

THE BLACK BRIGADE

JOURNEY OF THE POLISH 10th CAVALRY BRIGADE

POLAND 1939

10 Brygada Kawalerii (10th Cavalry Brigade)

FRANCE 1940

10 Brygada Kawalerii Pancernej
(10th Armoured Cavalry Brigade)

NORMANDY 1944

10 Brygada Kawalerii Pancernej
(10th Polish Armoured Cavalry Brigade Group)

of the Polish 1 Dywizja Pancerna
(Polish 1st Armoured Division)

For five days they slowed the German advance until the Krakow Army's front was broken, and which they were pulled from the front lines. From there they performed screening actions helping the Polish forces withdraw until, after the invasion by the Soviet Union, they escaped and fled to into Hungary.

The 10th Cavalry Brigade was very well equipped at the start of the invasion, especially with machine guns and anti-tank guns. The unit lost about half of its men, but was never defeated in open combat, gaining respect even from the enemy.

The Germans called 10th Cavalry Brigade "Die Schwarze Brigade" – "The Black Brigade", because of the black jackets worn by Polish mechanized officers, NCO's and crew. Another uniform oddity for the 10th Cavalry brigade was the use of the German M1918 stahlhelm as it was better suited to tank crew and motorised units.

This was not to be the end of its history, however. With the silent support of Hungarians, most of its soldiers managed to get to France, to join the Polish Army. They fought in France in 1940 as the 10th Armoured Cavalry Brigade. After France surrendered, the veterans of "The Black Brigade" went to Great Britain and became the core of the Polish 1st Armoured Division.



HISTORY

10 Brygada Kawalerii (10th Cavalry Brigade)
Poland 1939

Organised in 1937 as an experimental motorised infantry Brigade, the 10th Cavalry Brigade was the first of two Polish Armoured Brigades and led by Col. Stanislaw Maczek. During the Invasion of Poland the brigade was attached to the Krakow Army defending Lesser Poland and Silesia and went into battle on the first day of the German invasion of Poland.



**10 Brygada Kawalerii Pancernej
(10th Armoured Cavalry Brigade)
France 1940**

After escaping to Hungary, many Polish soldiers went to France to create a new army (the Polish Army in France) to fight the Nazis. Unfortunately they were not able to get the equipment or training they needed quickly enough from the French. When the German invasion of France began, equipment was quickly received however with little time to train, they were rushed into action unprepared. General Maczek decided to lead a small force of his best trained men, hoping that the rest of his unit would join them later. That small force was called the 10th Armoured Cavalry Brigade (10 Brygada Kawalerii Pancernej) in honour of the "Black Brigade" from 1939. On June 6, 10th Brigade had one tank battalion, two strong motorized cavalry squadrons, one anti-tank battery and one anti-aircraft battery

The 10th Brigade of Armoured Cavalry fought in the Champagne and Bourgogne regions. It protected the flank of the 4th and 6th French Armies near Champaubert, northwest of Dijon, and on June 16 routed Germans near Montbard, but by then the brigade was fighting alone, with the French units on both flanks either routed or in retreat. By 18 June the unit was mostly surrounded and without fuel and ammunition. General Maczek ordered the destruction of the unit equipment and withdrawal; the unit would be later recreated under his command in United Kingdom as the Polish elite 1st Armoured Division; gen. Maczek would be considered one of the best Polish - and armoured - commanders of the war.



**10 Brygada Kawalerii Pancernej
(10th Polish Armoured Cavalry Brigade
Group)
Normandy 1944**

The 10th Polish Armoured Cavalry Brigade Group was part of the Polish 1st Armoured Division created in February 1942 at Duns, in Scotland (commanded by General Stanisław Maczek). The 10th trained with the 4th Canadian (Armoured) Division and was attached to the 1st Canadian Army landing at Normandy on 8th August 1944 as part of Operation Totalize. Apart from Normandy the 10th Polish Armoured Cavalry fought in Belgium and the Netherlands and finally in Germany. The operation that cemented the brigade's tenacity, skill and determination was to be in the series of offensive and defensive operations that came to be known as the Battle of Falaise. The Polish 1st Armoured Division ended the war in Wilhelmshaven after seizing the Kriegsmarine naval base where General Maczek accepted the capitulation of the fortress, naval base, East Frisian Fleet and more than 10 infantry divisions. There they stayed undertaking occupation duties until 1947, when the division was disbanded.



CHAIN OF COMMAND



10 Brygada Kawalerii — POLAND 1939

10th CAVALRY BRIGADE

The first of the Polish Motorised Brigades. First to fight, well-armed and equipped with machine guns and anti-tank guns. Strong in terms of manpower.

Called "The Black Brigade" for their officer's distinctive black leather coats, the brigade also wore German M1918 stahlhelms.

PLATOON FORCE RATING:

Elite: - 2

Command Dice: 5

PLATOON HEADQUARTERS

Porucznik, *Senior Leader*, with pistol

SECTION ONE TO THREE

Kapral, *Junior Leader*, with rifle

RIFLE SECTION

wz.28 BAR, 2 crew
3 riflemen

SECTION FOUR

Kapral, *Junior Leader*, with rifle

RIFLE TEAM

wz.35 AT-rifle, 2 crew
Three riflemen

POLISH SUPPORT LIST

LIST ONE

Satchel Charge
Medical Orderly
Engineer Mine Clearance <i>Team</i> , 3 men
Engineer Wire Cutting <i>Team</i> , 3 men
Engineer Demolition <i>Team</i> , 3 men
Minefield
Barbed Wire
Adjutant
Polski FIAT 621 L (truck) or similar, no crew
Polski FIAT 508/ 518 (car) or similar, no crew
Entrenchments for one <i>Team</i>

LIST TWO

Roadblock
AT rifle wz.35 <i>Team</i> , 2 crew
46mm wz.36 mortar <i>Team</i> , 3 crew
Pre-Game Barrage

LIST THREE

Motorized Reconnaissance Squadron
Ckm wz 30 MMG on tripod mount, 5 crew
Sniper <i>Team</i>

LIST FOUR

Bofors 37mm wz.36 anti-tank gun with 5 crew and <i>Junior Leader</i>
Regular Rifle section with <i>Junior Leader</i>
Forward Observer Team with 81mm mortar battery off-table.
Engineer <i>Section</i> with <i>Junior Leader</i>
40mm Bofors Gun, 5 crew with <i>Junior Leader</i>
TKS Tankette, MG armed, with <i>Junior Leader</i>
TKS Tankette, 20mm armed, with <i>Junior Leader</i>
TK3 Tankette, MG armed, with <i>Junior Leader</i>
TK3 Tankette, 20mm armed, with <i>Junior Leader</i>
7TP with <i>Junior Leader</i>
Vickers E, MG armed with <i>Junior Leader</i>
Vickers E 47mm armed with <i>Junior Leader</i>

LIST FIVE

75mm wz.97/17 with five crew and <i>Junior Leader</i>

POLISH NATIONAL CHARACTERISTICS

GRANATNIK –OGNIA!

The Polish troops were trained to use their light mortar carefully, conserving ammunition until the critical moment of the fight. When a Senior Leader is attached to a light mortar Team and uses two or more Command Initiatives to direct their fire, they may add +1 to their roll to hit the target.

Once during a game a light mortar commanded by a Senior Leader who uses two or more Command Initiatives to direct their fire may add that many D6 to their firepower dice to represent rapid fire in that Phase.

TANK DEFENCE

The Polish soldier is trained not to be intimidated by tanks, but is trained to fight them off by firing at the command cupola and viewing slits. This hail of lead will not damage the enemy AFV, but may worry the crew.

To reflect this, when a *Leader* attached to a *Section* uses two Command Initiatives, he may focus their fire on any enemy AFV within 18". Roll as if an LMG team firing in Section 3.3, *MGs Against Armoured Vehicles*.

Most of the support options on the list will be self-explanatory and their qualities covered by the National Arsenal Table. All tanks and armoured cars come with a *Junior Leader*. Transport only vehicles, such as the car are simply vehicles which come with no crew. Remember, you will need to allocate men to drive these.

SACHEL CHARGE

The satchel charge is shown on Table Seven, *Hand-Held Anti-Tank Weapons*. The charge 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*. A maximum of two satchel charges may be selected by a Polish force.

46MM MORTAR TEAM

The 46mm wz.36 mortar has both smoke and H.E. rounds. It has a minimum range of 24", but closer than that the crew may use their rifles.

75MM wz.97/17

This is the French 1897 model 75mm *Soixante-Quinze* Field Gun. Unusually in Chain of Command a weapon of this type may be deployed on the table and used as an antitank gun. It may not fire High Explosive rounds at any infantry or other type of target on the table.

MOTORCYCLE RECONNAISSANCE TEAM

The Polish Recon Team is made up of two men crewing a wz35 AT Gun, one rifleman and a *Plutonowy Junior Leader*. They are equipped with four motorcycles. Motorcycles operate as wheeled vehicles but re-roll any 1's rolled.

THE POLISH ARSENAL TABLE

The Arsenal Table below covers a wide range of Polish support options. For Polish infantry weapons see Table Four, *The Master Arsenal Table*

FRENCH ARSENAL TABLE					
ARMOURED VEHICLES					
VEHICLE	ARMOUR	A.P.	H.E.	SPEED	NOTES
TKS/ TK3 tankette MGs	2	-	MG	Fast	Low profile, Small, No turret
TKS/ TK3 tankette FK-20mm	2	4	6	Fast	Low profile, Small, No turret
7TP jw 37mm Bofors wz.37	3	5	3	Average	No Hull MG
7TP dw Twin MG turrets	3	-	MG	Average	No Hull MG
Vickers E type A Twin MG turrets	3	-	MG	Average	No Hull MG
Vickers E type B 47mm Vickers OQF 3 pounder	3	4	4	Average	No Hull MG
TRANSPORT VEHICLES					
Car	-	-	-	Average	Softskin
Polski Fiat 508/ 518	-	-	-	Average	Softskin
ANTI-TANK GUNS					
ANTI-TANK WEAPONS	A.P.		H.E.		
Bofors Wz.36 37mm	5		3		
Bofors 40mm AA gun	5		6		
75mm wz.97/17	7		-		
wz.35 Anti-Tank Rifle	3		1		



CHAIN OF COMMAND



10 Brygada Kawalerii PANCERNEJ

FRANCE 1940

10th ARMoured CAVALRY BRIGADE

The remnants of the 10th Cavalry Brigade that fled Poland into Hungary. Now reorganizing as the 10th Armoured Cavalry Brigade and being resupplied with new equipment by the French Army.

The small force was given the name 10th Armoured Cavalry Brigade in honour of the "Black Brigade" from 1939. On June 6, 1940, an under-equipped 10th Brigade had one tank battalion, two strong motorized cavalry squadrons, one anti-tank battery and one anti-aircraft battery.

PLATOON FORCE RATING:

Elite: +0

Command Dice: 5

PLATOON HEADQUARTERS

Porucznik, *Senior Leader*, with pistol

SECTION ONE TO THREE

Kapral, *Junior Leader*, with rifle

RIFLE SECTION

Chatellerault M24/29, 2 crew
3 riflemen

SECTION FOUR

Kapral, *Junior Leader*, with rifle

RIFLE TEAM

14mm Boys Anti-Tank Rifle, 2 crew
Three riflemen

POLISH SUPPORT LIST

LIST ONE

Satchel Charge
Medical Orderly
Engineer Mine Clearance *Team*, 3 men
Engineer Wire Cutting *Team*, 3 men
Engineer Demolition *Team*, 3 men
Minefield
Barbed Wire
Adjutant
Entrenchments for one *Team*
Jeep or Car, no crew

LIST TWO

Roadblock
14mm Boys Anti-Tank Rifle *Team*, 2 men

LIST THREE

Motorized Reconnaissance Team
Hotchkiss M1914 MMG on tripod mount, 5
Sniper *Team*
Pre-Game Barrage
Canon de 25mm L/72 AT gun with 5 crew and a *Junior Leader*
60mm mortar team, four crew and a *Junior Leader*

LIST FOUR

Regular Rifle section with *Junior Leader*
Engineer *Section* with *Junior Leader*
40mm Bofors Gun, 5 crew with *Junior Leader*
Renault R35/R40 with *Junior Leader*
Forward Observer Team with 81mm mortar battery off-table

POLISH NATIONAL CHARACTERISTICS

GRANATNIK –OGNIA!

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Once during a game a light mortar commanded by a Senior Leader who uses two or more Command Initiatives to direct their fire may add that many D6 to their firepower dice to represent rapid fire in that Phase.

TANK DEFENCE

The Polish soldier is trained not to be intimidated by tanks, but is trained to fight them off by firing at the command cupola and viewing slits. This hail of lead will not damage the enemy AFV, but may worry the crew.

To reflect this, when a *Leader* attached to a *Section* uses two Command Initiatives, he may focus their fire on any enemy AFV within 18". Roll as if an LMG team firing in Section 3.3, *MGs Against Armoured Vehicles*.

Most of the support options on the list will be self-explanatory and their qualities covered by the National Arsenal Table. All tanks and armoured cars come with a *Junior Leader*. Transport only vehicles, such as the car are simply vehicles which come with no crew. Remember, you will need to allocate men to drive these.

SATCHEL CHARGE

The satchel charge is shown on Table Seven, *Hand-Held Anti-Tank Weapons*. The charge 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*. A maximum of two satchel charges may be selected by a Polish force.

60MM MORTAR TEAM

The 60mm Brandt mortar has both smoke and H.E. rounds. It has a minimum range of 24" and no maximum range limit. At shorter ranges the crew can use their rifles.

MOTORCYCLE RECONNAISSANCE TEAM

The Polish Recon Team is made up of two men crewing a 14mm Boys Anti-Tank Rifle, one rifleman and a *Plutonowy Junior Leader*. They are equipped with four motorcycles. Motorcycles operate as wheeled vehicles but re-roll any 1's rolled.

THE POLISH ARSENAL TABLE

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POLISH ARSENAL TABLE					
ARMoured VEHICLES					
VEHICLE	ARMOUR	A.P.	H.E.	SPEED	NOTES
Renault R35	5	3	3	Slow	No Hull MG
Renault R40	5	4	3	Slow	No Hull MG
TRANSPORT VEHICLES					
Car	-	-	-	Average	Softskin
Polski Fiat 508/ 518	-	-	-	Average	Softskin
ANTI-TANK GUNS					
ANTI-TANK WEAPONS	A.P.		H.E.		
Bofors 40mm AA gun	5		6		
Canon de 25mm L/72	3		2		
14mm Boys Anti-Tank Rifle	3		1		



CHAIN OF COMMAND



10 Brygada Kawalerii PANCERNEJ

NORMANDY 1944

10th ARMoured CAVALRY BRIGADE

This force reflects an infantry platoon of the 10th pulk dragonów zmotoryzowanych (10th Polish Dragoons Regiment). This regiment is part of the 10th Polish Armoured Cavalry Brigade, Polish 1st Armoured Division.

After escaping the Invasion of France, the 10th Armoured Cavalry Brigade reformed and trained in Scotland, working closely with the 4th Canadian (Armoured) Division.

They were attached to the Canadian Division during the Invasion of Normandy and earned respect as an elite unit at the Battle of Falaise

PLATOON FORCE RATING:

Elite: +5

Command Dice: 5

PLATOON HEADQUARTERS	
Podporucznik, <i>Senior Leader</i> , with Sten	
Sierżant, <i>Senior Leader</i> , with Sten	
AT TEAM	
PIAT, 2 crew	
MORTAR TEAM	
2" Mortar, 2 crew (with Smoke)	

SECTIONS ONE TO THREE	
Plutonowy, <i>Junior Leader</i> , with Sten	
LMG TEAM	RIFLE TEAM
Bren Gun Three crew	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 or Car, no crew
 Entrenchments for one *Team*

LIST TWO

Roadblock
 PIAT *Team*, 2 men
 2" mortar *Team*, 2 men
 Pre-Game Barrage

LIST THREE

Engineer Flamethrower *Team*, 3 men
 M5 half-track, no weapons
 Sniper *Team*
 Pre-Game Barrage
 Universal Carrier with *Team* and *Junior Leader*

LIST FOUR

Regular Rifle section with *Junior Leader*
 Engineer *Section* with *Junior Leader*
 40mm Bofors Gun, 5 crew with *Junior Leader*
 Forward Observer and 3" mortar battery
 Regular Vickers MMG on tripod mount, 5 crew
 Reconnaissance Car with *Junior Leader*

LIST FIVE

6 pounder anti-tank gun with 5 crew and *Junior Leader*
 Recce *Section* of two Universal Carriers, 4 crew each. One *Junior Leader*
 Engineer *Section* in M5 with *Junior Leader*
 M5 Stuart Light Tank with *Junior Leader*
 Crusader AA Mk II

LIST SIX

M4 Sherman/ Sherman 75 with *Junior Leader*
 Sexton with *Junior Leader*
 17 Pounder anti-tank gun with 5 crew and *Junior Leader*

LIST SEVEN

Sherman Firefly with *Junior Leader*
 M10 Achilles with *Junior Leader*
 Cromwell Iv to VII with *Junior Leader*

POLISH NATIONAL CHARACTERISTICS

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Once during a game a light mortar commanded by a Senior Leader who uses two or more Command Initiatives to direct their fire may add that many D6 to their firepower dice to represent rapid fire in that Phase.

TANK DEFENCE

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Most of the support options on the list will be self-explanatory and their qualities covered by the National Arsenal Table. All tanks and armoured cars come with a *Junior Leader*. Transport only vehicles, such as the car are simply vehicles which come with no crew. Remember, you will need to allocate men to drive these.

SATCHEL CHARGE

Details of the Sticky Bomb, along with several other British 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*. A maximum of two satchel charges may be selected by a Polish force.

SINGLE UNIVERSAL CARRIER

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

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.

RECONNAISSANCE CAR

This is a Humber or M3A1 White Scout Car commanded by a *Junior Leader* and armed with the Boys anti-tank rifle and the Bren gun.

UNIVERSAL CARRIER RECONNAISSANCE SECTION

Two Universal carriers commanded by a single *Junior Leader*. These have a three man crew in each armed with a Bren, a PIAT or a 2" mortar.

THE POLISH ARSENAL TABLE

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POLISH ARSENAL TABLE					
ARMoured VEHICLES					
VEHICLE	ARMOUR	A.P.	H.E.	SPEED	NOTES
M4 Sherman (all marks and variants)	6	7	6	Average	Ronson
Sherman VC "Firefly"	6	12	5	Slow	Ronson. No hull MG
Cromwell Mk IV/V	6	7	6	Fast	
M5 or M5A1 Stuart	4	5	3	Fast	
SELF PROPELLED GUNS & AA TANKS					
M10 Achillies	4	12	5	Average	No hull MG
Crusader AA MkII	4	4	7	Fast	No turret MG
Sexton 25pdr SP	4	8	7	Average	Top mounted AA LMG only
TRANSPORT OR SCOUT VEHICLES					
Car or Jeep	-	-	-	Average	Softskin
Universal Carrier	2	As weapon		Fast	Low profile, Small
M5 Half track	2	As weapon		Fast	
Humber LRC III	2	3	MG	Wheeled	No hull MG
M3A1 White Scout Car	2	3	MG	Wheeled	No hull MG
ANTI-TANK GUNS					
ANTI-TANK WEAPONS	A.P.		H.E.		
Bofors 40mm AA gun	5		6		
L50, 6 pounder	7		4		
L58, 17 pounder	12		5		
14mm Boys Anti-Tank Rifle	3		1		
INFANTRY ANTI TANK WEAPONS					
WEAPON	0-9"	9-24"	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 documents provided by Alexander Kawczynski over at:

<http://anatolisgameroom.blogspot.se/2013/09/more-chain-of-command-lists-for-poland.html>

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The following works were also referenced.

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