afternoon to join their left neighbor's advance over the Dniester, to seize Zydaczow and Woloczyn for the Bothmer Corps and then also cross the river. He intended, as he had already communicated in the army command order on June 17, to force the crossing over the Dniester again on both sides of Zurawno between Buczaczowce and Holeszow, as more favorable conditions seemed to present themselves there than further upstream. In the following days, the necessary regrouping of the army was carried out. The Szurmay Group left the Southern Army on the evening of June 20 and joined the Austro-Hungarian 2nd Army. Opposite the Marschall Group, the enemy continued to hold their strong bridgehead positions around Halicz-Jezupol.

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The Battles of the Austro-Hungarian 7th Army at the Dniester.

The Austro-Hungarian 7th Army also had to endure hard and varied battles during these days to hold the Dniester line. On June 15, its left wing managed to wrest the bridgehead of Nizniow from the enemy. However, on the same day, General von Pflanzer-Baltin was forced to withdraw the Korda Corps, advancing eastward between the Pruth and Dniester, to the Bojan—Horoszowa line, as an intercepted Russian order indicated an enemy advance over the Dniester below Zaleszczyki was to be expected. The river security in the gap between the Korda Corps and the Kaiser Group was assigned to half of the 8th and 10th Cavalry Divisions, with an army reserve formed at Zastawno from a brigade each of the 8th and 5th Cavalry Divisions and parts of the Krautwald Corps. However, the enemy's attack did not come from the north as expected, but against the front of the Korda Corps, which had roughly established its new positions by the night of the 16th. In the following days, it had to fend off repeated mass assaults by the Russian XXXII Corps and 3rd Cavalry Corps, which was only successful with the deployment of the army reserve. The four cavalry divisions now united north of the Korda Corps (Hungarian 5th, Austro-Hungarian 6th, 8th, and 10th) were grouped under Field Marshal Lieutenant von Benigni and reinforced by forces hastily brought in from the left army wing, as new reports indicated Russian attacks from the northern Dniester bank were also to be expected. On the night of the 20th, the enemy occupied the Dniester loop west of Uscie Biskupie and the next day launched a concentric attack from here and from the large forest area east of Rarwienczy. The defender had to retreat to the heights west of Dnutf; here, on June 22, he repelled all enemy assaults.

On the left army wing, after the capture of the bridgehead of Nizniow, only weaker parts of the Schönburg Group remained along the Dniester stretch from Ostra to Maryampol. General von Pflanzer-Baltin had deployed the main forces of his western wing over the Dniester against the line Potok Zlothy—Ropotice to force the enemy to abandon his positions south of the river at Czernelica by threatening his rear. General von Rybemont was tasked with the unified command of the operation. Already on the night of June 16, the Czbula Group had moved into the river loop south of Kolomea to Turb. During the day, parts of the Schönburg Group and the Rybemont Corps also crossed at and south of Ostra.

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The attackers pushed the stubbornly resisting enemy back to Kosmierzyn and Koropiec by the evening of June 18. The next day, the offensive was to be continued with full force, with parts turning east and west to force the enemy to evacuate the Czernelecia bend and the northern bank of Nizniow. Due to heavy counterattacks by the Russians, which began on June 19, General von Rhemen was forced into defense and had to abandon Kosmierzyn again. As further reinforcement of the Benigni group had become urgent, General von Pflanzer ordered on the 20th the cessation of the offensive over the Dniester and moved the dispensable forces here to the right wing of the army.

The offensive of the German Southern Army, which began on May 12, soon suffered from being assigned a dual task pointing in two different directions. It was to reach the upper Dniester in conjunction with the neighboring Austro-Hungarian 2nd Army on the left and thus the western Galician front of the Allies, advancing northward, and to exert operational pressure eastward to halt the Russian 9th Army's offensive directed against its right neighboring army in the area between the Dniester and Pruth.

This dual task, although the Southern Army initially had a significant superiority in units (9½ infantry divisions) over the opposing Russian 11th Army (6¾ infantry divisions), made it difficult to establish a focal point. After relatively easily achieved, spatially significant initial successes, explained by the voluntary retreat of the enemy, the progress of the advancing army in a broad front was minimal from the moment it encountered stubborn resistance. Only when General von Linsingen concentrated the forces of his left wing at the end of May, consciously accepting the risk of a setback on the right, did the push on Stryj pave the way for a decisive turn in the situation. However, since this success was not expanded northward with all available force to expel the enemy from the southern Dniester bank, and the focus was instead placed on the instructions of the army command for cooperation with the right neighboring army over Stryj-Lesie in an eastern, almost southeastern direction, a serious danger arose for the insufficiently secured left wing of the army. This manifested itself after a few days when the Russians received reinforcements, resulting in the heavy and costly setback north of Stryj and at Zurawno.

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The Result of the Offensive of the Southern Army.

The Russians had received reinforcements in the heavy and costly setback north of Stryj and at Zurawno. Although this could be balanced again by the vigorous countermeasures of the army leader and the bravery of the troops, it nevertheless resulted in a complete standstill of the army's offensive on the entire front for a longer period. That the Russians finally abandoned the southern bank of the Dniester happened under the impression of the failures of their neighboring front in the area west of Lemberg. A decisive impact on the course of the offensive of Generaloberst von Mackensen, as General von Linsingen had considered on June 8, albeit only temporarily, was denied to the two armies of the allied right wing until the fall of Lemberg. Indirectly, however, they contributed to its success by tying down strong enemy forces on their front.

12. The Allied Army Commands During the Operation on Lemberg.

Maps 5 and 6, Sketch 16.

General von Falkenhayn had, shortly after issuing the decisive orders of June 4 for the continuation of the offensive in Galicia¹), made a short visit to the German Western Front²). The impressions received there seemed to have reinforced his view that the extensive denuding of the Western Front of army reserves, which had occurred since mid-April, could only be sustained for a limited time. A withdrawal of forces from the eastern theater of war might therefore become necessary sooner than previously assumed. Shortly after his return to Ples, he reminded General von Conrad in a letter dated June 12 of "the immediate execution of reinforcement work on the Dniester-Wisznia and San lines with all conceivable means." The reason for this, he stated, was the fear "that the development might not be far enough advanced if we were forced by the situation to withdraw significant forces from Galicia. Such a situation could arise unexpectedly, although he currently had no indications for it." General von Conrad initially stated in his response that all orders for the strongest establishment of the San line, insofar as it was already in their possession, and the lower Wisznia line had been made, while the connection to the upper Dniester and the Dniester line itself would still have to be fought for.

¹) p. 203. — ²) p. 77.  
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were, while the connection to the upper Dniester and the Dniester line itself still had to be fought for. Moreover, he emphasized, "that the compulsion to transport strong forces from Galicia to another theater of war could certainly arise in the foreseeable future, both for Germany and for Austria-Hungary. However, he hoped that the now jointly planned thrust by the Allies in Galicia would be continued with full force until the decisive defeat of the Russian army."

General von Falkenhayn agreed, as his response on June 13 proved, that the common goal must remain "for the time being the decisive defeat" of the enemy. However, he also pointed out that "the operations in Galicia had been severely hampered by various incidents," and expressed doubt "whether it would be possible to continue them until the decisive defeat of the enemy." "The enemy will try to evade the thrust, and we cannot pursue him indefinitely." During the course of June 13, however, his view approached that of General von Conrad. From the reports of the high commands of the 11th and the Southern Army about the stubborn battles of the day, he gained the impression that the Russians were determined to resist with all their might. This also increased his hope for the success of a decisive blow. On the evening of June 13, he proposed in a letter to General von Conrad to transport the German divisions still in Syrmia, whose continued presence on the Serbian border no longer seemed necessary to him, to the Galician theater of war and to assign them to the Southern Army "so that it would receive the necessary forces to facilitate the advance of Mackensen's army eastward over the Dniester."

General von Conrad was pleased to find agreement with his own view "that the main decision against the Russian army in Galicia should be sought with all force." Assuming "that the enemy would accept this decisive battle at the latest along the general line Bereszyca—Nagyow—Karol," he also considered the movement of strong forces from the south over the Dniester particularly important for success. However, he declared that leaving at least one German division in Syrmia to prevent a Serbian incursion was indispensable and was ready for the immediate transport of the general command of the X Reserve Corps and the 101st and 105th Infantry Divisions.

1) G. 222 and 215/216. — 2) C. 198. 101., 103., 105. J. D.

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Proposal of Colonel von Seeckt for Swinging North.

Infantry Division ready for the Southern Army. The orders for this were issued

on the afternoon of June 14.

On June 15, the Chief of Staff of the 11th Army, Colonel

von Seeckt, presented an assessment of the situation to the German Supreme Army Command,

explaining how Generaloberst von Mackensen envisioned the continuation

of overall operations on the Galician theater of war following the hoped-for and

desired breakthrough of enemy positions west and northwest of Lemberg. The thrust of the 11th Army was to

continue eastward as before, until the majority of the Russian forces in

Galicia were separated from the main body of their army. An encirclement of significant forces on the northern

bank of the Dniester through comprehensive maneuvers east and north of Lemberg

was considered unlikely by Colonel von Seeckt in the event of an early enemy retreat,

but he hoped to be able to push strong parts by exerting strong pressure

against the roads leading north from Lemberg in an easterly and

northeasterly direction. Thus, he considered the task of the 11th Army

on this side to be presumably completed. The further pushing back of the enemy in Galicia to the northeast and east

was to fall to the Austro-Hungarian 7th Army and the Southern Army. For the entire

left wing of the army, the 2nd, 11th, and 4th Armies, Colonel von Seeckt proposed

swinging north. "The goal of this operation,"

as stated in the letter, "would then be the advance of the 2nd and 11th Armies

between the Bug and Vistula against the line Brest Litovsk—Warsaw,

while the 4th Army advances on both sides of the Vistula. This would

bring about the decision against the Russian western and north-

western front."

Here, for the first time, the great operational idea was

expressed, which was later to become reality, albeit under changed circumstances.

General von Falkenhayn even entertained, albeit only temporarily, the idea of diverting the two divisions completed from Gmynien to Galicia to the Southern Army to the western theater of war1). General von Falkenhayn was still very reserved towards it at this time,

as his marginal note on the last sentence of Colonel von Seeckt's letter proves: "A beautiful

idea! But?" The doubt expressed here by the leader of the overall operations

about the possibility, after the conclusion of the operations currently underway in Galicia, of initiating and carrying out a new, far-reaching offensive

on the eastern theater of war, arose mainly from concern about maintaining the resistance

capability of the German western front, against which new heavy attacks seemed to be impending at several points."

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Falkenhayn even considered, albeit only temporarily, the idea of diverting the two divisions completing from Gmynien to Galicia to the southern army to the western theater of war1). A doubt expressed by Colonel von Seeckt in his assessment of the situation also made him concerned about whether the Austro-Hungarian 4th Army would be able to continue covering the left flank of the 11th Army during the ongoing operation. On June 16, he felt compelled to inform the Commander-in-Chief East that he should not count on two divisions just released into his command area through the deployment of Landsturm formations for his purposes2). The letter stated: "The pressure on the Western Front is now so strong and the necessity to effectively support the left flank of the 11th Army during its decisive advance to the east can become so compelling that the deployment of the divisions at one point or another may become unavoidable."

A similar view on the continuation of operations on the eastern theater of war as Colonel von Seeckt was independently held by the head of the operations department, Colonel Tappen. On June 18, he suggested to General von Falkenhayn, after the fall of Lemberg, to advance "between the Bug and Vistula towards Warsaw against the strong Russian forces located there, to end the war with Russia or at least to completely break its resistance3)." He believed that solving this task would not require all the German forces currently deployed in Galicia, and proposed to withdraw two army corps to the western theater of war after the completion of the current operation, to make necessary replacements with them at the 6th Army. General von Falkenhayn himself hoped to go significantly further in reducing the German eastern forces. "His Excellency agrees," it is stated in a private diary of Colonel Tappen, "but wants to bring three more corps to Gaede to clear Alsace. Whether these three goals can be achieved simultaneously still needs to be examined." If the agreement noted here by General von Falkenhayn referred not only to the withdrawal of forces to the west but also to the continuation of operations in the east according to Colonel Tappen's proposal, it is hardly to be assumed that the Chief of the General Staff of the Field Army was considering a decisive offensive between the Bug and Vistula against the main mass of the Russian army.

1) Diary note of then Colonel Groener. 2) C. 128. 3) From unpublished war memoirs of the current Lieutenant General a. D. Tappen.

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The Army Commands Agree to the Shift Northward.

The field army was supposed to consider a decisive offensive between the Bug and Vistula against the main mass of the Russian army. For with a reduction of forces by five army corps, he could hardly regard such a far-reaching operation as promising success.

On the evening of June 18, the German Kaiser, accompanied by General von Falkenhayn, went to the 11th Army. On the train journey from Jaroslaw to Radyminu, on the morning of June 19, Generaloberst von Mackensen reported on the favorable progress of the offensive. Whether the idea of initiating a new operation in the area between the Bug and Vistula was discussed, and what position General von Falkenhayn actually took, could no longer be determined. In any case, the 11th Army Command itself, in view of the favorable course of the battles northwest of Lemberg, was eager to adapt the movements of the armies under its command during the ongoing operation as much as possible to the new operational idea that was emerging. When it became clear after the major breakthrough success at Magierow on the evening of June 19 that the majority of the enemy opposite the 11th Army had withdrawn northward, Generaloberst von Mackensen decided not to continue his army's advance eastward beyond the Lemberg—Rawa Ruska road, but to gradually direct the pursuit northward while consolidating forces.

On the late evening of June 19, Colonel von Seeckt presented General von Falkenhayn with a hastily sketched plan for the shift northward at the Jaroslaw train station upon his return from Radyminu. The German Chief of Staff approved the basic idea and the orders given but reserved final approval.

General von Conrad immediately joined the decision of the 11th Army Command, leaving only the question open as to whether parts of the 11th Army should initially be used for comprehensive action against the northern front of Lemberg in coordination with the 2nd Army. Already the next day, June 20, it became clear that this was not necessary. In line with its operational guiding idea, the 11th Army Command therefore also accepted a suggestion from the commanding general of the XXII Reserve Corps, whose right wing connected with the Guard Corps in the morning along the railway line Zolkiew—Rawa Ruska, to attempt to prevent the enemy from withdrawing by advancing eastward.

1) Diary note of Generaloberst von Pleffen. — 2) G. 232. — 3) Letter from Generaloberst von Seeckt dated June 27, 1931, to the Reichsarchiv. — 4) G. 233.

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Zolkiew—Rawa Ruska had been reached, attempting to prevent the enemy from retreating by advancing eastward. "The usefulness of a tactical partial success receded against the operational idea").

After his return from the Galician theater of war, General von Falkenhayn had a meeting with General von Conrad in Plesz on the afternoon of June 20. During this, he took the position that, regardless of the battle situation before Lemberg, whose capture was the task of the Austro-Hungarian 2nd Army, the 11th and 4th Armies should advance north between the Bug and Vistula. General von Falkenhayn argued against this, stating that a separation of the tasks of the armies under Generaloberst von Mackensen seemed premature. He proposed that the decision on the continuation of operations on a large scale should only be made after the expected fall of Lemberg. Consequently, the following directive was initially agreed upon for all armies:

"The operations currently progressing so successfully are to be carried out by Generaloberst von Mackensen with the 4th, 11th, and 2nd Armies until the capture of Lemberg. At the same time, the dissolution of the enemy retreating northward through attack, wherever he positions himself, is to be completed. The Szurmay Group is now subordinated to the 2nd Army command"). The Southern Army is to cross the Dniester and advance towards the area east of Lemberg. The 7th Army advances over the Dniester and secures the right flank of the army and the unconditional possession of Czernowitz."

The directive was issued on the evening of June 20. It was nothing more than a repetition of the tasks already assigned to the individual armies, with which they were still occupied at the time. The motives of General von Falkenhayn for this formulation of the directive are evident from a simultaneously dispatched telegram intended only for Generaloberst von Mackensen and his chief of staff: "The directive has received its formulation because, on the one hand, to achieve the goal while retaining all forces under your command, full freedom of action should initially be maintained, while on the other hand, the Supreme Army Command must reserve the right, considering the overall situation, to issue new directives as soon as it deems necessary, if necessary, with a reduction of the forces there. After carrying out the operations according to the above directive, it will certainly not be missed to draw German divisions from the 11th Army for use in the West. If special circumstances do not require any other measures, then the intention is: the 2nd Army will leave Army Group Mackensen to clean Galicia of the enemy with parts of the current Southern Army and 7th Army and to cover the right flank of the 11th Army.

1) Letter from Generaloberst von Seeckt dated July 26, 1927, to the Reichsarchiv. — 2) G. 238.

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The Instructions for the New Operation.

Measures, the intention is then as follows: 2nd Army separates from Army Group Mackensen to clear Galicia of the enemy with parts of the current South Army and 7th Army and to cover the right flank of the 11th Army. 11th Army (without the divisions to be detached) and 4th Army under Your Excellency's command advance further downstream."

Following this, General von Falkenhayn was ready to join General von Conrad's proposal for the continuation of operations after the fall of Lemberg, which aimed to detach the Austro-Hungarian 2nd Army from the command area of Colonel General von Mackensen and involve it in the downstream advances. If his intention to reduce the 11th Army by four divisions is maintained, the difference from the operations proposal made by Colonel von Seeckt on June 15 becomes clear. It seems that General von Falkenhayn, in the planned advance of the 11th and 4th Armies between the Bug and Vistula, did not envision the initiation of a new operation with far-reaching goals, but only a spatially limited pursuit, as also expressed in the directive itself with the words, "to complete the dissolution of the enemy retreating northward by attacking wherever he positions himself." Consequently, the Chief of the General Staff of the Field Army had no reservations about returning the limited right of disposition over the two divisions to be detached from the front in his command area to the Commander-in-Chief East upon his request received on June 20. He therefore believed he did not need them on the battlefield between the Bug and Vistula.

On June 22, before the news of the fall of Lemberg had reached him, General von Conrad, in line with his previous view, addressed General von Falkenhayn with the following operational proposal:

"2nd Army might take Lemberg today. Of the agreed tasks, one is then fulfilled, the other, pursuit by 4th Army and 11th Army northward, still to be fulfilled. My proposal: Colonel General von Mackensen carries out this task with 4th and 11th Army. The latter is assigned occupation troops to cover the Dniester line towards Kaminowka Strumilowa. 2nd Army leaves the association of Army Group Mackensen and pursues the enemy towards Busk (inclusive)–Friedjow (inclusive). South Army advances, as already reported as a replacement, with a strong right wing down the Dniester towards Surawno, to close off Halicz from the north and advance over the lower Gnila Lipa up to and including Rohatyn.

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Surawno, to close off Halicz from the north and advance over the lower Gnila Lipa up to and including Rohatyn. The 7th Army retains its previous tasks."

General von Falkenhayn agreed with this proposal. However, he did not prescribe an end goal for the Southern Army. The further it advances, the better it is. He also considered the attachment of the Beskiden Corps to the direction of Kaminoka Strumilowa unnecessary, as it might not be essential. For the continuation of operations, he requested the most rapid expansion of the railway lines Stryj—Chodorow, Przemysl—Lemberg, and Jaroslaw—Rawa Ruska.

Despite his agreement with the operational proposal of General von Conrad, the German Chief of General Staff maintained the intention to transfer four divisions from the area of the 11th Army to the western theater of war. Corresponding orders were issued on June 22. The 8th Bavarian Reserve Division was to begin its transport from the area of Jaroslaw on June 26, with the 56th Infantry Division and the XXXXI Reserve Corps to follow around June 28. The measure was justified by the fact that "given the current situation, in conjunction with the losses inflicted on the Russians since the beginning of this operational phase, a reduction of German forces in the southeast is possible without impairing the tasks still to be solved and is necessary with regard to the situation on the Western Front." General von Falkenhayn informed General von Conrad orally of the impending transport during a meeting in Teschen on the afternoon of June 22. For several days, he even considered the intention, already expressed to Colonel Tappen on June 18, to transfer three more corps from the 11th and Southern Army to the west, "to clear Upper Alsace of the enemy."

1) The proposal of General von Conrad also did not prescribe an end goal for the Southern Army, but rather foresaw an advance over the lower Gnila Lipa. Rohatyn was only indicated as the last boundary of the Southern Army's advance area.  
2) On the two railways considered for the previous Mackensen Group, the Przemysl—Mosciska line was completed on June 19. The completion of the Jaroslaw—Lubaczow line could be expected by June 24.  
3) See p. 94.  
4) See p. 609. Colonel Groener writes in his private diary on June 23: "Order for the transport of the four divisions from Galicia given on June 22. The operations against the Russians are too early." During a lecture, General von Falkenhayn told him to bring divisions back from the west and clear Upper Alsace of the French.

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Decision of General von Linsingen on the Dniester Crossing.

13. The Battles of the Southern Army at the End of June.

Session 17.

The commander of the Southern Army, General von Linsingen, had already reported to the allied army commands on June 17 that he intended, after the arrival of the two divisions made available to him on the 14th, rolling in from Southern Hungary to Stryj, to force the Dniester crossing again on the night of June 21 to 22 on both sides of Zurawno. The instructions arriving from Teschen on the evening of the 20th assigned the army the further operational task of advancing "towards the area east of Lemberg" after completing the river crossing. Contrary to the wishes of General von Conrad, to cross with the left wing of the Southern Army at Wolcniow, General von Linsingen held firm at the position chosen by him at and behind Zurawno, as he hoped that the Southern Army would be able to break through the defensive position established by the Russians behind the Gnila Lipa and roll it up from the south, as well as threaten Halicz from the north and the enemy in front of the 7th Army on its right flank. However, the forcing of the Dniester crossing was to take place only on the night of June 22 to 23, as only slightly more than half of the reinforcements had been unloaded in Stryj so far. General von Conrad agreed to this and also approved the further operational intention to advance over the lower Gnila Lipa. His new instructions arriving on June 22 were in this sense. The German Chief of Staff particularly emphasized that it was important to "advance the thrust of the Southern Army with the greatest possible acceleration on the northern Dniester bank, even if only at one point, to damage the enemy retreating from south of Lemberg."

Although on June 22, a third of the infantry and half of the artillery of the 101st and 105th Infantry Divisions were still missing, General von Linsingen, considering the overall situation, especially the capture of Lemberg known in the evening, refrained from postponing the attack again and left it at the plan already made in the morning for divisions whose transport had already been ordered, three corps from the 11th and Southern Army to Alsace. On June 25: "General von Falkenhayn says that it has been his view from the beginning to leave the reinforcement of the 11th Army only for the short breakthrough in Galicia, but then to withdraw it back to the west immediately." On June 26: "I agree with General von Schönborn that no further forces should be withdrawn from Galicia."

1) G. 238. — 2) G. 242 f. — 3) G. 246. — 4) G. 247 f.

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of the 22nd issued order, according to which the Dniester crossing was to take place early

the next day. His suggestion to have the left wing

of the 7th Army participate by advancing from the area of Maryampol to the northwest

could not be granted, as the forces here were too weak for an offensive use and the

tense situation on the rest of the army front did not allow their reinforcement.

General von Pflanzer only agreed to deception measures.

The Marschall Group (5th Cavalry Division and Austro-Hungarian Corps Hofmann)

had to bind the strong enemy forces standing in the bridgehead of Jezupol—Halicz

from the 22nd onwards through demonstrative advances. The Corps Gerok (Austro-Hungarian Brigade Bolzano and Austro-Hungarian 19th Infantry Division), Kusch (General Command of the X Reserve Corps with 101st and

105th Infantry Division) and Bothmer (3rd Guard Infantry Division and

1st Infantry Division) were to throw their infantry between Ostrow and Holeszow

over the river in the darkness and crush the enemy's resistance at dawn with overwhelming artillery fire

in the bud. The left wing, also under General Count von Bothmer

(48th Reserve Division, Hungarian 38th Infantry Division and Austro-Hungarian 1st Cavalry Division) was assigned to secure the flank of the crossing troops,

especially against Zydaczow, following the Szumay Group of the Austro-Hungarian 2nd Army.

However, things did not go as planned. It took

days of bitter fighting to reach the next desired goal.

The infantry of the three corps crossing during the night of June 22nd to 23rd

encountered extremely strong resistance everywhere and

managed to gain a foothold on the northern bank only at a few points.

Even during the day, it was not possible to significantly expand the breach points.

On the other hand, the enemy, apparently under the impression of the

unfavorable battles around Lemberg, evacuated the bridgeheads

of Zydaczow—Wolczimow and the left Dniester bank during the night and withdrew

to the east. In the pursuit immediately taken up, the

48th Reserve Division advanced to west of Chodorow, the Hungarian 38th Infantry Division further north to Ostrow. The Austro-Hungarian 1st Cavalry Division maintained the connection to the right wing of the 2nd Army, which reached the

line Wyglyanowka—Lopuszna. The Szurmay Group, which was left out of the front,

was gathered around Mikolajow the next day

and moved north on the 25th.

1) p. 239.

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The Southern Army Crosses the Dniester.

Even during the night of June 24, the corps of Gerok, Kosch, and Bothmer were unable to bring stronger forces to the northern bank, as the enemy sought to prevent the construction of bridges and footbridges through continuous artillery fire. At daybreak, massive Russian counterattacks began, which the few crossed battalions of the allies could only fend off with great difficulty and at the cost of heavy losses. Under these circumstances, the 3rd Guard Infantry Division refrained from further crossing attempts at Holeszow, where only a few companies had been able to establish themselves on the northern bank, and crossed with the main force behind the 48th Reserve Division east of Bzaczow, to force the stubborn defenders to retreat by flanking through Bortniki. The enemy opposed the advance of the left wing of the army and the neighboring b.-u. V. Corps to the east at the lake and stream section between Bortniki and Bobrka.

Although the fords became unusable due to the rising Dniester and the bridge sites were still under heavy enemy fire, it was finally possible the following night to bring the bulk of the infantry of the Kosch Corps and the 1st Infantry Division to the opposite bank. During the course of June 25, the enemy was driven from the heights west of Butaczow and northeast of Zurawno. Holeszow fell into the hands of the Guard. However, their main force could not take Bortniki. Larger successes were also denied to the northern parts of the Bothmer Corps.

The next day, the Kosch Corps had pushed the enemy behind the Swirz section. The three German divisions of General Count von Bothmer advanced fighting to the line Stryehorow—Chodorow. For further attacks against and over the Gnila Lipa, General von Linsingen made the 48th Reserve Division, which had become dispensable on the northern flank, available again to the Gerok Corps, whose crossed parts were still heavily pressed by the enemy.

On the night of the 27th, the Russians evacuated the bridgehead of Jezupol—Halicz; during the day, they also retreated behind the Swirz section in front of the Bothmer Corps and the right wing of the 2nd Army, which was reached everywhere by the allies and crossed by the Kosch Corps north of Butaczow under heavy fighting. Opposite Halicz, according to aerial reports and other information, the Dniester bank was only weakly occupied, and the former garrison of the bridgehead had marched behind the Sota Lipa. General von Linsingen therefore ordered the Marschall Group, to which he again subordinated the Bolzano Brigade, to cross the Dniester immediately with strong forces.

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and to roll up the Gnila Lipa position from the south. Otherwise, the offensive was to continue in a northeasterly direction, with the left wing towards Narajow.

Already in the morning hours of June 28, the army, following the enemy who had withdrawn during the night, reached the entire front of the Gnila Lipa. On its eastern bank, General von Linsingen encountered only weak rearguards, believing the main enemy forces to be in continuous retreat to the east. Therefore, he urged his corps to cross the river during the day and defeat the enemy before they could establish themselves in selected positions. However, these proved to be so strong and stubbornly defended that the crossing succeeded nowhere. Only in Rohatyn did parts of the 1st Infantry Division penetrate. In the Marschall group, the Dniester crossing succeeded only at Halicz, but not further downstream; the 5th Cavalry Division was stuck opposite Marampol.

The army command intended to focus the attack henceforth on the right wing, which was to be reinforced by the Austro-Hungarian 1st Cavalry Division and the Kosch Corps. The former was to reach the area of Butaczowce by the evening of the 29th, the latter on the road via Bursztyn Halicz. However, since the strong enemy resistance was not yet broken on this day and the eastern bank of the Gnila Lipa could only be taken in places, the planned shift of the Kosch Corps could not yet be realized. At the Gerok Corps, the newly arrived 48th Reserve Division engaged to the right of the Austro-Hungarian 19th Infantry Division. It filled the gap that had previously existed with the Bolzano Brigade. On June 30, the Kosch and Bothmer Corps were able to capture the eastern river heights in bitter fighting and hold against powerful enemy counterattacks, but a decisive success was not yet achieved on this day either.

Thus, the Southern Army had not yet succeeded in exerting operational influence on the course of events with the neighboring armies of Generaloberst von Mackensen on the left. However, by persistently continuing its attack, it had completely paralyzed the enemy's freedom of movement and inflicted heavy losses on them. Nearly 60,000 prisoners, 24 guns, and over 100 machine guns remained in their hands in the months of May and June. Their own bloody losses in June alone amounted to about 25,000 men, and the number of missing was about 11,000.

1) The losses of the Southern Army in May could not be determined.

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The Battles of the Southern Army at the Gnila Lipa.

The Austro-Hungarian 7th Army had to fend off strong Russian breakthrough attempts at Dobronowz and Dunth in the last third of June and expected new attacks against the Krautwald group at Zaleszczyki.

14. The Pursuit after the Capture of Lemberg until the End of June.

Maps 5 and 6, Sketches 16, 24, 25.

Based on the instructions given after the fall of Lemberg¹), the Austro-Hungarian 2nd Army was to continue the pursuit of the enemy eastward with its left wing towards Busk, while the 11th and Austro-Hungarian 4th Army, under the command of Field Marshal²) von Mackensen, were to advance northward between the Bug and Vistula. This would inevitably create an ever-widening gap between the 2nd and 11th Army during the movements. The allied army commands assumed that the separation of the enemy forces into an eastern and northern group, aimed for by the previous operation, had been successful. According to the reports available on June 23, the Russian 3rd Army was positioned with its left wing north of Rawa Ruska, facing south. The Russian 8th Army joined there, encircling Lemberg in a wide arc to the east. Although strong breakthroughs in the enemy's disrupted connections were noted, it was already apparent that the operational goal of this separation had not yet been fully achieved. The high commands of the 2nd and 11th Army were rightly concerned about their inner flanks. Their views differed on how these should be covered. The Austro-Hungarian army command decided, at the request of the 11th Army, that the coverage along the Bug down to Kaminotka Strumilowa was initially the task of the 2nd Army. From there, the 11th Army itself had to ensure the protection of its right flank through the Beskiden Corps assigned to it, after its detachment from the 2nd Army.

In the advance area between the Bug and Vistula, an expanded defensive position between Hrubieszow and Józefow was identified through aerial reconnaissance. A position extended along the northern bank of the Rata over Narol Miasto and north of the Tanew swamp area. While the armies of Field Marshal von Mackensen took their front northward, the necessary regroupings had to be made under simultaneous consideration of the obligations imposed on the 11th Army.

¹) p. 247. — ²) Promoted to this rank on June 22.

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simultaneously considering the tasks imposed on the 11th Army. The center and left wing of the 11th Army as well as the Austro-Hungarian 4th Army were not disturbed by the enemy. Rather, the Russians completely abandoned the San-Vistula angle in front of the left wing of the 4th Army on June 23. On the left bank of the Vistula, the allied troops could follow the enemy retreating beyond Sandomierz. The Austro-Hungarian 1st Army advanced there up to the Russian position in the Zawichost line (on the Vistula)—Darow, with the right wing and center of the Woyrsch Army Detachment reaching the northeastern edge of the large forest area southwest of the Baltow—Sienno—Ilza line. The rest of the front up to the Pilica remained unchanged.

Difficulties in regrouping the forces arose on the right wing of the 11th Army northeast of Lemberg. Here, on the heights around Zoltance, the XXXXI Reserve Corps and the northern wing of the Beskiden Corps were still embroiled in heavy fighting, which significantly delayed the extraction of the last parts of the XXXXI Reserve Corps and the relief of the Beskiden Corps south of the Zoltance—Kamionka road. The Austro-Hungarian 2nd Army, whose southern wing advanced to the Dawidowka on June 23, decided to expedite the relief of the Beskiden Corps by deploying the Kresja Group1) east of Lemberg and, to enable the army's extension northward, also to provide the Surmay Group2) from the right to the left army wing. However, these measures could only gradually become effective. On the other hand, the pursuit operation between the Bug and Vistula could not be halted due to the binding of the right wing of the 11th Army. Consequently, the center and left wing of the 11th Army advanced over the upper Rata to the recognized Russian position on June 25. The enemy evaded the planned attack for June 26 and retreated under disjointed rearguard actions. The 11th Army pushed through the forests south of Uhnow with its center and could also advance its left wing, effectively supported on the flank by the Austro-Hungarian 4th Army, up to the heights southeast of Narol Miasto. Its right wing initially remained tied down at Zoltance. Only on June 27 could the Beskiden Corps, in conjunction with the Kresja Group now deployed on the northern wing of the Austro-Hungarian 2nd Army, join the advance. On this day, the Austro-Hungarian 2nd Army captured the ridge west of the Gnila Lipa and reached Zadoworze with its left wing and the area south of Kamionka. Here, the Beskiden Corps joined with security measures against Kamionka.

1) 13th and 31st Infantry Divisions of the Austro-Hungarian IV Corps. — 2) See p. 154.

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The breakthrough through the Russian army front has succeeded.

movements against Kamionka. The 11th Bavarian Infantry Division and the Austro-Hungarian VI Corps advanced as flank protection against Moshty Wielkie and Belz. Only the three army corps of the left wing of the 11th Army — the Guard Corps, XXII Reserve Corps, and X Army Corps — could carry the pursuit further northwards beyond Uhnow-Belzec. The enemy still held the important road junction Narol-Miasto for securing his retreat. His previous movements indicated two directions, an eastern one in front of the right wing of the army and a northern and northeastern one in front of the left wing. The gaps in front of the Guard Corps did not seem to be filled by Russian cavalry. The advance of the three western corps of the 11th Army on June 28 to the Huczwa lowlands west of Zerniki and beyond Tomaszow necessitated a further extension of the forces entrusted with flank protection on the right wing. Therefore, the 119th Infantry Division was inserted into the section of the 11th Bavarian Infantry Division. Both divisions were placed under the command of General v. Kneussl. Near and west of Sielec, the enemy offered stubborn resistance to secure the withdrawal of his forces retreating on Sokal and behind the Bug. On the northern wing of the Austro-Hungarian 2nd Army, the Kreysa group reached the Bug at Kamionka Strumilowa on this day. Otherwise, the army advanced to the Gnila Lipa and into the area west of Sliniany. Behind this section and northward behind the Bug, the enemy apparently stood in a strong position. The reconnaissance results confirmed the impression that the desired separation of the enemy had now been achieved. The Russians withdrew in two groups both east behind the Bug and north to Zamosc. The 3rd Army entered the operational area of the Russian Northwestern Front. Thus, the offensive that began on May 2 in West Galicia and continued persistently for almost two months found its culmination in the breakthrough through the enemy army front. Field Marshal von Mackensen sought to exploit this now clearly recognized situation for the continuation of the pursuit and as a possible advantage. He decided to make the Russian position on the Tanew section untenable by advancing his left army wing northwest towards Zamosc and to assist the neighboring Austro-Hungarian 4th Army thereby regaining full freedom of movement.

1) Only the XII Corps had mostly turned east towards Sokal. In front of the German 11th Army were the rest of the XII, the XXIII, and the II Austro-Hungarian Corps and the 2nd Cavalry Corps, in front of the Austro-Hungarian 4th Army the XXIX, XXIV, X, III Austro-Hungarian Corps.

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thereby regaining full freedom of movement. The emphasis of the operation between Bug and Vistula was now on both sides of the Tomaszów—Zamość road, where 4½ divisions of the 11th Army (XXII Reserve and X Army Corps including the 22nd Infantry Division) were deployed in a narrow space, with the 107th Infantry Division positioned as army reserve behind them. Accordingly, the 11th Army also intended to continue its advance northwest on June 29. Meanwhile, it was known that its right wing, from which seven infantry divisions and a cavalry division were already used for securing the Bug or against it, would have to be led even more to the northeast and allocate further forces for the task of flank protection. This threatened to stall the entire pursuit operation of Field Marshal von Mackensen. It was therefore high time that decisive measures were taken to relieve the 11th Army of the concern for its right flank.

In the instructions issued by the Austro-Hungarian command on the evening of June 22, the 11th and Austro-Hungarian 4th Army were tasked with pursuing the enemy retreating north. A far-reaching operation was apparently not yet considered. Again, as in mid-month, it was the Chief of Staff of Field Marshal von Mackensen, Major General von Seeckt, who now suggested expanding the pursuit task into a new decisive offensive. On June 24, he presented the allied army commands with a detailed assessment of the situation, in which he initially described the "actual war aim on the eastern front as the imminent complete subjugation of Russia." He then continued:

"The southern Russian front is defeated. The northwestern half is undefeated. It can only be defeated if it is forced to abandon its strong front and is enveloped from the south while retreating. How sensitive this pressure is to the enemy is evidenced by the fact that even in the occupied front position of the 4th and the left half of the 11th Army to the north, the enemy began to abandon its position in the Vistula-San triangle also against the 1st Army and Bavarian. This invites even more to carry out the thrust on the right Vistula bank east of Ivangorod with strong force. It will throw the entire Russian northwest front.

1) Promoted to this rank in Lemberg.

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Gen. von Seeckt Proposes Decisive Offensive between Bug and Vistula.

In themselves, the forces of the 4th and 11th Armies, if not further weakened, will suffice. They would still grow if parts of the 1st Army were freed for use on the right bank of the Vistula. The prerequisite for the strength of the thrust is that it can be carried out without diverting forces to cover its right flank. One must consider the likely countermeasures of the enemy, who will hardly be ready to retreat behind the Bug. He will withdraw parts from the front or the right wing and immediately oppose them in a position between the Vistula and Bug, roughly along the Swangord—Wlodawa line. He will also throw available weak forces against the right flank of the advance, utilizing the rail connections via Brest Litowsk and Kovel. This development must be secured against. The Army High Command¹) has already recognized this necessity at the outset by directing the left wing of the 2nd Army to Kaminoka Strumilowa. I believe it is necessary to already consider redirecting the 2nd Army in this direction. The Besziden Corps is not sufficient for this if the advance of the right wing of the 11th Army extends over Belz to Hrubieszow and Cholm. Otherwise, it must be kept further back and not lose the strength of the front through lateral expansion. It is therefore requested to consider whether the 2nd Army should not join the advance in a northerly direction in echelons from the left wing in the general direction of Vladimir Volynsk. If the presumed influence from the east remains, this advance direction already results in bypassing an enemy position leaning on the Bug at Wlodawa and later covering against Brest Litowsk. For the final evacuation of Galicia and the continuation of operations against the Russian 8th and 9th Armies, the forces of the 7th and the now reinforced Southern Army should suffice, perhaps with the addition of the V Army Corps and Group Szurmay, while the 2nd Army with IV, XIX, and XVIII Army Corps turns north against the Radziechow—Krystynopol line. The boundary between the two main groups would roughly form the Lemberg—Brody railway.”

“While Generaloberst von Conrad²), from June 23 to 26, was on a business trip in the Lemberg area and initially refrained from commenting on this plan, General von Falkenhayn immediately declared his agreement. However, he added that it could not yet be said whether the planned operation would take place, because the situation east of Lemberg was still not clear and the conditions for committing all German troops to the right of the Vistula were not yet foreseeable.  
¹) See Army Command.  
²) Promoted to this rank after the capture of Lemberg.

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Gen.-Colonel von Conrad Suggests Cooperation of the Front of the High Command. East.

to bring west of the Vistula by rail via Lemberg, "in order to — along with secure coverage in East Galicia against the east — still advance forces over Sokal—Radzichow and be ready to intervene northwards or to cooperate with the eastern front as needed." Since this regrouping would only be possible in a few days, he requested that the XXXXXI Reserve Corps, if at all feasible, not be withdrawn from the western theater of war, but instead be tasked with securing the right flank of the 11th Army. Furthermore, Generaloberst von Conrad, disregarding the admonition of General von Seeckt, adopted a new operational idea by suggesting the cooperation of the front of the High Command East, "to strike the main Russian force and push the enemy back behind the Vistula." For this purpose, he recommended an attack from the area of the army group Gallwitz, which was to be reinforced by contributions from other front sections, in the general direction of Siedlce. He envisioned, as he wrote, that operation "which was initiated by us at the beginning of the campaign, but at that time could not penetrate due to the Russian superiority and the absence of the German thrust on Siedlce." General von Falkenhayn's view initially differed in some points from these proposals of the 8th and General Staff Chief. His position is evident from the draft of an operations order, which he sent to Teschen on the morning of June 28 with the addition that it would be advisable to issue this order to the armies immediately, should Generaloberst von Conrad approve it. General von Falkenhayn was indeed in agreement with retaining the XXXXXI Reserve Corps within the 11th Army." However, since this had already been withdrawn to Jaroslaw at the time, it was initially not considered as flank protection for the 11th Army. For this purpose, the German Chief of Staff rather considered the immediate advance of the k.u. 2nd Army against the Bug line Busk—Sokal necessary. To the right of it, the Southern Army was to continue its advance over the line Brzezany—Krasne (south of Busk) eastwards without pause and secure its right flank against the section of the lower Lota Lipa. To support it, the deployment of the last German division still in southern Hungary, the 103rd Infantry Division, via Delatyn and Stryj to Stanislau was envisaged. Also, the k.u. 7th Army was to advance without any reference with a strong left wing over the Dniester to the line Buczacz—Podhajce, while otherwise holding its positions from Bojan (east of Czernowitz) to north of Horodenka.

1) G. 248. 17\*

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Advance to the line Buczacz—Podhajce, otherwise hold their positions from Bojan (east of Czernowitz) to north of Horodenka. The task of the Austro-Hungarian 1st Army and the Woyrsch Army Detachment, according to General von Falkenhayn, was initially to push the enemy further back and over the Vistula line. Overall, he had thus joined the proposals of General von Seeckt. Regarding the later planned regrouping of the Austro-Hungarian 1st Army and the operational cooperation of parts of the Eastern Command, he refrained from making a statement.

The existing differences of opinion were resolved through verbal discussions between the two chiefs of staff on the afternoon of June 28 in Plesz. General von Falkenhayn complied with all the wishes of Generaloberst von Conrad. The Austro-Hungarian 2nd Army was initially to advance only to the upper Zlota Lipa (including Dunajow) and to Buß—Kamionka Strumilowa (including) with strong reserves on the northern flank to secure the Bug line up to the confluence of the Rata. Thus, it was considered of lesser importance as flank protection for the 11th Army. Instead, Generaloberst von Conrad maintained his intention to continue advancing the Austro-Hungarian 1st Army, that is, after breaking through the Russian position south of Kamien towards Tarlow, to lead it via Lemberg and then advance it over Radziechow—Sokal, ready to intervene to the left or right as needed. The advance of the Southern Army over the Gnila Lipa was initially to proceed only to Zlota Lipa down to Dunajow. Generaloberst von Conrad requested to refrain from bringing the 103rd Infantry Division from southern Hungary, as he still considered it indispensable on the Serbian front. The 7th Army was to continue securing the right flank and the temporary possession of Czernowitz. Overall, this meant that the eastward-facing covering front was only a spatially limited and temporary situation. The Woyrsch Army Detachment remaining on the left Vistula bank was to take over the entire front there up to the Pilica, exploiting any deviation of Russian forces for attack and following them to the Vistula.

On the evening of June 28, orders were issued to all armies in this sense. In an accompanying letter to General von Seeckt, the head of the Austro-Hungarian Operations Office, Major General Metzger, justified the measures envisaged for the immediate flank protection of the 11th Army: "... The reinforcement of the covering front against the three armies of the Russian Southwestern Front is intended to serve the purpose of forming an army remaining at the disposal of the Austro-Hungarian High Command, designated for operations east of the Bug, as the protection of the eastern flank of the 11th Army is only possible offensively in the long term."

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General von Falkenhayn Agrees to the Envelopment Offensive.

to form an army designated to advance east of the Bug, as the protection of the eastern flank of the 11th Army is only possible offensively in the long run. A purely defensive flank protection on the Bug, Lipa, Dniester line is reliably not feasible with further advances of the 11th and 4th Army and could not be achieved by merely stretching the 2nd Army, which has very limited numbers, all the more so since it is assumed here that the enemy will bring troops from other front sections via Kowel—Wladimir Wolynsk and via Dubno—Brody, not only to close the connection of his 3rd and 8th Army but also to make the 8th Army capable of attack."

The discussion of the general staff chiefs of the allies in Pleß on the afternoon of June 28 further created unanimity in the view that the participation of parts of the commander-in-chief East would decisively contribute to achieving a major operational success against the main Russian forces in Poland. In choosing the starting point and direction of an offensive from the German Eastern Front, for which various possibilities were considered, General von Falkenhayn still retained free hand, as he initially wanted to hear the opinion of Field Marshal von Hindenburg. In addition to the attack against the lower Narew recommended by Colonel General von Conrad, he also considered an advance along the Pilica up to beyond the Vistula as well as a simultaneous undertaking at or after Lublin. In this sense, he sent an inquiry to the commander-in-chief East on June 28 and requested his opinion.

15. The Russian Southwestern Front in June.

Maps 5 and 6, Sketches 16 and 17.

The short pause in fighting after the fall of Przemysl had been used by General Iwanow to form new reserves, which were to gather at Lubaczow, Lemberg, and Rohatyn. However, as early as June 12 and 13, new attacks began against the front of the 3rd and 8th Army. Despite heavy losses, which at the XXIV Corps alone amounted to about 70 percent of combat strength on June 12 and 13, the armies offered the most stubborn resistance. But when the 3rd Army was pushed back in fierce fighting on June 14 to the line east of Lesajsk—Lubaczow, General Brussilow took his 8th Army back into the long-prepared Grodek position in line southwest of Werchrata—Magierow—Grodek—south of Lubien on the night of June 16.

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The Summer Campaign of the Allies in Galicia.

his 8th Army into the long-prepared Grodek position in line

southwest of Werchrata—Magierow—Grodek—south of Lubien

back.

In view of the threatening accumulation of enemy forces north and

east of Jaroslau, the commander-in-chief of the Southwestern Front had already

on June 15 at the breaking point of the 3rd and 8th Army around Lubaczow

formed a special group from units partly designated as army reserves

under General Olochw (XXIX, II, and V Caucasian,

XXIII Corps, 4th Cavalry Corps). It remained subordinate to the 3rd Army

and was to maintain the right wing of the 8th Army as well as the connection

to it. The other corps of the 3rd Army

(XV, IX, XIV, X, III Caucasian, XXIV) as well as the

8th Army were tasked with holding their positions to the utmost.

The 11th Army had to hold the Dniester section from Zaleszczyki to Sniatyn.

Following it was the 9th Army, which from June 5 gradually

moved back into the line Halicz—Sniatyn according to the movements of the 11th Army,

to cover the river defense up to Chotin, while its left wing in the area of Czernowitz

was to become offensive again.

Already on June 16, the Olochw group was attacked and

like the left wing of the 3rd Army forced to retreat to prepared positions on the northern

bank of the Tanew on the night of June 17. A few days later, on the night of June 20,

the 8th Army also had to evacuate the Grodek position under the pressure of the German 11th Army and the left

wing of the Austro-Hungarian 2nd Army and retreat to the positions of Lemberg.

The gap between the two Russian armies was only covered by cavalry. By order of Grand

Duke Nicholas Nikolaevich, the right wing of the 3rd Army also

retreated behind the San without a fight by June 23 and joined the 4th Army at Zawichost.

Meanwhile, the fate of Lemberg had been decided. Already

on June 20, the commander-in-chief had ordered the evacuation of the city and

also the withdrawal from Galicia. When on the night of June 22

the XXVIII and VIII Corps were thrown out of their positions at Koltiew,

General Brussilow began the retreat on the morning of June 22 to the

line north of Rawa Ruska—north of Zolkiew—

Bobrka. On the same day, General Ivanov issued new instructions

for the Southwestern Front: the 3rd Army and Olochw Group were to closely

coordinate with the 4th to cover the Austro-Hungarian Southern Front Lubin—Wladimir

Wolynsk, while the 8th and 11th Armies, retreating eastward, were to delay the enemy as much as possible and bring him to a halt in the line Belz—Buzü—Zlota Lipa.

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The Russian Southwestern Front.

to prepare as much as possible to stay and to finally bring it to a halt in the line Belz—

Buzü—Zlota Lipa. The 9th Army was to

adapt its right wing to the movements of the 11th Army

and, by offensively exploiting its partial successes achieved in recent days between the Dniester

and Pruth, unfold the retreat operation of the Southwestern

front. The 3rd Army and the Dlochow Group moved to the Northwest Front on the night

of June 25th.

The following days led to further withdrawal of the fronts.

By the end of June, the 8th Army (XII., XXVIII., VIII., XVII.,

VII Corps) reached the line Sokal—

Kamionka—Gliniany under continuous enemy pressure; to the south, the 1st Army (V., XVIII., IX., XI Corps) joined in the line Gliniany—Rohatyn—

Bursztyn, which, after a successful counterattack on June 14th and 15th, initially held its front

but then had to retreat to the line Stryj—Lipa on June 26th. The 9th Army (X., XXX., XXXIII Corps,

2nd and 3rd Cavalry Corps, XXXII Corps) had refrained from offensive action due to significant reinforcement of the Austro-Hungarian 7th Army and held the

Dniester line Bolszowce—Uście Biskupie and from there the national border

to Bojan.

After withdrawing from the Southwestern Front, the Dlochow Group, heavily pressed, had to retreat to the line Grabowice—Krylow by June 29th. The gap to the left wing of the 3rd Army, which

moved to the area of Zamosć, was covered only by a reinforced cavalry

division. On June 29th, the Guard Corps XXXI Corps, previously with the 4th Army west

of the Bug, was made available to the Dlochow Group.

In agreement with the 4th Army, which had to withdraw its left wing to

Jozefow, the 3rd Army (including the Dlochow Group) was instructed to hold the line Urzendow—Krasniów—Grabowice—

Krylow—area north of Sokal. At the disposal of the commander-in-chief of the Northwest Front, the II Siberian

Corps from the 1st Army and the 13th Cavalry Division from the 4th Army were withdrawn to the area of

Cholm.

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C. The Attack of the Commander-in-Chief East against the Russian Narew Front.

I. The decisive meeting on July 2 in Posen.

The more the attack in Galicia grew into a major decisive battle, the more the Commander-in-Chief East felt the need to participate, as far as his own forces allowed. However, these were by no means sufficient for larger offensive operations unless the supreme army command at least provided the necessary ammunition; they also shrank more and more due to contributions to the Galician front and by withdrawing units for new divisions. The diversionary campaign to Lithuania and Courland and the gas attacks of the 9th Army were the utmost that could be achieved under such conditions. After carrying out the last, still pending contributions, the Commander-in-Chief East could only count on about 34 divisions along his approximately 850-kilometer-long front, which mostly counted only nine battalions, while about 50 Russian divisions with 16 battalions faced them.

After Italy entered the war, General von Falkenhayn on May 28 requested the position of the Commander-in-Chief East on the continuation of the overall operations against Russia, in the belief that the Russians would soon focus their efforts solely on regaining Libau on the one hand, and not losing Warsaw as well as Eastern Galicia with Przemysl and Lemberg again on the other. The fronts lying "between these focal points" would be ruthlessly stripped of forces by the enemy and were already in the process of doing so. Therefore, one had to expect heavy fighting at the mentioned locations. However, the Chief of the General Staff hoped that Libau could be held for a longer time. Against Warsaw, he thought of advancing further with the help of the then impending gas attack. He wanted to bring relief to the situation in Galicia by attacking elsewhere indirectly. To this end, he explained that the Narew Front played no role in this connection; any offensive there could easily be brought to an independent halt by weaker forces.

1) G. 18, 117, 121 f. — 2) C. 10. — 3) G. 133 ff. — 4) C. 200.

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The Effort to Support Overall Operations.

Therefore, as General Ludendorff had already expressed¹), only the attack south of the Pilica is in question. He asked for a position on this plan and inquired whether it was possible to free up four divisions from the Narew front for this purpose. The Commander-in-Chief East fully agreed with the operational implementations but had reservations about the release of further forces than already agreed upon, as the front would already be so thin that it could only be held with strongly fortified forward lines and rear positions.

On June 1, General von Falkenhayn requested not to reduce the 9th Army's strength in the near future, as "in case of urgent need," all dispensable forces with it must be relied upon to use them "in the south." The war diary of the Eastern Command also noted that a total of nine Russian divisions²) had now been transferred from their own front to the Galician front. The focus of the fighting had thus shifted to the southeast. The Commander-in-Chief now saw his task as holding on with as few forces as possible and supporting the decision by releasing troops. Giving up the Schawlen area and Libau was not yet necessary³).

On June 2, General von Falkenhayn reported that the attack south of the Pilica was no longer in question, as the enemy's resistance in Galicia was waning. However, he suggested the next day to support the local fighting by repeating the gas release at the 9th Army and perhaps also by operations "north of the Vistula," which he considered promising, as the Russians were generally suffering from a lack of ammunition. The Commander-in-Chief East assessed the prospects based on previous experiences as not so favorable and therefore replied on June 4: "The armies under my command attack as much as possible. However, since I have to continuously release forces due to the overall situation, I currently have no sufficient reserves for an effective attack except with the 9th Army and north of the Njemen." General von Falkenhayn, who did not consider these explanations convincing, refrained from a rebuttal. Soon after, the situation north of the Njemen seemed to develop so favorably that the Commander-in-Chief East still had the possibility in view to achieve a great success there.

1) Discussion from May 23, 1915 (p. 122). 2) III. Corps (21st and 52nd Div.), 3rd Guard, 8th, 51st, 62nd, 63rd, 77th, and 13th Russian Div. The Baltic deployment included eleven to twelve divisions as of June 1. In fact, there were ten (after the withdrawal of two returned); they were often informed. — 3) p. 124 ff. — 4) p. 135.

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The Attack of the Commander-in-Chief East against the Russian Narew Front.

... (promised a great success there). Thus, General von Falkenhayn agreed on June 11 that the two divisions gained for the decisive offensive north of the Njemen, unless unforeseen events occur, would be withdrawn from the units to be brought up to the 9th Army.

Since then, the Commander-in-Chief East has been primarily concerned with the idea of the operation against the current and future operations north of the Njemen, where he had in mind as a further goal a "Bormark north past Kowno." When he reported to the Supreme Army Command on June 20 that he had to postpone the overall attack of the 9th Army and therefore wanted to deploy two divisions from the 9th Army and the Gallwitz Army Group north of the Njemen instead of the 9th Army, General von Falkenhayn had "no objections given the current situation." The Commander-in-Chief East believed he was in full agreement with him and had to be further strengthened in this belief when he learned on June 25 that Field Marshal von Mackensen was now to "attack" the retreating enemy between the Bug and the Vistula to the north, "where he found him," and that General von Falkenhayn had even spoken to the Navy about the possibility of later actions against Riga, where he wanted to enlist the support of the Baltic Fleet. This went beyond the plans previously held by the Commander-in-Chief East, who had considered Mitau as the target for the left wing.

In this situation, the Commander-in-Chief East received the inquiry prompted by the proposal of Colonel General von Conrad from General von Falkenhayn on June 28. It stated: The pressure exerted from East Galicia must soon be felt on the left bank of the Vistula. The Woyrsch Army Division was to advance against the Vistula above the Pilica estuary. "His Majesty assumes that the troops under Your Excellency's command can also participate in the operation in extension of the directive from April 16." In addition to the already approved operation against Kowno, "as a special measure, vigorous support for the ruthless exposure of the front currently held by the 9th Army and an advance with the following forces, whether along the Pilica to beyond the Vistula or against a point on the lower Narew line, could be considered. The enemy would derive no significant benefit from the weakening of the Bzura and Rawka positions.

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The Attack of the Eastern Commander-in-Chief against the Russian Narew Front.

since he would have to overcome three prepared positions, the last of which runs from the Vistula north of the Pilica estuary via Piaseczno—Nadarzyn—Blonie. Therefore, the withdrawal of further forces of the 9th Army has been ordered from July 2. I have also refrained from reinforcing and launching an offensive of the Gallwitz Army Group. Whether the thrust will occur in the area of Ostrowiec, Kowno, or even further north depends on the surveys already ordered. I will report my final decision as soon as possible. I request information on how many Landsturm regiments I can count on and when they will arrive."

Instead of the attack at Kowno and north of the Njemen, as General Ludendorff later wrote, an attack via Ostrowiec—Grodno, or perhaps even one via Lomza, could also be considered, as it had already been planned following the winter battle. Such an offensive could have a decisive effect, leading "on the shortest spatial route into the rear of the Russian army retreating from East Galicia between the Vistula and Bug." Precisely for this reason, however, "serious resistance in the tactically already very strong and presumably also heavily occupied line Ostrowiec—Grodno" was to be expected, and it was therefore very questionable whether the attack across the broad swampy lowlands of the Bobr could be successful. Before the Eastern Commander-in-Chief made a final decision, he consulted the chiefs of staff of the armies in question (Gallwitz Army Group, 8th, 10th, and Njemen Army) on June 30 in Lößen to hear about the attack possibilities in their sectors. Colonel Count von Schwerin explained for the 8th Army that the attack at Ostrowiec was not possible due to the terrain conditions; he recommended the offensive on Lomza and westward. However, this interim solution was not further discussed; rather, Lieutenant General Ludendorff decided in favor of the offensive in the Njemen area and the simultaneous execution of the surprise attack planned against Kowno.

1) Memories, p. 114. — 2) Communication from Major General a. D. Count von Schwerin from summer 1931 to the Reichsarchiv.   
3) According to a communication from General Ludendorff from December 1931 to the Reichsarchiv, the Bobr area is known to be partly deep sandy, partly swampy, and extremely pathless forest area, unsuitable for the deployment of larger troop masses based on the experiences of the spring battles. General von Gallwitz held the same view (p. 278 f.), while General Count Schwerin, in a letter from summer 1931 to the Reichsarchiv, assessed the conditions favorably and believed that a major offensive against the Nowogrodek—Lomza front was also feasible.

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Memorandum of General Ludendorff.

The attack. The 10th and Njemen Army were to be reinforced not only by the 41st already in the Njemen area and the 3rd Infantry Division designated there, but also by a Guard Division (newly formed 4th Guard Infantry or 1st Guard Reserve Division) and by the XVII Army Corps.

After the meeting, a telegram from General von Falkenhayn arrived, stating: The operation against Kowno would be carried out as soon as possible and, if successful, would undoubtedly be of great importance for the overall situation. However, to what extent an operation north of Ostrowe would comply with the purpose outlined in his telegram of June 28, he could not yet discern. He anticipated a visit from the Kaiser to the 9th Army in the coming days; during this, the differences of opinion in Posen should be clarified in a personal discussion. Meanwhile, the Austro-Hungarian liaison officer with the Commander-in-Chief East, Major von Fleischmann, on behalf of Generaloberst von Conrad, also urged the thrust over the lower Narew into the rear of Warsaw towards Siedlce.

On July 1, Lieutenant General Ludendorff set forth his views in the following memorandum:

"The Eastern Army has the order from April 16: — "Deception and binding of the enemy north of the Pilica" — primarily fulfilled through the offensive north of the Njemen. The Russians have moved nine infantry and nine cavalry divisions there. The 10th Army has held the enemy in front of it with its advance; however, the offensive operations of the Gallwitz Army Group and the 9th Army have not prevented the enemy from transporting forces away. — The mutual distribution of forces is evident from the annex1).

The Eastern Army is everywhere facing equal or numerically superior, strongly entrenched forces that must be broken through; only the northern wing has operational freedom. The Eastern Army must also continue to contribute to the decision initiated by the operations in Galicia. It can free up for deployment elsewhere:

3rd Reserve Division from July 3;

XVII Army Corps with 36th Infantry Division from July 3, with

35th Infantry Division from July 8;

1st Guard Reserve Division (its replacement is to be carried out by Landsturm regiments, freeing up not possible before July 10).

1) See p. 270.

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The Attack of the Supreme Commander East against the Russian Narew Front.

Appendix:

Mutual Force Distribution on July 1, 1915.

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│ German¹) │

│ Russian │

│Inf.Div. Rad.Div. Inf.Div. Rad.Div. Remarks │

├───────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┤

│9th Army............. 10\*) 1 10¹/₄ 0 │

│Army Group Gallwitz 9¹/₂\*\*) 0 8¹/₄\*\*\*) 0 │

│8th Army............. 5¹/₂ 0 7¹/₂ 0 │

│10th Army............ 7 2 10¹/₂ 3 │

│Njemen Army.......... │

│ 7¹/₂ 3 8¹/₂ 3 │

│ 39¹/₂ 8¹/₂ 45¹/₂ 13 │

└───────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘

Remark: The German infantry divisions mostly consist of three regiments of three battalions, the Russian ones of four regiments of four battalions; the number of squadrons of the German and Russian cavalry divisions is the same.

1. A deployment of three divisions²) within the framework of the Woyrsch Army for a river crossing south of Iwangorod leads to an immediate, but probably only frontal support of the assault group. An offensive activity of the Eastern Army thus ceases.

2. A reinforcement of the 9th Army (two divisions³) would not be effective enough to influence the overall situation. The Russians have prepared numerous positions here that would need to be breached.

3. The Army Group Gallwitz, reinforced by the XVII Army Corps, could push the Russians back to the Plonsk—Pultusk line in heavy fighting. This should be followed by the attack on Nowogeorgiewsk. The operations are promising if the heaviest artillery can be made available for the attack on Nowogeorgiewsk. The operation is part of the overall treatment but does not support it in the most effective direction.

4. This is essentially located at Osowiec. After thorough examination of the conditions, it is to be noted that an infantry attack over the Bobr south of Osowiec and on Gonionds⁴) is possible; however, it would have to succeed in a single thrust, otherwise, the infantry would find itself in a difficult position in the swampy terrain.

¹) Since April (see p. 104), the 22nd I.D. had been transferred; new formations included 4th G.I.S.D., Div. Bredmann, and Abt. Libau. Among the infantry divisions were six each with the 9th Army, the Njemen Army, and Army Group Gallwitz, five with the 8th Army, and two active or reserve divisions with the 10th Army. — All other units were only considered for participation in decisive offensive operations in a further line due to their composition.  
²) For the use of the fourth division, see p. 272.  
³) Only two divisions, as the XVII A.K. already belonged to the 9th Army.  
⁴) Location immediately south of Osowiec.

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Memorandum of General Ludendorff.

in a single thrust, otherwise the infantry will find itself in a difficult position in the swampy terrain. Digging in is not possible due to the high groundwater. Effective artillery support for the infantry attack is out of the question. The security of the operation is not guaranteed. If it fails, it will lead to a severe setback. In the event of success, the troops can at best hold a more or less advanced bridgehead south of Osjowiec after the fall of Osjowiec. A continuation of the offensive towards Bialystok is not possible; the forces are insufficient, as it is certain that the Russians will concentrate forces there. Within the framework of the overall operation, this provides relief for other forces, but it does not lead to an immediate tactical cooperation that would crown a truly decisive operation. Without disregarding the advantages, the undertaking is not recommended, as its success is not guaranteed. The risk is too high compared to the potential success.

5. A reinforcement of the 10th Army and an offensive just south of Kowno and across the Njemen is only indicated if a planned operation against Kowno is successful. Whether this is the case depends on contingencies beyond military influence. An operation cannot be based on this. It should be emphasized that the planned coup against Kowno would be significantly supported by the addition of the heaviest artillery. This could also lead to the capture of Kowno if the other conditions do not occur.

6. The deployment of the freed forces with the Njemen Army, possibly with a simultaneous attack on Kowno, can achieve full tactical success here; a failure, as possible with the operation at Osjowiec, is excluded here. To what extent the tactical success will lead the Njemen Army eastward, or towards Wilna, remains to be seen. The fact that the Russians have led very significant forces into the area north of the Njemen as soon as they felt a threat here makes it likely that they will again bring reinforcements against the Njemen Army from a northern part of their 2nd Army. This will relieve another part of the overall front as well as any potential operation at Osjowiec. If the capture of Kowno also succeeds, a major strategic success will be achieved in the further course.

The deployment of the forces to be freed here can therefore take place:

1. in the area south of Iwangorod or 2. with the Njemen Army.

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The Attack of the Commander-in-Chief East against the Russian Narew Front.

1. The deployment south of Iwangorod means an immediate, but only frontal increase in forces of three divisions for the main decision east of the Vistula. The fourth division would have to remain at the disposal of the Commander-in-Chief East to be prepared for all circumstances, as it is quite possible that the Russians might rally for a strike against the 10th or the Njemen Army through a shift in forces. After the deployment of the three divisions, the Eastern Army would have to remain inactive and could only advance where the Russians voluntarily retreat before it.

2. If the divisions are assigned to the Njemen Army, the 7½ infantry and 5½ cavalry divisions of the Njemen Army will be enabled for the offensive. The actual offensive increase in forces is considerably greater for the allied army than with a deployment of the four divisions at Iwangorod. Even if seemingly far from the main decision, this will be more influenced by the deployment of forces north of the Njemen than by the immediate deployment.

"The reinforcement of the Njemen Army and its offensive with a simultaneous attack on Kowno therefore appears as the most effective activity of the Eastern Army within the framework of the overall operation."

With this memorandum, the Commander-in-Chief East returned to the proposals already made on May 20. He thought, as he did then, initially only of immediate support for the offensive of Field Marshal von Mackensen through a tactical success on his own front, but not of a large own operation that could ultimately lead to a campaign decision against Russia in conjunction with that offensive. In his opinion, the forces were not sufficient for such a goal. Since the prospects for tactical success at the point where the strongest operational impact was expected, at Osowiec, were not favorable, he advocated for the attack at Kowno and northwards, which should "bring relief at another point of the overall front." Only if the capture of the strong fortress Kowno succeeded, did he hope "in further consequence for a great strategic success."

1) p. 122.  
2) Similarly, Ludendorff states in his memoirs, p. 114: "If Kowno, the key to the Russian Njemen defense, had fallen, the way to Wilna and into the rear of the main forces of the Russian army was opened. It had to make a massive leap backward. If the Njemen and 10th Army could receive even slight reinforcements in time and a column from the north could flank through Wilna, it was hoped that the summer campaign of 1915 would end with a decisive breakthrough of the Russian army."

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Notes of General von Falkenhayn.

General von Falkenhayn, who had a discussion with Field Marshal von Mackensen in Rawa Ruska on July 1 and gained the impression that everything was progressing well there, arrived in Posen via Plesz on the morning of July 2. His view was as follows: The situation in the West seemed relaxed after the failure of the French-English attacks, but one had to be prepared for a repetition of similar breakthrough attempts. They could force the shift of the main focus of warfare back to the Western Front. Meanwhile, the strained situation of Turkey increasingly demanded active intervention against Serbia. How long the Austro-Hungarian military leadership on the Italian front would manage with the forces deployed there was uncertain, although all attacks had been repelled so far. Despite the great successes in Galicia and the currently favorable prospects of the Mackensen army group, it seemed necessary to continue the offensive against Russia with spatially and temporally limited objectives, so that the Supreme Army Command remained able to quickly redeploy strong forces to another front if necessary. The possibility of a quick conclusion to the now two-month-long Eastern operation was therefore urgently desirable. The necessary major military success seemed most safely and quickly achievable through the direct cooperation of the Mackensen and Hindenburg army groups in the area between the Bug, Vistula, and Narew.

Based on these considerations, General von Falkenhayn firmly rejected an offensive over Kowno and northward, as the Eastern Commander-in-Chief apparently wanted to propose; he also had doubts whether any effect could be achieved on this path that would benefit the main operation. The experiences made in a similar attempt in the spring (February/March) seemed to argue against it. Even then, the Eastern Commander-in-Chief had harbored very far-reaching hopes, which were not fulfilled. A local tactical victory was not sufficient, "especially not if, as in the present case, it ran the risk of dissipating in an eccentric direction and merely leading to greater dispersion."

1) Diary entry of Colonel General von Pleszen from July 2, 1915.  
2) Evidence for the following view of General von Falkenhayn is not contained in the files. It can only be derived from subsequent notes, especially the later correspondence with the Eastern Commander-in-Chief and the work written by the General after the war (p. 97 ff.). However, it is not very likely that what is summarized there was fully discussed on July 2.  
3) Report of the Eastern Commander-in-Chief to the Kaiser from January 9, 1915, Volume VII, C. 11.

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ran the risk of dispersing in an eccentric direction and merely leading to greater expansion." The Supreme Army Command needed a success that promised quick and decisive effect on the struggle between Bug and Vistula. However, General von Falkenhayn did not expect such success from the operation via Kowno, even if a significantly larger increase in forces could be made possible for this front section than he considered permissible given the overall situation, and even if this would enable the offensive of the left wing to continue in the direction of and beyond Vilna against the enemy's rear connections. "The Russians had long recognized the dangers of operational envelopment ... and learned to apply countermeasures against it. Their use was facilitated by their numerical superiority, their more efficient railway network, and the ruthlessness with which they could and did, from experience, give up territory whenever it seemed expedient to them¹)."

Now Army Group Mackensen had received orders on June 28 to advance against the Russians between Bug and Vistula²); the operational direction of the Supreme Commander East had initially been left open. Meanwhile, General von Falkenhayn had decided, in line with Conrad's plan³), for the offensive from the area of Army Group Gallwitz against and across the lower Narew, with the further goal of a thrust passing east of Warsaw⁴). He had abandoned earlier concerns about this operation across the "swamp section" of the Narew, as the lowlands would "soon be passable everywhere"⁵). The German Chief of General Staff envisioned as the ultimate goal to compress the enemy masses in Poland through simultaneous pressure from the south and northwest and, if possible, to cut off their retreat. A decisive victory over these significant enemy forces was intended to increase and expand the already apparent shock to the Russian army in Galicia to such an extent that it would be incapable of offensive action for a long time; such an effect seemed to him the highest achievable with the available means in the foreseeable future, and "a fully sufficient success for the purposes of the Supreme Army Command."

Accordingly, the Chief of General Staff gave a presentation to the Kaiser at the Royal Castle in Posen and recommended "the cooperation of Hindenburg's forces in favor of the operation on the eastern bank of the Vistula from the area of Przasnysz and not from Kowno."

¹) von Falkenhayn, p. 197. — ²) p. 260. — ³) p. 259. — ⁴) Diary entry of General Tappen from July 2, 1915. — ⁵) p. 200 and 267.

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on the eastern bank of the Vistula from the area of Przasnysz and not from Kowno.”1) The Kaiser shared this view. Given the overall situation and the specific conditions of the Russian theater of war, he was also of the opinion that the attack over the Narew offered far better prospects than at Kowno. After the presentation by General von Falkenhayn, the Kaiser received Field Marshal von Hindenburg and Lieutenant General Ludendorff. The Commander-in-Chief East presented the overall situation in the East and his intentions in accordance with General Ludendorff's memorandum in the presence of General von Falkenhayn. It was the first time since winter that he had the opportunity to present his views on the major operations to the supreme warlord. He proposed the offensive of the reinforced Njemen Army with a simultaneous attack against Kowno; in response to the Kaiser’s objections, he conceded that it was “more a matter of feeling whether to attack at the Narew front or north of the Njemen.”2) He believed he was acting for the benefit of the whole by temporarily abandoning resistance to the intentions of the Chief of the General Staff of the Field Army to avoid further unwanted friction, in order to resume his own plan at a given time.

Then the Kaiser elaborated on his intentions, “with which” — as Colonel General von Plessen wrote at the time — “the decision for the offensive from the area of Przasnysz was made.” In any case, due to proximity, the impact is felt more noticeably and quickly than it can be from Kowno.”

A written order that would have clearly outlined the task of the Commander-in-Chief East was not given, and thus the views on the outcome of the meeting differ in some details.3)

1) Diary entry of Colonel General von Plessen, who attended the presentation, from July 2, 1915.  
2) von Falkenhayn, p. 98. These words first appear in a telegram from General von Falkenhayn to the Commander-in-Chief East dated October 8, 1915. General Ludendorff confirmed the event with a communication from December 1931 to the Reichsarchiv. However, it is unclear whether the words were spoken by the Kaiser or by Field Marshal von Hindenburg (cf. von Hindenburg, p. 127 f.).  
3) Apart from the diary entry of Colonel General von Plessen, the following documents are available to me in excerpts: General Ludendorff, in a memorandum dated July 1, 1915, addressed His Majesty and the Field Marshal. His Majesty decided in accordance with point 2. — In an evening telegram from the Obersten...

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In particular, the Commander-in-Chief East seems to have interpreted the task of the Gallwitz Army Group more narrowly than it corresponded to the intentions of General von Falkenhayn. Accordingly, regarding the exposure of the front west of the Vistula, he arrived at a different conclusion concerning the allocation of forces for the Narew attack than the Supreme Army Command might have wished. These differences of opinion did not come to open expression; rather, General von Falkenhayn essentially accepted what the Commander-in-Chief East considered correct.

The 8th Army was to join the attack of the Gallwitz Army Group. Furthermore, as General von Falkenhayn wrote after the war, "the attention of the Commander-in-Chief was directed to the necessity of temporarily involving all forces otherwise available at his front" in the Narew operation. Until this was carried out, "all operations not directly serving security purposes, even in the north, should be postponed. On the other hand, it would be advisable to make preparations for a rapid shift of troops from the Narew Group to the north for a later attack."

The Army Command stated: "In confirmation of today's discussion, His Majesty expects that the planned operation against a part of the Narew Front will be conducted. The sooner the attack becomes noticeable to the enemy, the more effective it would be in the sense of the whole." — In the war diary of the Commander-in-Chief East, it is merely stated that the "deployment of available forces with the Gallwitz Army Group" should take place.

1) General Ludendorff wrote in 1919 (Memoirs, p. 115) that the Kaiser had ordered the continuation of the offensive in Poland, unprepared that the Gallwitz Army Group "was to break through the enemy in front of it and advance against the Narew, while the 9th Army and General von Woyrsch were to advance against the Vistula." In contrast, General von Falkenhayn mentioned nothing of this in his somewhat later published book (p. 99), that the 9th Army and the Woyrsch Army Detachment were to advance against the Vistula. The Commander-in-Chief East instructed the Gallwitz Army Group to break through the Russian positions on both sides of the Narew with precision and to advance against the Bug to relieve the Mackensen Army Group. The cutting off of enemy forces located at the Vistula and in the north should not have been considered, as it was evident that this not precisely thought-out formulation is at least doubtful whether "cutting off the enemy masses" was even mentioned when the order was given, thus intended, as the goal of the attack. Rather, only the "relief of the Mackensen Army Group" was likely intended.  
2) von Falkenhayn, p. 98.

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against establishing connections with the Russians. It would then probably be expedient to direct the thrust over the middle Njemen in a southeasterly direction, instead of setting it in the vast areas north of the river." It is certain that such indications were in line with the decision made by the Kaiser and his Chief of General Staff. However, according to the introductory words chosen by General von Falkenhayn, if at all on this occasion1), they were more likely presented as wishes or suggestions from the Supreme Army Command in an indefinite form. On the other hand, it is also certain that the Commander-in-Chief East did not interpret the indications as a binding order, but believed himself entitled to act differently in the mentioned matters at his own discretion.

2. Execution of the Attack.

a) Preparations.

Map 6 and Sketches 19, 20, 21.

Since the decision for the Falkenhayn plan had been made, the Commander-in-Chief East faced a task he internally resisted, whose success he did not see as tactically assured, and which, even in the best case, seemed to offer no prospect of decisive operational impact2). Under the first impression of that decision, he sent a message to the 10th Army on July 2, stating that the Supreme Army Command had ordered to refrain from the intended attack on Kowno. However, he could not bring himself to completely abandon the attack prepared north of the Njemen. He wanted to continue it as much as possible alongside the Narew operation, to divert from it on one hand, and on the other hand to prepare for the operation over the middle Njemen also envisaged by the Supreme Army Command for later.

1) What documents General von Falkenhayn had for his presentation is not known; the files provide no clarification.  
2) Major von Fleishhammel reported on the night of July 3 about the intended attack near Przasnysz to Tschen: "In any case, based on the mutual balance of forces in this area, there is hope to advance the offensive to Siedlce, as long as the Russians do not retreat at the Narew due to the events at Lublin." Furthermore, it is noted in the later diary entry of Colonel Ludendorff: "The Russian artillery deployment is strong, had a conversation with Colonel Marquard on July 5, 1915: "Ludendorff did not consider the outbreak possible; Marquard convinced him otherwise."

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To prepare the operation envisaged by the Supreme Army Command over the central Njemen. The 41st Infantry Division was therefore to remain with the Njemen Army.

Lieutenant General Ludendorff informed the Gallwitz Army Group on the afternoon of July 2 that the main attack was to be conducted in their sector and that the XVII Army Corps would be assigned for this purpose. The other two divisions envisaged as reinforcements (3rd Infantry and a Guard Division) were already there. Heavy artillery was to be supplied by the 9th Army.

General von Gallwitz had so far had about seven divisions in his 150-kilometer-wide sector between the lower Vistula and Szkwa; however, only seven were available for the task at hand. About 8 1/4 Russian divisions seemed to be facing them. East of the Szkwa, the right wing of the 8th Army extended in a 70-kilometer width to the Bohr below Ostrowiec, which, with a total deployment of four divisions, included some additional powerful divisions. However, about six Russian active divisions, including the Guard Corps, faced this front section.

In the evening, Lieutenant Colonel Hoffmann, who had remained in Lötzen and was informed by telephone about the outcome of the Potsdam meeting, communicated to the Gallwitz Army Group what the Eastern High Command was planning. The breakthrough target was Siedlce; in this direction, the advance was to be made "by the shortest route" from the left wing. Such an attack led via Ostrolenka over the Narew. "The bold idea," — as General von Gallwitz wrote after the war — "to advance directly deep into the enemy's rear — Siedlce was 140 kilometers from my front — occupied me intensely." For such a far-reaching undertaking, the reinforcement by the envisaged XVII Army Corps alone seemed insufficient. Also, the "extremely difficult" terrain between Orzyc, Omulew, Rozoga, and Szkwa with the river barrier lying just behind it, the Narew at Ostrolenka and Nowogrood, was not very suitable.

1) p. 270, Memorandum of General Ludendorff; there, however, perhaps somewhat narrowly, only nine and a half divisions are counted.  
2) 4. G. T. G., and 1. G. R. D.; 2nd, 3rd, 26th, 37th, and 86th I. D. (these, previous divisions of the Günter Corps, consisted mainly of replacement units).  
3) From all, at 3 p.m., S. D.  
4) Hoffmann, I. p. 272. Record from July 2. by Gallwitz, p. 268.

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to extend the western front. A further march over the Narew with the main forces towards Siedlce and an attack on Nowogeorgiewsk is to be considered. — 4.) 8th Army strengthens between Szkwa and Pisa to join the operations of the Gallwitz Army Group on command. It otherwise holds its positions. — 5.) 10th Army covers in its previous extended position the left flank of the Eastern Army between Rajgrod Lake and the Njemen west of Kowno. The 10th Army cannot count on reinforcements. — 6.) Njemen Army is to attack the Russian 5th Army and thereby also relieve the 10th Army."

On July 4, Lieutenant General Ludendorff arrived at the army headquarters in Soldau to discuss the situation and intentions with General von Gallwitz. There was "unanimity about the procedure to be followed, with General Ludendorff favoring the advance against the Narew line Pultusk—Rozan (not Ostrolenka). He secured ammunition in masses." The attack day was initially set for July 11.

On July 5, General von Gallwitz issued the basic instructions for the attack. They corresponded to the already mentioned Marquardt memorandum on attack procedures, which among other things demanded a vigorous approach to breakthrough. The heavily fortified Przasnysz was to be bypassed initially to bring it down more easily after taking the high ground west and east of the city. This resulted in two separate sections over a total attack width of about 36 kilometers, with Przasnysz in the middle. In these, three corps with a total of seven divisions were to attack in the first encounter, with an eighth division following behind the center. The troops of the neighboring sections, including two active divisions east of the Orzyc, were to tie down and distract the enemy with their own operations and join the attack.

When on July 6 the transport of three Russian corps from northern Poland became known, the Eastern Commander-in-Chief also assessed the attack prospects more favorably. "The Russian now has hardly any forces left to counter a breakthrough frontally and by flanking attack," it says in his war diary. The following day he expressed concerns about whether the attack was too broad." General von Gallwitz held to his plan; he considered "the number of attacking troops sufficient; even though the enemy positions were magnificently developed, the occupation was no longer particularly dense after the withdrawal of the II Siberian Corps." Nevertheless, he decided to provide a Landwehr brigade behind the right and an active division behind the left attack wing from the reserves of the neighboring sections. An attack operation of the 10th Army and a new gas attack of the 9th Army were to contribute to distracting the enemy and fixing his forces; further operations, especially the offensive of the Njemen Army, were still pending. For the attack against Kowno, preparations were to be resumed, and the next freely available unit was to be sent there, even if its execution could not be considered initially. Otherwise, the attack planned for the right wing of the 8th Army meant the most immediate support for the Gallwitz Army Group.

On July 9, the Eastern Commander-in-Chief reported to the Supreme Army Command in response to their inquiry: "According to the instructions given to me on the 2nd of the month in Posen, the Gallwitz Group, reinforced by the XVII Army Corps, 38th Infantry Division, and all available artillery, will attack on both sides of Przasnysz and break through the Russian position. The right wing of the 8th Army will support the Gallwitz Group's offensive by attacking between Szdna and Pipja. The attack cannot begin before July 12 ... I had to postpone the operation against Kowno because troops are not available at the moment." Referring to this final sentence, General von Falkenhayn inquired about the use of the 41st Infantry Division, as the forces set for the Narew thrust seemed too weak to him. On his behalf, Major General Lappen arrived at the Eastern Commander-in-Chief in Lötzen on July 10. The strike group set through the Przasnysz area was now further reinforced by the 50th Reserve Division and the 9th Army, so that it now counted 10½ divisions. The 9th Army had thus given up a total of four instead of the originally planned two divisions.

¹) von Gallwitz, p. 269. ²) See p. 283. ³) Guard Corps at Lomza, II Siberian Corps south of Przasnysz, VI Corps in front of the German 9th Army, where also the VI Siberian Corps had been brought in recent days; all for use in southern Poland and Galicia.

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Preparations for the Attack at Przasnysz.

Concerns about whether the attack might be too broad“). General von Gallwitz

remained firm in his plan; he considered “the number of assault

troops to be sufficient; even though the enemy positions were magnificently

constructed, the occupation was no longer particularly dense after the withdrawal of the II Siberian

Corps“. Nevertheless, he decided to deploy a Landwehr brigade from the reserves of neighboring sectors behind the right,

and an active division behind the left attack wing“).

An offensive operation by the 10th Army and a new gas attack by the

9th Army“) were meanwhile intended to distract the enemy and strengthen

his forces; further operations, especially the offensive of the Njemen Army, were still pending. For the attack against

Kowno, even if its execution was not initially considered, at least the preparations were to be resumed and the

next available unit was to be sent there. Moreover, the planned attack for the right wing of the 8th Army

meant the most direct support for the Gallwitz Army Group.

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Pipja. The attack cannot begin before July 12 ... I have had to postpone the operation against Kowno, as there are currently no troops available.“ Following

this conclusion, General von Falkenhayn inquired about the use of the 41st Infantry Division, as the forces designated for the Narew thrust

seemed too weak to him. On his behalf, Major General Lappen“) arrived at the Commander-in-Chief East in Lötzen on July 10. The

assault group set through the Przasnysz area was now further reinforced by the 50th Reserve Division and the 9th Army, so that

it now counted 10½ divisions. The 9th Army had thus given up a total of

four divisions instead of the originally planned two.

1) von Gallwitz, p. 270.   
2) Ldw. Br. of Colonel Count von Pfeil and Klein-Ellguth from XVII R. K.   
(previously Corps Suren) and Division Falk formed from troops of Corps Eben.   
3) These operations of all other armies (except Army Group Gallwitz   
and 8th Army) will be described later in detail.   
4) Promoted to this rank on June 26.

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h) Breakthrough through the Russian Positions from July 13 to 15.

Sessions 19, 20, 21.

At the front of the Army Group Gallwitz, the days since July 2 had quickly passed with preparations for the attack. Its start had finally had to be postponed to July 13. Since the foremost Russian line was in places up to 1000 meters away from the German front, the troops had needed time to advance — according to the views and combat conditions of the time — in nightly spade work to the storm distance of about 250 meters. The reinforcement divisions had therefore already had to move into their sections on July 8 and 9 and had since worked their way forward against the enemy. Deceiving the enemy about the attack intentions was thus almost impossible, especially since the camouflage of the inevitably extensive other movements and attack preparations was already extremely difficult due to the short duration of the summer nights.

The enemy seemed to be standing in perhaps reduced strength, but otherwise unchanged in his previous positions. He lay in widely branched and deeply structured defense installations, which were arranged in groups but connected with continuous obstacles and seemed to be carefully expanded. Two position systems were to be distinguished. The front consisted of three positions, of which the third, running on average three kilometers behind the first, was formed only by a series of support points; in its middle, the town of Przasnysz was fortress-like expanded. In the line Ciechanow—Krasne lay a contiguous second position system, which was connected to the first by the barrier position Ciechanow—Przasnysz.

The heights close behind the German positions offered the artillery good observation possibilities. The attack led west of Przasnysz over richly structured and often covered terrain, which east of Grudusk (heights 175 and 179) showed height differences of up to 50 meters; in the attack section of the left wing, the terrain generally showed simpler larger forms, but was more heavily wooded. On fields and meadows stood excellent grain or high summer grass. Only a single large road, which led most directly to the attack direction from Mlawa via Przasnysz and Makow to the crossroad Pultusk—Rozan, crossed the attack area; otherwise, one was dependent on pure natural paths.

In the early morning of July 13, the German attack troops were ready as follows:

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The Deployment for the Attack at Przasnysz.

First Encounter:

Troops | Width | Artillery

north of Grudusk:

Gen. of Inf. von Plüskow (Gen. Comm. XI. A. C.) | 38th Inf. Div. 86th Inf. Div. | 11 km | 33 batteries, including ten heavy field guns (15 cm), one howitzer (21 cm).

eastward continuing to the road junction north of Mchowo:

Gen. of Inf. von Pannwitz (Gen. Comm. XVII. A. C.) | 1st G. Res. Div. 36th Inf. Div. | 11 km | 46 batteries, including eight heavy field guns (15 cm), three howitzers (21 cm).

eastward continuing to the Orzyc:

Lt. Gen. von Watter (Gen. Comm. XIII. Württ. A. C.) | 26th (Württ.) Inf. Div. 3rd Inf. Div. 4th G. Inf. Div. | 17 km | 44½ batteries, including ten heavy field guns (15 cm), three howitzers (21 cm).

total | 7 divisions | 39 km | 123½ batteries, including 28 heavy field guns (15 cm), six howitzers (21 cm).

Second Encounter:

behind the right wing:

combined Ldw. Brig. Pfeil. 50th Res. Div., arriving from Mlawa station.

behind the center:

35th Inf. Div. of the XVII. A. C.

behind the left wing:

combined Inf. Div. Falk (parts of the 2nd and 37th Inf. Div.).

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The total number of about 500 guns<sup>1)</sup> with around 400,000 rounds corresponded roughly to the deployment that had brought success at Gorlice, but by equipping the heavy field howitzer batteries with 1,000 rounds compared to only 600 at Gorlice, it gained even greater strength. This artillery, whose deployment was led by Colonel von Berendt as "General of the Foot Artillery," was to fire as inconspicuously as possible, so that on July 13, after daybreak, as soon as observation was secured, the effective fire could begin. In the "instruction" given by General von Gallwitz, the long-time inspector of the German field artillery, to his troops, it was stated: "Well-aimed, lively, and highly observed point fire. Large ammunition use in a short time, but no drumfire that excludes observation. The moral effect is lost if little is hit. Temporary increase of fire to strong fire waves to force the enemy to occupy his trenches in anticipation of the attack. Just before the assault, maximum fire increase, sudden forward shift on agreed signal, then advance. Artillery must provide the infantry with the necessary fire protection until the breakthrough. Immediately behind the last shell, the first man of the assault column must be in the enemy trench."

General von Gallwitz wanted to personally lead the attack of the Plüskow and Pannewitz corps west of Przasnysz; his office was set up in Dzierzgowo behind Grudusk. The Plüskow corps had the task of indicating if anything protruded from the Russian front - the section Grundtke (inclusive) - Pandlowo - Koscielne (exclusive); this was a width of about seven kilometers. The Pannewitz corps was to conduct the "main attack against the front Beroza (exclusive) - Height 154 east of Olziewic (inclusive)"; this was a width of 4.5 kilometers. At 8 a.m., the infantry of both corps was to launch the assault and, if possible, reach the high positions on both sides of Czernice Borowe on the same day. On the eastern flank, Lieutenant General Freiherr von Bater was independently active and also had command over Division Fall. He was to attack the ten-kilometer-wide line Dłusnice - Stegna to break through the enemy front between Murawko and Orzyc; the line Bartniki - Dembiny was named as another target for him.

<sup>1)</sup> The official Russian account by Korolkow erroneously arrives at a much higher number, apparently calculating the batteries as six guns. In fact, with very few exceptions (26th Inf. Div.), only four guns are found. (See "Memoirs of the General of Infantry v. C." p. 33.) — In the past, even less was found; it merely originates from the memorandum of Colonel Max von B., which also could no longer be found.

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The Orders for the Attack at Przasnysz.

biny was named to him as a further target. In the other parts of the attack front, the enemy was initially to be held down and pinned. The neighboring sections, especially the corps Surén to the west, were to deceive the enemy with minor operations and increased fire activity and were to be ready to advance later in connection with the assault group.

Overall, it was estimated that in front of the seven attacking German divisions in the first line (each with nine battalions), there were about three Russian divisions (each with 16 battalions), and it was assumed that west of Przasnysz were parts of the I. Turkestan Corps, at Przasnysz and to the east the I. Siberian Corps, known throughout as combat-ready troops.

For the continuation of the attack after the initial breakthrough, General von Gallwitz had ordered the corps Plüskow and Pannewitz. "In exploiting the successes achieved to continue the breakthrough, I do not want to restrict the commanding generals, but I ask them to remain steadfastly straight within the strictly maintained combat zones. Careful consideration will be needed as to whether the attack on the second or third enemy position requires systematic preparation, which seems permissible for a staggered procedure. The more the enemy has suffered in the removal of the front line, the less his resistance will be in the next positions." Furthermore, General von Gallwitz intended to regulate the approach depending on the results of the attack from case to case; only after the removal of the positions of Sczernice Borowe and Bartniki—Dembiny should the attack be conducted from the northwest and northeast simultaneously against Przasnysz, which remains particularly important as a road junction. He also considered the possibility that the enemy, after breaking through his front lines, would retreat in such disarray that his rear sections could be overrun with rapid action. Even against Przasnysz, a coup de main can promise success if the Russians can no longer manage to gather sufficient forces to occupy the works."

In poor weather and rain, the effective firing began on July 13 at 4 a.m. across the entire attack front; impaired observation seemed to affect the result. General von Gallwitz allowed the two corps of the right wing to delay the start of the assault by one hour.

At the corps Plüskow, to whose support the heavy batteries of the 50th Reserve Division had also been advanced, the artillery effect seemed sufficient.

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Artillery effect sufficient. The infantry advanced as planned at 8 a.m. and made good progress. The 38th Infantry Division under Major General Schultheiß initially captured Grunduß in front of the enemy's main position and took about 6000 prisoners. Meanwhile, Lieutenant General von Bernuth with the 86th Infantry Division took the advanced elevation northwest of Pawlowo Koscielne. General von Plüskow believed he had only weak enemy forces in front of him, but they fought well. He expected the enemy to hold the "main position" on the 20 to 30 meter high, partially wooded heights north of the Grunduß—Czernice Borowe road. The attack on this line was to be carried out in coordination with the Gallwitz High Command, systematically under new artillery preparation. By noon, the Plüskow Corps had already reached the northern edge of those heights.

In the Pannwitz Corps, the start of the attack was postponed to 9 a.m. due to initially insufficient artillery effect. Then the 1st Guard Reserve Division under Major General Albrecht and the right wing of the 36th Infantry Division of Lieutenant General von Heineccius also broke through the forward Russian lines north of the Wengierka in the first attempt and advanced against the gently rising forest heights of Czernice. The left wing east of Czerwinice remained — as ordered — waiting. At 12°, General von Pannwitz designated the southern edge of the forest north of Czernice—Olszewice as the next target.

The Watter Corps, which had advanced at 8:42, also had good initial successes. On the right, the 26th (Württemberg) Infantry Division under Lieutenant General Wilhelm Duke of Urach captured the fortifications of Osowiec. More stubborn resistance was encountered in the center by Lieutenant General von Staabs with the 3rd Infantry Division at the village of Szla and in the forest east of it, while further east the 4th Guard Infantry Division under Major General Count von Schweinitz and Krain Baron von Jednorozec stormed elevation positions south of Jednorozec. During the transition over the heavily fortified enemy resistance in the numerous forests across the entire width of the corps front.

To the Commander-in-Chief East, who had arrived with his close staff in Willenberg, General von Gallwitz could report at 1 p.m.: "The second enemy position from the heavily fortified ridge near Biskupiec to the forest northeast of Czernice Borowe and to the point 150 north of Chojnowo is in our possession. Several thousand prisoners, some guns, and machine guns captured."

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The First Day of the Attack at Przasnysz.

taken. The enemy apparently completely surprised. The third enemy main position is also to be attacked." This was located about two kilometers south of the Grudusk—Czernice road, to which it approached at Chojnowo. The report further stated that the Watter Corps was in possession of Szla, but fighting was still ongoing in the forest east of the place; on the left wing of the corps, the Falk Division was moving into the front.

At 3:30 in the afternoon, the attack on the right wing was reorganized. The Plüskow Corps received the high ground immediately south of the Grudusk—Czernice line as the day's objective; the following Pfeil Brigade was made available to cover the flank during further advances. The Pannwitz Corps, which was later tasked with turning southeast against Przasnysz and thus significantly extending its front, was assigned the 35th Infantry Division, thereby reuniting the XVII Army Corps.

During the afternoon, the advance slowed. The movement of artillery required time, and the strength of the infantry advancing from line to line began to wane. General von Plüskow had temporarily halted his 38th Infantry Division south of Grudusk to wait until the 86th Infantry Division reached the Grudusk—Czernice road. At 1:30 in the afternoon, he learned from the 38th Infantry Division that the enemy held Lysaftowo; the others were reportedly "in full retreat against the third position lying south of the main road." When the road was reached by the 86th Infantry Division in the afternoon, the commanding general ordered a new attack. After initially good progress, the enemy artillery fire intensified; the enemy seemed to have settled again. From Lysaftowo, he attacked the flank of the 38th Infantry Division. The German infantry laboriously advanced further and took the strong positions of Pziszcoli Gorne in the evening after the deployment of the Pfeil Brigade. However, the German artillery effect suffered from continuous rain and poor observation. Thus, the attack against the Russian third position, otherwise from Lysaftowo and at the southern edge of Czernice, came to a halt. Artillery firing and storming were postponed to the morning of July 14.

Meanwhile, the Commander-in-Chief East suggested using the still fresh 35th Infantry Division to take the only weakly fortified Przasnysz by surprise, encircling it from the south. At 5:30 in the afternoon, General von Pannwitz, who had already deployed this division between the 1st Guard Reserve and 36th Infantry Division, gave the order to pivot towards the Laguny—Przasnysz—Mchowo road.

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had determined the artillery division, the order to pivot against the road Laguny—Przasnysz—Mchowo. At this time, however, the 1st Guard Reserve Division had not yet reached the road Czernice—Chojnowo. It was only at 7 o'clock that it could begin the attack against the strong positions between Dzielin and Chojnowo, and only at 7:30 was the 35th Infantry Division under Major General von Hahn on its left in the front line. It was already getting dark when the 1st Guard Reserve Division took Chojnowo at 9 o'clock in the evening; the strong position northeast of the place could only be wrested from the enemy by the 35th Infantry Division in a devastating attack at 10 o'clock. Thus, despite all the dedication of the troops, they did not get beyond the line Chojnowo—German starting position at Mchowo on this day and were still about five kilometers away from Przasnysz.

The General Command Watter had the impression at 3 o'clock in the afternoon that the enemy was retreating everywhere and only offering resistance with rearguards at some points. However, progress was slow due to rain and forest fighting. The enemy seemed to be receiving reinforcements. The line Bartniki—Dembinin, set as a further target by General von Gallwitz, was still on average three kilometers in front of the enemy front when the fighting also subsided here after 10 o'clock in the evening. On the left wing, the division of Lieutenant General von Fall had entered the front line; the wide meadow depression of the Orzyc offered protection to its eastern flank.

The overall result of the first day of attack did not quite meet the high expectations of the morning and midday hours, although the breakthrough into the enemy positions west of Przasnysz had reached a depth of up to six kilometers, east of the place up to 4½ kilometers. The two front positions of the Russians were breached at two points over a width of 15 kilometers each, and at many points the third position was reached; at Czernice, all Russian battery positions were taken. Nevertheless, only 5400 prisoners, five guns, and about 20 machine guns could be reported as booty; because the enemy had only weakly occupied his positions, had withdrawn his small number of artillery and found time to bring it to safety in time; he apparently wanted to hold the third position.

The operations of July 13 were also successful in the neighboring sections.

In the corps Surén, which adjoined the corps Plüskow to the west, the 85th Landwehr Division under Lieutenant General Clissow Rocq von Breugel stormed the Russian first position and west of the railway to Ciechanow in a width of about six kilometers.

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The Continuation of the Attack at Przasnysz.

Rocq von Breugel stormed the Russian first position and west of the railway towards Ciechanow over a width of about six kilometers. As further advance at this point seemed possible only with the deployment of new forces, Lieutenant General Curien intended to attack on his eastern flank the next day to directly support the main attack.

In the 8th Army, the 75th Reserve Division under Lieutenant General von Seydewitz stormed the heights south of Lipnitz on July 13 at the eastern bank of the Orzwa and captured 1800 prisoners; further east, the 10th Landwehr Division led by Lieutenant General Clausius broke into the Russian lines at Krusza and also captured 600 prisoners. Attacks at both locations were to be continued the next day.

Behind the Russian front, German aerial reconnaissance had so far detected only insignificant movements of reserves; no larger closed formations were identified on a day's march backward. The surprise of the enemy seemed successful; prisoners also confirmed this view.

For July 14, General von Gallwitz ordered the continuation of the attack; above all, it was important to get Przasnysz into hand. The Plüskow Corps and the XVII Army Corps were to take the strong Russian third position south of the Grundwulf—Czernice road as well as at Chojnowo and east, then the XVII Army Corps was to turn further against Przasnysz, the 50th Reserve Division was to follow behind the right flank on Grundwulf. The Watter Corps was to reach the Bartniki—Dronzczewo road, ready to assist against Przasnysz later if needed. The order further stated: "If the enemy retreats at night, all corps will relentlessly follow in their combat zones." These ran against the second line of Russian defenses, specifically for the Plüskow Corps on Opinogora and east, for the XVII Army Corps on Zielona and east to Bogate, for the Watter Corps east of the Wengierka.

The battle continued through the night in some places. The divisions of the Plüskow Corps had mostly already reached their first target for July 14. At dawn, the attack continued along the entire breakthrough line. Soon, however, it became clear that only rearguards were facing them. Pilots, who had been on the move since 3 a.m. and advanced deep into the hinterland, found the roads, especially the main road Przasnysz—Makow—Pultusk, covered by southward-moving vehicle columns; magazines went up in flames. The enemy was in full retreat; even Przasnysz was evacuated.

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Przasnysz was cleared. Initially in combat development, but soon in marching columns, the German corps followed in a broad front. General von Gallwitz sent them the directive as early as 9 a.m.: "The pursuit idea must remain the guiding principle in the next operations. Enemy rear guard positions must be attacked and overrun without delay." The barrier position along the Ciechanow–Przasnysz road was taken without delay. At noon, General von Gallwitz reported to the Eastern Commander-in-Chief the further intention: "Advance the army against the last occupied section Ciechanow–Bogate–Krasnosielc, which is to be attacked." Meanwhile, the enemy had also begun retreating in front of the entire western flank of the army group. The corps Dickhuth and Surén followed. East of the Orzyc and in front of the 8th Army, the Russians still held.

In dull and rainy weather and consequently muddy roads, the three corps of the German breakthrough front approached the Russian second line of defense in the early afternoon hours. Some advanced positions were taken. General von Gallwitz, who personally led the two corps advancing west of the Wengierka, considered postponing the attack to the next morning, but then let the corps begin when they wanted to take the Russian positions in the evening before the enemy brought reinforcements. However, the attempts had to be abandoned because the artillery did not achieve sufficient effect under unfavorable observation conditions. At nightfall, the attackers were positioned everywhere close to the enemy positions, ready to attack. Behind the Plüskow corps, the 50th Reserve Division had moved up, and the 36th Infantry Division had been withdrawn as a reserve at the XVII Army Corps.

The attack of the Watter corps also came to a halt in the evening after insignificant individual successes against strong Russian resistance. The enemy stubbornly held his fortified positions from Bogate to Drozdowo on the western bank of the Orzyc. The corps had gradually swung southeast and extended its left wing with landwehr, as the enemy on the right bank of the Orzyc in front of the corps and in front of the 8th Army was still in the old positions.

On the western flank of the army group, the Surén corps had been able to follow the retreating enemy. In doing so, the 85th Landwehr Division had approached the positions of Ciechanow. The fighting continued here into the darkness. Further west and with the Dickhuth corps, they had reached the line running over Plonsk to Wyszogrod on the Vistula, reaching the Russian second line of defense up to eight kilometers, but also stood partly further away from it.

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The Second and Third Day of the Breakthrough.

Russian second line system had approached up to eight kilometers,

but was also partly still further away from it.

Overall, the attack of the Army Group Gallwitz had advanced 10 to 15 kilometers in two days. The loot had increased to 7100 prisoners, and the own losses were moderate at 2700 men. It turned out that the fight had so far been mainly against the 11th and 2nd Siberian Divisions. However, it was also necessary to reckon with the full force of the 1st Siberian Division held in reserve, as well as reinforcements that were rushing in by rail and foot march according to aerial observations. A possibly heavy new attack was imminent; however, there was no doubt about its outcome after the previous successes.

The infantry of the German assault corps moved closer to the enemy positions on July 15th under cover of darkness; at dawn, the artillery began firing. It turned out that they had quite strong, well-protected installations in front of them. The attack task seemed not much inferior to that which had been solved on July 13th after the most thorough preparation by completely fresh troops; however, the forces were not sufficient to carry it out across the entire width of the front. General von Gallwitz pointed out to the two western corps 11 and 17 that the enemy was bringing up reinforcements, and that it was therefore necessary to attempt a breakthrough through the enemy position at one point today if possible. Since this seemed to be the least strongly developed according to the results of the aerial reconnaissance in the area of Zielona, he wanted to strike here.

General von Plüskow prepared the incursion on his left wing in the area west of Zielona, General von Pannwitz on his right wing east of the mentioned place. While the artillery concentrated its fire on these positions, the flyers reported further unloading of Russian reinforcements at Nasielsk and northwards, which were marching on Pultusk and Ciechanow. Under these circumstances, General von Gallwitz gave the corps the instruction that now, as they had the last enemy position in front of them, it was no longer a matter of deep penetration, but of quickly swinging in to unroll the Russian lines. Between 2 and 3 in the afternoon, the 1st Guard Reserve Division under Major General Albrecht succeeded in breaking through in the area of the bridge southeast of Zielona; it was quickly expanded eastward with the help of parts of the 36th Infantry Division. This division itself was inserted between the 1st Guard Reserve and the 35th Infantry Division to break through in the direction of Wenzewo on the way to Pultusk.

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To break through towards Wenzewo on the way to Pultusk. A little later than the XVII Army Corps, the 86th Infantry Division under Lieutenant General von Bernitz also succeeded west of Zielona after a hard fight; it was soon expanded to the west. Parts of the 50th Reserve Division had already been involved here; now this entire division was inserted to break through to Kolaczkowo. Meanwhile, at 5 p.m., the 38th Infantry Division under Major General Schultheiß also broke into the stubbornly defended Russian position at Dipinogura further west; the enemy retreated from here to Ciechanow.

At 6 p.m., General von Gallwitz ordered the two western corps: "If the rolling up of the enemy position has led to the enemy clearing the entire line," the Plüskow Corps should proceed south to Gontz—Ciechanow, the XVII Army Corps should turn southwest to Karniewo—Makow, and the 50th Reserve Division should fill the gap between them towards Stary Golynin. He was able to report to the Commander-in-Chief East at 6:15: "The fortress-like last enemy position Ciechanow—Krasnosielc has been broken through after a hard fight at Zielona over about seven kilometers, five large strongpoints taken." However, he also had to draw attention to the beginning difficulties in the supply of ammunition.

On the outer flanks of the two corps, north of Ciechanow and at Bogate, the enemy still offered stubborn resistance, against which, in the spirit of General von Gallwitz, the Plüskow Corps turned right, the XVII Army Corps turned left, while in the direction south only the 50th Reserve Division under General of Cavalry Baron von der Goltz continued; here the entire Russian 30th Division of the IV Corps, which had arrived by rail, was identified as a new opponent. The unloading at the Warsaw railway continued, and new enemy forces marched on the road Rozan—Makow. General von Gallwitz therefore repeatedly urged vigorous pursuit and rolling up of the parts of the Russian front still holding at Bogate. He wanted to "personally reap the immediately beckoning fruits of victory" and hoped, above all, through the cooperation of the Plüskow and Surén Corps, to perhaps catch the Russians at Ciechanow.

Despite the fatigue of the troops, movements and battles continued partly deep into the night, but without reaching the set goals. The Plüskow Corps reached the road Ciechanow—Pultusk only at the road junction Pomorze with a detachment set to interrupt the Warsaw railway, but remained with the 38th and 86th Infantry Divisions on average still about three kilometers away from it.

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The Breakthrough through the Last Enemy Position.

The 38th and 86th Infantry Divisions were still on average three kilometers away; the 50th Reserve Division, which had only managed to regroup with difficulty, had advanced almost no further, up to Kolaczbowo. At the XVIII Army Corps, the 1st Guard Reserve Division only advanced with forward detachments beyond the position taken in the afternoon; the pursuit of the 36th Infantry Division, which was swinging around Krasne, came to a halt at night before Wenzewo, and the enemy still held at Bogate. This was partly due to the fact that the German attack on the east bank of the Wengierka had fallen about two kilometers short.

The four divisions of Lieutenant General von Watter faced an opponent who held tenaciously in strong positions everywhere. The general planned attack ordered for July 15th led only to local successes. From the right wing and the center of the corps, the Russians still held the forest areas east of Bogate and the west bank of the Orzyc, at Krasnosielec in a very strong bridgehead position. The German left wing reached the river southeast of Dronzborno. Further north, Landwehr troops continued to secure with the front facing northeast, as the enemy still stood before Corps Eben and to the east. However, on this day, the 8th Army gave way to the attack of the 10th Landwehr Division in the protruding arc of Kruszla, allowing progress to be made towards Nowogrod.

The western wing of Army Group Gallwitz had also gained ground behind the retreating enemy. The left wing of Corps Dickhuth and Corps Surén had followed up to the Russian second line of defense, which stretched from Wyszgorod over Plonsk to Ciechanowo. Here, the left wing of Corps Surén, the 85th Landwehr Division, had been fixed since the evening of the previous day; it was too weak to carry out the attack against the hill positions of Ciechanowo. Success was expected from the further advance of Corps Plüskow.

c) Continuation of the Attack up to the Narew.

Sketches 19, 20, 21, 22.

The Commander-in-Chief East, who had returned to Libau on the afternoon of July 15th, was very satisfied with the successes of Army Group Gallwitz. As General Ludendorff expressed to General von Gallwitz over the telephone in the evening, it was not believed that the attack would penetrate the Russian defensive network so quickly.

1) from Gallwitz, p. 283. (Cf. p. 277, note 2.)

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believed that the attack would penetrate the Russian position network so quickly. The question arose in which direction the operation should be continued.

Within the framework of the overall situation in Poland, the purely frontal retreat of the Russians towards Wyszogrod—Plonsk—Makow had no decisive significance yet. Left of the lower Vistula, their front had long been pushed back before the German 9th Army up to the height of Wyszogrod; it would only become untenable when the Narew Line itself fell. Nevertheless, since the beginning of the month, there were signs that the Russians also wanted to withdraw left of the Vistula, initially into the Grojec—Blonie position, which offered a completely secure connection to the Narew Line in the strong cornerstone of Nowogeorgiewsk. Aerial reconnaissance, intercepted radio messages, and prisoner statements consistently gave the impression that the systematic evacuation of the area west of the Vistula was being initiated. Extensive destruction measures appeared to be underway; villages were going up in flames; the population, it was said, was being evacuated. Two Russian corps (VI Siberian and IV) had been withdrawn; the positions in front of the southern wing of the 9th Army were supposed to be significantly weaker than before. Thus, the possibility had to be considered at any time that the enemy might withdraw before the 9th Army. Whether he would then try to continue holding the Grojec—Blonie position in the south and the Narew Line in the north in connection with the large and strong fortress Nowogeorgiewsk, or whether he would soon retreat further under the pressure of Army Group Mackensen's offensive, which was to be continued between Bug and Vistula after a temporary standstill¹) — it remained important that Army Group Gallwitz's thrust hit as deep as possible into his rear, thus maintaining an eastward direction in the continued attack.

In contrast, General von Gallwitz intended to advance with his main forces in the direction of Pultusk—Rozan; the Eben Corps was to cover against Ostrolenka, which he hoped would be attacked by the 8th Army. In a telephone conversation about this question, General Ludendorff, now that the enemy positions had been penetrated in their entire depth, wanted the decisive attack to be "directed more towards Ostrolenka and in return rather give up terrain at the Vistula." General von Gallwitz considered such an extension of the attack too broad; given the current situation, Rozan was the most easily attackable point. An extension to Ostrolenka would bring us before a more solid position and before the undefeated troops of the IV Siberian and V Corps.

¹) The Bug Army already attacked on this day (July 15); cf. p. 387.

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The Question of Further Attack Direction.

a more secure position and in front of the undefeated troops of the IV Siberian and V Corps. When he finally posed "the specific question" of whether he should attack Ostrolenka, "the Field Marshal, who was with Ludendorff, immediately granted him freedom of action; the latter also agreed"1). The decisive factor was that even now, the primary goal was the tactical success, the conquest of the Narew line. However, General Ludendorff also wanted to give the Gallwitz High Command, in which he had confidence, as much freedom as possible in its decisions2). Thus, it remained with its intentions.

After the movements were completed on the evening of July 15, General von Gallwitz assumed that the Russians would try to establish themselves in the line Nowogeorgiewsk—advanced positions from Pultusk—area of Bogate—Orzyc and hold this line, which was significantly shortened compared to earlier. He ordered the continuation of the attack in a southern and southeastern direction. For this, the left wing of the XVII Army Corps was to "only engage" the enemy in the strong positions of Bogate, primarily to allow the pivoting of the German right wing to take effect. On July 16, the enemy held close to the extended front of the corps and before the right wing of the Surén Corps, his prepared second line of defense; the striking power of these German troops was in no way sufficient to drive him out here by force. However, he had evacuated the town of Ciechanow, threatened by encirclement, during the night. The 86th Infantry Division of the Plüskow Corps was able to report capturing artillery as booty from their night advance. Further east, the enemy was retreating under rearguard actions. The corps, however, initially advanced southwestward as ordered, against the retreat routes of the enemy withdrawing from Ciechanow, managing to shoot down an attacking Russian cavalry brigade, and only resumed the decisive thrust towards Pultusk in the afternoon. Meanwhile, the enemy resistance had been able to strengthen again in connection with the still-held positions north of Golymin on one side and from Bogate on the other. By evening, the left wing of the corps again reached east of Somyn, and subsequently, the Plüskow Corps, whose center, fighting on the Pultusk road, had reached Stary Golymin, while its two wings were somewhat lagging.

The day was much more difficult for the XVII Army Corps and the Watter Corps.

1) from Gallwitz, p. 283.  
2) Communication from General Ludendorff from December 1931 to the Reichsarchiv.

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Corps Watter. The latter was able to initially continue the maneuver initiated the day before to the southeast against only weak resistance from the Russians. The situation temporarily appeared so favorable that General von Pannwitz wanted to redirect his corps eastward to outflank the enemy of Corps Watter. However, in the afternoon, they encountered very yielding new resistance on both sides of Krasne; it seemed that the enemy had received further reinforcements. It was only late in the evening that parts of the 36th and 35th Infantry Divisions managed to penetrate the northern part of the stubbornly defended location. South of Bogate, despite fierce Russian resistance lasting into the night, successes were also achieved; parts of the 35th Infantry Division crossed to the eastern bank of the Wengierka. Corps Watter encountered equally strong resistance, attempting to force the Orzyc crossing at several points simultaneously. The 26th Infantry Division could only reach the river with its left wing south of Podos. The 3rd Infantry Division took the crossing at this location after heavy, costly fighting but had to relinquish it again against newly emerging Turkestan battalions; it remained definitively in German hands only in the evening. The 4th Guard Infantry Division and the right wing of Division Falk could only reach the river on both sides of Krasnosielc and had to repel heavy counterattacks here in the afternoon, with the heavily fortified location of Krasnosielc forming the mainstay of Russian resistance.

Between the upper Orzyc and Pissa, however, the enemy abandoned his defense front, held for months, on the night of July 16 and retreated over almost 60 kilometers in width. The left wing of Division Falk had crossed the Orzyc southeast of Dronzdzewo by noon in a broad front and was positioned on the eastern bank northeast of Krasnosielc by the evening of that day, ready to strike the Russians still holding at this location in the flank and rear the next morning. Corps Eben and the right wing of the 8th Army had also set out from their positions to pursue and followed the enemy halfway to Siedlanka.

Much was gained, and yet the hoped-for larger territorial gain after breaking through the last prepared position of the enemy was temporarily achieved in the least operationally effective direction, against the northern front west of Pultusk. In the direction of Rozan, progress over the Orzyc was not made, and to exploit the situation between Orzyc and Pissa, the striking power of the German divisions following here in only a thin line was in no way sufficient. In the actual attack front, difficulties became apparent.

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The First Stagnation in the Attack.

In the attack front, difficulties became noticeable. Although in the four days since July 13, only two of their divisions had moved slightly more than 30 kilometers, or 1½ days' marches, from their original positions, it was already noticeable that overcoming each new resistance required very large amounts of artillery ammunition, which, due to difficult road conditions, no longer reached the front in sufficient quantities. It was also always the same ten divisions that had now been attacking continuously for the fourth day, while their front had meanwhile extended from 40 to 50 kilometers. Fresh troops, which could give the attack new impetus and enable the formation of a focal point at an operationally decisive location, were lacking and were not yet in sight. It is to be assumed that if they had been present, the supply difficulties would have increased even more.

To reinforce, the Commander-in-Chief East could only fall back on the 9th Army, which since July 10 had still counted two general commands with six divisions, including the 5th and 49th Reserve Divisions, otherwise replacement troops and Landwehr, and some Landsturm. If the enemy of this army was still at least significantly superior in infantry, there was currently no danger at their front. The longer and stronger the Russians remained at the Rawka and Bzura, the greater the result of the operation on Pullus\* had to be. However, the Commander-in-Chief East had not yet intended to move all essential parts of the 9th Army to the breakthrough front Narew, but had assigned them the task of following the retreating Russians to turn against the Grojec—Blonie position and Nowogeorgiewsk and later against Warsaw. As the progress of the Gallwitz Army Group also made the retreat of the enemy from the 9th Army increasingly likely, he decided on July 16, if the enemy retreated here, to move forces of this army to the right bank of the Vistula. At noon, he ordered the newly formed 83rd Infantry Division from Landwehr and Landsturm posts of the previous Posen Corps to be assembled in the direction of Wyszogrod for crossing the river and to prepare the division forming the southern wing for transport. Later, he decided to also prepare rail transport for the 83rd Infantry Division to move them to Willenberg behind the eastern wing of the Gallwitz Army Group. The four divisions¹) remaining with the 9th Army and Landsturm had to continue to be ready for pursuit and attack against Nowogeorgiewsk and Warsaw.

¹) 5th and 49th R. D., 84th S. D. (newly formed from parts of the Posen Corps) Div. Westernhagen. The latter two divisions consisted mainly of Landwehr.

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storm had also continued to prepare for pursuit and attack against Nowogeorgiewsk and Warsaw. When the Supreme Army Command inquired the following morning whether more troops should be moved to Gallwitz, these orders could be referred to. Immediately thereafter, all ordered movements began, as the enemy had already begun the expected retreat before the 9th Army during the night.

In front of the Army Group Gallwitz, the enemy had used the darkness to once again evade the German pressure on broad sections of the front. Resistance was only offered north of Pultusk and northwest of Rozan. These fortified bridgeheads of the Narew line seemed to be held; reinforcements were brought against them. At 8 o'clock in the morning, General von Gallwitz regulated the further advance of his corps. He intended to close off the northern front from Nowogeorgiewsk—Bzura with the right wing, and to advance with the center against the Narew section Pultusk—Rozan. For this, the Plüskow Corps, to which the 1st Guard Reserve Division was also to be transferred, was assigned to Pultusk, the XVII Army Corps against the Narew between Pultusk and Rozan, the Watter Corps against Rozan; the Falk Division was to retreat to the Eben Corps during further advances, which would then again have two active divisions and twelve Landsturm battalions. It was to close off Ostrolenka with its left wing. This command regulation for the left army wing somewhat took into account the view of the Commander-in-Chief East, who wished for the main focus to be shifted further east, but this weakened the striking power in the breakthrough direction Pultusk—Rozan. The army headquarters was moved forward to Lejtsin southeast of Przasnysz.

During the day, the Litzthuy and Surén Corps reached as far as Wyszogrod—Nowe Miasto to the north, the Plüskow Corps with the center to just before the strongly fortified enemy positions of the northwest front of Pultusk. The temporarily held hope of perhaps achieving the goal with a coup here had to be abandoned after the reconnaissance results now available. On the left wing of the corps, the 50th Reserve Division faced fierce resistance at the crossroads of Karniewo. In a line running from here northeast to the mouth of the Wengierka into the Orzyc and further over the 70-meter-high fortified heights southeast of Podos (Height 171) to Jednoroje, the enemy had settled again. In the attack against him, the two active divisions of the XVII Army Corps pushed through on both sides of the road to Makow.

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Pushing Back the Enemy Against the Narew.

The two active divisions of the XVII Army Corps advanced on both sides of the road to Makow. The 36th Infantry Division reached this location in the evening, while to its right, the 1st Guard Reserve Division at the northern edge of the forest east of Karniewo, despite support from the 50th Reserve Division, did not break through, and to the left, the 35th Infantry Division turned over the Orzyc against the flank of the enemy standing before the Watter Corps; it was able to inflict heavy losses on the retreating parts and captured 1200 prisoners alone. The Watter Corps itself was held up at the Orzyc bridges destroyed by the enemy and could therefore only work its way to the new Russian positions southeast of Podosz by evening. In agreement with the Army High Command, the decision for the next day was expected from the 35th Infantry Division, which was to attack the flank and rear of the enemy. The enemy seemed to have received further reinforcements, which he threw into the battle as they arrived. At the Eben Corps, only the Fall Division advanced well. Otherwise, this corps and the right wing of the 8th Army could make only slight progress in the forest and swamp terrain east of Ostrolenka with many obstructed sand paths. General von Scholz wanted to resume the attack the following day also east of the Pissa.

On the morning of July 18, the enemy had vacated his positions in front of the left wing of the Plüskow Corps, the XVII Army Corps, and the Watter Corps; contact with him was mostly lost. It gradually became apparent that the Russians had retreated in one move to the fortified area of Pultusk and Rozan and between both places against the Narew. The army order from the morning of July 17 had already taken this possibility into account. Thus, the German troops now followed up to the northwest and north front of the positions of Pultusk and Rozan. Between both places, they initially remained about six kilometers away from the Narew. On the left wing, the strength of the Eben Corps was not enough to push the enemy further back against Ostrolenka. Also, on the entire remaining front of the army group and with the 8th Army, there was a standstill, though only insignificant progress was made.

Meanwhile, the booty had risen to around 24,000 prisoners, but the number of only 110 officers and in total only 14 guns was strikingly low. On the other hand, their own bloody losses had increased to about 20,000 men due to the partially very stubborn battles that followed the initial breakthrough.

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The Attack of the Eastern Commander-in-Chief against the Russian Narew Front.

On July 18, the Eastern Commander-in-Chief received the following telegram from General von Falkenhayn: "His Majesty has taken particular pleasure in the reports of the great successes achieved in recent days under Your Excellency's leadership by the armies of Gallwitz, Scholtz, and Below. At the same time, His Majesty expressed confidence that the thrust against the Narew would not come to a halt at this section, but rather that every effort would be made to advance it as quickly as possible towards the lower Bug." For the newly resumed offensive of the Mackensen Army Group, it was of utmost importance that no standstill occurred. Everything now depended on the success of quickly crossing the Narew in the direction intended by General von Gallwitz towards Pultusk—Rozan, with Rozan being, according to the General's view, "the easiest point to tackle" and also representing the more operationally effective direction. Any delay would benefit the enemy, who, as indicated by the targeting of his radio stations, was now constantly bringing in new forces. His XXI Corps from Galicia was identified as a new enemy at Rozan, the III Siberian Corps was supposed to be advancing from the Niemen Front, and it could easily free up additional forces from the area west of the Vistula, where, besides the German 9th Army, since July 17, the Woyrsch Army Detachment was also moving against Iwangorod. Meanwhile, the difficulties of the operation had grown to the point where a temporary standstill had to occur before the Narew line could be overcome. Bringing up ammunition and the heaviest artillery required a lot of time with increasing distance from the railway. By this day, July 18, the main railway line from Mława to Warsaw had been converted to German gauge and restored up to Ciechanow; field railways from Mława to Przasnysz and from Willenberg to Ostrolenka were under construction.

In General Ludendorff's memorandum of July 1, it was stated: The Gallwitz Army Group "could push the Russians back to the Pronsk—Pultusk line in heavy fighting." This goal was achieved in six days of struggle, even significantly exceeded on the flanks. The "Pincer of Przasnysz" had torn open the Russian first line of defense over a width of 40 kilometers, the "Hammer of Ribik" had also struck the decisive hole in the defensive line Ciechanow—Krasnosielc. The Russian front was breached to a depth of 30 kilometers.

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Before the Fortified Narew Line.

and the enemy was thereby forced to abandon his heavily fortified positions from the lower Vistula to the Pisa, which had been built over months, and also to withdraw the previously stubbornly defended front west of the Vistula1). Whether the same result would have been achieved if the attack had been launched from the beginning with the operational goal of Siedlce, focusing on the left wing towards Ostrolenka, cannot be determined retrospectively. The battle against the I. Siberian Corps, considered the core of Russian resistance, would certainly have been easier, as it would not have been confronted frontally in its particularly strong defensive positions at Przasnysz, but its flank would have been gained, forcing it to fight in open field with a shortened front. However, according to the responsible authorities, the terrain conditions ruled out such an operation.

d) Enemy Measures.

Sketches 19, 20, 21.

The attack by General von Gallwitz had hit the right wing of the Russian 1st Army (General Litwinow), which had to defend the approximately 60-kilometer-wide area between Orzyc and Vistula with six divisions2).

When the German attack broke out, the enemy was by no means as surprised as was assumed on the German side. He had already learned of the arrival of German reinforcements at Chorzele on July 6 through prisoner statements. In the following days, his ground and air reconnaissance noted, among other things, an increase in artillery, wagon trains, and the construction of supply railways; he concluded from these signs that a German attack was imminent. Almost every night brought individual prisoners. In doing so, the German XVII Army Corps, previously stationed at the Narew, was identified as a new opponent. On the night of July 11, it was finally determined that the Germans were approaching closer, and the width of the German attack was correctly assessed by the high command of the Russian 1st Army. It expected the start of the attack for July 12. On this day, the German artillery's firing made such a strong impression that July 12 was highlighted in the records of some units as a "day of battle." However, their own defensive preparations were too late.

1) See loot and losses on p. 299.  
2) The book by Korolíow, "Przasnysz," primarily served as a basis for depicting the events on the Russian side.

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The Attack of the Supreme Commander East against the Russian Narew Front.

The Russian positions on July 13, as before, were occupied along the 40-kilometer-wide attack front by only two divisions: the 2nd Siberian of the 1st Siberian Corps to the east, and the 11th Siberian of the 1st Turkestan Corps to the west of Przasnysz, which together counted 32 battalions and about 100 guns. As a reserve, the 1st Siberian Division of the 1st Siberian Corps had been moved forward to Mlava on the night of July 12 and thus stood a strong day's march behind the front; behind the 11th Siberian Division, a Turkestan brigade had been set up as a reserve. Further forces were sought to be freed in more westerly sections.

On July 13, the 2nd Siberian Division east of Przasnysz vigorously defended against the attack of four German divisions. In the area of Przasnysz itself, ½ of the 1st Siberian Division was inserted, west of the city the defense of the 11th Siberian Division was already withdrawn early into the intermediate position of Czernice before the attack of initially five German divisions. However, the resistance began to collapse here as well in the afternoon despite the deployment of the Turkestan brigade; parts retreated in dissolution. Meanwhile, the leader of the 1st Siberian Corps ordered the retreat into the second line of defense running over Krasnosielc—Podos to Bogate, and around midnight General Litwinow ordered the retreat of the entire army. They were to keep the mentioned line extended over Ciechanowo to Wyszogrod on the Vistula. The infantry of the 11th Siberian Division had shrunk from 14,500 to about 5,000 rifles, and the 2nd Siberian Division had probably lost a third of its strength. According to the Russian view, the advantage of the situation was not sufficiently exploited by the Germans on this day. Only because the Germans had repeatedly halted in the attack was it possible to organize the Russian troops, severely shaken by overwhelming artillery fire, for new resistance. In this context, the procedure of the Plüskow Corps, which continued the attack without interruption on the night of July 14, is presented by the Russians as particularly effective and therefore exemplary.

By the evening of July 14, the 1st Siberian Corps (2nd Siberian Division on the right, 1st on the left) was ready for new defense from northeast of Krasnosielc, where it connected to the correspondingly bent-back western wing of the 12th Army, to west of Bogate. Here, the 30th Infantry Division of the IV Corps, brought in by rail, was already arriving, and the 14th Cavalry Division was positioned behind the front. To the west, the finally weakened 1st Turkestan Corps joined, whose left flank held the positions around Ciechanow.

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The Attack of the Commander-in-Chief East against the Russian Narew Front.

The judgment is correct; however, later the already mentioned concern arises that ammunition and supply reinforcements would probably have stalled even more than was already the case¹).

e) The Attack over the Narew.

Sessions 19, 20, 21, 22.

With the approach to the fortified Narew line, the Gallwitz Army Group faced a new task. It was necessary, in view of the defensive opponent, to force a crossing over a river whose defense could rely not only on some permanent works but also on field fortifications that had been expanded over months of work.

The Narew itself was, without the smaller river loops, about 100 kilometers long between the Bug estuary above Nowogeorgiewsk and the bridgehead of Ostrolenka, a strong natural obstacle. In the summer of 1915, it was about 80 to 150 meters wide, with sandbanks in places and some bush-covered islands, and had a low water level after a dry spring. Very shallow fords were rare and variable in their location. On foot, one could wade through the river in many places; however, bridges were necessary for guns and vehicles. The lowland accompanying the watercourse in varying widths was almost everywhere dry and passable as the German troops approached.

For the Gallwitz Army Group, it was necessary to overcome the extensive installations of Pultusk and the smaller ones of Rozan with the large fortress of Nowogeorgiewsk on the right flank, but if possible, to carry out the crossing over the river outside these two places. Pultusk, with its two old forts near the local bridge, was expanded into a spacious weapons site by about ten kilometers of advanced, deeply structured defense installations; at Rozan, which also had some old forts, the distance of the new installations from the bridge site was only about three kilometers. At both places, the heights of the western right bank approached the river flowing from north to south, while they were several kilometers away on the east side. The east-west running river chalk between the two places showed less pronounced height differences and was widely accompanied on both banks by a broad, simply wooded lowland. A similar picture was offered by the area above Rozan, at Ostrolenka, and towards Lomza.

¹) Further on the question of force deployment p. 371 f.

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Intentions and Preparations.

The Gallwitz High Command had been dealing with the question of how to force the Narew crossing for several days and had instructed the Eben Corps to attack the northern tributaries to further bind the resistance; however, an effect was not to be expected soon.

On the evening of July 18, General von Gallwitz issued an "Instruction for the Attack on the Narew Front." General von Plüskow was to attack the "northern part of the bridgehead" of Pultusk with four divisions, including 56 batteries (18 of them heavy and 10 heaviest artillery), and with the 86th and the "disposable parts" of the 38th Infantry Division to the west, with the 50th and the 1st Guard Reserve Division east of the road from Ciechanow, here "mainly the part leaning on the Narew." The attack of the XVII Army Corps was to "initially aim at creating efficient crossings and securing them" between Pultusk and Rozan. It was said to be "conducted in such a way that the bridgehead can be achieved under the protection of previously prepared strong artillery at two places simultaneously and surprisingly, while at several other places the enemy is misled by simultaneously intended crossing points appearing as feigned attacks and Lachy," but reconnaissance was to provide confirmation first. A division was to be assigned to each crossing point. The Eben Corps with three divisions, including 39 batteries (eleven of them heavy and one heaviest artillery) was designated against Rozan and was to lead the main attack against the western front. The attack on the two fortresses was to be initiated by the corps and carried out according to the progress made; General von Gallwitz wanted to determine the timing for the attack of the XVII Army Corps himself. The neighboring corps, the XVII Reserve Corps and the Eben Corps, were to engage the enemy in front of their front and thus cover the flanks of the attack.

On July 19, the situation on the right wing of the army group remained unchanged. The center moved closer to the indicated positions and the Narew without significant fighting. At the High Command, the idea of breaking through the river between Pultusk and Rozan and thereby primarily bringing Pultusk down came more and more to the fore.

General von Plüskow intended to lead the main attack against Pultusk from the northwest. General von Gallwitz, however, placed particular emphasis on ensuring that also a forward position on the northern front at Chmielewo on the Narew be attacked to cross the river at the loop extending far to the north and to seize Pultusk from the rear; he wanted the focus of the attack to be shifted more to the east.

1) Three or twelve kilometers east of the Orzye estuary.  
\* World War. Volume VIII. 20

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The Attack of the Commander-in-Chief East against the Russian Narew Front.

at Chmielewo on the Narew advanced work would be attacked to cross the

river at the loop bending far north there and to capture Pultusk from behind;

he wanted the main focus of the attack to be shifted more to the east. To enforce

this view, the Chief of Staff of the Army Group, Colonel Marquard, would meet

with General von Plüskow tomorrow. However, the change required shifts

in the attack front and thus time. The decisive attack now directed against the

northern front could therefore only begin on July 22, one day later than intended.

Meanwhile, to tie down the enemy, artillery fire was to begin on July 20, and

the attack against the northwest front was to be launched on the 21st. The intended

use of the 42 cm guns would likely have to be abandoned, as they could hardly

arrive in time due to the lack of load-bearing bridges.

The XVII Army Corps, which received the order in the morning,

to take possession of the terrain north of the Narew in its section extending

from the Orzyc estuary to the east on that day, remained almost everywhere

so far from the river itself that Russian cavalry could hold on the north bank,

especially in the river bend east of Lachy. The enemy estimated on the south bank.

The Watter Corps, which also received the order in the morning,

to advance south of Rozan to the Narew, deployed a battalion, a cavalry regiment,

and a battery, which remained opposite the enemy resistance until surrender.

The artillery of the corps began with parts to fire against the installations of Rozan;

three heaviest guns were still expected as reinforcements. The Russians returned

fire weakly, the bulk of their artillery seemed to have been withdrawn across the

river; they entrenched in the extension of the northern front of the fortress on the

eastern Narew bank. Lieutenant General von Watter therefore considered it

questionable whether they would defend the installations west of the river at all,

but still prepared to defend them in stubborn combat. In such a case, he wanted

to bring down one support of the enemy front after another in a siege-like attack

and to achieve the goal with the least possible own losses. On July 20, artillery

fire was to begin early to first remove an advanced Russian position on the Pultusk

road.

Everywhere from Rozan to west of Nowogrod, the enemy had retreated

to the Narew on the night of July 19 across the entire front. The corps followed

up to the river. It found the fortifications on the right bank at Ostrolenka cleared

and occupied them by midnight. The enemy seemed weak here. The Eben Corps, however, lacked sufficient striking power to exploit this opportunity; its request for reinforcement with heavy artillery had been rejected in view of the tasks still to be solved before Pultusk and Rozan.

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Approaching the Bridgeheads and the River.

However, Corps Eben did not have sufficient striking power to take advantage of this opportunity; its request for reinforcement with heavy artillery was rejected in view of the tasks still to be solved before Pultusk and Rozan.

The right wing of the 8th Army also reached the Narew at certain points. In front of its center, the enemy still held a larger bridgehead northwest of Nowogrod, further east in its previous positions.

In anticipation of the 83rd Infantry Division rolling towards Willenberg, General von Gallwitz intended to soon pull the active troops of Corps Eben to the right to force the Narew crossing between Rozan and Ostrolenka. The Commander-in-Chief East promised further reinforcements with the Menges Division, which General von Gallwitz requested behind his right wing to Mlawa, as well as the airship Z 12, which was to attack the enemy unloading stations. He also ordered the 8th Army to pull a division with strong artillery to its right wing upon reaching the Narew bank, to act against Ostrolenka or to cross the river at the Rozoga mouth. He also demanded a closer approach of the right wing of the Gallwitz Army Group to the Narew and the positions of Nasielsk, where the enemy seemed to be evacuating his XXVII Corps.

General von Gallwitz now had a total of 17½ divisions; on the other hand, the battles had resulted in a loss of about 20,000 men, for which only 3,000 replacements had arrived so far. For the supply of the troops during further advance, he applied for the continuation of the field railway from Prasznitz to Rozan and the construction of a full railway to Ostrolenka to connect to the Russian railway network.

On the morning of July 20, parts of the artillery of Corps Watter opened fire against the positions of Rozan. These lay as if dead; no artillery shot was fired from the Russian side, raising doubts as to whether everything had been evacuated. The 26th (Württemberg) Infantry Division reported that it intended to storm the enemy height position 132 advanced on the southwest front; about 600 prisoners were the result. This success seemed a good start and raised hopes for further progress. In a telephone conversation that General Ludendorff had with the Supreme Army Command that morning, it was confidently expressed that the attack would "smoothly come over Narew and Bug," but reinforcements were not necessary here¹).

1) Previously in the West.  
20\*

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The Attack of the Commander-in-Chief East against the Russian Narew Front.

expressed assurance that the attack "would smoothly come over Narew and Bug," but reinforcements were not necessary here¹).

General von Gallwitz had already suggested to the XVII Army Corps to let parts cross the Narew at Lachy as soon as possible. However, General von Pannwitz had ordered his right 36th Infantry Division to move east from the area just east of the Orzyc estuary behind the 35th Division, to cross the river bend at Ostrołęk, which juts out the furthest against the enemy, on the left flank of the corps. But here the enemy still stood on the right bank, which he also attacked before the 36th Infantry Division arrived, with strong forces advancing from the east south of Rozan, with weaker parts also from the south west of Lachy, crossing the river and pressing the right flank of the Bülow Corps, but especially the XVII Army Corps. Further Russian forces simultaneously advanced west of the Orzyc estuary and from the northern front of Pułtusk against the left flank of the Plüskow Corps.

This led to a series of partially stubborn battles. General von Plüskow moved the bulk of the 38th Infantry Division as a reserve from his right flank behind the left; he also believed he could not do without the cooperation of the 42 cm guns against Pułtusk now. At the XVII Army Corps, the situation looked serious at times; in the afternoon, General von Pannwitz had already deployed his last reserves and requested reinforcements. Only in the evening did the situation appear restored everywhere; the large river bend south of Rozan remained in enemy hands, with about one Russian infantry division and one cavalry division involved in the fighting here, with possibly somewhat stronger forces at Pułtusk. The own losses were considerable; the Plüskow Corps had captured about 1000 prisoners with the 1st Guard and the 50th Reserve Division together, but also lost about 600 men each. Additionally, a battalion of the 86th Infantry Division of the Plüskow Corps, which had three cholera deaths, had to be withdrawn from the front, and losses due to dysentery occurred.

All in all, the previously high hopes were somewhat dampened by the day's events; it had shown that overcoming the Narew line would pose greater difficulties than expected. The enemy had increasingly shifted the focus of his defense to the Pułtusk—Rozan area. South and east of Pułtusk, the I Turkestan Corps seemed to be positioned, in Pułtusk itself the IV Corps, northeast of it at the Narew the 14th Cavalry Division and further back the I Siberian Corps, at Rozan the newly arrived XXI Corps, at Ostrolenka the IV Siberian Corps, while the XXVII Corps seemed to be advancing towards Bischöf.

¹) Handwritten note by Gen. von Falkenhayn from July 22.

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Russian Counterattacks.

Even the IV Corps, northeast of it on the Narew the 14th Cavalry Division and further back the I Siberian Corps, at Rozan the newly arrived XXI Corps, at Ostrolenka the IV Siberian Corps, while the XXVII Corps seemed to be advancing towards Bischöf. Thus, there were at least ten, partly very fresh enemy divisions that had to be thrown out of strong positions. Further heavy fighting was therefore to be expected.

After the vicissitudes of the day, the three German attack corps initially focused on Albeney for July 21. General von Gallwitz said to himself, "that engaging the Narew front by the weak XVII Army Corps, before we firmly held the flanks, would offer no prospect," so there was no point in leaving parts of the corps in a vulnerable position in the Narew bend"). He had it evacuated from Gostkowo to south of Rozan during the night.

But even on the flanks of the army group, greater successes were initially not to be expected. Although the commanding general of the XVII Reserve Corps, Lieutenant General Surén, had left the garrison of Nowogeorgiewsk so small after the withdrawal of the Russian XXVII Corps that he wanted to attempt a coup de main with his Landwehr divisions, at least against the positions of the northern front. General von Gallwitz had initially agreed to this"). In view of the strength of the fortress, he then doubted the success of such an undertaking; he considered it more appropriate, given the overall situation, to move the 83rd Landwehr Division of the corps to the east behind the right flank of the Plüskow corps. This also nullified the plan of Lieutenant General Surén. At the same time, the Commander-in-Chief East made the General Command of the III Reserve Corps, previously belonging to the 9th Army, available for unified leadership of the attack on the large Russian fortress. On the left flank, General von Eben wanted to carry out a feint operation on the Narew south of Ostrolenka on July 21, to then force the crossing at this place on the 22nd. But this plan also became obsolete, as General von Gallwitz ordered the main forces of the corps to be deployed north of Rozan. Thus, the last combat-ready parts of the army group were drawn to the actual breakthrough front, which thereby — without the forces still expected by rail (83rd Infantry Division and Division Menges) — reached a strength of twelve divisions.

1) von Gallwitz, p. 294. — 2) Communication from Lt. Gen. a. D. Kabisch (then Chief of Staff of the XVII R. K.) from summer 1931 to the Reichsarchiv. Further details on the attack on Nowogeorgiewsk f. C. 375 ff.

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At the 8th Army, the 75th Reserve Division reached the Narew, which carried very little water here, at the Szkwa estuary on July 20, and the 10th Landwehr Division had reached just before Nowogrod. The army reported that it had prospects of crossing the river at these two points and requested reinforcement of its right wing by a division. In view of the difficulties that had been shown to the Gallwitz Army Group, the Commander-in-Chief East temporarily considered continuing the 83rd Infantry Division, which was rolling towards Willenberg, to Kolno, but then abandoned this idea as it would have meant a dispersion of forces. He had firm confidence that the attack of the Gallwitz Army Group must succeed.

On the morning of July 21, General von Gallwitz viewed the situation more calmly than under the impression of the evening news, but he believed he had to reckon with a repetition of the Russian attacks. On the other hand, he was clear that a prompt continuation of their own attack, which the Commander-in-Chief East repeatedly urged, was necessary. However, preparations had not progressed far enough at either the Plüskow Corps or the Watter Corps to ensure full success by July 22. Therefore, General von Gallwitz agreed that the attack at the Plüskow Corps should be postponed to the morning of July 23 and then carried out as far as possible in one go to the bridgeheads. Also, in front of Rozan, General von Watter wanted to take further measures on July 22 to carry out the attack against the inner line on July 23. Since the enemy between Pultusk and Rozan, where he also stood with parts on the right Narew bank as before, was now calm, the XVII Army Corps was also to attack again by forcing the crossing on the night of July 23, this time not again in the Ostrykol arc, but further west in direct connection with the attack of the Plüskow Corps. In addition, on the same night, the Eben Corps also wanted to fight for the crossing in the area north of Rozan, as did the 8th Army at the Szkwa estuary. Thus, the general attack in the entire 75-kilometer-wide area from Pultusk to the Szkwa was in prospect for July 23. The Gallwitz Army Command had been relocated to Krasne as early as July 21.

When General von Gallwitz on the morning of July 22 made an immediate inquiry to General von Falkenhayn about the situation and intentions, he concluded: "In any case, we face the outcome of the operations with great confidence."

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Preparation for the Attack on Pultusk and Rozan.

reported, he concluded: "In any case, we stand with great confidence towards the outcome of the operations." On the evening of this day, the troops were ready in the following new formation:

General von Beseler was assigned the Dichhuth Corps and the 14th Landwehr Division of the former Surén Corps in front of the northern front of Nowogeorgiewsk from the positions of Nałęczów, against which feigned operations were to be conducted on July 23 to divert the enemy's attention.

Group Plüskow with the now united XVII Reserve Corps (86th Infantry Division and Landwehr Brigade Pfeil, behind it 85th Landwehr Division), 50th and 1st Guard Reserve Division (these two under the command of the commander of the 50th Reserve Division, General Freiherr von der Goltz, combined) for the attack on Pultusk.

XVII Army Corps (36th and 35th Infantry Division), on the right wing extended by the 38th Infantry Division, which arrived south of Szelkow, to the Narew crossing at Zambski and east of Goltkowo (near Romny).

Corps Watter with 26th and 3rd Infantry and 4th Guard Infantry Division in front of Rozan. Here, the result of the afternoon's partial attack against the northwest front fell short of expectations.

Corps Eben with 2nd and 37th Infantry Division and the 83rd Infantry Division, predominantly consisting of Landsturm, advancing from Willenberg to the Narew crossing between Rozan and Ostrolenka. That this could take place the following morning had become unlikely according to reconnaissance results.

As an army reserve, the Menges Division was advancing from Mlawa to Ciechanow, and thus, however, behind the operationally less effective right wing of the attack section.

Against Pultusk, General von Plüskow had ordered the XVII Reserve Corps to attack west of the Pelta, east of the Pelta up to the Narew at Chmielewo the Goltz Group. The artillery had been pushed forward as far as possible, but the rearmost batteries were still four to five kilometers from the enemy's foremost line. The effective firing that began on the morning of July 23 from more than 200 guns (including about 80 heavy howitzers and 42 cm) was sharply concentrated against the intended breach point, one of which lay between the road from Stary Golynin and the Pelta, while the main attack was to take place along the road from Makow and to the east.

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The Attack of the Eastern Commander-in-Chief against the Russian Narew Front.

while the main attack was to take place along the route from Makow and to the east. After breaking through the advanced positions, the attack was to be continued without interruption, in order to capture the inner defensive line and the bridges on the same day.

Russian artillery barely responded. At 8:00 a.m., the 1st Guard Reserve Division under Major General Albrecht was the first to break into the northern front along the route from Makow, soon followed on its right by the 50th Reserve Division under General von der Goltz, and at 9:00 a.m. by the 86th Infantry Division of the XVII Reserve Corps under Lieutenant General von Bernitz, in whose area the 42 cm battery had been effective. However, it took hours before the entire northern front was taken. It was not until after 11:00 a.m. that progress was made on the road from Stary Golynin, and only after 12:00 was the large earthwork of Chmielewo over the Narew in the hands of the 1st Guard Reserve Division. General von Gallwitz ordered this division to halt so that it could immediately cross the river and, if possible, reach the road to Wyszkow behind Pultusk by evening. Moreover, the success achieved was to be exploited to the fullest extent to quickly capture the town and the crossings. All other considerations had to be set aside.

However, it was not easy to achieve the set goal, as from the previous artillery setup only two flat-fire batteries, a 10 cm and a 13 cm battery, equipped with very few rounds, could act against the inner defensive line and the bridges located an average of six kilometers behind the front position. Thus, a completely new artillery deployment was necessary. Also, the attack of the 85th Landwehr, 86th Infantry, and 50th Reserve Division did not gain ground with the hoped-for speed. Parts of the 50th Reserve Division suffered significant losses, while others, when rolling up the Russian position, captured many prisoners but also lost time. Observations of the extensive forest areas hindered the rapid pursuit behind the enemy, whose retreat, according to observations by the aviators, was stalled at the bridges of Pultusk. However, it could not be effectively targeted by the German artillery. The aviators themselves were not equipped at the time to seriously disrupt it with bombing. The attack movement came to a halt in the evening before the inner defensive line, which, in connection with the two permanent works, directly covered the town of Pultusk and the crossing point and seemed strongly fortified. Forces capable of getting the attack going again were lacking, as the division Menges (Landwehr and replacement troops) assigned to the XVII Reserve Corps in the meantime was still 25 kilometers on the march, having been partially exhausted by a 40-hour train journey, so that their intervention could not be expected that day.

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Execution of the Attack on Pultusk and Rozan.

25 kilometers of advance, partially following a 40-hour train journey, left the troops so exhausted that their involvement on this day was no longer expected. General von Plüskow reported to General von Gallwitz at 8 p.m.: "In view of the great exertions and the approaching darkness, the assault must be postponed tonight. At dawn, the position should be breached." Meanwhile, the 1st Guard Reserve Division had brought infantry to the southern bank of the Narew at Chmielewo and Grojno. However, a bridge was not expected to be completed until 3 a.m., so the division could only advance into the rear of Pultusk then. This threat — General von Plüskow believed — would likely be avoided by the enemy through timely evacuation of the western bank.

In the area of the XVII Army Corps, the Narew crossing by the 38th Infantry Division, which had driven the enemy from the northern bank the previous afternoon, was unsuccessful at Zambski. However, further east, the 36th Infantry Division under Lieutenant General von Heineccius, whose infantry partially waded through the river, reached the southern bank early on July 23 and advanced from there. By noon, the right wing of the 35th Infantry Division also managed to secure the southern bank, while infantry of the 38th Infantry Division crossed in the area of the 36th and then created space westward. The construction of bridges progressed slowly due to Russian counteractions. The 36th Infantry Division suffered such significant equipment losses that they had to rely on the bridge train of the 35th, delaying their construction again; the 38th Infantry Division could only begin construction at Zambski by evening.

Nevertheless, by July 23, they had established a firm foothold on the 16-kilometer river stretch from Chmielewo to Binduga on the southern bank of the Narew and could begin constructing four bridges, including that of the 1st Guard Reserve Division. The apparently not very strong enemy stood close by, holding the right bank in the arc from Ostrolęka.

At Rozan, General von Watter had intended on July 23 to fully occupy the positions of the Northwest Front. However, this partial goal was not fully achieved. As the enemy positions did not seem storm-ready everywhere, some strongly fortified installations north of the Pultusk road were taken; with very few own losses, 1100 prisoners were captured. The approximately 1½ kilometers further back, also heavily fortified Russian second position was to be taken only on the following or the next day.

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The Attack of the Eastern Commander-in-Chief against the Russian Narew Front.

The heavily fortified Russian second position was to be taken only on the following or the next day. "I agreed in the hope," wrote General von Gallwitz later, "that in the meantime the successes of the neighboring corps would assert themselves and that greater bloodshed could be avoided at Rozan." He calculated on the one hand with the night evacuation of Pultusk and further advance of the XVII Army Corps, on the other hand with the still pending Narew crossing of the Corps Eben, which was to be forced in the early morning of July 24 between Rozan and Ostrolenka.

The 8th Army's operations against the Narew on July 23 had yielded no results.

On the night of July 24, the expectations of General von Gallwitz were fulfilled. The Russians evacuated Pultusk and Rozan. Parts of the 86th Infantry and 50th Reserve Division had already moved into Pultusk during the night. By 5 a.m., the report was in the hands of the High Command, and by 6 a.m., the news followed that the advance troops of the 3rd Infantry Division had also entered Rozan. In both places, the bridges were destroyed, except for a military bridge and a footbridge just north of Rozan, which were under such heavy enemy fire that they could not be used for the time being. The Russians had set Rozan itself on fire during their retreat, similar to previous places; only about a third of the houses could still be saved. Pultusk, on the other hand, showed only minor damage.

General von Gallwitz himself later judged the success: "The famous Narew Line was taken after ample careful preparation, but ultimately after a short battle. What had not been considered about this problem in military literature and strategic tasks! It was something worth experiencing. However, eleven days had passed since the attack at Przasnysz, too much for the map distance. But what had the Russian piled up in works in this area to defend it? he mostly did!" About 37,000 prisoners and 49 machine guns, but only 14 guns were the total booty since July 13, of which 8,500 prisoners, 49 machine guns, but not a single gun from the period since July 18. In the fortified bridgeheads of Pultusk and Rozan, only 3,600 prisoners were made together. The enemy had mainly occupied his extensive defensive installations on the right bank of the Narew with infantry alone for so long until they were shattered by the mass deployment of German artillery.

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Crossing the River and Outcome of the Battles.

The infantry alone managed to hold out for so long until they were crushed by the mass deployment of German artillery. Despite all efforts of the brave German troops, who alone suffered about 3000 casualties on July 23, the Russians succeeded in withdrawing the forces deployed in the bridgeheads back across the river in a short summer night without significant loss of prisoners and without any loss of equipment.

3. Continuation of the Attack against the Bug.

a) Influence of the Supreme Army Command¹).

General von Falkenhayn saw in the favorable course that the operations had taken since mid-July not only with Army Group Gallwitz but also with the Army Detachment Woyrsch²) and Army Group Mackensen³), promising signs for the maturation of the great success hoped for between the Vistula, Narew, and Bug. "General von Falkenhayn brings good news. Everything is progressing in the East. In the West, the enemy is calm. ... Falkenhayn says it seems as if the campaign will now be decided in the East!" — so wrote Generaloberst von Plessen in his diary on July 19. In such hope, the German Chief of General Staff had decided to bring in two more divisions from the West⁴). So far, all allocations from other theaters of war had been assigned to Army Group Mackensen. Since their further relocation did not seem advantageous due to long transport routes and difficult supply conditions, General von Falkenhayn inclined to assign the two divisions to the 9th Army so that they could advance between Iwangorod and Warsaw over the Vistula into the rear of the enemy still holding at the Narew. He then agreed to the proposal of Generaloberst von Conrad, who advocated deployment with Army Group Gallwitz. General von Falkenhayn therefore informed the Commander-in-Chief East on July 20: "After the course of recent events, it is highly foreseeable that the decision in the campaign against Russia will fall in the area south of the Narew. In it, therefore, the deployment of even the last battalion, not absolutely necessary elsewhere, is justified and required. His Majesty has consequently ordered the deployment of the 54th and 58th Infantry Divisions as well as the Mortar Battalion No. 1 from the Western theater of war. The transport begins on July 20th."

¹) Maps 6 and 7. — ²) G. 394. — ³) p. 390 ff. — ⁴) p. 100.

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The Attack of the Commander-in-Chief East against the Russian Narew Front.

port begins on July 20th1).“ Information on the intended use and the desired unloading stations was requested.

When this telegram reached the Commander-in-Chief East, it was 2 p.m.2). The enemy had evacuated the fort on the west bank of the Narew near Ostrolenka the previous evening, and the Gallwitz army group reported the first success against Rozan as well, but the severity of the subsequent Russian counterattacks over the Narew between Pultusk and Ostrolenka had not yet been recognized. The staff was still full of hope to quickly overcome the Narew line. To the left of the Vistula, the 9th Army was advancing against the Grojec-Blonie position3), the right wing of the Woyrsch army detachment4) was approaching the fortress of Iwangorod from the south. On the front from Lomza through Ostrowiec and Rowno to Schaulen, the situation was essentially unchanged; in the far north, the left wing of the Njemen army had come close to Mitau5).

The Commander-in-Chief East, in contrast to the Supreme Army Command, was still of the opinion that the thrust over the lower Narew would remain operationally ineffective, and that the sooner, the better all available forces should be deployed at the Njemen, the retreat of the Russians on the left bank of the middle Vistula might have reinforced this view. Therefore, he had already assigned the surplus third brigade of the Menges division to the 10th Army the day before, to push further forward against the Njemen and Kowno, according to a diary entry by Major General Groener from that time, he was thinking of a "breakthrough at Olita". Only a success in the Njemen area now seemed to promise operational impact. The decision on the use and unloading stations for the divisions rolling in from the west was to be reserved by the Commander-in-Chief East until the beginnings reached the Vistula the day after tomorrow; by then he expected to have a clearer view of the further outcome of the attack on the Narew. Here he pushed sharply forward, also meeting the wishes of the Supreme Army Command. In this, General Ludendorff, in a telephone conversation with Major General Tappen, requested to postpone the decision on the deployment of the two western divisions until the morning of July 22nd, and expressed the conviction that the Gallwitz and Scholtz armies would smoothly cross the Narew and the Bug and exert the effect on the battles at Lublin demanded by the Supreme Army Command.

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Confrontation with the Supreme Army Command.

to cross the Narew and the Bug and exert the effect demanded by the Supreme Army Command on the battles at Lublin¹). Therefore, there might now be an opportunity to deploy the new divisions against the Russian Njemen Front.

However, the events of July 20 had significantly reduced the prospect of quickly crossing the Narew²). It seemed that the enemy was withdrawing forces from the 9th Army and thereby strengthening its Narew Front. Thus, the Commander-in-Chief East now considered a sharp attack by the army possible and necessary. He gave the order in the evening to break through the enemy positions on the left bank of the Vistula to cross the river above Warsaw³). He aligned with the thoughts of General von Falkenhayn⁴). He considered cooperating with the left wing of the Woyrsch Army Detachment and possibly also presenting this to the Supreme Army Command⁵). Meanwhile, he made the first arrangements for the encirclement of Nowogeorgiewsk.

On the morning of July 21, the decision of General von Falkenhayn arrived. Even if the not entirely satisfactory course of July 20 at the Narew Front had already raised slight doubts in him as to whether the high hopes he had attached to the overall operation in recent days would be fulfilled, he now had to reflect that the offensive of the Mackensen Army Group was also threatening to come to a standstill due to unexpectedly stubborn resistance. If that happened, the success of the entire operation was in question. Therefore, the most urgent requirement seemed to him to keep the attack on the Narew Front in motion. He informed General Ludendorff: "Since the situation between the Bug and the Vistula urgently demands relief through the thrust from the north, I can to my

¹) In the draft of Gen. von Falkenhayn from July 20 to a letter to Gen. Ludendorff, which has not been amended, it says: "At least Tappen told me, you had — in deviation from your and the Field Marshal's view in Poland — thought that the forces of the Gallwitz and Scholtz armies would be completely sufficient to safely advance over the Narew and the Bug so far that their impact on the events at Lublin would be certain."  
²) P. 308 f. — ³) P. 336. — ⁴) P. 315.  
⁵) General Ludendorff mentioned in a conversation with the Austro-Hungarian Army Command on July 21, which he had in Warsaw with the German and from the Austro-Hungarian advance of the Woyrsch Army Detachment over the Vistula (P. 397 f.) to Gen. Ludendorff had been suggested (Records of the War Archives Vienna).

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The Attack of the Eastern Commander-in-Chief against the Russian Narew Front.

Regret alteration of the general operational plan in the sense of the local suggestion, not to consider deploying divisions coming from the west against the Njemen Front."

Meanwhile, the enemy had evacuated the Grojec position in front of the 9th Army during the night. At the Njemen Army, the entire southern wing was now advancing, 3400 prisoners were reported, Schawlen was recaptured. At 12:45 PM, another message from General von Falkenhayn to General Ludendorff in Lötzen arrived, stating: "Even for the case you mentioned in yesterday's telephone conversation with Tappen, that Group Gallwitz was advancing well, unfortunately, in my opinion, no deviation from the highest orders should occur now."

Then Field Marshal von Hindenburg himself addressed the Supreme Army Command at 12:45 PM: "We also intend to break through the Narew line under all circumstances. However, since it was possible to achieve this goal without deploying the new units and their use further east would then be more effective, General Ludendorff has communicated my intention to postpone the final determination of the deployment point until the divisions begin to cross the Vistula." In response, General von Falkenhayn elaborated his view: Due to the situation in the Balkans, time was pressing. However, it is not to be assumed that the Mackensen Army Group, after the achievements and efforts it has already made, "will advance quickly on its own," nor will the cooperation of the Woyrsch Army Detachments and the 9th Army suffice. "So it remains only to make the Narew assault group as strong as possible, so that it quickly forces a decision, and therefore the allocation of the two fresh western divisions to it has occurred. — This does not prevent, as soon as clear signs of collapse and yielding of the enemy between the Vistula and Bug become apparent, strong forces from the Narew assault group being thrown onto the Njemen to pursue the success initiated by Your Excellency." The prerequisite is only "accelerated transition of railway bodies at the East Prussian border to those over the Narew." They also formed, according to the view of the Eastern Commander-in-Chief(1), the precondition for unhindered progress of the Gallwitz Army Group.

The Eastern Commander-in-Chief now decided to assign the 54th of the two advancing infantry divisions to the left wing of the Gallwitz Army Group, and the 58th to the 8th Army, to now also advance on the previously only thinly occupied front section east of Ostrolenka.

1) Communication from Gen. Ludendorff from December 1931 to the Reichsarchiv.

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Discussions with the Supreme Army Command.

Army Group Gallwitz, to assign the 58th to the 8th Army, in order to now also advance on the previously thinly occupied front section east of Ostrolenka. As things stood, he shared the view of General von Falkenhayn. "It is necessary," states his war diary, "to first complete the already begun Narew operation. However, it is doubted here that the Narew operation can lead to a decision. The decision lies at Kowno, taking this fortress and advancing toward Wilna." It was feared, as repeatedly discussed and emphasized in the staff, "that the Russians, with their great skill in retreat, would slip their head out of the noose at the Narew while sacrificing rear guards"¹).

On July 22, Field Marshal von Hindenburg presented his intentions to the Supreme Army Command: "According to His Majesty's orders, I am placing the greatest emphasis on operations against the Narew. Since the Narew has not yet been crossed, the new infantry divisions are being unloaded at Puppen and Kolno to strengthen the Narew assault group. After crossing the Narew, Gallwitz's right wing will take the fortifications at Zegrze with the weakest possible forces, encircle Nowogeorgiewsk from the north and northeast and attack it. The 9th Army is to break through the Russian position in front of Warsaw, then cross the Vistula upstream with parts of its forces and attack Warsaw. Close cooperation between the 9th Army and Gallwitz's right wing is essential in the battle for Warsaw and Nowogeorgiewsk and will be kept in mind by me, as well as freeing up parts of the 9th Army for the offensive to the east. The 10th Army²) continues to attack with its weak forces. The Njemen Army³) is carrying through its tactical success. I reserve the decision as to how far it will be advanced toward Wilna. — I dutifully point out that I still expect a decisive success and quick and decisive relief for Mackensen from reinforcing the 10th Army and taking Kowno."

July 23 brought the already described⁴) advances of Army Group Gallwitz against Pultusk and Rozan and the Narew crossing between both places. Additionally, Field Marshal von Hindenburg could also report a complete victory of the Njemen Army to the Kaiser in the evening⁵). The booty taken since July 14 there amounted to about 27,000 prisoners and 23 guns.

¹) Communication from Colonel von Waldow from summer 1931 to the Reich Archives. Similarly reported on July 20, 1915, by Major von Fleischmann to the 8th Army Command (Files of the War Archives Vienna).  
²) p. 473. — ³) p. 461 f. — ⁴) p. 313 f. — ⁵) p. 462 f.

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captured and 23 guns. According to the report of General von Below, "the main body of the Russian 5th Army fighting at Schaulen has been dispersed." However, there was a lack of forces to further expand this success, as the entire concern of the Commander-in-Chief East was now initially focused on continuing the Narew operation. After crossing the river, it was to take a more easterly direction. Depending on the need, one could then force the Bug crossing with the right wing in the area of Wyszkow and thus go directly into the rear of the Russians still holding at Warsaw, or also — remaining on the right bank of the Bug — strike towards Brest Litowsk and thus against the depth of the Russian connections. A corresponding order was already given at noon to the Gallwitz Army Group and the 8th Army after the first reports of successes achieved at Pultusk1).

The decision of the Supreme Army Command received the following day, July 24, coincided — as far as the continuation of the Narew operation was concerned — with what the Commander-in-Chief East had already ordered. It stated: "After taking note of Your Excellency's intentions, His Majesty has ordered: The rapid continuation of the operations of the Narew strike group in a generally southeastern direction is necessary. The more it succeeds in placing emphasis on the left wing, the better it will be. The unloadings at Kolno and Puppen already indicate this. The measures against the fortresses of Warsaw, Nowogeorgiewsk, and Zegrze are to be adapted to the guiding idea, therefore, for the time being, as few forces as possible are to be deployed against them. The capture of the fortresses is currently of no value compared to the importance of the thrust to the southeast. — Your Excellency's intention to deploy parts of the 9th Army after breaking through the position at Blonie—Nadarzyn across the Vistula corresponds to the plans of the Supreme Army Command. A reinforcement of the 10th Army is unfortunately not feasible at the moment, which also answers the final sentence of the telegram. It will be of great importance for the overall operations if the Niemen Army soon advances with at least stronger cavalry against the Russian rear connections in the area of Wilna."

Thus, the agreement with the Supreme Army Command was restored in the measures to be taken immediately. However, the relationship had been strained by the sharpness of the preceding discussions, leading to an undesirable escalation; the deeper underlying conflicts were not resolved.

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The Continuation of the Attack against the Bug.

conflicts experienced an undesirable escalation; the deeper underlying oppositions were not resolved.

h) The Battles of the Army Group Gallwitz and the 8th Army from July 24 to 26.

Maps 6 and 7, Sketches 21 and 22.

The order of the Eastern High Command, which reached General von Gallwitz on the afternoon of July 23, stated: "After forcing the Narew, the right wing of the Gallwitz Army is to take Dembe, Zegrze, and Benjamino and attack Nowogeorgiewsk." The mass of the army is to continue the march along the line Wyszkow—Ostrow and the road Ostrow—Lomza up to the Ruz-Bach. — The right wing of the 8th Army is to advance along the Ruz-Bach." It was intended, as indicated in a later report from General von Gallwitz to the Supreme Army Command, that the march of the Gallwitz Army Group would open the way. Since the battle for the Narew crossings was still in full swing when this order was received, General von Gallwitz initially gave only the Plüskow Corps the new directive to take the direction towards Wyszkow after capturing Pultusk. He ordered the XVII Army Corps to establish a firm foothold with the right wing on the heights south of Zambki and to force the Narew crossing in the protruding arc of Ostrolt with the 35th Infantry Division.

When it became clear on the morning of July 24 that the enemy had already vacated the bridgeheads of Pultusk and Rozan, the army order regulating the march against the Bug followed. The Beseler Group (Dickhuth Corps and 14th Landwehr Division, to which the Pfeil Brigade retreated, and twelve heavy and heaviest batteries used on the Narew front until then) was to take Nasielsk and concentrate against the north and northeast front of Nowogeorgiewsk. In the area Pultusk—Rozan, by the morning of the day, only the bridge at Chmieleno (1st Guard Reserve Division) and those at Zambki and Rondy (38th and 36th Infantry Divisions) were usable, and only in the afternoon was a fourth bridge at Pultusk completed; Russian fire, which still lay on the crossing points, had repeatedly delayed construction. The movement was to be continued in the following formation: The XVII Reserve Corps (85th Landwehr and 86th Infantry Division, now with the 1st Guard Reserve Division instead of the Menge Division) was to advance on both sides of the Narew to the south and southeast, with the left wing on the road to Wyszkow, and to take cover against Warsaw.

1) Connection to G. 315. — 2) G. 309 and 375 ff.  
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to advance on both sides of the Narew to the south and southeast, the left wing on the road to Wyszkow, and to take cover against Warsaw. The Plüskow Corps (now 50th Reserve Division, Menges Division, and 38th Infantry Division), the XVII Army Corps (36th and 35th Infantry Divisions), and the Watter Corps (as before 26th and 3rd Infantry and 4th Guard Infantry Divisions) received the direction to Wyszkow (exclusive)—Ostrow. The Eben Corps (as before 83rd, 2nd, and 37th Infantry Divisions with only minor heavy artillery) was assigned the section of the road west of the Ruz Brook Ostrow (exclusive)—Lomza as the target.

Meanwhile, heavy rain showers had set in. During the day, the area to the right of the Narew was reached without significant fighting near Nasielsk and eastward. To the left of the river, the advance initially depended on the speed with which the troops could be led over the bridges, but then new Russian resistance soon became noticeable here as well. The 86th Infantry Division, which could only cross late at Pultusk, encountered the enemy in a strong position twelve kilometers south of the crossing point at the Prut section in the evening. To the left, in continuous skirmishes in the woods east of Pultusk, the 1st Guard Reserve Division and the 38th Infantry Division came up to about the same level as that division, while the 50th Reserve Division and the Menges Division, which had only been able to cross later, were still behind. North of the exploited Pultusk breach, which was essentially dry at the time, the XVII Army Corps reached up to the 36th Infantry Division on the left bank of the Narew up to the height of the Ostrołł loop. The 35th Infantry Division succeeded in bridging the river bend itself at two points, but then it was stuck in narrow bridgeheads due to increasing enemy resistance. The same happened to the Watter Corps, which, in view of strong Russian defenses at Rozan, was only able to bring weak infantry across the river. The Eben Corps also failed to advance. Although its 83rd Infantry Division under Lieutenant General Stumpff had brought two battalions across the Narew further north at Raminow, the 2nd Infantry Division, Lieutenant General von Falk, these weak forces, which had waded through the river, were only able to hold out against repeated Russian attacks with heavy losses and with extreme difficulty; flanking fire from well-fortified positions hindered their reinforcement as well as their supply with ammunition and provisions.

The advance of the left wing of the army was particularly close to the heart of the commander-in-chief. If this success remained unachieved, while the right wing gained ground, it would result in a pivot that would increasingly lead to purely frontal pursuit behind the gradually eastward-yielding enemy; operational impact could then hardly be hoped for.

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Between Narew and Bug. New Stay.

says, while the right wing gained ground, a swing resulted, which more and more led to purely frontal pressing behind the enemy gradually retreating eastwards; operational impact was then hardly to be hoped for. In the afternoon, General von Gallwitz inquired extensively by telephone with General von Eben about the prospects of crossing the river north of Rozan and considered attempting it now more at Ostrolenka, as General von Eben had originally intended1); but here too the enemy had meanwhile strengthened, and a new attempt at this point required such extensive regrouping of troops and ammunition that it could only be undertaken for July 27. However, this seemed too late. Thus, General von Gallwitz agreed to the proposal of General von Eben, who — although unable to guarantee the outcome — in agreement with Lieutenant General von Falk commanding at Kaminotka, hoped that there, even in tough fighting, they would gradually reach the goal. "We must absolutely get through," it says in the record made at the Gallwitz High Command about this conversation, "it is of utmost importance for the operation."

In the mistaken assumption that General von Eben would now cross at Ostrolenka, the 8th Army was ready to join this advance with its own right wing.

By the morning of July 25, seven Narew bridges were completed by the Gallwitz Army Group in the Pultusk—Rozan area, with another begun kilometers south of Pultusk and at Rozan. However, the enemy had meanwhile had time to settle again and further strengthen. On the front from Nowogeorgiewsk to Lomza, including both places, up to 17 Russian divisions2) now seemed to be standing, most densely just in front of the part of the German front where the Narew had already been crossed. At the same time, new delays in supply, especially in the delivery of ammunition, became noticeable; the routes from rail and field railway junctions had become longer, the few existing roads were completely worn out and often impassable due to heavy traffic and new rain showers. Thus, a shortage of ammunition arose at the fighting front, which hindered the rapid continuation of the operation even more, as the demands of the infantry for strong artillery preparation grew.

1) See p. 309.  
2) According to a situation map, the 63rd Infantry Division, I Turkish Corps, IV Corps, 2nd Infantry Division, XXVII Corps, I Siberian Corps, XXI Corps, IV Siberian Corps, V Corps were deployed, as well as some individual brigades and three cavalry divisions. — In fact, the enemy even counted 20 infantry and three and a half cavalry divisions.

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became more obstructive as the demands of the infantry for strong artillery preparation grew. Complaints about ammunition shortages began; it had to be conserved. The Eben Corps had already reported on July 24 that to cross at Ostrolenka, it first had to fetch the ammunition prepared at Raminonta.

General von Gallwitz had transferred the leadership of the attack between the Narew south of Pultusk and the Pultwy-Bruch to General von Plüskow. The day passed here with skirmishes against the new Russian positions and other attack preparations. North of the Pultwy-Bruch, the XVII Army Corps advanced towards the railway running along the eastern edge of the lowland Wyszkow-Ostrolenka, where the enemy had apparently made a strong front again. At the Watter Corps, the bridges of Rozan were still under Russian fire. The infantry settled in the foreland of the Narew lowland, and the entire artillery then withdrew to the west bank in the evening. "For the divisions of the corps, it was initially about setting up the captured positions," it says in the corps' war diary on this day. The Eben Corps also failed to achieve any further success. The situation of the troops, heroically established east of the river but also reinforced by battalions, became increasingly difficult, as despite all efforts, it was not possible to silence the Russian artillery machine gun fire; it came from forest positions that could not be scouted and therefore could not be fought down with limited ammunition. Thus, the losses at this one spot rose to almost 1000 men. An additional difficulty was that the water depths of the fords changed so much due to the impact of heavy Russian shells and rain that almost every connection to the east bank was eventually interrupted.

In the 8th Army, the 75th Reserve Division succeeded in bringing a company across the river east of the Szkwa estuary; further progress was also prevented here by strong enemy counteraction.

The hope that after overcoming the Narew near and east of Pultusk, it would proceed quickly and thus facilitate the crossing further upstream did not seem to be fulfilled. In a telephone conversation that General von Gallwitz had with the Supreme Command D (1), General Ludendorff wished for more emphasis behind the XVII Army Corps to gain space to the east between Bug and Narew.

1) According to von Gallwitz, p. 307.

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Between Narew and Bug. Russian Counterattack.

win1). In contrast, General von Gallwitz himself considered the forward

push and pivoting of the corps, reinforced to four divisions, under Watter

southward towards the Bug to be desirable. Therefore, he aimed to bring

his left wing over the Narew as well. Since progress at Kaminofa was stalled,

he suggested to General von Eben once more to attempt the crossing at

Ostrolenka in the area of the 37th Infantry Division, and provided him with

the advancing 54th Infantry Division. With this reinforcement, General

von Eben believed he could accomplish the task; he set the 54th Infantry

Division for Ostrolenka on July 26.

At the 8th Army, General von Scholtz hoped to force the crossing in

the area of the 75th Reserve Division by sharply consolidating the troops

at the break of the next day. Meanwhile, the 58th Infantry Division had

also arrived behind it. Thus, the striking power of a total of four aggressive

divisions was now ready on the border of the two armies in the Ostrolenka–

Szkwa mouth area.

In the Gallwitz Army Group, the attack was to be continued on July 26

across the entire front. On the right wing, the Plüskow Corps was to lead

the main thrust by breaking through the Russian position at Pniewo on the

road to Wyszkow. However, before this could happen, a general Russian

counterattack began at about 8 a.m., spanning 60 kilometers in width. Its

left wing struck west of the lower Narew the 85th Landwehr Division, its

right the 4th Guard Infantry Division northeast of Rozan. In sometimes

bitter struggles, it was possible to repel the enemy everywhere, capture

about 3000 prisoners, and gain local advantages at certain points in the

pursuit. Overall, however, the Russian thrust, seemingly executed with

considerable manpower and ammunition, had significantly taxed the German

troops. The 50th Reserve and the 1st Guard Reserve Division together lost

another 1500 men; generally, the forces of the troops were very exhausted,

the artillery was short of ammunition. General von Plüskow reported that

a new attack would not be possible before sufficient ammunition supplies

arrived. At the Watter Corps, the Russian advance had only hit the southern

flank and was easily repelled. Subsequently, it was possible to advance

further in the woods east of Rozan. On the left wing, the 83rd Infantry

Division of the Eben Corps had participated, which in the meantime had been moved across the river between the 4th Guard Infantry Division.

1) Communication from Gen. Ludendorff from December 1931 to the Reich Archive.

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had been led across the river by the 4th Guard Infantry Division. The bridgehead on the eastern bank of the Narew at Rozan had thus been expanded in three days of fighting to a depth of only about three kilometers, though also extending northward. This — it was hoped — would benefit the 2nd Infantry Division at Kamionka, which was still fighting under the most difficult conditions for the crossing. Despite serious losses, Lieutenant General von Falk did not want to give up here, but continued to reinforce the units that had crossed, although they gained no significant ground forward.

At Ostrolenka, new delays occurred. General von Gallwitz, who placed particular value on rapid forward progress at this point and therefore pressed for it, had to yield to the objections of General von Eben, who wanted to execute the crossing only after thorough preparation, based on the experiences at Kamionka. Major General Baron von Watter, the commander of the approaching 54th Infantry Division, reported that despite all efforts to accelerate, he could not cross until the 28th. This was partly due to the unfamiliar road conditions in the East, which posed great difficulties for his vehicles coming from the West, further increased by rainfall.

The 8th Army also achieved barely any progress on July 26th. Two battalions of the 75th Reserve Division reached the left bank of the Narew; however, their situation threatened to become difficult when the enemy prevented bridge construction here as well through artillery fire and searchlight illumination.

In a situation report directly requested by the Supreme Army Command in the morning, General von Gallwitz had reported on his current mission and described his forces as sufficient against the enemy forces currently opposing him. However, for an effective continuation of the attack, the troops needed a rest period and, above all, ammunition. Further delays in the forward movement were therefore inevitable. General von Gallwitz contemplated the idea of first directing all force to the left wing, with which he then wanted to swing southward. However, he still wanted to postpone the attack of the right wing, which he considered less urgent.<header>c) The Standstill in the Attack from July 27 to August 6.</header>For the right wing and center of Army Group Gallwitz, July 27th was essentially a day of standstill following the heavy fighting of the 26th. In some sectors, the troops observed how the enemy expanded and wired their positions; but also they themselves were initially set on defense.

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Between Narew and Bug. Battles without Progress.

they themselves were initially set up for defense. General von Plüskow considered a withdrawal of units that had suffered particularly heavy losses only possible "once a rear position had been established". On the left wing at Rozan, where the enemy had evacuated the wooded area east of the river during the night, the bridgehead was expanded to Goworowo, reaching a depth of eleven kilometers; simultaneously, the 83rd Infantry Division could advance northward to within about five kilometers of the Kamionka crossing point; in total, more than 2000 prisoners were captured. However, the hoped-for relief for the situation of the 2nd Infantry Division remained elusive for now. The 54th Infantry Division, positioned for crossing at Ostrolenka, still lacked the promised pontoons and some ammunition, so that the river crossing early on July 28th seemed impossible according to the unit commanders. General von Eben, however, maintained the previously set attack time.

In the 8th Army, the 75th Reserve Division under Lieutenant General von Seydewitz had succeeded in completing a bridge at the Szkwa mouth during the night and, during the course of the day, bringing its entire infantry to the southern bank of the Narew despite enemy fire; the 58th Infantry Division had arrived behind it. Lieutenant General Ludendorff now designated the advance eastward against the rear of Lomza as the next task for this wing of the 8th Army; he promised two mortar batteries from the Eben Corps once this corps had completed its crossing. Since the heavy batteries freed up at Pultusk and Rozan had been assigned to the Beseler Group, the left wing of Army Group Gallwitz and the right wing of the 8th Army had to make do with their existing artillery, which was quite insufficient for the task at hand; the Eben Corps had only six heavy howitzer batteries for its three infantry divisions.

On the morning of July 28th, Army Group Gallwitz reported directly to the Supreme Army Command, apparently in response to their inquiry: On the right wing, the attack against Dembe—Serock would be possible in about three days; "until then, the Russians are exhausting themselves in futile attacks". The Prut position, which had proved to be strongly fortified, was also to be attacked; however, it would take two to three days before the ammunition would arrive. At the Pulwy marsh and to the north, the XVII Army Corps would fight a delaying action across a broad front. The important thing now was to first help the Eben Corps cross the Narew. If the crossing at Ostrolenka succeeded today or tomorrow, the offensive could be continued on this wing as well in two to three days with nine divisions.

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continued. As soon as this report was communicated to the Supreme Army Command by the High Command East, the differences in views on the further objectives became clear1). While Colonel Marquard pointed out that "the encirclement around Warsaw must be closed and tightened," the left wing should not be extended further against the 8th Army, rather it should be reinforced if possible, Lieutenant Colonel Hoffmann represented the view of the Commander-in-Chief East, who did not expect much from the thrust southwards against and over the Bug, but wished to gain space southwards; the Gallwitz Army Group should first unite with the 8th Army to open the Narew crossing in the direction of Sniadowo; until Lomza had fallen, it could not cross the Bug anyway.

Reports of Russian offensive activity also came from the right wing of the Army Group on this day. In a discussion with the Plüskow Corps, Colonel Marquard hoped that the Russians would bleed out in the continuous attacks. Meanwhile, the German attack was halted everywhere. The resumption at the Plüskow Corps was now scheduled for August 3; until then, ammunition should be procured. This meant that the right wing of the army was not only — as assumed in the morning report to the Supreme Army Command — delayed for three days, but for almost a week, the advance against the Bug directly into the rear of Warsaw, to close the encirclement there, was postponed accordingly. But even on the rest of the front, things did not go as desired on July 28.

At the Watter Corps, only a local success at Goworowo was recorded; the temporarily assigned 83rd Infantry Division, reserve, landwehr, and landsturm troops with only about six batteries, were too weak to make further progress after the successes of the previous day. At the Eben Corps, the stubbornly enduring 2nd Infantry Division managed to bring five batteries across the river during the night — parts of the 37th Infantry Division followed —, but the situation could not be decisively improved initially.

At Ostrolenka, where the security detachment of the 54th Infantry Division only partially succeeded early in the morning against the enemy's prepared defense, the army command, considering the experiences at Ramonieka, considered whether to proceed with the operation after all to abort the operation after all, in order to bring the division over a bridge that had meanwhile been started south of Kamionta to the left bank of the Narew.

1) p. 325.

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Between Narew and Bug. Battles Without Progress.

to break off again, in order to bring the division across to the left bank of the Narew via a bridge that had meanwhile been started south of Kamionta. In contrast, the division commander, Major General von Watter, still considered the execution of the already initiated operation promising and necessary "in the interest of the troops and the cause." He wanted to conduct crossings at several points during the coming night, thus on a broader front, with which General von Eben also agreed. However, General von Gallwitz now intervened with the order to prepare the division for a march southward, where a secured crossing was guaranteed and fresh fighting power was urgently needed against the enemy's tenacious resistance.

With the 8th Army, the 75th Reserve Division could not significantly expand its position south of the Narew due to rising water; its troops were, as stated in the war diary, "at the end of their strength after enormous exertions." For the continuation of the attack, the 58th Infantry Division was also placed under the command of Lieutenant General von Seydewitz and deployed on the right wing.

The morning of July 29 brought the surprising news that the Army Detachment Woyrsch had gained the right bank of the Vistula between Iwangorod and Warsaw with several spearheads¹). However, complete standstill prevailed at their own front; the enemy seemed to be reinforcing here; near Wyskow, aviators had reported unloading of troops that appeared to be marching toward Ostrow. If the enemy withdrew from the Vistula, it was possible that he would try to gain room for maneuver to the north. General von Gallwitz therefore ordered for his entire right wing up to and including the XVII Army Corps to strengthen and wire their positions and to withdraw reserves. On the left army wing, on July 30, unless a "significant change in the situation occurred" by then, only the Eben Corps was to attack, to which the 83rd Infantry Division fell back. The objective was to envelop the IV Siberian Corps stationed at Ostrolenka from the south. The Watter Corps was to cover the right flank of this attack. As General von Gallwitz explained to General Ludendorff²), his further intention remained unchanged: "Hold on the right, no attack against the fortresses for now. On the left with ten divisions, covered against the east by the 8th Army, advance on Ostrow—Malkin," thus executing a large right wheel against the Bug. From the Plüskow Corps, the 1st Guard Reserve Division was to march back to Szelkow as an army reserve, from where it could be drawn over Rozan to reinforce the left army wing.

¹) p. 405. — ²) von Gallwitz, p. 310.

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Army reserve marched back to Szelkow, from where it could be drawn via Rozan to reinforce the left wing of the army.

The attack of the Eben Corps didn't begin until noon on July 30th and, despite the deployment of the 54th Infantry Division on the right wing, its results again fell far short of the hopes of the Gallwitz High Command. Due to the Russians' tenacious resistance, instead of encirclement, they only achieved a frontal push-back of a few kilometers in a northeastern direction. A directive that General von Gallwitz gave to the Commanding Generals and Division Commanders on this day shows what general difficulties stood in the way of rapid advance, but also with what emphasis the leadership nevertheless held fast to achieving a great objective through attack. It stated: "The great successes achieved in the fight for strongly fortified positions through the deployment of heavy and heaviest artillery must not lead to waiting for the cooperation of such combat resources even in cases where the fight can be carried out without them." The 21 cm mortars were intended for strongly fortified strongpoints, against wide wire obstacles, and under certain circumstances also against localities with strong masonry. However, the ammunition resupply was difficult and, with lengthening supply lines, could only be accomplished at the expense of field artillery ammunition and provisions. As much as it was necessary to "spare the infantry losses where possible, we must also not spoil the troops too much. Hastily constructed strongpoints, for whose construction the enemy had only a few days available, must be overcome with the cooperation of field artillery and heavy field howitzers. The longer the attack on such points is delayed, the more time the enemy has to strengthen them."

Ammunition shortage also became apparent in the 8th Army. The commander of the 58th Infantry Division, Lieutenant General von Gersdorff, who was accustomed to western combat conditions, reported that in his opinion "a continuation of the attack was impossible with the completely inadequate means." The Narew crossing was not anticipated until the night of August 2nd.

For a week, the operation had essentially been at a standstill. General von Gallwitz brought the 1st Guard Reserve Division to his left wing. When he then also withdrew the 50th Reserve Division from the Plüskow Group on July 31st, this group felt capable only of holding the position, but no longer of attacking. On the same day, at the Eben Corps, a Russian counterattack temporarily broke through the 83rd Infantry Division and inflicted heavy losses on it.

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Between Narew and Bug. Increasing Ammunition Demands.

The division inflicted heavy losses on them. At the same time, it became apparent that the situation of the parts that had crossed the Narew at Kamionka was significantly worse than General von Gallwitz had assumed based on previous reports. General von Eben had indeed ordered the continuation of the attack on the entire front east of the Narew, but had to report in the evening that his ammunition columns at the distribution point Krempa, where the Watter Corps also received supplies, would have to wait for days to be filled; the demands of his corps were barely met to a third there, which posed a serious threat to the continuation of the attack. Nevertheless, progress was made by the 2nd Infantry Division during the afternoon, especially in finally taking the Russian position dominating the crossing at Point 92. At Ostrolenka, rearward movements of the enemy were observed on the southern bank of the Narew. On the other hand, the Narew Bridge of the 75th Reserve Division was destroyed again by Russian fire at the 8th Army. At 11 p.m., General von Eben ordered the continuation of the attack on the entire front for the following day to open the river crossing for the 8th Army.

Even August 1st brought no decisive progress. Complaints about ammunition shortages persisted, while the Russian artillery showed more activity than before. According to Major General Tappen of the Supreme Army Command, who spoke at the German headquarters in Krazne that day, there was enough ammunition available for the East; however, due to long and poor road connections from the unloading stations, it did not reach the front in the required amount. Not only the Chief of Staff of the Eben Corps, Major General von Boyna, but also that of the Watter Corps, Lieutenant Colonel Reinhardt, made emphatic complaints about this situation in telephone conversations with the High Command. The cholera threat was also not yet overcome¹). There were 97 cases; as a specialist in combating it, General Physician Dr. Hünermann joined the army group.

Meanwhile, it became known that the attack of Army Group Mackensen was now progressing and that one of the works of Iwangorod had already fallen. Foreign newspapers spoke of the impending evacuation of Warsaw. It seemed that the Russians intended to stubbornly defend access to the large double-track railway Warsaw—Bialystok, which must have been important for them for the return of equipment and supplies.

¹) See p. 308 and Gallwitz, p. 314.

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On August 2, pilots reported that the evacuation of Warsaw seemed to be well advanced; numerous larger bivouacs had been observed south of the Bug towards Nowo Minsk. Increasingly, it had to be considered that the enemy was now also yielding in front of the Army Group Gallwitz. However, on this day, only the Eben Corps made some progress; on August 3, it found the Russian positions at the Narew near Ostrolenka vacated and moved forward. By evening, the railway from Goworowo to south of Ostrolenka had been reached; more than 2000 prisoners were taken. "The railway for the general attack in a southeasterly direction was clear," wrote General von Gallwitz later; it was to begin on August 4. Instead, the Commander-in-Chief East now ordered the continuation of the attack with the left wing on Sniadowo, thus sharply to the east. This required a turn from the previously southeast-directed front and the final abandonment of the thrust south over the Bug into the rear of Warsaw. Somewhat deviating from the decision of the Commander-in-Chief East, General von Gallwitz temporarily held on to the idea of advancing his left wing more southeasterly to cooperate with the Mackensen Army Group.

On August 4, the attack was also resumed at the Watter Corps, which had meanwhile been reinforced by the 1st Guard Reserve Division, and the enemy east of Goworowo, on and north of the road to Ostroln, was thrown out of its positions in fierce fighting. At the same time, the Eben Corps advanced up to 15 kilometers east of Ostrolenka. Following this, the "Seydewitz Corps" (58th Infantry and 75th Reserve Division) of the 8th Army began the advance south of the Narew to the east. Near the town of Nowogrod, the 10th Landwehr Division crossed the river. 5000 prisoners were the day's bounty for the Gallwitz Army Group, 4000 of them at the Watter Corps. However, the territorial gain for this corps, especially on its right wing, remained small. In the evening, it was also learned that the enemy of the 9th Army had meanwhile retreated behind the fortifications of Warsaw and that it had completely vacated the left Vistula bank at Iwangorod. One particularly felt "a decision," noted General von Gallwitz on this day. However, he still expected new resistance from the enemy in a position that had meanwhile been prepared, which ran fairly straight from the northeastern end of the Pulwy Marsh to the area west of Lomza.

1) von Gallwitz, p. 314. — 2) Ibid., p. 316.

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Meanwhile Narew and Bug. Progress, but no decision.

August 5th showed that the enemy was initially not even inclined to retreat to these lines. The day brought no progress. From the right wing of the army group, the 38th Infantry Division was now also assigned to the left wing, and the general command of the XI Army Corps was to follow there. However, the enemy had, as was learned, already given up Warsaw; the 9th Army had followed there to the Vistula. "The Russians are desperately defending themselves and have entrenched again," wrote the first general staff officer of the army group, Major Staff, on this day. "But I do hope that we will get through and, in cooperation with Mackensen, strangle them."

On August 6th, the left wing of the Beseler group reached the fort Dembe on the Narew, which was not defended by the enemy. Otherwise, the day brought some progress in tough fighting in the direction of the southwest, especially at Wonsowo and Czerwín, which, although not operationally significant, together with the battles of the last three days, resulted in a larger number of prisoners, 14,000 men along with 69 machine guns, and also a capture of six guns. An attempt made by the 8th Army on this day to advance against Dostwiec by releasing gas, however, did not achieve the hoped-for success. On the other hand, various points on the front reported backward movements by the enemy; numerous village fires indicated imminent, perhaps larger, retreat intentions of the Russians.

4. The events at the 9th Army and the capture of Warsaw2).

Maps 5, 6, and 7, Sketch 12.

When Field Marshal von Hindenburg gave the fundamental order for the initiation of the Narew operation on July 3rd, the 9th Army had received the order to initially cover Poland to the left of the Vistula. However, if the Russians retreated here, it was to follow them to encircle Warsaw and Nowogeorgiewsk on the left bank of the Vistula.

After the transfer of the XVII and ½ XI Army Corps for the Narew attack, Field Marshal Leopold Prince of Bavaria, with Major General Grünert as Chief of Staff, at his nearly 100-kilometer-long front still had over 6½ infantry divisions, including the fully capable assault troops of the 5th, 49th, and 50th Reserve Divisions, as well as a cavalry division¹).

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along a front nearly 100 kilometers long, over 6½ infantry divisions, including the fully combat-ready 5th, 49th, and 50th Reserve Divisions as assault troops, plus one cavalry division¹). The Supreme Command estimated the force ratio against the opposing Russian 2nd Army at 83 German versus 148 Russian battalions, though they felt significantly superior in artillery of all calibers and ammunition. As aerial reconnaissance results repeatedly indicated that the enemy would soon withdraw to the Grojec-Blonie position, the pursuit concept took precedence over the defensive task. Both the Supreme Army Command and the Supreme Commander East wished that the enemy, before withdrawing, should be further weakened by another gas attack if possible, to relieve pressure on both Army Group Mackensen's offensive and the impending attack against the Narew.

On July 6th, Field Marshal Prince Leopold ordered gas to be released as soon as weather conditions permitted. The priority was "to damage the enemy before it's too late, even if full tactical exploitation of the effects must be foregone." Gas cylinders were installed in the area of the XXV Reserve Corps between Humin and the Sucha, and in the northern adjacent Bzura bend near Beseler's group. The timing of the release was left to the commanding generals.

Already that evening, weather conditions in the southern sector seemed so favorable that General von Scheffer ordered the release at 9:45. Between Humin and Borzynow, the success appeared good. Further north, the release was suspended due to insufficient wind strength, but then the gas cloud that had formed further south blew back there and drifted northward along the positions beyond the Sucha. It came completely unexpectedly for the German troops stationed there and wasn't even recognized in the darkness. Serious losses occurred; against a total loss of only 29 men from Russian fire stood about 1450 casualties from their own gas, including 138 dead - counting all who died from the effects in the following days. The effect on the enemy also appears to have been considerable. Assault troops were able to bring back 112 prisoners, 11 machine guns, 1700 rifles, and other equipment as spoils from their positions.

¹) Organization as of July 3rd (from the right wing): Div. of Lt. Gen. von Menges (replacement and Landwehr troops from the former Breslau Corps), Group of Gen. von Frommel: 9th Cavalry Div., 84th Infantry Div. (Landwehr and Landsturm troops of the former Posen Corps), XXV Reserve Corps (50th and 49th Reserve Div.), Group of Gen. von Beseler: ½ III Reserve Corps (5th Reserve Div.), 83rd Infantry Div. (Landwehr and Landsturm troops of the former Posen Corps), Westernhagen Detachment (Landwehr and Landsturm troops).

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Simultaneous Battles of the 9th Army.

were able to bring back from their positions 112 prisoners, 11 machine guns, 1700 rifles, and other equipment as spoils. From the course of this third gas operation, the lesson was learned that releasing gas at night would only be considered again if one's own troops were equipped with sufficient protective measures.

In the following days, signs of the enemy's impending retreat increased. The Russian IV Corps had been withdrawn from the front on the right wing of the army, and the enemy weakened in front of the southern adjoining Army Detachment Woyrsch. Daily, the pilots reported heavy rail traffic in the rear area. Prisoners stated that the area in front of the Blonie position was being devastated, and villages there were being burned down. The majority of the population was being transported away, and everything that could be of any use, especially metals, even church bells and door handles, was being removed.

When the attack at Przasnysz began on July 13, the tension increased, but the 9th Army itself was further weakened. It had already given up the 50th Reserve Division; Landsturm troops and re-harnessed artillery had taken their place and were consolidated into a division under Major General Gerée. When the attack by the Gallwitz Army Group made good progress and on the right wing, which had remained calm opposite the 9th Army, began to move on the Vistula bank, the Commander-in-Chief East announced on July 16 that the 9th Army was to prepare for the siege of Warsaw and Nowogeorgiewsk; moreover, further forces were to be released in the event of a Russian retreat. The 83rd Infantry Division and the Menges Division were designated for this purpose.

Already the following morning, it became apparent that the Russian retreat had become a fact. Almost without a fight, the 9th Army was able to follow up to the Grojec—Blonie position on July 17 and the two following days, where the enemy had settled again. A little over 1300 prisoners were the total spoils. However, the strength to overcome the long-prepared extensive enemy position was still sufficient after the release of the two divisions demanded by the Commander-in-Chief East; above all, there was a lack of the ammunition required for such a task.

On July 20, when the Russian counterattack directed against the Gallwitz Army Group suggested that the enemy was deploying stronger forces from the front of the 9th Army,

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9th Army withdrew¹), while the Army Detachment Woyrsch with its right wing was already approaching Iwangorod from the south²), the High Command 9 believed that the enemy would not seriously defend the Grojec position, but would soon retreat to the Vistula and the bridgehead of Gora Kalwarja. The Supreme Commander East gave the order to break through the enemy positions between Grojec and Blonie in the direction of Tarczyn, "to gain the right bank of the Vistula above Warsaw³) and attack Warsaw." He made ammunition particularly available. On the left, the army was to secure against Nowogeorgiewsk, for its later siege General von Beseler transferred to the General Command of the III Reserve Corps to the Army Group Gallwitz⁴), while Lieutenant General von Diringshofen took command of the troops of the left wing of the army.

Already on the morning of July 21, the expectation of the High Command 9 was confirmed. The enemy had evacuated the Grojec position at night, but still held at Blonie. The corps Scheffer (49th Reserve Division and Landsturm Division Gereke), previously set for the breakthrough to Tarczyn, was given the direction to the northeast towards Piaseczno. On July 22, the 9th Cavalry Division, as the right wing of the army, following the enemy, reached the Vistula over the Pilica estuary and turned north against Gora Kalwarja. The new Russian position extended in a semicircle of about ten kilometers around this place and then moved to the Warsaw front, which ran from Piaseczno via Nadarzyn and Blonie to the Vistula west of Nowogeorgiewsk.

On this day, the Supreme Army Command had announced that, according to reliable reports, the evacuation of Warsaw was to be expected soon, so as not to expose it to shelling. To the left of the Vistula, the extensive fortifications of the city, as aerial reconnaissance showed, had already been blown up by the enemy. The Supreme Army Command placed great importance on accelerating the attack on the fortress front. The 9th Army planned for July 25. Field Marshal Prince Leopold led the breakthrough against the Piaseczno—Nadarzyn section, with the aim of reaching Warsaw early here. The following days were spent preparing for the attack, especially with the positioning of the partly unlimbered batteries and their ammunition; air raids were launched against the Warsaw station and the Vistula bridges. As then on July 24, the news of the capture of the Narew fortresses Pultusk and Rozan came, it seemed to the Supreme Army Command and the Supreme Commander East that it was high time to also advance with special emphasis from the west against the Russians.

¹) G. 308 ff. um 317. — ²) S. 396. — ³) Cf. G. 341, note. — ⁴) S. 309.

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on the right bank of the Vistula east of Gora Kalwarja, strong new Russian positions have been identified.

On July 27, Generaloberst von Woyrsch informed the Commander-in-Chief East that his left wing, the German Landwehr Corps, was to force the Vistula crossing between Iwangorod and Gora Kalwarja, at the mouth of the Radomka, on the night of July 29. For this, he requested the support of the 9th Army through feigned operations below the mouth of the Pilica. However, the enemy pushed back the German 9th Cavalry Division, which was standing in a 22-kilometer-wide front, somewhat during these days. The wide deployment of the army was not considered entirely without concern, as it had concentrated all its strength in a narrow space against the planned breakthrough point and was no longer so mobile due to its entire composition with built-in, partly unmanned guns and numerous siege and bridge equipment, that it could evade at any time. At the same time, it became apparent that the amount of ammunition necessary for the destruction of the Russian position and for subsequent new attack preparations would probably not be available at all. Rather, the Supreme Army Command had pointed out that, according to the evening report from the previous day, there seemed to be little prospect of early successes against the Blonie position; in this case, a reinforcement of the Narew strike group or the Woyrsch army detachment by parts of the 9th Army would be considered, "all the more so as, according to all reports, the Russians will hardly hold Warsaw if it is threatened from the east."

The Commander-in-Chief East replied: The Russians had about six divisions in the Blonie position and were conducting the defense very actively. Therefore, a further weakening of the 9th Army would be impossible, even if the attack were stopped. In view of the current high water level of the Vistula and the Russian fortifications along the eastern bank, the attempt to cross at the mouth of the Radomka seemed to him to have little prospect of success. "Within the framework of the current operations, it would therefore be more promising to either reinforce the 9th Army with the Landwehr Corps to initially push the Russians into Warsaw, where they would have strong forces free to deploy — or to deploy the Landwehr Corps on the right wing of the Narew strike group to accelerate the fall of Warsaw through vigorous pressure from the north." General von Falkenhayn replied: "Although I do not consider an advance of the Russians from the Blonie position westward with further objectives likely, the release of forces from the 9th Army is temporarily refrained from in consideration of Your Excellency's position."

1) p. 406.

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expanded and connected through field installations into a cohesive position. Field Marshal Prince Leopold had ordered the enemy to be driven into Warsaw the following day.

On August 4, the advance before the fortified line of the forts was halted again; behind it, the enemy seemed to continue the retreat through the city and across the Vistula to the east. The following day, the Scheffer Corps pushed through along the road from Piaseczno. But already during the night, the Russians evacuated the fort line and Warsaw itself and retreated to the right bank of the Vistula. On the morning of August 5, the troops of the German 9th Army entered the city. The population remained calm. The Vistula bridges were destroyed; across the river, a firefight ensued.

With the capture of the Polish capital, a widely visible success of the operations in Poland was achieved. Although military booty1) was hardly recorded, the impression worldwide was of considerable significance. The Russians had destroyed military equipment and strategically important supplies before their withdrawal. The city and population had suffered little; traffic proceeded as usual.

5. Disputes between the Supreme Army Command and the Eastern Commander-in-Chief. — Formation of the Prince Leopold Army Group.

Maps 6 and 7.

Towards the end of July, when the attack in Courland was completed with the reaching of the Aa section2) and that of General von Gallwitz had again come to a halt3), the Eastern Commander-in-Chief considered it urgent to carry out the operation over the Njemen against Vilna, which had been advocated since the beginning of the month in Posen and repeatedly since then, most recently on July 22, to disrupt the Russian connections4) and initially to take Rowno. According to what General von Tschirschky had expressed in his communications of July 21 and 24,5) he also seemed to agree with this plan and only considered the time for its execution as not yet arrived. Just now, he had the supply of the heaviest 5-ton batteries, which the Eastern Commander-in-Chief had requested for deployment against Kowno from Colonel General von Conrad and had also been assured of receiving, was prevented by the indication that they would be needed against Iwangorod, for the Vistula crossing, and for the advance of the 4th Army.

1) Information on the booty of the 9th Army during the advance against the Vistula could not be determined, losses amounted to about 7000 men.  
2) See p. 464.  
3) See p. 326 ff.  
4) See p. 271 ff. and 317 ff.  
5) Ibid.

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Capture of Warsaw. — Question of the Njemen Operation.

requested for deployment against Kowno by Generaloberst von Conrad and

also assuredly received, was prevented by pointing out that they would be

used against Iwangorod, for the Vistula crossing and for the advance of the

i. 4th Army. However, since this seemed to be a purely Austro-Hungarian

task, which Generaloberst von Conrad was primarily responsible for deciding,

this justification was not considered entirely valid by the Supreme Commander

East.

On July 26, Generalfeldmarschall von Hindenburg addressed the

following report to the Kaiser: "To Your Imperial and Royal Majesty, I

dare to most humbly present my view of the current war situation: Before

the armies of Field Marshal von Mackensen, the enemy is withdrawing forces

towards Brest Litowsk. Their transport is likely, either against Army Group

Gallwitz or towards Wilna. The striking power of the armies of Field Marshal

von Mackensen seems to be essentially exhausted by the ongoing battles, thus

putting the success of the operations ordered by Your Majesty into question.

The Vistula has become wider due to continuous rain, making a crossing

between Iwangorod and Warsaw, as long as the enemy holds the right bank,

in my opinion, no longer feasible1). The Army Group Gallwitz2) will probably

gain ground. However, if the enemy deploys its forces against them, their

striking power will soon weaken unless they are further immediately reinforced.

Even if they are successful, their advance will never lead to the defeat of the

enemy army3). At most, they can push the Russians back against the line Brest

Litowsk—Bialystok. However, this does not yet decide the war despite all

successes. The Russians must be hit much more sensitively! This can only be

achieved in the current war situation by strengthening the 10th Army, capturing

Kowno, and offensives by the 10th and Njemen Army against the Russian

connections. This operation could be initiated by providing assault equipment

on Kowno and by strengthening the 10th Army with parts of the army of

Field Marshal von Mackensen, the Army Detachment Woyrsch, and the 9th

Army — but only after completing their current attack."

When the letter arrived in Pleß, General von Falkenhayn had just

departed for the western theater of war3). The response was therefore delayed

until July 30. On that day, the Chief of the General Staff, immediately upon his return from the western theater of war, obtained the decision of the Kaiser.

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chief of staff immediately upon his return from the western theater of war sought the Emperor's decision. Just a week ago, on July 24, he had presented his intention to enclose the fortresses of Ivangorod, Warsaw, Nowogeorgiewsk, "but otherwise to pursue the retreating Russian army to destroy it before it crosses the Bug." Meanwhile, on July 29, the Vistula crossing by the Woyrsch army detachment had succeeded, and at the same time, the Mackensen army group had resumed its offensive after a several-day pause with a splendid initial success. General von Falkenhayn now points out that the Eastern Commander-in-Chief had based his assessment of the difficulties of these two army parts on incorrect assumptions. The favorable turn on the southern part of the Polish theater of war had also revived his hope of achieving a great success on the chosen path. He did not believe that the Russians would still halfway retreat to the Brest-Bialystok line to escape the battle decision. He annotated the relevant passage in the Field Marshal's letter with the remark: "The Russians must be defeated beforehand before they decide to do so."

The Emperor agreed to the proposals of his Chief of Staff. The letter, in which he informed the Eastern Commander-in-Chief of the decision, for the first time also contained a certain concession to the operational idea that he had been advocating with increasing emphasis since the meeting in Posen on July 2. General von Falkenhayn admitted that it was undoubtedly highly desirable to advance with a strong army on the middle Njemen, but then continued: "Time and space unfortunately make it impossible to form this army from contributions from Woyrsch around Mackensen so that the enemy could not easily take timely countermeasures. A certain consequence would be the stagnation of all our forces now deployed here until winter. This must be avoided under all circumstances. So it remains only to strive for the defeat of the enemy through the most vigorous continuation of the ongoing operations."

1) Diary entry of Colonel General von Plesßen, who added: "I fear this intention will no longer succeed, as the departure is timely and very skillfully executed. With this situation, our position deteriorates greatly, as we must hurry westward with our army echelon against the forces gathered behind the Bug." In fact, the situation in the west at that time did not indicate this (p. 99 f.).

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Discussion with the Supreme Army Command.

To strive for ongoing operations1). His Majesty hopes that Your Excellency, by advancing strong parts of the Narew assault troops on the right Bug bank and similarly advancing parts of the Njemen Army in the area east of the Njemen, can significantly contribute to success."

The decisive factor for this negative stance was still the desire to conclude the offensive on the eastern theater of war in the foreseeable future. This line of thought also corresponded to the intention to give further impact to the successful, but not yet secured, crossing of the Vistula by the Woyrsch Army Detachment by providing reinforcements. On July 31, the inquiry was therefore made to the Commander-in-Chief East: "The crossing of the Vistula by the Landwehr Corps has already led to a welcome impact on the enemy. The effect would be significantly increased by bringing in additional forces. An attempt will be made to make troops from the southeastern front available for these purposes. Support could be provided more quickly by the 9th Army. I therefore ask Your Excellency for prompt notification as to whether at least one infantry division of this army can be made available." Since the 9th High Command did not consider the release of an infantry division feasible due to the width of any section, only a cavalry division was released2).

1) In contrast, the War Minister present at the Great Headquarters, General Wild von Hohenborn, and the Chief of the Field Etappen Inspection, Major General Groener, essentially held the same position as the Commander-in-Chief East. General Groener noted in his private diary: "July 28. Meeting with General von Wild. We agree in a few minutes on an offensive with the 10th Army. General von Falkenhayn, too little inclined in his thinking, stubbornly adheres to the decision once made and keeps returning to it. General von Falkenhayn is for further advancement at Gallwitz on Siedlce, attacking Malin. — July 31. Conversation with Lappen about the operation. He believes that we lack the forces for the big pincer. He still wants to bring the III Army Corps from the west to Gallwitz, where everything available must be deployed. The mistake is that we do not aim with Falkenhayn to destroy the Russian army as much as possible. They want to be content with the defense on the Bug line, to then bring their ten corps through a breakthrough to the west. Falkenhayn does not come to this thought. He believes that we fulfill the task with the army, bringing about the decision in the east through our own operation against the rear connections of the Russians. For this purpose, everything possible from the Bug Army to Gallwitz should be pulled out for the offensive. Until we have driven the Russians from this theater of war, as begun, the entire Russian army encompassing operation must be brought to an end." — 2) C. 339.

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The Attack of the Eastern Commander-in-Chief against the Russian Narew Front:

The hope for "overthrowing the enemy through the most vigorous continuation of ongoing operations," as General von Falkenhayn's letter of July 30 shows, was very much based on the success of quickly advancing strong parts of the Narew assault group on the right Bug bank. Their slow progress1) threatened to nullify this hope at the beginning of August. He therefore considered further reinforcement of this group necessary and suggested to the Eastern Commander-in-Chief on August 2 whether the transfer of one to two divisions of the 9th Army to the Narew was now appropriate. "Even if the Russians wanted to leave the right and advance westward from the fortress triangle, which I consider very unlikely, they will not be able to change the course of the main decision in any way. The position of the Commander-in-Chief of the 9th Army would indeed be temporarily very impaired. However, I am ready to request an order from His Majesty that would remove any sharpness from the process."

Meanwhile, the Eastern Commander-in-Chief had already decided to reinforce the 10th Army with new forces as preparation for the future attack against Kowno2). He replied to the Supreme Army Command on August 3: "I do not currently consider it possible to withdraw one to two divisions from the entire front, which is under attack and in close contact with the enemy parts of the 9th Army. If the Russians vacate the Blonie position, one to two divisions will be freed. I will prepare everything to expedite the transport. However, I do not consider their deployment at the Narew favorable. There is no lack of troops here, but we are fighting purely frontally in very difficult terrain conditions. I can only support the deployment of forces that may be freed up at the 9th Army at Kowno, to decisively act against the rear connections of the Russians in conjunction with the Njemen Army after capturing the fortress. Kowno maintains only weak fire. A quick deployment is still possible here. However, I will also attack Kowno without reinforcing my weak left flank to prepare an offensive here. I have given the order for this. I request the allocation of ammunition for the heaviest artillery and heavy field howitzer ammunition. Should I receive the heaviest artillery, I would be grateful." In response to a query from General von Falkenhayn, this position was supplemented: "Before the 9th Army, the enemy apparently about to vacate the Blonie position."

1) p. 326 ff.  
2) Div. Bredmann from the Njemen Army, 6th Ldw. Br. from the 8th and a Det. Regt. from the 9th Army. — 3) p. 326.

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The Attack of the Commander-in-Chief East against the Russian Narew Front.

"under securing against the forces possibly still located in the Vistula fortresses, to break through with all means against and over the line Lukow—Siedlce").

That the Supreme Army Command considered such plans had been known to the Commander-in-Chief East for some time, yet the order came now as a complete surprise. After a series of incomparable victories and almost a year of successful activity as the sole commander over the German part of the Eastern Front, Field Marshal von Hindenburg felt the restriction of his command area, ordered on the very day of the capture of the Polish capital, as an affront. His staff felt the same way. This exacerbated the opposition to the Supreme Army Command to the utmost, in conjunction with factual disagreements, leading to an irritated exchange of telegrams with them. That General von Falkenhayn expressly described the formation of the new army group as a temporary, purely operational measure necessitated by the war situation and the command arrangement vis-à-vis the Austro-Hungarian army, which did not restrict the administrative area of the Commander-in-Chief East, could not erase the feeling that, besides factual reasons, at least the intention played a role to limit the power area of the Commander-in-Chief East and thereby take away the possibility of reinforcing the 10th Army and thus the planned thrust over the Njemen.

Despite the reorganization of circumstances, the Commander-in-Chief East adhered to the plan to dispatch the parts of the 9th Army (84th Infantry Division and heavy batteries) already designated against Kowno, but encountered decisive rejection from the Supreme Army Command. General von Falkenhayn expressed his conviction again on August 6, "that in the current situation, everything depends on defeating the enemy in Poland by attacking from all sides, and that rapid advancement of the wings is only possible if a strong pressure from the Vistula is exerted." For use against Kowno, he proposed the 115th Infantry Division from the West as a replacement for the requested parts of the 9th Army, which, however, could only arrive on August 12. The heavy batteries were to be released only after the 9th Army had forced the Vistula crossing, thus at a quite uncertain time. From the troops of this army, the Commander-in-Chief East was left only with the division-strengthened, consisting of Landwehr and Landsturm, previous Westernhagen detachment, which had formed the northern wing and was designated against the southern front of Nowogeorgiewsk.

1) Operations of the Army Group Prince Leopold p. 410 and 414 ff.

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The division reinforced, consisting of Landwehr and Landsturm, the previous Westernhagen detachment, which had formed the northern wing and was designated against the southern front of Nowogeorgiewsk.

The entirety of these events prompted a letter from Field Marshal von Hindenburg to General von Falkenhayn, in which he bitterly complained on August 12 that "the degree of independence essential for his position, naturally serving the whole, had gradually and repeatedly been restricted in a rather diminishing form to an extent that not only impaired his creativity but also significantly hampered the conduct of operations."

Meanwhile, the Njemen Army had reached Poniewiez and Mitau, and the 10th Army had initiated the attack against the large Njemen fortress Kowno. Despite the extremely limited means available according to the previous instructions of the Supreme Army Command, the Eastern Commander-in-Chief was determined to continue doing everything possible to gain ground in the Njemen area and thereby pave the way for a future operation over Wilna. However, it was difficult to muster the necessary forces after the transfer of the 9th Army, as not only Kowno but also the large fortress Nowogeorgiewsk had to be dealt with, in front of which about four divisions were entrenched. On August 7, General von Falkenhayn had pointed out: "Our ammunition situation makes it completely impossible to simultaneously undertake the siege of two fortresses"; since the siege of Kowno had already been initiated, that of Nowogeorgiewsk had to be postponed. But just two days later, he demanded that the deployment of the heaviest Austrian-Hungarian batteries, freed up from Iwangorod, be directed first against Nowogeorgiewsk, whose accelerated capture he "must place special value on given the current situation and the reports on the condition of the garrison." Thus, in the following days, the attack on Kowno and that on Nowogeorgiewsk proceeded side by side.

Once again, Field Marshal von Hindenburg reported his assessment of the overall situation to the Supreme Army Command on the morning of August 13: "The operation in the East, despite excellent achievements of the Narew thrust, has not led to the destruction of the enemy. The Russian has, as expected, evaded the pincer movement and allows himself to be pushed back frontally in the direction he desires.

1) p. 466 and 476 f.  
2) The reasons for the change in assessment could not be determined.  
3) p. 377 f.

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as expected, evaded the pincer and can be pushed back frontally in the desired direction. He is able to regroup at will with the help of his good routes and direct strong forces against my left wing, which threatens his connections. I consider this to be endangered. On the other hand, a decisive blow is only possible from the area around Kowno, although unfortunately a considerable amount of time has been lost for this. I therefore urgently request again a reinforcement of my left wing, in order to either become offensive depending on their outcome or at least to hold the territory gained so far. I emphasize again that I saw the only possibility of destroying the enemy in the offensive of my left wing against connections and the rear of the enemy. This offensive is probably still the only means to avoid a new campaign, in case it is not already too late for this."

In contrast, General von Falkenhayn stated in his detailed response of August 14: "The destruction of the enemy has never been hoped for from the ongoing operations in the East, but merely a decisive victory corresponding to the purposes of the Supreme Army Command. The destruction as a whole should not have been pursued in the present case, according to my view, which must remain decisive after approval by His Majesty. The basic conditions for this are simply lacking, one cannot expose the connections of an opponent who is numerically far superior and facing frontally, who has excellent connections, unlimited time, and unrestricted space, while one is forced to operate in trackless, path-poor terrain with a tight time limit and in connection with many troops that are not very powerful, some even not resistant. However, no one will doubt that the enemy has already been decisively defeated for our purposes, who realizes that the Russians have lost about 750,000 men as prisoners alone in three months, countless material, besides Galicia the Kingdom of Poland and the Duchy of Courland, finally the possibility of seriously threatening Austria-Hungary during the initiation of the Italian war or at all in the foreseeable future, as well as the other, their Odessa army, at the critical moment in the Balkans. There is also some prospect that the results of the operations will increase, as it has been possible to push no less than five thoroughly defeated enemy armies into the area between Bialystok and Brest Litowsk." — In contrast, the Chief of the General Staff now admitted for the first time that the operation would probably have been even more decisive if it had been possible to simultaneously strike over the Niemen.

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to achieve a significantly more favorable outcome of the operation. Since this assessment included the renunciation of the Narew operation, it bypassed the thoughts of General von Falkenhayn, for whom such renunciation had never been an option.

That General von Falkenhayn finally made the forces freed by the fall of Nowogeorgiewsk on August 19 available for the Niemen area1) did not in any way alleviate the extremely heightened tension between the two highest German command posts. It had been continuously growing since the formation of the Prince Leopold Army Group. A new point of contention had already arisen due to the need to lift the outdated subordination of parts of the homeland territory (six deputy general commands along with their fortresses) under the Commander-in-Chief East2).

On August 24, General von Falkenhayn responded to the complaints of the Field Marshal General from August 12.3) He emphasized that none of the measures he himself proposed or ordered according to his authority had ever been carried out for reasons other than purely factual ones. In impressive sentences, he then stated: "In my position, I have to bear the responsibility for the overall course of the war before my conscience, before our King and Lord, and before our descendants entirely alone. No one can share it with me, no one can relieve me of it, no one can help me in the slightest. In this position, subordinating my honest, factual conviction to the opinion of anyone else, no matter how high they stand, or even to personal consideration, no matter how venerable the person in question may be, would be a crime for which there is no closer designation, not because I consider myself better than many others — I know my inadequacy all too well —, but because in my office, which was not entrusted to me through my own doing or at my own request, but merely through the trust of His Majesty in the most difficult moment of the war, according to my understanding, there should be no factual compromises, and because my absolute duty in this office is to unite all parts of our armed forces in joint action for the good of the whole according to the unified will of the supreme command, which of course only represents that of His Majesty."

This letter from the Chief of the General Staff was not yet in the hands of the Field Marshal when on August 24, the General Government of Warsaw was formed under General von Beseler, and contrary to earlier hopes, the main part of the Russian territory previously administered by him was also taken from him.

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of the Field Marshal General, when on August 24, the General Govern-

ment of Warsaw was formed under General von Beseler and, contrary to earlier

expectations, the main part of the previously Russian-administered territory was also taken from him.

Field Marshal General von Hindenburg then stated on August 25

in a letter addressed to the Supreme Army Command and simultaneously in copy to the

Military Cabinet and the Ministry of War: The title "Supreme

Commander of all German Forces East" granted to him in the urgency of need had now become a pressing

issue, he asked to consider a change. However, this was rejected by

the Supreme Army Command with detailed reasoning,

pointing out that the use intended for the Field Marshal General by His Majesty

would still make the creation of a similar title necessary. This communication

could in no way diminish the sharpness of the resulting opposition.

6. The 12th and 8th Army in the Pursuit through Poland.

Maps 6 and 7, Sketch 22.

a) The Pursuit from August 7 to 11.

On the morning of August 6, General von Falkenhayn asked the

Gallwitz High Command whether the army group would "break through".

Colonel Marquard replied that "there was good confidence". When asked for

an operational proposal, he recommended strengthening the right wing of the

8th Army. Finally, General von Falkenhayn again

emphasized the importance of the army group's operation. In the afternoon,

Colonel Marquard, apparently at the instigation of

General von Gallwitz, called Major General Tappen and repeated: "The

operation must not be stopped; it is progressing well. If

forces are available, they must be directed to the right wing of the 8th Army."

At the border against the direction of attack maintained by the army group

Gallwitz, already a larger gap was forming towards the southeast. At the same time, General von Gallwitz also suggested to the

High Command of the 8th Army to strengthen its right wing

with its own forces. That the army itself was meanwhile on August 3 had to transfer the 6th Landwehr Brigade to the 10th Army.

1) p. 346. — 2) Connection to C. 333.  
3) According to records at A.D.R. Gallwitz. — To what extent the D.B.D. was  
informed about these discussions could no longer be determined (p. 352).

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On August 3, the 6th Landwehr Brigade had to be transferred to the 10th Army<sup>1</sup>, which was a very surprising measure by the Eastern Commander-in-Chief. To comply with his directive to take the direction towards Sniadowo with the left wing, without abandoning his own intention of advancing southeast, General von Gallwitz extended the left wing with Landsturm troops to connect with the 8th Army, while maintaining the southeast direction for the core of his army group.

To what extent the Eastern Command was informed about these intentions and the direct communication between the subordinate army group and the Supreme Army Command could not be determined<sup>2</sup>. In any case, it had a completely different view than General von Gallwitz. According to General Ludendorff, "there was nothing more to gain between the Bug and the Narew." The Eastern Commander-in-Chief also felt how the Supreme Army Command ensured that "nothing independent was ordered from his side"<sup>3</sup>.

On August 7, the Gallwitz Army Group, long the strongest of all formations under the Eastern Commander-in-Chief, received the designation 12th Army<sup>4</sup>; its group Beseler, intended for the attack against Nowogeorgiewsk, came directly under the Eastern Commander-in-Chief the following day<sup>5</sup>.

The morning of August 7, after almost two weeks of stalemate, brought costly frontal battles with no visible success. On a broad front, the enemy had vacated their stubbornly defended positions of about ten days during the night, as the Russian 12th Army, positioned east of Rozan, was, according to the official Russian account<sup>6</sup>, "gradually so worn down that it was no longer able to hold off the Germans even for a short time." Only in front of the center of the German 12th Army did the enemy still stand on the eastern edge of the Pulmyn-Bruches.

<sup>1</sup> p. 344 note and p. 475.  
<sup>2</sup> The then First General Staff Officer of the Army Group, now Colonel a. D. Staff, wrote to the Reichsarchiv in the summer of 1931: "I have fundamentally informed the Eastern Commander-in-Chief about everything, unless Colonel Marquard expressly wished it to be omitted. However, this happened more than once or twice, as it gave no solid reason for a later sharp difference between Ludendorff and Tappen, whose persistence Colonel Marquard sought to avoid." In contrast, General Ludendorff stated in a letter from December 1931 to the Reichsarchiv that he had never heard of these discussions.  
<sup>3</sup> p. 376.  
<sup>4</sup> p. 376.  
<sup>5</sup> Rjesnawom, p. 192 f.

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Between Bug and Narew. The Objective of the Operation.

Following the enemy, often fighting against rear guards, the troops of this army reached the lower Narew and the Bug from Dembe to below Wyszkow by the evening of the day. The fort Zegrze, abandoned by the enemy, was occupied and subsequently a line was taken, which led six kilometers northwest past Wyszkow over the eastern edge of the Pultny marsh, east past Borislow to the Ruz stream. Here, the 8th Army joined in the direction of the Narew lowlands west of Lomza. Again, 4000 prisoners were brought in. The enemy apparently was in an orderly retreat to the east from the previously advanced arc against the middle Vistula. The bridges over the lower Bug had been demolished, numerous localities set on fire.

General von Gallwitz still intended to pursue in a generally southeast direction to intercept the Russian forces retreating from Warsaw to the east at the Bug. In contrast, Lieutenant General Ludendorff, in a telephone conversation about this, doubted the prospects of such an attempt and again pointed to parallel pursuit to the east and close connection to the 8th Army. Accordingly, the commander-in-chief P gave the 12th Army the order on August 8 to advance north of the Bug against the line Makow—Zambrow—Lomza, main forces on Czyzew. Subsequently, the 8th Army received Rutki as its target; it was to take Lomza. When General von Gallwitz again expressed hope of capturing the enemy retreating from the Vistula at the Bug, Lieutenant General Ludendorff wanted to take this possibility into account. General von Gallwitz was, however, little satisfied: "My new front," he later wrote, "left to the east, right to the south, then formed almost a right angle. Ludendorff, however, considered the army strong enough to turn sufficient forces to the southeast against Ciechanowice in addition to the front to the east and the Bug occupation in the south. I saw the idea of encircling the retreating enemy seriously endangered with such an approach." In the same matter, Colonel Marquard and Major Staff also made representations to Lieutenant Colonel Hoffmann, pointing out that if operations continued over the line Nur—Wizna, i.e., beyond the narrow point between Bug and Narew, the forces would not be sufficient. The commander-in-chief

1) von Gallwitz, p. 320 f.  
2) According to the communication of Colonel a. D. Staff from summer 1931 to the Reichsarchiv, the renewed inquiry was made at the special request of Gen. von Gallwitz.  
† World War. VIII. Volume.

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However, he often did not let himself be deterred in his decisions. General Ludendorff had already informed the 8th Army that it was desirable to take Lomza as soon as possible to free up forces for the 10th Army, with the 3rd Reserve Division being considered for the task. In the evening, he agreed in a conversation with Colonel Marquard that the 12th Army no longer intended to cross the Bug, and concluded by saying: "If you want to wait a little longer, you must hold far ahead. I believe you have enough forces."

The view recorded in the files, which the Chief of Staff of the 12th Army, Colonel Marquard, presented to his commander in the evening, sought to bridge the differences: "The enemy cannot, due to poor road conditions, withdraw all the forces located there, about 16 corps, from the arc between the Vistula and the Bug over Brest Litowsk and south of it. Rather, at least five to six corps must cross the Bug northwest of the fortress, even if some corps are transported by rail. The task of the 12th Army is to prevent this retreat to the northeast or at least to hinder the enemy as much as possible. If the enemy immediately begins the backward movement, the 12th Army may no longer be able to catch him at the Bug. The operations must therefore be conducted so that in this worst case, one can fall on the enemy's flank further east — in the Bielsk area. The longer the enemy delays the withdrawal, the more likely it is to engage him in battle at the Bug. If he offers sustained resistance in a position forward of Brest, one can completely get behind him. To do justice to all these possibilities, one must pursue the now defeated enemy with a strong left wing and echeloned right along the Bug." Accordingly, Colonel Marquard wanted, as soon as the current resistance was broken, to direct the left wing, the Eben Corps, towards Zambrow, the Hahne Corps south past Andrzejow, the Watter Corps and the XVII Army Corps against the enemy north of Andrzejow and at the Bug, the XVII Reserve Corps folded right. "The main idea" must remain to encircle the enemy "in the north and push him back over the Bug or in a southeasterly direction. Only if the execution proves impossible and a concentration of the main forces on other parts of the front becomes necessary should this viewpoint be abandoned. — If the enemy prepares in a bridgehead position at the Bug, it should be indicated: XVII Army Corps between Bug and Straße Ostrow—Malkin, Korps Watter subsequently from the north and northeast."

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Successes between Bug and Narew.

Road Ostrow—Malkin, Corps Watter subsequently from the north and

northeast.“

Meanwhile, the enemy had again vacated his positions in front of the right wing

of the 12th Army during the night, while he held stubbornly in front of the

left and in front of the 8th Army. In pursuit, the XVII Reserve Corps (85th Landwehr and 86th Infantry Division) reached

Wizkow and east of it the Bug. At Tucholka, the front turned north;

the XVII Army Corps (88th, 36th, and 35th Infantry Division)

came to this watercourse. In the area west of Ostrow, the Watter Corps joined (3rd Infantry, 1st Guard Reserve, and 4th Guard Infantry Division, followed by the 26th Infantry Division), then the newly formed Plüskow Corps (54th Infantry,

50th Reserve, and 38th Infantry Division) and finally the Eben Corps

(83rd, 37th Infantry Division and Landsturm units). The enemy

held a position that ran about eight kilometers west and northwest of

Ostrow over the large artillery firing range there and then followed

the Ruz Brook along the road to Sniadowo. Here, the

2nd and 37th Infantry Division had crossed south of the brook and broken into the Russian position, but could only hold the captured ground with heavy losses. Further north, the

enemy held the Ruz Brook and his position in front of the 8th Army, which now

south of the Narew with three divisions (58th Infantry, 75th Reserve, and

10th Landwehr Division) advanced.

On August 9, the listening service revealed the further retreat of the

Russian radio stations on both sides of the Bug. The Plüskow and Eben Corps

broke through the enemy rear guard positions on the road Ostrow—

Sniadowo and pursued several kilometers beyond them.

Elsewhere on the front, progress was made. The greatest difficulties were

in the direction of Ostrow, where knowledge of the

firing range terrain of the Russian artillery may have offered special advantages. In the 8th Army, the 10th Landwehr Division captured the

weakly defended Westfort of Lomza, but the road Sniadowo—Lomza

was not yet reached. From the north, the 1st Landwehr Division approached the outdated fortress, which the enemy seemed to be evacuating.

On this day, the 12th High Command again communicated directly with the

Supreme Army Command about the situation and intentions,

when Colonel Marquard called Major General Tappen at noon and

explained over the phone that south of the Bug the enemy was moving east back, but constantly throwing new forces against the 12th Army.

1) Previous Division Menges.

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back, but continuously threw new forces against the 12th Army. The combat strength of the army was decreasing, and there were fears that it would arrive too weak at the decisive point in the enemy's flank. It was therefore desirable that the left wing of the 9th Army, whose XXV Reserve Corps stood west of Nowo Minsk on this day and was deployed eastward toward Kaluszyn, while only two cavalry divisions had advanced further north so far, should establish contact with the 12th Army in a northeastern direction. When the left wing of the 8th Army's attack group had passed the Wizna swamp, it would face danger from the left, and it was questionable whether the army's strength would then be sufficient. Colonel Marquard¹) therefore asked whether an army corps could not be brought up to the left wing of the 12th Army, and Major General Tappen assured him that he would keep the matter constantly in mind.

How the Supreme Commander East viewed these negotiations, to what extent he was even aware of them, is not known²). When he was informed at 7 o'clock in the evening about the success of the Plüskow and Eben corps, General Ludendorff responded: "Then continue straight ahead and then swing in." Accordingly, both corps were deployed for pursuit in an eastern direction on August 9th, with General von Gallwitz still hoping to "push as many enemy forces as possible into the bridgehead of Malkin and across the Bug," in order to then fall upon the enemy's flank east of the Bug bend as they withdrew eastward³). This seemed all the more possible to him as the German 9th Army south of the river was still a strong day's march back toward the west.

The morning of August 10th brought the welcome certainty that the Russian 12th Army, whose southern wing was believed to be at the railway south of Lomza, had begun its retreat; the concern about the connection with the 8th Army thus receded into the background for the moment. Almost without encountering any resistance, the Eben corps could traverse the forest mountains of the Czerwony Bor. The small fortress of Lomza had been evacuated by the enemy and was occupied by the German 8th Army. But now the Russian 1st Army also gave way at Ostrow. The railway-

¹) Regarding this, General von Gallwitz informed the Reich Archives in summer 1931, based on diary entries, that Colonel Marquard had also spoken with the Supreme Commander East at noon that day. The main content apparently consisted of complaints from the 8th Army that the 12th Army was not holding far enough to the north and therefore the 8th could not advance.  
²) See p. 351 note 2 and p. 352.  
³) von Gallwitz, p. 322.

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The crossing point Malkin was reached, and thus after more than three weeks of offensive, the northernmost of the major railway lines connecting Warsaw with the interior of Russia, which had previously supplied the Russian troops in West Poland, was achieved. Operationally, this was now an insignificant gain and also of value for the increasingly difficult own supply only if it was possible to restore the Vistula bridge at Warsaw, which was still in enemy hands, or to gain a connection to the German railway network through the connection line under construction from Willenberg to Ostrolenka. The enemy now seemed to be in full retreat to the east. Pilots reported retreating enemy columns in many places; villages were burning, the fields were devastated. A leap forward was achieved, as on no day since the beginning of the operation; it amounted to 20 kilometers and more for many corps. South of the Bug, contact was made south of Wyszkow with the cavalry of the 9th Army.

General von Gallwitz and his advisors were not entirely of the same opinion regarding the further direction to be taken. Since the end of July, the First General Staff Officer, Major Stäpf, had increasingly inclined to the view of the Commander-in-Chief East that the Narew-Ostrolenka had done its part, and that the decision should henceforth be sought in the Njemen area. "The distance we have gained in four weeks can be marched on the left wing in four days," he wrote on August 9. In contrast, General von Gallwitz himself still held firmly to the idea of pursuing with full force to the southwest. Colonel Marquard, however, now proposed a more northerly direction, "since there is nothing more to be gained at the Bug." The decision requested by the Commander-in-Chief East was fair to both possibilities and went as follows: the army should, with the main focus on the right, push further forward against Ciechanowice–Sokolv; the 8th Army, which had entered through the Wizna swamp, would maintain connection with them. However, since this army had just now to hand over the 3rd Reserve Division, which was standing northeast of Lomza, to the 10th Army, it counted only five divisions, of which three were already south of the Narew.

On August 11, the 12th Army advanced well along the Bug; the XVII Army Corps reached Juzel. On the other hand, to its left, the Watter Corps in pursuit battles with the left wing only reached just in front of Czyzew.

1) p. 307. — Initially, only a field railway was laid here; at the end of July, full railway construction began.  
2) Communication from Colonel a. D. Stäpf from summer 1931 to the Reich Archive.  
3) von Gallwitz, p. 325.  
4) pp. 354 and 478.

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the Watter Corps in pursuit battles with the left wing only up to just before Czyzew. "The progress is quite time-consuming," states the war diary of the General Command, "and proceeds slowly. This was due less to the strength of the enemy than to the fatigue of the troops and the almost complete lack of visibility of the terrain. It was repeatedly expressed to the Army High Command that while the attack was progressing slowly, and the reinforcement of the lines with new masses changed nothing noteworthy, much had been achieved with some rest for the troops, who had been in continuous combat for four weeks." At the Corps Plüskow and Eben joining to the north, the enemy offered even considerably more resistance. Unlike the previous day, it appeared to be not weak rear guards but stronger forces with much artillery; the entire day was spent struggling to advance just a few kilometers. By evening, the Eben Corps had taken Zambrowo. The 8th Army had gained a foothold on the eastern bank of the Gac section.

Thus the narrowest point between Bug and Narew had been reached; on a 45-kilometer front, about 18 German divisions stood so close together that it had already become necessary to place five of them in the second echelon. The Narew operation had long since passed its tactical peak and threatened to devolve operationally into frontal pursuit. Catching the Russian masses retreating before the army groups Mackensen and Prince Leopold east of the Bug could only succeed if the 12th Army advanced quickly, faster than the enemy could retreat. So far, this had not been the case. In the 30 days since July 13, they had gained about 120 kilometers in total, amounting to only four kilometers per day; it was hardly to be expected that they would advance significantly faster in the future. August 11 had again shown what it meant when the enemy was willing to offer resistance. With an enemy who had conducted his withdrawal operation skillfully up to this point, such determination had to be expected to continue whenever his situation required it.

The battles so far had clearly shown the difficulties of frontal pursuit. Actual pursuit had rarely occurred: Almost everywhere and every time, the enemy had been able to withdraw unnoticed under the cover of darkness after stubborn resistance, only to establish new positions further back, often in previously prepared positions. Each time, weak points in the new formation had to be scouted, the attack ordered, and the artillery concentrated on the breakthrough points. Every tactical advance had to be purchased with an expenditure of time, ammunition, and blood that hardly corresponded to the operational gain.

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Combat Conditions and Results between Bug and Narew.

Deployment scouted, the attack ordered, the artillery concentrated against the breach points. Every tactical advance had to be bought with an expenditure of time, ammunition, and blood, which hardly corresponded to the operational gain.

The unexpectedly large ammunition requirement, even for an experienced artillery general like the commander-in-chief of the 12th Army, which had to be used to overcome every single enemy rearguard position¹), significantly contributed to the delay of the advance. The increasing distance from the starting point made it increasingly difficult to bring up the necessary quantities. The railway construction could not keep pace with the operation despite its slowness. At the destroyed Vistula bridge in Warsaw, on the Mlava–Nowogeorgiewsk line, otherwise on German territory and near Kolno, the endpoints of the main railway operations were temporarily located. A field railway rebuilt from Mlava via Przasnysz had reached the area west of Rozan, coming from Willenberg to Ostrolenka, thus ending about 60 kilometers behind the front. The troops to be pursued between Bug and Narew had meanwhile grown to about 18 divisions with more than 700 guns.

Opposite them, however, the enemy had also further strengthened. By August 11, about 18 divisions of his 1st and 12th Army were standing, of which four divisions were gradually brought in from the Southwestern Front, with probably also about 700 guns²). Thus, the impression of the German troops seems correct that the enemy was now considerably stronger in artillery than at the beginning of the operation. The more his infantry dwindled, the more the essentially undiminished artillery had to make itself felt.

The severity, but also the peculiarity of the four-week previous battles is illustrated by the following figures: The casualties of the Gallwitz Army and the right wing of the 8th Army involved in the attack had grown from about 37,000 between July 13 and 26 to more than 56,000 by August 8.

¹) Since the beginning of July, the army had been allocated: 370,000 rounds for field guns (7.7 cm), 27,500 for 10 cm guns, 192,000 for light field howitzers (10.5 cm), 129,000 for heavy field howitzers (15 cm), 15,000 for mortars (21 cm); a total of 734,000 rounds.  
²) 9 ¾ (1 1/6) = August 11, 1915, between Narew and Bug from Bieze to Zuzel: From the 12th Army V Corps (10th and 17th Div.) and IV Siberian Corps (9th Siberian and 10th Fib. 59th, 69th, ¾ 61st Div.); 1st Army, XXVII Corps (1st Rifle Brigade and 76th Div.), XXI Corps (33rd and 37th Div.), 1st Siberian Corps (1st Siberian 6th Div.), IV Corps and 20th Div. (1st Siberian 1st and 2nd Siberian Div.). The army some divisions: 17 ¾ infantry, 1 ¾ cavalry divisions. The increased 4 ¾ divisions had come from the Southwestern Front since July 13.

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The army of Gallwitz and the right wing of the 8th Army involved in the attack had grown from about 37,000 from July 13 to 26, to more than 56,000 by August 8. This meant 3,000 to 4,000 men, more than a third of the infantry strength in each division, and is a significant testament to the sacrificial task that remained for the infantry to solve despite the high consumption of artillery ammunition. These losses were offset by spoils, which, including those of the participating parts of the 8th Army, amounted to about 80,000 prisoners and 250 machine guns by August 11, but only 20 guns.

b) Up to the Upper Course of Nurec and Narew. August 12 to 19.

The frontal pursuit, in which the army group Prince Leopold and the right wing of Commander-in-Chief East (12th and right wing 8th Army) were involved, was to continue to aim, according to the will of the Supreme Army Command, to cooperate with the army group Mackensen, which was advancing from the direction of Cholm—Lublin towards Brest and the Bug below this fortress. General von Falkenhayn wanted to decisively hit the retreating enemy still west of the Rokitno swamps and the primeval forest of Bialowieza. The army group Prince Leopold, which stood close to Lukow and Siedlce on the evening of August 11, was therefore set to advance with the right wing on Brest!).

Commander-in-Chief East also had hope on this day that his 12th Army, advancing with a strong right wing on Ciechanowice, could at least intercept parts of the Russian troops that were heading further south from the west and southwest towards the Bug. However, he did not promise himself decisive successes from this. He considered it certain that the enemy would succeed in systematically evading in a northeasterly direction and wished to place the emphasis on further advance initially still in a generally easterly direction towards Bielsk, but later north of the forest of Bialowieza. In contrast, General von Gallwitz continued to advocate for the southeasterly direction.

While troops of the army group Prince Leopold entered Lukow and Siedlce on August 12, the 12th Army encountered sustained resistance on the entire front north of the Bug on this day. However, during the night the enemy also withdrew here; the pursuit led together with the right wing of the 8th Army to the lower Narec and then into a line that ran west past Sokolow almost straight north to the Narew swamps of Wizna.

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Last Efforts between Bug and Narew.

together with the right wing of the 8th Army up to the lower Narec and then into a line that ran almost straight north past Sokolow to the Narew swamps of Wizna. The enemy seemed to have set up new resistance. The Supreme Army Command had General of Foot Artillery, Major General Schabel, examine whether it was possible to bring down the fortress of Osowiec by blowing and shooting gas. Since the reconnaissance had shown that with the available limited forces, for example only three heavy artillery batteries, even with the use of gas, there was no prospect of capturing the place, they had to wait until an advance on the eastern Bobr bank was opened. Here the 8th Army now had four divisions, while on the western bank its 11th Landwehr Division alone blocked the 50-kilometer-long swamp stretch.

On the evening of August 13, the Commander-in-Chief East learned that the enemy was now retreating rapidly down the Bug in front of the Mackensen Army Group from the south. He had to, as it seemed, cross the river at Brest and below in a northeasterly direction. On the northern wing of the Prince Leopold Army Group, the Frommel Cavalry Corps had received the direction towards Kleszczele, "to get behind the enemy parts retreating over the Bug." For the 12th Army, this initially changed nothing. Its commander was still full of hope. In an order he gave to the commanding generals that day, it was said that further advance of the army could lead to the destruction of the enemy. "We must break the opposing resistance with all our might as quickly as possible. Extreme effort in the coming days will save us a lot of blood later. The goal is worth the effort."

On August 14 and 15, the attack of the center (Plüskow Corps) and the XVII Reserve Corps, which had meanwhile moved in north of it, brought the decision for the 12th Army. East of Mazowiec, the 4½ division strong Russian XXI Corps retreated before the attack of the German 54th, 38th, and 86th Infantry Divisions, losing 2000 prisoners, as it is called in the official Russian account¹), "defeated," and thus gave the entire Russian front between Bug and Narew the impetus for further retreat.

¹) Njesnamow, p. 97 (there the battle is apparently mistakenly dated to August 22).

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It was answered that only the German 9th Cavalry Division was withdrawn.

The enemy continued to retreat according to his situation before the army group Prince Leopold rather than before the northern adjoining 12th Army. On the other hand, the increasing pressure against the rear of Osowiec prompted him to evacuate this place after the demolition of the works and bridges already on the night of August 23 and thus to retreat before the 8th and the left wing of the 12th Army. While the northern wing of the army group Prince Leopold reached the western edge of the Bialowies forest by the evening of August 24 in pursuit, the strong southern wing of the 12th Army fought hard beyond Bielsk. The center was still fixed before the upper Narew, the extreme left wing, the 37th Infantry Division, had already crossed it in connection with the Seydlitz Corps of the 8th Army west of Bialystok. Even further north, three Landwehr divisions of this army could follow the enemy over the abandoned Osowiec almost in one go to Knyszyn and to the Berezowka section.

The difficulties that stood in the way of a more effective continuation of the offensive had increased significantly in the last ten days with the 12th Army. Already in the "special orders" of August 12, General von Gallwitz had pointed out that it was impossible for the stage to keep pace with the troops. The space to be bridged by the columns of the corps had to be stretched far beyond the usual measure, the oat supply reduced to half of the normal requirement. Since the harvest was now in the field or had just been brought in, the troops were to feed as much as possible from the land. In the area still untouched by the war, which had now been reached, essential parts of the supply needs were also provided in a reasonably sufficient quantity, because the enemy had no longer succeeded in removing or burning all the supplies of the vast area in time; but even the flour and bread supply could hardly be managed alongside the ammunition supply by the vehicle columns.

Even a leader as strong-willed as General von Gallwitz had to increasingly take these conditions and the diminished attack power of the troops into account. Records of the responsible offices and leaders provide a picture of what it looked like in the army: In the war diary of the Watter Corps, it was already written on August 20: "37 days continuously in combat, the infantry had only half its strength left, the field artillery material was unusable to a worrying extent."

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Supply Difficulties and Reduced Offensive Power.

In the war diary of Corps Watter, it was already written on August 20: "37 days continuously in combat, the infantry had only half its strength left, the field artillery material was unusable to a worrying extent." This, along with the length of the rear connections, which measured 100 kilometers to Ostrow and another 35 kilometers to the field railway endpoint Rozan, and the poor feeding condition of the horses due to a lack of oats, made a pause urgently desirable. On August 22, "with regard to the urgently necessary ammunition savings, only very quiet artillery fire was maintained." The following day, the leader gained the impression in a conversation with the commanding general that due to the overexertion, the troops' offensive capability had significantly declined. It was expected from the artillery that "it should do everything."

In the Corps Stieren, according to its war diary on August 20, the last ammunition column was emptied, and the next filled one could only arrive on the 23rd. The heavy losses, it was said, especially of the 86th Infantry Division, were attributed to the inadequate artillery preparation due to a lack of ammunition. A regiment of the 50th Reserve Division had to be withdrawn from the front after it had shrunk from 57 officers to 6, from 3700 men to 600. The remaining troops, it was said in the report, mostly came from the "last replacement, which arrived during the operation, was already classified as inferior and also proved to be inferior." New replacements, which were requested, would not find any old core in the regiment to give them support. The regiment needed 14 days to reorganize and regain internal strength.

On August 22, the chief of staff of Corps Plüskow, Colonel Baercke, personally arrived at the army headquarters to describe the "lack of striking power due to the small numbers and the shortage of officers."

On August 24, Corps Parnewitz also reported: Since ammunition and supplies could not be brought up according to consumption, a three-day pause in the attack was necessary.

General von Gallwitz himself judged in his diary entries on August 20: "The Russian army report emphasized the tenacity of our attacks." But I could not deny that our strength was no longer what it used to be. For 39 days we had been fighting and had since then given up 1,400 officers and 60,000 men.

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fought and had since given up 1400 officers and 60,000 men¹). A stop in the relentless push soon seemed inevitable.” The war diary of the High Command also pointed out the low combat strength of the infantry, which, as always, had to bear the brunt of the bloody losses as well as the mental and physical strain. Thus, the battalions of the 38th and 54th Infantry Divisions did not have 400 men of combat strength, and the 4th Guards Infantry Division counted only 4000 rifles in total. On August 21, General von Gallwitz could “no longer overlook the exhaustion of the troops.” The hope, temporarily held the following day, of repelling the enemy quickly shattered in the face of increasing difficulties. “It would be a pity,” he wrote in his diary, “if we were to falter now, because with the Russians, according to prisoner reports, letters, and their enormous losses, things look even bleaker. They are ripe for collapse if we can only apply the necessary force. Everywhere they show hopelessness, mainly because of our artillery... I wanted to wait yesterday to bring up artillery ammunition replacements. But the troops, who are of the best will, always act differently and thus awaken in the higher command the belief that it will still work. With battalions of 325 men, there is not much to be done. Now, the army has fulfilled its duty.” Russian counterattacks, which were also reported on this day, the General considered “to be repelled as ordered from above, as last attempts to turn the tide or at least to gain freedom of movement.”

The conditions were more favorable than with the 12th Army at the 8th Army, which had not been fighting as long or as hard and had better supply conditions.

With such a decisive reduction in the offensive power of the main army, it was ultimately of lesser importance which direction was given to the right wing of the Commander-in-Chief East for further action. The Supreme Army Command still wished to let the main force act in a purely eastern direction, while the Commander-in-Chief East, since the capture of Osowiec, considered a northeasterly direction necessary to at least indirectly support the advance of the 10th Army against Vilna²). He therefore ordered on August 24, in continuation of the instruction given on August 19 — as he had to believe — in agreement with the Supreme Army Command³), that “after the capture of Białystok” the railway from there via Sokolka to Grodno should form the boundary for the further operations of the 12th and 8th Armies.

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to hand over. For this reason, the Chief of Staff of the 12th Army, Colonel Marquard, while advocating for a frontal pursuit to the east to throw the Russians "into the swamps," made representations to the Supreme Army Command on the same day during a telephone conversation with Major General Tappen, but without success. In fact, in the following days, the 12th Army did not even have the opportunity, due to supply issues, to pursue with the remaining forces. On the evening of August 26, its left wing, together with the right of the 8th Army, was able to capture the important city of Białystok in battle. On August 27, the 12th Army reached the city of Narew behind the now rapidly retreating Russians, and on the 28th, the pursuit could only be continued with partial forces. The offensive of the strongest army advancing through northern Poland had stalled. A record by Captain von Waldow from the Eastern High Command the next day stated: "The Russian is retreating systematically, and so quickly that we cannot follow with our rear connections. The railways are too badly destroyed. One could howl with rage. The 12th Army must actually halt in the pursuit and wait, and the Russian gets time to move forces to Wilna. Just now comes the news that a new corps is being unloaded there and is marching north. Our operation has not succeeded."

Meanwhile, a fundamental new order from the Supreme Army Command on August 27 halted the army groups Mackensen and Prince Leopold in view of the Rokkino swamps. Only the operations initiated by the Commander-in-Chief East were to be continued. However, their focus was no longer on the 12th, but on the 10th Army assigned to Wilna.

d) Considerations.

"The army has fulfilled its duty." — This statement by General von Gallwitz about the achievements of the 12th Army, which was temporarily the strongest with 14 divisions involved in the pursuit through Poland, must be at the forefront of considerations about the results; it equally applies to the 8th Army, which had only seven divisions. The troops marched, fought, and bled with a willingness to sacrifice and dedication, as they could not have been greater under the given circumstances.

1) General von Gallwitz writes about this in the summer of 1931 to the Reich Archives, stating that Colonel Marquard was not commissioned by him for this.  
2) See wording on p. 489.

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Observations.

could not have been greater under the given circumstances. As countless testimonies prove, as far as its strength reached, it repeatedly approached the almost daily new attacks with joy and was rightfully filled with the proud consciousness of having pushed back a numerically superior enemy through all of Poland for about 200 kilometers.

Tactically, everything was accomplished that — considering the given circumstances¹) — could be accomplished. If the attack results were not fully satisfactory in terms of the extent of captured materials and operational success, this primarily expresses that these were pure frontal battles, beginning with the breakthrough of an extremely strong and deeply structured position system that had developed over months of work, continued across a river section likewise prepared for sustained defense, and ending in pushing back an enemy who repeatedly put up resistance but always managed to evade a decisive battle in time. Stubborn resistance at strong natural sections, often combined with local counterattacks, alternated with unnoticed nightly withdrawals. The pursuit repeatedly came to a halt before new enemy positions, which were perhaps often only very weakly occupied. This continuously repeating pattern required not only time and strength but also disproportionate amounts of ammunition and cost the attacking infantry many officers and the best of the troops, so that finally only hastily trained war replacements and older age groups were bearing the burden of combat. The need for effective preliminary artillery work became all the more pressing. But its effectiveness was also no longer at the same level as at the beginning of the war due to worn-out gun barrels, less effective makeshift ammunition, and insufficient gunnery training of some batteries manned with older age groups. When one considers how much the strength of the Russian defense had increased simultaneously through the long-range effect of artillery and machine guns, despite great shortages of equipment and ammunition, one will properly appreciate the magnitude of what was achieved by leadership and troops.

The destruction of the enemy had not been achieved, only its attrition. The captured numbers tell a clear story. In 6½ weeks, for 21 divisions of the German 12th and 8th Army, they totaled around 125,000 prisoners, 350 machine guns, but only 23 artillery pieces. How little this meant in its entirety, especially regarding the number of artillery pieces, becomes clear when one considers that at Tannenberg, 13 German divisions in six days captured 92,000 prisoners and 350 artillery pieces.

¹) Cf. p. 358 f.  
† World War. Volume VIII. 24

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Tannenberg 13 German divisions captured 92,000 prisoners in six days, but brought in 350 guns. Due to the slowness of the purely frontal attacks, the enemy was always able to withdraw his artillery in time and almost always evade in good order. How high his total losses were is not known.

General von Falkenhayn pointed out after the war that the Gallwitz army, due to a lack of forces, was unable to give real emphasis to its left wing and was thus increasingly pushed in a purely Westphalian direction. The Commander-in-Chief East could very well have brought more forces to their attack, four divisions from the 9th and two from the 10th and the Njemen Army. "Had the Narew assault group conducted their attack on the 14th with 20 divisions, it is highly probable that they would have been able to prevent strong parts of the enemy from withdrawing from the pincers. It is therefore a mistake that the reinforcement was omitted. Its cause must... be sought solely in the fact that it was not possible to bring about a unified understanding of the situation between the leading and executing positions." It should "not have been tolerated" that the main operation, "for whatever reasons, a single man was withdrawn. As surely as it would have been primarily the responsibility of the high command to integrate into the overall operation, so surely was part of the responsibility for the fact that this did not happen on the chief of staff. His task was to ensure the complete surrender of each part as a whole and for the same, even where, as in this case, extraordinary personal difficulties stood in his way."

The Commander-in-Chief East, who was decidedly opposed to the Narew operation from the outset and considered its continuation deep into August to be misguided, nevertheless did everything in his view to ensure its success. After the Kaiser had once decided very willingly for the proposal of his chief of staff, Field Marshal Hindenburg considered it his duty to leave nothing undone to help this plan succeed. Since then, he has used his entire authority for the success of the operation and personally positioned himself at the start of the attack on the battlefield at Przasnysz, because he knew "what decisive importance our Supreme Army Command attached to the success of the ordered breakthrough."

1) For more on the enemy see pp. 301, 323, 325, 359, 374, and 436 ff.  
2) From Falkenhayn, pp. 104 and 109 f. — 89. e. 275 ff. 281 around 1917.  
4) Personal communication to the President of the Reich Archives from November 7, 1931.

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Reflections.

He went to the battlefield at Przasnysz because he knew "what decisive importance our Supreme Army Command attached to the success of the ordered breakthrough." General Ludendorff, as the Field Marshal further wrote in his book, had indeed often internally adhered to the plan of the Njemen operation. This deviation "had neither any influence on our further joint thinking and action," nor did it impair the "strength with which we implemented the decision of the responsible Supreme Army Command in mid-July." Similarly, General Ludendorff himself wrote that the disagreements with General von Falkenhayn imposed on him the special obligation to implement the Supreme Army Command's thoughts, which differed from his own, "if possible with even greater care than those that were consistent or his own."

The Supreme Army Command was continuously informed about the measures of the Commander-in-Chief East, especially as far as they concerned the Army Group Gallwitz. Had it considered the deployment of forces against the Narew insufficient, it would have had to intervene decisively. Regarding the question of complete exposure of the front west of the Vistula, General Ludendorff expressed himself as follows: "The release of the left bank of the Vistula west of the Sam mouth Nowogeorgiewsk was correct if the Supreme Army Command was firmly determined to fight for the decision in the East. Then it had to accept the risk of exposing the front. The enemy could not advance into the empty front. It was different if it had to be reckoned with the possibility that the operation against Russia might come to an early conclusion. Then the enemy, who no longer felt threatened far in Poland and Lithuania, could attack west of the Vistula." In a similar sense, General von Falkenhayn expressed himself to the Commander-in-Chief East on June 28, stating that the enemy would not be able to derive any significant benefit from the exposure of the front west of the Vistula "as long as the advance between the Bug and Vistula" — that is, the offensive of Army Group Mackensen — "remained in progress." On the other hand, he almost continuously urged an attack by the 9th Army after July 2, even considering adding two more western divisions to it. Thus, the Supreme Army Command is at least fully responsible for leaving stronger forces west of the Vistula. A significant contrast between their view and that of the Commander-in-Chief East does not seem to have existed on this point.

1) von Hindenburg, p. 128. — 2) Ludendorff, p. 120.  
3) Letter to the Reich Archive from December 29, 1931.  
4) p. 266 ff. — 5) p. 315.

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mandos East does not seem to have existed at this point. However, it did exist regarding the forces to be left at the Niemen. But General von Falkenhayn allowed the Commander-in-Chief East to act there as well, even repeatedly demanding active engagement for this section of the front. It is therefore quite questionable whether his idea that 20 instead of 14 divisions should have been deployed against the Narew is merely a retrospective consideration, which, however, cannot be denied justification.

If the six divisions in question had been available at the beginning of the Narew operation, which was undoubtedly possible given the situation, intentions, and railway conditions, one could have attacked the enemy on July 13 at two places simultaneously, besides Przasnysz also at Ostrolenka—Nowogrod, with strong forces and thus not only split the Russian defense but above all given one's own attack a much more effective operational direction. Also, according to later experiences, an early, surprising attack at Ostrolenka—Nowogrod might have come faster and easier than at Pultusk—Rozan and over the Narew. In the course of the fighting, the attack front was eventually extended to Nowogrod. However, since the total strength for this was too low and it was the border area between the Gallwitz Army Group and the 8th Army, full unity of command at this point was not achieved. It was precisely here that troops were lacking, especially heavy artillery, because General von Gallwitz deliberately kept his left wing weak compared to the center of his front, where he initially sought tactical victory. In addition, disagreements with the General Command of the I Army Corps stationed in front of Ostrolenka and resulting fluctuations in orders had a detrimental effect. Only after overcoming the Narew itself did the center of the army group get bogged down in front of new Russian positions, did General von Gallwitz begin to shift the focus more to the left wing. And to achieve operational effect, it was already quite late.

The Commander-in-Chief East gave the Gallwitz High Command, in which he had full confidence, free rein in conducting the operations. More serious disagreements about the pursuit direction only arose during the fighting between Bug and Narew, where the Gallwitz High Command could rely on the aligned view of the Supreme Army Command. However, it can hardly be proven that these contradictions affected the success of the operation.

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Considerations.

the operation have impaired. Even if, in the sense of the Supreme

Army Command, an attempt had been made at the beginning of August to strengthen the attack front between

the Bug and Narew more than it was, the result would hardly have been greater. The already serious supply difficulties at that time would have increased with further accumulation of troops to such an extent that they would have outweighed the advantage of the larger number.

The Commander-in-Chief East and the High Commands Gallwitz and

Scholtz tried with the limited number of forces assigned to the Narew

operation to make the most of the situation. This was naturally the case, especially with General von Gallwitz,

who believed until the end with full inner conviction in the possibility

of intercepting significant parts of the Russians. The limited

forces that the Commander-in-Chief East, but only in the course of the later

eastward-directed pursuit operation through Poland and almost always

only after consultation with the Supreme Army Command, gradually spared for

the nourishment of the battle in the Njemen area, could hardly have changed the

result between Bug and Narew. Due to

the contrast between the two highest command posts, the

High Command Gallwitz was in a difficult position, as it was in

constant direct connection with the Supreme Army Command, whose

views it shared, but at the same time it had to act according to the instructions of the

Commander-in-Chief East. It mastered the particularly difficult

conditions resulting from this with tact, so that serious

frictions were avoided and the operation proceeded essentially in harmony.

The fact that the Narew campaign was not more successful was due

solely to the fact that the attack had to begin with the always difficult and

time-consuming breakthrough through a developed trench system and subsequent

river crossing. Meanwhile, the enemy found time to reinforce

from the troops fighting west of the Vistula and in Galicia to such an extent that the German attackers soon faced opponents of equal division

strength, who were at least equal to them in number of rifles, if not superior, and only inferior in

artillery. This ratio shifted with the progress

of the battles more in favor of the Russian defenders than the German

attackers. Thus, rapid advancement in the described

battles and supply difficulties was out of the question, and the differences

of opinion about the operational direction to be maintained had

only subordinate significance for the actual course.

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The task of pushing an enemy retreating in a broad, closed front into the Rokitno Marshes or, as General von Gallwitz occasionally expressed it, "embracing" them, was not feasible when the operational gain in 46 days was only 200 kilometers, averaging less than five kilometers per day. In contrast, the Russians, relying on relatively efficient railway connections, always had the opportunity to secure not only the fighting troops but also many other valuable assets. It might have seemed tempting to throw the parts that appeared to retreat northeast between the Rokitno Marshes and the advancing German armies from the west, numbering 13 to 14 corps, into that relatively manageable area and thereby inflict decisive damage. However, the Russian retreat direction was not aligned with the advance direction of the Gallwitz army in such a way that a flanking effect could be achieved. The northern Russian armies (2nd, 1st, and 12th Army) were brought back almost directly eastward to the Brest-Bialystok line, thus frontally, and only gradually adjusted to the growing demand for forces on the northern wing after abandoning the Slonim front; the 4th, 3rd, and 13th Army retreated diagonally from the south towards them. Thus, the transport of forces by rail in the general direction of Minsk-Wilna went hand in hand. Such a generously and properly managed retreat movement, even for parts of the army, to turn into a catastrophe, was beyond the striking power of a pursuer, who had almost uninterrupted fighting for four weeks in the first half of the attack and was already more than 100 kilometers away from the endpoints of efficient railway stations. And yet, great achievements were made. In cooperation with the Mackensen army group, the victories of the Gallwitz army and its neighbors on the right and left drove the enemy away from the threatening proximity of the German border. The capture of Warsaw and the spoils taken during the yet-to-be-described conquest of the large fortress of Nowogeorgiewsk must also be seen as direct consequences of the Narew campaign.

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The Beginning of the Encirclement.

7. The Conquest of Nowogeorgiewsk¹).

Map 6, Sketches 21 and 23.

Nowogeorgiewsk was the largest and strongest of all Russian fortresses and the only fortification in western Poland that was exempted from decommissioning in 1910 and had since been further modernized. Located at the confluence of the Narew and Vistula, it secured, together with the outdated forts Dembe, Zegrze, and Benjamino to the east, the Narew crossing north of Warsaw and blocked the railway leading east of the Vistula to Warsaw, which had to cross the Wkra and Narew rivers within the fortress. Eight older forts, advanced beyond the city walls, enclosed an area of about eleven kilometers in diameter. On the north and west fronts, the Russians had begun a new line of fortifications, consisting of armored groups, four to five kilometers ahead of the old one. Since the beginning of the war, it had been rapidly expanded and extended to other fronts. In about the same distance beyond this outer line of fortifications, deeply structured, advanced positions had emerged.

On July 17, the right wing of Army Group Gallwitz, Corps Dickhuth, and XVII Reserve Corps, advanced against the northern front of Nowogeorgiewsk. It was a fortunate coincidence that the chief engineer officer of the fortress, who had driven beyond his own lines in a motor vehicle, fell into German hands dead, but with valuable maps. The next day, the left wing of the 9th Army, Westernhagen Division, also approached the fortress's positions on the southern Vistula bank. By July 20, the XVII Reserve Corps' general command had concluded from intercepted Russian radio messages, aircraft, and patrol reports that only a weak enemy was opposite²); strong elements, the Russian XXVII Corps, seemed to be leaving the fortress to the south and east. Lieutenant General Surén considered it possible to take the fortress by storm the following day. However, General von Gallwitz prevented the execution of this plan, which was unlikely to succeed, although preparations had already begun. At the same time, the Eastern Commander-in-Chief appointed the commanding general of the III Reserve Corps, General of Infantry von Befeler, to lead the unified attack against the large fortress, who had already successfully led the conquest of Antwerp; the former quartermaster general of the 9th Army, Major General von Gaußewitz, joined him as chief of staff.

¹) A detailed account is contained in Issue 4 of the "Battles of the World War"; Reference: "The Conquest of Nowogeorgiewsk". — ²) Cf. p. 309.

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The Attack of the Supreme Commander East against the Russian Narew Front.

feler, to lead the unified attack against the large fortress, who had already successfully led the capture of Antwerp1); the previous chief quartermaster of the 9th Army, Major General von Gaußewitz, joined him as chief of staff. On July 21, General von Beseler took command of all troops in front of the northern front of the fortress, Corps Dickhuth and parts of the XVII Reserve Corps. The infantry gradually advanced further. Gradually, heavy batteries arrived in greater numbers, whose deployment was directed by the General of the Foot Artillery, Colonel von Berendt, who had been detached since the fall of Pultusk2).

The news of the impending fall of Warsaw prompted the acceleration of the attack: On August 5, the advance was to be made against the Narew bend Dembe—Serock; given the composition of the assault infantry from predominantly older age groups, General von Beseler demanded that the artillery must manage it. The bombardment of the positions advanced north of the forts Dembe and Zegrze was successful in causing the Russians, who had already abandoned Warsaw, to vacate these positions very quickly. After the wooded area behind was also cleared on August 6, the two forts could be occupied without a fight the next day, while at the same time on the eastern Narew bank the right wing of the 12th Army reached the Bug3). On August 9, the Wetzling detachment completed the encirclement of the fortress in the south up to the Vistula, above Thorn, corresponding to the progress of the 9th Army4), now also joining the siege troops, which on the same day were directly subordinated to the Supreme Commander East as the independent Army Group Beseler. When on August 10 a brigade of the 85th Landwehr Division could also seal off Nowogeorgiewsk in the east between Narew and Vistula, the ring around the fortress was closed. To carry out the attack, General von Beseler now had troops of about four divisions, which, with the exception of a part of the siege batteries, consisted only of Landwehr and Landsturm5) and could deploy around 300 guns in total, including over 100 heavy and 14 heaviest howitzers.

1) Volume V, p. 221 ff. — 2) p. 311 ff. — 3) p. 352 f. — 4) p. 414 f. — 5) Corps Dickhuth, mostly Landsturm; 14th Ldw. D. and Brig. Pfeil, half Landsturm; 169th Brig. of the 85th Ldw. D.; Wetzernagen detachment; also predominantly siege artillery. — Total: 55 battalions, 10 squadrons, 69 ½ batteries (including 42 ½ heavy and heavy, among the latter five with motor batteries).

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The Attack on Nowogeorgiewsk.

For the attack, the northeastern front of the fortress between Wkra and Narew was primarily considered, against which the only railway from Mlawa led. Here, General von Beseler wanted to deploy his main forces and proceed similarly to the autumn of 1914 against Antwerp. Without formal siege, under the sharpest concentration of artillery effect, a breach was to be shot in a narrow strip of the attack section into the individual resistance lines, through which the closely following infantry was to penetrate in a rapid thrust. Operations against the other fronts were intended to make it difficult for the enemy to shift forces within the fortress area.

The heaviest and heavy artillery alone counted 26 batteries with 113 guns at the attack front. However, a large part of these, especially among the inherently less worn flat trajectory guns, were of older type with only limited firing speed and range. Additionally, the ammunition situation imposed restrictions, as the large fortress of Kowno was also being attacked simultaneously, and a lack of columns made the procurement of ammunition extraordinarily difficult. Thus, the siege gun, the heavy field howitzer, initially had only 200 to 300 rounds each.

On August 11, the Commander-in-Chief East pointed out that he "must place great importance on the rapid execution of the attack against the fortress" to soon free up the forces used for further tasks. General von Beseler was already willing to comply with this.

After thirty hours of artillery effect, on August 13, the 14th Landwehr Division under Lieutenant General Schalscha von Rheinfeld and the Pfeil Brigade broke through the front enemy defense lines between Wkra and Narew on a narrow front and advanced close to the permanent tank groups XIV, XV, and XVI; about 2000 prisoners were the booty. At the same time, there were also operations against the other fronts.

1) The attack plan against the fortress drafted by the Great General Staff in peacetime can no longer be found, so it could not be determined how the strength of the fortress was assessed at that time and what attack means were considered necessary against it.  
2) High-angle fire: 3 batteries 42 cm, 5 batteries 30.5 cm, 2 batteries Mrs. (21 cm), 11 batteries heavy field howitzers (15 cm); total 21 batteries. Flat fire: 2 batteries 15 cm-Ran., 3 batteries 17 cm-Ran., 2 batteries 10 cm-Ran.; total 5 batteries.  
3) G. 347 t/m. 472 ft.  
4) At Gorlice 600 each, at Przasnysz 1000 rounds each.

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The Attack of the Commander-in-Chief East against the Russian Narew Front.

The other fronts took place. The attack was to be continued against the section of Groups XV and XVI, each consisting of two forts with several intermediate works, connected and secured by obstacle belts. Already on the night of August 14, the artillery carried out the necessary change of position and began on this day the destructive fire against all works between Bieka and Narew.

Under the impression of the previous German attack successes, the Russians evacuated their advanced positions on the entire northwest front up to the Vistula on the night of August 15. However, at the attack front itself, things did not initially progress as desired. An assault attempt by General von Schalscha against Fort XV a on the railway failed. General von Beseler considered refraining from the sap attack under these circumstances, but then decided to continue the artillery attack immediately and repeat the assault on August 16. After systematic and strongest artillery preparation against Groups XV and XVI and a subsequent multi-hour crisis, the assault against Group XV succeeded; Fort XV b was taken by Brigade Pfeil, capturing 500 prisoners, Fort XV a, the strongest work of the entire fortification belt, somewhat later by the 21st Landwehr Brigade; the total booty of the day was 2400 prisoners and 19 guns. The simultaneous attempts against the west, south, and east fronts initially brought no decisive progress, but the enemy also retreated to his armored groups here the following night.

The new assault planned for August 17 after strong artillery preparation against Fort XVI a led Brigade Pfeil only to the glacis of this work, where the troops remained exhausted. General von Beseler therefore wanted to use August 18 and 19 for further preparation of the attack and then renew the assault. The order for this had already been given when the enemy evacuated the armored groups XIV and XVI on the night of August 18, leaving behind many prisoners and much equipment. Without a fight, the German troops could follow up to Nura, behind which the enemy, supported by the old forts, had re-established himself on new defenses. On August 18, the attack artillery opened fire against these forts; the infantry of the 14th Landwehr Division gained a foothold on the western bank of the Bieka. The left wing of the Dichthuth Corps could, advancing south over the fort XIII c, which had also been abandoned by the enemy, connect with them.

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The Capture of Nowogeorgiewsk.

Intercepted radio messages, apparently random artillery fire, and the departure of six aircraft to the east were interpreted as signs of the impending fall of the fortress. General von Beseler decided to continue the attack with full force despite the previous great efforts for defense. Throughout the night of August 19, the outer works and the interior of the fortress were kept under disruptive fire. Meanwhile, the enemy also evacuated all armored groups from the northwest front and retreated to the line of the old forts. Explosions and fires suggested that structures, ammunition, and supplies were destroyed.

Fighting, the German troops penetrated the inner forts of the northeast front on August 19, later also entering the citadel. Here, the commander of the fortress, General Bobyr, was captured. The bulk of the garrison seemed to have retreated to the southern bank of the Vistula, whose bridges they had blown up, but surrendered there without making a serious breakthrough attempt, still in the afternoon hours to the German encirclement troops. By evening, the entire fortress was in German hands. The railway bridges over Wkra and Narew were thoroughly destroyed. The spoils, 6 generals, about 90,000 men, including 30,000 construction soldiers, 103 machine guns, and about 700, later counted even 1600) guns, exceeded all expectations; rich supplies of ammunition, clothing, equipment, and provisions as well as significant stocks of war-important metals were added. The capture of the largest, modernized Russian fortress was achieved in just under twelve days. The heavy artillery had fired around 34,600 rounds (519 from German, 678 from Austro-Hungarian heavy guns) and overcame all difficulties, the inevitable ammunition supply and position changes with outdated equipment, paving the way for the infantry consisting only of older cohorts.

On the day after the capture of the fortress, August 20, the Supreme War Lord visited the victorious troops with General von Falkenhayn. The Supreme Commander East and General Ludendorff had also gone to Nowogeorgiewsk for this purpose. Operational questions were not discussed. The Supreme Commander East had already received permission to use the forces freed up before Nowogeorgiewsk in the future on the Njemen Front.

1) Including all older and close-combat guns.

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The Attack of the Eastern Commander-in-Chief against the Russian Narew Front.

The cooperation of the attack by Mackensen's army group and Gallwitz's army group did not give the Russians time to evacuate the fortress of Nowogeorgiewsk as systematically as they had done with other fortresses. The evacuation of Warsaw had fully occupied the railways, and that of Nowogeorgiewsk would have required numerous additional 1000 trainloads. Thus, the Russian Supreme Command had already determined on July 5th that the fortress of Nowogeorgiewsk should be defended as an independent position to the utmost. The garrison and artillery equipment corresponded to this. It was calculated that the fortress could hold out for at least two months. The reason for the unexpectedly rapid fall was rightly attributed to the destructive power of the German artillery — one of the last radio messages from the commander spoke of an explosion in the citadel. Moreover, as the Chief of General Staff, General Januschkewitsch, remarked, "God knows whether the German cannons alone are to blame. If 110,000 men had surrendered and 80,000 had fallen, that would be understandable. But 80,000 surrendered, and only 10,000 fell. One really cannot say that Nowogeorgiewsk fulfilled its task honorably."

1) Krolow, "The Failed Kamnä", p. 41.  
2) Kudaschew letter from August 26, 1915. — According to Knor, p. 320, the High Command of the 1st Army, to which the fortress had last been subordinate, estimated the resistance duration to be only ten days.

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D. The Offensive of the Allies on Brest Litowsk.

I. The Pursuit between Bug and Vistula in the First Half of July.

Maps 5 and 6, Sketch 24.

Soon after the capture of Lemberg, the armies fighting in Galicia were given new, separate tasks by the allied military commands1). The 11th and Austro-Hungarian 4th Armies were to advance northward between the Bug and Vistula under the unified command of Field Marshal von Mackensen to press the southern flank of the Russian forces in Poland. The three armies of the right wing, the Austro-Hungarian 2nd, the Southern Army, and the Austro-Hungarian 7th Army, were tasked with covering this operation with a front directed eastward. To avoid any gap between the inner wings of both army groups and to ensure the immediate flank protection of the 11th Army, the prompt advancement of the Austro-Hungarian 1st Army, positioned between the Bug and Vistula for relief, was intended to move over Lemberg to the Bug2). Until this could be effective, the 11th Army had to protect its flank directly and hold its right wing — Beskiden Corps, Corps Kneussl (119th Infantry Division and 11th Bavarian Infantry Division), Austro-Hungarian VI Corps — staggered to the right.

The left wing of the 11th Army (Guard Corps, XXII Reserve and X Army Corps) opened the previously unsuccessfully attacked Taneo section to the left neighboring Austro-Hungarian 4th Army by continuing its advance towards Zamosc in the last days of June. In a rapid march, this army overcame the swamp and forest area of that section on June 30, despite significant route difficulties, and pushed its left wing almost up to the height of Krasnik. The results of the reconnaissance indicated a retreat of the Russians along the entire line northeast behind the Bug and into a position running from Hrubieszow over Krasnik to Josefow. In the foreground of this position, northeast of Zamosc, at the Labunka and especially at the Por, the three corps of the left wing of the 11th Army already encountered sustained resistance on July 1st,

1) See pages 247 and 253.  
2) The railway Jaroslaw—Przemysl—Lemberg was restored by July 5.

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The Offensive of the Allies on Brest Litowsk.

At Labunka and especially at Por, the three corps of the left

flank of the 11th Army encountered sustained resistance on July 1st,

while the Austro-Hungarian 4th Army was still able to advance to the enemy's main position

along the line Turóbin—Kraśnik—Józefów.

The next day, a certain relief of the far-advanced

right flank of the 11th Army occurred with the return of the XXXXI.

Reserve Corps1). It had hurried in strong marches from Jaroslaw and was now inserted

between the 119th Infantry Division, stationed northwest of Krystynopol, and the Kneussl Corps

(now consisting of the 11th Bavarian and the newly arrived 107th Infantry Division).

This strengthening of the flank protection made it possible to

now also use the corps of the center (Kneussl and

Austro-Hungarian VI Corps) for the push northward. While both encountered strong resistance,

the enemy retreated behind the stream sections of the Wolica, Wieprz, and Por

in rear-guard actions before the Guard and XXII Reserve Corps.

The X Army Corps succeeded in advancing over the lower Por.

It was supported by the right flank of the Austro-Hungarian 4th Army, which

also broke into the Russian main position east of Kraśnik. As the

11th Army, under the protection of its northern Bug security, which had advanced

west of Krylow, prepared to continue its push northward, its center and left flank

were unexpectedly attacked by strong enemy forces. In heavy

fighting, the army managed to generally hold or regain its line. However, as further strong

Russian reserves were identified near Hrubieszów and Cholm, Field Marshal

von Mackensen believed that the offensive of the 11th Army should only be continued

when its right flank was relieved by the arrival of the Austro-Hungarian 1st Army,

thus freeing up additional forces of the 11th Army for the attack.

Only the left flank of the 11th Army, advanced over the Por,

was to reach the line Ploska—Turóbin to gain a favorable starting

position for the later continuation of the offensive.

From the not entirely accurate reporting of the intelligence

officer of the Supreme Army Command at the Army High Command about

the intention of the Field Marshal, General von Falkenhayn

gained the impression that, besides the 11th Army, the Austro-Hungarian 4th Army should also be

held back. However, this would not have met his wishes.

1) G. 248. Instead of the General of Infantry von François, who was appointed as the commanding general of the VII Austro-Hungarian,   
Lieutenant General von Bünau took over the command of the XXXXI Reserve Corps. For this, the leadership   
of the 2nd Guard Infantry Division was given to Lieutenant General Freiherr von Lüttwitz.

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The pursuit stalls between Bug and Vistula.

Already on July 1, he had placed decisive importance on the fastest possible and uninterrupted advance of the army group in a discussion with Army Command 11 in Rawa Ruska and had Generalmajor v. Kappen point out in Teschen the next day that the right wing of the 11th Army in the Bug defense should be quickly relieved by the 2nd Army and that the 1st Army, designated as future flank protection, should be made as strong as possible. In a personal discussion with Generaloberst v. Conrad on July 3 in Teschen, he further suggested strengthening the 11th Army with the entire South Army to lend the staff of the Mackensen army group the greatest emphasis. However, since the Austro-Hungarian Chief of General Staff expressed concerns about whether the east-facing defensive front would remain strong enough, it was finally agreed to initially withdraw only two divisions from the South Army to reinforce the 11th Army after crossing the Zlota Lipa. On the evening of July 3, General von Falkenhayn urgently pointed out to Army Command 11 that any delay in the advance must be avoided, "for the longer the enemy holds time and the railway at Lublin, the harder he will be to defeat." However, Field Marshal von Mackensen was able to report to him on the morning of July 4 that the Austro-Hungarian 4th Army, which had meanwhile significantly expanded its breakthrough east of Krasnik on July 3, had by no means been halted; rather, it should continue the offensive together with the left wing of the 11th. However, he dutifully combined this report with the note that a very strong consumption of forces had already occurred in the attacked armies, and that the bulk of the 11th Army would only be capable of new attacks when effective relief for it was achieved through the deployment of the Austro-Hungarian 1st Army around July 13. General von Falkenhayn now again urgently pointed out to Army Command 11 on the evening of July 4 that any delay in the advance must be avoided. He also once again approached Generaloberst von Conrad with the request to expedite the relief of the Beskiden Corps by the 2nd Army and the transport of the 1st Army. At the same time, he requested the immediate transfer of the two divisions of the South Army and their command to form a new army within the Mackensen army group.

The continuation of the partial offensive initially brought some successes. On July 4, the left wing of the 11th Army managed to reach the Plon?a—Turubin line under fighting. Also, the attacking part of the 4th Army was pushed a good distance further north.

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The Offensive of the Allies on Brest Litowsk.

was pushed a good distance further north. On July 5, the enemy continued to yield before the inner flanks of both armies. However, their resistance stiffened along the line Stierbizów—Urzendow. On July 6, only slight progress could be made on the left flank of the 11th Army and west of Urzendow by the 4th Army. The Mackensen High Command reported in the evening that no fewer than four new Russian corps¹) had been identified in front of their line. The pursuit of the 11th Army had essentially come to an end. Nevertheless, the Austro-Hungarian 4th Army hoped to continue its push towards Lublin after replenishing its ammunition supplies. However, July 7 and 8 brought significant setbacks. The right flank and center were pushed back to the area of Krasnix. Relief by the left flank was widely dispersed, and the heavily weakened 11th Army was no longer able to assist. The attack between the Bug and Vistula had stalled. Meanwhile, the Russians continued their counterattacks only briefly and without much force. Both sides dug in along the entire front.

The reinforcement deemed necessary by General von Falkenhayn for a successful continuation of the offensive in the area between the Bug and Vistula depended on the developments at the neighboring fronts. The Austro-Hungarian 2nd Army and the Southern Army²) had only slowly gained ground from section to section since the end of June in daily, partly heavy fighting. The tenacious enemy frequently launched strong counterattacks on this front. Only on July 5 was the 2nd Army in undisputed possession of the line Dunajow—Busk—Kamionka Strumilowa. To its right, the Southern Army had already reached the west bank of the Zlota Lipa from Dunajow the day before. On the same day, the Austro-Hungarian 7th Army advanced very small forces of its left flank at Butowka to the northern Dniester bank, while gathering all dispensable forces to form a strong reserve around Horodenka, as they expected Russian attacks in the area of Jaleszczyki. With the capture of the Zlota Lipa and Bug lines, the allied army commands considered the advance of the right army wing in Galicia temporarily concluded. The 2nd and Southern Armies were ordered to sustainably expand the captured positions for defense.

¹) In fact, Guard Corps, XXXI, II Siberian, and VI Siberian Corps were newly deployed there. — ²) See p. 249 ff.

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Reinforcement of the Mackensen Army Group.

build up. This created the possibility of withdrawing forces from this front to reinforce the Mackensen Army Group.

Already on July 4, Generaloberst von Conrad had given his consent to the weakening of the Southern Army requested by General von Falkenhayn, while simultaneously expressing the wish that it be subordinated to the commander of the Austro-Hungarian 7th Army, General von Pflanzer-Baltin, in the event of a resumption of the offensive. The German Chief of Staff had rejected this and added that instead of the current command of the Southern Army, which was transferring to the Mackensen Army Group, General of Infantry Count von Bothmer would take over the command of the army with his general command. Consequently, the Southern Army relinquished its general command of the X Reserve Corps (General of Infantry Roß) with the 101st and 105th Infantry Divisions. On the evening of July 6, the commander-in-chief, General von Linsingen, was recalled with his staff and took command of the newly forming Bug Army on the right flank of the Mackensen Army Group. In the following days, the Southern Army was further weakened by the transfer of the 1st Infantry and 5th Cavalry Divisions, as well as the general command of the XXIV Reserve Corps (General of Infantry von Gerok) to the Mackensen Army Group.

West of the Vistula, the Russians had once again yielded at the turn of June/July. The Austro-Hungarian 1st Army initially followed them to Kamienna and was then withdrawn except for one infantry regiment and half of the 2nd Cavalry Division. An infantry division moved east of the Vistula to the Austro-Hungarian 4th Army, while the remaining parts were transported by rail via Lemberg behind the right flank of the 11th Army to the Bug downstream from Kamionka Strumilowa. Here, the Szurmay Group and the 46th Infantry Division from the Austro-Hungarian 2nd Army joined them. The Woyrsch Army Detachment took over the entire front west of the Vistula up to the Pilica. Its right flank advanced to the enemy's heavily fortified position along the Zemborzyn—Sienno—Ilza line and attacked it unsuccessfully on July 7.

On July 11, the chiefs of staff of the allied army commands agreed in Pless on guidelines for the continuation of operations on the southeastern theater of war. Initially, opinions on this differed significantly in several points.

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The Offensive of the Allies on Brest Litowsk.

Generaloberst von Conrad proposed that the Austro-Hungarian 4th and 11th Armies, with their left wing along the Vistula and their right on Cholm, should attack, with the Bug Army to the right of them — this with a strong group east of the Bug on Wladimir Wolynsk. On the western Vistula bank, the Army Detachment Woyrsch was to advance in coordination with the Austro-Hungarian 4th Army in the general direction of Iwoslen. Generaloberst von Conrad envisioned covering this decisive main operation to the east in an offensive form by advancing the Austro-Hungarian 1st and 2nd Armies and the Southern Army up to the line Zimno (south of Wladimir Wolynsk)—Druzkopol—Pieniatin—course of the Sereth, while the 7th Army was to simultaneously push northwards east of the Strypa. In these proposals, General von Falkenhayn saw the danger of a fragmentation of forces; he agreed with them only regarding the use of the 4th and 11th Armies and the Army Detachment Woyrsch. However, he wanted the Bug Army to closely cooperate with the 11th Army to increase the striking power on this side of the Bug. Furthermore, he desired the involvement of the Austro-Hungarian 1st Army in the operations of Army Group Mackensen under the command of the Generalfeldmarschall. It was to advance east of the Bug against the line Wladimir Wolynsk—Luzk to protect the Allies' offensive on the right flank. The head of the operations department, Generalmajor Tappen, went even further in the objectives for this army. He advocated that it should be reinforced by German troops to quickly and securely take control of that line "as a starting point for repelling the Russians." If the foundation were thus laid for the possibility of always keeping the Russians from evading eastwards, they would have to come into a very bad situation under the simultaneous pressure of General von Gallwitz's offensive; under certain circumstances, they could even be encircled if they held their ground." This aligned with the view of the head of the Field Marshal's staff, Generalmajor Groener, who wrote in his diary on July 4: "In my opinion, a strong army east of the Bug is necessary." General von Falkenhayn opposed such an extensive offensive goal east of the Bug, as "given everything known about the terrain beyond the Bug, it was feared that this alone would present insurmountable obstacles to further operations.

1) From unpublished war memoirs of the current Lieutenant General a. D. Tappen.

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Reorganization of Army Group Mackensen.

would create insurmountable obstacles in the course“¹). He also had

concerns about weakening the striking power of the main group seeking a decision in the area

between the Bug and the Vistula by transferring German troops to the Austro-Hungarian

1st Army. However, Colonel General von Conrad, who gratefully and joyfully welcomed any

reinforcement of his troops by Germans, quickly warmed to General Tappen's proposal and

also withdrew his objection to placing the 1st Army under the command of Field Marshal

von Mackensen. Thus, General von Falkenhayn finally agreed to the transfer of the XXXI.

Reserve Corps and the 5th Cavalry Division as well as the Hungarian 11th Cavalry

Division to the 1st Army, although he maintained his concerns

about a far-reaching operation in the difficult terrain east of the

Bug²). The Austro-Hungarian 1st Army was tasked with accompanying the offensive on the southern

flank by advancing over the Bug into the area near Wladimir Wolynsk

with at least four infantry and three cavalry divisions, securing the Bug line upwards to the height

of Dub with their remaining forces. The Austro-Hungarian 2nd Army and the Southern Army were initially

to remain defensive, while the Austro-Hungarian 7th Army was to attack east of the Strypa in the direction of

Czortkow—Buczacz. Corresponding instructions were issued to the armies on July 11.

Field Marshal von Mackensen ordered that the new offensive

should be launched by the Bug Army on July 15. On the same day, the 81st Reserve Division of the XXXI.

Reserve Corps, already deployed around the left flank of the 1st Army near Krylow, was to join it,

while the assembly of the remaining parts of this army, intended for the attack on Wladimir Wolynsk,

which could only be completed on July 18, postponed the action to a later date. Field Marshal

von Mackensen also assigned the 103rd Infantry Division³) of Major General von Stossfuß, rolling in from Strymien,

whose deployment General von Falkenhayn had secured despite initial concerns from Colonel General

von Conrad. The 11th and Austro-Hungarian 4th Army were to advance one day

later than the Bug Army, i.e., on July 16. The

necessary redeployments for the deployment proceeded according to plan

without interference from the enemy. In total, 33 infantry and two cavalry divisions were available to the Bug, 11th, and

Austro-Hungarian 4th Army.

¹) von Falkenhayn, p. 93.  
²) General Tappen noted in his diary: “It was only a compromise, nothing complete.”  
³) p. 260.

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The Offensive of the Allies on Brest Litowsk.

The vast area between the Bug and Vistula, into which the army group had already entered around the turn of June/July and where the decision was to be fought in the future, has in its southern part up to about the height of Cholm—Jangorod the character of hilly land, north of which it increasingly turns into flatland. Mostly covered with extensive, dense forests and traversed by numerous watercourses with marshy lowlands in various directions, the sectional terrain offered generally favorable positions, for the artificial strengthening of which the population was extensively involved. Large roads with solid ground were only available in limited numbers. Railways were completely absent in the 100-kilometer-deep area from the Galician-Russian border to the line Cholm—Lublin, except for the section Rozwadów—Lublin¹) which had not yet been fully completed by the Russians and was meanwhile destroyed again. It was therefore to be expected that the regulation of supplies would encounter serious difficulties. According to a suggestion from Army High Command 11, the head of the field railway service had already ordered the immediate construction of a single-track field railway at the end of June, which was to establish the connection with the Russian main railway network via Zamość in the general direction of Cholm, following the railway line Rawa Ruska—Belzec²).

The conditions were similar in the area east of the Bug. Here, the southwestern offshoots of the large Rokitno swamp area extended up to the river on a broad front. The difficulties that arose from this for the movements of large troop bodies were indeed overestimated by General von Falkenhayn according to his own later testimony based on the existing maps and terrain descriptions as well as gathered information at the time. It was not known that "the magnificent works carried out in the years before the war to improve the drainage conditions in the swamp area had lowered the water level to such an extent that the passability of the area in such dry summers as that of 1915 was actually only hindered by the watercourses themselves. It would have been quite possible," writes General von Falkenhayn³), "to move even with stronger troop formations in it, if it had been possible to overcome the supply difficulties. They remained, of course, in full extent due to the complete lack of railways¹) and solid roads."

¹) Only on August 9 could this section be put into operation after extensive restoration work.  
²) The construction started on June 29 came into operation on August 1 up to Zamość. Only on August 25 was the connection to the main railway Cholm—Lublin, which had been made operational shortly before, reached.  
³) von Falkenhayn, p. 93.

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The Russian Forces in Front of the Mackensen Army Group.

to move if it were possible to overcome the supply difficulties. They naturally remained in full extent due to the complete lack of railways¹) and solid roads.

The Mackensen High Command calculated, based on the information available to them about the distribution of the R u s s i a n F o r c e s, that parts of the 4th, 3rd, and the newly formed 13th Army, with a total strength of about 15 corps and 8½ cavalry divisions, were facing the army group in the area from the Vistula to the region south of Vladimir Volynsk. It was assumed that the front of the 4th Army on this side of the Vistula (XXV., XV., VI. Siberian Corps, 2½ Cavalry Divisions) extended eastward to Zychana, with the front of the 3rd Army (IX., X., III. Caucasian, XIV., XXIV., II. Siberian Corps, Guard Corps, one Cavalry Division) adjoining to the left, extending to the west of Grabowiec, and the front of the 13th Army (II. Caucasian, XXIII., XIX., XXXI., V. Caucasian Corps, five Cavalry Divisions) on both sides of the Bug with the left wing reaching the area of Bzary. Prisoner statements revealed that there was a shortage of rifles and replacement troops often arrived without firearms. Behind the combat front, Russian infantry regiments were to be formed without rifles. Ammunition seemed to be more plentiful. However, it was doubted whether it would suffice for prolonged artillery battles.

The assumptions about the composition and strength ratios of the Russian armies generally corresponded to reality. The 4th Army under General Ewert (XVI., Grenadier-, XXV., VI. Siberian, XV. Corps, a total of 10 infantry and 2½ cavalry divisions) stood on both sides of the Vistula, the front of the 3rd Army under General Lisch (IX., X., III. Caucasian, XIV., XXIV. Corps, a total of ten infantry and two cavalry divisions) extended from Zychana to Grabowiec. Behind it were in reserve the II. Siberian Corps, Guard Corps, and the 56th Infantry Division, a total of 5½ infantry divisions. The newly formed 13th Army from the previous Olschoff Group under General Gorbatowski (II. Caucasian, XXIII., V. Caucasian, XXXI., XXXI. Corps, a total of 13 infantry divisions, and 4th Cavalry Corps with four cavalry divisions) held with its left wing on the eastern bank of the Bug in the area north of Sofal, loosely connected to the 8th Army.

¹) In contrast to the completely railway-less area west of the Bug, east of the river, in the railway line Vladimir Volynsk—Sokal, already created by the Russians in the autumn of 1914, there was a connection between the Russian and Austro-Hungarian main railway network.  
²) See p. 262.

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on the eastern Bug bank in the area north of Sofal, loose connection to the 8th Army. At the beginning of July, the assembly of strong German and Austro-Hungarian forces between Bug and San, especially against the inner flanks of the Russian Northwest and Southwest Front, had indicated an attack from the south and southwest direction, the 3rd and 13th Army had been instructed to offer stubborn resistance to enable the bringing up of reinforcements. The 4th Army was to maintain the connection to the 3rd Army on the eastern Vistula bank, if necessary by giving up terrain on the opposite bank. This task had been successfully solved by the three Russian armies in the previous battles. They were determined to accept the upcoming decision as well.

2. The Battle of Krasnostaw and Hrubieszow

from July 15 to 22.

Maps 5 and 6, Sketches 24 and 25.

The attack of the Bug Army¹) starting on July 15 initially brought no success. The attempt of the Gerok Corps to break through on the right army flank at Malmowce failed. In repeated counterattacks, the enemy threw the attackers back to the starting position. The advance of the Beskiden Corps with the main focus in the direction of Zabrce also came to a halt. In the evening, General von Linsingen reported that ten divisions were facing his army in defensive combat. This deployment of forces showed the enemy's firm intention to cover his retreat on the roads leading east behind the Bug with strong resistance. He assumed that it was primarily important not only to throw the enemy but above all to cut off a retreat in an easterly direction. Only by quickly advancing the Bug Army on the western, the Austro-Hungarian 1st Army on the eastern bank, could the enemy's retreat still be blocked. However, this required a reinforcement of the Bug Army and a reduction of its attack front.

The Austro-Hungarian 1st Army²) had to postpone the crossing over the Bug at Sofal due to high water.

1) The Bug Army consisted of: Corps Gerok (Genlt. XXIV. R. K., 11th Bavarian I. D., 107th I. D.), Beskiden Corps (2nd R. D., 35th R. D., 4th G. D.), 1st S. D. (40th, 47th, 49th Lst. I. D.), 1st Corps (46th S. D.), German XXXXI. R. K. (81st, 82nd I. D.), Bavarian 103rd S. D., German 5th R. D., Austro-Hungarian 4th and Hungarian 11th I. R. D. (Rad.-Corps Theodory)

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The Prussian Guard Storms Krasnostaw.

due to high water. Only weak parts reached the eastern bank during the night.

Even on July 16, the Bug Army did not break through. The Austro-Hungarian VI Corps, in a frontal attack against the strong position behind the broad Wolica depression, could only achieve local progress with significant losses. However, a full success was achieved west of the Wieprz. Under the pressure of a powerful thrust by the inner wings of the XXII Reserve and X Army Corps, exemplarily from Goltzowa, the Russians, simultaneously pressured by the Guard Corps at the front, were forced to quickly abandon the Wieprz-Wolica angle. By deploying the 119th Infantry Division on the right wing of the X Army Corps, the attack wedge could be pushed further north to Izdebno. On this day, the Austro-Hungarian 4th Army did not yet launch a unified attack.

On the right wing of the Bug Army, even the deployment of the 1st Infantry Division at the Gerok Corps on July 17 could not bring the attack into flow. However, the 11th Army managed to exploit its success west of the Wieprz despite increased resistance. Krasnostaw succumbed to the assault of the Guard. Under a flanking cover pushed north on the west bank of the Wieprz, the infantry of the Guard Corps crossed the Wieprz and gained a bridgehead east of Krasnostaw. To be able to quickly move the parts of the 2nd Guard Infantry Division of Lieutenant General Freiherr von Aßtritz, still standing at the Wolica front, the 105th Infantry Division was to be deployed for their relief. This division and the adjacent 22nd Infantry Division, which had succeeded in crossing the Wolica at a spatially limited point, were subordinated to General of Infantry Kosch. To the left of the Guard Corps, the XXII Reserve and X Army Corps fought back and forth over Izdebno. The Austro-Hungarian 4th Army, attacking on a broad front, still gained no ground today. Therefore, Field Marshal von Mackensen advised shifting the focus to their right wing to join the victorious left wing of the 11th Army in advancing the attack.

1) The 11th Army consisted of: Austro-Hungarian VI Corps (12th, 39th Infantry Divisions), Guard Corps (1st, 2nd Guard Infantry Divisions), XXII Reserve Corps (42nd, 44th Reserve Divisions), X Reserve Corps (19th, 20th Infantry Divisions), Gerok Corps (Bento. X Reserve Corps, 101st, 105th Infantry Divisions), 119th Infantry Division, 105th Infantry Division, 22nd Infantry Division (the latter brought from the western theater of war in early July G. 99.)  
2) The Austro-Hungarian 4th Army consisted of: XVII Corps (11th, 45th Infantry Divisions), XIV Corps (3rd, 8th, 10th Infantry Divisions), IX Corps (106th, 4th, 41st, 21st Infantry Divisions), X Corps (2nd, 24th, 26th Infantry Divisions), Russian Corps (37th, 62nd Infantry Divisions, German 47th Reserve Division and 1st and 3rd Brigades of the Polish Legion), 2nd Reserve Division.

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Connection to the victorious left wing of the 11th Army to carry out the attack.

The previous result of the offensive was minor. Only the three corps of the left wing of the 11th Army had breached the Russian front west of the Wieprz in a spatially limited manner. The stubborn resistance that the enemy had offered in the first three days of fighting, and the reports received by July 18 about his force distribution, gave the commander of the army group the conviction that very strong Russian forces must have been deployed between the Bug and the Vistula, determined to fight the decisive battle. He even expected a counterattack from the Cholm—Lublin line, at least the strongest defense in this line. On the other hand, he no longer considered an advance of the Russians from the east over the Bug against the right flank likely. He therefore believed he had to concentrate his forces as much as possible in the area between the Bug and the Vistula, where the decision was being fought, but could forego the transfer of stronger forces of the b.-ö. 1st Army to advance from Krylow to Vladimir Volynsk. This army was instructed to only gain bridgeheads on the Bug, which should serve as a fallback for the cavalry corps of General von Hebred (German 5th, Austro-Hungarian 4th, and Hungarian 11th Cavalry Division) to be deployed later on Vladimir Volynsk—Luzk. The Bug security of the 1st Army was to extend downstream to Slupce. Since the army no longer needed the XXXXI Reserve Corps for this purely defensive task, it was to join the Bug Army and increase its striking power. This seemed all the more necessary to him, as this army had not yet succeeded in advancing by July 18.

In the 11th Army, the breach in the enemy position widened on this day. The bulk of the 105th Infantry Division of Major General von der Esch, deployed to the Wolica front, was moved west of the Wieprz behind the guard and pushed through the bridgehead of the Wieprz to the east. Immediately starting heavy counterattacks by the Russian guard from the north and east brought this advance to a halt and thus enabled the extremely threatened Russian garrison of the Wolica position to retreat. The Austro-Hungarian VI Corps and the 22nd Infantry Division simultaneously pushed frontally over this section after the retreating enemy. Also west of the Wieprz, the cavalry corps and the left wing of the XXII Reserve Corps had to fend off strong counterattacks. The initially well-advancing left wing of this corps did not get beyond Olszanka. In front of the X Army Corps, the enemy offered sustained resistance only in a new position northwest of Izdebno.

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The Battle of Hrubieszow.

The enemy only offered sustained resistance in a new position northwest of Izdebno. West of the Gielczew stream, the 19th Infantry Division, in cooperation with the right wing of the Austro-Hungarian 4th Army, pushed them back to Rzczonow.

On July 19, the Austro-Hungarian 1st Army expanded its bridgehead at Sokal and was able to establish a foothold north of Iczary on the eastern bank of the Bug. The Heydebreck Cavalry Corps began to cross the river. The army was again reminded that further advances beyond the Bug were not appropriate, but that the prompt relief of the XXXXI Reserve Corps was necessary, as it had occupied the western bank of the Bug on both sides of Krylow and was simultaneously striving to maintain the connection to the Bug Army to the north. This army was now in full forward movement, as the enemy had retreated along its entire front during the night of July 19. Covered on the right flank by the 1st Infantry Division at the Bug, the 11th Bavarian Infantry Division pushed the enemy back behind the Huczwa, which had become boggy due to the recent rains. The 107th Infantry Division, led by Major General von Moser, advanced north of Zaborez. Here, the Russians retreated successfully in the face of further advances into the rear of their position at Hrubieszow. The territorial gain was significantly greater on the left wing of the army, where the Beskiden Corps under General of Cavalry von der Marwitz was able to follow the retreating enemy to Woslawice. To continue the pursuit the next day along the entire line, Hrubieszow was to be taken early by encirclement from the west.

In front of the 11th Army, the enemy retreated further east of the Wierpz under the double pressure in the front and against its rear from the bridgehead east of Krasnystaw. The Austro-Hungarian VI Corps followed and reached the stream section at Siemnica Krolewska with its left wing. As the troops of General Korsch (22nd and 105th Infantry Divisions) and parts of the Guard Corps gathered northeast of Krasnystaw, the former were to be withdrawn again. Along this entire line, they now found themselves facing newly reinforced positions. On the eastern bank of the river, however, the advance already took on more of the character of a pursuit. The left wing of the Guard Corps swung towards Wierpz. The XXII Reserve Corps advanced beyond Lopiennik. The X Army Corps, however, drove its spearhead towards Piaski under great marching efforts and thus stood close to the intended target, the Cholm—Lublin road.

Also in front of the Austro-Hungarian 4th Army, the enemy moved in one go up to a new position in the Chmiel—Opole line, to which the army advanced.

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a new position in the line Chmiel—Opole, to which the army advanced.

Thus, by the evening of the fifth day of the attack on the battlefield between Bug and Vistula, a significant spatial success was recorded almost along the entire line. However, the enemy had managed to avoid a decision by a systematic retreat into well-prepared positions. Their combat strength, which had also manifested in effective counterattacks, was by no means broken.

Meanwhile, on the western bank of the Vistula, the Army Detachment Woyrsch had achieved a significant success south of the Ilzanka, which did not remain without influence on the enemy front opposite the Mackensen Army Group. On the morning of July 17, the right wing of the Army Detachment broke into the Russian position and forced the enemy to retreat. In pursuit, the Ilzanka was reached by the evening of July 18. The group Kövesz on the left wing was also able to follow the withdrawing enemy on July 19 to the line Starzyez—Kowala—west of Przylot—west of Wysmierzyce. This began to make the operational cooperation of the forces on both sides of the Vistula noticeably threatening for the Russians. According to the orders of Field Marshal von Mackensen, the enemy between Bug and Vistula was to be withdrawn to their main positions everywhere on July 20 and these themselves attacked on July 21.

Things did not proceed as systematically as planned. Initially, it was a surprise that the enemy attacked the bridgeheads of the southern and 1st Army on the eastern bank of the Bug with strong forces on July 20 and pushed back their garrisons. The Cavalry Corps Heydebreck had to vacate the barely won eastern bank again. This delayed the relief of the XXXXI Reserve Corps intended to strengthen the Bug Army. Field Marshal von Mackensen did not allow the deployment of the 103rd Infantry Division of Major General von Esfom, requested by the 1st Army, for a counterattack on the eastern bank.

The Bug Army also encountered unexpected obstacles. The hope of General von Liningen that the enemy would succumb to the attack comprehensively directed against Hrubieszow was initially not fulfilled. The thrust of the 107th Infantry Division, conducted from the west against the heights north of Hrubieszow, did not penetrate. To give this flank attack greater force, the 11th Bavarian Infantry Division of Major General Ritter von Kneussl was replaced by the 1st Infantry Division of Lieutenant General von Conta and moved across to the western bank of the Huczwa.

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The Bug Army Breaks the Resistance at Hrubieszow.

relieved and moved across to the western Huczwa bank. However, on July 20, due to the late hour, it could no longer enter the battle. Since the Besikden Corps also had to postpone its attack due to uncertain weather to July 21, General von Linsingen decided to bring down Hrubieszow the next day through a frontal attack by the 1st Infantry Division south of the Huczwa and by encircling with the 11th Bavarian and 107th Infantry Division from the west. He hoped in this way to separate the Russian forces west and east of the Bug.

The striking power of the 11th Army was reduced by the days of fighting and marches on roads made impassable by rain. Its territorial gain on July 20 in new fierce battles against the enemy, reinforced by significant fresh forces, was therefore only slight. The Austro-Hungarian 4th Army, which had shifted its focus to the right flank, unsuccessfully attempted to break through in connection with the 11th Army at Chmiel.

Field Marshal von Mackensen saw no danger in the strong deployment of forces against the Bug bridgeheads of the Austro-Hungarian 1st Army. It even seemed desirable to him that the enemy, feeling threatened here, would tie down forces away from the decisive battle. Apparently, the Russians had no intention of advancing over the Bug themselves. Since the use of the Heydebreck Cavalry Corps east of the Bug was not possible at the time, the Field Marshal ordered on July 21 that his cavalry divisions (the German 5th and Austro-Hungarian 4th) on the western Bug bank should free up the XXXXI Reserve Corps as soon as possible for use at the front of the Bug Army. The Hungarian 11th Cavalry Division was assigned to the Bug Army. Due to shifts within the front, the attack of this army was only carried out in the course of the afternoon. The enemy abandoned Hrubieszow under pressure against his right flank and rear. He was pushed back from Hrubieszow to the north and onto Zabudce. The Besikden Corps succeeded in taking the position on both sides of Wosjlawice on a broad front and then holding it against counterattacks. General von Linsingen believed that these counterattacks served as the prelude to further retreat and therefore ordered that the XXXXI Reserve Corps should soon intervene in the battle over Hrubieszow with the 1st Infantry Division, and the 11th Cavalry Division should follow the army group. The 11th Army encountered the hardest resistance on both banks of the Huczwa. However, the Austro-Hungarian 4th Army succeeded in breaking into the enemy on both sides of Trzciniec.

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On July 22, the enemy attacked the bridgeheads of the b. and 1st Army east of the Bug in vain. Field Marshal von Mackensen informed the commander-in-chief, Field Master von Puhallo, that for operational reasons he no longer valued the bridgeheads, only the absolute holding of the river section was necessary. The b. and 2nd Army continued their attack on the right flank. The foremost parts of the XXXXI Reserve Corps had to turn east against the enemy immediately after passing through Hrubieszow, who was standing in the river bend west of Uscilug. To the north, the 1st Infantry Division Woyrsch fought. The Gerdt Corps advanced further west, but encountered new heavily fortified positions at and east of Teratyn. The Beskiden Corps could only hold its lines in changing battles. The divisions of the 11th Army were at the end of their striking power and dug in. The b. and 4th Army could still expand the success of their center. The left army wing advanced on the Vistula to Imitlowice, as ordered by the High Command Mackensen, to maintain the connection with the Army Detachment Woyrsch.

Before this, the enemy had already vacated the stubbornly defended position north of the Ilzanta on the morning of July 19 after fierce night battles. By the evening of July 22, the two wings of the Army Detachment Woyrsch reached the Vistula, partly only after overcoming new resistance, above Iwangorod in the line Janowice–Patkowice, below Iwangorod in the line west of Pawlowice–Ryczwol to the Pilica estuary. In the gap in between, the fortress was closed from the west, and strong parts were prepared for crossing the river on both sides of the road Zwolen–Nowo Aleksandria.

The High Command Mackensen assessed the intentions of the enemy on July 22 in a report to the Supreme Army Command as follows: "Enemy prepares retreat with 13th Army to the northeast. From the 3rd Army, counterattacks are initially to be expected, then retreat to the north, later to the northeast. The 4th Army will initially cover the middle Vistula, then withdraw, initially to the north." The enemy thus seemed to be preparing a large backward swing behind the Bug. Field Marshal von Mackensen did not conceal that it would be desirable for the army group to strike the flank of the Russian retreat with a successful thrust. However, he could not ignore the realization that the battles during the course of which the hard-hit and exhausted 11th Army was no longer able, in its current grouping of forces, to achieve decisive successes against the enemy, whose defensive strength remained unbroken.

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Pause in Combat for the Mackensen Army Group.

The heavily battered and exhausted 11th Army was no longer able, in its current grouping of forces, to achieve decisive successes against the enemy, whose defensive strength remained unbroken. Therefore, he reported with a heavy heart to the Supreme Army Command his decision to "continue the advance northward with a strong center and cover against the east only after a necessary pause in combat."

This decision did not surprise the German Chief of the General Staff of the Field Army. He himself had viewed the prospects as extremely favorable on July 19¹, but on the 21st wrote to the Commander-in-Chief East²: "The Mackensen Army Group faces a far superior enemy. Those of its troops that must advance have been severely battered by almost three months of mobile warfare, and their right flank requires constant attention. It is therefore not to be assumed that the army group can advance on its own." For the leader of overall operations, however, a pause in the offensive of the Mackensen Army Group called into question the success of his own plans, which were aimed at a decisive blow against the main body of the enemy. The previously favorable course of events, especially on the Narew Front, had only recently awakened in him the hope "that the decision in the fight against Russia would fall in the area south of the Narew"³. To achieve this goal, the concentric pressure from the northwest and south against the enemy masses located in the area between the Bug and Vistula could not be allowed to slacken even temporarily. It was therefore crucial to get the stalled offensive of the Mackensen Army Group back on track as quickly as possible. General von Falkenhayn, in the aforementioned letter to the Commander-in-Chief East, identified the uninterrupted continuation of the Narew operation, using all available forces, as the most effective means, since immediate support for the Mackensen Army Group by bringing in fresh units appeared unfeasible due to unfavorable railway and supply conditions⁴ in Galicia and southern Poland.

At the same time, he was also eager to bring the forces still west of the Vistula, such as the 9th Army and the Woyrsch Army Detachment, to bear on the course of the war beyond the river as soon as possible⁵. On July 21, he therefore proposed to Colonel General von Conrad to combine these two formations into an army group directly subordinate to the German Supreme Army Command under the command of Prince Leopold of Bavaria and to launch an attack across the Vistula between Iwangorod and Warsaw in the direction of Lublin–Siedlce.

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The Army Detachment Woyrsch is to relieve the Mackensen Army Group.

The Woyrsch detachment was to force the crossing b e l o w Iwangorod. The German Chief of General Staff temporarily refrained from further discussing his plan to form a new army group under General Field Marshal Prince Leopold of Bavaria.

General Field Marshal von Mackensen had accurately assessed the situation and intentions of the R u s s i a n s in his report of July 22 to the Supreme Army Command. Despite the deployment of reinforcements (II Siberian and Guard Corps with the 3rd Army, 56th and 27th Infantry Divisions with the 13th Army), it was not possible to hold the previous positions. The Commander-in-Chief of the Northwestern Front, General Alexeyev, ordered a gradual withdrawal to the prepared positions Iwangorod—Kock—Ostrow—Opalin—Luboml—Kowel for the three armies of his southern wing (4th, 3rd, and 13th Army) on July 22. The 3rd and 13th Armies were tasked with delaying the advance of the Mackensen Army Group towards Brest Litovsk through offensively conducted resistance. In particular, the area around Vladimir Volynsk east of the Bug was to be held as long as possible. Due to the attack pause imposed by the allies, the Russians gained time for the systematic preparation of the ordered retreat. They refrained from immediately initiating movements.

3. The continuation of the offensive on Cholm—Lublin from July 23 to 31.

Maps 6 and 7, Sketch 24.

Until the resumption of the offensive on the front of the Mackensen Army Group, the Austro-Hungarian 1st A r m y successfully repelled enemy attacks against their bridgeheads on the Bug as before. Their cavalry divisions were deployed for flank security down to Stitcze.

At the Bug Army, General von Linsingen, who saw only the concealment of his further retreat in the enemy's counterattacks, initially attempted to continue the offensive. The XXXXI Reserve Corps and parts of the 1st Infantry Division had to conduct long, heavy, bloody battles for the possession of Spiczilosi east of Moniatycze and the forest east of Annopol in their front directed eastward against the Bug loop between Uscilug. The combat strength of the enemy was also expressed in the often repeated counterattacks from the woods against the adjacent front of the 1st Infantry Division and the Geyl Corps.

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Counterattacks from the forests. Nevertheless, after a few days, the 11th Bavarian Infantry Division succeeded in taking the enemy positions west of Annopol. Attempts to advance at Teresyn on the road to Cholm, however, failed. Only the Beskiden Corps, supported by neighboring troops of the Austro-Hungarian VI Corps, achieved some local advantages on its left flank on July 25. Counterattacks by the Russians in the following days were repelled. The overall result of these several days of bitter fighting by the Bug Army was minimal. They only proved that their severely exhausted and weakened divisions alone were not able to break the stubborn resistance of the enemy. Here too, a pause in fighting was absolutely necessary to resume the attack together with the other armies.

Against the 11th Army, the Russians only launched connected, unsuccessful attacks on July 23. Otherwise, the regrouping and preparation of forces for a new advance could be carried out undisturbed by the enemy until July 28. Reinforcements to raise the very depleted business forces arrived in the meantime.

Before the Austro-Hungarian 4th Army, the enemy began to retreat to a prepared position only a few kilometers backward on July 23. The army followed them; the deployment for the new attack also remained undisturbed here.

For the resumption of his offensive, Field Marshal von Mackensen chose the middle of the enemy front between Bug and Vistula, the line Cholm—Lublin, as the main direction of attack. He did not fail to recognize that a new eastern thrust, with partial forces on the right bank of the Bug, could effectively hit the enemy if he, as assumed, retreated to the northeast. However, this would have required time-consuming regroupings. The terrain near the Bug, with its numerous watercourses and swampy areas, was also considered particularly unfavorable for movements and battles of large troop masses. Furthermore, it was expected that the enemy would offer particularly stubborn resistance on his outer army wing to cover the withdrawal of his masses over the middle Bug. From a further westward thrust, the Field Marshal finally hoped, in close cooperation with the Woyrsch Army Detachment, to quickly outflank the Russian Vistula front still held on both sides of Swangorod. He also considered an early withdrawal of the enemy possible and believed that such a move would certainly be covered by heavy partial attacks.

1) The Austro-Hungarian army command withdrew the 8th Infantry Division from the army for use on the Italian theater of war.  
2) See p. 388.

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Resumption of the Offensive of Army Group Mackensen.

It was considered possible by the enemy and believed that such an attack would certainly be covered by heavy partial attacks. "The army is ready," it was therefore ordered, "to repel these attacks as before and to follow the retreating enemy. A premature advance against his strong positions does not promise the desired success and would play into his hands." Only on July 29 were the 11th and 4th Armies to jointly launch a new attack.

The main breakthrough point for the 11th Army was again determined to be the front west of the Wieprz. Here, a strong assault group under the command of General von Emmich (XXII Reserve Corps, Corps Roßki, X Army Corps, 119th Infantry and Guard Cavalry Division) was to first break through at Biskupice and then throw strong rear echelons to the south for a flank attack east over the Wieprz. This was intended to ease the difficult frontal attack over the fire-rich Siemnica section for the right-adjoining front (Guard Corps and Austro-Hungarian VI Corps). After reaching the first objectives, the main round was to be moved from the western Wieprz bank to the eastern one. The army reserve (the 22nd and the 103rd Infantry Division, transferred from the Austro-Hungarian 1st Army) was therefore positioned immediately east of the river. The Austro-Hungarian 4th Army was to join the attack with a strong right wing in the direction of Lublin. It extended to the right into the area northeast of Chmiel to facilitate both the crossing of the Giełczew stream by the left wing of the 11th Army and to flank the enemy standing in front of its own front. The center, where the German 47th Reserve Division was located, was to continue the frontal breakthrough northwest of Trzcianice. Additionally, the army was instructed to swing its left wing at the Vistula to hold Russian forces that might otherwise turn against the army detachment Woyrsch tasked with the crossing below Iwangorod. The Bug Army was assigned the dual task of covering the right flank of the 11th Army and participating in the new offensive by advancing on Cholm as long as possible.

According to the enemy force grouping reports, the Austro-Hungarian 1st Army (five infantry and two cavalry divisions²) faced seven Russian infantry divisions and two cavalry corps on the eastern Bug bank. More than ten Russian divisions were massed in front of the Bug Army, which numbered eight infantry divisions.

1) p. 394. — 2) p. 395.  
\* World War. Volume VIII.

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massed. However, the 11th Army with 12½ infantry divisions was almost four divisions superior to the enemy standing in front of their front, the Austro-Hungarian 4th Army (14½ infantry divisions) about seven. The Russians were supposed to have freshly assembled their formations. Artillery ammunition also seemed to be more plentiful with them now.

General von Emmich wanted to lead the decisive attack entrusted to him by breaking out fan-like from the area on both sides of Fajslawice. The Kosch Corps was to break through the enemy position in the direction of Biskupice. Accordingly, the mass of heavy artillery was deployed here. To the right of it, the XXII Reserve Corps was to advance with a strong left wing north of Fajslawice and then attack eastwards below Lopiennik over the Wieprz. The flank security above Lopiennik was taken over by the Guard Cavalry Division. The X Army Corps had to provide strong parts on its right wing to cover the left flank of the Kosch Corps against a threat from the large forest west of Fajslawice. The task of the left corps wing, however, was to join the attack of the neighboring army directed to the northeast west of the Gielczew stream.

General Kosch focused on the left wing of his corps. Here, the 105th Infantry Division of Major General von Eich succeeded, after repeated sharp fire concentration, in storming the elevated group of houses Ignasin (west of Fajslawice), the focal point of the enemy position, soon after 7 a.m. In a powerful swing, the division expanded its success to both sides. The 101st Infantry Division, led by Major General Reißer, also managed to advance its attack east of this place at noon, supported on the left flank over Fajslawice, and to pull along the left wing of the XXII Reserve Corps. In the early afternoon, the 44th Reserve Division, following in the second line under Lieutenant General von Dorrer, advanced east over the Wieprz. The 20th Infantry Division, led by Lieutenant General Ritter and Edler von Deiting, offensively covered the left flank of the Kosch Corps by advancing east of the Gielczew stream in the direction of Piaśki. Under the impact of these all-round successes, the enemy abandoned further resistance in a rearwardly developed position and vacated the area in the Wieprz-Gielczew arc. Overnight, the 101st Infantry Division seized the northern Wieprz bridges northeast of Fajslawice, while the 105th Infantry Division on the left of relentlessly advanced northward and captured Biskupice by midnight.

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Breakthrough Attack on Biskupice.

relentlessly advanced northward and captured Biskupice by midnight. The X Army Corps reached Piaski.

The battle on the eastern bank of the Wieprz was not as successful. To make the flank attack of the XXII Reserve Corps over the river as effective as possible, General von Emmich moved the 119th Infantry Division to Fajsławice. By 4 p.m., strong parts of the XXII Reserve Corps had already crossed the Wieprz after executing the right turn. However, strong resistance then set in, as the enemy recognized the threat posed to its south-facing front by this rear threat from the Guard Corps and the Austro-Hungarian VI Corps. Therefore, the XXII Reserve Corps was unable to advance further east today. Consequently, the Prussian Guard Corps also achieved only minor local successes on both sides of Krupie in its frontal attack against the stubborn resistance of the Russian Guard. Similarly, the left wing of the Austro-Hungarian VI Corps, which joined this attack, did not achieve significant territorial gains.

The Bug Army now showed how much the previous battles had sapped the striking power of the troops. The combat pause had been too short. The attack, whose focus was on the 1st and 11th Bavarian Infantry Divisions west of Annopol, did not break through despite local advances by both divisions. The Austro-Hungarian 2nd Army maintained its bridgeheads on the Bug despite some local losses. The Austro-Hungarian 4th Army also did not achieve any greater success.

Overall, the gain of the first day of the attack was thus limited to the successful breakthrough of Emmich's assault group into the enemy's position west of the Wieprz. The aim was now to expand this success so that it also affected the adjoining fronts to the right and left. To this end, Field Marshal von Mackensen ordered General von Emmich to continue with as strong forces as possible on July 30, while maintaining the line from Dorfbis east of the Wieprz, to bring down the particularly well-fortified enemy position in front of the Guard Corps and the Austro-Hungarian VI Corps. At the same time, these two corps were to attack anew at the front. If the strike east of the Wieprz succeeded, it was hoped that the difficult attack of the Bug Army would also gain momentum.

The commander of the Austro-Hungarian 4th Army, Archduke Josef Ferdinand, now intended to shift the emphasis of the attack to the left wing, to break through the enemy here and then roll him up to the right.

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to relocate, break through the enemy here and then roll him up to the right. The decisive factor for this change was the fact that the Woyrich Army Detachment had succeeded on July 29 in crossing the Vistula below Iwangorod at several points. It was hoped that this threat to the rear would weaken the enemy's resistance in front of the left wing of the 4th Army.

On the early morning of July 30, Field Marshal von Mackensen was unexpectedly faced with a new situation: The enemy, having timely recognized the great danger threatening east of the Wieprz, had begun a retreat during the night almost along his entire front between the Bug and the Vistula into a new position, which, as reconnaissance revealed, ran approximately along the line Matcze (on the Bug)—south of Cholm—north of Lublin—Kurów. This too was strongly fortified according to intelligence reports, with the involvement of the civilian population. West of Kurów, it found support at Nowo Alexandrija on the Russian Vistula front around Iwangorod. Once again, as so often before, the enemy had evaded the decisive blow intended for him at the last moment. Once again, the army group seemed to face the equally difficult, exhausting, and thankless task of a frontal attack against a strong position. For the pursuit immediately undertaken by all three armies quickly came to an end.

On July 31, the enemy was pushed back from the field to his main position, partly again under the fiercest fighting. In the Bug Army, the 1st and 11th Bavarian Infantry Divisions successfully advanced over Strzelce. The army was instructed to focus its further advance in the direction of Cholm. Also on the left wing of the 11th Army, the X Army Corps succeeded in breaking into the Russian position west of the Wieprz. The left wing of the 4th Army advanced into the area around Kurów. Its right wing received a direction to the northeast towards Lenczna. The 11th Army was to succeed in making a connection of its striking power in a narrower space impossible. The decisive attack planned by Field Marshal von Mackensen on August 1 with the Emmich Group on both sides of the main road Fajslawice—Wlodawa, with the Plettenberg Group (Guard Corps, 22nd and 103rd Infantry Division) east of it, left wing over Pawlow, was to be conducted. It still seemed as if the Russians were determined, despite the previous failures of their entire front in Poland, to hold against the concentrated attacks of the Allies.

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The Order for Crossing the Vistula below Iwangorod.

4. The Vistula Crossing of the Army Detachment Woyrsch.

The military success of the 11th Army at Biskupice, which had revitalized the offensive of the Mackensen Army Group, coincided with an equally important event on the left neighboring front, the crossing of the Army Detachment W o y r s c h over the Vistula. Generaloberst von Woyrsch, based on the directive received on the evening of July 21 from the Austro-Hungarian Army Command, to engage with the strongest possible forces over Nowo Aleksandrija in the battle of the Austro-Hungarian 4th Army, immediately set the crossing above the fortress Ertrunkungen against the line Nowo Aleksandrija—Golomb. The crossing was to take place on the night of July 24 to 25 at Nowo Aleksandrija, with a simultaneous feint by the Landwehr Division of General Count von Bredow at Janowice. During a meeting with General von Falkenhayn on July 23, however, the Chief of Staff of the Army Detachment, Lieutenant Colonel Heye, expressed concerns about the crossing at Nowo Aleksandrija, as the advantage of surprise would be lost at this location, and suggested crossing below the fortress instead. Apart from the possibility of surprise, continuing the thrust here would strike the rear of the enemy opposing the Austro-Hungarian 4th Army and have a significantly more favorable operational impact. General von Falkenhayn, who, as already mentioned, shared the same view, proposed a corresponding modification after consultation with Generaloberst von Conrad.

Meanwhile, preparations for the crossing at Nowo Aleksandrija were begun for all eventualities. Only on the late evening of July 24 did the new directive from Teschen reach the High Command in Radom, according to which the Vistula crossing below Iwangorod in the area of the Radomka estuary was to be forced by the Landwehr Corps and the Landwehr Division Bredow. The Austro-Hungarian XII Corps of General von Kövess was tasked with securing the river from the Chodel estuary downstream to Kozienice, enclosing Iwangorod, and attacking the fortress upon the arrival of heavy artillery. General von Falkenhayn added to this directive on July 25 that the main requirement for the success of the crossing was the surprise of the enemy.

1) The Army Detachment Woyrsch consisted of: 2. D. Bredow, Ldw.R. (3rd and 4th Austro-Hungarian Divisions), Group Kövess (Austro-Hungarian XII Corps with 16th and 35th Infantry Divisions), Austro-Hungarian 7th and 9th Divisions.  
2) C. 398.  
3) C. 398.  
4) C. 398/399.

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Additionally, the main requirement for the success of the crossing is the surprise of the enemy. The choice of the crossing point is therefore left to the high command and should not be limited by the reconnaissance of the Radomka estuary. The crossing should take place as soon as possible, without regard to any parts of the 9th Army that might be brought up.

Although the crossing at Nowo Aleksandria had already begun on the night of July 25th upon receiving the new instructions, the left march of the three Landwehr divisions was immediately initiated: the Landwehr Corps was to reach the area Swierze Gorne—Glownaczow—Magnuszew by July 27th, and the Landwehr Division Bredow was to reach the area of Brzuzza by July 28th. Despite the extraordinarily long and strenuous marches required for this regrouping of all troops, especially those already deployed bridge trains at Nowo Aleksandria, all three Landwehr divisions were in the ordered accommodations by July 27th. After the relief of the Landwehr Corps, General von Kövesh took over with the Austro-Hungarian 7th Cavalry Division the Vistula security from south of Janowiec to Opatkowice and closed off the fortress Iwangorod with the Austro-Hungarian XII Corps from the west. The Austro-Hungarian 9th Cavalry Division maintained the river security between Kozienice and the Pilica, and it was immediately subordinated to the high command Woyrsch.

Based on the reconnaissance results, Generaloberst von Woyrsch ordered the crossing for the night of July 28th to 29th between Swierze Gorne and Tarnow with the main focus at Ryczywol. However, on July 27th, the Russians attacked the cavalry stationed on the right flank of the German 9th Army north of the Pilica. Generaloberst von Woyrsch was thus faced with the serious question of whether to adhere to his decision for the Vistula crossing or to first turn north to support the 9th Army. The situation seemed not to be worrying, as it was already believed since July 24th that Russian attacks between Iwangorod and Warsaw had to be expected: 4½ Russian corps were at the Vistula crossing, and the Vistula crossings below the Pilica estuary were in Russian hands. Generaloberst von Woyrsch, however, remained firm in his decision, as he saw in his own river crossing the most effective countermeasure against an impending enemy offensive south of Warsaw. In the order issued on the morning of July 27th, he entrusted the leadership of the crossing to the commander of the Landwehr Corps, General of Cavalry Freiherr Herrn von König.

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Preparations and Execution of the Vistula Crossing.

Mr. von König. Initially, the high ground on both sides of the road

Maciejowice—Góbelow and the forest area on the eastern bank of the Vistula

were to be secured. The execution of this operation was primarily assigned to

the 3rd (Major General von Arnim) and 4th (Major General von Hofacker) Landwehr

Divisions; the Landwehr Division Bredow, whose artillery was made available

to the Landwehr Corps for the crossing, was to be ready for immediate

reinforcement on the eastern bank, as Russian counterattacks were expected soon.

The Austro-Hungarian 9th Cavalry Division retained its security mission

at the Vistula, while the Köves Group was to simulate crossing attempts at

Kazimierz and Nowo Aleksandja and otherwise pin down the enemy with

artillery fire. The 9th Army was also called upon to support with feigned operations.

The technical management of the river crossing was under the direction of

the General of Engineers at the Woyrsch High Command, Major General

Adams, in the hands of the Austro-Hungarian Colonel Michel. He had at his disposal

four German, six Austro-Hungarian pioneer companies with two German divisional,

½ corps bridge train and 21 Austro-Hungarian war bridge equipment units.

This bridge material, equivalent to the equipment of six German corps,

allowed a strong combat force to be thrown across the approximately 900-meter-wide

river with the first echelon. The crossing itself was to be carried out in five groups

at ten crossing points over a front width of 20 kilometers. Each group was to take

four guns; the bulk of the artillery was deployed close to the Vistula. East of

Ryczynwol, the construction of a military bridge was to begin immediately. Since

on July 28, the 9th Army explicitly waived support from the Woyrsch Army

Detachment on the northern Pilica bank, and all indications were that the

preparations had remained hidden from the enemy below Iwangorod, the

prospects for success of the river crossing had significantly improved.

On the night of July 28 to 29, at 1 a.m., the first echelon set off. Less than

two hours later, the bulk of the infantry was on the eastern bank of the river;

on the left flank, Kobylinica, Przewoz, and the large island east of Ryczynwol

were in German hands, with 300 prisoners and 5 machine guns captured. Despite

enemy artillery fire, bridge construction east of Ryczynwol could begin at 7 a.m.;

by noon, the first parts of the artillery and the train crossed. The strongest resistance

was encountered by the 22nd Landwehr Brigade of Lieutenant General Sachs at Tarnow.

It managed to bring only a few guns across the Vistula and faced a difficult situation against soon-to-begin Russian attacks.

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against soon commencing Russian attacks a difficult position. Only when

artillery arrived over the bridge at Ryczywol for support did their situation

improve.

The crossing was successful, but now it was necessary to quickly advance

to gain space for deeply structured bridgehead positions. Although the

corps reserve and the flank protection from the Pilica were immediately

brought up, it was no longer possible, in view of quickly brought up enemy

reinforcements, to make further progress on the eastern bank on July 29.

The next day, strong counterattacks were launched particularly

against the two flanks at Kobylinica and Tarnow. The Landwehr

Division Bredow was brought over a now completed second bridge at

Swierze Gorne and took Maciejowice after heavy fighting.

On July 31, the water of the Vistula rose significantly due to heavy rains

in recent days and made the northern bridge unusable.

This created a critical situation as the Russians brought up reinforcements

and continued their counterattacks. Although the Landwehr

Division Bredow, after repelling heavy attacks from 16 Russian battalions,

managed to take the village of Podzamcze in a follow-up attack, it was only

when the Landwehr Corps captured Domaziew in fierce fighting on August 1

that a bridgehead was secured, ensuring a safe crossing.

Already on July 29, and again on the 30th and 31st, after the

left flank of the Austro-Hungarian 4th Army had moved and reached the

height of Nowo Aleksandrija, Generaloberst von Woyrsch

appealed to the allied army commands for reinforcement by

powerful infantry, as his Landwehr divisions were too weak to exploit

the success achieved. General von Falkenhayn

then attempted to obtain the transfer of a division to the army section

from both the Supreme Commander East and Generaloberst von Conrad,

but was refused by both. The only support

came on July 29 from the Austro-Hungarian 2nd Cavalry Division from the

Austro-Hungarian 4th Army and on July 31 the German 9th Cavalry Division from the

9th Army; in addition, the Austro-Hungarian 7th Cavalry Division,

which had become dispensable before Iwangorod, and the Austro-Hungarian 9th, which still

secured the Pilica-Vistula angle. However, for cavalry there was initially

no possibility of use east of the Vistula, as the Russians

still held their bridgehead position firmly. Stronger accumulations at Jelechow, reported by aircraft, suggested a continuation of their attacks.

1) p. 404. — 2) p. 338 and 343.

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Strong Counterattacks by the Russians on the East Bank of the Vistula.

Movements at Jelechow, reported by pilots, suggested a continuation of their attacks.

Although the Kövesz group had achieved successes before Iwangorod on August 1 and during the night of August 2, and had advanced to the enemy position, the stubborn resistance of the Russians on the eastern bank of the Vistula in front of the Landwehr Corps continued on August 2. Generaloberst von Conrad was now inclined, upon repeated representation by General von Falkenhayn, to accede to the requests of the High Command Bövich for reinforcements, and declared himself ready to provide him with the German 47th Reserve Division of the Austro-Hungarian 4th Army, albeit only after reaching the Bzura.

August 3 also brought no noticeable relief. Although the Russians withdrew on this day on the southern flank of the Landwehr Corps to the heights east of Kruszyna, they continued to hold stubbornly on the heights southwest of Sobolew and Laskarzew at the eastern edge of the forest area. However, the Kövesz group succeeded in taking possession of the Russian position on the road Gniewoszów—Slowiki at the western front of Iwangorod. Towards evening, explosions and fires in Iwangorod seemed to indicate the evacuation of the fortress. During the night of August 4, the Russians indeed abandoned the western front of Iwangorod and withdrew to the east bank of the Vistula into the city and some outdated works, already abandoned in peacetime. Generaloberst von Bövich then ordered, on the instructions of the Austro-Hungarian High Command, the preparation of a division of the Kövesz group for crossing at Rozienice; at the same time, however, Generaloberst von Conrad, in agreement with General von Falkenhayn, ordered that the German 47th Reserve Division, in view of the "changed situation at Iwangorod," should remain with the Austro-Hungarian 4th Army.

Even in the following days, the Landwehr Corps was unable to completely break the enemy resistance. Nevertheless, local progress was made. During August 2, the left wing took the stubbornly defended Damirow, and during the night of August 5, the north of Razum was also taken, finally giving the 22nd Landwehr Brigade some breathing space, which had had to fend off strong Russian attacks for days, closely aligned with the Vistula. In the center, too, it was possible to break into a height position southwest of Laskarzew and occupy Buczy. The Kövesz group, however, unsuccessfully attempted to gain the east bank at Iwangorod. As the Austro-Hungarian 35th Infantry Division had completed its assembly at Rozienice on the morning of August 5, Generaloberst von Bövich intended, after a short pause, to resume the attack on the east bank.

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to resume. The overall situation had meanwhile changed, preventing this.

After the capture of Warsaw¹) by the 9th Army, General von Falkenhayn

revived his previously expressed plan to unite the 9th Army and the Army

Detachment Woyrsch into an army group under the command of Field

Marshal Leopold Prince of Bavaria²). Generaloberst von Conrad promptly

agreed. The corresponding orders were issued immediately on August 5.

The new army group was directly subordinate to the German Supreme

Army Command and was tasked with the operational objective of advancing

with all means against and beyond the line Lublin—Siedlce³).

The command area of the newly formed army group Prince

Leopold of Bavaria extended along the Vistula from the area just south

of Iwangorod to the southern front of Nowogeorgiewsk and initially

comprised 9½ infantry and four cavalry divisions along this approximately

150-kilometer stretch, including two or three of the Austro-Hungarian

army. Field Marshal Prince Leopold directed the right wing of the Army

Detachment Woyrsch towards Lublin for further advance. With the main

forces of the 9th Army, the commanding general of the XXV Reserve Corps,

General von Scheffer-Boyadel, was to force the crossing of the Vistula at or

south of Warsaw. Against the southern front of Nowogeorgiewsk, only the

eastern western front, consisting of Landwehr and Landsturm, was to be

held. It was reinforced by one division and, at the request of the Supreme

Commander East, was detached from the army area on August 7 and

subordinated to General von Beseler for the attack on the fortress⁴).

5. The Pursuit between Bug and Vistula  
in the First Third of August.  
Maps 6 and 7, Sketch 24.

Meanwhile, the enemy, who faced the Mackensen army group between

Bug and Vistula, again evaded the impending blow by timely withdrawal

on August 1. Also east of the Bug, he now retreated.

¹) G. 340. — ²) G. 345/346. — ³) G. 398 f.  
⁴) Thus, the army group Prince Leopold of Bavaria consisted of: Army  
Detachment Woyrsch; Austro-Hungarian XII Corps (16th and 35th Infantry Divisions);  
Bredow Landwehr Corps (3rd Landwehr Division) and 7th Landwehr Division; 9th  
Army: 35f. XXV Reserve Corps (49th Reserve Division, 3rd Landwehr Division);  
9½ Infantry Divisions (formed in the following days); 5 Austro-Hungarian Reserve  
Divisions; Frommel Cavalry Corps (9th and Austro-Hungarian 2nd Reserve Division,  
the latter since August 7, previously with Army Detachment Woyrsch).

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Bug and Vistula, but also on the eastern Bug bank in front of the left

flank of the 5th and 1st Army to continue to evade. The armies of the Allies

followed.

In a report to the Supreme Army Command, Field Marshal von Mackensen

designated as his task, an advance with strong

forces to the north, regardless of whether this would finally force the enemy to

abandon his positions on the Vistula or whether it would hit the southern

flank of the retreat. Main direction of the thrust over

Parczem towards the Warsaw—Brest Litowsk railway. The initial left

envelopment of the 11th Army, to roll up positions behind Bieprz and Tysmienica

and at the same time gain freer operational terrain,

than a frontal pursuit offers. A broader front of the 1st Army is considered

sufficient after the enemy's withdrawal, after the 13th Russian Army

is drawn north. Bug Army extends to the left, initially

to cover against Wlodawa, then again moves towards Wlodawa

11th Army is to lead the main thrust over Ostrow—Parczem on both sides of the Tysmienica,

4th Army in the main direction Kock towards the line Bobyn—Luftow

and gain connection to Borysch, whose march direction on

Siedlce is assumed."

Field Marshal von Mackensen believed he could achieve a faster and

thus greater success if he shifted the focus

of his operations not, as previously intended, in a northerly direction

towards Wlodawa, but northerly towards Parczem. Through the

necessary leftward shift of the 11th Army, he also wanted to give the Bug

Army the opportunity to bypass the difficult-to-overcome, swampy forest area

southwest of Wlodawa with parts on the left, and also to open the crossing

over the difficult river sections of the Bieprz and the Tysmienica for the 5th and 4th Army. The

High Command did not consider the large retreat movement of the enemy behind the Bug

to be so far advanced that a powerful thrust

to the north could no longer effectively hit the southern flank. It also saw

the possibility of close operational cooperation with the Army

Detachment Borysch and the 11th Army as the next satisfaction for

a major success against the main part of the Russian forces in

Poland. By army order at 10:30 a.m., it was ordered to initiate the

appropriate regrouping in further operations on August 4th.

The view of Field Marshal von Mackensen coincided

with that of the German Chief of the General Staff of the Field Army, while

Colonel General von Conrad now directed the entire army group towards the northeast, as the enemy seemed to be about to abandon his Vistula front, thus turning the battles along the entire line into an operational pursuit.

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Initially continuing at Lubartow, then moving forces behind the 11th Army advancing north over the Wieprz to open the crossing over the river with the main direction towards Kock. The army approached Lubartow closely on August 4th and reached the line Samokleski—Bronow. West of the Vistula, the enemy had already vacated the fortress area of Iwangorod1).

From the reconnaissance results regarding the Russian retreat, a clear picture emerged of a separation of their forces on the battlefields in Southern Poland and Eastern Galicia. The right wing of the Russian Southwestern Front (8th Army) was still at Sokal on the Bug. However, the left wing of the Northwestern Front (13th Army) had moved north towards Kowel. In the gap that formed between the two fronts, seven Russian cavalry divisions were supposed to be concentrated.

In the following days, the ordered movements continued. The enemy withdrew in the area between the Bug and Vistula, partly under stubborn and skillful rearguard actions, further to a strong position recognized by aircraft in the line Uhruf (on the Bug)—Ostrow—course of the Tysmienica and the lower Wieprz. The armies advanced against this position fighting. Of decisive importance was a success on August 7th by the right wing of the Austro-Hungarian 4th Army, which led over Lubartow on the road to Kock to Firlej. This resolved the ordered crossing behind the 11th Army into the area beyond the Wieprz on August 4th. By its own strength, the right wing could now gain the eastern bank of the Wieprz on both sides of Lubartow. As a continuation of this success, on August 8th, the 4th Army reached its entire front to the lower Wieprz, thus advancing with its left wing into the fortress area of Iwangorod, which had meanwhile been vacated by the enemy. Also, between the Tysmienica and the Wieprz, the left wing of the 11th Army could advance accordingly on this day. By August 9th, the necessary movements were completed. It also moved closer to the enemy's position east of the Tysmienica under fighting. However, the left neighboring army could already advance the center and left wing beyond the Wieprz.

This rapid advance of the Austro-Hungarian 4th Army was related to the events that had meanwhile occurred on the front of Army Group Prince Leopold. Already on August 7th, intercepted radio messages had given the impression that the enemy, as before the left neighboring Army Gallwitz, as well as before the 9th Army, had continued the retreat, with the main forces already at Garwolin, Nowo-Minsk, and Stanislawow, and only weak rearguards at the Vistula.

1) p. 409.

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General von Linsingen Considers Focus on the Bug More Effective.

before the neighboring left army Gallwitz¹), as well as before the 9th Army, continued the retreat, with the main forces already at Garwolin, Nowo-Minsk, and Stanislawow, and only weak rear guards at the Vistula. On the night of August 8, the 84th Infantry Division, the 49th Reserve Division, and the Gereke Division succeeded in gaining the eastern bank of the river at Warsaw with parts. Weak enemy forces withdrew eastward; construction of a military bridge in Warsaw began, over which the crossing started on the morning of August 9. Meanwhile, the enemy had been retreating since the night of August 8, where the Army Detachment Woyrsch was in retreat; it followed and reached the area of Stamin and northward on August 9, with the group Köves on the right wing extending beyond Rosfisch.

On August 10, the k.-k. 4th Army, north of the Wieprz, in conjunction with the right wing of the Army Group Prince Leopold, continued its right turn over Koch and to the upper Bystrzyca. Also, before the Emmich Group of the 11th Army, the enemy voluntarily gave up the western bank of the Tysmienica. It then prepared for a flanking attack over the widely flooded lowlands of the river due to damming.

The Bug Army, on the other hand, could make only slight progress in these days in difficult swamp terrain, especially against the elevated positions between the railway and road Cholm-Wlodawa north of the Ucherka, under heavy, loss-heavy attack battles. Already on August 6, General von Linsingen had attempted, in line with his earlier assessment of the strategic situation²), to effect a shift of forces to the right wing of the army at Field Marshal von Mackensen. He argued that the Russians could only be defeated by a "quick and strong advance on both banks of the Bug or at least on the western bank." An advance of the left wing or the center of the armies operating between the Bug and Vistula would no longer hit the flank of the enemy retreat. Rather, the enemy would resist the relatively weak forces of the German right wing in strong positions immediately west of the Bug until the withdrawal of its main forces over this river section was completed. General von Linsingen, therefore, has to put the Bug Army in a position to force a breakthrough just west of the Bug as quickly as possible by reinforcing it with one or two army corps or by shortening its front.

¹) C. 352. — ²) G. 390 and 413.

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In response to these representations from his subordinate, Field Marshal von Mackensen, in agreement with the Chief of the General Staff of the Field Army, maintained his position. "I consider," he replied, "the thrust of a strong center still indicated, as it offers the best prospects for a rapid advance of the offensive. This must first force the enemy, who has not yet been completely made to retreat, to withdraw and must reach his southern retreat flank as quickly as possible. I do not expect this speed of success from an advance on both sides of the Bug. Furthermore, the advance of the Bug Army through Borissow can be halted by enemy forces on our right flank. Securing the 11th and 4th Armies from such impact is the task of the Bug Army. If it also succeeds in advancing with considerable forces over Wlodawa, it will significantly support the operation of the 11th Army." The Chief of the General Staff, General von Seeckt, also expressed hope in a telephone conversation with General Lappen on August 6, that by continuing operations in the ordered directions, the enemy could be "caught before Brest Litowsk."

The Commander-in-Chief of the Russian Northwest Front had already decided on August 3, in view of the perilous overall situation, to withdraw his 12th, 1st, 2nd, 4th, and 3rd Armies, yielding to the concentric pressure of the Allies, to the line Lomza—Ostrow—Koch—Pralin. On August 10, he was forced to order the continuation of these movements to the line Osowiec—Biebrza—Giechanowiec—Drohiczyn—Miendzyrzec—Wlodawa, while the 13th Army east of the Bug had to withstand the pressure of an operational encirclement against the flank and rear of the shortened front and simultaneously maintain the connection to the Russian Southwest Front through cavalry.

6. The Pursuit from August 11 to 16.

Maps 6 and 7, Sketch 24.

Already on August 3, General von Falkenhayn had informed the Austro-Hungarian Chief of the General Staff that he considered the joint task of the Allies on the Eastern theater of war to be solved as soon as the pursuit operation would reach the general line Bug—Brest Litowsk—Grodno. Furthermore, such strong forces would have to be deployed on other theaters of war, that a state of equilibrium would result in the East, separating the operational areas of the Allies.

1) Ostrow south of Lomza.  
2) p. 483. The Commander-in-Chief East received this message only on August 18.

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Colonel General von Conrad Proposes Pursuit to the Northeast.

It was suggested that in the East a state of inertia would arise with the separation of the operational areas of the allies. On August 5, Colonel General v o n C o n r a d fundamentally agreed with this spatial objective but also expressed the view that the continued presence of the Russian front in Galicia, 40 kilometers from Lemberg, could not be tolerated in the long run, and indicated that he would either in connection with the current operation or following it, aim to advance his own front east of the Bug and in Galicia.

A few days later, on August 8, he himself presented the German Supreme Army Command with a detailed proposal for the continuation of joint operations in the East. He maintained the previous strategic goal of thoroughly defeating the Russians in the Narew—Vistula—Wieprz—Wlodawa arc through concentric pressure from the northwest, west, and south. However, since the enemy was trying to escape encirclement by rapid retreat under stubborn resistance on his flanks, the Mackensen army group now had to take the general direction to the N o r t h e a s t towards Brest Litowsk, while the pressure of the Bug Army on the outermost flank would be reinforced by the addition of the German 47th Reserve Division. This time, however, there was no mention of this army crossing to the eastern bank, as Colonel General von Conrad had previously advised several times. It had to result inevitably from the change in direction of the army group to the northeast. Colonel General von Conrad also intended to have the Austro-Hungarian 1st Army advance in the direction of Rowel and to reinforce it further from the 4th Army¹). Parts of the Russian 13th Army apparently were in the process of being transported away from Rowel, while the Russian 8th Army was extending its front northwards along the Bug. Simultaneously with the 1st Army, he also wanted to have the 2nd and the Southern Army become offensive with their inner flanks against the line Bialykamien—Alczow—Zborow.

The response from General von Falkenhayn on August 9 already revealed some uncertainty: In his view, the Mackensen army group would, in the course of the ongoing pursuit, naturally come into the desired direction to the northeast. However, he feared that issuing new instructions to them at this moment would cause an undesirable delay, while the utmost urgency was required.

¹) Already on August 5, Colonel General von Conrad had ordered the Austro-Hungarian 4th Army to transfer the Austro-Hungarian X Corps to the Austro-Hungarian 1st Army.

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Therefore, he also wanted the Bug Army to advance northward as quickly as possible on this side of the Bug. Undoubtedly, his previously emphasized concern about the terrain difficulties of the Rokitno Marshes played a role here. He agreed to the other proposals and intentions with certain reservations. Generaloberst von Conrad immediately made a new representation: Only by a strong thrust of the right wing of the Mackensen Army Group could success still be achieved, which was all the more serious as the enemy was daily withdrawing more from the flank attack. A loss of time could not arise from a new directive, as the attack on the current Russian position was to be carried out first.

Upon receiving the report on the morning of August 10 that the Russians were now also retreating in front of the right wing of the Austro-Hungarian 4th Army, Generaloberst von Conrad again turned to General von Falkenhayn with an urgent request to change the operational direction for the Mackensen Army Group, as otherwise not only the 4th, but also the 11th and Bug Army would come in front of the enemy, instead of into the flank. In a personal discussion, to which Generaloberst von Conrad traveled to Ples on the 10th, General von Falkenhayn, however, took the position that "given the exhaustion of the troops and the terrain or supply difficulties, it was less important whether the 11th and Bug Army broke through, than that they succeeded at any point at all." When during this discussion the news arrived that the enemy was now also retreating from the left wing of the 11th Army, it was easy for Generaloberst von Conrad to demonstrate that the conditions for the thrust of the 11th Army in a northerly direction towards Parczew had thus become obsolete. General von Falkenhayn now agreed that the Mackensen Army Group was given the direction to the northeast towards Brest Litowsk. The 4th Army was to advance with its left wing over Radzyn to Biala, the 11th Army with its left wing over Parczew to Lomazy, and the Bug Army with its right wing in the river valley northward.

Field Marshal von Mackensen then issued corresponding orders. He also ordered that the 4th Army should transfer an Austro-Hungarian division to the 1st Army and the German 47th Reserve Division to the 11th Army, which in turn was to transfer the 22nd Infantry Division of the Bug Army. The 1st Army received a double assignment depending on the behavior of the Russian 13th Army assembled in the area around Kowel.

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The pursuit presses forward only with difficulty.

Russian 13th Army. Field Marshal von Mackensen anticipated that this army could become offensive from Kowel to facilitate and relieve the retreat of the main Russian forces behind the Bug. If it advanced westward against the right flank of the Bug Army, it should itself be attacked on the flank by the 1st Army. If it directed its advance southwest against the 1st Army, then this had to fend it off at the Aug and Bug section, while the Bug Army could then find an opportunity to flank over the Bug. In the third case, if the Russian 13th Army did not become offensive at all, the 1st Army received no new instructions.

The next task of the Mackensen Army Group was purely tactical: it was necessary to drive the enemy out of its non-opposing positions. However, the strength of the Bug Army was not sufficient on August 11 to break the resistance of the Russians in the strong elevated positions north of the Ucherka and in the marshy lowlands on both sides of the Garbatowka—Wlodawa road. Even the 11th Army achieved only insignificant partial successes east of the Tymienica despite brave efforts. A relief of this front by the intended flanking attack of the Emmich Group over the Tymienica did not occur, as it did not succeed in overcoming the marshy lowland. In front of the Austro-Hungarian 4th Army, however, the enemy surrendered the Bystrzyca above Ossowno without a fight.

The army detachment Woyrsch, located on the right wing of the Prince Leopold Army Group, occupied Lutow and advanced close to Siedlce. It was to continue the pursuit north of the Lutow—Brest Litowsk railway on the orders of the Supreme Army Command, "to prevent a withdrawal of the enemy from the area west of the Pripjet marshes in a northeasterly direction"¹). The 9th Army, extending with the left wing over Wengrow, encountered stubborn resistance at the Kortrzyn and Siwice sections. The conditions here were similar to those of the neighboring 12th Army on the left: the pursuit was characterized by laborious and time-consuming advances from section to section²).

At the front of the Mackensen Army Group, the execution of the attacks on August 12 was resolved, as the enemy evaded the Bug and 11th Army. When aerial reconnaissance detected extensive marches to the north and northeast in the morning hours, Field Marshal von Mackensen ordered the Bug Army to advance northward on Wlodawa.

¹) p. 360. — ²) p. 358 ff.

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Field Marshal von Mackensen of the Bug Army was to advance northward on Wlodawa. It was also supposed to spare forces for use in a northeasterly direction beyond the Bug. However, the pursuit came to a halt on the main roads to Wlodawa before Macoszyn and Bruszki. The artillery could not follow in the difficult terrain in time. The 11th Army, with its front narrowing, had strong units (XXII Reserve Corps, Austro-Hungarian VI Corps, X Army Corps, 47th Reserve Division) moved to the second line, but after passing through the forest zone ahead, it encountered the enemy again south of Parczem. The inner flanks of the 11th and 4th Armies still did not succeed in crossing the Lhynienica west of Parczem. The left flank of the 4th Army, however, swung completely to the east. The army was instructed to transfer two more divisions with the command of the Austro-Hungarian IX Corps to the 1st Army.

In the Prince Leopold Army Group, the advance of the Woyrsch Army Detachment beyond Lubow—Siedlce had the effect that the enemy also abandoned its resistance in front of the 9th Army at the Kostrzyner section and further north.

Already on the evening of August 11, General von Falkenhayn had asked the Austro-Hungarian Chief of Staff for instructions to the Mackensen Army Group to adjust its left flank to the forward movement of the Prince Leopold Army Group. Generaloberst von Conrad then ordered, beyond the agreements made in Plesk the day before, a rapid right turn against the Bug for the entire Mackensen Army Group in the sense of an overtaking pursuit. The Army High Command 11 now determined the boundaries for the advance of its army to the right as the line Piesia Wola—Süszno on the Bug (north of Wlodawa), and to the left as the line Parczew—Roznadawofka. Against this, General von Falkenhayn raised an objection the next morning at the Army Headquarters in Lublin, where he had gone for oral consultation with Field Marshal von Mackensen, and set, in accordance with the agreement of August 11, the line Parczew—Lomazy as the advance direction for the left flank of the 11th Army. He designated the task of all armies as the fastest possible reaching of the Slawatycze—Radzyn road, to still catch the enemy retreating in front of the Prince Leopold Army Group in the flank.

Contrary to expectations, the Russians continued their retreat west of the Bug on the night of August 13. General von Linsingen requested further reinforcement of his army, as the air security would have to stretch further with the rapid advance northward.

1) p. 418.

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General von Falkenhayn still hopes for great successes before Brest Litowsk.

requested a further reinforcement of his army, as the air security would have to stretch further with the rapid advance north. Consequently, the X Army Corps, following in reserve behind the left wing of the 11th Army, was dispatched with the Guard Cavalry Division to relieve the XXXXI Reserve Corps at the Bug. In a strong march, where the terrain and the enemy's road and bridge destructions often caused greater delays than the resistance of his rearguards, the three armies advancing west of the Bug reached the line Rozanka (north of Blodawa)—Rundo—area southwest of Miedzyrzec on August 13. Here, the right wing of Prince Leopold's army group joined, whose left wing approached the middle Bug south of the Nurzec estuary.

The intention of Field Marshal von Mackensen was to let the Bug Army advance west of the river as far as Roden. The 11th Army was to reach the line Roden—Petrkowce on the railway to Brest Litowsk and probe towards the fortress. Thus, the Bug Army was assigned the area east of the Bug as a later operational field. For the s.e. 4th Army, there was no more room in the front of the two army groups. It could be excluded for other purposes.

According to the findings of the pilots, the enemy moved north before the Bug and 11th Army, northeast before the 4th Army, and east before Prince Leopold's army group. General von Falkenhayn concluded that large troop masses had gathered in the area northwest of Brest Litowsk and hoped that with the sharp pursuit by the allied armies on all sides, it would be possible to engage large parts of the enemy retreating over the Bug still on this side of the Bialowieza forest in the area between the upper Narew and middle Bug, at least significantly disrupting their retreat. Based on this assessment, he sent the following directive in the evening: "Army Group Mackensen is to secure against Brest Litowsk with the left wing of the 11th Army from Lomazy via Biala to Janow. Operations against the roads leading east from Brest Litowsk are recommended." Prince Leopold's army group was deployed with the right wing from Mienowce to Niemirow on the Bug, with the Frommel Cavalry Corps in the general direction of Klejsczele. This directive meant a new change in the operational direction for Army Group Mackensen. The 11th Army was to push directly north past the fortress of Brest Litowsk.

1) p. 361.

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The advance of the Bug Army to the east across the river was again

abandoned. The directive was issued in agreement with the Austro-Hungarian

High Command. Thus, Generaloberst von Conrad also abandoned the

intention of exerting a noticeable pressure beyond the Bug east of Brest

Litowsk against the southern flank and into the rear of the enemy's

retreat movement. Accordingly, Generalfeldmarschall von Mackensen had

to change his orders. The 11th Army was assigned the Bug route Brest

Litowsk—Janow as its target, and it was to be accompanied on the right

by the Bug Army, which was also entrusted with the operations against

the roads leading east. The Austro-Hungarian 4th Army was to continue

participating in the pursuit to the Bug, even on an ever-narrowing front.

For all three armies, it was important to stay on the heels of the enemy

retreating north and northeast. The involvement of the Austro-Hungarian

1st Army by advancing beyond the river north against the Russian 13th

Army was abandoned, as no counterattack was expected. The 1st Army

was also to limit itself to holding its positions after the arrival of the

reinforcements assigned to it.

However, it became apparent as early as August 14 that the Russian

command had correctly recognized the impending danger and ensured a

strong defensive front on the southern flank of their retreat movement.

The three armies of the Mackensen Army Group made little progress

against the stubbornly resisting rearguards along the entire line. Behind

this line of resistance, the masses of Russians continued their withdrawal,

east of the Bug to the north, west of the river to the east towards

Slawatycze and Brest Litowsk, and north over Janow. Airmen found the

area around Brest Litowsk heavily occupied with troops.

By August 15, the general retreat of the Russians had progressed so

far that the defensive front directed south could be withdrawn a bit. The

previously still occupied eastern Bug bank was now also vacated by the

enemy north of Dubienka. On the right flank of the Bug Army, parts of

the XXXI Reserve Corps and the 22nd Infantry Division, which had

meanwhile been relieved by the X Army Corps at the river height, were

able to gain a foothold on the opposite bank, even under fierce fighting,

at Wlodawa. Downstream, the army advanced beyond Slawatycze. The

11th Army followed the skillfully evading enemy despite the greatest

terrain difficulties up to the Luczna—Krzna stream south of Biala.

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The Russians continue the orderly retreat before the Mackensen Army Group.

South of Biala, the 4th Army subsequently reached westward up to and over the Krzna River. The right wing of the Prince Leopold Army Group stood about 14 kilometers north of Niemirowce. "The Russian withdrawal routes made a very orderly impression; nothing was discarded; no broken wagon, no dead horse lay on the road"¹). However, along the entire wide-ranging pursuit front, the bridges, villages, and harvest supplies set on fire by the enemy were in flames. Explosions were audible from the direction of Brest Litowsk.

In view of the rapidly progressing retreat movement of the Russians on the entire front of all three army groups, General von Falkenhayn now deemed it necessary to point out to the Mackensen Army Group the increased importance of a strong pressure along the Bug. At the same time, the Commander-in-Chief East was designated Klejsczale as the direction for the advance of the right wing of the 12th Army²). The Prince Leopold Army Group was also to advance ruthlessly over the middle Bug.

Field Marshal von Mackensen therefore ordered the Bug Army, in conjunction with the Guard Corps advancing on the right wing of the 11th Army, to drive the enemy back to the fortress of Brest Litowsk. The Austro-Hungarian VI Corps was to take over the security against Brest Litowsk to the left of the Guard, and the left army wing (Kosch Corps) was to advance over Biala and drive the enemy back across the Bug below the fortress.

On August 16, the enemy continued the retreat on both banks of the Bug northward. Intercepted Russian radio messages already reported heavy congestion at the crossings. To protect its withdrawal on the east bank, the enemy hurriedly deployed troops brought in by motor vehicles against the bridgehead created the day before at Wlodawa and prevented the attempt to expand the bridgehead as a starting position for offensive operations through strong counterattacks. On the west bank, strong parts of the Bug Army swung north from Slawatycze into the area south of Koden against the river. The 11th Army pushed its right wing to the Bug at Koden.

The Austro-Hungarian 4th Army crossed the Klukowka, while the Prince Leopold Army Group was already probing towards the Bug below Niemirow. The Trommel Cavalry Corps reached Siemiatycze.

¹) Transcript from August 15 in the war diary of the Prince Leopold Army Group.  
²) G. 362.

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7. The Battles for Brest Litowsk from August 17 to 26.

Maps 6 and 7, Sketch 24.

The allied military commands established the Niemirow–Tumin line as the boundary between the two army groups on August 16. The Mackensen army group was to continue the pursuit with its left wing in conjunction with the Prince Leopold army group, and in addition, initially encircle the Brest Litowsk fortress on this side, and later also on the northwest front on the opposite Bug bank. Furthermore, General von Falkenhayn decided, upon inquiry from General von Seeckt, that larger operations by the Bug Army on the eastern bank were not desirable in terms of the general situation. He justified this by stating: "The enemy is not retreating voluntarily, but heavily beaten, although in an extraordinarily skillful manner. Nevertheless, it is possible that he is still considering a reversal of the situation through a counterattack similar to the Marne Offensive. Given the condition of his 12th, 1st, 2nd, 4th, and 3rd Armies, he could mainly rely on the 13th Army, now in the northern march through the western Polesie1). However, its intervention would hardly lead to the hoped-for results. It is necessary for the Mackensen army group to strengthen its positions along the Bug above Brest Litowsk and later in front of the fortress, creating the possibility to move freed forces as a reserve behind the right wing of the units continuing the thrust past the fortress over the Bug. These must be made as strong as possible to attack relentlessly." General von Falkenhayn also shared the agreement reached with Generaloberst von Conrad at the beginning of August2), that the continuation of the pursuit operation beyond the general line Brest Litowsk–Grodno was not intended at the time, unless there was a prospect of inflicting significant damage on the enemy through a short advance beyond this line. Smaller operations over the Bug above Brest Litowsk against the connections leading east were recommended. On the other hand, "measures of a larger scale in this direction were outside the scope of the overall operation." The Chief of the General Staff of the Field Army thus decided once again in the spirit of the operational idea that had guided him from the beginning of the offensive.

Field Marshal von Mackensen pointed out the need for the Bug Army and 11th Army to strongly expand their encirclement positions and decided to move the X Army Corps, which had been deployed as a security at the Bug, behind the left wing of the 11th Army.

1) Another term for Rokitno Marshes. — 2) p. 416.

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Right Turn of the Mackensen Army Group against Brest Litowsk.

decided to move the X Army Corps, which had been deployed shortly before as a security measure on the Bug, behind the left wing of the 11th Army.

By carrying out the ordered relief movements, on August 17, the left wing of the Bug Army and the 11th Army were able to swing to the right into the line north of Roden–Janow. The Austro-Hungarian 4th Army reached the Bug southeast of Niemirow in a narrow space, where it joined the Prince Leopold Army Group. On the opposite bank, the enemy was entrenched. The main road from Brest Litowsk to Kobryn was covered with marching columns of all arms. According to agent reports, the Russian leadership intended to hold the fortress as long as it could be used for the retreat of the field army. There was a lack of ammunition for prolonged defense. However, strong forces had to be concentrated in a confined space in the fortress itself. Since a new general command (XXXIV) was also detected in front of Brest Litowsk by eavesdropping, the Mackensen High Command, following the advice of General von Falkenhayn, considered the possibility of an advance from the fortress and prepared against the Guard Corps as well as the 103rd and 119th Infantry Divisions behind the right wing of the 11th Army. Since the Supreme Army Command was already considering the imminent attack on the fortress, Field Marshal von Mackensen tasked the Bug Army with encircling the south and west fronts and soon with the attack, and also subordinated to it the Austro-Hungarian VI Corps now standing on the right wing of the 11th Army.

The retreat of the Russians east of the Bug continued. Consequently, Field Marshal von Mackensen believed, within the framework of the instructions given to him, that he should now attempt to cut the communication line of the Russian 13th and 8th Armies and thus also that from Brest Litowsk to the southeast by an advance of the Cavalry Corps Heydebreck) from Wladimir Wolynsk on and over the railway junction Kowel. The Austro-Hungarian 1st Army received corresponding orders. Generaloberst von Conrad still attached great importance to the early capture of Kowel for other reasons. Already on August 14, he had expressed to General von Falkenhayn in Teschen, based on his previously indicated plans, the intention to gradually unite the 4th Army, which had been largely pushed out of the front of the Mackensen Army Group, with the 1st Army on the Bug front and to initially direct both armies from there towards Kowel to lead them forward.

1) p. 413. — 2) p. 417.

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to carry out. They were then no longer to participate in the operations of the

Mackensen Army Group, but to comprehensively attack the Russian 8th Army from the north, while at the same time the inner flanks of the

2nd and the Southern Army south of the Krasne—Brody railway were to take the offensive.

Colonel General von Conrad therefore saw in the advance

of the Heydebreck Cavalry Corps a welcome means to quickly gain a suitable starting position for this encirclement operation against

the Russian 8th Army. General von Falkenhayn agreed

on August 19 with the intentions of the Austro-Hungarian Chief of General Staff.

The Bug Army succeeded on August 18 in significantly expanding the bridgehead at Wlodawa and advancing the 1st Infantry Division from it

against Piszca, although it soon encountered strong resistance favored by the swampy terrain. On the front of the Mackensen Army Group

west of the Bug, there were only preliminary skirmishes in the wider fortress area. Prince Leopold's Army Group crossed the

Bug south of Niemirow.

On August 19, the Heydebreck Cavalry Corps began its broad

deployment in the area of Wladimir Wolhynsk—Luboml, the concentric

advance in the direction of Kowal, without initially encountering the enemy.

However, the resistance of the Russians east of Wlodawa

proved so strong that the 1st Infantry Division was still unable to reach the

road junction of Piszca. In the 11th and 4th Armies, the

swing north around Brest Litowsk continued, with the left flank reaching

after crossing the Bug at and north of Janow up to the Koteka section, where it found connection north of Wolka to the Army

Detachment Woyrsch. Desperate counterattacks directed against the middle of the swing front, in which strong Russian cavalry was also used ruthlessly in the attack, suggested that large troop masses must still be gathered in the area around Brest Litowsk.

General von Falkenhayn therefore urged the 11th Army to accelerate its advance. He hoped to achieve significant successes against the enemy north of the

middle Bug and gave the line Tumlin—Ruschly as the further separation line for the advance of the Mackensen and

Prince Leopold Army Groups. He directed the left flank of the latter towards Klejsczele—Gajnowka. However, reports that the Russian 3rd Army's high command had already left Brest Litowsk raised doubts about the feasibility of the Chief of General Staff's hopes.

Large supplies and much artillery material with ammunition were to be transported away. This indicated a planned evacuation of the fortress.

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Advance of the Bug Army East of the Bug.

supplies and much artillery material with ammunition were to be transported away. This indicated a planned evacuation of the fortress.

Indeed, on August 20, the Russian 4th Army (XVI, Grenadier, XXV, XV, VI Siberian, IX Corps) swung back into the line Kleszczele—Wysoko Litowsk—east of Drogniki, followed by the 3rd Army (XXIV, X, XIV, III Caucasian, XXIX, XXIII, XXXI Corps, 4th Cavalry Corps) on this side of the Bug reached the line east of Drogniki—Koden, beyond the river it held the extended line Koden—Sack—Kursk—Wladyslawow (east of Wladimir Wolynsk). The Russian 13th Army had been dissolved on August 17. Its troops were assigned to the 3rd Army, as far as they were not transported to other fronts. The fortress Brest Litowsk was also subordinated to this. The Russian leadership was evidently aware of the serious danger that the execution of their retreat movement from a pressure of the enemy on the right Bug bank east past Brest Litowsk had to grow. Therefore, they provided for the strongest defense there.

As a result, on August 20 and 21, the Bug Army also failed to advance to the road Luboml—Piszca, although the entire XXXI Reserve Corps from the south sought to encircle through the lake district and the 22nd Infantry Division intervened on the left next to the 1st. Only on August 22 did the XXXI Reserve Corps advance over this road to Mielniki. Simultaneously heavily attacked in the front, the enemy finally also released Piszca and the area north of it. Although General von Linsingen reinforced his forces east of the Bug with the Gerok Corps (11th Bavarian and the 107th Infantry Division), the stubborn enemy could only be pushed back a few kilometers in the difficult forest and swamp terrain in the following days. Behind strong barrier positions, his main forces continued to flow to Kobryn.

On August 24, the Heydebreck Cavalry Corps, after days of fighting, took possession of the railway junction Kowell and advanced from there in a northerly direction to Ratno. It now came under the command of the Bug Army's high command. Parts of the b. u. l. Army had already followed the Cavalry Corps to Kowell in recent days. The army, further strengthened by detachments from the 4th Army, was already regrouping for the offensive ordered to the southeast. On August 22, the entry of Generaloberst von Conrad from the command area of the army group command was planned.

General von Linsingen saw in the strong resistance that his army found on the east bank of the Bug, the enemy's intention to enable the planned evacuation of the fortress Brest Litowsk and the orderly retreat of the Russian masses to the east.

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to enable the planned evacuation of the fortress Brest Litowsk and the orderly retreat of the Russian masses to the east. He therefore considered a quick grasp and accelerated attack on the fortress west of the Bug absolutely necessary. On August 22, he instructed his corps not to wait for the decisive attack until the siege artillery, expected to be ready for fire at the earliest on August 28 and 29, had arrived. The following days were spent preparing for a coup de main attack.

As a result, significant progress was initially made only north of the Krzna stream on the front of Army Group Mackensen west of the Bug. Here, the 11th Army reached the Bug as early as August 21, its left wing (Corps Kosch) pushed beyond it to the Nareka section, where it became involved in heavy fighting. In the following days, the 44th Reserve Division from the south and the 103rd Infantry and 47th Reserve Divisions from the north, as well as rear parts of the Austro-Hungarian 4th Army, joined in, without achieving the intended encirclement of the enemy. It seemed that the Russians had brought artillery from the fortress with ample ammunition to support their defense. Only when the Guard Corps also advanced over the Bug below the Krzna mouth on August 24 did the enemy shift to a west-facing front.

On this day, the Austro-Hungarian 4th Army reached the area south of Ruski with its left wing in close connection with the Army Detachment Woyrsch, the northern wing of the 9th Army over Kleszczele to the western edge of the Bialowiec forest. In serious fighting in the source area of the Nurec on August 22 and 23, the German Landwehr Corps, the Landwehr Division Bredow, and the Corps Scheffer were again able to report larger numbers of prisoners, totaling around 10,000 men and 25 machine guns. Already on the evening of August 23, the Supreme Army Command had informed the High Command of Army Group Prince Leopold that it was not intended to follow the left wing further than to the western edge of the Bialowiec forest. It would be of great importance to block there only with weak parts, but to advance as quickly as possible with strong forces south of the forest, in order to then operate in a general southern direction against the retreat route of the enemy still in front of the Austro-Hungarian 4th and German 11th Army.

¹) p. 367.

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The Enemy Abandons Brest Litowsk.

no longer any prospect that the hope expressed in this directive would still be fulfilled.

The Mackensen Army Group, despite all attempts to intercept the Russian retreat movement on the flank, had ended up in front of their line. Continuing the attack against the Leina position, where sustained resistance was expected, could only push the enemy back in the direction they themselves desired, to the east. A change in this operationally unsatisfactory situation could only be hoped for if the Bug Army succeeded in quickly capturing the fortress of Brest Litowsk and simultaneously breaking the enemy's resistance with their forces deployed in the forest and swamp area east of the Bug. General von Seeckt, however, no longer expected any great success from the flanking action south of Brest Litowsk in an assessment of the situation submitted to the Supreme Army Command on the evening of August 24. Indeed, on August 25, the enemy strongly resisted the pressure of the Bug Army at Maloruta and northwest to the Bug. The Heydebreck Cavalry Corps was still far behind. However, on the evening of the same day, the o.u. VI Corps succeeded in capturing several forts on both sides of the road to Brest Litowsk with a storming hand. In front of the right wing of the northern adjoining XXII Reserve Corps, the enemy retreated south of the Krzna to their positions in the fortress area. On the northern Bug bank, the left wing of the XXII Reserve Corps swung over the lower Lesna to the right, while the other corps of the 11th Army pushed the enemy back behind this section, and the o.u. 4th Army reached as far as Rusilow with its left wing.

In the area of the fortress, strong firelight and numerous explosions were observed. The marches out of the fortress to Kobryn continued. In the evening, intercepted enemy radio messages arrived at Mackensen's headquarters, indicating that the Russians would also evacuate the Leina position at night. Similarly, the retreat was to begin at 2 a.m. in front of the Bug Army. Consequently, Field Marshal von Mackensen ordered the uninterrupted continuation of the pursuit by the Bug Army south and the 11th Army north of the Brest Litowsk—Kobryn road at 10 p.m. General von Falkenhayn also emphasized late at night the great importance of a rapid breakthrough north and south around Brest Litowsk. At the same time, the Prince Leopold Army Group received orders to continue the offensive south of the Bialowiec fort with the Woyrsch Army Detachment, while the left wing of the 9th Army was also to take over the blockade of the fort on the Gajnowka—Siemienowka railway.

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The 9th Army was also to take over the blockade of the fort on the Gajnowka—Siemienowka railway.

Already in the early morning hours of August 26, the right wing of the Bug Army, the XXXXI Reserve Corps and the 22nd Infantry Division, crossed the railway on both sides of Maloruta and pursued the enemy retreating towards Kobryn, who, however, offered strong resistance in the segmented terrain. The right wing reached Motrany after a hard fight and blocked the enemy, pushed back northwards through the swamps by the Heydebreck Cavalry Corps from the south, from retreating northwards. It was pushed southwards. The Cavalry Corps reached Ratno. Under the pressure of the right wing of the Bug Army on the road to Kobryn, the Russians also evacuated the forest area west of the Bug, abandoning the heavily fortified Brest Litowsk fortress. Without serious fighting, the Beskiden Corps and the Austro-Hungarian VI Corps were able to occupy the southern part of the fortress and cross the Bug in the early morning hours. The VI Corps was then assembled and returned to the 11th Army. The XXII Reserve Corps had already occupied the citadel between 2 and 3 in the morning; the forts were mostly blown up by the enemy. The Bug Army was instructed to advance sharply with its left wing on and south of the road to Kobryn, in conjunction with the parts of the 11th Army pursuing further north over the Leśna to the east, to relocate the forces of the enemy, who were still holding out in the swamp sections on both sides of the Wlodawa—Kobryn road, from this beautiful marshy terrain. The Bug Army then reached the Ryta section. The 11th Army followed the enemy retreating east of the Leśna under rear-guard fighting to the line Raczkī (on the railway)—Kamieniec Litowsk.

The Austro-Hungarian 4th Army occupied a bridgehead east of Kamieniec Litowsk after crossing the Leśna. It was to hold it only for securing the side change of the right wing of Prince Leopold's army group, which reached the Leśna Prava north of Kamieniec Litowsk in the evening. Then the rest of the 4th Army, as well as the Austro-Hungarian VI Corps, had to march to the 1st Army.

Upon the report of the capture of Brest Litowsk, the Supreme Army Command determined on the evening of August 26 that the Leśna would be the boundary between the Mackensen and Leopold army groups. It was stated: "An advance in front of the swamp area east and south of Pruzana is not intended." Thus, a goal was set for the further pursuit operation of both army groups.

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The operational success remains denied.

Thus, August 26 had brought the Mackensen Army Group an outwardly great success, the capture of Brest Litowsk, one of the most heavily fortified Russian fortresses! At the same time, however, it had become apparent that the hope cherished by General von Falkenhayn until the end, to cut off significant parts of the enemy, had been thwarted. The Russian retreat had been carried out according to plan under skillfully conducted rearguard actions. The evacuation of Brest Litowsk had been thoroughly prepared. The forts were blown up, the magazines and the city abandoned by the population were mostly set on fire. Considerable supplies could still be saved from destruction. However, only small ammunition stocks fell into the hands of the attacker. All modern artillery material was transported away, only a few old guns formed the booty. Despite the concentration of strong troop masses in the fortress area, the number of prisoners was also small. Aerial reconnaissance revealed that the withdrawal of the enemy marching columns on the roads over Kobryn and Pruzana to the east and northeast remained in constant flow. The main mass of the southern wing of the Russian Northwest Front was thus moving north of the Rokitno swamp area. The connection to the Russian Southwest Front was thus finally cut off. Only the Russian 4th Cavalry Corps remained south of the swamp area in the region of Kamien Koszyrski. It had, as determined by intercepting radio messages, the task of blocking the roads leading from there north through the Rokitno swamps. Characteristic of the confident mood with which the higher Russian leadership, despite all tactical setbacks, looked forward to the outcome of their strategic retreat, was an intercepted radio telegraphic call from General Ewert, the leader of the 4th Army. In it, the plan for the breakout was given, that the troops would disengage from close contact with the enemy with honor. Added was: "May they remember the great war of 1812 and draw from it instruction and the deep belief in our ultimate victory." Indeed, the traditional skill of the Russians in conducting the retreat, supported by the sloping terrain, proved effective once again. Although the operations of the Mackensen Army Group, which alone cost the Bug Army about 33,000 men and the 11th Army over 50,000 men in losses, had failed to achieve the desired operational success, they had still managed to, apart from causing significantly heavier bloody losses and prisoner losses to the enemy, deeply shake their combat power and deprive them of any offensive capability for a long time.

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The Offensive of the Allies on Brest Litowsk.

certainly considerably heavier bloody losses and prisoner losses¹), deeply shaken in its combat strength and deprived of any offensive capability for a long time. In addition, the moral impact that the quick fall of Brest Litowsk had on both friend and foe was not to be underestimated. The surrender of this last stronghold of Russian national defense in Poland, newly expanded at great expense, was an open admission that the vast area west of the great river barrier of the Bug was definitively lost for Russia.

8. Considerations.

In view of the operationally not fully satisfactory result that the offensive of the Mackensen Army Group had from mid-July to the end of August, the question arises whether a greater, decisive success could have been achieved with different leadership of the operation. One would have to consider the possibility of using strong forces on the east bank of the Bug for the purpose of an operational encirclement of the Russian defense front directed southwards and a thrust against their rear connections. This idea was not only discussed in the fundamental meeting of the allied general staffs on July 11 in Ples²) before the start of the offensive, but also repeatedly during its course. General von Falkenhayn opposed it from the outset, considering the unfavorable terrain east of the Bug and the expected supply difficulties, and steadfastly maintained this view until the end. His concerns about the possibility of deploying larger troop masses in those areas were not shared, at least not to the same extent, by his colleagues³), nor by Generaloberst von Conrad and General von Linsingen. They later admitted that General von Falkenhayn's concerns were exaggerated. For supply, the conditions east of the Bug might have been less unfavorable than west of the river, as the Galician railways there were disrupted by the Russians in the autumn of 1914 with the construction of the Wladimir Wolynsk—Sokal connection to the Russian railway network.

¹) Over 33,000 prisoners fell into the hands of the Bug Army in July-August, and 55,000 to the 11th Army. The number of captured guns (15) and machine guns (174) was small. The Woyrsch Army Detachment captured 16,500 prisoners in August, brought in 48 guns (mostly spoils from Ivangorod), and 60 machine guns.  
²) See p. 385. — ³) See p. 386.

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The Operational Leadership of Army Group Mackensen.

In 1914, the connection route Wladimir Wolynsk—Sokal had a link to the Russian railway network. The head of the German military railway system therefore already considered the deployment of a strong army east of the Bug at the beginning of July to be feasible and necessary.

That it would have been possible to create the conditions for simultaneous operations on both banks of the river by regrouping forces on a large scale and by exchanging the approaching s.-u. 1st Army with the Bug Army, which was in the process of formation, before the opening of the new offensive, is not to be disputed. Apparently, this idea was not considered by the connecting General Staffs at that time, because the difficulties of the upcoming task only gradually became apparent from the increasingly solidified, eventually even openly conducted resistance of the Russians in the area between the Bug and the Vistula in the first week of July. When, on July 11, the question of using stronger forces on the east bank was discussed for the first time in Plesz, it was already too late for such extensive and time-consuming regrouping of forces before the start of the offensive, as the timing for this could no longer be postponed in view of the simultaneously planned Narew operation. Consequently, in the initial situation in mid-July, as it had developed due to the course of events in the first half of the month, the prerequisites for a far-reaching offensive of strong forces on the east bank of the Bug were lacking. The weak attempt to change banks, which the s.-u. 1st Army then made in the first days of the operation, also served merely to protect the right flank of the army group against possible attacks by the Russians from the east. When these did not occur, Field Marshal von Mackensen immediately abandoned the continuation of the attempt.

Certainly, even after the start of the offensive, the shifting of stronger forces of the Bug Army to the east bank was still possible. They could have exerted increased offensive pressure there together with parts of the s.-u. 1st Army. However, it was not to be assumed that they would find easier work there against the Russian 13th Army than west of the river. A complete encirclement of the outer flank of the Russian Northwest Front seemed hardly to be hoped for. Rather, there was a danger that the forces predicted east of the Bug could become entangled in barely manageable battles and could easily be diverted in an eccentric direction from the main decision-making site. That these already in view of the need for the closest possible cooperation with the Narew assault group in the area between the Bug and the Vistula should be sought was in line with the guiding idea.

1) p. 386. 2) World War. Vol. VIII. 28

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The Offensive of the Allies on Brest Litowsk.

The aim was to seek the closest possible cooperation with the Narew strike group in the area between the Bug and Vistula, in line with the guiding idea. Field Marshal von Mackensen therefore had the justified desire, and after the course of the first heavy days of fighting even more reason, to keep his forces as concentrated as possible in this area. As long as the enemy seemed determined not only to defend to the utmost but also to fight a decisive battle in Poland — this impression persisted, aside from temporary fluctuations, until the end of July — the leader of the army group saw the extension of his right wing beyond the Bug to the east as an impairment of his striking power at the decisive point. He welcomed the fact that the strong river obstacle provided effective protection against an offensive threat to the right flank of the army, and consequently, the number of troops required for security purposes could be kept within tolerable limits.

Thus, until the end of July, it was primarily tactical reasons that made the concentration of the strongest possible forces necessary to achieve victory at the main battlefront. From the beginning of August, as the large, apparently uniformly planned retreat movement of the entire Russian forces in Poland began to become clearly visible, operational considerations suggested the crossing of strong forces to the eastern bank of the Bug. Colonel General von Conrad and independently of him, General von Linsingen, advocated this idea in the sense of a pursuit aimed northwards against the retreat routes of the Russians, overtaking them laterally. In contrast, Field Marshal von Mackensen, in agreement with General von Falkenhayn, insisted on continuing the operation in a generally northern direction on this side of the Bug, with the strategic overall picture in mind. He hoped to advance more quickly with the 11th Army, made the main carrier of the pursuit, on a shorter route in more favorable terrain and thus exert more effective pressure against the retreat routes of the Russians than seemed possible in the feared swampy terrain beyond the Bug, where stronger enemy resistance was expected. This calculation proved to be quite correct, as the Russian retreat from Poland had already progressed further than the German leadership had dared to assume. Instead of hitting the flank, the pursuer ended up in front of the front. It remains to be seen whether a pursuit conducted with strong forces south past Brest Litowsk towards the northeast would have achieved significantly greater material successes. The determined resistance, which parts of the Bug Army encountered there from mid-August onwards after their crossing at Wlodawa, even suggests that it would have been very difficult to quickly achieve direct impact against the retreat area of the main Russian forces north of the swamp area.

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Question of Stronger Flanking Pressure East of the Bug.

Determined resistance, which parts of the Bug Army encountered there from mid-August after their crossing at Wlodawa, even suggests that it would have been very difficult to quickly achieve direct impact against the retreat area of the main Russian forces north of the swamp area. Nevertheless, from a retrospective point of view, the possibility cannot be dismissed that an earlier and stronger flanking pressure here would have strategically threatened the Russian retreat movement more significantly. This would have more severely disrupted the orderly and planned execution of this retreat movement, particularly the evacuation of the fortress Brest Litowsk, and thus could have shaken the combat strength of the Russian army even more than the frontal pursuit managed to do.

The question of using strong forces east of the Bug would be fundamentally different under the assumption of a simultaneous offensive directed not against the Narew from the front of the Commander-in-Chief East, but on and over Vilna against the northern flank of the main Russian forces. In such a case, it would have corresponded to the idea of concentrated cooperation against the rear connections of the enemy masses standing in Poland if the Mackensen Army Group had already placed the focus of its operations in the area east of the Bug from mid-July.

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E. The Russian Supreme Command until the End of August¹).

Maps 5, 6, 7 and Volume VII, Map 1.

Since Gorlice, the Russian Supreme Command was primarily focused on defense. It hoped for relief through the offensive begun by the Western Powers on May 9²) and the entry of Italy, soon Romania, perhaps even Bulgaria into the war. On the other hand, it was concerned whether it would actually succeed in halting the advance of the Central Powers in Galicia. Both were interrelated: successful defense in Galicia had to promote the acquisition of new allies, whose intervention would also bring relief for the situation in Galicia. Besides domestic and economic considerations, foreign policy concerns also argued for a stubborn fight for every inch of ground, while purely militarily the idea was to maintain the army's striking power and therefore to retreat into the vastness of the empire as needed without regard to land loss. The duality of these viewpoints played a decisive role in the measures of the Russian leadership alongside the impact of the Central Powers' offensive.

At the beginning of May, the entire front, measuring over 1300 kilometers, was commanded as before by General Alexeyev in Siedlce, with the Northwest Front consisting of five armies (10th, 12th, 1st, 2nd, 5th) with around 55 divisions, and General Ivanov in Cholm with the Southwest Front also consisting of five armies (4th, 3rd, 8th, 11th, 9th) with 50½ divisions³); the center divided the entire front into two approximately equal parts. The Supreme Command, as before, with Grand Duke Nicholas as General Staff Chief and General Janushkevich as General Quartermaster, was located in Baranovichi. Directly under the Grand Duke, the 6th Army in the north, with non-deployable troops, had to protect the Baltic Fleet, Petersburg, and the coast, while in the south, a similarly composed 7th Army and the Black Sea Fleet had a corresponding special task.

¹) Volume VII, C. 436 (regarding Dardanelles, p. 329). — More about Southwest Front C. 189 ff. and 261 ff.  
²) p. 51 ff.  
³) Landwehr units are not included here. General Danilov (p. 521) gives the total strength for the end of June, including only Landwehr, as 108 infantry divisions, 16 rifle and foot artillery brigades, and 35 cavalry divisions.

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Structure and Combat Power of the Army.

The sea had a corresponding special task. In Odessa, after the

withdrawal of the V. Caucasian Corps²), a weak landing corps for

Constantinople was kept ready, whose use, however, was only considered

in view of the strength of the Turkish fleet if the connection with Bul-

garia was achieved or if the Allies had already advanced to the Bosporus³).

The Caucasus Army, still about six divisions strong, was almost entirely

on Turkish soil in impassable mountainous terrain at the border.

The organization of the Russian army was essentially the same as at

the beginning of the war, but they had begun to expand the existing

independent rifle brigades into divisions and later began to consolidate

Landwehr units into divisions. The infantry regiments still had a target

strength of four battalions, the light batteries originally equipped with

eight guns were reduced to six guns with few exceptions, so that each

division probably had about 36 field guns⁴). The heavy artillery

(flat fire of 10 cm, high-angle fire of 15 cm and upwards) counted in

June only 104 batteries with 386 barrels⁵). After the fighting, which

had continued with few interruptions since August 1914, the troops

were in dire need of rest and replacement of officers, trained personnel,

weapons, and ammunition. However, there had been a serious shortage

of all this for a long time. The Russian war industry was unable to meet

the demand. Deliveries expected from abroad, especially through British

mediation from the United States⁶), were delayed because the Western

powers themselves had urgent needs. Apart from the always uncertain

route through the neutral countries of Scandinavia and especially the

Balkans, the only permanently open connection still led through the

Far East; for the port of Archangelsk was only usable in a few summer

months, and the new railway to the ice-free Murman coast was barely

one-third finished. Deliveries from Marseille to Petersburg in the spring

took two months⁷).

¹) Volume VII, pp. 330 and 434.  
²) Another unit intended for the "entry" into Constantinople was ready in   
Vladikavkaz. England, which placed no value on such participation, is said to have   
rejected sea transport (Kudaschev letter of June 22, 1915).  
³) Volume II, Appendix 2.  
⁴) It is not possible to determine for certain.  
⁵) Manikowski, II, p. 81.  
⁶) Volume VII, p. 136.  
⁷) French official report, Vol. III, Year 612; the route is not known.

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The Russian Supreme Command until the End of August.

Behind the front lines, apart from the breakthrough front in Galicia and southern Poland and the area north of the Njemen, which were quite strongly developed, in Poland from south of Iwangorod via Nowogeorgiewsk to near Lomza, deeply staggered rear positions and behind them the Narew-Vistula line, reinforced by fortifications, offered stubborn resistance. However, if the pressure from the opponents unexpectedly forced the abandonment of this "forward theater of war," the large rear main defense line of the Njemen and Bug with the strong and modernized fortresses of Kowno, Grodno, and Brest was still available. Its right flank seemed sufficiently protected by the absence of railways and roads north of the Njemen, while the left wing found secure support behind the Dniester at the Romanian border. This last position was hoped to be held even under the most unfavorable developments.

Since the beginning of May, the focus of the Supreme Command had been captivated by the situation at the front in Galicia. Information about the German troop distribution was generally quickly and well informed, presumably through agent reports and prisoner statements. The German advance north of the Njemen was not considered significant, as the forces identified there were too weak to pose a threat. Thus, the Northwest Front had meanwhile become the source of strength, nourished by troop transfers for the heavy and costly battle of the Southwest Front. Here, around mid-May, the pressure against the section that had previously felt it most strongly, against the 3rd Army, which stood below the fortress of Przemysl on the San, seemed to have eased, and it was believed that the German troops were moving more southward. On May 17, the Grand Duke personally wired General Brussilow, the commander of the 8th Army, expressing special confidence in his tactics and was convinced that he would not only hold Przemysl, whose possession was particularly important, but also strengthen the overall situation through active combat leadership on his remaining front. He suggested to the Southwest Front to consider forming a new operational army from their reserves in the area north of Lemberg, to which the three divisions strong army reserve and from the Northwest Front a particularly proven army leader, General Plehwe, previously commander of the 12th Army, should be assigned one and a half corps. However, the commander of the Northwest Front reported that if he were to lead such a transfer, he needed to know whether he should continue to hold his current front or be allowed to give up the Grojec position covering the Narew and Warsaw.

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Hope for Relief through Italy's Intervention.

As the enemy at the San did not advance further on May 20, the Russian military leadership saw the situation as more favorable again, with the imminent intervention of Italy likely playing a decisive role. A military convention had already been concluded with it on April 26, through which both powers committed to deploying the maximum of their forces in the direction of Vienna-Budapest for a decisive blow against the Danube Monarchy and to manage with a minimum on the other fronts. Serbia was to participate by seeking contact in a northwesterly direction on the Italian right wing near Laibach. In view of these plans, the start of the retreat from the San was postponed. General Ivanov intended to prepare a larger offensive operation; General Alexeyev now proposed an even larger one, aiming to attack in the West and thus restore the situation in Galicia. The Grand Duke explained to the commanders of the Western powers on May 23 that at least ten newly deployed German divisions were already fighting against Russia; this indeed complicated their task, but "in the context of the overall situation, it was just timely to facilitate the expansion of the successes already achieved in the West"(2). When the state of war was declared on the Italian front on May 24, General Joffre was to send a telegram of admiration for Russian heroism and expected "the most brilliant results from Italy's entry into the war." The Russian military leadership believed, as on the same day the attack of the Central Powers at the San continued, only in a final effort by the enemy to end the operation by capturing Przemysl and then turn against Italy. They ordered that the fortress should only be evacuated when all means were exhausted, and had the 4th Army of the Southwest Front move to the Northwest Front so that General Ivanov could focus all his attention on the defense in Galicia. However, the formation of a new operational army north of Lemberg had meanwhile proven impractical.

It soon became apparent that the new ally, contrary to its initial intentions, was not yet ready for the offensive, and its deployment would extend well into June(3). Similarly, the Serbs were unable to attack because they were hindered by diseases and flooding of the border rivers and by Bulgaria and Albania threatening them.

1) Tsarist Russia in World War, p. 328 ff.  
2) Walentinow, p. 49. — Cf. p. 73 ff. of this volume.  
3) p. 29.

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garien and Albania were threatened. On the other hand, despite all efforts, the hope of forming an alliance with Romania) or Bulgaria was dwindling.

When on the night of June 3, the last forts of Przemysl had to be evacuated, the Galician front began to waver again. But the situation on the N o r t h w e s t e r n f r o n t also began to cause concern. The first overall operation of the German 9th Army) caused fear for Warsaw, while the continuation of attacks on the Njemen and north) appeared threatening only for the extreme right wing of the army. On June 5, the Chief of General Staff, General Januschkewitsch, wrote to the Minister of War): "After the Germans have brought about an unprecedented collapse on the Southwestern front, they will now apparently turn to the Northwestern front"; the question was only whether against Warsaw or Riga. Reinforcing the Northwestern front was not easy, because since May 9, against 18 divisions), i.e., about 200 battalions, had been thrown to the Southwestern front. The result of their intervention was "virtually zero," the complete corps and divisions had "melted away like snow."

While Warsaw was somewhat secured by the armies and fortifications standing before it, Riga, which was more important for the supply of the army due to its large industry than Warsaw, was virtually unprotected; open to enemy access. A panic had broken out in the city; people began to remove money, supplies, and machines, so that the threat alone already hampered the production of army supplies). In Petersburg, there was concern. Since the commander-in-chief of the Northwestern front did not yet expect far-reaching German operations north of the Njemen, the Supreme Command retained the leadership of the previous Riga—Schavli—Group, which became the "5th Army," to be transferred to General Plehwe and as the only available reinforcement at the time, to move divisions with only 3000 men each (combat strength¹) to Riga until they could be replenished.

1) p. 11.  
2) p. 134.  
3) pp. 124f. and 131 f.  
4) Correspondence Suchomlinow/Januschkewitsch.  
5) From the N o r t h w e s t e r n f r o n t in April III. Reserve Corps (21st and 52nd Div.), 63rd Div., 13th Div., 62nd Div., 12th Div., XV Corps (8th Div.), 77th Div., 3rd Guard Div., II Reserve Corps (on Gren. and 51st Div.), VI Corps (4th and 6th Div.), then the two divisions marked with \* and another (12th fib.) from the Southwestern front returned in early June. From the C a u c a s u s F r o n t: 20th and 3rd Reserve Div. and two Foot Cossack Brigades. A total of 15 divisions. How the number of 18 divisions is calculated was not clear.  
6) Knox, p. 291 f.

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Evacuation of Przemysl. Situation of the Northwest Front.

Divisions with only 3000 men each (combat strength¹) were to be transferred to Riga until they were replenished. "This will calm the public and cool the Emperor," wrote the Chief of the General Staff to the Minister of War²). The new 5th Army was to protect the route to Petersburg in the future, together with the Baltic Fleet. Admiral Kanin, who had taken over command from the now deceased Admiral von Essen, relied on the naval ports in the Gulf of Finland; in the open Baltic Sea and in the Gulf of Riga, he had almost only light forces, mainly minelayers and submarines. The 5th Army was detached from the rest of the front due to its special task; its rear connections led northeast to Riga. This gave the fortress of Kowno increased importance as the right wing support point of the main front and was therefore directly subordinated to the Commander-in-Chief of the Northwest Front, its garrison reinforced. All troops west of the lower Vistula to the Pilica were combined as the 2nd Army, eliminating the previous 5th Army.

Regarding the overall situation of the Northwest Front, General Alexeyev wrote to the Chief of the General Staff on June 5: The decisive factor was that it was "stretched to a thin thread" without reserves. After twelve divisions for the Southwest Front and seven for the area north of the Njemen³) had been withdrawn recently, the front garrison was so weakened that the enemy could break through even the strongest fortified positions after thorough artillery preparation. Therefore, the only option was to shorten the front by retreating behind the Narew and into the Grojec position; then up to four corps could be spared as reserves. The aim was to preserve the combat strength of the armies, considerations of the moral impact of retreating had to take a back seat. However, there was no time to lose, so as not to be attacked in the current extended positions. Once the regrouping was completed, an attack could be considered again. The Commander-in-Chief of the Southwest Front viewed the situation differently. When General Januschkewitsch suggested to him on June 6 to gradually gain rear positions to preserve the Seesaw, in order to fight the great battle at the Gnila Lipa, General Ivanov wanted nothing to do with it. He replied, the task was, despite the most difficult circumstances, to defend every inch of land; "the Emperor, Russia, and the Grand Duke demand from us stubborn resistance... We did not cover the entire area with a network of strong positions just to retreat in one go, covered only by a rearguard").

¹) p. 440, note 4. ²) Correspondence Suchomlinov/Januschkewitsch, June 7. ³) p. 440, note 3. ⁴) In May III Corps (56th and 73rd Div.), XIX Corps (17th and 38th Div.), XXXVII Corps (6th, 68th, and 79th Div.); also Inf. Brig. XIII, 1st Caucasian and 3rd Turkish Rifle Brig.

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be, despite the most difficult circumstances, to defend every inch of land; "the Emperor, Russia, and the Grand Duke demand from us stubborn combat ... We have not covered the entire area with a network of strong positions just to retreat now, only covered by a rearguard, in one move."

On the same day, the Grand Duke reported to the Tsar that the shortfall now amounted to 300,000 men on the Southwestern Front and 100,000 men on the Northwestern Front, but for the incoming replacements, weapons were lacking, "thus every strategy ends." The training level of the replacements, who had barely learned to shoot due to the lack of rifles, was beyond criticism; there was a lack of officers. "We cannot seize the initiative again, but must limit ourselves to repelling the enemy's blows ... Due to the enormous losses, the value of the troops decreases every day; the units are dwindling." Although Italy has now entered the war, the Germans have strengthened their forces against Russia. The French attack also remained ineffective, despite their deployment of ten corps, superior in artillery and unlimited ammunition." It is "distressing and shameful" that Russia's "truly more than heroic, brilliant troops suffer unheard-of losses due to a lack of weapons and ammunition and are not even rewarded with successes." In such a situation, the negotiations conducted simultaneously with the Western powers for better cooperation only expressed helplessness, and they had no influence on the course of events.

On June 8, General Januschkewitsch replied to General Alexejew's proposal to withdraw, stating that the last positions at the Narew and near Grojec were still in question without giving up the overall situation. He received four divisions of heavy artillery, which meant a "significant reinforcement" of the Northwestern Front. The final decision on what should happen next was left to him. The Grand Duke agreed to carry out the movement soon; the only condition was that the construction of a second line of defense behind the Bug and Narew, as well as behind the positions of Grojec and Radom, should begin immediately. On the Southwestern Front, General Brussilow was forced on June 15 to order the retreat to the Grodek position west of Lemberg.

1) Njesnamow, p. 57.  
2) Gajewski, pp. 56 ff. and Bonch-Brujewitsch, p. 259.  
3) Gajewski. The French had a different view of the balance of forces.  
4) A total of 8 batteries of 15 cm howitzers and 4 batteries of 10 cm cannons, totaling 48 guns. — See p. 437.

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Retreat Considerations. Fall of Lemberg.

To command Lemberg. After the enormous losses, which especially this front had suffered, the total deficit was now estimated at 500,000 men. The shortage of rifles increased; in the columns of the southwestern front, up to 60 percent of the ammunition was missing.

On June 17, in a meeting with the commanders of the army groups in Cholm, defense was set as the task for the near future to restore the army's combat strength and later to resume the offensive. The northwestern front was to consider the middle Njemen, the Bobr, the Narew, and the Vistula up to Iwangorod inclusive as the main line of defense. Forward of this line, the front could be shortened if necessary, but Warsaw was to be held "to the utmost." The southwestern front, whose right wing (3rd Army) was still north of the lower San, could, in view of the sharp German pressure towards Lemberg, withdraw southwards to Lublin-Cholm up to the Reich border, but should delay the enemy by exploiting every available terrain section. To strengthen this front, extreme measures were taken; their infantry was to immediately receive 30 men suitable for non-commissioned officers "with rifles" from each cavalry regiment of the entire army, 100,000 replacement troops "with rifles," and the entire remaining rifle stock of 40,000 pieces. An additional 150,000 rifles were hoped to be freed in the coming months by equipping the replacement battalions with Japanese weapons; the factories produced about 45,000 pieces monthly. All infantry regiments were to be reduced from four to three battalions as needed.

Based on the Cholm meeting, the Supreme Army Command ordered on June 19 to withdraw the right wing of the 3rd Army to the right bank of the San and to maintain the connection to the 4th Army of the northwestern front in the future at the Vistula near Zawichost. When the 8th Army then saw itself forced to evacuate Lemberg itself the following night, the "thorough evacuation" of the Galician capital and the entire still-occupied part of Galicia was ordered. The loss of Lemberg on June 22 was a particularly severe blow to Russia's prestige. The situation had escalated to the point where major decisions had to be made. Inside the empire, dissatisfaction was evident, which had led to street riots in Moscow: "From all sides, people are shouting" (wrote the Chief of the General Staff to the Minister of War), "and frighten us with the Hydra of Revolution. That was all we needed."

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still missing. With Romania, the matter is being dragged out, with Sweden¹) we are being intimidated. It gets worse by the hour. — The internal enemy is also beginning to stir. Duma deputies have convened for a congress. Essentially, the Duma has convened on its own without being summoned and wants to exercise control.

On June 25, the Tsar, accompanied by all ministers, came to the Great Headquarters. He had previously dismissed the Minister of War, General Suchomlinov, who was blamed for the inadequate supply of the army with weapons and ammunition, and replaced him with General Polivanov. During the consultation in Baranowicze²), the entire situation was thoroughly discussed. Politically, the result was the Imperial Decree of June 27, through which the Duma was convened and the Russian people were urged to endure with the reasoning: "The enemy must be defeated, otherwise peace is impossible." For Poland, the self-government promised shortly after the outbreak of war in 1914 was to be developed.

General Danilow³) reports on the military resolutions: For the Grand Duke as Supreme Commander, the main goal was to preserve the army. He hoped that the pressure from the allies would eventually bring relief and that the "regularity" of the impending Serbian and German advance would set a goal. It was about gaining time, with the "numerical area" of Russia offering great possibilities. And yet, in the future, no step of Russian soil should be surrendered to the enemy without compelling necessity. If it was not possible to remain further west, then the defense in the Njemen—Bug line was the most promising. It had to extend from Riga to the Romanian border, about 1000 kilometers, and had positioned itself behind this railway cross-connection Riga—Wilna—Baranowicze—Rowno—Kameniec Podolsk, with numerous branches to the west and east. Those favorable defense lines had already been almost reached by the outer army wings in retreat, while the center still had to advance. It was necessary to lead them out of threatening encirclement if needed. Therefore, it was desirable to place them under unified command. At the same time, the circumstance had to be taken into account that the armies, in the event of further retreat, would encounter the Rokitno Marshes.

¹) Volume II, p. 33.  
²) Danilow, p. 521, recalls that the consultation had already taken place on June 24. However, according to Paleologue I, p. 358, the Tsar did not leave Tsarskoye Selo until June 25. — ³) Danilow, p. 522 ff.

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Change of the Minister of War. Retreat Preparations.

the armies would, in the event of further retreat, fall back on the Rokitno

marshes1), the large forest and swamp area of the upper Pripet. According to

considerations made in peacetime, in such a case, the focus of military operations

should lie north of the swamp area on the roads to Moscow and Petersburg.

Therefore, the northernmost army of the Southwestern Front (3rd Army) and

the large Bug fortress Brest Litovsk were already transferred to the Northwestern

Front. The border was now along the line Rawa Ruska—Sokal, so that the entire

front in Poland, the whole "forward theater of war," fell into the area of the

Northwestern Front. General Ivanov, with only three armies (8th, 11th, and 3rd

Army) and twelve corps, comprising 36 divisions and thus about one-third of the

entire army, was responsible for covering south of the Rokitno marshes in the

direction of Kiev. Currently, his armies were positioned in a front about 300

kilometers wide along the upper course of the Bug, the Zlota Lipa, and the Dniester

to the Romanian border east of Czernowitz.

"The most responsible part of the general task"2) was to be fulfilled by General

Alexeyev as the commander-in-chief of the Northwestern Front. He commanded

eight armies on a front currently measuring 1300 kilometers (starting from the

right wing: 5th, 10th, 12th, 1st, 2nd, 4th, 3rd, and the newly forming 13th Army)

with 37 corps, comprising 80 divisions and thus about two-thirds of the entire army.

He was also to withdraw the six armies currently in Poland through the area

between Ostrowiec and the Rokitno marshes, which, despite a width of about 200

kilometers, represented a kind of bottleneck due to the small number of usable

routes. The line Lomza—Ostrowiec—Forest of Augustow had to be held at all

costs; swamp areas facilitated this. But also the danger that an attack against the

weak northern flank could bring for the overall situation north of the Rokitno

marshes "had to be constantly kept in mind by the supreme army command."

Everything was thought out and prepared for the event that retreat became

unavoidable, which included the evacuation of all of Poland with Warsaw. Minister

Sazonov reassured the French ambassador in Petersburg on June 26th3): "The

Russian army will conduct its retreat as slowly as possible and exploit every

opportunity for counterattacks and to unsettle the enemy. If Grand Duke Nicholas

should determine that the Germans are withdrawing part of their forces to use them

on the Western Front, he will immediately resume the offensive."

1) Previously called Polesie in earlier volumes.  
2) Danilov, p. 522.  
3) Paléologue I, p. 360.

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immediately resume the offensive. His campaign plan allows him to hope that our troops can hold Warsaw for at least two more months."

When in the last days of June and the first days of July, the new left wing of the Northwest Front and especially the right of the Southwest Front had to further yield to the pressure of the Central Powers, General Alexeyev wanted to continue stubborn resistance south of the Lublin—Cholm line, where the enemy seemed to be directing the main thrust; he also prepared for the possibility of a German attack in the most sensitive direction, from East Prussia via Ostrowiec. On July 4, he ordered the 2nd Army, most exposed in West Poland, to close the deployed fortress areas on the night of July 7 and to retreat to the Blonie—Grojec position; the 4th Army to the south and the 12th and 1st Armies on the Narew Front were also to join the movement. However, the execution was halted again, the timing left open; preparations for the evacuation of Warsaw had begun.

At the request of General Alexeyev, the Grand Duke himself came to Siedlce on July 5 and gave him free rein through an order stating: The enemy, who was apparently only conducting a feint operation north of the Njemen, threatened the entire situation on the front theater of war with the attack on Lublin—Cholm. If it was not possible to stop this attack, General Alexeyev was to continue to evade, "to preserve the living strength of the army for the long-lasting war." Meanwhile, in the south, the abandonment of the Bug Line was already being considered, with the front Lomza—Malkin—Lutow—Ratno, 75 kilometers southeast of Brest Litowsk on the upper Pripet, being considered as the next line of resistance; the extreme limit for the retreat was initially to be the line Bobr—upper Narew—Brest Litowsk—Ratno. Thus, the Southwest Front was henceforth assigned the front between the Rokitno Marshes and the Romanian border. Ivangorod, Warsaw, and Nowo-Georgiewsk were not to be defended as fortresses but evacuated as parts of the field positions with these. The Grand Duke could not bring himself to order the same for the large and strong fortress of Nowogeorgiewsk; this place, which covered Warsaw, was to be held and defended to the utmost; the impossibility of finally depriving it of the already overloaded railways leading east from Warsaw had decisively influenced this decision. Meanwhile, the Grand Duke hoped to be able to postpone the retreat further. On the 10th, the Russian attack began, perhaps the German striking power would still falter.

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Effect of the German Attacks.

nische attack began<sup>1)</sup>, perhaps the German striking power was still waning. Even in the worst case, he expected to hold Warsaw for at least another month, until early August<sup>2)</sup>. The difficulty and uncertainty of the situation was also expressed at the meeting held at the French Grand Headquarters in Chantilly on July 7<sup>3)</sup>, when the Russian military attaché, Colonel Count Ignatiev, could not give a binding statement on the Grand Duke's next intentions.

Due to the success of the large German attack against the Narew Front starting on July 13<sup>4)</sup>, General Alexeyev was forced to order his 2nd Army to execute the retreat to the Blonie—Grojec position; the movements began on the night of July 17. This meant the decisive turning point. Eager telegrams were sent to the Western powers; they demanded that the Italians act more decisively. The Serbs had already received the news that their advance on Laibach<sup>5)</sup> was no longer in question "in view of the inactivity of the Italians"; instead, they should be ready to invade Syrmia at a given signal. The Russian military leadership no longer fully trusted them, as they had been conducting a small war since early June to gain control of Albania, where the conflict of interest against Italy played a role, which had already occupied Valona in December 1914. Serbia even wanted, as was heard, to negotiate a separate peace with Vienna<sup>6)</sup>.

With the advance of the Austro-Hungarian 1st Army to the east bank of the Bug<sup>7)</sup>, holding this river line by the Southwest Front was already in question. When on July 19 the Army Detachment Woyrsch also launched an attack<sup>8)</sup> and the Army Group Gallwitz stood before Pultusk and Rozan<sup>9)</sup>, the Grand Duke again went to Siedlce and gave General Alexeyev explicit authority to withdraw the armies "as needed" over the Vistula to the east. Warsaw was to be evacuated in the following "very possible" cases: once, if the enemy in the north finally broke through the front, and also if he advanced in the south to Iwangorod—Brest Litowsk.

<sup>1)</sup> p. 31.  
<sup>2)</sup> Rukadeschno Letters, July 6, 1915.  
<sup>3)</sup> Details follow in Volume IX.  
<sup>4)</sup> Details of the Russian countermeasures on this front see p. 301 and 370; the Southwest Front p. 389 f.  
<sup>5)</sup> p. 439.  
<sup>6)</sup> Rukadeschno Letters, July 18 and 24, 1915. — See also p. 606 and 611.  
<sup>7)</sup> p. 390 ff. <sup>8)</sup> Gebna. <sup>9)</sup> p. 304 f.

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The Russian Supreme Command until the End of August.

The enemy in the north finally breaks through the front, but also if he advances in the south to Ivangorod—Brest Litovsk).

On the night of July 21, following the retreating 4th Army on the northern flank of the 2nd Army, the Grojec position was abandoned, and on the 22nd, General Alexeyev ordered the southern flank (4th, 3rd, and 13th Army) to gradually retreat to the Ivangorod—Kovel line. The following days brought the fall of the Narew line Pultusk—Lomza. At the same time, the pressure of the new German attacks in Lithuania and Courland began to take effect, which now already threatened the road to Vilna. On July 24, Prince Kudachev, the representative of the Foreign Minister at the headquarters, reported to Petersburg that General Yanushkevich had told him, "taking a deep breath," that "we must drink the cup to the dregs" and, pointing to the Riga—Schaulem front, said: "If the Germans continue to attack there, we must evacuate Warsaw and — retreat."

General Alexeyev did not yet consider the situation on the extreme northern flank to be threatening. As he reported to the Grand Duke during another meeting in Siedlce on July 28, the German forces deployed there were too weak for a major operation, and new decisions were not yet necessary. General Danilov accordingly attached "overriding importance" to the front north of the Njemen, and the Grand Duke ordered the immediate reinforcement of the 5th Army fighting there with two infantry and one cavalry division from the southwestern front. However, he left the timing for the evacuation of the Vistula line to General Alexeyev as before. The events on the Narew front were now considered decisive for the fate of Warsaw, as a German breakthrough towards Wyszkow on the Bug could severely complicate the retreat of the Russian troops still standing on the Vistula. At the Lublin—Cholm front, it was believed that they could hold at this time, and an attack at this point was considered less threatening.

The surprising Vistula crossing by the Woyrsch Army Detachment on the night of July 29 between Warsaw and Ivangorod brought new concerns. When the Russian 4th Army failed to repel the enemy here again, General Alexeyev ordered the 2nd Army on August 2 to evacuate the west bank of the river and thus Warsaw; the line of the old outer forts was to remain occupied initially but not defended.

1) Kudachev letter from July 22, 1915.  
2) p. 460 ff.  
3) 69th and 2nd Finnish Div.

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Orders for the Retreat.

The old outer forts were initially to remain occupied but not defended.

On August 4, the bridgehead on the left of the Vistula at Iwangorod was evacuated;

the last Russian troops left Warsaw the following night and blew up the bridges.

On August 5, General Alexeyev ordered the general retreat from the Vistula to the east

to begin on the night of the 7th, with the next target being the line

Lomza—Malkin—Lukow—Cholm. Parts freed by the shortening of the front

were to reinforce the extreme right wing (5th and 10th Army), for which

there was increasing concern.

Meanwhile, the Grand Duke had already informed the commander-in-chief of the

Southwest Front at his new headquarters in Rovno on August 3

of the intention to continue the retreat to the Niemen—Bug line,

explaining that this line in the north was already threatened by encirclement.

To strengthen the 5th Army in particular, the Southwest Front now had to give up

120 individual companies. In total, the Northwest Front was already

650,000 men short of its target strength. For the gap that had to arise

between the two army groups during the continuation of the retreat

towards Pinsk, only two cavalry divisions were now available against the enemy

south of Vladimir Volynsk over a width of 30 kilometers. On August 6, the Grand Duke

came to Rovno again. The possibilities the Supreme Command was already considering

on the Southwest Front are shown by the decision made there at the time

to have seven bridges built over the Dnieper near Kiev and below on a 200-kilometer

stretch of river. Despite everything, there was still hope here for a final victory.

When Prince Kudaschow reported German peace feelers in those days,

General Januschkewitsch was very dismissive. The prince reported

to Minister Sazonov: "I believe that here, as everywhere in Russia,

it is felt that it is indispensable to end the war with a failure."

In view of the German attacks north of the Niemen and before Kovno,

concerns about the right wing of the army also continued to grow.

As early as July 30, General Alexeyev had serious concerns

about the possibility of a German breakthrough between the 5th and 10th Army at Swenzjany, for which the Germans could surprisingly quickly reinforce.

1) Njesnamow, p. 87. — There may be an error in the date, and   
it may also refer to the journey on August 3.   
2) p. 604 ff.   
3) Kudaschow letter from August 3, 1915.

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10th Army expressed concern about Swenzjany, where the Germans could unexpectedly strengthen quickly. This would force an immediate weakening of the Vistula front, whose evacuation had not yet been ordered at that time. The 5th Army was therefore to shift its focus more to the south, in the area of Dünaburg. On August 9, the Southwestern Front was again ordered to transfer two divisions to the 5th Army. At the Northwestern Front, the Grand Duke inquired whether it was not "advisable to withdraw the front in Poland further back to strengthen the middle Njemen and the roads to Kowno, the section that was to support the future front." The blows delivered that day by the German 12th and 8th Armies south of Lomza against the Russian 12th and by the Mackensen Army Group at Lubartow against the 3rd Army accelerated the execution of the retreat movement. "To prevent the armies from complete dissolution," General Alexejew ordered on August 10 for the 12th, 1st, 2nd, 4th, and 3rd Armies to retreat further to a line running south past Lubow east of Diswiece. The movement was to be carried out gradually; cavalry and rearguards were to repeatedly hold up the enemy and force development, while entire corps were to be released as reserves at the same time. However, this movement also led to further withdrawal of the 13th Army, stationed southwest of Kowel with its right wing on the Bug, which the Supreme Command would have liked to keep standing to protect Brest Litowsk. On the other hand, the southwestern front, weakened by detachments for the north, was already so weakened that it was hardly able to hold its line.

The rapid advance of the German attack against Kowno increased concerns. On August 14, the Supreme Command designated the best and numerically strongest corps of the army, the Guard Corps, from the 3rd Army to Wilna; this army thereby shrank from 90,000 to 63,000 rifles, distributed among five remaining corps (ten divisions).

The following days brought a decisive change in the organization of the army. After discussions that went back to July 28 and after a meeting with General Alexejew on August 16 at his new headquarters in Wolkowysk, on August 17, the division of the oversized Northwestern Front into a Northern Front was ordered.

1) 65th and 4th Finnish Div.  
2) P. 355 and 414.  
3) Two infantry divisions and one rifle brigade.

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The deployment of two corps for coastal defense to Wolmar and Walk was prevented by General Aljezejew when the German ships soon left the Gulf of Riga again). The mass of the advancing reinforcements continued to flow into the area of Wilna, where the Sventsyan gap was particularly dangerous since the fall of Kowno. The fall of this fortress also forced the abandonment of the entire line Kowno—Grodno—Brest Litowsk. The front was to be withdrawn, but in such a way that the railway Wilna—Baranowicze—Rowno remained secured as a cross-connection behind it.

On August 22, Disna was released. After the 4th Army was shaken by the German Army Detachment Woyrsch on August 25 and in view of the simultaneous threat from the southeast, the prepared evacuation of the strong modern fortress Brest Litowsk was also carried out, General Aljezejew ordered the general retreat to the line Grodno—Rowno on the night of August 26.

Meanwhile, the Supreme Army Command had moved to Mogilew on the Dnieper since August 21. Here, the Minister of War, General Polivanow, brought the news to the Grand Duke on August 22 of the Tsar's decision to take over the supreme command himself with General Aljezejew as Chief of Staff. The Grand Duke was then to be assigned the Caucasus Front. From then until the Tsar's arrival on September 5, the previous Supreme Army Command did not intervene decisively in the events that were hardly sustainable anyway. How the views of its previously leading personalities were at that time is characterized by the report of Prince Kudaschew from August 30: The outgoing Quartermaster General, General Danilow, said that lack of ammunition and declining morale left little hope for significant improvement of the situation; nevertheless, "the final victory can remain ours under two conditions: 1. that we do not despair and do not tire despite all trials, 2. that we do not have a revolution." Otherwise, the prevailing view was: The Germans, judging by the tone of their press, have the double solution: 1. Strike both south and east. Accordingly, our goal must be: 1. Conclude a pure peace before the Germans are expelled from Russia, 2. maintain the ranks of the army.

1) p. 468 ff. — 2) p. 364. — 3) p. 428. — 4) p. 429 f. — 5) Polivanow, p. 208 ff.

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Change in the Supreme Army Command.

The overall course of Russian operations until early September was a stubborn struggle for every inch of ground and protection of the "evacuation" of territories, which ultimately had to be abandoned; nothing was to fall into the enemy's hands that could serve him in any way for warfare.

From a purely military point of view, objections can be raised against such a type of warfare, as it exhausted the army's forces in pure defense, even though there was room to retreat. With timely withdrawal of the front, the Russian army could have been almost entirely withdrawn from decisive attacks by the Central Powers. A major German operation north of the Njemen would likely have come to a halt soon if a strong Russian right flank had been established early, as it would have been at a disadvantage due to poorer rear connections. This would have led to purely frontal attrition in trench warfare, with the Russian army remaining a fully valid power factor in a strong defensive position and dangerously close to the borders of Germany, ready to break out again into a major offensive at the appropriate time. This could have offset any partial success the Central Powers might have achieved on other fronts in the meantime.

For the decision on the fundamental question of how the war should be conducted on a large scale, however, as mentioned at the outset, military considerations alone were not decisive, but alongside considerations of the wishes of the Western powers, ultimately external and internal political conditions, and thus the Tsar and his government. It cannot be overlooked that the procedure used tied up very strong German forces throughout the summer, which would have been freed for other theaters of war with a rapid retreat to the Njemen-Bug line. In fact, the Russian command skillfully traversed the hundreds of kilometers of retreat areas, and did so systematically in the direction it had chosen itself, resulting in the cramped space between Oswiece and the Rokitno swamps. However, the resistance power of the troops failed because they lacked officers, trained replacements, weapons, and ammunition, which ultimately affected morale. It is noteworthy that until the final battles against the Central Powers, apart from the established fortresses, before and around Przemysl, Nowogeorgiewsk, and Kowno, the unplanned, often immobile and outdated equipment, from mid-May to the end of August, the total number did not exceed 200 pieces.

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200 pieces did not exceed, while the loss of prisoners in these 3½ months amounted to around 850,000 (of which alone 90,000 were the garrison of Nowogeorgiewsk). Meanwhile, the losses of artillery had notably decreased since about the beginning of July, so that perhaps at this time, in connection with the idea of a general retreat, greater restraint in the use of artillery may have been ordered. According to a report made to the French ambassador at the end of August¹) by the Russian General Staff, the total Russian losses from May to July were 350,000 monthly, in August 450,000, totaling 1,500,000 men.

The measures actually taken on the Russian side also raise the question of what prospects a large German offensive on Wilna, initiated early, at the latest after the capture of the Narew line, i.e., around the end of July, would have had. It could have been supported by a land and sea attack against Riga, but above all by simultaneous sharp pressure on both sides of the Bug from the south. The forces for this would have been readily available. The Narew thrust had already delivered what was expected of it, and west of the Vistula, any combat-ready unit was dispensable. A strong German offensive, suddenly launched against Kowno and on both sides of this fortress, would have initially encountered very little Russian resistance on the right bank of the Niemen and could have penetrated deeply in a rapid first advance; it would have taken a long time for the Russians to bring up sufficient forces to counter such a thrust. The German success had to be all the greater, the more it succeeded in destroying the Russian forces standing around Kowno in a double encirclement, gaining space to the south, and thereby blocking the three railway lines leading into the interior of the Reich between Osowiec and the Rokitno marshes. In view of the strong Russian countermeasures that were sure to be expected, such an offensive had to become increasingly difficult with increasing distance from its own sources of strength and with the simultaneous, rising supply needs due to the duration and intensity of the fighting. It was therefore crucial to achieve in time to block the mentioned supply lines early and keep them blocked for the duration of the fighting, thereby also making it difficult, if not entirely preventing, the supply of the Russian masses streaming back from Poland. That with such conduct of operations a surrender of significant parts of the Russian army could have been achieved is possible; certainly, however, a much faster and, for the Russians, especially in terms of equipment, more loss-intensive retreat from Poland would have been forced than by the encirclement attempt west of Bug and Niemen.

¹) Paléologue I, p. 400.

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Reflections.

It is possible that a disarmament of significant parts of the Russian army could have been achieved; however, a much quicker and, for the Russians, especially in terms of equipment, more costly retreat from Poland would have been forced than by the encirclement attempt west of the Bug and Njemen. In retrospect, it seems that the time required for this was underestimated, which was already necessary at that time due to the defensive strength of the weapons for an essentially frontal offensive against an approximately equally strong enemy, if this enemy had the will to defend every inch of ground. It was precisely from this will of the opponent that the prospects for success for a far-reaching strong encirclement operation in the Njemen area arose.

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G. The Capture of the Permanent Position and the Events until the End of the Year at the Commander-in-Chief East¹).

Maps 6 and 7, Sketch 30.

According to the order of the Supreme Army Command of September 25, the permanent position in the section of the Commander-in-Chief East was to run from the mouth of the Beresyna into the Njemen to the Baltic Sea coast. The connection at the Gulf of Riga resulted in by far the shortest line. Even it measured almost 400 kilometers in the air. However, the troops had already advanced almost 100 kilometers beyond this shortest line to the east on a broad front and were engaged in heavy fighting against attacking enemies east of Wilna and also near Dünaburg. Overall, the Commander-in-Chief East currently had 37½ infantry divisions and nine cavalry divisions, but could only count on about 28 divisions of infantry in the long run²).

Under these circumstances, all previous far-reaching plans, such as advancing to Minsk and capturing Riga, had to be finally abandoned³). But even the battle east of Wilna, which in any case promised no major territorial gains, had to be abandoned if further execution of the attack against Dünaburg became questionable. A line as short as possible and favorable for defense had to be chosen, and the front at Wilna even had to be moved back. That the enemy could count such a retreat as a victory had to be accepted.

On September 27, the Commander-in-Chief East presented a report on the situation and intentions, requested by the Supreme Army Command, stating that it would probably not be possible to push the enemy back before the right wing of the 10th Army. He continuously reinforced and extended his wing east of Wilna and apparently moved forces into the area east of the Narocz-See-Dünaburg line. An imminent offensive against this line had to be expected. The offensive of the 8th and 10th Army is therefore suspended. The 10th Army initially bends its left wing back to the Narocz-See and moves forces from its center to the area north of the Narocz-See. A reinforcement of the left wing of the Njemen Army is also necessary. The army group occupies its permanent position in the line Berezyna-Mündung—Narocz-See—area west of Dünaburg—Mitau—Schloß.

¹) p. 522 ff. and 537 f. ²) p. 524. ³) p. 521 ff. and 536.

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Line Guidance of the Permanent Position.

extends in line Berezyna-Mouth—Narocz Lake—area west of Dünaburg—Mitau—Castle its permanent position." As soon as possible, further forces would be released for the Supreme Army Command, a general command and three divisions prepared for transfer in the coming days. How many divisions could then still be transferred and in what timeframes, however, could not yet be foreseen.

After the armies had already been informed about the intentions in general and had been duly informed about the manner of execution, the Commander-in-Chief East firmly established the line guidance for the permanent position on September 28. It was to run from the Njemen to the Lida—Molodeczno railway along the Berezyna, thus in the previous front, then over the Narocz Lake to the Driswjaty Lake and further along the Düna to follow the current position of the Njemen Army. Although it was the outermost line, it offered such great advantages through the exploitation of natural obstacles that it was expected to be held with the least forces. The position was to gain a certain depth through the construction of several lines and behind it, at a short distance, a second position was to be explored and prepared. At the same time, efforts began to reorganize the units, which had been largely destroyed due to the battles, and to restructure the entire front. The previous 8th Army was dissolved and had to transfer its troops to the 12th Army; its deputy commander-in-chief, General von Scholz, with Lieutenant Colonel Count von Schwerin as Chief of Staff, was soon to take over a newly forming army group between the 10th and the Njemen Army, which would then be assigned the area from the Düna to halfway Dünaburg—Jakobstadt. Hand in hand with these changes went the redistribution of forces to the individual armies.

The occupation of the permanent position proceeded largely according to plan, but still under numerous local battles. They were most intense with the 10th and the Njemen Army, in the area east of Wilna and near Dünaburg.

For the 10th Army, it was important to shorten the front in the area west of Molodeczno by removing the protruding Russian position arc from Smorgon. In doing so, the right wing of the Litzmann group made good progress south of the city on September 27. On September 28, the outermost left wing of the old 8th Army, General von Frommel with the 83rd Infantry and 11th Landwehr Division, gained ground at the Berezyna bend northeast of Wiszniew and captured more than 3000 prisoners and nine machine guns.

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The Events Until the End of the Year at the Eastern Commander-in-Chief.

General von Frommel with the 83rd Infantry and 11th Landwehr Division, at the Berezyna bend northeast of Wiszniew, captured more than 3000 prisoners and nine machine guns. However, the battle for the city of Smorgon itself was particularly stubborn. Here, the left wing of Group Litzmann from the west and the right of Group Eben from the northeast worked together, but only the attack of the latter (3rd Reserve and 31st Infantry Division) on the east bank of the Wilia from the north advanced, capturing 400 prisoners and guns on September 29 and advancing deep into the rear of Smorgon on September 30. The further advance of the left wing of Group Litzmann, however, stalled due to a lack of ammunition. Surrounded from the west, north, and east in an arc of only four kilometers in diameter, the Russians managed to hold the city of Smorgon. Meanwhile, the left wing of the German 10th Army had disengaged from the enemy, after the latter had dealt a serious blow to the 77th Reserve Division east of Wilejka on September 27. Otherwise, the withdrawal proceeded systematically and essentially undisturbed to a line running from the Wilia east of Smorgon over the Wiszniew Lake to the Narocz Lake. The Russians followed and captured, according to their own account, abandoned vehicles and ammunition, while "only very few prisoners" fell into their hands. The idea of inflicting further damage on them through a counterattack was abandoned by the German 10th Army's high command when, on the night of September 30, reports arrived, including a Russian order captured by the 9th Cavalry Division, indicating a deep advance by the approximately four-division-strong Kasnakow Cavalry Corps from the east into the gap north of the Narocz Lake was expected for that day. The expected Russian advances only came on October 1 and were repelled at Kosjany and south without difficulty on that and the following day.

1) Njesnamow, p. 122.

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Battle for Smorgon. Capture of the Permanent Position.

rejected. Meanwhile, it had also been possible to close the gap that had existed from the northern end of Lake Dryswjaty to the German positions in front of Dünaburg, and by early October, a continuous, albeit still rather thin, defensive line on both sides of the Dvina had been established along the entire front of the Commander-in-Chief East.

Precisely here, in the area of Krosjany and north to Lake Dryswjaty, the enemy continued his efforts against the weak German forces stationed here in the following days with great superiority, deploying not only strong cavalry but also his entire IV Corps²⁵). Meanwhile, German infantry had also arrived, so that the stubborn attempts of the enemy, repeatedly made on October 3 and the following days, eventually encountered the resistance of five German infantry and 5½ cavalry divisions and could be more easily repelled everywhere since then.

The Supreme Army Command now demanded, as it had long anticipated²⁶), further contributions, which it urgently needed in view of the difficult situation in the West and the Serbian campaign²⁷). These could only be provided without endangering the defense in the extended lines of the Commander-in-Chief East, after these had been further consolidated and the fortification of positions had made some progress. I currently estimated the 10th Army at its front at 38 divisions; this was more than the total forces of the Commander-in-Chief East²⁸). In an assessment of the situation demanded by the Supreme Army Command, it was explained to them on October 6: "Russians are attacking the 10th Army and the right wing of the Niemen Army with all their might, intending to break through to the Dünaburg—Wilna road or at least to make it impossible to withdraw further forces of the Eastern Army to the West through their attack. I expect that it will be possible to prevent the enemy from breaking off." A contribution of further forces, it was then said, was impossible and could only occur, if the attack was repelled, after a shortening of the front had been achieved by taking Smorgon and the bridgehead of Dünaburg.

²⁵) In fact, between Postawny and Lake Dryswjaty from the south, the Russian I, IV, XIV Corps with a total of 6½ infantry divisions and 8 cavalry divisions were stationed.  
²⁶) See 483 and 492.  
²⁷) See 502.  
²⁸) In fact, the 10th Army faced only about 30 Russian infantry and 9½ cavalry divisions, although north of Lake Narocz there were 11½ infantry and 3 cavalry divisions.

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For this, some of the heaviest batteries were urgently requested. The shortening of the front was all the more necessary as the Commander-in-Chief also had to withdraw reserves from the center for his own needs to lead the left wing, as any potential penetration of the front at Mitau "would have the most serious consequences."

General von Falkenhayn immediately responded: "Undoubtedly, it would be advantageous if the current position of the army group could be permanently held and, in addition, pressure could be exerted in the direction of Dünaburg." However, if the question arises whether the retention of forces is permissible, whose absence on the Western Front could endanger the German position, it must be absolutely denied. He suggested shortening the front if necessary by retreating to the line Smorgoń—Dünaburg—Bausk or even to one that runs straight from Smorgoń to Bausk. However, it must be adhered to the allocations; the heaviest guns could only be transferred once they were freed from the Serbian front after the Danube crossing. In contrast, the Commander-in-Chief East emphasized on October 7 that the position currently occupied, with or without shortening at Smorgoń and Dünaburg, was by far the most favorable that could be taken. It should be held with a minimum of forces. Any rearward position that dispensed with the protection of the Düna would require more, but at least the same forces as the position without shortening the front. He therefore left it at the line previously ordered for the permanent position. On the other hand, General von Falkenhayn did not insist on the transfer of all units requested in September; instead of 13, only nine infantry divisions were eventually transferred.

Meanwhile, the 10th Army repelled all attacks directed against its left wing. However, their forces were so engaged that the idea of taking Smorgoń had to be finally abandoned on October 11. Also, on both sides of the Düna, where the Russian pressure persisted, the thinly manned front was withdrawn on October 19 from Kossjany by about 15 kilometers to Widzy, where the defensive conditions were considered more favorable by the troops than in the previously held forward line.

With the Njemen Army, the attack on Dünaburg was continued as far as the forces allowed. On October 6, 7, and 8, the I Reserve Corps under General von Morgen (36th, 1st, and 78th Reserve Divisions) made progress against the northwest front of the bridgehead and captured 1,350 prisoners.

1) G. 524 Amm. 1. — 31., 42., 115. I.D. and 6. R.D. remained with the Commander-in-Chief East.

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Battles of the Njemen Army.

The I Reserve Corps under General von Morgen (36th, 1st, and 78th Reserve Division) made progress against the northwest front of the bridgehead and captured 1350 prisoners. However, on October 9, fierce Russian counterattacks began, which were repeated on October 11, 14, and 17, and also extended further south. They were unsuccessful everywhere. On the German side, it was necessary to hold back for the time being, as heavy artillery and ammunition were scarce and the extremely unfavorable railway conditions precluded rapid and regular supply. Thus, the attack against the northwest front could only be resumed on October 23 after reinforcing the artillery. 14 batteries of heavy and heaviest artillery prepared the assault of the 2nd Infantry, 78th, and 1st Reserve Division, which then broke into the enemy positions over a ten-kilometer width. They reached Illuxt, captured 3700 prisoners and 12 machine guns, and inflicted extraordinarily heavy bloody losses on the Russian masses retreating towards the Dvina bridges. But then the attack came to a halt. A further success achieved on October 26 had only local significance.

Overall, despite the use of stronger artillery and all the efforts of the troops, the goal of reaching the Dvina line was not decisively closer; it would have required significantly stronger attacking forces than the railway situation allowed to bring in and equip with war supplies. Since October 1, two months earlier than originally planned, the Bajohren—Prekuln¹) connecting railway was put into operation, and thus a line independent of the sea connection to Schaulen—Poniewiez and Mitau was opened, the situation was initially only slightly eased, as the capacity of the new route was still very low. The enemy still held a bridgehead on the west bank of the Dvina, which extended about 20 kilometers north from the fortress of Dünaburg and was about ten kilometers deep. The Commander-in-Chief East found the progress made unsatisfactory in the overall situation. He feared the onset of frost before the troops could expand the permanent position and therefore suggested on October 27 to halt the attack. However, General von Below, like General von Morgen and their subordinates, hoped that gaining the Dvina bank would lead to a decisive improvement in the positions and also believed that halting the attack before the goal was reached would negatively affect the troops.

¹) See p. 458 and 548.

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before the goal was reached, it would negatively affect the troops. They wanted to try to continue it. However, when this attempt had to be postponed on October 30 due to the ammunition situation, they were also in favor of stopping the attack. The order for this was given on November 1 by the Commander-in-Chief East.

General Otto von Below had also been eager to simultaneously advance the positions at Mitau further against the Düna with the attack on Dünaburg and thus shorten the overall line. This goal was achieved on October 15 through a surprise attack led by Lieutenant General Hans von Below, involving the 6th Reserve Division, 6th Landwehr, and 174th Infantry Brigade1), which brought in 1000 prisoners. Since then, the German position ran along the Düna to Kirchholm and then at the southern edge of the Tirul-Gumpf near Riga to the west to the coast at Schloss. Thus, the enemy also maintained an extensive bridgehead on the left bank of the Düna here, as well as at Dünaburg and Jakobstadt.

All in all, the October battles of the Njemen Army once again brought in 12,000 prisoners and 37 machine guns as booty. However, this was offset by about 15,000 of their own losses.

The situation on the sea flank2) remained constantly uncertain, now stretched from the Reich border over 360 kilometers. English submarines that had penetrated the Baltic Sea and Russian mines not only hindered trade traffic to Scandinavia and the only one still open to Germany, but also caused losses to the German Baltic Sea forces, which from July to the end of the year included an armored cruiser, two small cruisers, and about twelve other vehicles, while corresponding losses of the more restrained Russian fleet were not present. Instead, it had gained a significant increase through four new battleships. If it did not exploit its great superiority in any way, but continued to limit itself to covering the route to Petersburg in the Gulf of Finland, this was mainly due to the presence of this hostile force along with the English submarines and the ever-new mine barriers affecting the overall situation in the Baltic Sea. The sea route to Libau was constantly endangered, its port defenseless against long-range fire from ship guns. The Gulf of Riga remained a dominion of the Russian fleet, secured by mine barriers against German ships, whose forces repeatedly disturbed the German coastal surveillance with artillery fire and small landing operations.

1) Previously Brig. Sommeier.  
2) See p. 468. For more details, see "War at Sea", Baltic Sea II, p. 268 ff.

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Situation at Sea. New 8th Army and Army Group Scholz.

were occasionally disturbed by artillery fire and small landing operations. The Commander-in-Chief East felt compelled to reinforce the coastal section with a cavalry division. However, the bombardments were found to be so unpleasant as securing against them was hardly possible. Long-range guns requested for defense could not be provided by the Supreme Army Command for the time being, and the fleet was not in a position to help unless at least the island of Ösel was taken, thereby providing the necessary support for a permanent establishment in the Gulf of Riga. Such an extensive operation was not conceivable for the time being due to a lack of forces. Only when the sea bay froze over could peace from the sea be hoped for.

At the entire land front of the Commander-in-Chief East, combat activity decreased as the construction of positions progressed and the situation stabilized, while at the same time fatigue from the enormous efforts of the long summer campaign, lack of ammunition, and the onset of winter imposed restrictions on both sides. Between November 10 and 17, which now received the designation "8th Army"2), the Army Group Scholz was formed on October 28 from contributions from both, whose front, starting at Widsh, was extended northward to below Dünaburg in the first days of November. Here, the Russians had made a strong advance shortly before, on November 6, using very explosive Japanese ammunition, which inflicted serious losses on the German 36th Reserve Division. After uninterrupted attack battles, this unit had to be withdrawn in peace because the "supply was inadequate, bringing in winter items was not possible due to urgent ammunition transports"; the men of the division were "partly still dressed in rags"3).

Overall, the land front measured 590 kilometers after the conclusion of the battles, secured by 33 infantry)7, 7½ cavalry divisions, and 52 Landsturm battalions; the enemy seemed to be facing six infantry divisions and 1½ cavalry divisions. 1⅓ German cavalry divisions and two Landsturm battalions were deployed on the coast.

1) C. 468. — 2) C. 541.  
3) War diary of Army Group Scholz.  
4) P. 524 and 540. — 5) See 80. R. D. (Brig. Monteon), 108. J. D. (Det. Beckmann), 109. J. D. (174. J. Br. [Sommer]) and 17. Ldw. D. (Det. Eisfeld) were renamed or newly formed.

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Railway Situation and Permanent Position.

from there to High Command 8 in Poniewicz (80 kilometers) another 24 hours.

The activities of the Commander-in-Chief East, who had relocated his headquarters from Lötzen to Kowno on October 21, were dedicated to the administration of the occupied Russian territory alongside purely military tasks. This territory, which included the area behind Army Group Prince Leopold and, despite the separation of the General Government of Warsaw¹), still encompassed around 220,000 square kilometers. From this territory, which corresponded to approximately two-fifths of the then German Empire in size, it was necessary not only to supply their own troops with provisions and horses but also to provide resources to the homeland and the Western Army when possible.

When the Kaiser visited the area of the Commander-in-Chief East with General von Falkenhayn towards the end of the year, Field Marshal von Hindenburg briefed him about the situation in Wilna on December 12. He considered the right wing and center of his front secure; the construction of positions had already made good progress here. As reserves, the 12th and 10th Armies and the Army Detachment Scholtz had each only been able to withdraw one mixed brigade. The situation appeared more precarious with the new 8th Army. Here, they had to be prepared for Russian attacks, especially once frost set in and the Düna, the lakes, and marsh lowlands would no longer pose obstacles. Only two infantry divisions stood as reserves behind this front; reinforcement was desired here. The Commander-in-Chief East did not expect major landings on the coast, but he did anticipate troublesome bombardments from the sea and threats from agents and spies who were being deployed behind their own lines. Until now, as he further explained, it had been possible to compensate for the lack of troops through mobility; however, this solution failed in the interior of Russia. The railway conditions did not allow for rapid redeployments; where troops were stationed, they generally had to be used there.

¹) P. 351.

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H. The Pursuit of the Army Groups Mackensen and Prince Leopold after the Fall of Brest Litowsk

The German Chief of the General Staff of the Field Army had in August given his approval to the proposals of the Commander-in-Chief East and Generaloberst von Conrad to shift the focus of the offensive from the center of the allied army front to the flanks, with the condition that the planned, spatially far-separated special operations against parts of the Russian army should not result in a continuation of the offensive along the entire line for an indefinite period. For weeks, his primary concern as the leader of overall operations was the desire to make sufficient forces available as soon as possible for the campaign against Serbia, deemed absolutely necessary. Additionally, the possibility had to be considered that the Western opponents might deploy their reserves, which had grown to nearly 50 infantry divisions, against this offensive as well. It was also necessary to strengthen the Eastern forces. This was most feasible from the center of the army front in Russia. For these purposes, General von Falkenhayn withdrew strong troops from the Mackensen army group in quick succession from August 25 onward.

On August 27, Generaloberst von Conrad agreed to the proposal that in the future, instructions to the Mackensen army group should be issued solely by the German supreme army command. As a result, the rest of the Austro-Hungarian 4th Army and the Austro-Hungarian VI Corps were also withdrawn from this army group. However, Generaloberst von Conrad did not immediately relinquish all influence over the progress of operations on the German front. Understandably, he was very concerned that during the partial operation he planned in Eastern Galicia, the Russian army would be kept in check on its other fronts.

1) Connection to C. 435. — 2) C. 614.  
3) From August 26, the 101st Infantry Division, on August 28 and 29 the Guard Corps, on September 1 the 11th Bavarian Infantry Division, on September 3 the 5th Infantry Division, on September 5 the 103rd and 105th Infantry Divisions, on September 6 the XXII Reserve Corps and the 25th Reserve Division of the Beskiden Corps, on September 7 the 20th Infantry Division, on September 9 the General Command X Reserve and the 19th Infantry Division.

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The Pursuit Continues East of Brest Litowsk.

The front was kept in check. Thus, he not only returned to his earlier proposal, expressed in the spirit of Field Marshal von Hindenburg, to reinforce his army group for the upcoming offensive on Wilna, but he also suggested simultaneous actions by the army groups Mackensen and Prince Leopold up to the area of Pinsk and to the Jasiolda. General von Falkenhayn remained firm against these proposals, maintaining the position he had already justified in a letter to Colonel General von Conrad on August 26: "Certainly, strengthening the Kronow Group is desirable, but it is far more important that the Dardanelles are closed, and that the iron in Bulgaria is forged as long as it is hot. Consequently, the forces we can withdraw from the area of Brest Litowsk, without initially loosening the grip on the enemy's throat, must be directed to the Danube."

The initial impetus for the operations of the army groups Mackensen and Prince Leopold not coming to a halt after the capture of Brest Litowsk, contrary to the intentions of General von Falkenhayn, came from the High Command of the Mackensen Army Group. Already on the evening of August 26, Major General von Seeckt had expressed in a report to the Supreme Army Command the view that stubborn enemy resistance south of the large Jasiolda swamps was not to be expected, and that apparently "there was still the prospect of a generous encirclement of the Russian army," provided that the advance of the Hindenburg Army Group on and over Wilna was considered promising. The cooperation of the Mackensen and Prince Leopold army groups in this regard manifested in an advance over the line Kobryn—Kamieniec Litowsk in the direction of Pruzana under cover against the east and closure of the southern edge of the Bialoviez forest. Field Marshal von Mackensen therefore also continued the pursuit of the Bug Army and the 11th Army eastward on August 27. Also, with the Prince Leopold Army Group, the Woyrsch Army Detachment forced the crossing over the Lesna Prawa under fighting, while the 9th Army continued the blockade of the Bialoviez forest.

The confidence expressed by Major General von Seeckt in assessing the overall situation did not leave an impression on General von Falkenhayn. Although he adhered to fundamental instructions for the operations of the near future¹), which were issued on the night of August 28, that the army groups Mackensen and Prince Leopold with their main forces should halt their advance eastward at the swampy terrain east of the line Ratno—Kobryn—Szereszow and only remain on all roads with smaller mixed units against the enemy.

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The Pursuit of the Army Groups Mackensen and Prince Leopold.

with their main force to halt the advance eastward at the swampy terrain east of the line Ratno—Kobryn—Szereszow and only to remain with smaller mixed units on all roads near the enemy. Both army groups were also tasked with the immediate construction of field positions along the general line Bug—Brest Litowsk—extent of the Bialowiez forest—mouth of the Narewka into the Narew, which should be suitable for permanent holding with the least possible forces. At the same time, however, General von Falkenhayn pointed to early grouping for an advance of the inner wings of both army groups, which under certain circumstances would lead over the line Pruzana—Szereszow northward against the enemy's rear connections north of the Bialowiez forest.

Consequently, Field Marshal von Mackensen ordered on August 28 that the Bug Army should continue its assigned pursuit over Antopol—Kobryn only as far as an impact on the southern flank of the Russian forces retreating eastward could be hoped for. The 11th Army was also to pursue only with its right wing up to the Muchawiec section. However, its left wing (the corps Kosch reinforced by four infantry divisions) was to advance to Pruzana in conjunction with the action ordered by Field Marshal Prince Leopold of the army detachment Woyrsch on Szereszow to create the conditions for a continuation of the offensive northward. The desired flank pressure of the Bug Army did not materialize. The enemy was pushed back purely frontally in fierce and for him costly battles until August 29 over the line Kobryn—Szereszewno. This resulted in a strong destruction and weakening of his units. The 11th Army alone captured 3700 prisoners on August 29. The army detachment Woyrsch encountered strong resistance on both sides of Szereszow. Aerial reconnaissance reported the departure of endless columns up to and beyond the Sczara, extensive troop gatherings at Pruzana, and heavy column traffic from there to Glomino and from Rozana northward. At the Koslow station, on the Brest Litowsk—Baranowicze railway, large supplies were stored.

General von Falkenhayn believed, from the booty numbers and reconnaissance results transmitted to him on the evening of August 29, that there was still the possibility of inflicting severe damage on the enemy by further sharp pursuit of the Mackensen army group in a northeasterly direction up to the Jasiołda section.

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General von Falkenhayn intends to continue the pursuit.

to do. He informed the high commands of both army groups during the night that he had no objections to such an operation with a simultaneous advance of Prince Leopold's army group over Pruzana. However, since only slow frontal pushing back of the Russians was possible on August 30, and since the own troops had already suffered greatly from supply and replenishment difficulties, Field Marshal von Hindenburg saw no prospect of a major success. He decided to halt the advance after the capture of Pruzana and ordered for August 31, apart from a short advance on the main Kobryn road over the Muchawiec section, only the reinforced Koch Corps on the left wing of the 11th Army to continue the pursuit up to the Dranczye—Pruzana road in connection with the Woyrsch army detachment. In response to an inquiry from the Supreme Army Command, he reported on the morning of August 31: "Hope of intercepting significant parts of the enemy between Jasiodla and Muchawiec section no longer exists. The main reason is that the Bug Army failed to swing in time against the southern flank with the right wing, nor with the cavalry corps. Frontal pursuit of the right wing and middle 11th Army over swampy terrain promised no significant success, as the withdrawal of the Russians was initiated in time and was carried out systematically with alternating rear guards ... Heavy rain showers will halt troop movements in the swampy terrain everywhere. Condition of the troops is good, although probably partially fatigued. Performance of the horses, especially with heavy artillery and columns, is particularly declining in some places. Losses are concerning."

Nevertheless, General von Falkenhayn urgently recommended that at least on the passable roads along the entire front, a sharp pursuit up to the Jasiodla section should be made. This was also necessary to facilitate the advance of the Woyrsch army detachment and at the same time to gain advantage from it. In the subsequently ordered continuation of the pursuit up to Jasiodla, the Bug Army was instructed to direct its left wing along the road over Kobryn to Bereza Kartuska. While in the evening its right wing was stuck in front of the Sniper-Bug Canal, secured to the south by the divisions of the now established cavalry corps, its left wing gained more space on the main road in conjunction with the 11th Army. The Guard Cavalry Division under Lieutenant General von Storch reached Luft. On the northern wing of the 11th Army, the Koch Corps advanced into the area north of Malecz. The Woyrsch army detachment reached Jasiodla with advance troops after the capture of Pruzana. Arrival of

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The 9th Army traversed the Bialowicz Forest on impassable roads.

On September 1st, Field Marshal von Mackensen once again urged his two armies to advance quickly on both sides of the main road Kobryn—Bereza Kartuska up to the Jasiolda. Simultaneously, the Bug Army was also to advance towards Pinsk to prevent the enemy from withdrawing by rail. It accordingly shifted its center of gravity to the right in this direction. Again, the day brought heavy fighting along the entire line against the Russian rear guards, who were firmly entrenched behind canal and swamp stretches and determined to maintain stubborn defense. No significant successes were achieved.

However, when in the early morning of September 2nd, the 82nd Reserve Division under General Fabarius broke through the hotly contested position at the Dniepr—Bug Canal near Horodec, the enemy soon retreated on the remaining front as well. Both armies pressed forward. General von Linsingen still hoped to encircle the forces retreating towards Pinsk from both sides. In the evening, he placed his right wing (5th Cavalry Division, XXXXI Reserve Corps and 107th Infantry Division) under General von Gerok for a thrust along the railway towards Pinsk, while the Beskiden Corps was to pursue along the main road towards Bereza Kartuska, with the main force advancing southeastward south of the Jasiolda. The 11th Army reached the Jasiolda with Kosch Corps at Sielec. As the General Command of the X Reserve Corps with the 103rd and 105th Infantry Divisions was now to be withdrawn¹), it was replaced by the X Army Corps (19th Infantry and 47th Reserve Division, with the 20th Infantry Division in reserve behind).

The Army Group Prince Leopold gained little ground on September 1st and 2nd. The enemy offered stubborn resistance both to the Army Detachment Woyrsch at the few crossings of the wide marshy lowlands of the Jasiolda and to the 9th Army at Nowydwor and northwest of it. Early in the morning of September 2nd, a directive from the Supreme Army Command had arrived, according to which Army Group Prince Leopold was to continue the offensive against the road section Slonim—Zelwa²). In the evening, Army Group Mackensen also received orders to participate in this attack with its left wing in the direction of Slonim. Their High Command then ordered the Commanding General of the Beskiden Corps, General of Cavalry von der Marwitz, to carry out this advance with the 4th Infantry, 35th and 47th Reserve Divisions and the Guards Cavalry Division.

¹) p. 550. — ²) p. 492.

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for provisions and no accommodations. It had been thoroughly depleted. The water supply also encountered difficulties in many places.

Only on the night of September 13 did the enemy withdraw before Army Group Prince Leopold as well as before the 12th Army. However, the immediate pursuit already stalled on the evening of September 14 at the broad swamp section of the Szczara. Attempts by the Landwehr Corps to force a crossing at Slonim in the following days initially brought only minor local successes. On the night of September 18, the enemy continued its retreat along the entire front. The Supreme Army Command, in view of the advancing operations of Army Group Hindenburg in the Wilna¹) area, considered "aggressive pursuit also by Army Group Prince Leopold urgently necessary" and on September 19 gave its left wing, which had already reached the railway northwest of Molczadz, the almost northward direction toward Nowogrodek. Tenacious resistance from enemy rear guards and bottomless roads continued to hamper the advance. By September 21, the pursuit reached just before Baranowicze and the area south of Nowogrodek. Strong resistance appeared anew at the Myschanka. Only on the night of September 23 did the enemy evacuate his positions. The Army Group advanced to the upper course of the Szczara on both sides of the Baranowicze—Minsk railway and to the Serwetsch. Thus the important railway junction of Baranowicze fell into German hands. The right wing of the 12th Army gained ground east of Nowogrodek.

Field Marshal Leopold Prince of Bavaria still believed he could "further build on the success by continuing the offensive jointly with Army Group Hindenburg toward Minsk." General von Falkenhayn, however, had decided to definitively halt the purely frontal pursuit, as the desired operational result had completely failed to materialize. On the night of September 24, Army Group Prince Leopold received orders "not to cross the Szczara section above the Oginski Canal nor the Serwetsch and Njemen with the main force." On September 25, the Supreme Army Command ordered Army Group Prince Leopold to take up a permanent position along the line Oginski Canal (from Telechany)—Upper Szczara—Serwetsch—mouth of the Berezyna into the Njemen.

How much the internal condition and the fighting strength of the troops, severely diminished by continuous battles and marches, required the suspension of offensive operations is best illuminated by a report submitted unsolicited by the commander of the 119th Infantry Division, Major General von Behr, on September 21.

¹) p. 513.

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Condition of the Pursuing Troops.

The requirements of the offensive operations are best illustrated by a report submitted unsolicited by the commander of the 119th Infantry Division, Major General von Behr, on September 21. It stated:

"The 119th Infantry Division has been in continuous forward movement since May 2. This has resulted in conditions that urgently need remedy if the division is not to completely lose its combat effectiveness one day.

In the infantry, the number of departures due to illness from overexertion increases daily. The influx of replacement troops cannot keep pace. In the relentless advance, it is impossible for the replacement troops to reach the division. Transport times of six weeks since the start of the march are now the norm. Instead of fresh, combat-ready troops, exhausted, footsore men arrive, a high percentage of whom have already fallen ill along the way. It hardly needs mentioning that the weeks-long marches of the replacement transports with at most two officers, without properly organized units, without corporal leaders, etc., are not conducive to maintaining discipline. All troops urgently need replacement clothing and equipment. The infantry particularly lacks boots; if the men do not help themselves by taking boots from captured or fallen Russians, many would have to go barefoot.

Mounted units suffer from constant horse losses. The artillery and columns, which have long been advancing only at a walking pace due to poor roads, lose several horses daily, which collapse from exhaustion and have to be shot. The increased performance of the horses is not nearly matched by their nutrition. Oats are supplied irregularly and in insufficient quantities by the supply columns, and in the country, the systematic utilization and preparation of known suitable potatoes, beets, and other grains is rarely possible during the daily long marches. Most of the horses are constantly outdoors, often in cold rain without shelter. Apart from combat losses, the daily loss of horses can be estimated at at least 25. How this loss is to be compensated is currently an unsolvable puzzle. The horse depots are exhausted, and they can occasionally procure small, poorly nourished horses, unsuitable for riding. Replacements from home also arrive weeks too late and are already exhausted from the march and the lack of fodder along the way, impairing their effectiveness.

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and the lack of fodder on the way impairs its performance.

With the downright miserable condition of the horses, which are the only reliable means of transport on the bad roads, further grievances arise that urgently need remedy. The artillery urgently needs material for the repair and maintenance of the guns. The heavy battery 119 has been firing with only two guns for a long time because the long-requested replacement material has not arrived. The same applies to the horseshoe material. It is now feared that the division will not be supplied with cleats when frost sets in, because the possibility of procuring the material is lacking.

The division is currently particularly unfavorably positioned with artillery ammunition. Before September 24, the ammunition column department is unable to issue ammunition to the light columns. If the division continues to march, the distance to be covered by the light columns increases, and with it the difficulty of timely supplying the artillery with ammunition. If one disregards the demands that the ongoing battles will place on the nerve strength of the fighting troops and only considers the supply of the sick and wounded, it becomes apparent that the point in time when the division is also at the end of its performance capability is not far off. The evacuation of wounded from the field hospitals to the rear is becoming increasingly difficult because the rear cannot advance at the pace of the front troops. Therefore, the division is forced to leave the field hospitals in place for a long time and, on the other hand, faces increasing embarrassment regarding their follow-up and usability in the event of major losses. — The fact that communication with home via field post has almost completely ceased is mentioned only in passing.

From the above, it follows that the division urgently needs some time to rest; otherwise, the day can already be predetermined when the division will consist only of staffs, regiments of 600 men, and guns without harness and ammunition."

When passing on this report to the Supreme Army Command, Colonel General von Woyrsch remarked on September 23: "Given the overriding importance of rapid progress in the current pursuit, I have so far paid no attention to such anxious concerns as expressed in the report, especially since the troops have remained remarkably good despite all hardships and have proven themselves excellently in the battles.

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The Permanent Position of Army Group Prince Leopold.

The troop has remained outstandingly good despite all hardships and has distinguished itself excellently in the battles. However, I feel obliged to submit the attached, unsolicited report in the original, as the conditions in other parts of the army division and especially with the 23rd corps are gradually taking on a similar shape. The main reason for this lies essentially in the insufficient and particularly irregular supply by the railway, which the army division has unsuccessfully tried to improve. For weeks, only half rations and the necessary ammunition could be supplied to the troops, making the fullest use of the available horse and wagon columns.

For the permanent position assigned to Army Group Prince Leopold1) with a width of about 160 kilometers, a total of eleven infantry divisions and initially also a cavalry division2) were available. The course of the future position was clearly outlined by the Oginski Canal, Szara, and Serveitsch. Construction could begin immediately. The double-track main railway Warsaw—Brest Litowsk—Minsk—Moscow, which became passable to Koslow (single-track from Brest Litowsk) on October 4, met the middle of the front at Baranowicze and ensured adequate supply. Opposite the army group stood the center and right wing of the Russian 3rd and the Russian 4th Army, totaling 23½ infantry and 2½ cavalry divisions3).

The combat operations in the area of the Commander-in-Chief East subsided faster than with Army Group Prince Leopold. The calm was only interrupted on October 20 and 21 by an attack led by the Russians against the 5th and XII Corps. This corps, which had to cover the important railway junction Baranowicze in the south and still significantly block the major highway Bobruisk—Brest Litowsk, one of the few continuous solid roads in the interior of Russia, suffered a loss of 7,700 men due to the Russian breakthrough into its position, of whom nearly 6,000 men, mostly of Romanian nationality, were taken prisoner.

1) See p. 556.  
2) From south to north at the beginning of October: Army Detachment Woyrsch: Guard R. D. (transferred to Army Group Linsingen at the beginning of October), Beskiden Corps (35th and 47th R. D.), 4th and XII Corps (above and below the 35th S. D.), Ldw. Corps (4th Ldw. D.), Ldw. D. "Bredow"; 9th Army: XXV R. K. (49th I. R. 90th and 84th S. D.); army group reserve: 119th J. D.  
3) From the Russian 3rd Army (from south to north): III Caucasian, XXIV, X, and IX Corps with 2nd and 11th Rad. Div.; Russian 4th Army: (Gren. Corps, XV, XVI, XXXV, from ibid. I. Turk. and XXV Corps (Army Reserve) with 15½ Inf. and 1½ Cav. Div.

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The Pursuit of the Army Groups Mackensen and Prince Leopold.

7700 men, of whom nearly 6000, mostly of Romanian nationality, were captured. After the situation was restored by the deployment of German reserves, Generaloberst von Boeyrich assigned the Austro-Hungarian corps a section more to the north, less exposed to enemy operations. On November 10, the right wing of the army group was extended another twelve kilometers to the south.

A week before the pursuit operation of the army group Prince Leopold came to a halt, the Bug Army of the Mackensen army group had successfully carried out its assigned special operation, the attack on Pinsk. On September 3, the enemy had evaded their comprehensively planned attack north of the Dnieper-Bug Canal in an easterly direction. In two groups under the command of Generals von Gerok and von Conta, advancing frontally to the east, the army reached the line Zarzeczka-Chomsk and further northwest to Jasiolda. On September 6, the eastward-directed battlefront was carried forward by the assault of the 107th Infantry Division on Drohiczyn to the line Disvoce-Bezdziez. Due to the great distances from the railway points Wlodawa and Biala, the supply service began to fail here as well. The troops were no longer able to bring sufficient ammunition and supplies with their weakened columns over the destroyed roads and impassable paths. Thus, the Bug Army could initially only send mixed detachments after the enemy. Already on September 5, the chief of staff of the Mackensen army group had seen fit to report in detail to the Supreme Army Command about the condition of the troops. They had fully met the high demands on their physical and moral strength during the long period of fighting and had remained consistently confident and aggressive. However, they wished at least for the possibility of a short training of their replacements, or better yet a rest period, as the months-long, costly battles and marches in the most difficult terrain and with the greatest deprivations of all kinds had significantly sapped their strength. The guns were heavily worn out, but particularly concerning was the recent condition of the horses, both in the troops and in the columns, especially due to the ongoing shortage of fodder.

1) p. 554.

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Advance of the Bug Army on Pinsk.

In the following days, the army group remained stationary and awaited the arrival of ammunition and supplies. Meanwhile, the transfer of the X Army Corps¹) was ordered. The Hungarian 11th Cavalry Division marched south to the Austro-Hungarian army. Since Field Marshal von Mackensen had been selected to lead operations against Serbia, his army group was dissolved on September 8²), but the designation "Army Group Mackensen" was retained for camouflage.

General von Linsingen, who was entrusted with the high command in place of the Field Marshal, reported to the army command on the evening of September 8 that the pursuit by the bulk of the Bug Army had been halted for two days due to a lack of ammunition and supplies. The next operations of the army group were merely a question of supply. The railway would be operational to Terespol west of Brest Litowsk by September 10 and to Kobryn by September 20. Accordingly, the Bug Army would not be able to resume the offensive on Pinsk until September 14, unless the advance weak detachments succeeded in forcing the enemy to retreat earlier.

From advances made by the Russians at several points on the night of September 11, and from reports that strong transports were moving east over the railway via Pinsk, General von Linsingen concluded that the enemy was preparing to withdraw soon and ordered a surprise attack along the entire front on September 12. The breakthrough was completely successful. The Gerok Group advanced with its main effort on its right wing between the Dnieper-Bug Canal and the railway to Klimanoworodzevicz. In the Conta Group, the 1st and 22nd Infantry Divisions overran the enemy and advanced beyond Zawierze. On the night of September 13, the 107th Infantry Division succeeded in rolling up the enemy from the north in front of the Gerok Group. Now the entire front moved forward. General von Linsingen pressed for a vigorous pursuit to prevent the Russians from re-establishing themselves in front of Pinsk. On September 14, the XXXXI Reserve Corps³) advanced against stubbornly holding parts south of Ogowa, and the 107th Infantry Division advanced on Obrow. Despite counterattacks, the Conta Group reached Molodowo. The next day, the enemy was pushed back to his deeply echeloned bridgehead position at Kolodsiewicze west of Pinsk.

¹) See p. 554.  
²) The high command of the 11th Army was not reassigned until September 16.  
³) The previous leader of the XXXXI Reserve Corps, Gen. von Winkler, took over the IV Reserve Corps. Until the arrival of his successor, Gen. of Artillery von Braun, the commander of the 82nd Reserve Division, Major General Fabarius, assumed command of the corps.

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The Pursuit of the Army Groups Mackensen and Prince Leopold.

The bridgehead position at Kolodsiewicze west of Pinsk was pushed back. Behind it, strong masses still marched northward via Logiszin. After the forward lines of the bridgehead were stormed during the night, in the early morning hours of September 16, the troops of General von Conta broke through the Russian position in a final assault. The enemy also retreated fighting in front of Group Gerok. At 6 a.m., their forward elements already penetrated into the city of Pinsk, encountering almost no resistance. The entire peninsula between Pina and Jassolda was in German possession.

This pursuit operation, too, had demanded tremendous new achievements from the troops. The pursuit columns, significantly reduced in their combat strength, had fought hard against tenacious resistance in mostly difficult to traverse, unclear terrain intersected by lakes and swampy waterways. The deprivations of all kinds were no less severe, as during the rapid advance it was impossible for the numerically small supply formations to adequately provision the troops on the increasingly deteriorating roads. Although the enemy suffered no significant losses in prisoners during this frontal pursuit, the energetically and swiftly executed thrust, despite the exhaustion of the troops, found its reward in the fact that the Russians were not given time to devastate the last strip of terrain west of Pinsk and this city with its rich supplies as they had done to the retreat area further west.

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J. The Right Wing of the Army from Mid-July to the End of the Year¹).

1. The Austro-Hungarian Offensive in Eastern Galicia and Volhynia.

Map 6, Sketch 31.

According to the agreements made on July 11 by the allied army commands²), during the offensive operation of the Mackensen Army Group, the German Southern Army³) and the Austro-Hungarian 2nd Army⁴) were to remain defensive in Eastern Galicia at the Zlota Lipa and the Bug for the time being. Only the Austro-Hungarian 7th Army⁵), which had meanwhile grown to about ten infantry and five cavalry divisions, was assigned a spatially limited partial attack east of the Strypa in the direction of Czortkow—Buczacz. It began on the night of July 14, but only achieved a major success on the eastern flank. There, the Benigni Group managed to establish itself in the Meister Loop north of Doroschouts. Within a few days, however, the offensive had to be considered a failure. The only gain, achieved at the cost of heavy losses, seemed to be the Russians' abandonment of the apparently intended transfer of divisions to the 9th Army. In the last third of July, the fighting at the breach points subsided; towards the middle of the month, the enemy continued to launch fierce attacks against the Korda Corps on the extreme right flank, which, however, invariably broke down in the defensive fire of the defenders.

At the same time, the Austro-Hungarian 2nd Army, which had meanwhile extended north to Dab, in cooperation with the Austro-Hungarian 1st Army, cleared the left bank of the Bug between Kamionka Strumilowa and the Rata-Mündung and secured a bridgehead at Kaminota Strumilowa.

¹) Connection to G. 385. — ²) G. 387.  
³) The German Southern Army consisted of: Hofmann Corps (Austro-Hungarian 55th Infantry Division, Hungarian 37th Honved Division, Austro-Hungarian 1st Reserve Division), 48th Reserve Division, Marschall Corps (3rd Guard Division, Austro-Hungarian 19th Guard Division).  
⁴) The Austro-Hungarian 2nd Army consisted of: V Corps (Austro-Hungarian 14th and 33rd Infantry Divisions), XVIII Corps (Austro-Hungarian 9th Guard Division, Austrian 1st Landsturm Brigade), XIX Corps (Austro-Hungarian 29th and 34th Infantry Divisions), IV Corps (Austro-Hungarian 27th and 35th Infantry Divisions, Austrian 1st Landsturm Support Brigade), Czbultka Corps (Austro-Hungarian 31st, Austrian 43rd Guard Division), Army Reserve: Hungarian 51st Guard Division.  
⁵) The Austro-Hungarian 7th Army consisted of: Korda Corps (Hungarian 42nd Infantry Division, Hungarian 202nd Infantry Division, Austro-Hungarian 3rd Guard Division, 2nd Austrian Polish Legion), Benigni Group (Austro-Hungarian 6th Guard Division, Austro-Hungarian 15th Infantry Division), Army Group: Austro-Hungarian 5th Reserve Division and 30th Infantry Division), Benigni Corps (Austro-Hungarian 5th, 15th and 36th Guard Divisions) Army Reserve: Hungarian 5th Reserve Division, 28th.

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The Right Wing of the Army from Mid-July to the End of the Year.

Rata estuary and fought for a bridgehead at Kaminota Strumilowa.

August was calm at the front of all three armies of the right wing. Only with the 7th Army did a successful attack develop from a violent reconnaissance in the area of the Krautwald group, which led to the capture of the enemy bridgehead at Czernelica on August 9. Further-reaching offensive plans of the cavalry general Baron von Pflanzer-Baltin, which aimed at an attack by the Benigni group north of Doroschoutz and the Benigni corps at Kosmierzyn, had to be temporarily denied approval by Colonel General von Conrad, as he was forced to withdraw some forces from the 7th Army to reinforce the Italian front. On August 12, he ordered the removal of the III Corps (22nd and 28th Infantry Division). This section was taken over by the 5th Infantry Division, under the command of Field Marshal Lieutenant Ritter von Henriquez.

The 2nd Army extended its left wing on the Bug to the Rata estuary on orders from Teschen on August 5 and reinforced the Czilbulka group with the 1st Cavalry Division withdrawn from the Southern Army. On August 6, the army commander, Cavalry General von Böhm-Ermolli, reported to the army command that his army, after receiving new replacements in mid-August, would count 100,000 rifles and would then be able to unite four divisions and the bulk of the heavy artillery on the southern flank for a breakthrough at Brody, in which the Southern Army would have to participate. This intention coincided with the plan of Colonel General von Conrad to clear Eastern Galicia of the enemy through a major offensive operation1). The Austro-Hungarian Chief of General Staff declared his agreement on August 11 and ordered the 2nd and Southern Army to prepare for the attack. However, this was not to take place until after the 18th, as the 1st Army, also designated to participate, was not yet operationally ready. On August 16, Colonel General von Conrad informed both army high commands2 that the "preparatory operation on the inner flanks of the 2nd and Southern Army would only be carried out as part of a general attack, with the participation of the 4th Army2) on the armies of the Russian Southwestern Front."

The resulting postponement of the start of the offensive led the Southern Army Command to fear that the armies of the Russian Southwestern Front, under the impression of the advance of the Allies in Poland, might evade the planned strike by prematurely evacuating their positions, for which there were already certain indications.

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The Instructions of the Austro-Hungarian Army Command for the Offensive.

of the allies in Poland could evade the planned strike by prematurely evacuating their positions, for which there were already certain indications. The Chief of the General Staff, Lieutenant Colonel von Hemmer, therefore approached the Austro-Hungarian Army Command on August 19 to have the 7th, Southern, and 2nd Armies attack simultaneously in the very next days without regard to the cooperation of the 1st and 4th Armies. The three armies, having significantly improved their combat strength during the operational pause, would most likely be able to defeat the opposing enemy alone, or at least bind him and deprive him of the freedom to act.

The Austro-Hungarian Army Command replied the next day that it had already been prompted by the same considerations to order the deployment of the 1st Army, reinforced by parts of the 4th Army, for a comprehensive attack against the right wing of the Russian Southwestern Front on August 19. For this purpose, an advance on Kowel was already underway and the assembly of strong forces between Wladimir Wolynsk and Kowel was being carried out. In connection with this, the order for the attack of the 2nd and Southern Armies was also expected in the next few days, to which the 7th Army would also join.

At the same time, the 1st Army received instructions to group itself so that the attack could begin immediately, but in any case after the arrival of the XIV Corps in the area around Kowel (August 24). "To protect the main thrust initially directed from the line Wladimir Wolynsk—Kowel generally towards Luzk," Kowel was to be firmly occupied by the Cavalry Corps Heydebreck (5th Cavalry Division, Austro-Hungarian 4th Cavalry Division, Hungarian 11th Cavalry Division) and an infantry division of the X Corps. For the attack on Luzk, this corps was to be positioned at Wladimir Wolynsk, the IX south of Turyski, and the XIV, brought up via Luboml, at Kowel. The group Smetal, advancing from the 4th Army (Austro-Hungarian 4th and Austrian 45th Infantry Division), was to be used as an army reserve as needed.

On August 21, general guidelines for the offensive of the right wing of the army were issued. The 2nd and Southern Armies were to attack on their inner flanks simultaneously with the 1st, with the 7th Army joining from the left flank as the Southern Army advanced. All armies were to be ready to immediately pursue the enemy in the event of a premature retreat.

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To immediately pursue. On August 23, Generaloberst von Conrad assigned the task to the 1st Army, which had been detached from the Mackensen Army Group the day before¹), "to push back the Russian XXXI Corps to the area around Kowel through an offensive, general direction Luck, to strike the right wing of the Russian Southwestern Front, to finally achieve the separation of the Russian armies, and to drive the enemy out of Olyka." For this, the left wing of the 1st Army was to be strengthened as much as possible, the Smetau Group and the 7th Cavalry Division coming from the Boorsch Army Division were to be moved over Kowel. An advance of strong forces in a northern or northeastern direction was not in the intentions of the army command; the pursuit of the Russian XXXI Corps retreating northwards over Kowel was to be carried out only as far as necessary for the security of their own offensive against the right wing of the Russian Southwestern Front. However, the area around Kowel had to be firmly taken into hand.

The leader of the 1st Army, Field Marshal von Puhallo, reported that he would be ready to attack on the afternoon of August 26 with the II and I Corps as well as the Szurmay Group on the Bug and Lug, with the X and IX Corps on the Zimno—Mafowicze line, and with the XIV Corps and the 4th Cavalry Division on both sides of the railway leading from Kowel to Rowno at Holoby²). The 12th Infantry Division was designated to occupy Kowel, the pursuit of the Russian XXXI Corps and the securing of the northern flank were assigned to the Heydebreck Cavalry Corps with the German 5th, the Hungarian 11th, and the Austro-Hungarian 7th Cavalry Division arriving on the 27th at Luboml. The Smetau Group was to be moved over Kowel or south of it depending on the situation.

The Heydebreck Cavalry Corps occupied Kowel on the 24th and immediately followed the Russian XXXI Corps retreating to Ratno³); the next day, the 5th and Hungarian 11th Cavalry Divisions were subordinated to the Bug Army and thus withdrew from the framework of the planned operation⁴). Since the enemy facing the left wing of the 1st Army, estimated at the 12th Infantry Division and four cavalry divisions, retreated southwards on August 26,

¹) G. 427. — ²) G. 555 Note 3.  
³) Grouping of the Austro-Hungarian 1st Army on August 26: II Corps (Austro-Hungarian 25th Infantry Division),  
I Corps (Austro-Hungarian 56th, 46th Infantry Division), Szurmay Group (Austro-Hungarian 7th, Hungarian 40th Infantry Division),  
X Corps (Austro-Hungarian 24th, Hungarian 6th Infantry Division), IX Corps (Austro-Hungarian 10th, Austrian 36th Infantry Division),  
XIV Corps (Austro-Hungarian 4th Austrian Division and 2nd Austrian Division), Army Division: Austrian 13th Infantry Division.  
⁴) G. 427.

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The Beginning of the Offensive.

During the course of August 26, moving southwards, the X and IX Corps advanced beyond the reported deployment line to Chorostow and Kisielin. The XIV Corps was positioned in the evening at Dubitow, with the 4th Cavalry Division ready at Holoby.

On August 27, the right wing of the army launched an attack. On the left wing of the 7th Army, the assault group of the Rhemen Corps (Austro-Hungarian 36th and ½ 5th Infantry Division) broke through the Russian positions at the lower Zlota Lipa and advanced west of Nordsiatyn. In the Southern Army, the left wing of the Hofmann Corps and half of the German 48th Reserve Division took the heights west of Uhnynow; the battle group of the Marschall Corps, formed from the 3rd Guard Infantry Division, the 95th Reserve Infantry Brigade (48th Reserve Division), and parts of the Austro-Hungarian 19th and Hungarian 38th Infantry Division, stormed the strong, stubbornly defended Russian positions west and southwest of Urman. The assault wing of the 2nd Army seized the opposite river heights between Ciemierzynce and Golosyn. Finally, the center of the 1st Army reached the line Steniatyn—Chorochoryn under lighter fighting, the XIV Corps reached Prespa, and the reinforced 4th Cavalry Division reached the Stryr near and northeast of Sohl.

In the early morning of August 28, the enemy began a retreat along the entire front north of the Dniester. The left wing of the 7th, the Southern, and 2nd Army pressed sharply forward under partially heavy fighting with enemy rearguards and reached new prepared and heavily occupied positions on the western river heights of the Strypa and in the line Zloczow—Solotwina—Radzichow on the 29th. In the 1st Army, the X and IX Corps were already positioned on the evening of the 28th, the right wing (II, I Corps, Szurmay Group) on the 29th before a continuous line of resistance stretching from Stojanow over Sadowa to Giernit. The XIV Corps threw back stronger enemy forces at Rozyszcze over the Styr on the 28th and advanced the next day between the Styr and the railway to Rowno into the area northwest of Riwnecy. The 2nd Infantry Division, brought up from Kowcl, which had left only a reinforced regiment there, followed echeloned to the left north of the railway, while the 4th Cavalry Division, which had already crossed the Styr on the 28th, advanced southwards over Troscianiec.

1) Grouping of the Austro-Hungarian 2nd Army on August 27: V Corps (Austro-Hungarian 14th, 33rd, and 34th Infantry Divisions, Austrian 43rd Infantry Division), XIX Corps (Austro-Hungarian 29th Infantry Division), IV Corps (Austro-Hungarian 27th Rifle Brigade, Hungarian 51st Rifle Brigade), XVIII Corps (Austro-Hungarian 32nd Rifle Brigade), Szibulla Corps (Austro-Hungarian 31st Rifle Brigade, Austrian 1st Landsturm Brigade, Austro-Hungarian 11th Landsturm Brigade).  
2) The army reserve (Austro-Hungarian 13th Infantry Division) was inserted into the front of the X Corps on August 28.

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The Right Wing of the Army from Mid-July to the End of the Year.

had followed in echelon to the left, north of the railway, with the 4th Cavalry Division, which had already crossed the Styr on the 28th, advancing southwards over Troscianiec.

Generaloberst von Conrad had already repeatedly pointed out to Field Marshal von Puhallo during the course of August 28th that it was particularly important for the rapid capture of Luck and extensive encirclement to cross the Styr with a strong left wing downstream from Rozyszcze, where full freedom of action existed. Against the intention of the army commander to advance the XIV Corps on Luck on the 29th, but to let the X and IX Corps attack the Russian positions on the Styrna frontally only the next day, the Austro-Hungarian General Staff Chief again raised objections, because this would lead to a very favorable entrenchment for the enemy. Only by wide encirclement of the enemy's northern flank would the Styrna and Styr line on the Dubno—Luck stretch be made untenable. Therefore, strong forces should immediately advance over the Styr downstream from Luck to the east.

Field Marshal von Puhallo then directed the XIV Corps against the area east of Luck and directed the 4th Cavalry Division to Rowno. The X Corps was withdrawn from the front on the night of the 30th; it was to cross the Styr point on the 31st at and north of Rozyszcze and advance southwards on September 1st. By this time, the Smefalu group and the 7th Cavalry Division could also appear on the southern bank, so that seven infantry and two cavalry divisions were available for use on the eastern bank of the Styr. The frontal attack of the remaining corps was postponed until the encirclement became effective.

Thus, the XIV Corps advanced on August 30th against the Luck—Rowno road, with the 4th Cavalry Division advancing eastwards on both sides of the Rowno railway. Apparently under the pressure of these movements, the enemy evacuated his positions in front of the center and the right wing of the 1st Army during the following night and withdrew over the Styr. The II and IX Corps, as well as the Garnum group, followed on the 31st to the Styr Dubno—Montonowka line, with the XIV Corps establishing a connection with the troops of the Field Marshal's Office of Zibulka on the northern flank of the 2nd Army during the night of the 31st, reaching the Russian positions west of Radziechow and, following the retreating enemy closely, reached the Styr on the same day. On the southward adjoining front, only the corps was able to achieve a greater territorial gain by taking Zborow and advancing north of it to the Bzoczow—Tarnopol railway.

1) Without the 13th I.D., which joined the Surman group.  
2) On August 29th, XVIII Corps with Austro-Hungarian 31st and 32nd I.D., eastern 1st Ldst. Br., Austro-Hungarian 1st R.D. and 1st Ldst. Hus. Br.

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crossed with parts west of Cuman the Putilowka. It was supposed to advance south after repelling the enemy over the Goryn in the angle between Stubla and Uscie, to hold the enemy and take away the forward position of Rowno in the sand strip. However, as the Putilowka lowland downwards Cuman had become almost impassable due to continuous rain, Archduke Joseph Ferdinand abandoned the encirclement and, through the group Smetal, reinforced the X Corps southwest of Cuman to break through to Klewan.

Meanwhile, the 4th and 7th Cavalry Divisions, combined into the Berndt Cavalry Corps, had to turn north against strong Russian cavalry, which had already been advancing since September 2 south of the Sarny—Kowel railway against the flank and rear of the 4th Army. Against this new enemy, the 1st Cavalry Division provided by the 2nd Army and the Polish Legion (1st and 3rd Brigade) just west of Kowel had also been set in motion. Furthermore, Generaloberst von Conrad had agreed with General von Falkenhayn on the evening of September 2 to send the 2nd and 9th Cavalry Divisions, part of the German 9th Army, over Brest Litowsk to Kowel, and ordered the 7th Army to transport the 10th Cavalry Division there as well. On the night of the 6th, General von Falkenhayn finally agreed to the relocation of the Hungarian 11th Cavalry Division from the Bug Army to the area around Kamien Koszyrski. The Berndt Cavalry Corps occupied the Nomin crossings at Bereftany and Garajmontka on September 5 after fighting, repelled stronger enemy forces at Kolki over the Styr on the 7th, and advanced in the Romin-Styr angle to Kultkowicze in the following days. The 1st Cavalry Division pushed the enemy north of the Styr back to Zartorysk and Olszuf, and the Polish Legion forced the Russian cavalry, which had advanced to Kowel, to retreat behind the Stochod. Thus, the dangerous threat to the rear seemed happily eliminated.

The northern wing of the 4th Army could only resume the attack on September 8 due to the strong fatigue of the troops. The reinforced X Corps broke through the enemy positions southwest of Cuman. At night, the enemy also evacuated the front adjoining to the south. In pursuit, the 4th Army reached the Stubla on the 9th, behind which the enemy had settled again, and the left wing of the 1st Army came to a halt in the line Iwanie—Moszkow. South of Murawica, the enemy had already begun the retreat behind the Stwa on the 7th. The II Corps followed closely here, occupied the western riverbank heights the next day, and entered Dubno.

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The Offensive of the Austro-Hungarian 1st and 4th Army Comes to a Halt.

followed closely here, occupying the western riverbank heights the next day and advancing into Dubno. Under the influence of Generaloberst von Conrad, who hoped that the vigorous continuation of the offensive on Rowno would relieve the armies in distress in Eastern Galicia, Archduke Joseph Ferdinand attempted to bring down the new Russian front again by encircling it from the north. He left only the 24th Infantry Division at the Stubla downwards Klewan and had the remaining four divisions of the X Corps advance from the northern bank of the Putilowka against the Goryn. They took Derzno on the 10th and established a foothold south of the Goryn bend, but then encountered the fiercest resistance. The left wing of the 1st Army (I Corps and Group Szurmay) advancing southwards also made slow progress. The Archduke weakened the Stubla front by three more divisions, one of which he made available to the 1st Army, the other two to the X Corps. However, they were not deployed in the two assault groups, as an order arriving from Teschen on the evening of September 12 required two divisions to be immediately dispatched over Rozin to the 2nd Army.

The offensive of the 2nd Army initially progressed well. Its right wing broke through the strong Russian positions between Olozow and Bialkamin on the night of September 1. Subsequently, the enemy withdrew from the entire army front as well as from the left wing of the Southern Army (Corps Marschall). The following night, they evacuated the Strypa position in its entirety and retreated to the Sereth and the line Jalozce–Radzimillow–Rozin. The left wing of the 7th, the Southern and the 2nd Army followed, engaging in skirmishes with enemy rearguards and advancing towards the new Russian positions in the following days.

In the Southern Army, the attack on the apparently very strongly fortified bridgehead of Strusjow–Tarnopol required such thorough preparations that it could only be scheduled for the morning of September 7.

1) The 62nd, 45th, 4th, and the 13th Infantry Division, which was meanwhile withdrawn from Group Szurmay. 2) The 26th Infantry Division of the IX and the 2nd and 21st Infantry Divisions of the XIV Corps; the 21st Infantry Division had been stationed as army reserve at Olfta since September 9. At the Stubla, only the 10th Infantry Division of the IX, the 3rd of the XIV, and the 24th Infantry Division of the X Corps remained. 3) The Rhemen Corps and the group Henriques, which was now also turning south over the Dniester.

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Severe Setbacks for the Southern and Austro-Hungarian 7th Army.

Goryn did not advance. The left wing of the army, like the 1st Army, had been stationed at the Styr since the 8th, with the enemy occupying its eastern bank.

The incomplete result of the 2nd Army's relief attack was all the more unfortunate as the situation on the front to its south had meanwhile become even more critical. On September 8, although the right wing of General Freiherr Marschall had managed to advance beyond Nastajow and the Hofmann Corps had been able to halt the enemy before their positions, the left wing of the 7th Army was pushed back by strong Russian forces to the Strypa and the line Liskie—Jazlowice the following day; on September 10, the Henriques group even had to retreat behind the Dniester and to the Wisch Heights north of Zalessczyki. General Freiherr von Pflanzer-Baltin, who had already reinforced the Rhemen Corps on the two previous days with one and a half cavalry divisions from the Henriques and Benigni groups, also had the Hungarian 37th Infantry Division, assigned to him by the army command and in the process of unloading at Nizinow, transported to Buczacz by motor vehicles from the morning of the 10th; parts of the division, however, had to be moved to the Zalessczyki bridgehead to join the Henriques group in the evening. To ensure the defense against the enemy incursion and to regain the Sereth line, the Austro-Hungarian VI Corps, originally intended for transport to southern Hungary, was to be relocated from Rawa Ruska to Nizinow and Halicz from September 11 onwards.

The 7th Army thus had sufficient forces to prevent a new setback. In contrast, the Southern Army, against which the Russian counteroffensive was primarily directed, lacked any reserves. Its left wing had been engaged in the fiercest defensive battle on September 10. It had still managed to hold the positions overall. Whether this would continue to be possible with the continuation of the enemy attack was particularly questionable in view of the heavily battered Austro-Hungarian 19th Infantry Division. General Count Bothmer found it necessary to return half of the Hungarian 38th Infantry Division to the western bank of the Sereth within the XIX Corps to have at least a weak reserve behind his northern flank. Since it was not immediately possible to release them from the combat zone of the 2nd Army, General von Böhm-Ermolli initially provided the Marschall Corps with a regiment of the Hungarian 51st Infantry Division. It arrived just in time on September 11, to join forces with parts of the heavily attacked 3rd Guard Infantry and 48th Reserve Divisions to launch a counterattack against the enemy, who had broken through in a broad front at Dolzanka in the morning.

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to join forces with parts of the heavily attacked 3rd Guard Infantry and 48th Reserve Division to counterattack the enemy, who had broken through in a broad front at Dolzanka in the morning. Although the previous positions of the Austro-Hungarian 19th Infantry Division were retaken in the evening, the High Command of the Southern Army believed that the breakthrough apparently sought by the Russians, especially near Tarnopol¹), could only be permanently thwarted by bringing in sufficient reinforcements. The Austro-Hungarian Army Command referred to support from the 2nd Army, which could also provide it with two divisions under Field Marshal Lieutenant Cibulka²), as the relief attack of its right wing had meanwhile come to a halt.

New powerful attacks by the enemy on September 12, mainly directed against the bent-back right wing of the Marschall Corps, raised fears that the proven German divisions of General Freiherr Marschall might also be put in severe distress if they remained in their positions, especially since the enemy was nowhere seriously tied down on the southern adjoining front. General Count Bothmer therefore decided, with the approval of the General of the Marschall Corps, to withdraw to the heights east of the Wosuszka on the night of September 13 and to designate a reinforced brigade of the 48th Reserve Division as army reserve. To support the Hofmann Corps, Generaloberst von Conrad transferred the Hungarian 39th Infantry Division to the Southern Army, from whose position the Hungarian 37th Infantry Division joined the VI Corps.

The severe setback suffered by the 7th and Southern Army in recent days, the stalling of the offensive on the rest of the right wing's front, and the heavy attacks that the enemy had been directing against the southern wing of the 2nd Army since the afternoon of September 11, created a completely changed situation for the Austro-Hungarian Army Command. Generaloberst von Conrad could not escape the representations made by General von Falkenhayn on the afternoon of September 12, that a further unfavorable development of the fighting in Eastern Galicia would adversely affect the overall situation and that relief could only be hoped for by abandoning the continuation of the offensive and resolutely transitioning to defense. He therefore ordered Archduke Joseph Ferdinand on the late evening of September 12, only to carry out the partial attack planned on the northern flank of the 4th Army,

¹) According to eyewitness reports, which later proved to be false, not enough divisions were supposed to have been unloaded at Tarnopol.  
²) The Austro-Hungarian 32nd I.D. and a division combined from three regiments of the Austro-Hungarian IV Corps under Major General Kroupa.

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The Cessation of the Offensive.

to carry out the partial attack planned on the northern flank of the 4th Army,

but otherwise to cease the offensive and immediately march the 2nd and 26th Infantry

Divisions to the 2nd Army). These, the Southern

and the 7th Army were to limit themselves to expanding and

holding the lines they had reached until reinforcements and replacements arrived.

However, this did not succeed fully. In the 7th Army,

the Henriques Group had to be withdrawn to the old bridgehead

positions of Alekszyń on September 13, while in the 2nd Army, the southern flank,

which had been breached in a broad front in the morning, had to retreat to the line Zarudzie—Lopuszna.

The combined Kroupa Division from the Southern

Army was immediately reassigned to this; the 32nd Infantry Division, left alone with the Czbulla Group,

had to close the gap that had arisen between the inner

flanks of the Southern and 2nd Army due to the retreat of the Marschall Corps.

The next day, after a prolonged artillery preparation that

sometimes escalated to drumfire, the enemy launched a strong attack

against the entire front of the Southern Army. While he was repelled by the Marschall Corps

with heavy losses and could only temporarily penetrate the trenches of the Czbulla Group

at Worobiówka, he succeeded in breaking through the bridgehead positions of the Hofmann Corps

at Burlanow in the afternoon and gaining a foothold on the western bank of the Strypa.

This also led to the evacuation of the northern and southern

adjacent bridgeheads. Since the Southern Army again did not have

sufficient reserves to support the Hofmann Corps, which was now only in ruins,

and to regain the bridgeheads²), and a relief offensive of its left flank was not

immediately possible, General Freiherr von Pflanzer-Baltin, on the orders of the army command,

deployed parts of the VI Corps, which had meanwhile arrived at Buczacz,

on September 15 on both sides of the Strypa for a flank attack to the north.

The attack of the Hungarian 37th Infantry Division advancing east of the river towards Dobropole

came to a halt after initial gains in space against

overwhelming enemy positions, but it did provide the Hofmann Corps with a noticeable relief,

as the enemy shifted his focus to the left flank of the 7th Army. On

September 16, the parts that had reached west of the Strypa to Kotuzow of the 12th Infantry Division were also to advance on Dobropole to get the attack flowing again.

1) p. 571.  
2) The Hungarian 39th S. I. D., which was in the process of unloading west of Pobahce, was not yet ready for use.

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the 12th Infantry Division also to advance on Dobropole to get the attack here back on track. However, they had to be deployed with the 37th Infantry Division, which came under heavy pressure from strong Russian counterattacks.

The failure of the relief attack by the 7th Army led General Count von Bothmer to fear another breakthrough by the enemy at the Hofmann Corps. On the morning of September 17, it surprisingly turned out that the enemy had retreated during the night in front of the entire front of the 7th and Southern Army to the Sereth. This finally allowed the severe crisis into which both armies had fallen to be considered overcome. During the day, the Strypa bridgeheads were reoccupied by the Hofmann Corps, and the Wischä Heights north of Zalesszyki by the Henriques Group. Otherwise, only weak detachments followed the enemy on the orders of the army command. Generaloberst von Conrad did not intend to resume the offensive in Eastern Galicia for the time being, considering the overall situation. The current positions were to be expanded instead. The 39th Infantry Division was reassigned to the 7th Army, which had to extend its left wing to the south of Burkanow. The Southern Army detached the 3rd Guard Infantry Division as an army reserve from the Marschall Corps, which had also included the Austro-Hungarian 32nd Infantry Division¹) since September 14. The Czbullka Group Command returned to the 2nd Army, which in recent days had not only repelled all enemy assaults but, with the help of the 26th Infantry Division²) that had meanwhile arrived, had even regained part of the lost ground east of Lopuszno.

Meanwhile, a fundamental change in the situation had also occurred on the northern wing of the Austro-Hungarian front. The left wing of the 4th Army (the X Corps) had, according to the orders of the army command from the evening of September 12, initially continued the attack and on the 13th was able to advance north of the Goryn to beyond Posjolno; however, it was then pushed into defense and attacked on the 15th by superior Russian forces in the front and left flank. Consequently, the X Corps had to be bent back into the line Klewan—Karpilowka at night.

¹) The Austro-Hungarian 32nd and the Hungarian 38th Infantry Division, reunited since September 13, had been able to advance their positions on the 15th through a surprise attack on both sides of the railway to Tarnopol.  
²) See p. 575.

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On September 16, it was breached north of Klewan. This resulted in the withdrawal of the entire army to the line Jarczow — Netrelnno and behind the Putilowka. Northward, up to Kosti on the Styr, the cavalry corps Berndt, whose command was transferred to Major General Count Herberstein, took up a new position. In the area between Styr and Stochod, the 1st Cavalry Division retreated to the line Raznicze—Kaizowka.

However, even in the new position, the X Corps and the Herberstein Cavalry Corps were unable to withstand the enemy's continued heavy attacks on September 17; repeatedly breached, they had to retreat to a rear line. As holding this line until reinforcements arrived seemed uncertain due to troop exhaustion, Archduke Joseph Ferdinand ordered the withdrawal of the 1st and 4th Armies behind Styr and Stochod for the coming night. This could be carried out in complete order, as the enemy did not pursue anywhere. On the evening of September 18, the center and left wing of the 1st Army were ready to defend behind the Styr downwards Dubno, the 4th Army behind the Styr up to north of Rozyszcze — with the XIV Corps in a bridgehead position east of Lucz —, followed by the Herberstein Cavalry Corps (Austro-Hungarian 1/2, 4th, 7th Cavalry Division, a regiment of the Polish Legion) up to Sobul; the newly formed corps of General of Cavalry Baron von Hauer, consisting of the Austro-Hungarian 1st, 1/2 2nd, 9th, Hungarian 11th Cavalry Division and the bulk of the Polish Legion (1st and 3rd Brigade), secured the isthmus at Nawoz and on the Stochod up to Lubieszow.

2. The Offensive of the Linsingen Army Group against Rowno.

Map 6, Sketch 32.

The German Chief of General Staff had been following the unfavorable development of the battles of the Austro-Hungarian Northern Army with growing concern. As early as September 14, he had approached Generaloberst von Conrad with the proposal to withdraw the Austro-Hungarian front in Galicia behind the Alota Lipa to increase its resistance strength and to reinforce it with the Austro-Hungarian XVII Corps, ready for transport to southern Hungary at Cholm and Dubno. However, the allied army commands had agreed to hold the current front due to the unfavorable moral effects of a retreat. The XVII Corps was to be moved behind the 2nd Army to Krasne for the time being, even at the risk of arriving too late for the campaign against Serbia.

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The Right Wing of the Army from Mid-July to the End of the Year.

Furthermore, General von Falkenhayn, on his own initiative, considered a relief attack by two to three divisions of the Bug Army from the area west of Pinsk in the general direction of Rowno, but then abandoned this idea and instead ordered the Bug Army to transport a division to Southern Hungary.

In the afternoon of September 17, before the withdrawal of the northern wing of the Austro-Hungarian front behind Styr and Styr, Generaloberst von Conrad approached the German High Command with the request to direct all forces freed after gaining the area around Pinsk "via Lubiaz—Kolk into the flank of the enemy attacking the 4th Army." Consequently, General von Falkenhayn instructed the leader of the Bug Army, General von Linsingen, to move two divisions in time to the area around Brodnica so that they could, if necessary, begin the march south together with the 5th Cavalry Division on September 19. With Generaloberst von Conrad, the consolidation of these forces, the cavalry corps Hauer and Herberstein, as well as the 4th Army into Army Group Linsingen was agreed upon, which was to be bound to the instructions of the Austro-Hungarian High Command. General von Linsingen designated the 1st and 22nd Infantry Divisions under the command of the XXIV Reserve Corps (General of Infantry von Gerok) for the new operation. However, their deployment in the area around Brodnica was delayed by one day because the supply of the troops with provisions and ammunition for the near future could not be accomplished sooner. From the XXXXI Reserve Corps, whose command was taken over by General of Artillery von Gronau, the 82nd Reserve Division occupied the entire security line of the Bug Army, which had meanwhile advanced beyond the Styr to the Wisłiza, while the 81st Reserve Division was withdrawn as a reserve to the area west of Pinsk. The corps remained under General von Linsingen as the "Bug Army" and was also referred to in official army reports as "Army Group Mackensen" for deception purposes.

General von Linsingen received the order to "prevent the further advance of the northern wing of the Russian forces south of the Pripjet." General von Linsingen, in agreement with Generaloberst von Conrad, saw it as his task not to begin the further retreat of the 4th Army unconditionally, but to deliver a decisive blow to the northern wing of the Russian Southwestern Front. Given the precarious condition of Archduke Joseph Ferdinand's troops, he believed a significant reinforcement by German forces was necessary for this. However, given the overall situation, this was out of the question. General

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The Formation of the Linsingen Army Group.

von Linsingen therefore received only the order to "prevent the further advance of the northern wing of the Russian forces south of the Pripjet." He was given full freedom of action for the execution. The assumption of command over the new army group took place on the night of September 20. From the available reports, General von Linsingen gained the impression that the enemy attacks against the northern wing of the allies, in which only the Russian XII, XXXIX, and the repeatedly defeated XXX Corps, as well as two cavalry corps, seemed to be involved, were by no means a real offensive, but rather one of the usual Russian military maneuvers to disguise defensive intentions. He therefore decided to solve his task offensively, even without further reinforcement, by advancing the Gerok Corps and three divisions to be withdrawn from the front of the 4th Army against the enemy's right flank. For this purpose, the two Austro-Hungarian cavalry corps and the German 5th Cavalry Division were to clear the area between Stochod and Styr of the enemy and block the Styr crossings, the Gerok Corps was to have arrived at Liszniowka by September 22, the 4th Army was to prepare three divisions behind its left wing to hold its positions against "an enemy inferior in number and inner value" under all circumstances. Since Archduke Joseph Ferdinand did not have sufficient reserves to form the assault group, Generaloberst von Conrad subordinated to him from September 21 the Austro-Hungarian 11th Infantry Division along with the corps command of the XVII Corps.

On September 20, the Gerok Corps began its advance south. The 5th Cavalry Division had already crossed the Stochod at Lubieszow the day before and driven enemy outposts from Jeleznica and Sudcze. Now the Hauer Cavalry Corps also advanced eastward. The 4th and 1st Armies initially followed the enemy only hesitantly, but from the afternoon of September 19, they had attacked the bridgehead of Lucz with strong forces. In the following two nights, all enemy assaults could be repelled, but in the early morning of September 23, they succeeded in breaking through the northern front, seizing a Styr bridge, and gaining a foothold on the west bank.

1) The Austro-Hungarian 4th Army on September 20: IX Corps (Austro-Hungarian 10th and ½ 2nd G. D.), XVII Corps (Austro-Hungarian 3rd, Austrian 14th and 45th, Austro-Hungarian ½ 2nd and 24th G. D.), X Corps (Austro-Hungarian 6th, Austrian 3rd G. D.); Army reserves: Austrian ½ 21st G. D., Austro-Hungarian 10th R. S. B. Total strength: about 60,000 rifles.  
2) The XVII Corps, when the crisis with the 2nd and Southern Army was considered overcome, was relocated to Krasne on September 17, along with the Hungarian 41st G. D., behind the Austro-Hungarian Southern Army. It was thus required for the corps commander Wladimir Woyrsch. It was therefore definitively excluded from the planned participation in the campaign against Serbia, just as the VI Corps had been before.

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During the nights, all enemy assaults could be repelled, but early on the morning of September 23, they succeeded in breaking through the northern front, seizing a Styr bridge, and gaining a foothold on the west bank. Consequently, Luz had to be abandoned, and the XIV Corps had to be withdrawn to the line Polama Gorta—Stiernit. Archduke Joseph Ferdinand considered the situation so serious that he ordered the march of the divisions intended for the planned flank attack (Austrian 13th and 21st Infantry Divisions, and the 11th Infantry Division of the XVII Corps) northward and further requested the assignment of the Hungarian 41st Infantry Division, which had meanwhile been moved forward to Gorodok, which was promptly granted. He made the 21st Infantry Division available to the XIV Corps, intending to use the other three for a concentric counterattack the next day, which would have made their simultaneous deployment behind the Herberstein Cavalry Corps impossible.

General von Linsingen received detailed reports about the events at Luz only on the night of September 24, when he returned to his headquarters in Tablon (60 kilometers southwest of Brest Litowsk) from a trip to Kowel. At the same time, he learned more about a setback at the German XXXXI Reserve Corps; its left wing had to defend itself against heavy attacks by superior forces east of Logiszin since September 21 and finally had to retreat behind the Jasiolda and Dsjinski Canal on the 23rd with considerable losses. Also, southwest of Pinsk, near Nemez, the German defenses had been pushed back northward. Despite these unfavorable reports, General von Linsingen saw no cause for serious concern. He did not believe in a superior Russian attack on the Pinsk peninsula and trusted that even for the weak, over 60 kilometers apart forces of the XXXXI Reserve Corps in the impassable, water-rich terrain, it must be possible to prevent further enemy advances. But even if this did not succeed, he did not consider the overall situation to be immediately endangered. He also did not share Archduke Joseph Ferdinand's concerns about the situation at Luz. Incidentally, the command of the 4th Army had meanwhile become calm, as the enemy had not advanced further from the western Styr bank. General von Linsingen therefore decided that the 11th and 41st Infantry Divisions should continue their march northward; only the 13th Infantry Division should remain behind the left wing of the XIV Corps for the time being, but also only be deployed there in an emergency.

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The Right Wing of the Army from Mid-July to the End of the Year.

However, on the 28th, before new enemy positions in the line Mlynow–

Olyka, behind the Putilowka and in the swamp area on both sides of Berestiany,

the Herberstein Cavalry Corps advanced over Rolski against the Kormin,

the Hauer Cavalry Corps captured the line Nowosiolki–Kolodzieje,

the two divisions of General von Heydebreck were in attack

against Kuchecka Wola.

With the retreat of the Russians behind the Putilowka and to the

Kormin, the task assigned to the army group was essentially fulfilled.

However, General von Linsingen did not yet consider his task completed.

The objective of the operation was now the capture of Kowno.

To achieve this, he initially wanted to push the enemy back over

the Stubla and Goryn. Immediate action against

this section seemed inappropriate in view of newly discovered

Russian troop concentrations in front of the northern wing of the group (Gerok),

which suggested a flank attack. General

von Falkenhayn also pointed out that the Austro-

Hungarian troops, in their current condition, probably

lacked the necessary striking power for such a far-reaching offensive, and

that the military-political situation absolutely demanded no operations

be initiated where new setbacks were more likely than the opposite. General

von Linsingen therefore ordered that the 4th Army should not initially advance

over the heights east of the Putilowka, the Conta Corps should establish the line

Berestiany–Czernysz for sustained defense and move strong

forces behind its left wing, while General

von Gerok had to prepare the 11th Infantry Division of the XVII Corps and the 4th Cavalry

Division of the now also subordinate Herberstein Corps as

reserve at Rolski. Only after carrying out this reorganization

and clarifying the situation with the enemy did he want to continue

the attack on the northern wing.

However, the left wing of the 1st and 4th Army made hardly any progress on September 29;

the southern wing of the Gerok group reached

after repelling Russian counterattacks up to the Putilowka and captured

Kapitulowka, the Conta Corps stormed enemy positions south of

Czernysz, the Herberstein Cavalry Corps repelled strong attacks. The

Hauer Cavalry Corps completely pushed the enemy south of the Kowel–Sarny railway

over the Styr, on whose west bank now only downward from

Sarny had been shifted.

1) According to the available reports, the general command of the Russian  
XXX Corps and the 77th R.D. on the 27th R.D. on September 27 were moved northward to the upper  
Melnica, the 77th I.D. from the area around Pinsk to the area west of  
Sarny had been shifted.

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The Offensive of Army Group Linsingen Comes to a Halt.

Rafalowka Russian detachments stood; General von Heydebreck did not advance against Ruchcza-Wola.

Generaloberst von Conrad no longer promised any significant operational and tactical results from a continuation of the 4th Army's attack alone, especially since participation of the southward adjoining front could not be considered due to a lack of forces, and the cessation of the German offensive north of the Pripjet allowed the enemy free hand for troop movements towards Rowno. General von Linsingen also decided to refrain from advancing over Putilowka, Korimin, and Styr and to expand the reached lines as a permanent position; the cavalry corps Heydebreck was to limit itself to clearing the left bank of the Wiesielucha. However, the army command and army group were united in the desire to resume the offensive against Rowno around the railway junction Sarny, whose possession they considered important for the permanent control of the area gained in the southeast, after replenishing the troops and forming a strong strike group on the northern flank of General von Gerok. Generaloberst von Conrad then hoped to involve the East Galician front in this offensive. The German Chief of General Staff also considered it very desirable for the general situation in the East to keep the Russians under pressure, which, given the circumstances, would probably only be possible south of the Pripjet. However, he pointed out that an offensive starting only in the second half of October would likely encounter equally strong forces that had been brought up in the meantime, and he doubted whether the advanced season would allow for larger operations in the Rowno—Sarny area. He therefore suggested refraining from further attacks and requested, with reference to the strong German deployment against Serbia, to release the German forces provided for the operation in Volhynia or equivalent Austro-Hungarian forces for the front north of the Pripjet as well as the German Alpine Corps in Tyrol for the Western Front. The question of whether Army Group Linsingen would attack again or not was to be decided by Generaloberst von Conrad around mid-October. At this point, he also hoped to make up for the setback on the German Eastern Front. However, he immediately initiated the replacement of the Alpine Corps.

At the front of Army Group Linsingen, there had still been various battles on September 30 and October 1. The 4th Army had occupied Zornitza, the Conta Corps had been able to take all enemy positions at Czernysz, and the Herwarth cavalry corps repelled Russian attacks. Before both corps, the enemy retreated behind the Kormin.

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back behind the Kormin. However, on the afternoon of October 2, he advanced with strong cavalry and parts of the 77th Infantry Division over the Stryr against the left wing of the Hauer Cavalry Corps and pushed it back over the Nowoivolki-Maniewicze road and onto Karasin over the next two days. General von Linsingen formed a new assault group north of Kolki from the Austro-Hungarian 11th and the German 1st Infantry Division under General von Conta1) and launched it on October 5 for a counterattack in a northeasterly direction. According to their progress, the Hauer Cavalry Corps was to concentrate strong forces on its left wing and advance on Holuzki. However, the Conta group initially made slow progress in the impassable swamp and forest terrain; it was not until October 8 that the enemy was pushed back over the Stryr between Czartorysk and Kolodziesje. General Freiherr von Hauer had meanwhile had to swing north, as parts of the Russian Cavalry Corps Belaschanow had broken through at Jeziere on the 6th and advanced to Rudka Czerwiszcze the following day. On October 9, they were even able to advance southwards to Karasin. However, when half of the Austro-Hungarian 11th Infantry Division took Rudka the next day and the Hungarian 11th Cavalry Division2) approached Jeziere from the north to close proximity, the enemy avoided the impending encirclement by hastily retreating to the northeast. On October 10, the 5th Cavalry Division finally succeeded in driving the enemy out of Kuchecka Wola and from the left bank of the Wieśleucha. This success probably only served to intimidate, as parts of the XXXI Reserve Corps, which had been relieved in the front on both sides of Pinsk by the Guard Cavalry Division transferred by the Woyrsch Army Detachment at the beginning of October, had meanwhile pushed the enemy standing at Newel back over Sinczyce.

Meanwhile, fighting had resumed south of the Styr. Here, the enemy had sharply attacked the Kritel group, the 4th Army, and the northern wing of the 1st Army from October 7 to 9, but ultimately could only establish themselves in Karpilowka.

At the same time, he advanced with strong forces against the front of the allies in Olyka-Luzk. The 2nd Army, which had already had to fend off heavy Russian attacks in the last third of September and had finally had to give up Nowe Aleksiniec, now lost Spanow Kritel on the left bank of the Ikwal.

— 2) p. 581.

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Russian Counterattacks are Repelled.

lost on the left bank of the Ikwal. The Southern Army was able to maintain its bridgehead positions at Burtanow, against which the enemy assault was primarily directed, and repelled the enemy who had penetrated north of Nordwiwkoje on the extreme left flank using parts of the 3rd Guards Infantry Division back to the Sereth. However, on October 11, the Russians succeeded in capturing the bridgehead of Wisniowczy from the northern flank of the 7th Army and establishing a foothold on the right bank of the Strypa. The Austro-Hungarian VI Corps struggled in vain to restore the situation. Only a determined counterattack by three battalions of the 3rd Guards Infantry Division — the last reserve of General Count von Bothmer — drove the enemy back across the river on October 13. A reoccupation of the lost bridgehead positions was abandoned. By mid-month, calm returned to the Eastern Galician front.

3. The Russian Southwestern Front from Late August to Mid-October.

Sketches 31 and 32.

At the beginning of the Austro-Hungarian offensive on August 27, the Russian Southwestern Front (8th, 11th, and 9th Armies), having transferred ten infantry divisions to the Northwestern Front in July and August, had a total of 29 infantry and 11 cavalry divisions1). On the northern flank of the 8th Army, against which the main thrust was directed, only the Rerberg Cavalry Corps with 3½ cavalry divisions and parts of the XII Corps were stationed. They had to relinquish the major road Wladimir Wolynsk—Luzk to the far superior Austro-Hungarian forces on August 27, creating an extremely threatening situation for the 8th Army. As the southern adjoining front was also breached in several places, the commander of the Southwestern Front, General Ivanov, decided to withdraw his three original units on the 28th to the line Siernitza (northwest of Luzk)—Radziechow—Uscilug around the Strypa. To the particularly endangered right wing of the army, he quickly assigned two divisions from the 11th and 9th Armies, consolidated into the XXXIX Corps. But even with their help, the 8th Army could not withstand the encirclement; on the night of August 31, it had to retreat behind the Styr.

1) 8th Army: Rad. Corps Rerberg, XII, VIII, XVII, VII Corps (9 Inf., 3½ Cav. Div.); 11th Army: VI, XVIII, XVII Corps (7 Inf., ½ Rad. Div.); 9th Army: XXII, XXIII Corps, 2 un. Cav. Corps (13 Inf., 7 Rad. Div.). Transferred to the Northwestern Front were: 58, 78. S. D., XXI Corps, 69. S. D., 2 Finnish Rifle Div., 65. S. D., 4 Finnish Rifle Div., XXVIII Corps.

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Even with their help, the 8th Army could not withstand the encirclement; on the night of August 31, it had to retreat behind the Styr.

When the pivotal point Luck was lost on this day, the Styr section could no longer be held. General Brussilov therefore withdrew his army

behind the Putilowka and into the line Olyka—Murawica—Radzivilow, united his 3½ cavalry divisions to protect

the right flank in the area of Derazno, and had the important railway junction Sarny occupied by a reinforced brigade of the XXXIX Corps.

Through brief counterattacks, the Austrians and Hungarians could be brought to a halt in front of the new front; in the army section north

of Kozin, the VIII Corps even managed to deal them a significant blow on September 3. The Russian 11th Army, which was connected to the south,

had to retreat further, just like its left neighboring army, the 9th, after being breached on the night of September 1 at Zloczow.

Under the protection of strong rearguards, they took up a new prepared defensive line on both banks of the Sereth. General Ivanov then weakened

the right wing of the 9th Army by one corps — the XXX —, which he quickly sent to Rowno. However, before it could be used here to encircle

the Austro-Hungarian northern wing, the 8th and the right wing of the 11th Army were again defeated and pushed back behind the Stublia and Ikwa

as well as into the line Rydoml—Chyrowica. The advance of strong cavalry1) from Kormin, Styr, and Stochod against the flank and rear of the Austrians

and Hungarians undertaken in the first days of September did not bring any relief to the heavily pressured Brussilov army and finally ended with

the retreat behind the mentioned rivers. On the other hand, a relief attack begun on September 6 from the bridgeheads of Tarnopol and Strusow

developed into an unexpectedly successful offensive by the 11th Army and the right wing of the 9th, through which the allies were thrown back

with heavy losses by September 13 to Nowe Aleklnice and to the Wosuzka and Strypa, which resulted in the weakening of the Austro-Hungarian

northern wing in favor of the attacked front. The next day, the inner wings of the 11th and 9th Army even managed to gain a foothold on the

western Strypa bank. Now the 8th Army could launch the long-intended counterattack. General Brussilov had his entire cavalry advance southwest

from Kormin on September 15, breaking through and deploying the XXX Corps to encircle from the north, the XXXIX and parts of the XII Corps from the east on Derazno.

1) The cavalry corps formed from two cavalry divisions of the 8th Army   
Welaschen and 1½ cavalry divisions of the 3rd Army sent to assist the   
4th Cavalry Corps.

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Defensive Measures of the Russians.

break and positioned the XXX Corps comprehensively from the north, the XXXIX and parts of the XII Corps from the east on Derazno. This attack was also fully successful; in several days of fierce fighting, the Austro-Hungarian 4th and 1st Armies were forced to retreat behind the Styr and the lower Stwa.

While the 11th and 9th Armies, after completing their task, returned to their previous positions at the Sereth on the night of September 17, the 8th Army continued its attack, storming the bridgehead of Luck with the XXX and XXXIX Corps and the 4th Rifle Division on September 23, and established itself on the left bank of the Styr. At the same time, a new encirclement operation by German forces advancing from the north on Kolki became noticeable. While the 4th Cavalry Corps of the 3rd Army (three cavalry divisions) advanced to the Stochod, it gradually withdrew to the Wiesielucha and the Styr, General Brussilow timely withdrew his northern flank from the impending danger by retreating to the Kormin and behind the Putilowka, where he withstood all assaults.

By the end of September, the Russian military leadership no longer considered the situation on the southwestern front as threatened. The Chief of General Staff, General Alexeyev, pointed out that the right wing of the 8th Army could be strengthened by detachments from the 9th Army and by bringing in the 125th Infantry Division from the Starokonstantinov—Proskurov area, so that it could counter any enemy encirclement attempt east of Rovno. Consequently, General Ivanov moved a division of the 9th Army to the area northwest of Rovno and ordered his armies to weaken the enemy further through short advances before he could reorganize and replenish his depleted units. As an introduction to this, the 4th Cavalry Corps, reinforced by an infantry division of the 3rd Army, together with the two cavalry divisions of General Welsaschen, which had been moved north, and to which a regiment of the 4th Rifle Division was attached, crossed the Styr on both sides of the Sarny—Rovno railway on October 4 and pushed the Austro-Hungarian cavalry back to and over the Nowosilki—Rudka Czerniszce road. However, the ground gained had to be relinquished after only a few days. The attacks launched by all three armies of the Russian southwestern front led only to minor local successes;

1) In this area (Map 7), besides the 125th Infantry Division, the "Black Sea" Brigade of the 100th Guards Division was stationed as an army reserve.  
2) The 77th Infantry Division of the XXXI Corps stationed in front of the Pinsk peninsula (left flank corps of the 3rd Army).

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The Right Wing of the Army from Mid-July to the End of the Year.

smaller local successes; the right wing of the 9th Army succeeded again, albeit only temporarily, in gaining a foothold south of Burkanow on the western bank of the Strypa. By mid-October, the Russians, as well as the Allies, had taken up permanent positions.

4. Reflections.

Generaloberst von Conrad had pursued the goal with the autumn offensive of the Austro-Hungarian army in Galicia and Volhynia to decisively defeat the Russian southwestern front, capture the fortress of Rowno, and clear the remaining Galician territory still in enemy hands. This goal was not only not achieved, the offensive ended after promising beginnings with a severe setback and extraordinarily large losses in men¹), in some places also in material²). From the beginning, the attacker was numerically far superior on the decisive northern wing — the Russian 8th Army with 9 infantry and 3½ cavalry divisions faced at the end of August the Austro-Hungarian 1st and 2nd Army with 24½ infantry and 3½ cavalry divisions. Also, in overall strength, the Allies had a considerable superiority with 38 Austro-Hungarian and German infantry divisions and 8½ cavalry divisions, which was further increased during the operation by the deployment of five more divisions (Hungarian 37th, 39th, and 41st, Austro-Hungarian 11th and 12th Infantry Division³).

If the offensive nevertheless ended in failure, the reasons may lie partly in the deployment of forces, which was not sufficient to encircle the enemy's northern wing. On the other hand, the impassable, water-rich forest and swamp terrain of Volhynia, especially in unfavorable weather conditions — from September 3rd, continuous rain caused particular difficulties for the movements of large troop formations and the supply lines.

¹) According to "Austria-Hungary's Last War 1914—1918", Vol. III, p. 163, the Austro-Hungarian Northern Army (7th, Austro-Hungarian 2nd, 1st, and 4th Army), whose combat strength was 480,000 men on September 1st, had a loss of about 230,000 men by the end of the month (including 40,000 sick), including 109,000 missing, who according to Russian reports were almost entirely captured. Of these, 17,800 dead and wounded, 3,900 sick, and 13,300 missing were attributed to the Southern Army. It faced the Southern Army itself before the start of the offensive until the end of September with approximately 11,600 prisoners and 17 machine guns.  
²) The losses of the Russian 11th and 9th Army in the first half of September were 34 guns and 11,000 prisoners.  
³) Not considered here are the Polish Legion (1st and 3rd Brigade) and the German 1st and 22nd Infantry Division.

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The Reasons for the Failure of the Austro-Hungarian Offensive.

Rain — the movements of large troop bodies and the supply faced particular difficulties. More significant is the fact that the divisions deployed for the decisive blow on the northern flank had participated in the advance of the allies from West Galicia to Brest Litowsk since early May and had covered many hundreds of kilometers on mostly poor roads while constantly fighting. They were exhausted and had to muster their entire combat strength for the new offensive, where they were again expected to perform at their highest. The Austro-Hungarian units in East Galicia, after the hardships of the Carpathian winter and the months of strenuous and costly battles that led them to the Zlota Lipa, no longer had sufficient offensive power to finally drive the tenacious enemy, skilled in conducting a retreat, from the Galician soil, as the terrain offered favorable defensive possibilities in the numerous tributaries of the Dniester running parallel to the south.

After the retreat of the Austro-Hungarian left wing behind the Etwa and the Styr in mid-September, General von Linsingen, with relatively small but also very strained forces advancing from the most favorable direction, was able to restore the balance with difficulty, but he too was denied a decisive blow against the northern flank of the Russian Southwestern Front, as it managed to evade the threatening encirclement in time and extend its front northwards.

The failure of the offensive had an adverse effect on the overall situation of the allies, as the Austro-Hungarian Northern Army emerged from it significantly weakened, and the German Supreme Army Command was forced to bring in additional German forces from the eastern and western fronts to replace the Austro-Hungarian VI and XVII Corps, which had to be deployed in the ongoing operations in East Galicia and Volhynia and were tied down there.

5. The Capture of the Permanent Position.

Map 7, Sketch 32.

When the battles in East Galicia and Volhynia concluded with the expulsion of the enemy from the western Styrpa and Styr banks, Generaloberst von Conrad directed the Austro-Hungarian 7th and the Southern Army as well as the Böhm-Ermolli army groups (Austro-Hungarian 2nd and 1st Army) and Linsingen (Austro-Hungarian 4th Army, Groups Gerok and Gronau) to ensure that the overall situation, "especially the still unclear development of matters on the Balkan Peninsula and at the Romanian border," required the secure holding of the permanent position to be expanded by all means.

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(Austro-Hungarian 2nd and 1st Army) and Linsingen (Austro-Hungarian 4th Army, Groups Gerok and Gronau) pointed out that the overall situation, "especially the still unclear development of events on the Balkan Peninsula and at the Romanian border," required the secure holding of the permanent position to be expanded by all means. After integrating new replacements, strong army reserves were to be set aside to repel possible Russian attacks or for use on other fronts.

Before the Linsingen Army Group could begin expanding the achieved line, it was hit by a new attack. On October 16, strong forces — a total of 5½ infantry and 4½ cavalry divisions of the inner flanks of the Russian 8th and 3rd Army — advanced against the positions of the Gerok Group between Karpilowka and Jezierzce, aiming to shorten the front by capturing the Styr bend from Czartorysk and Kolki. The next day, the enemy, due to the failure of the unreliable Ruthenian 22nd Brigade of the Austro-Hungarian 11th Infantry Division, managed to seize the well-fortified bridgehead of Kullikowicze and gain the left bank of the Styr at Rafalowka. The 1st Infantry Division, thus encircled on both sides, had to be withdrawn from the Styr bend on October 18, suffering significant losses in men and material, and on the 19th, even had to bend its right flank back to Olyka. From here to the Styr at Kolki, there was a 16-kilometer-wide gap into which the particularly proven rifle divisions of the Russian XXXX Corps pushed. North of the Conta Corps, the Sauer Cavalry Corps retreated to the Holszia-Jezierzce line before a superior enemy.

General von Linsingen had already taken care on October 18 to stem the enemy incursion by bringing up available reserves. On the 20th, parts of the German 22nd Infantry Division and the Austrian 21st Infantry Division, rushed from the left flank of the 4th Army, advanced from Kolki, with the Austro-Hungarian 10th Cavalry Division from the area east of Nawoz, the Polish Legion (1st and 3rd Brigade) from the west, and the 1st Infantry Division from the north for a concentric counterattack, which pushed the tip of the Russian wedge back over ten kilometers, but then stalled.

1) The designation "Mackensen Army Group" for the Gronau Group (XXXXI. R. R., G.R.D.) was dropped on October 12 — already in the army report from the 7th; the group has since belonged to the Linsingen Army Group.  
2) See pages 576, 583.  
3) From the 8th Army, the XXX and the newly formed XXXX Corps, as well as the Cavalry Corps Welsätschen; from the 3rd Army, the reinforced 4th Cavalry Corps.  
4) Austro-Hungarian XVII Corps (Hungarian 41st, Austrian 13th, German 22nd Infantry Division), Austro-Hungarian Cavalry Corps Saven (Austrian 1st and 3rd Polish Brigade, Austro-Hungarian 1st and 9th Cavalry Division, German 1st Infantry Division), Austro-Hungarian Cavalry Corps Sauer (1st and 3rd Polish Brigade, Austro-Hungarian 1st, 9th, and 11th Rifle Division).  
5) Brusilov, My Memories, p. 155.

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New Russian Attacks Collapse.

In the area east of Nawoz, the Polish Legion (1st and 3rd Brigade) from the west and the 1st Infantry Division from the north launched a concentrated counterattack, pushing back the tip of the Russian wedge over ten kilometers, but then it stalled. Even after the arrival of the Austrian 45th Infantry Division from the 2nd Army northeast of Rolli, as well as the half Austrian 26th Infantry Division and 2nd Polish Brigade from the 2nd and 7th Armies in the center and on the northern flank of the 1st Infantry Division, the Allies only slowly gained ground in bitter and costly fighting, which was repeatedly contested by fierce Russian counterattacks. Only after a three-day pause, used to form a strike group with the 1st Infantry Division, could a powerful blow be dealt to the enemy on November 13, forcing them to evacuate the western bank of the Styr south of the Rowel—Sarny railway the following night. The left wing of the Conta Corps and the Hauer Cavalry Corps did not advance to the Styr again but entrenched themselves along the Kolodzjeje—Jezierec line. Meanwhile, fighting resumed with the Böhm-Ermolli Army Group and the Southern Army. On October 21, the right wing corps (VII) of the Russian 11th Army unexpectedly attacked the right wing of the Austro-Hungarian 2nd Army and threw them out of their forward positions near and north of Nowe Alekziniec. The situation was quickly restored by deploying reserves. More dangerous were renewed breakthrough attempts by the enemy at the Strypa. There, the Russian XXII Corps succeeded on October 31 in capturing the bridgehead of Siemikowce and occupying the village on the right bank. Only after five days of extremely bloody fighting, involving troops from the Russian XVIII and VI Corps, could the enemy be pushed back to their original positions by the Hungarian 38th Infantry Division and parts of the 3rd Guard, 48th Reserve, and Austro-Hungarian 55th Infantry Division. The losses on both sides were unusually high; in the Southern Army, they amounted to 2000 dead, 4500 wounded, and 3200 missing, while the Russians left almost 6300 prisoners in the hands of the Allies.

In mid-November, a longer pause finally occurred on the Eastern Galician and Volhynian fronts. Only then could the Austro-Hungarian Northern Army and the Linsingen Army Group begin to organize the extremely fragmented units and prepare for new military requirements. The Austro-Hungarian 7th Army received after the transfer of 1½ infantry divisions each to the southwestern front and the Linsingen Army Group for its approximately 150-kilometer-wide section at the beginning of December, still over 7½ infantry and 4 cavalry divisions, the Southern Army with a front width of around 60 kilometers over 5½ infantry divisions.

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The Right Wing of the Army from Mid-July to the End of the Year.

The Linsingen group had at the beginning of December over 7½ infantry and 4 cavalry divisions for their approximately 150-kilometer-wide section, the South Army had over 5½ infantry divisions for a front width of about 60 kilometers. The Böhm-Ermolli Army Group held a front of about 140 kilometers with 10¼ infantry divisions and 1 cavalry brigade, behind which were 1½ infantry divisions and 1 cavalry brigade as army group reserve, and 1¾ infantry divisions as army reserve. It had transferred one division to the Italian theater of war and another to the Linsingen Army Group. In its 250-kilometer-wide section, the front line was occupied by 14 infantry and 6 cavalry divisions, which had sent their valuable horse material to the rear to increase their combat strength as foot troops; behind them were half a division as the 4th Army reserve, and two infantry divisions as army group reserve at Kolki and Maniewicze; finally, around Luck, an army reserve of one infantry and three cavalry divisions was assembled(!). In total, there were thus 41¼ infantry and 11 cavalry divisions along the approximately 600-kilometer-wide front from the Romanian border to north of Pinsk; the Austro-Hungarian army command had 2¾ infantry and 3 cavalry divisions as reserves in this theater of war.

On the Russian side, too, a regrouping of forces was planned after the conclusion of the fighting for a new offensive planned for the end of the year.

1) 7th Army: XI Corps (Austro-Hungarian combined Brigade Papp, Hungarian 42nd Infantry Division), Benigni Group (Austro-Hungarian ½ 5th Cavalry Division, 3rd and 8th Cavalry Divisions), Schütz Group (Austro-Hungarian 30th Infantry Division, Brunk 6th Cavalry Division), XIII Corps (Austro-Hungarian 15th and 36th Infantry Divisions), VI Corps (Austro-Hungarian 12th, Hungarian 39th Infantry Division); Army reserve: Hungarian 202nd Infantry Brigade and German 5th Cavalry Division. — South Army: Hofmann Corps (Austro-Hungarian 130th, 131st, and 132nd Infantry Brigades), Marischal Corps (48th Cavalry Division, Austro-Hungarian 19th Cavalry Division, ⅔ 3rd Infantry Division), Gerok Group (Austro-Hungarian 3rd Infantry Division, 5th Infantry Division, 9th Infantry Division). — Böhm-Ermolli Army Group: 2nd Army: IV Corps (Austro-Hungarian 14th and 33rd Infantry Divisions), V Corps (Austro-Hungarian 64th Infantry Brigade and 34th Infantry Division), Hofal Group (Austro-Hungarian 27th and 29th Infantry Divisions), XVIII Corps (Austrian 1st Landsturm Brigade, Austro-Hungarian 31st Infantry Division, Hungarian 1st Depot Hussar Brigade); 1st Army: I Corps (Austro-Hungarian 25th, Austrian 51st Infantry Division), Gerok Group (Austrian 3rd Infantry Division, 5th Infantry Division, 9th Infantry Division); Army group reserve: Austro-Hungarian 110th and 51st Cavalry Divisions, 1 attached Radetzky Brigade. Army reserve: Austro-Hungarian 34th and 42nd, Austrian 43rd Infantry Division. — Linsingen Army Group: IX Corps (Austro-Hungarian 10th and 24th Infantry Divisions), X Corps (Austro-Hungarian 3rd and ½ 24th, Hungarian 37th Cavalry Division), Kritef Group (XVII Command, Hungarian 41st Infantry Division), II Corps (Austro-Hungarian 13th, 15th, and 26th Infantry Divisions); Army reserve: Austro-Hungarian ½ 24th Cavalry Division, Austrian 10th Cavalry Division. — Northern Army: Hofmann Corps (Austro-Hungarian 130th, 131st, and 132nd Infantry Brigades), Fath Corps (Austrian 1st and 2nd Infantry Divisions, Austro-Hungarian 10th Cavalry Division, reinforced 1st Infantry Division (with 2 Hungarian and 3 Polish Brigades), Cavalry Corps Hausar (Hungarian 11th, Austro-Hungarian 1st and 9th Cavalry Divisions, 1 Polish Brigade); Grona Group (Gentdo. XXXXI Cavalry Division, Austro-Hungarian 11th Cavalry Division). — Army group reserve: Austrian 21st Infantry Division, Cavalry Corps Lehmann (formerly Herberstein, Austro-Hungarian 2nd, 4th, and 7th Cavalry Divisions).

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Transition to Trench Warfare.

Operations were conducted on the southern flank. The boundary between the Western and Southwestern Fronts, previously marked by the Sarny-Kovel railway, was moved about 40 kilometers northward at the beginning of December. The troops stationed in this area from the 3rd Army — the 4th Cavalry Corps and the XXIV Corps, deployed here in early November — were transferred to the 8th Army. This army now consisted of 15½ infantry and 5 cavalry divisions. South of Krzemieniec, it was joined by the 11th Army with 6½ infantry divisions and 1 cavalry division. From Strusow to the Romanian border, the 9th Army was stationed with 12 infantry and 7 cavalry divisions1). Including the two infantry and three cavalry divisions of the left wing of the Russian Western Front (3rd Army) facing the Gronau Group, the Linsingen Army Group and the Austro-Hungarian Northern Army thus faced a total of 36 infantry and 16 cavalry divisions, approximately equal forces.

1) 8th Army: 4th Cav. Corps, XXIV Corps, 5th Cav. Corps (Weislaffschew), XXXX, XXX, XXXIX, VIII, and XVII Corps; 11th Army: VII, VI, and XVIII Corps; 9th Army: XXII, XXXIII, XXXI, XI, XII, and XXXII Corps, 2nd and 3rd Cav. Corps.  
† World War. Volume VIII

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K. The Russian Supreme Command from September to December 1915¹).

Maps 6 and 7.

On September 5, the Tsar arrived at the Grand Headquarters in Mogilev and, with General Alexeyev as Chief of Staff, took command of all land and naval forces at the front. The announcement stated: "With unwavering faith in ultimate victory, we will fulfill our sacred duty to defend the homeland to the utmost." Given the disintegration that the previous supreme commander, Grand Duke Nicholas, enjoyed in the widest circles, the people, army, and allies did not welcome this change with unreserved joy and increased confidence²). All attempts to dissuade the Tsar from his plan had failed. On the other hand, General Alexeyev, due to his military past, enjoyed particularly high esteem³).

The army group of the Northern Front under General Russki, which also included the Baltic Fleet, held the Dvina line at the beginning of September with strong bridgeheads on the western bank; the 10th Army had been "under the compulsion" of the German advance between Dvinsk and Vilna and had already been transferred to the Western Front by the end of August. The Western Front under General Ewergt, the previous commander of the 4th Army, stood with the 10th, 1st, 2nd, 4th, and 3rd Armies in a line running from west of Vilna east past Grodno to the south. Its left wing, the 3rd Army, had particularly felt the pressure of the German Army Detachment Woyrsch and the Mackensen Army Group in the last days of August, which had pushed them back to Pruzana and Pinsk. After Grodno was evacuated on September 2 before the attack of the German 8th Army⁴), stubborn battles developed to the east. The main concern was directed at the northern flank threatened by encirclement near Vilna; the previously reported reserves were soon to be consolidated into a new 2nd Army to close the gap at Swenzjany. The Southwestern Front under General Ivanov (8th, 11th, and 9th Armies) was forced to retreat before the advancing enemy into a line running east of the Styr and then along the Sereth to the south, thus still holding Austrian territory with its southern flank.

¹) Connection on p. 452 ff. — ²) See, among others, Poincaré, VII, pp. 70 and 80 f. — ³) Volume VII, p. 300. — ⁴) p. 496.

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Retreat Battles.

to retreat from the advancing enemy to a line running south along the Styr and then along the Sereth, thus still holding Austrian territory with its southern wing. However, the Russian Supreme Command had already assigned only local significance to the battles in this theater of war for some time. The armies of the Southwestern Front served primarily as a source for strengthening the northern fronts, to which they had already transferred 13½ divisions from June to the end of August and were to transfer four more; thus, since mid-July, they had been weakened by 40 percent of their strength overall.

The new Supreme Command could not change the overall situation; initially, it could only try to slow down the pace of the retreat. In its first directive, issued on September 8, it stated that the strength of the enemy attacks along the entire front had diminished; the enemy was following with partly strong advance guards mainly along the roads; this had to be taken into account in the defense. Rapid evasion had to be avoided to ensure the return of supplies and refugees.

When the German attack, which began on September 9 northwest of Vilna, grew into an extremely threatening encirclement of the northern wing of the Western Front1), the Supreme Command had to order the retreat of this front to the line Michaliszki—Nowogrodek—Baranowicze—Dsjunkf Canal on September 17. It also hoped for only a restoration, but no decisive change in the situation, from the new 2nd Army, which was meanwhile gathering west of Molodetschno. Thus, on September 22, the further retreat to the line Narocz Lake—Smorgon and south was already ordered, so that the front finally ran just east of Baranowicze and Pinsk.

The Southwestern Front2) had meanwhile been deliberately left to itself, despite warning reports from General Ivanov, who was particularly concerned about his right wing, which covered the direction to Kiev, in view of the Austro-Hungarian offensive against Rovno. But when the Western powers launched a major relief attack in France at the end of September, the Russians also attacked again, hoping to win Romania for themselves and help Serbia, which the Tsar's government had advised to be uncompromising against Austria-Hungary in the decisive days of July 1914.

Since no German troops seemed to be opposing at the attack site, "confidence in one's own ability and the belief in success led troops and leaders to entirely different actions."

1) See p. 525 ff. — 2) See p. 585 ff.

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The Russian Supreme Command from September to December 1915.

Belief in the success of troops and leaders to completely different ones“1). That their attack brought a considerable booty of more than 70,000 prisoners and 37 guns and in October also achieved a success at Baranowicze, despite the defeat in the north and later setback at Luck, boosted the confidence of the Supreme Command. It gradually became clear that the German command had begun to transfer numerous units that had previously fought against Russia to other fronts. By October, seven divisions had been counted that had gone west, nine that had been sent to the Balkans. It was also observed since mid-October that less effective ammunition was being fired from the enemy side3). With the decline of combat activity, the construction of strong positions and preparations for winter began on the entire Russian front, just as on the Austro-Hungarian and German fronts. A continuing concern was Serbia. To help this country as much as possible, from mid-November, the 7th Army4) located in the wide area around Odessa was transformed into a fully-fledged and particularly powerful military body through withdrawals from the front.

Moreover, the Russian army urgently needed rest and found it. How severely it had suffered is shown by the total losses, which according to official Russian compilations5) had grown to more than 2.2 million by the end of the year from May 1915, including more than 1 million missing. The field army (excluding the approximately six-division-strong Caucasus Army) had been reinforced to 126 divisions by consolidating independent militia formations. In December, it counted 1,360,000 infantrymen and 4,650 guns (of which 650 were heavy)6), which resulted in an average strength of the divisions of almost 11,000 infantrymen and 37 guns.

1) Kjesnamow, p. 127.  
2) p. 559 ff.  
3) Diary entries of an officer from the Russian Great Headquarters from December 15, 1915: “It has now been two months since it has been proven everywhere on our front that the German artillery shells do not explode” from December 17: “The majority of the German heavy artillery shells do not explode” (Lemke, pp. 277 and 296).  
4) p. 436 f. — Further details on this, as well as other military and political measures of the Russian Supreme Command, will be included in Volume IX.  
5) Russia in World War in Figures p. 30.  
6) Figures according to a report made to the French ambassador in Petrograd on December 11, 1915 (Paleologue I, p. 460). — The Russian artillery had received orders in November 1915 to supply the Caucasus Army only with 20, indirect fire from 15 cm upwards, the remaining guns only for the month of November with 532 barrels, also stated so low.

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Losses. Strength of the Army.

an average strength of the divisions of almost 11,000 infantrymen and 37 guns. The rifle equipment had already improved to the extent that only about twelve percent of the field army's infantry were unarmed. The continuously growing performance of the Russian arms industry gave hope for further improvement¹). Nevertheless, they remained dependent on foreign aid for arms and ammunition production and sought it wherever it could be found, not only from the Western powers and America but also in Italy and Japan. However, when the French Minister Doumer demanded in December, in exchange for rifles, a monthly replacement of 40,000 Russian men for the French army, this degrading proposal was rejected²).

The goal of all efforts was to restore the army's combat strength to be able to attack again as soon as possible.

¹) The production of ammunition for the artillery was increased from 14,000 rounds daily in May to 59,000 in December and was expected to reach 122,000 rounds by March 1916. The insurmountable quantities still lacked 45,000 to 67,000 rounds per month (secret communications to the French ambassador; Paléologue I, C. 324 and 460).  
²) Kudatschen letters from December 14 and 23, 1915.

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V. The Multi-Front War in Summer 1915.

I. The Situation until Early August.

On May 21, the Chiefs of Staff of the Central Powers agreed to continue focusing the main efforts of the war on the Galician theater and to remain defensive on the other fronts1). General von Falkenhayn adhered unwaveringly to this decision in the following months despite Italy's entry into the war and the occasionally crisis-like tense situation at the Dardanelles and especially on the Western Front.

With the growing successes on the eastern theater of war, the operational goal here was increasingly expanded. During the Galician operation, the initial limited task was to relieve the Austro-Hungarian Carpathian front from Russian pressure, but after reaching the Wisłok, the pursuit was continued to the San to "deliver a blow to the enemy that could not be reciprocated"; thereafter, operations against the enemy east of the San were to continue "until a decision sufficient for our purposes"2), i.e., until the final defeat of the Russian offensive power in Galicia. Finally, in unified cooperation of the Austro-Hungarian and German Eastern Front, the defeat of the main enemy forces in Poland and thus the "campaign decision" against Russia was sought. Under these circumstances, it was clear that the East gradually demanded all available forces from the other theaters of war. With the increasing troop requirements of the Eastern Front, both Chiefs of Staff did not shy away from the risk of stripping the German Western Army and the Serbian front of forces to the limit of what was possible. From mid-April to the first half of August, no fewer than 14½ infantry and reserve divisions from the West and the German divisions from the Serbian front, a total of 17½ divisions, were moved to the Russian theater; specifically from the Western Front: 2½ on April 14, eight divisions, on May 3 one division, on June 2, 2½, on July 19 two divisions, and on August 8 one division. Of these, only two were transported back to the western theater of war.

1) G. 10. — 2) G. 202.

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The Military and Political Situation of the Central Powers Spring 1915.

Only two were sent back to the western theater of war. Corresponding to the gradually expanding operational goals on the Russian front, the deployment of these forces did not occur uniformly, but rather gradually. A result of decisive importance for the campaign was not achieved.

All demands exceeding a minimum from the other theaters of war had to be temporarily postponed due to the growing need for forces in the East. The start of the campaign against Serbia, which was urgently demanded and repeatedly considered due to the difficult situation of the Ottoman Empire, had to be postponed again and again. Thus, the path to the Orient for supporting Turkey, which was engaged in heavy attrition battles on Gallipoli, remained blocked.

With even greater emphasis, however, the diplomatic struggle continued after Italy's entry into the war to prepare a final solution to the extremely difficult and significant Balkan problem for the overall conduct of the war; for there was a danger that after Italy, the neutral Balkan states would also turn to the enemy camp. The accession of the last European great power to the enemy alliance, the difficult situation at the Dardanelles, and the tension between the United States of America and Germany caused by the sinking of the "Lusitania" meant a considerable burden on the Central Powers from the standpoint of the Balkan states, despite all the successes of the allies on the Galician front. The sharp contrasts that arose in the recently initiated negotiations between Bulgaria and Turkey due to excessive Bulgarian demands could also be seen as a worrying sign of an unfavorable development of affairs. Similarly, the increased resistance to continuing neutrality, which was asserted by the Romanian government, could be interpreted. This renewed suspicion that Romania was bound by contractual agreements to follow Italy's actions.

Above all, it was the uncertainty of the Balkan situation that brought the leading statesmen and chiefs of staff of the Central Powers together for a meeting at the German Great Headquarters in Pleß on May 25. The focus was on exchanging views about Romania's stance. According to the General's opinion, the efforts of the allies had to be incessantly directed towards securing Romania by assuring military and economic guarantees.

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The Multi-Front War in Summer 1915.

von Falkenhayn aimed the efforts of the allies at winning Romania by assuring military and economic guarantees. It was unanimously agreed that it was necessary to bridge the differences between Bulgaria and Turkey. The hope for an agreement between these two states seemed present, as the High Porte, according to recently received reports, did not reject a territorial concession to Bulgaria up to the Maritza line and only demanded the conclusion of an alliance with Bulgaria in return. If it was possible to reach an agreement on these issues, the first condition for the creation of a "Balkan League" was fulfilled, whose establishment General von Falkenhayn again suggested during the course of discussions; as a further prerequisite for this, he strongly advocated the understanding between Austria-Hungary and Serbia.

The uncertainty of the political situation was further heightened by alarm reports from the Dardanelles. On June 9, the German ambassador, Baron von Wangenheim, reported from Constantinople that the recent land attacks by Anglo-French forces on Gallipoli had extraordinarily shaken the Turkish resistance. The enemy artillery had gained considerable superiority, and Turkish ammunition production could no longer keep pace with consumption. "Under all these circumstances, the fall of the Dardanelles must be expected unless it is possible to quickly reach an understanding with Romania that ensures the passage of ammunition... In my opinion, the Dardanelles cannot hold out for more than a month."

Immediately thereafter — mid-June — the successful operation of the allies on the Galician front began to exert its moral impact on the Balkans to such an extent that the transfer of the larger part of the German troops stationed in southern Hungary to the Galician front seemed possible.

This improvement in the situation was mainly due to the fact that the Entente did not succeed at that time in bringing Romania and Bulgaria to their side. However, even though a shift to the enemy camp was avoided, the Romanian government remained firm in its refusal to allow the passage of urgently needed munitions shipments for Turkey.

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The Unresolved Situation in the Balkans.

To allow munitions shipments. This had an even more unfavorable effect

as the Dardanelles crisis apparently reached its peak at the end of June.

The German ambassador described the situation on June 30 based on reports

from the army commander, Marshal Liman von Sanders, in the darkest terms:

While the conduct of the Turkish troops on the Gallipoli Peninsula is beyond

praise, "the enemy is bringing more and more heavy artillery into position

and bombarding us day and night with heavy shells. Although the number of

our guns is completely sufficient, the lack of ammunition has now become so

oppressive that the moment can be foreseen when we will no longer be able

to withstand the enemy's artillery attack... It must be expected that the

resistance of the Turkish army will be broken in the very near future. Once

the land army is defeated, the fortress, according to Admiral Usdom, can

only hold out for three more days. Marshal Liman von Sanders[1] therefore

asks me to inform higher authorities that if a sufficient quantity of

ammunition is not immediately procured, the Dardanelles are lost..."

Despite this report, it was only understandable that the demand was now

emphatically raised again to save Turkey by attacking Serbia. In a report

dated July 2, the German military attaché in Sofia, Major Freiherr von der

Goltz, stated: There can hardly be any doubt that Bulgaria, although

apparently dealing with Germany in a friendly manner, is fundamentally not

willing to support us in the matter of supplying Turkey with war material.

A change could only occur with a break between Bulgaria and Russia; to

bring this about, there is only one means: the attack on Serbia.

A telegram from Chancellor von Bethmann Hollweg dated July 4 came to the

same conclusion as this report. He asked General von Falkenhayn for a

statement on a request from the German ambassador in Constantinople, which

measures should be taken if the enemy's breakthrough through the Dardanelles

succeeds. The question was whether Turkey should continue fighting in

Thrace after the fall of the Dardanelles, withdraw to Asia Minor, or make

peace. From a political standpoint, as the Chancellor explained, the decisive factor was that Germany could likely persuade Turkey to continue holding out in Thrace even after the Dardanelles were conquered by the Western powers, keep Romania calm, and bring Bulgaria over to our side.

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The Multi-Front War in Summer 1915.

pointed out, the Chancellor stated that the decisive factor was that Germany would likely be able to persuade Turkey to continue holding out in Thrace even after the Dardanelles were captured by the Western powers, keep Romania calm, and bring Bulgaria over to our side. However, as soon as the military situation allowed, immediate action against Serbia was necessary.

While the Reich leadership emphasized the urgent need to quickly subdue Serbia to finally provide the threatened ally with the necessary support1), the responsible leader of the German overall operations argued that the primary goal now was to fully exploit the victories over Russia. "If Turkey can hold the straits for another five to six weeks," General von Falkenhayn replied to the Chancellor on July 6, "then Russia's defeat will likely be so apparent that we can confidently expect a more favorable stance from the two Balkan states for our purposes."

With these statements, General von Falkenhayn approached the view previously held by General von Conrad that, following the expected decisive successes over Russia, a Balkan campaign would no longer be necessary to secure the connection with Turkey. At this point, the German Supreme Army Command hoped that continuing the offensive in southern Poland, along with a simultaneous attack by the Gallwitz Army Group against the Narew2), would lead to Russia's military defeat and thus also the decision on the Balkans. Indicative of this view is the previously mentioned3) diary note by Generaloberst von Plessen from July 19, suggesting that the campaign in the East now seemed decided, and an assessment of the situation sent by General von Falkenhayn to the Chancellor on July 22, intended for communication to leading parliamentarians. In it, the Chief of the General Staff emphasized that the Serbian campaign, if the Russian power, as he hoped, was finally defeated, would probably become unnecessary, "because under such an assumption, Romania and Bulgaria would no longer pose any difficulties for us4)."

However, the political leadership only expected limited effects from military victories over Russia and took a detailed position on the letter from General von Falkenhayn dated July 6.

1) von Bethmann Hollweg, Vol. II, p. 13. — 2) p. 264 ff. — 3) p. 315. — 4) Political Archive of the Foreign Office.

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The Difficult Situation of Turkey at the Dardanelles.

addressed the letter from General von Falkenhayn dated July 6 in detail. The Russian Empire, replied the State Secretary of the Foreign Office, von Jagow, could only be made ready for peace if it became convinced that the efforts of the Western powers would not succeed in conquering the Dardanelles. To hold the straits, however, the subjugation of Serbia was necessary. General von Falkenhayn apparently expected a tangible conclusion to the operations against Russia in five to six weeks. By that time, it should be possible to provide the necessary forces against Serbia, amounting to 250,000 men. For the defense of the Dardanelles, this might already be too late; but even in this unfavorable case, the subjugation of Serbia remained necessary to win over Bulgaria, extend a hand to the Turks beleaguered in Thrace, and, if possible, liberate Constantinople again.

However, before an agreement on the various views of the military and political leadership was reached, the German ambassador in Constantinople had come to a confident assessment of the ammunition situation and thus the entire combat situation at the Dardanelles. By moving ammunition from the fortified positions of Tschataldschá1) to the front lines at the Dardanelles, the situation there had temporarily improved, he reported on July 5; it was by no means excluded that the main danger could be eliminated by the end of the month through the successfully pursued domestic ammunition production2). Further reassurance was provided by a letter from Field Marshal Freiherr von der Goltz dated July 8. The ammunition shortage continued, but "everything must be done," he emphasized, "that is compatible with the general interests of the alliance to provide us with supplies... But if I am to answer the question of whether it would be necessary to accept particularly pressing conditions from the Balkan states or to forgo other decisive undertakings just to save Turkey, i.e., to make its further resistance possible, then I must decidedly deny this question... If it depends only on us here, we will manage, even without foreign help..."

1) Fortification line west of Constantinople, where the Bulgarian attack came to a halt during the Balkan War of 1912/13.  
2) The management of ammunition production in Constantinople had been assigned to a German naval officer, Captain z. S. Pieper. More details on the ammunition issue at the Dardanelles will be contained in Volume IX.

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These communications reinforced the Supreme Army Command in their view that the situation at the Dardanelles could most easily be alleviated by a vigorous continuation of the offensive against Russia.

The defeat of Russia not only represented the best solution to the Balkan problem but also effectively banished all dangers on the Italian front!). If the Tsarist Empire withdrew in time from the ranks of the opponents of the Central Powers, the outcome of the multi-front war could be awaited with confidence.

2. Peace Initiatives of the German Supreme Army Command.

Recognizing the significance of a peace agreement with Russia for the outcome of the war, General von Falkenhayn left no stone unturned in the spring and summer of 1915 to reach an understanding with Russia by exploiting the favorable military situation on the eastern theater of war. When Przemysl fell on June 3, and thus the San line was taken, he therefore requested the Chancellor, through the mediation of the representative of the Foreign Office at the Great Headquarters, the envoy von Treutler, to "take advantage of the currently favorable situation of the campaign against Russia and make an attempt to reach a cessation of hostilities between us and Russia..." He proposed to present the Tsar, through a neutral power, with the following: "Przemysl is in our hands, the troops thus freed are moving on Lemberg, which must be taken in the foreseeable future. A new army will soon be deployed against the eastern front2). This military situation will not be changed by the possible, but in view of our successes unlikely, entry of Romania and Bulgaria3) into the war against us any more than the already completed entry of Italy has... We therefore propose that between Russia and us the hostilities be ceased.

1) p. 29.  
2) Here, General von Falkenhayn presumably had in mind the new deployment of the four and a half divisions in Galicia, which he finally decided on June 2. See p. 202.  
3) During the difficult Bulgarian-Turkish negotiations, the situation repeatedly seemed so tense "that it was by no means certain whether the Bulgarians would not attack Turkey today or tomorrow." Report of the German ambassador, Baron von Wangenheim, from June 16 to the Foreign Office.

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The Peace Initiatives of the German O. H. L. in Winter 1914 and Spring 1915.

and hostilities against us be ceased. We do not demand a breach of faith if Russia feels bound to the Allies. Peace needs to be concluded only when our other opponents also want peace, or when the agreement of September 4 becomes void by the withdrawal of one of the allies.

With this letter, the Chief of the General Staff of the Field Army had once again initiated peace efforts that had been ongoing for months and had only temporarily stalled. As early as September 1914, neutral European states had offered to mediate peace, but were rejected in Paris and London. In January 1915, American Colonel House was prompted by President Wilson to establish contact with the English and German governments to explore peace possibilities. He hoped to achieve that both parties would initially be willing to engage in mutual discussions. An essential prerequisite for this, however, was that Germany agreed to evacuate Belgium and to the plan of general disarmament of the powers. Colonel House arrived in Berlin at the end of March and held discussions with the Chancellor and the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs. However, without addressing the Belgian question, the issues that directly concerned the United States, such as American munitions deliveries to the Entente and the blockade imposed by England over Germany, were discussed more urgently. The question posed by Colonel House, whether the German government would be willing to join a new convention for securing the seas, was fundamentally agreed to by the Chancellor. However, following the sinking of the "Lusitania" by a German submarine on May 7, these discussions came to a temporary end.

In addition to Colonel House's peace efforts, in the early months of 1915, a neutral European state attempted to establish contact between the warring powers to facilitate peace. Leading English circles were not entirely opposed to this idea. In Russia, too, the efforts seemed temporarily favorable to develop.

1) According to the London Agreement of September 4, 1914, the governments of England, France, and Russia mutually committed not to conduct separate peace negotiations during the war and to accept peace proposals only with the consent of the Allies. See Volume VI, p. 405.  
2) p. 17.

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to be favorable. The Tsar indeed rejected the idea of a separate peace, but was otherwise not averse to entering into an exchange of ideas with Germany regarding peace through neutral mediation. However, the prospects for this discussion began to appear increasingly unfavorable during April, apparently due to the expected entry of Italy into the war by the Entente. News from England cast doubt on the possibility of achieving peace; simultaneously, Russia also showed a dismissive attitude.

On the other hand, given the impending breakdown of relations between Vienna and Rome, as well as the various conflicts existing in the coastal area of the Adriatic between Italy and Serbia, May 1915 seemed to be the time to reach an understanding between the Danube Monarchy and Serbia. Therefore, in mid-May, it was suggested by Germany to the Austro-Hungarian government to conclude a separate peace with Serbia on the basis that the Negotin district would be ceded to Austria-Hungary, thereby securing an immediate connection with Bulgaria. In return, Serbia was to be granted Northern Albania and the merger with Montenegro. The Austro-Hungarian Foreign Minister, Baron Burian, was not opposed to this endeavor but considered it desirable that the initiative come from the Serbian government. However, this was not achievable, as indicated by a letter from the Austro-Hungarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs to General von Conrad dated May 30: "Burian wants to build golden bridges for them — the Serbs — but they do not come." Nevertheless, the idea of an approach by Austria-Hungary to Serbia from the German side was pursued further in the following weeks.

1) "I advocate ... for peace with Serbia," as stated in the records of the War Minister, General von Wild, from June 16 — "Serbia: Turkey to the Adriatic; Bulgaria: Macedonia; Greece: Epirus; Romania: Bessarabia and Bukovina." Although these plans apparently did not go beyond considerations, they are indicative of how much the military side at that time hoped for the creation of a Balkan federation allied with the Central Powers to bring about peace. See p. 600.  
2) Regarding the efforts of the Central Powers to reach an understanding with Serbia, the Serbian General Staff work (Volume VIII, p. 171) writes: On June 21, Bulgaria declared itself ready for negotiations with Serbia, provided that the demanded part of Serbian-Macedonia-

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The Peace Initiatives of the German Supreme Army Command in the Summer of 1915.

This was the situation when, on June 3, the peace proposal from General von Falkenhayn reached Chancellor von Bethmann Hollweg. On the same day, he responded, pointing out the failure of his previous peace efforts, stating that based on the experiences gained, there was the greatest likelihood that the Tsar would decisively reject the proposed cessation of hostilities. Should this not be the case against expectations, the Tsar would condition the acceptance of the proposal on either us ceasing hostilities against all our opponents or the Russian forces not being used on any other theater of war. Furthermore, the Tsar would only provide the German government with any response to a clearly outlined proposal after consulting with his allies. "Any proposal from us," emphasized the Chancellor, "presupposes that we are ready to make peace with all our enemies based on the current war situation. That our opponents are inclined to do so seems doubtful to me after Italy's attack. In any case, peace would at best only be achievable on the basis of the status quo ante. Whether this path must be taken is subject solely to military assessment..." The Chancellor concluded by expressing the thought that Germany was hardly in a position to offer the Russians significantly more than the Tsar hoped to achieve by remaining with the Entente. Moreover, Germany's peace proposals to Russia could be interpreted by Romania and Bulgaria as a sign of weakness; there was a danger that these states might switch to the camp of our opponents out of fear of being too late in the distribution of the spoils.

The demands of Sofia were very unsettling in Serbia, where the Bulgarian mentality was all too well known. Germany and Austria-Hungary used this circumstance for a peace offer. The Serbian government rejected this proposal with consideration, as the Austro-Hungarian maneuver was too transparent. It was intended to be directed at Bulgaria so that it would join the Central Powers; it was said that they wanted to come to an understanding with Serbia to deliver Macedonia to Bulgaria." According to the findings made in the Political Archive of the Foreign Office, a genuine peace offer to Serbia was not made, but inquiries were made by a neutral power to the Serbian government as to when and under what conditions they would be inclined to conclude peace with the Central Powers.

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Despite this decision by the responsible leader of German overall policy, General von Falkenhayn continued to seize every opportunity to resolve the peace issue. A new occasion for this was provided by a letter from Generaloberst von Conrad dated July 21 to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Vienna. The current impressive military maneuver, it stated, which would likely soon lead to the capture of Lublin, Cholm, Iwangorod, and perhaps even Warsaw, should be used to break the enemy's bloc through an agreement with Russia and to neutralize Romania and Bulgaria. Golden bridges should be built for Russia for a separate peace.

General von Falkenhayn forwarded the copy of this letter sent to him on July 22 to Chancellor von Bethmann Hollweg, adding that his view coincided with that of Generaloberst von Conrad. The right time to approach Russia should not be missed.

In his reply on July 30, the Chancellor pointed out that he had been thoroughly examining for months whether Russia was inclined towards a separate peace with Germany, but that the Russian government had so far consistently responded negatively. Although a shift in sentiment in favor of Germany was noticeable, there was no inclination towards a separate peace; rather, they adhered to the old position that Russia, bound by the word of the Tsar, could only make peace jointly with its allies. The severe defeats in Poland and Russia were not considered decisive for the final outcome of the war in Petersburg and were only regarded as temporary setbacks. With the deployment of British forces still in training, the great offensive of the Western powers would begin in the fall on the French front. Despite the undoubtedly noticeable shift in sentiment, it seemed unjustified to assume that Russia would decide on a separate peace even with favorable progress in our military operations in Poland. The possibility for this would, if at all, only arise when Russia had to finally abandon its hope for the fall of the Dardanelles¹) and the acquisition of Bulgaria.

¹) When the Chancellor linked Russia's willingness for peace in this way with the success of the Gallipoli campaign, it should be remembered that Russia had no interest in conquering the straits without Russian involvement. Under certain circumstances, they were even prepared, ...

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The Supreme Army Command Plans the Clearing of Upper Alsace from the Enemy.

"Herein I see, as Your Excellency knows, the crucial point as before. It is known in Petersburg that we would settle for reasonable terms in the event of an imminent separate peace. I also make it known there that the establishment of a prolonged German-Austrian administration in Congress Poland would so strengthen the Polish freedom and independence movement that Poland would have to be considered lost to Russia in one form or another." The Chancellor concluded with the remark that the Entente would view a German-Austrian peace offer as a sign of weakness despite our victories in Poland and would treat it accordingly, as long as hopes of subduing Turkey, annexing the Balkan states, and a breakthrough in the West persisted. "Only when these prospects are eliminated will we be strong enough to extend our hand for peace if our opponents do not come."

General von Falkenhayn's pursuit of an imminent peace also makes his plan to clear Upper Alsace, first expressed in mid-June, understandable, for which merely military reasons could hardly be asserted. General von Conrad had made similar considerations when he described the minimum goal of the Eastern operation in his letter of May 14 to General von Falkenhayn as: "Regaining the territory of the monarchy and the territory of Russian Poland on the left bank of the Vistula, which is to be ceded to us as compensation for territorial concessions to Italy." General von Conrad had come close to this goal in mid-June when the capture of the capital of Galicia was not imminent. It is therefore probably no coincidence that at this time the German Chief of Staff also sought to recapture the last part of German soil in Upper Alsace still occupied by the enemy, so that in any peace negotiations there would be no more bargaining chips in enemy hands.

How much General von Falkenhayn was counting on the possibility of peace at that time is also evident from the fact that he sent a memorandum prepared by the Supreme Army Command on "the economic and military situation of France" to both the Chancellor and the Foreign Office in early June, which concluded: "France's sacrifices in this war are so enormous that the government will neither be able to bear the responsibility before the people nor before history, and will soon be faced with the question of whether abandoning resistance will serve the nation's future better than continuing the war, which is hopeless for France despite all external aid."

to conclude a separate peace with Turkey to concentrate all forces against the Central Powers. See "Constantinople and the Straits." According to Russian secret files of the former Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Moscow 1925/26. p. 437 of this volume.  
1) p. 614. — 2) G. 139/140.  
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The Multi-Front War in Summer 1915.

In early June, both the Chancellor and the Foreign Office received a memorandum

prepared by the Supreme Army Command on "the economic and military situation of

France," which concluded: "France's sacrifices in this war are so enormous that the

government will neither be able to bear the responsibility before the people nor before

history and will soon be faced with the question of whether the task of resistance is

more beneficial to the future of the nation than the continuation of the hopeless war

for France despite all foreign aid." If the thoughts of this memorandum were correct,

then it might indeed be questionable whether the enemy alliance was willing to endure

another winter of war.

In this context, the explanation is probably also found that General von Falkenhayn

on June 20 gave the General of Engineers at Army High Command 10, Major General

von Mertens, the secret verbal order to "militarily explore positions" on the western

front in the general line Nieuport, Lille, Douai, Hirson, Stenay, Metz — thus roughly

parallel to the Belgian border. This was the shortest possible line behind the Western

Front, where the possession of Belgium, access to the sea, and the possibility of a new

major offensive against the Western powers remained secured. According to a statement

by Major General von Mertens, it was apparently a "demarcation line" that could be

taken in the event of an armistice with subsequent peace negotiations.

3. The Shift of the Focus of Warfare.

Not without reason did Chancellor von Bethmann Hollweg in his response to General

von Falkenhayn on July 30 point out the great importance of winning Bulgaria for the

initiation of peace with Russia. This had also been fully recognized by General von Falkenhayn.

1) See Kronprinz Rupprecht of Bavaria "My War Diary" p. 368. On June 24, 1915,   
it is noted: "At noon I spoke with the General of the Engineer Inspectorate Mertens,   
who was traveling the Western Front on behalf of the O. H. L. to find out in what   
way a demarcation line would have to be drawn in the event of an armistice." — In   
contrast, the former bureaucratic leader of the Operations Department in the German   
Great Headquarters, Major a. D. Dr. Mertens, reports that General von Falkenhayn   
did not express the intention to the Operations Department that the mentioned position   
was considered as a potential demarcation line. (Letter to the Reich Archive from   
August 15, 1931.)

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The Multi-Front War in Summer 1915.

There were tense plans and every increase in strength for the Central Powers was to be welcomed from the standpoint of overall war leadership. Therefore, he agreed with the start of negotiations on Bulgaria's participation in the campaign against Serbia.

These began on August 3 at the Great Headquarters in Plesk with the envoy sent by the Bulgarian government, Lieutenant Colonel Gantchew. However, the course of the negotiations experienced a significant delay due to the tense situation at the Dardanelles, particularly due to the sinking of the American steamer "Arabic" by a German submarine on August 19. The new serious diplomatic disputes between Germany and the United States that arose from this did not fail to have their psychological impact on Bulgaria's stance. Only after the situation eased did the negotiations lead to the conclusion of a military convention between Germany, Austria-Hungary, and Bulgaria on September 5. It seems by no means excluded that the concern about a separate peace between Serbia and the Central Powers significantly influenced the Bulgarian government's final decisions. On September 15, Turkey joined the military convention.

Bulgaria's accession to the alliance of the Central Powers was a success of great political and military significance, which would probably not remain without repercussions on the other Balkan states. If it was now possible to overthrow Serbia — and there could hardly be any doubt about that — then for Austria-Hungary the threat of flanking, which had existed since the beginning of the war, was eliminated and the worst crisis at the Dardanelles was overcome. The establishment of secure connections with the Orient opened up new possibilities for Turkey's warfare in Asia, united the Ottoman Empire with the Central Powers and Bulgaria into a solid alliance, and above all, finally blocked the shortest connection line between Russia and the allied Western powers.

1) For more details, see Volume IX.  
2) p. 17.  
3) According to a report from the former German military attaché in Constantinople, Lieutenant General a. D. von Lossow, from January 25, 1932, to the Reichsarchiv. See also p. 606 note 2.

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the enemy should continue to be weakened as much as possible in its combat strength.

The decision to carry out the Serbian campaign was facilitated not only by the successful course of negotiations with Bulgaria but also by the seemingly secure situation on the Italian and Western fronts.

The second Isonzo Offensive by the Italians completely failed at the beginning of August. Again, the superiority of the Austro-Hungarian army over the new enemy was clearly demonstrated. It was hoped that the ally would continue to manage the threat here on its own.

Above all, the Metz meeting at the end of July had already strengthened General von Falkenhayn's conviction that the German Western Front, "like an iron wall," stood unshakably firm and was capable of withstanding all storms despite the great numerical superiority of the enemy. The victorious defense against the previous heavy enemy attacks had created a confident mood throughout the German front. Thus, the essential backing for operations on other fronts seemed to be secured here as well.

As an army reserve, 8½ infantry divisions were available behind the Western Front. At the end of July, General von Falkenhayn considered using this reserve mainly for an operation in Upper Alsace to clear German soil of the enemy, an idea that had occupied him, albeit temporarily, since June. During the Metz meeting, the Chief of Staff of the 5th Army, Lieutenant General Schmidt von Knobelsdorf, was instructed to carry out the necessary reconnaissance in Upper Alsace; General von Falkenhayn considered the deployment of six divisions sufficient for the operation.

The result of the reconnaissance was discussed on August 28 in a meeting between Generals von Falkenhayn and Schmidt von Knobelsdorf in Berlin and presented by the former to the Supreme War Lord on August 30. On this day, the diary of Colonel General von Plessen records: "Our supreme army command is considering an advance in Upper Alsace to drive the enemy out of the last piece of Germany." Simultaneously, however, towards the end of August, calculations by the intelligence department of the Supreme Army Command showed that the Western powers had approximately 50 infantry divisions behind the front.

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Shift of the Focus of Warfare to the Southeastern Theater of War.

However, towards the end of August, calculations by the intelligence department of the Supreme Army Command showed that the Western powers had approximately 50 infantry divisions stationed behind the front. This increased the possibility that the opponents, as long as the main forces of the Germans were tied up in the East, would launch a major offensive. Under these circumstances, the German Chief of General Staff deemed it necessary to withdraw stronger forces from the Eastern Front, not only for the Serbian campaign but also to secure the Western Front, which now required increased attention.

Already on August 27, the day before his meeting with General Schmidt von Knobelsdorf, General von Falkenhayn had issued the first orders from Berlin for the establishment of a permanent position on the Eastern Front for the army groups of Prince Leopold and Mackensen. Although these measures were initially not implemented, they initiated the conclusion of the Eastern operations.

Since the beginning of September, when Bulgaria was won over for participation in the Serbian campaign, all other attack plans were definitively put on the back burner. The focus of warfare began to shift from the eastern to the southeastern theater of war.

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VI. Review of General von Falkenhayn's Conduct of War against Russia.

The question of how Germany should defend itself in the event of a multi-front war against its opponents in the West and East had been decided by the long-standing Chief of the Prussian General Staff, Count Schlieffen, to immediately throw the main mass of the German army against the French and English, while initially conducting the fight against Russia with a minimum of forces in strategic defense without direct connection with the Austro-Hungarian ally. His successor, General von Moltke, had maintained the basic idea of this planned solution, but had promised the Chief of Staff of the allied army to support the offensive intended from Galicia into Poland by his own attack from East Prussia against the Russians, in order to bind the Russian forces facing the German Eastern Front and prevent them from intervening against the allied forces. At the outbreak of war, the attack against the Russians had not taken place because the German 8th Army in East Prussia initially had to defend itself against the concentric pressure of the Russian 1st and 2nd Armies advancing against it from two sides. By destroying one of these armies at Tannenberg and severely shaking the other in the Battle of the Masurian Lakes, the front of the ally had been relieved to a much greater extent than the Chiefs of Staff had anticipated in their peacetime agreements. Nevertheless, the failures in Galicia had significantly increased the difficulties of the task of maintaining the balance against the superior Russian forces, especially since the hoped-for quick decision by arms in the West had not materialized.

When General von Falkenhayn took over the leadership of the overall operations of the German army in mid-September 1914, he had adhered to the basic idea that the final decision in the world war must and would fall on French soil against the Western powers. In this, he agreed with both the Austro-Hungarian Chief of Staff and the Commander-in-Chief East, as important as the question was, on which path this final reckoning should be pursued, and what significance the fight against Russia now had in this context, the views of the responsible personalities already differed greatly in the autumn of 1914.

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on how this final settlement should be pursued, what significance the fight against Russia now had, the views of the responsible personalities already differed greatly in the autumn of 1914. While General von Conrad and soon after also the Commander-in-Chief East, after the failure of the Ypres offensive, believed that the military defeat of Russia must precede the decisive battle against the Western powers, the German General Staff saw the uninterrupted continuation of the attempt to subdue the French and English as the overriding task. He wanted the fight against Russia to continue only as a holding action, to gain time, as a backing for the German Western Front. While offensive strikes were certainly to be sought, the German deployment in the East should remain within the narrowest possible limits.

This viewpoint remained decisive for General von Falkenhayn even after the final failure of the German attacks in Flanders in mid-November, when he could no longer ignore the realization that the time when the decisive battle in the West could be fought with a prospect of success had been postponed. His guiding thought remained the earliest possible resumption. Although by the end of November, given the predicament in which the conduct of war in the East had fallen due to the superiority of the Russians, a significant reinforcement of the Eastern Army could no longer be avoided. Nevertheless, General von Falkenhayn still saw its task at the end of 1914 merely as "pushing the Russians back to the Vistula or into their bridgeheads, otherwise clearing up the Russian parts standing opposite West Prussia and in East Prussia as quickly as possible, but then limiting itself to a more holding conduct of war."(1) A similar task, in his view, fell to the leadership of the Austro-Hungarian army in Galicia and Serbia, "with whose solution they have enough to do for the winter months."(1)

However, it would be wrong to see the restraint of the German Chief of Staff towards the proposals of the leaders on the Eastern Front, aimed at a decisive conduct of war against Russia, as an expression of rigid adherence to his once chosen solution, according to which the decision in the West was to be pursued directly. His restraint corresponded much more to fundamental considerations about the peculiarities of the theater of war and the resulting possibilities of success and views of the war against Russia.

1) Volume VII, p. 74.

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the success possibilities and views of the war against Russia arising from the mutual balance of forces. When in those days General Wild von Hohenborn proposed in a memorandum to shift the focus of German warfare from the western theater to the eastern and to seek the decision there first, General von Falkenhayn noted in the margin of this memorandum that "a complete military overthrow of Russia is to be achieved." It is difficult to assume that he drew such far-reaching conclusions solely based on the previous results of operations on the Eastern Front, which, despite brilliant victories of the commander-in-chief, often remained without decisive impact. Undoubtedly, even then, his judgment was decisively influenced by the question of force requirements and the consideration of the immeasurably vast operational space of the Russian Empire, viewpoints that General von Falkenhayn repeatedly asserted in the further course of the campaign in the East. He was convinced that for the decisive offensive in the East, a deployment of forces was necessary that far exceeded what he could muster with regard to the security of the Western Front. A shortening of this front by straightening or withdrawing the existing positions and a large-scale saving of forces was out of the question for him, given the paramount importance he attached to holding every inch of ground in France and Belgium. But even if a significant saving of forces for the East could be achieved, any attempt to strive for the desired final decision against the eastern colossus seemed doomed to failure due to the enormous difficulty of preventing the Russians from retreating into the interior of their empire. "Napoleon's experiences did not invite imitation of his example."

With this fundamental attitude, it was not difficult for the head of the German overall operations at the beginning of 1915 to reject a proposal from the Austrian Chief of Staff, which aimed to force a breakthrough through the Russian front in West Poland between Nida and Pilica towards Radom by "ruthlessly deploying new German forces from the West or from new formations" and thereby achieve "a full, decisive success." Also, the intention expressed shortly thereafter by General von Conrad to launch a major offensive from the Carpathian Front to deliver a decisive blow, whose effect he estimated far higher than mere territorial gain up to the San-Dniester line, was met with strong reservations by General von Falkenhayn from the outset.

1) Volume VII, p. 5. — 2) Volume V, p. 585. — 3) von Falkenhayn, p. 48.

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Review of General von Falkenhayn's Conduct of War against Russia.

“whose effect he estimated far higher than mere territorial gain up to the

San-Dniester line”) General von Falkenhayn faced from the beginning

with strong reservations. That he did not oppose the implementation of this

plan can only be explained by the fact that the Commander-in-Chief East also

advocated for it emphatically and had already independently provided the

German forces needed to form the Southern Army. The very soon visible

failure of the Carpathian Offensive justified the concerns of the German

Chief of General Staff.

He simultaneously found himself in a particularly difficult situation due to the request

of Field Marshal von Hindenburg to transfer the newly formed corps in the homeland

for deployment on the left wing of his front in East Prussia. General von Falkenhayn

planned their use on the western theater of war, although initially unable to

consider a far-reaching offensive. When he finally

“reluctantly” acceded to the request of the Commander-in-Chief East, it was

partly in view of the ally's situation, whose growing

difficulties he could not ignore. Certainly, other considerations and motives

also played a role, as the question of deploying the new corps in connection

with the prior transfer of General Ludendorff to the Southern Army had created

an extremely serious crisis on a personal level, concerning the

position of the Chief of General Staff. In no way, however, could he indulge

in the hopes that the Field Marshal attached to the planned offensive. This

was linked to a “decisive, probably devastating defeat” of the Russian

northern wing facing East Prussia, but he also believed that by continuing

the offensive “with full force on Bialystok”

while simultaneously pressing from the Carpathians, he could foresee “the final

defeat of Russia” and thus an outcome that he considered

“decisive for the outcome of the entire war.” In contrast, General von Falkenhayn

expected only “greater local successes” with

the effect of putting the Russians “in such a position that they would not be able

to become dangerous to us in the foreseeable future.” The actual course

of operations did not yield the decisive results hoped for by the Commander-in-Chief East

and thus proved General von Falkenhayn's view correct. He saw in this a new confirmation

of his fundamental view that, given the relatively modest resources available to Germany for offensive operations, the continued application of operations against the flank or wing of the Russian front could not be granted prospects of significant success.

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to participate. The history of the decision's formation reveals that suggestions from the circle of trusted advisors of General von Falkenhayn, especially from the Army High Command Mackensen and the Austro-Hungarian military leadership, played a decisive role. However, the German Chief of General Staff knew how to process these suggestions into a plan, rejecting those that seemed too far-reaching or inappropriate, in which his unchanged fundamental stance on the question of the fight against Russia was decisive. He certainly recognized that a turning point in the conduct of the war in the East had been reached, where a spatial and temporal expansion of the operational goal was urgently desirable and permissible, considering the general war situation, through the powerful exploitation of the partial successes achieved so far into a unified strike. However, he was not prepared for a further increase in the deployment of forces by further utilizing the resources of the Western theater of war; on the contrary, he sent two divisions back there. Painstakingly avoiding falling into "boundless plans," he set himself a task, in full agreement with Generaloberst von Conrad, that seemed achievable with the available forces, considering the overall situation of the Central Powers. Again, he wanted to bring the Russians into a situation by weakening and paralyzing their offensive power "where they would not be able to become dangerous to us in the foreseeable future." The long-standing intention, reluctantly postponed time and again, to assist the Turkish ally by subduing Serbia, also made a solution desirable that promised the early conclusion of offensive operations in Russia. On this basis, the idea of the closest possible concentric cooperation of the Mackensen army group and the Commander-in-Chief East in the area between the Bug, Vistula, and lower Narew suggested itself. A setback seemed almost impossible here, even if the offensive should not penetrate or stall halfway in the worst case. General von Falkenhayn, however, believed in the success of the operation and hoped for a great, also operationally significant success, "the cutting off of the enemy masses standing at the Vistula and in front of Mackensen."1) In this, he saw a "decisive victory corresponding to the purposes of the Supreme Army Command." The then Prussian Minister of War, General Wild von Hohenborn, has, in retrospect, expressed himself in a record dated August 27, 1915, as follows:

1) von Falkenhayn, p. 98.

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Looking back on this in a record from August 27, 1915, it was stated as follows: "Falkenhayn initially only wanted to reach the San, then he was driven to Lemberg, then came the thrust along the Bug. Everything developed historically, as if by itself, one thing from another. Initially, no one here thought of a final major operation. Only later will the matter be portrayed as a brilliant plan in history. But those who were involved know that strategy is a simple thing, where one limited goal follows another, to then present a proud overall picture, at which the layman thinks God knows what. Incidentally, Falkenhayn merely followed his own operational thinking when he acted differently than Hindenburg suggested."

However, the question arises whether the fundamental view of General von Falkenhayn, emphasized here as well, regarding the limited effectiveness of any offensive operation in the vast spaces of Russia, provides a sufficient explanation for his behavior in the opinion dispute with the Commander-in-Chief East that began in early July. If he rejected the operation proposed by the latter "north of the Njemen with simultaneous attack on Kowno" with the reasoning that it "ran the risk of scattering in an eccentric direction and merely leading to greater expansion"¹), one misses an examination of the success possibilities and prospects of the idea, as it seems, initially only hinted at, but nevertheless obvious, of an offensive on and over Wilna. An examination would have easily revealed that this offensive, in terms of effort, time, and space, did not pursue "nebulous goals" at all, that it could be conducted as well as the Narew operation within the framework of deliberately limited warfare, that it hardly faced greater supply difficulties like this one, but that it promised an operational, depth-fed, much greater impact, because its thrust direction immediately threatened the main lifelines of the Russian army north of the Rokitno swamps. This operational effect could still be increased if, at the same time, from the opposite direction from the south, a strong pressure was exerted from the beginning on the area east of the Bug against the rear connections to Russia south of the swamps by the Mackensen army group. One may ponder the much-debated question of whether in the summer of 1915 an operation aimed at a double-sided encirclement in this sense could have led to the destruction of large parts of the Russian army and thereby the campaign decision hoped for by the Commander-in-Chief East, think as one might, one thing should be beyond question, that the mere threat to the enemy's rear in the thrust directions over Wilna and east of the Bug must have had a momentous impact on the behavior of the main mass of Russians standing in Poland.

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so that the campaign decision hoped for by the Commander-in-Chief East could

be brought about, think as one will, it must be beyond question that

the enemy's threat to the rear in the thrust directions over Vilna and east of the Bug

alone must have had a momentous impact on the behavior of the main mass of Russians stationed in Poland.

To counter the danger of an unprecedented release of weapons,

a massive regrouping of forces on the largest scale from the

area between the Narew, Vistula, and Bug to the Niemen front and in

the area east of Brest Litovsk would have been necessary. The inevitably

associated hasty retreat from Poland could easily have turned into a catastrophe under the pressure

of the pursuers, surely it would have severely and lastingly shaken the fighting

strength and morale of the troops.

These were all reasons, within the realm of possibility,

that the responsible leader of operations could also consider in his

standpoint of warfare with limited objectives. Retrospective consideration cannot

escape the impression that General von Falkenhayn faced the

proposals and requests of the Commander-in-Chief East both at the decisive

meeting in Posen on July 2 and in the following

weeks, when these requests took on a stormy form, with a

certain inner prejudice that made it difficult, if not impossible, for him to

objectively examine the pros and cons. In his justified advice and objections of others

it is striking that he was not inaccessible by nature. The explanation

may be found in the psychological field. The widespread assumption of

personal rivalry is indeed more serious. Examination hardly stood.

It suffices in this regard to refer to the letter of August 24 to

Field Marshal von Hindenburg, in which the Chief of Staff

makes a charmingly open and beautiful confession of the high regard he holds for his position and sense of responsibility.

The interpretation that General von Falkenhayn, based on

the experiences of earlier times, did not trust the responsible personalities

of the High Command of the Commander-in-Chief East with the same degree of

judgment on the prospects of success in the fight against Russia as he did himself seems more accurate. In a letter dated October 8, 1915,

to Field Marshal von Hindenburg, he expressed himself with the words:

"I cannot, with my proposals, rely on the feelings of others, but solely on my own conviction."

1) p. 350.

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but merely to rely on my own conviction." It seems

as if the self-assured adherence to principles and convictions once deemed correct

demonstrated here made General von Falkenhayn hesitant at the decisive moment

of July 1915 in relation to the thoughts of the Commander-in-Chief East.

In the first days after the start of the new offensive, he saw

no reason to subject his own plan regarding the prospects of success

to a review or change. All indications

seemed to suggest that a major military success with considerable

operational impact was imminent. On July 20, he considered it "highly

probable that the decision in the fight against Russia

would fall in the area south of the Narew." He decided to

even bring back the two divisions that had been withdrawn a few weeks earlier

to the western theater of war. However, disillusionment soon followed.

The offensive stalled both with the Mackensen Army Group

and with the Gallwitz Army Group. The

Commander-in-Chief East repeatedly and increasingly urged

the operation of his left wing against the Russian connections. The

Minister of War, General Wild von Hohenborn, and the head of the field

railway service, Major General Groener, advised in the same direction1). The

Chief of General Staff, however, summarily rejected the idea even now, as "the

commitment of all our forces currently deployed here until winter

would be a certain consequence." With tenacity, he held on to his own plan despite the

disappointing results that the course of the operation had brought

so far. He did not believe that the enemy,

as Field Marshal von Hindenburg rightly feared, would evade the

battle decision in Poland by a quick retreat to the Brest

Litovsk—Bialystok line. "The Russians must be defeated

before they decide to do so"2). On July 30, he hoped for "the defeat

of the enemy through the most vigorous continuation of the ongoing

operations"2). A few days later, there was no longer any doubt

that the Russians had systematically initiated the retreat on the entire front in Poland.

Instead of the desired battle decision, the task of pursuit arose. Here too, as the

Chief of General Staff emphasized on August 6,3), everything depended on

defeating the enemy in Poland by attacking from all sides." A week later, he

hoped that by pressing sharply from all sides, it would be possible

to capture large parts of the retreating enemy this side of the forest of Bialowies and at least significantly disrupt their retreat."

1) C. 315. — 2) C. 342. — 3) C. 346.

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Bialowies to engage in battle, at least to significantly disrupt their retreat“).

However, these wishes and hopes were not fulfilled. Despite all efforts and exertions of the pursuers, the enemy always and everywhere evaded capture. By mid-August, General von Falkenhayn could no longer deny the truth of the Eastern Commander's statement: “The operation in the East has ... not led to the destruction of the enemy. The Russian has, as expected, evaded the length and allows himself to be pushed back frontally in the direction he desires”2). The German Chief of Staff, however, easily reconciled himself to this operationally unsatisfactory result as a natural process, which one had to try to disturb and hinder, but could not prevent. His rapid change of mood becomes understandable when one considers the fundamental idea that had always dominated him, that a “complete military overthrow of Russia would never be achieved.” With this consistently held fundamental idea, it was not difficult for him to see the recent events in a favorable light. Not disappointment over a minor operational result took place, but satisfaction with a performance fully sufficient for the purposes of the Supreme Army Command. Thus, General von Falkenhayn perceived the inherently manifold findings of the Eastern Commander as unjustified criticism and saw in them only new evidence that the command authority held completely false ideas about the limits of success that were drawn for any offensive operation in Russia. In his response, he stated3):

“A destruction of the enemy has never been hoped for from the ongoing operations in the East, but merely a decisive victory corresponding to the purposes of the Supreme Army Command ...” For a complete destruction, “the basic conditions are simply lacking. For one cannot strive to destroy an enemy who is numerically far superior and facing frontally, who has excellent connections, unlimited time, and unrestricted space, while one is forced to operate in railway-less, path-poor terrain with a tight time limit in deploying very limited forces, some of which are not even resistant troops.” Following this, General von Falkenhayn strongly emphasized the positive achievements of his operation and claimed credit for them, stating that the enemy “is now already decisively defeated for our purposes, as the Russians, apart from their enormous loss of prisoners and material, have lost Galicia, Poland, and Courland and are no longer in a position to seriously threaten Austria-Hungary in the foreseeable future.”

1) G. 421. — 2) G. 347. — 3) G. 348.  
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“Decisively defeated in purpose,” as the Russians, apart from their massive losses in prisoners and material, had lost Galicia, Poland, and Courland and were no longer in a position to seriously threaten Austria-Hungary “at any foreseeable time.”

General von Falkenhayn consistently adhered to this view until the conclusion of the war of movement in the East in the autumn of 1915. In his decisive agreement to the late execution of the operation of the Commander-in-Chief East on Vilna, he expressly opposed any possibility of defeating an enemy who was determined to retreat without regard for losses in land and people as soon as he was engaged, and who had vast Russia at his disposal1). Even after the unsatisfactory outcome of the Vilna offensive, he reiterated in a letter to the Commander-in-Chief East2) that one could not hope to decisively encircle a numerically superior enemy who would not stand without regard for losses in land and people, with vast Russia and good railways behind him. However, one could harm such an enemy in a manner completely sufficient for our purposes by staying firmly on his blade everywhere, thus binding him in movement and relatively weakening him, but then striking deep into his lines at a well-chosen spot with concentrated forces. He cited the “campaigns of Mackensen, Woyrsch, and Gallwitz” as successful examples of this method.

Yet, the last phase of the war of movement in 1915 in Russia shows that the repeatedly stated commitment to warfare with limited objectives did not spare the German Chief of General Staff from confronting the conflicting desires and interests of his own strategy in practical action. From the end of August, he found himself in internal conflict. On one hand, he wanted to harm and weaken the enemy as much as possible so that he could not strengthen for an offensive in the foreseeable future; on the other hand, the consideration of the overall situation of the Central Powers urged the quick conclusion of the offensive in Russia to secure sufficient forces for the Serbian campaign and the defense of the Western Front. The attempt to simultaneously and equally account for both viewpoints proved unfeasible. Despite internal resistance, General von Falkenhayn was compelled to initially support and relieve the offensive operations of the two army flanks, initially conceived as special undertakings with limited objectives, with the forces of the army center to an extent that far exceeded his original intentions.

1) p. 492. — 2) Letter from October 8, 1915.

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only as special operations with limited objectives, the offensive operations of the two army wings were supported and relieved by the forces of the army center to an extent that went far beyond his original intentions. And yet, as the events at the front of the ally particularly proved, the enemy was not "damaged in a way completely sufficient for our purposes." On the other hand, the prolonged expenditure of strong forces at unintended locations impaired the decision-making and freedom of action for the tasks of other theaters of war. For the overall conduct of the war, it would undoubtedly have been more in line with General von Falkenhayn's standpoint if he had adhered to the decision to break off operations in the East at the end of August and consequently also prevented the special operations of the two army wings. It would then have been possible to launch the offensive against Serbia at an earlier time with the equally strong forces intended for both allies, thus avoiding the highly undesirable increase in the German contingent, and also to make strong reserves available in time for use on the western theater of war.

Thus, the war of movement of 1915 in the East concluded with significant territorial gains, as far as the German front was concerned, but not with a severe disruption of the combat power of the Russians. Yet they still held the field. The success was bought with all the disadvantages that the Central Powers fighting on the inner line faced in fixing substantial forces and resources in extended positions deep in enemy territory. Whether this result, achieved with a conscious renunciation of decisive warfare, was sufficient in terms of strategic rear security to now resume the decisive battle against the French and English with a prospect of success was the fateful question facing the German Supreme Army Command at the turn of the year 1915/1916.

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Appendix 1 on loose sheet with "Maps and Sketches".

Appendix 2.

The Mutual Balance of Forces in Infantry on the Western Front around Mid-June 1915.

On June 11, 1915, General von Falkenhayn pointed out in a wire to the Commander-in-Chief East that no further forces could be withdrawn from the West: "Since the Western opponents, who are of the highest military value, have about 600 more battalions at the front than we do, this is not surprising."

Even on the enemy's side, there was an awareness of a very significant superiority at this time.

1. The German Calculation.

The total number of battalions of the German Western Army was 1156. Since the troop overviews of the German Western Armies taken in advance by the Reichsarchiv only cover the reference dates between April 5 and June 30, 1915 — almost a quarter of a year apart — errors in today's calculation are unavoidable. 91 battalions that were missing in the overviews are included. Landsturm battalions are only counted as far as they were actually at the front, and fortress garrisons only those from Metz (excluding Landsturm). Recruit depots have been disregarded.

Based on the information provided by the Intelligence Department at the Chief of the General Staff of the Field Army up to June 11, the following emerges:

The number of French battalions in France was 1326. This includes all known Territorial Divisions — also those presumed to be in Paris at the time — as well as the divisions 151, 152, 155, which are considered questionable.

The British Army in France comprised 399 battalions. This includes seven English active battalions, 46 Territorial battalions, and 46 Indian battalions outside the divisional association, as well as 72 battalions of divisions 9 and 10, which were presumed to be in France. The presence of these 166 battalions was partly only assumed (agent reports); partly their usability as front-line troops was questionable.

The number of Belgian battalions was 61.

Thus, the 1156 battalions faced a total of 1786 enemy battalions. This resulted in a superiority of the opponents by 630 battalions. However, the documents regarding the assessment of the British troops were incomplete.

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Mutual Force Ratio of Infantry on the Western Front.

2. Official French Data.

The French official figure ¹) quantifies the total strength of the allied troops opposing the Germans on the Western Front in mid-June 1915 as

1360 French battalions (including about 280 territorial battalions),

318 British battalions,

76 Belgian battalions,

thus totaling 1754 battalions and estimates, presumably based on calculations from June 1915, the number of German battalions at 1128.

According to this calculation, the superiority of the allied French, British, and Belgians would have been 626 battalions.

3. The Actual Ratio.

If one assumes for the German side the numbers calculated under point 1, and for the opponents the numbers contained in the French official figure, it results that by mid-June 1915

1156 German battalions

1754 French-British-Belgian

faced each other, so the superiority of the opponents was 598 battalions.

¹) French official figure, III, p. 161.

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Information on the Deployment, Training, and Use of the "Kitchener" Troops. Annex 3.

Some information on the deployment, training, and use of the British "Kitchener" troops¹).

At the outbreak of war, Great Britain had 450,000 regular troops²), about 300,000 Territorial troops, and about 350,000 National Reserve. Of the regular troops, 118,000 men were stationed outside the homeland. For use in the expeditionary corps to be sent to France, initially only the regular troops stationed at home (332,000 men) and those Territorial troops who had volunteered to serve outside the country in case of danger (17,621 men) were considered, totaling around 350,000 men.

On August 5, 1914, the House of Commons approved an increase in the regular army by 500,000 men. On August 6, Lord Kitchener, appointed Secretary of State for War, considered this measure insufficient and further reinforcement necessary. He planned to establish a whole series of new, so-called "Kitchener" divisions in addition to the existing units. The training of these formations was to take place in special camps according to needs through recruitment. On August 7, 1914, the government issued a call through posters and the press for the voluntary enlistment of 100,000 recruits. The number continued to increase from August 8 to 12. By mid-September 1914, 500,000 volunteers had already been enlisted. Restrictive measures had to be issued because the existing military facilities could not cope with such an expansion of the army. Accommodation and procurement of the necessary clothing and equipment posed difficulties. Needs could largely only be met through contracts with foreign countries. A significant issue was the lack of training personnel. On August 17, a law was passed allowing the reinstatement of discharged non-commissioned officers. In addition to the deferment of 500 officers just transferred to India on Lord Kitchener's orders, the recruitment of all available active officers, reserve officers, Territorial officers of the training corps, unassigned and re-enlisted officers, especially non-commissioned officers promoted to officers, served to create the lower leadership personnel.

The lack of sufficient weapons severely hampered training. On October 11, the government was forced to lift some of the restrictive measures issued in mid-September due to a sharp decline in volunteer enlistments. At the same time, a Parliamentary Recruitment Committee was established to organize recruitment activities uniformly. While the other arms continued to be supplemented from existing depots, the entire country was divided into districts for infantry volunteer replacements, generally corresponding to regions, with larger cities forming their own districts. Each of these districts was to supply recruits for a specific regiment. Recruitment for the Territorial troops continued alongside.

¹) According to the British official work.  
²) Active troops, reserve, special reserve.

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Information on the Formation, Training, and Use of the "Kitchener" Troops.

In total, the number of volunteers enlisted by the end of 1914 was 1,186,337 men, with an average number for the months of November 1914 to June 1915 of 125,000.

On May 19, 1915, Lord Kitchener issued a new call for an additional 300,000 recruits. This time, the effect fell short of previous results, with only 115,000 men enlisting in June.

Meanwhile, the disadvantages for the war-essential industries of the country had become apparent, as they lost about 33% of their workforce to the armed forces. To prevent this, the government was forced to introduce the "National Registration Act" on July 15, 1915, i.e., the compulsory registration of all male and female British citizens aged 15 to 65 by age, gender, residence, occupation, and fitness. After these lists were completed on September 15, certain industries were closed to volunteers. The lists of men aged 18 to 41 were handed over to the recruitment authorities so that the relevant individuals, as long as they did not belong to exempted professions, could initiate increased recruitment activities.

On October 11, 1915, Lord Derby was appointed as the Director-General of Recruiting. He already presented a bill (Derby Scheme) on October 16, representing the last attempt to adhere to the volunteer system. It was still allowed to report at a specific time or to a unit. Those who did not want to do this were to enroll in special lists with the obligation to follow the government's call to arms in times of danger. Upon the acceptance of the law, Prime Minister Asquith assured that in case of need, unmarried men would be called upon first. By December 15, 1915, 2,184,979 men had enrolled in these Derby lists, while 215,431 men reported for immediate service during the same period. The total number of volunteers enlisted in 1915 was 1,280,362.

The volunteer units were organized into Kitchener Divisions for training, which were grouped into Kitchener Armies, each consisting of six divisions. The 1st Kitchener Army was formed on August 21, 1914, the 2nd on September 9, 1914, and the 3rd on September 13, 1914. The 4th and 5th Armies already existed in September 1914 but were reorganized and only received their final form on April 27, 1915.

Of the Kitchener Divisions, which were numbered from 9 to 26 and from 30 to 41, 26 were deployed in France, 3 at the Dardanelles, and 2 initially in Egypt, later in France. By the end of 1915, 21 divisions had arrived in France, one of which was transferred back to Malta in November 1915. Deployment to the front occurred, unless events forced other conditions, only after training behind the front for about three months.

The combat value of the Kitchener Divisions, according to English judgment, never reached that of the old regular divisions. The goodwill of leaders and troops, their intellectual abilities, and their zeal could not compensate for the incomplete training and lack of experience.

1) With the moment of landing, the concept of the "Kitchener" Army disappeared, and the troops were assigned to the existing armies there.

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Source Reference.

The presentation is based on the files located in the Reichsarchiv as well as on information from involved leading personalities and their collaborators. Below, the most important sources of the available literature are listed. As far as they are cited in the presentation, it is done with the keyword highlighted in this directory.

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