

# 1<sup>ST</sup> POLISH INDEPENDENT PARACHUTE BRIGADE

The 1st Polish Independent Parachute Brigade (1.Polska Samodzielna Brygada Spadochronowa) was formed in Scotland on 23 September 1941.

It was composed of Polish soldiers who, after the fall of France in 1940, arrived in the United Kingdom. The brigade was reinforced by volunteers from Polish Army units formed in Russia and evacuated from there via the Middle East. Further volunteers came from other countries all over the world. The troops received parachute and other specialised training in the brigade and British training centres.

In June 1944 the brigade received its Regimental Colours, a gift from the Polish women of Warsaw, secretly made and consecrated in November 1942 in a Warsaw church.

In July 1944 the brigade was transferred from Scotland to England, where it became part of the First Allied Airborne Army and made operational under its newly promoted commander Major General Stanislaw Sosabowski.

As the liberation of Europe progressed, the brigade was briefed for several actions. The first drop was to be near Paris, another in the north of France, followed by Belgium. Each of these was cancelled at the last moment. For political and logistical reasons the brigade was not permitted to support the popular Polish uprising in Warsaw that began in August.

Finally, in September 1944 the brigade, attached to the British 1st Airborne Division took part in the assault to capture the Rhine crossings at Arnhem.

Part of the brigade was lost during contested landings. However the brigade's 2nd Battalion and elements of the 3rd dropped at Driel, opposite Arnhem on the south bank of the Lower Rhine on 23 September. This caused a radical dislocation of the German siege around the cut off 1st Airborne Division in Oosterbeek, ensuring its further survival by a few more days.

Having established a 'hedgehog' defensive perimeter on the south bank the Poles managed to ferry 200 paratroopers across the river to support the Oosterbeek defence. They covered the withdrawal of the 1st Airborne Division during the night of 25/26 September, after being reached by the advance elements of the approaching British XXX Corps ground advance. The brigade lost 23% of its fighting strength, which amounted to 400 casualties.

Maj Gen Sosabowski, was controversially removed from command in December 1944, following sustained criticism by Lt Gen Browning, with whom Sosabowski had an acrimonious relationship. This treatment of Sosabowski, and by implication 1st Polish Para Brigade, was considered to be an injustice by many of the British airborne veterans who served and fought alongside the Poles in World War II.

In 1945 the brigade was attached to the Polish 1st Armoured division and undertook occupation duties in northern Germany until 30 June 1947 when the unit was disbanded. Most of the Polish soldiers remained in exile in England.

The Polish 6th Air Assault Brigade is the present day successor to the war-time brigade.

by Harvey Grenville

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<http://www.paradata.org.uk/units/1st-polish-independent-parachute-brigade-0>



# CHAIN OF COMMAND



## 1 POLSKA SAMODZIELNA BRYGADA SPADOCHRONOWA

### 1<sup>st</sup> POLISH INDEPENDENT PARACHUTE BRIGADE

OPERATION MARKET GARDEN 1944

Missing a third of their Brigade, their Anti-tank batteries, all their Light Artillery and vital supplies, the Brigade was dropped in the middle of enemy positions. Isolated and surrounded by enemies, unable to link up with the Allied Forces, it was clear that something had gone wrong.

Playing this force with its initial historical arrangement will prove challenging due to the lack of support options the force had at the time of their jump.

Support lists will reflect the historical support at the time of the jump and then the follow on situation once the Brigade finally began to see Allied Forces and support arrive many days later.

#### PLATOON FORCE RATING:

Elite: +5 (Aggressive)

Command Dice: 5

#### PLATOON HEADQUARTERS

Podporucznik, *Senior Leader*, with Sten  
Sierzant, *Senior Leader*, with Sten

#### PIAT TEAM

PIAT, 2 crew

#### MORTAR TEAM

2" Mortar, 2 crew

#### SECTIONS ONE TO THREE

Plutonowy, *Junior Leader*, with Sten

#### LMG TEAM

Bren Gun  
Three crew

#### RIFLE TEAM

Six riflemen

### POLISH SUPPORT LIST

#### LIST ONE

Sticky Bomb or similar  
Medical Orderly  
Engineer Mine Clearance *Team*, 3 men  
Engineer Wire Cutting *Team*, 3 men  
Engineer Demolition *Team*, 3 men

Minefield

Barbed Wire

Adjutant

Jeep, no crew

Entrenchments for one *Team*

#### LIST TWO

Roadblock

PIAT *Team*, 2 men

2" mortar *Team*, 4 men

Pre-Game Barrage

#### LIST THREE

Engineer Flamethrower *Team*, 3 men

Sniper *Team*

#### LIST FOUR

Forward Observer *Team* with 3" mortar battery off-table.

Engineer *Section* with *Junior Leader*

Regular Vickers MMG on tripod, 5 crew

Below is the additional support available to the Brigade after Allied Forces linked up with the Brigade.

Support is from British XXX (30<sup>th</sup>) Corps and Irish Guards.

### ADDITIONAL ALLIED FORCE SUPPORT LIST

#### LIST THREE

Scout Car with *Junior Leader*

Universal Carrier with *Team* and *Junior Leader*

#### LIST FOUR

Regular Rifle section with *Junior Leader*

#### LIST FIVE

6 pounder anti-tank gun with 5 crew and a *Junior Leader*

Armoured Car with *Junior Leader*

M5 Stuart Light Tank with *Junior Leader*

#### LIST SIX

Additional Parachute *Section* with *Junior Leader*

M4 Sherman with *Junior Leader*

17 pounder anti-tank gun with 5 crew and *Junior Leader*

#### LIST SEVEN

Sherman Firefly with *Junior Leader*

## POLISH NATIONAL CHARACTERISTICS

### FIVE ROUNDS RAPID!

The British soldier is taught to love his rifle and the mantra that delivery of fast, accurate fire is the key to success.

When a Leader is attached to a rifle *Team* and uses two or more *Command Initiatives* to activate that *Team*, he may add that many D6 to the *Team's* firing dice to reflect his controlling their rapid fire.

### CONCENTRATED FIRE

The Bren gun was a reliable and popular weapon, but in truth it was too accurate to be an ideal light support weapon. As a result the British used its accuracy to good effect by concentrating their fire on a specific target and, effectively, sniping with the light machine gun.

When a Leader is attached to a Bren *Team* and uses two *Command Initiatives*, the *Team* may focus their fire against one enemy *Team*, even when other *Teams* are present within 4" of the target.

Most of the support options on the list will be self-explanatory and their qualities covered by the National Arsenal Table.

### STICKY BOMBS

Details of the Sticky Bomb, along with several other Polish hand-held weapons which may be used instead if preferred, are shown on Table Seven, *Hand-Held Anti-Tank Weapons*. It may be used once by any *Section* on the table when commanded by the *Senior Leader* commanding the platoon who is, we assume, carrying it with him up to that point.

How the charge works is detailed in Section 9.3.4, *Tank Hunters*.

### 2" MORTAR TEAM

The 2" mortar has only three rounds of High Explosive ammunition, the rest being all smoke rounds. It has no theoretical minimum range, but at under 12" the crew would normally use their rifles for reasons of their own safety. However, if using a 2" mortar to fire on a target under 12" roll a D6 for each hit achieved. On a roll of 3 to 6, the shrapnel from the round has hit the target *Unit*, the enemy will dice for the Hit Effect as normal. On a roll of 1 or 2, the

shrapnel from the round has hit the mortar *Team*, they must roll for the [Hit Effect on Table 6](#).

### SINGLE UNIVERSAL CARRIER

This has a crew of three men armed with a Bren gun and a *Junior Leader*.

### SCOUT CAR

This is the Dingo or Lynx commanded by a *Junior Leader* and armed with a Bren gun.

### ARMoured CAR

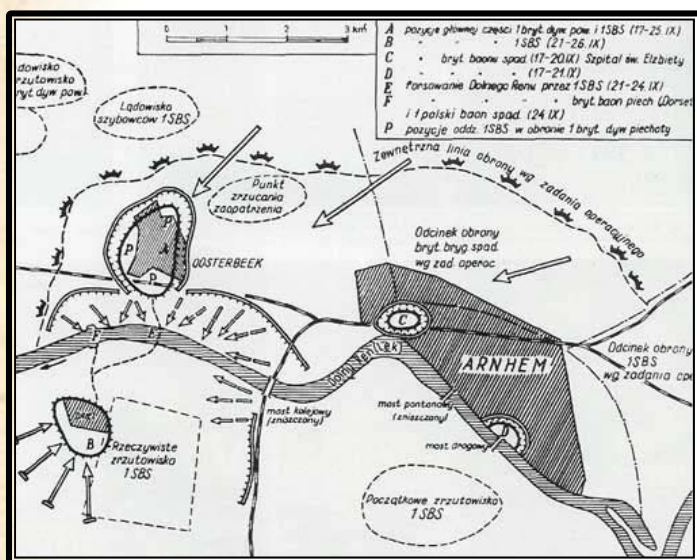
This covers the Daimler, Humber, AEC and Staghound Armoured Cars commanded by a *Junior Leader* and armed with a main gun and secondary machine gun.

## THE POLISH ARSENAL TABLE

The Arsenal Table below covers a range of Polish support options.

POLISH ARSENAL TABLE					
ARMOURD VEHICLES					
VEHICLE	ARMOUR	A.P.	H.E.	SPEED	NOTES
M5 or M5A1 Stuart	4	5	3	Fast	
M4 Sherman (all marks and variants)	6	7	6	Average	Ronson
Sherman VC "Firefly"	6	1	5	Slow	No Hull MG. Ronson
SCOUT & ARMOURD CARS					
Daimler Dingo Scout	2	0	MG	Wheeled	Single MG.
Lynx Scout Car	2	0	MG	Wheeled	Single MG.
Humber Mk IV	3	5	3	Wheeled	No hull MG.
Daimler Mk I	3	5	MG	Wheeled	No HE, no hull MG.
AEC Mark II	4	7	4	Wheeled	No hull MG.
AEC Mark III	4	6	6	Wheeled	No hull MG.
Staghound	3	5	3	Wheeled	
Staghound Mk II	3	3	6	Wheeled	
ANTI-TANK GUNS					
ANTI-TANK WEAPONS	A.P.		H.E.		
L50, 6 pounder	7		4		
L58, 17 pounder	12		5		

INFANTRY ANTI TANK WEAPONS						
WEAPON	0-6"	6-9"	9-18"	18-24"	24-36"	H.E.
PIAT	7		7		7	2



## CREDITS REFERENCES & FURTHER READING

### CREDITS

Credit goes to the following people and places. Works used with permission. Many thanks to them for allowing me to use their works.

#### Force Composition Details

Based upon a document provided by Andrew Parkes, translated from Polish to English by Alexander Kawczynski over at: <http://anatolisgameroom.blogspot.com.au/2013/08/1st-polish-independent-parachute.html>

#### Text and Background

Credit goes to Hervey Grenville and Paradata

<http://www.paradata.org.uk/units/1st-polish-independent-parachute-brigade-0>

### REFERENCES

The following works were also referenced.

<http://www.marketgarden.com/2010/UK/statistics/statis2.html>

<http://www.89fss.com/polish.htm>

<http://www.paradata.org.uk/units/1st-polish-independent-parachute-brigade-0>

<http://www.polandinexile.com/marketgarden.htm>

<http://www.rothwell.force9.co.uk/polish1.htm>

**No Greater Ally: The Untold Story of Poland's Forces in World War II:** By Kenneth K Koskodan

**World War II Airborne Warfare Tactics:** By Gordon L. Rottman

**THE ORGANIZATION AND ORDER OF BATTLE OF MILITARIES IN WORLD WAR II:** By Charles D. Pettibone

**The Polish Army 1939-45:** by Steven J. Zaloga; Richard Hook (21 January 1982). Osprey Publishing.

**Arnhem 1944: The Airborne Battle, 17-26 September – June 1, 1999:** by Martin Middlebrook

### FURTHER READING

For more details and information about this intriguing brigade, especially its formation, background and political use, I strongly suggest the following as well as the references above:

<http://anatolisgameroom.blogspot.com.au/2013/08/1st-polish-independent-parachute.html>

and while not completely used for this list, a translated 1934 Polish Infantry Manual. A fantastic resource.

<http://anatolisgameroom.blogspot.com.au/2013/08/translated-polish-army-manual-for.html>

Paradata contains some amazing resources, especially photographs and documents and war diaries of the fighting around Arnhem.

<http://www.paradata.org.uk/units/1st-polish-independent-parachute-brigade-0>

General Overview

<http://www.historicaleye.com/WorldWar2/eagles-on-the-rhine.html>