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4th Rifle Division in Kuban and Odessa as Part of Polish Army in France (1918–1919)

4 Dywizja Strzelców na Kubaniu i w Odessie jako element Armii Polskiej we Francji (1918–1919)

ABSTRACT

This paper outlines the history of the 4th Rifle Division led by General Lucjan Żeligowski, which was established in the autumn of 1918 in Kuban in southern Russia. It was initially under the command of the Russian Volunteer Army, but soon afterwards it became a part of the Polish Army in France. After the agreement between the French government and the Polish National Committee was concluded in September 1918, the 4th Rifle Division was subordinated to the command of the allied forces and in December it was transported to Odessa. During the talks with the French government, it was established that from January 1919 the French side would take over upkeep of the division. The division was then subordinated to the Supreme Commander of the Allied Forces in the Balkans. From that point on, the division has officially become a part of the Polish Army in France. At the same time, however, General Lucjan Żeligowski established close contacts

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with the command of the Polish Army in Warsaw and de facto subordinated himself to the authority of Józef Piłsudski, as the Commander in Chief. The 4th Rifle Division eventually returned to Poland in June 1919, where it was transformed into the 10th Infantry Division. This concluded the history of the of the 4th Rifle Division, which was the only Polish tactical unit formed in Russia that managed to return to Poland.

Key words: 4th Rifle Division in Russia, General Lucjan Żeligowski, Polish Army in France, History of Odessa, Polish Army in South Russia

Established at the end of 1918 in Kuban in southern Russia, the 4th Polish Rifle Division [hereinafter: PRD] was a tactical unit, formally subordinated to the Polish Army Command in France. The origin of this division dates back to the Polish II Corps, which was in development since December 1917 in Soroca on the Dniester¹. In January 1918, on the basis of the Russian 166th Infantry Division [hereinafter: ID] the organisation of the 4th PRD in Suceava in Bukovina officially started², from where by the end of the month it was regrouped to Bessarabia. There General Władysław Glass was appointed its commander³. After German troops entered the Ukraine⁴, the Polish II Corps marched deep into the Ukrainian

¹ The corps – formed based on the Russian 29th Army Corps – was supposed to include the units of the Russian 4th and 9th armies, which at that time were Polish to a rather significant extent.

² Based on Russian 661st Infantry Regiment [hereinafter: IR], 13th Rifle Regiment [hereinafter: RR] was formed and based on the 662nd IR, the 14th RR was created.

³ More in: M. Wrzosek, *Polskie korpusy wojskowe w Rosji w latach 1917–1918*, Warszawa 1969, pp. 146–155; W. Kozłowski, *Artyleria polskich formacji wojskowych podczas I wojny światowej*, Łódź 1993, pp. 320–326; H. Bagiński, *Wojsko Polskie na Wschodzie 1914–1920*, Warszawa 1921, pp. 336–341. General Władysław Glass (1864–1918) – Pole, Catholic. After graduating from the Junker Infantry School in Moscow, in 1885 he started serving in the Russian military. Two years later he was promoted to the rank of an officer, in 1911 he reached the rank of colonel, and in 1916 he became a major general. In June 1917 he took over the command of the Russian 24th ID, and in January 1918 he was given the reins of the newly formed 4th PRD. Two months later, due to the pressure of the Germans, he was dismissed from the command of this division, after which he went to southern Russia, where he joined the ranks of the Volunteer Army. He was killed in action on 10 November 1918. More: В.А. Юшко, *Генералы российской службы польского происхождения – кавалеры ордена Святого Георгия и Георгиевского оружия периода первой мировой войны*, in: *Wrogowie, sojusznicy, towarzysze broni. Polsko-rosyjskie stosunki wojskowe w pierwszej połowie XX wieku*, ed. J. Wojtkowiak, Poznań, 2013, pp. 65–66.

⁴ This took place on the basis of the peace treaty between Bolshevik Russia and four central states – Germany, Austria-Hungary, Turkey and Bulgaria, concluded on 3 March 1918. According to this treaty, large areas of Belarus and Ukraine, as well as Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia and Poland Ukraine would end up under German and Austro-Hungarian occupation.

territory, during which Colonel Józef Haller took over the command⁵ on 28 March. In the following weeks, the Corps regrouped in the area of Kaniv on the Dnieper, where on 11 May 1918 it surrendered to the Germans after the battle. Some of the soldiers became German PoWs, while others tried to reach other places in Russia where Polish troops were organized. One of them was the 4th PRD, reconstituted in Kuban, which is covered in this paper. Its objective is to show the complicated issue of the division's subordination to the emerging Polish military authorities and the circumstances surrounding its arrival in its home country⁶.

The division was formed in the time of internal turmoil in Russia, which emerged after the Bolshevik Revolution (7 November 1917) and the fall of the former Provisional Government of Alexander Kerensky. In the following months, the chaos in Russia deepened, caused by the reluctance of a part of the former empire's society towards the new authorities and the ongoing destruction of the Russian army. As early as by the end of 1917, many Russian politicians and soldiers of the former imperial army began to go off to the regions of Russia where the Bolshevik power had not yet found its way in order to organize anti-Bolshevik resistance movements. The ranks of the opposition towards the new government were growing rapidly, both in Russia itself and among the Entente states, which considered the separatist peace treaty signed in Brest by the Bolsheviks with the central states on 3 March 1918 an act of treason. As its result, Russia withdrew from the war and the territories of Belarus, Ukraine and southern Russia were occupied by German and Austro-Hungarian troops, which led to the eventual liquidation of the Polish military corps in Russia in May and June, including the aforementioned Polish II Corps⁷.

In the first half of 1918, the Bolsheviks ruled – and to a limited extent – solely over central Russia, and their actions aimed at a crackdown against the competing political parties led to a radical exacerbation of terror and a bloody civil war. Both sides fielded provisional armies – Bolshevik troops and the Russian military, which soon started to be referred to as 'white armies'. However, the situation was very complex, since in addition to

⁵ After the German army entered Ukraine, the Corps found itself in a difficult situation, resulting from the fact that in March it was joined by the soldiers of the former 2nd Brigade of the Legions led by Colonel. Józef Haller, who abandoned the side of the central states on the night of 15–16 February 1918 and were considered deserters by the Austro-Hungarian authorities.

⁶ More in: M. Wrzosek, *Polskie*, pp. 303–340; W. Kozłowski, *op. cit.*, pp. 337, 343–347, 351–360; H. Bagiński, *op. cit.*, pp. 345–377; W. Lipiński, *Walka zbrojna o niepodległość Polski w latach 1905–1918*, Warszawa 1990, pp. 300–307.

⁷ More in: R. Pipes, *Rosja bolszewików*, Warszawa 2005, pp. 4–5; W. Mędrzecki, *Niemiecka interwencja militarna na Ukrainie w 1918 roku*, Warszawa 2000, pp. 17–48.

these armies, a number of provisional units and ordinary looting groups were also formed. As a result, in a short period of time, virtually the entire structure of the state has disintegrated, and Russia has been embroiled in a civil war taking place in three main areas – southern Russia, north-western Russia and Siberia. In the south of Russia, at the turn of 1917 and 1918, a Volunteer Army under the command of General Nikolai Alexeyev and Lavr Kornilov started to be formed. Mid-1918 brought the mutiny of the Czechoslovak Corps, two anti-Bolshevik governments were formed (in Samara and Omsk) and an army commanded by Admiral Alexander Kolchak was established, while in the Murmansk region, the Volunteer White Northern Army of Gen. Yevgeny Miller started its organisation. However, the armies of the Whites did not have a common strategy and did not coordinate their actions, which was one of the main reasons for the Bolshevik final victory⁸.

One of the anti-Bolshevik Russian armies was the aforementioned Volunteer Army, whose main organizer in early 1918 was General M. Alexeyev. After the Bolshevik coup, he went from Moscow to the Don River, where he intended to gather the remains of the Russian army. Soon, he was joined by General L. Kornilov, who took command of the Volunteer Army on 7 January, leaving General Alexeyev in charge of politics and finance. Its chief of staff was General Alexander Lukomsky. The leaders quickly established military missions to France and Great Britain, which were to provide the army with the necessary material assistance. The forces of the Volunteer Army at the beginning of 1918 were small, and in February 1918, pressured by the Bolshevik troops commanded by Vladimir Antonov-Ovseyenko, they left Novochoerkassk and Rostov, heading south, towards Kuban. During the fights for Yekaterinodar, the capital of the Kuban Cossacks, the Commander-in-Chief of the Volunteer Army, General Lavr Kornilov, was killed in action on 13 April. He was replaced by General Anton Denikin, who lacked the charisma and talent of his predecessor. Eventually, in late April, the army under his command captured Yekaterinodar, which became General Alexeyev's headquarters. A month later, the forces of General Denikin pushed out by Bolshevik

⁸ More about the civil war in Russia: R. Pipes, *op. cit.*, p. 6 and next; S. McKeekin, *Revolucja rosyjska. Nowa historia*, Warszawa 2017, p. 329 and next; M. McCauley, *Narodziny i upadek Związku Radzieckiego*, Warszawa 2010, pp. 88–93; G. Swain, *Wojna domowa w Rosji*, Warszawa, 2007, p. 35 and next; E. Mawdsley, *Wojna domowa w Rosji 1917–1920*, Warszawa 2010, p. 19 and next; P. Kenez, *Civil War in South Russia 1919–1920*, Berkeley 1977; А.П. Кочнева, *Россия в огне Гражданской Войны*, Благовещенск, 2018; *Революция и гражданская война в России: современная историография. Сборник статей, обзоров и рефератов*, ed. В.П. Любин, Москва 2018.

troops from the Don River, and the area was once again fully controlled by the Volunteer Army, and in the summer of 1918 its troops occupied southern Kuban with an important port in Novorossiysk by the Black Sea. As a result, the Volunteer Army was first established on the Don River, and later also in Kuban, in areas inhabited mainly by the Don and Kuban Cossacks⁹. The Volunteer Army, which was an armed anti-Bolshevik formation, comprised two separate parts – the troops of the Volunteer Army and Don and Kuban Cossack troops, led since May 1918 by Ataman General Pyotr Krasnov), subordinated to the army command. In the summer, the Cossacks constituted a significant part of the entire Volunteer Army, as they accounted for almost 60% of its personnel. No wonder that its command made every effort to increase the number of Russian ‘volunteers’ in the ranks, which only brought visible results in mid-1919, after the invasion of Ukraine¹⁰.

In the meantime, after the Germans disarmed the Polish military corps in Russia in May and June 1918, more and more Polish politicians and soldiers dreaming of rebuilding independent Poland began to reorient themselves towards the Entente states, all the more so as from June 1917 the Polish Army in France was organised in Western Europe, headed by Colonel Józef Haller (soon promoted to the rank of General) since September 1918. Starting in mid-1918, its envoys have been making efforts to organize new military formations in Russia, among others, a move which was supported by Polish political activists, mainly from the National Democracy circles. ‘In June 1918. [...] in the face of Germany's hostile actions against the Polish I and II Corps, there was no possibility of forming any armed force in the Kingdom of Poland. As a result, the Polish armed forces could only be created on the basis of coalitions. In order to coordinate the recruitment action with the Polish National Committee [hereinafter: PNC] in Paris and

⁹ After the Bolshevik Revolution, the Cossacks established their own independent political and military organisations. Until the withdrawal of German troops from Russia, the Don Cossacks tried to create an independent Republic of Don under their patronage, initially led by Ataman Gen. Alexey Kaledin), but later they joined the Volunteer Army, just like the Kuban Cossacks.

¹⁰ R. Pipes, *op. cit.*, pp. 16–24, 36–38; P. Sulatycki, *Kubań*, Warszawa 1930, pp. 52–55. More on the Volunteer Army and its 1918–1919 battles: E. Mawdsley, *op. cit.*, p. 207 and next; G. Swain, *op. cit.*, p. 119 and next; G. Stewart, *The White Armies of Russia*, New York 1933; В.Ж. Цветков, *Белые армии юга России*, book 1, Москва 2000; А.И. Деникин, *Очерки русской смуты*, vol. 2, Минск 2017; А.И. Деникин, А.А. фон Лампе, *Трагедия Белой Армии*, Москва 1991; А.С. Лукомский, *Воспоминания генерала А. С. Лукомского: Период Европейской войны. Начало разрухи в России. Борьба с большевиками*, vol. 2, Берлин 1922; P. Wrangel, *Wspomnienia*, vol. 1, Warszawa 1999, p. 91 and next; D. Wierzchoś, *Generał Piotr Wrangel. Działalność polityczna i wojskowa w latach rewolucji i wojny domowej w Rosji*, Kraków 2008, p. 52 and next.

the National Department in Chicago, forming the Polish Army in the West, the KW RPZM [Executive Committee of the Polish Council of Interparty Unity – author’s note] decided to start organising the Polish Armed Forces in Russia, which would become part of the Eastern Front, or if it did not form, would be merged with the Polish army in the West. The Polish army was to be under the command of the allied states [...]’¹¹.

However, the majority of Poles who previously served in the Russian army did not have the opportunity to join the ranks of the Polish Army in France, which is why they were striving to create new Polish armed formations in civil war-torn Russia. It was not an easy task. That is why the decision was made to establish the army with the Entente troops, which invaded the Russian soil, first in Murmansk and Arkhangelsk, and when the Bolsheviks blocked this direction, the soldiers started heading south, where the Russian Volunteer Army, supported by France and Great Britain, was operating. Given this turn of events, in June 1918, Haller sent Colonel Franciszek Zieliński, Colonel Józef Zajac and Major Leon Bobicki to Kiev, where the Supreme Council of the Polish Armed Forces was established in February 1918 on the basis of the Naczpól. Given the liquidation of Polish Corps in Russia, the organisation has taken steps to re-establish Polish troops in southern Russia, and for that reason they entered into talks with M. Alexeyev (commander of the Volunteer Army) and the French military mission to provide the new Polish formations with the necessary supplies and financial support. The Military Commission of the Supreme Council, established in June under the leadership of Józef Haller, agreed with representatives of the French military mission that Polish military formations to be formed in southern Russia would become a part of the Polish Army in France, under the command of the Volunteer Army. As a result of the talks, shortly before his departure to France, Haller appointed,

¹¹ ‘W czerwcu 1918 r. [...] wobec wrogich kroków Niemiec w stosunku do I i II Korpusu Polskiego nie istniała możliwość formowania jakiegokolwiek siły zbrojnej w Królestwie Polskim. W związku z tym polskie siły zbrojne mogły być tworzone jedynie w oparciu o koalicję. W celu koordynowania akcji werbunkowej z KNP w Paryżu i Wydziałem Narodowym w Chicago, tworzącymi armię polską na Zachodzie, KW RPZM [Komitet Wykonawczy Rady Polskiej Zjednoczenia Międzypartyjnego – author’s note.] postanowił rozpocząć organizowanie Polskiej Siły Zbrojnej w Rosji, która stałaby się częścią Frontu Wschodniego, lub jeśli taki nie powstał, zostałaby połączona z armią polską na Zachodzie. Tworzące się wojsko polskie miało pod względem wojskowym podlegać dowództwu sprzymierzonych [...]’. D. Tarasiuk, *Polski obóz narodowy w Rosji w latach 1917–1918*, Lublin 2014, p. 251. To read more about the attitude of various Polish political groups towards the issue of forming the Polish army in Russia, see: *ibidem*; A. Miodowski, *Wychodźcze ugrupowania polityczne wobec idei polskiego wojska w Rosji w latach 1917–1918*, Białystok 2002.

with the consent of the aforementioned Supreme Council, the commander of the Polish Army in the East – Lieutenant General Lucjan Żeligowski. Earlier, he served in the Polish I Corps in Russia, and after its disarmament by the Germans in June 1918, he avoided captivity and after arriving in Kiev he became a member of the aforementioned Supreme Council, after which he soon became commander of the Polish Army in the East¹².

The initial talks with General Alexeyev in June 1918 failed because he demanded using the Polish military unit to fight against the Bolsheviks immediately after being formed. This, in turn, was not accepted by the Polish delegation led by Colonel Zieliński, who – despite the failure of the talks – stayed at the headquarters of the army. The situation of Poles in Russia became seriously complicated in August, when the Bolsheviks, fighting against the ‘whites’, blocked Polish soldiers from reaching the Murmansk region and Siberia. Additionally, after the assassination of Field Marshal Herman von Eichhorn in Kiev, the Germans occupying Ukraine launched repressions against the underground organisations operating in the region, including Polish ones. The deepening chaos in Russia caused the representatives of the aforementioned Supreme Council to resume talks with the commander of the Volunteer Army and finally agreed to the condition of using the Polish troops in the fight against the Bolsheviks immediately after their formation. General Alexeyev agreed that the Poles who had served in the ranks of the Russian Volunteer Army could move on to the new Polish military formation. Thus, it was not until mid-August 1918 that a fundamental breakthrough was achieved – thanks to the consent of the command of the Volunteer Army, an independent Polish Unit was formed in Yekaterinodar (currently known as Krasnodar) in Kuban, which was to become a part of the Polish Army in France, yet remain under the command of the Russian Volunteer Army. Hearing the news, many Polish soldiers from various units of the former Russian army headed for Kuban – including vast numbers of the former soldiers of the Polish II Corps disarmed by the Germans in May 1918. We should highlight the fact that the main aim of establishing a Polish military unit in Kuban was not to fight against the troops of the central states or Bolshevik troops, but rather to protect the soldiers – Poles who had previously served in the Russian army – from the effects of the growing anarchy in Russia, as well as to enable their return to the reborn homeland as soon as possible¹³.

¹² B. Gumowska, *Opowieść o gen. broni Lucjanie Żeligowskim*, part 1, *Lata 1865–1920*, Bydgoszcz 1994, pp. 35–36; A. Papakin, *Polskie formacje wojskowe na Ukrainie 1917–1919*, Warszawa 2018, pp. 155–156; А.И. Селицкий, *Поляки на Кубани. Исторические очерки*, Краснодар 2008, p. 122.

¹³ A. Papakin, *op. cit.*, pp. 156–157; D. Tarasiuk, *op. cit.*, p. 242; A. Solak, *Żołnierze Niepodległej. Polskie wojsko w Rosji 1914–1920*, Kraków 2018, p. 205; А.И. Селицкий, *op. cit.*, p. 123.

On 24 August, General Alexeyev approved the formation of the Polish Unit, according to which it was to consist of a rifle battalion, a cavalry squadron and a field artillery platoon. Initially, the unit was headed by Colonel F. Zieliński (former commander of the 4th PRD in the Polish II Corps), Lieutenant Colonel Kazimierz Orlik-Łukoski was appointed its chief of staff (former commander of 14th Rifle Regiment in Polish II Corps), and the rifle battalion was led by Major Stanisław Wyspiański. An officer company led by Captain Bolesław Pytel was also formed at the battalion, and at the turn of August and September a cavalry squadron was formed, commanded by Major Konstanty Plisowski (this squadron became the basis for the later 14th Jazłowiecki Uhlan Regiment). By the time the first ten days of September had passed, the Polish Unit was moved from Yekaterinodar to the nearby Pashkovska Stanitsa, where organizational work continued, as part of which on 10 October, the Polish Rifle Brigade under the command of Col. Michał Żymierski was formed, encompassing a rifle regiment and an officer school (the brigade consisted of about 700 soldiers)¹⁴.

At the same time – in accordance with the agreement concluded with the command of the Volunteer Army – some of the newly formed Polish subunits, including 300 men, were sent to the front to fight against the Bolsheviks. Here they were subordinated to General Jan Stankiewicz – the first commander of the Polish II Corps in Russia, who after his dismissal in March 1918 left for southern Russia and joined the Volunteer Army. In the Stavropol area, Polish soldiers fought against the Bolshevik 2nd Stavropol Rifle Division, while they were not withdrawn from the front until November due to the order to move the Polish Unit from Kuban to Odessa¹⁵. The recognition for the Polish soldiers could be seen in the farewell order of General Stankiewicz, who remained in the ranks of the Volunteer Army: ‘The Polish Unit is leaving the ranks of my unit and, according to orders, goes to their new destination. [...]. In all battles the Polish troops were distinguished by bravery and courage. [...]. While

¹⁴ Centralne Archiwum Wojskowe Wojskowego Biura Historycznego [hereinafter: CAWWBH], 4 Dywizja Strzelców [hereinafter: 4 DS], ref. no. I.122.81.1, non pagination, Rozkaz nr 8 Oddziału Polskiego z 29 VIII 1918 r.; S. Nałęcz-Małachowski, *Wspomnienia generała*, Łódź 2003, p. 37; H. Bagiński, *op. cit.*, pp. 483–485; A. Smoliński, *Powrót do kraju oddziałów jazdy sformowanych w ramach 4 Dywizji Strzelców Polskich oraz ich włączenie w skład Wojska Polskiego – 1919 r.*, ‘Przegląd Kawalerii i Broni Pancerniej’ 1999, 24, 158, p. 1; W. Czaykowski, *Zarys historii wojennej 14 Pułku Ułanów Jazłowieckich*, Warszawa 1928, pp. 5–7; *Armia Polska we Francji. Dzieje wojsk Generała Hallera na obczyźnie*, ed. J. Sierociński, Warszawa 1929, p. 199; А.И. Селицкий, *op. cit.*, p. 124.

¹⁵ H. Bagiński, *op. cit.*, pp. 492–493; A. Papakin, *op. cit.*, pp. 157–161; A. Solak, *op. cit.*, pp. 205–206; А.И. Селицкий, *op. cit.*, p. 125.

I have to part ways with my brothers in arms, I congratulate them and I am glad that their dreams have come true, the wandering is over and they will return to their beloved Homeland with a gun in their hands to defend its freedom and laws'¹⁶.

In the meantime, the process of the formation of Polish troops in Kuban was accelerated after the arrival of General Żeligowski, who on behalf of General Józef Haller and the aforementioned Supreme Council took the position of commander-in-chief of the Polish Armed Forces in the East¹⁷. However, until October 1918, the command of the Volunteer Army considered the Polish Army to be one of its units, and thus the issue of regulating its independence from the Russian army became an increasingly pressing matter. As previously stated, the Military Commission of the Supreme Council led by Haller agreed with the representatives of the French military mission that the new Polish military formations to be formed in southern Russia were to be operationally subordinated to the command of the Volunteer Army, while formally being a part of the Polish Army in France. This army was formed by the decree of President of the Republic of France Raymond Poincaré of 4 June 1917¹⁸. According to this decree, it was to be an autonomous military formation, subordinated during the war to the French command. Its organisation was to be based on the French model and the costs of equipment and upkeep were to be borne by the French government in the form of a loan¹⁹. The Polish Army

¹⁶ 'Oddział Polski wychodzi ze składu mego oddziału i zgodnie z rozkazami skierowuje się na nowe miejsce. [...]. We wszystkich bitwach oddział polski odznaczał się walecznością i męstwem. [...]. Rozstając się obecnie ze swymi towarzyszami broni winszuję im i cieszę się, że marzenia ich ziściły się, tułaczka skończyła, a oni z bronią w rękę wrócą do swej ukochanej Ojczyzny, by bronić jej wolności i prawa'. H. Bagiński, *op. cit.*, p. 493.

¹⁷ CAWWBH, 4 DS, ref. no. I.122.81.1, no pagination, Meldunek o stanie liczebnym 4 Dywizji Strzelców Polskich [hereinafter: 4 DSP] w dniu 29 X 1918 r. and Rozkaz 4 DSP nr 33 z 27 X 1918 r.; *Pamiętniki generała broni Lucjana Żeligowskiego*, ed. D. Fabisz, Warszawa 2014, p. 12.

¹⁸ On 20 May 1917, the French-Polish Military Mission led by Gen. Louis Archinard was established in France.

¹⁹ For more on the Polish issue during World War I and the origins of the Polish Army in France, see: D. Radziwiłłowicz, *Błękitna Armia. W 80 rocznicę powstania*, Warszawa 1997, pp. 13–18; M. Orłowski, *Generał Józef Haller (1873–1960)*, Kraków 2007, pp. 208–209; H. Bułhak, P. Stawecki, *Armia Polska we Francji (1917–1919). Szkic do dziejów*, in: *Polonia i odbudowa państwa polskiego w 1918 roku*, ed. W. Śladkowski, Lublin–Warszawa 1991, pp. 109–116; H. Bułhak, P. Stawecki, *Armia polska na ziemi francuskiej*, in: *Armia Polska we Francji 1917–1919. Materiały sympozjum z okazji 65 rocznicy powstania Armii Polskiej we Francji*, Warszawa 1983, pp. 35–36; W. Lipiński, *Bajonczycy i Armia Polska we Francji, 'Bellona' 1929*, 33, pp. 71–80; M. Wrzosek, *Wojskowość polska podczas pierwszej wojny światowej (1914–1918)*, in: *Zarys dziejów wojskowości polskiej w latach 1864–1939*, ed. P. Stawecki, Warszawa 1990,

in France was under a strong influence of National Democracy activists, who established the PNC in Lausanne on 15 August 1917, soon moved to Paris, headed by Roman Dmowski, who had been in France since 1915. This committee was recognized by France as the official representation of the Polish nation, and the governments of Great Britain, Italy and the United States also soon followed suit²⁰.

An important event took place in the early autumn of 1918, which was the signing of an agreement between the PNC and the French government on 28 September, according to which all Polish troops on the allied side, regardless of their current location, were to form a single Polish army under uniform command. The essence of this agreement was the recognition of the Polish army as an ally to the Allied States, fighting with central states, and thus, the recognition of the formally non-existent Polish state as a member of the winning coalition. According to the agreement, the political leadership of the Polish army was to be carried out by the PNC in Paris, which, with the consent of the French government, appointed its commander, Colonel Józef Haller (promoted on 29 November to the rank of a General)²¹.

The agreement of 28 September was of key importance for the future of the Polish troops formed in southern Russia, because General L. Żeligowski, who arrived in Yekaterinodar on 20 October, just two days later became the head of the Supreme Committee of Polish Armed Forces in the East. This committee was to represent the Polish army formed in southern Russia in contacts with outside actors, as well as to exercise political leadership over it. In the first place, the Supreme Committee dealt with the issue of ensuring greater independence of the Polish Unit (soon to be transformed into the Polish Rifle Brigade, and then into the 4th PRD) from the command of the Volunteer Army²². However, only the death of

pp. 216–218; W. Lipiński, *Walka*, pp. 367–375; W. Skarzyński, *Armia Polska we Francji w świetle faktów*, Warszawa 1929, pp. 38–39; *Armia Polska we Francji. Dzieje*, pp. 112–113.

²⁰ H. Bułhak, P. Stawecki, *Armia Polska we Francji*, pp. 117–118, 131–132; M. Wrzosek, *Polski czyn zbrojny podczas pierwszej wojny światowej 1914–1918*, Warszawa 1990, pp. 342–345, 458–474; D. Radziwiłłowicz, *Błękitna*, pp. 15–18; M. Leczyk, *Komitet Narodowy Polski a Ententa i Stany Zjednoczone 1917–1919*, Warszawa 1966, p. 119 and next. To read more, see: A. Czubiński, *Walka Józefa Piłsudskiego o nowy kształt polityczny Europy Środkowo-Wschodniej w latach 1918–1921*, Toruń 2002; *Sprawy polskie na konferencji pokojowej w Paryżu w 1919 r. Dokumenty i materiały*, vol. 1, Warszawa 1965; J. Zamoyski, *Powrót na mapę. Polski Komitet Narodowy w Paryżu 1914–1919*, Warszawa 1991.

²¹ M. Orłowski, *op. cit.*, pp. 218–219. The French-Polish Military Mission, which to that point was serving the role of the organizer of the Polish Army in France, was transformed into an intermediary body between the French authorities and the commander of said army.

²² CAWWBH, Dowództwo Armii Generała Hallera [hereinafter: DAGH], ref. no. I.123.1.204, no pagination, Pismo do gen. Józefa Hallera z 28 II 1919 r.; Z. Oplustill, *Polskie formacje wschodnie 1918–1919*, Warszawa 1922, pp. 194–196.

General Alexeyev²³ and General Denikin assuming command made Polish plans possible. This was reflected in a new agreement concluded by the Supreme Committee with the command of the Volunteer Army, which regulated this issue as follows: 'The Polish Armed Forces troops on the territory of the Volunteer Army constitutes a part of a single independent Polish Army, fighting on the French front as an independent allied army. [...]. The political director and representative of the Polish Army Troops in the territory of the Volunteer Army is the Polish Supreme Political Committee. [...]. Polish troops, formed and located on the territory of the Volunteer Army, remain under the operational command of the Volunteer Army'²⁴. Soon, General Żeligowski, who was the head of the Supreme Committee of the Polish Armed Forces in the East, issued the following address on the above matter: 'The Polish Army troops in the East, which make up a part of one independent Polish Army, are subordinate, together with the Polish Armed Forces in France, to the Polish Army Command along the entire allied front. [...]. As long as the country is ruled by the invader, as long as there is no independent government of a united and independent Poland, the Polish Army cannot exist without foreign influence – thus, we have to form the Polish Army outside our borders, where we can ensure its complete independence. Thus, according to General Haller's order of 10 July 1918, I call upon all the Poles who are capable of bearing arms, in particular military Poles to join the Polish Army in the East'²⁵.

General Żeligowski was the commander of the Polish Armed Forces in the East, but in reality, as a result of the lack of communication with other emerging Polish units in Russia, he realistically commanded only Polish units in Kuban. They grew gradually, thanks to which on 10 October 1918

²³ He died on 8 October 1918 in Yekaterinodar (Krasnodar).

²⁴ 'Oddział Wojsk Polskich na terytorium Armii Ochotniczej stanowi część jednej niezależnej Armii Polskiej, walczącej na francuskim froncie i posiadającej prawo samodzielnej armii sojuszniczej. [...]. Kierownikiem politycznym oraz przedstawicielem Oddziału Wojsk Polskich na terytorium Armii Ochotniczej jest Polski Polityczny Komitet Naczelny. [...]. Wojska polskie, tworzone i znajdujące się na terytorium Armii Ochotniczej w znaczeniu operacyjnym całkowicie podlegają dowództwu Armii Ochotniczej'. *Armia Polska we Francji. Dzieje*, pp. 199–200.

²⁵ 'Oddziały Wojska Polskiego na Wschodzie, jako część jednej niezależnej Armii Polskiej, podlegają łącznie z Wojskami Polskimi we Francji zwierzchniemu Dowództwu Wojsk Polskich na całym froncie koalicyjnym. [...]. Dopóki w kraju rządzi najeźdźca, póki nie powstał z woli narodu niezależny Rząd Polski zjednoczonej i niepodległej, dopóki Armia Polska bez wpływów obcych istnieć nie może, musimy Wojsko Polskie tworzyć poza krajem, tam, gdzie mamy możliwość całkowitej jego niezależności. W myśl więc rozkazu Generała Hallera z dnia 10-go lipca 1918 roku wzywam Polaków, zdolnych do noszenia broni i Polaków wojskowych do zgłaszania się do Wojska Polskiego na Wschodzie'. *Ibidem*, p. 201.

the Polish Unit was reorganized to become the Polish Rifle Brigade, and on 23 October 1918 it was transformed into the 4th PRD, which was clearly stated by the order of the Command of the Polish Armed Forces in the East issued on that day: 'From now on, the Polish Army Unit at the Volunteer Army shall be referred to as the 4th Polish Rifle Division'²⁶. The division was headed by Colonel Zieliński, and its chief of staff was Captain B. Pytel, who replaced Lieutenant Colonel K. Orlik-Łukoski. Łukoski was sent to Warsaw at the turn of October and November in order to make efforts to ensure funds required for the upkeep of the unit and its return to the homeland. The newly created division was made up of one infantry brigade (commander: Colonel M. Żymierski), a cavalry squadron (Major K. Plisowski), an artillery battalion (Lieutenant Colonel Józef Rojek), an engineering company (1st Lieutenant Henryk Bagiński), the Aviation Unit (1st Lieutenant Waldemar Narkiewicz), a division hospital (Józef Chomiczewski), and three NCO schools. In total, on 29 October, the division was made up of 988 soldiers (including 257 officers), which clearly indicates that waiting for the mass voluntary draft of Poles in Kuban was in vain, and the 4th PRD had a professional character from the very beginning²⁷. In order to alleviate this issue, on 15 November 1918, General Żeligowski gave a draft order in Yekaterinodar: 'In view of the mobilisation of citizens in our Homeland to join the ranks of the United and Independent Polish Army, by virtue of a resolution of the Supreme Committee of the Polish Armed Forces in the East, subordinate to the Polish Army Headquarters in France, Poles aged 18–35 years, living in the area of the Kuban Troops and in the other lands of the Caucasus, as well as in the area of the Don Army are ordered to report immediately to the nearest Office of the Polish Armed Forces in the East to undergo a medical examination'²⁸. However, there was little response to this order, which hindered further development of Polish units in Kuban.

²⁶ 'Od dnia dzisiejszego Oddział W.P. przy Armii Ochotniczej nazywać się będzie 4 Dywizją Strzelców Polskich'. CAWWBH, 4 DS, ref. no. I.122.81.1, no pagination, Rozkaz Dowództwa Wojsk Polskich na Wschodzie nr 1 z 23 X 1918 r. In turn, the report sent by General Żeligowski to General Haller on 26 February 1919 states that the 4th PRD was established on 22 October 1918. (CAWWBH, 4 DS, ref. no. I.122.81.7, no pagination).

²⁷ CAWWBH, 4 DS, ref. no. I.122.81.1, no pagination, Stan liczebny 4 DSP w dniu 29 X 1918 r.

²⁸ 'Wobec powołania w kraju obywateli do szeregów Armii Polskiej Zjednoczonej i Niepodległej, na mocy uchwały Komitetu Naczelnego przy Dowództwie Wojsk Polskich na Wschodzie, podległego Dowództwu Armii Polskiej we Francji, powołuje się do służby wojskowej polskiej Polaków zamieszkałych na Obszarze Wojska Kubańskiego i na innych ziemiach Kaukazu oraz na obszarze Wojska Dońskiego w wieku od 18 do 35 lat włącznie i poleca się natychmiast stawić się do najbliższego Urzędu Zaciągu Wojsk Polskich na Wschodzie celem poddania się oględzinom lekarskim'. CAWWBH, DAGH, ref. no. I.123.1.204, no pagination, Rozkaz gen. Lucjana Żeligowskiego o poborze do Polskiej Armii z 15 XI 1918 r.

On the eve of a truce on the Western front, Józef Haller's order of 10 November 1918 defined the organisational structure of the expanded Polish Army in France, which was to be made up of – according to the initial assumptions – three corps: I and III Corps in France, and II Corps in Russia. Each of the corps was to have two or three infantry divisions with the necessary support troops. In Russia and Siberia, the Polish Military and Political Mission sent there was soon to take up work coordinating the draft to the Polish troops. Formally being not only the commander of the Polish Army in France, but also the commander of all Polish armies, General Haller subordinated all Polish units fighting on the side of the Entente thanks to this order. However, the planned mass draft enacted by the order of the Commander of the Polish Armed Forces in the East of 15 November 1918 failed, which is why on 21 November the 4th PRD was dissolved and, on its basis, an Independent Polish Rifle Brigade was organized, led by Colonel Stanisław Nałęcz Małachowski²⁹.

Further cooperation with the Volunteer Army in Kuban was hardly in line with the interest of the Polish Army Command in Paris, whose aim was to move the Polish unit closer to the reborn Polish State as quickly as possible, with the intention of sending it to the front in Eastern Galicia in the future. Talks concerning its move from Kuban to Odessa took place with the active participation of the French consulate in Odessa, as the French side was keen to support the defence of the city. At that time, the situation in Ukraine became much more complicated, because with German and Austrian troops leaving the area, both the Ukrainian side (Directorate of the Ukrainian People's Republic), the Bolsheviks and the Volunteer Army and the intervention armies of the Entente countries had aspirations to occupy southern Ukraine. Soon, General Denikin received a radio order from the Commander-in-Chief of the Allied Forces, General Ferdinand Foch to immediately send Polish troops to Odessa, where it was to be moved under the command of the allied forces. After a short preparation, the Independent Polish Rifle Brigade – which at that time fielded about 2,500 soldiers – left Pashkovska Stanitsa on 22 November and reached Novorossiysk by train two days later. Here the bulk of the troops of the brigade were loaded on board of *Saratov* and on 27 November they sailed towards Odessa, where they arrived on 1 December 1918 (about

²⁹ CAWWBH, Dowództwo I Korpusu Armii generała Hallera, ref. no. I.123.2.1, no pagination, Rozkaz gen. Józefa Hallera nr 3 z 10 XI 1918 r.; 4 DS, ref. no. I.122.81.1, no pagination, Rozkaz 4 DSP nr 44 z 21 XI 1918 r.; D. Radziwiłłowicz, *Polskie formacje zbrojne we Wschodniej Rosji oraz na Syberii i Dalekim Wschodzie w latach 1918–1920*, Olsztyn 2009, p. 246; А.И. Селицкий, *op. cit.*, p. 127.

1,000 soldiers, namely artillery and cavalry, remained in Novorossiysk until mid-January 1919)³⁰.

At that time, 10–15,000 German and Austrian soldiers were in Odessa; however, they did not want to take part in fighting against Ukrainian troops. The misunderstandings between the German and Polish soldiers were also quick to occur, but fortunately they were incidental³¹. This was probably influenced by the statement of M. Henneau, French consul in Odessa on 11 December: 'The Polish Unit, which is currently in Odessa, as the front guard of the Coalition troops, is under French command. Any threat to the security of this unit, its commanders, and representatives, as well as all those who helped to create it, will be considered an insult to the Coalition States'³². The 3rd Corps of the Ukrainian National Army was also stationed in the city, but it did not have any significant forces. The Polish division was operationally subordinated to General Vasily Biskupsky (commander of the Odessa Military District), and in economic terms, it was managed by General Alexei Gryshyn-Almaz (interim military governor of Odessa). The Polish unit found itself in the midst of the civil war in Ukraine, as on 14 December an uprising broke out against Hetman Pavlo Skoropadskyi, who, after German and Austrian troops started withdrawing from Russia, changed his former pro-German policy – advocating for the unification of Ukraine with Russia. This led to the aforementioned uprising and the seizure of power by Ataman Semen Petlura, to whom almost all Ukrainian military units pledged their allegiance. However, a problem arose in Odessa, where the III Corps of Ukrainian Armed Forces was made up mostly of Russian soldiers, who sympathized with General Denikin's Volunteer Army. Given this situation, the Ukrainian army has taken steps to bring the city back under the Ukrainian fold³³.

³⁰ T. Kawalec, *Historia IV-tej Dywizji Strzelców generała Żeligowskiego w zarysie*, Wilno–Kraków–Łódź 1921, pp. 8–12; R. Bergel, *Dzieje II Korpusu Polskiego*, Warszawa 1921, p. 23; F. Libert, *Zarys historii wojennej 31 Pułku Strzelców Kaniowskich*, Warszawa 1928, pp. 3–7; W. Zaborowski, *Zarys historii wojennej 28 Pułku Strzelców Kaniowskich*, Warszawa 1928, p. 3; *Armia Polska we Francji. Dzieje*, pp. 201–203; S. Nałęcz-Małachowski, *op. cit.*, p. 38; A. Papakin, *op. cit.*, pp. 162–163; А.И. Селицкий, *op. cit.*, p. 129; Z. Oplustill, *op. cit.*, pp. 211–212; А.И. Деникин, *op. cit.*, p. 779.

³¹ В. Файтельберг-Бланк, В. Савченко, *Одесса в эпоху войн и революции (1914–1920)*, Одесса 2008, p. 44 and next.

³² 'Oddział Polski, znajdujący się obecnie w Odessie, jako straż przednia wojsk Koalicji, znajduje się pod francuską komendą. Każde porwanie się na bezpieczeństwo tego oddziału, jego dowódców i przedstawicieli, jakoteż wszystkich, którzy pomagali jego tworzeniu się, uważane będzie jako obraza Państw Koalicji'. H. Bagiński, *op. cit.*, p. 498.

³³ A. Papakin, *op. cit.*, pp. 165–166.

Keeping Odessa – both for the French authorities and for the command of the Volunteer Army – was extremely important, so the arrival of the Polish unit (after arriving in Odessa, the 4th PRD was re-formed on the basis of the Independent Polish Rifle Brigade) was welcomed as it strengthened the weak forces of the defenders. In the first days of December 1918 the Ukrainian army led by Ataman Semen Petlura approached Odessa. The units of 4th PRD took an active part in the city's defence, but despite their valiant efforts, on 13 December the city fell almost entirely into Ukrainian hands. Soldiers of the Polish division retreated to the port area, which they defended on their own for the next few days. The situation changed with the arrival of ships with French and Greek troops to Odessa on 18 December (the main force was the 5,000-strong French 156 ID). Thanks to this event, the Ukrainian troops were driven out of the city the next day. By the end of December, the command of the coalition troops concluded a truce with Ataman Petlura. Both sides willingly agreed to do so, as a new opponent in the form of Bolshevik troops was coming from the north, posing a serious threat to both the Allies and the Ukrainian People's Republic³⁴.

For the 4th PRD, this truce meant a longer period of relative calm, which could be used for further organisational work. During the process, the Independent Polish Rifle Brigade was disbanded, and the 4th PRD was formed again on its basis, to constitute a part of the 2nd Polish Army Corps in France, according to Haller's assumptions. On 8 December 1918, General Żeligowski gave the related order: 'Today, the mobilisation area of the Polish Armed Forces in the East becomes the mobilisation area of the 2nd Polish Army Corps, the structure of which is listed below. The territories located to the north [actually, to the south – author's note] and west of the Russian Soviet Republic will supply only the 4th Division of the Polish Army. The areas to the north and east of the Russian Soviet Republic (Murmansk and Siberia) will supply only the 5th Division of the Polish Army. Both these divisions are given the staffs according to the attached posts, while the staff of the 2nd Polish Army Corps will be formed after establishing permanent communication between the 4th and 5th Divisions. As a commander of the Polish Armed Forces in the East, I will take command of the 2nd Polish Army Corps and at the same time the 4th Division of the Polish Army, until any relevant orders are sent by the Polish Government or General Haller. The

³⁴ H. Bagiński, *op. cit.*, pp. 497–500; A. Papakin, *op. cit.*, pp. 166–167; S. McKeekin, *op. cit.*, p. 338. Some sources mention that French troops arrived in Odessa on 17 December (P. Olszewski, 'Kwestia ukraińska' w polityce Francji od schyłku 1917 r. do kwietnia 1919 r., 'Piotrkowskie Zeszyty Historyczne' 2011, 2, p. 89).

Supreme Command Headquarters in the East is therefore dissolved on the eighth day of this month³⁵. As a result, the command of the 4th PRD was personally taken over by General Żeligowski, and its structure was made up of three rifle regiments: 2nd Rifle Regiment (commander: Colonel M. Żymierski – this number was given to preserve the tradition of the 2nd Brigade of the Legions), 13th Rifle Regiment (Lt. Col. F. Sikorski), and 14th Rifle Regiment (Col. S. Nałęcz Małachowski), an engineering company (Captain H. Bagiński), aviation unit (1st Lieutenant W. Narkiewicz) and several smaller units. The position of the Chief of Staff of the Division was taken by Lt. Leon Bobicki, and the position of the quartermaster was held by Lt. Wiktor Thommee.

Table 1. The Personnel of the 4th PRD on 16 December 1918.

Description	Officers	Privates	Total soldiers	Horses
Division Staff	12	3	15	-
2nd Rifle Regiment	47	171	218	40
13th Rifle Regiment	97	333	430	87
14th Rifle Regiment	114	58	172	12
Cavalry Squadron	68	226	294	172
Artillery Battalion	44	160	204	118
Engineering Company	23	15	38	-
Air Squadron	22	48	70	37
Division Hospital	16	47	63	6
Odessa Square Command	15	21	36	8
Administration	10	-	10	1
Military Court	7	-	7	-
Communication	2	18	20	3
Division total	477	1100	1577	484

Source: CAWWBH, OdeB NDWP, ref. no. I.301.30.2, no pagination, Stan liczebny Oddziałów Wojska Polskiego na Wschodzie z 16 XII 1918 r.

³⁵ 'Teren mobilizacyjny Naczelnego Dowództwa Wojsk Polskich na Wschodzie staje się z dniem dzisiejszym terenem mobilizacyjnym 2 Korpusu Wojsk Polskich, skład którego podany poniżej. Tereny położone na północ [winno być na południe – author's note] i zachód od Rosyjskiej Sowieckiej Republiki – kompletują wyłącznie 4 dywizję Wojsk Polskich. Tereny położone na północ i wschód od Rosyjskiej Sowieckiej Republiki (Murmań i Syberia) kompletują wyłącznie 5 dywizję W. Polskich. Obie te dywizje otrzymują sztaby według załączonych etatów, sztab zaś 2 Korpusu W.P. będzie uformowany po nawiązaniu stałej łączności między 4 i 5 dywizją W.P. Ja dowodząc P.S.Z. na Wschodzie, obejmuję dowództwo 2 Korp. W.P. i jednocześnie 4 dywizji W.P. – do chwili otrzymania odnośnych rozkazów Rządu Polskiego lub Jenerała Hallera. Sztab Naczelnego Dowództwa na Wschodzie wobec tego, dnia 8 b.m. rozwiązuje się'. CAWWBH, 4 DS, ref. no. I.122.81.1, no pagination, Rozkaz Dowództwa Wojsk Polskich na Wschodzie nr 24 z 8 XII 1918 r.

Initially, the 4th PRD was operationally subordinated to the command of the Russian 3rd Corps (since the end of December 1918, the Corps was formally a part of the Volunteer Army), and its supply and upkeep were ensured by the Russian Governor of Odessa, General Grishin-Almazov³⁶. In the face of major supply problems, at the end of December 1918 General Żeligowski sent a delegation headed by Col. Zieliński to Thessaloniki – the location of the command of the French Intervention Corps) to ensure the improvement of supply situation for the 4th PRD. From Thessaloniki, the delegation went to Paris, where they referred the case to the commander of the Polish Army in France, General Haller. As a result, on 27 December 1918, the Supreme Command of the Polish Armed Forces in Paris sent a letter to the PNC, in which it demanded that this issue be resolved with the French authorities as soon as possible: ‘On the basis of the 1998/I dispatch, I ask you to urge the French Minister of War to give an order to General Franchet d’Esperey’s Army to take the Group of Polish Armed Forces in Odessa under the command of General Żeligowski under their fold as a part of the Polish Army fighting against the Germans and their allies in accordance with the agreement of 28 September 1918 between the French government and the PNC in Paris’³⁷. In the course of the talks with the French government, the delegates agreed just a few days later that from January 1919 onwards, the French side would take over the full upkeep of the 4th PRD³⁸. At that time, the division was also operationally subordinated to the command of the French Intervention Corps (commander: General Philippe d’Anselme), who was in turn subordinate to the Supreme Commander of the Allied Forces in the Balkans, and at that time it was General Louis Franchet d’Esperey.

However, the Polish Division stationed in Odessa was still struggling with serious problems of financial and material nature, as well as staffing, so its command made further efforts to improve the supply situation, as almost everything was missing (for example: shoes, uniforms, food, ammunition, etc.), and because of diverse equipment and uniforms (sheepskins and sheepskin hats), the Polish Unit was quickly dubbed

³⁶ CAWWBH, 4 DS, ref. no. I.122.81.1, no pagination, Rozkaz Dowództwa Wojsk Polskich na Wschodzie nr 17 z 3 XII 1918 r.

³⁷ ‘Na podstawie depezy 1998/I proszę o spowodowanie Fr. Minister. Wojny wydania polecenia Armii Generała Franehet d’Esperey o wzięcie Grupy Wojsk Polskich, znajdujących się w Odessie pod Dowództwem Generała Żeligowskiego na żołd jako części Armii Polskiej walczącej z Niemcami i ich aliantami w myśl umowy z dnia 28 września 1918 r. pomiędzy rządem francuskim i K.N.P. w Paryżu’. CAWWBH, DAGH, ref. no. I.123.1.204, no pagination, Pismo Naczelnego Dowództwa Wojsk Polskich w Paryżu do KNP z 27 XII 1918 r.

³⁸ B. Gumowska, *op. cit.*, p. 37.

'Wild Division'³⁹. In reality, the Command of the 4th PRD had to cope with upkeep of the division in its own, which is clearly confirmed by the report of General Żeligowski sent to General Haller on 28 January: 'I report that due to a complete lack of funds, which were not provided by the Supreme Committee of the 4th Polish Army Division Command, on 31 December 1918 I was forced to borrow 500,000 (five hundred thousand) roubles from the Russian Governor of the city of Odessa, General Grishin-Almazov, of which 50,000 I paid to the Supreme Committee at its request and 450,000 went towards the needs of the Division entrusted to me'⁴⁰. This allowed for improving the situation of the division a little, but supply and financial problems accompanied it until the division arrived in Poland.

It should be noted here that at the beginning of 1919, the highest command of the Entente had little hope for the army of the reborn Polish state supporting the Volunteer Army, which could tie up the Bolshevik forces in the west. However, as Sean McMeekin aptly pointed out: '[...] a miracle would have to happen for Polish patriots to cooperate with Russians or Cossacks. Kołczak promised to recognize Poland's independence, but under obvious duress. Denikin did not even promise as much, he fought under the banner of 'United and indivisible Russia' Piłsudski reacted rather coldly to the suggestions of the Entente to agree on the moves with the Volunteer Army'⁴¹. For obvious reasons, Poland's interests were hardly in line with Denikin's policy, which is why it is no wonder that the Polish side was not interested in the victory of the Volunteer Army in the Russian civil war. However, the Polish command

³⁹ CAWWBH, 4 DS, ref. no. I.122.81.11 and ref. no. I.122.81.31, Stany 4 DSP z 1919 r.; DAGH, ref. no. I.123.1.33, Raport gen. ppor. L. Żeligowskiego z 23 III 1919 r. and ref. no. I.123.1.204, Raport o stanie 4 DSP z 27 XII 1918 r.; H. Bagiński, *op. cit.*, pp. 505–526; F. Libert, *op. cit.*, pp. 7–8; W. Lipiński, *Walka*, pp. 331–336; T. Kawalec, *op. cit.*, pp. 12–31; W. Zaborowski, *op. cit.*, pp. 5–6; S. Brzeszczyński, *Dzika Dywizja. Wspomnienia 1918–1922*, Warszawa–Kraków 2017, pp. 16–17; *Księga Chwały Piechoty*, ed. E. Quirini, Warszawa 1937–1939, metryka 31 Pułku Strzelców Kaniowskich, no pagination; H. Kiszko-Zgierski, *Zarys historii wojennej 6 Pułku Ułanów Kaniowskich*, Warszawa 1930, p. 9.

⁴⁰ 'Melduję, że z powodu zupełnego braku pieniędzy, niedostarczonych przez Komitet Naczelny znajdujący się przy Dowództwie 4-tej Dywizji Wojsk Polskich, byłem zmuszony dnia 31 grudnia 1918 roku pożyczyć od rosyjskiego Gubernatora miasta Odessy, Generała Griszyna Almazowa 500.000 (pięćset tysięcy) rubli, z których 50.000 wypłaciłem Komitetowi Naczelnemu na jego prośbę do jego dyspozycji, zaś 450.000 poszło na potrzeby powierzonej mi dywizji'. CAWWBH, DAGH, ref. no. I.123.1.204, 204, no pagination, Meldunek gen. ppor. Żeligowski to General Józef Hallera z 28 I 1919 r.

⁴¹ '[...] cud musiały się zdarzyć, aby polscy patrioci współdziałali z rosyjskimi bądź z kozakami. Kołczak przyrzekł uznać niepodległość Polski, lecz pod oczywistym przymusem. Denikin nawet tego nie obiecał, a walczył pod hasłem 'Rosja jedna i niepodzielna'. Piłsudski chłodno reagował na sugestie ententy, by uzgadniać posunięcia z Armią Ochotniczą'. S. McKeekin, *op. cit.*, p. 339.

wanted the 4th PRD to return to the country, which could strengthen the weak forces of the Polish army. This was not an easy task since it required regulating many issues with the command of the Entente.

On 7 January, the commander of the Polish Army in France sent a letter to the commander of 4th PRD, in which he defined the rules of subordination of the division: 'As it stands now, in operational terms, the General reports to the Coalition Army Commander in the East, General Franchet d'Esperey in Constantinople. Through the PNC in Paris, I have initiated efforts with the French Government to allocate sums for the upkeep of military formations and troops under the General's command, with the request that the French Ministry of War instruct the Commander of the Armed Forces in the East, General Franchet d'Esperey, to take in Polish troops in Odessa on a permanent basis'⁴². The issue of the subordination of 4th PRD was finally settled a few weeks later, which is confirmed by the order of General Józef Haller of 4 March 1919 sent to the command: 'The 4th Division reports directly to General Berthelot [Henri Mathias Berthelot – author's note], who belongs to the French Army Group of General Franchet d'Esperey and makes him an intermediary to the General Command. [...]. The Command of the 4th Division of the Polish Army in close consultation with General Berthelot, will send a courier every 10 days to the Supreme Command of the Polish Army Headquarters, via Bucharest. This courier can also serve as a liaison between the Supreme Command of the Polish Army and General Lamezan [General Robert Lamezan-Salins, in the period from January to June 1919, was head of the Polish Military Mission to Bucharest – author's note], the Polish Military Representative in Bucharest'⁴³.

⁴² 'Obecnie zatem pod względem operacyjnym Generał podlega Dowódcy Wojsk Koalicyjnych na Wschodzie Generałowi Franchet d'Esperey w Konstantynopolu. Przez Komitet Narodowy Polski w Paryżu wszcząłem starania u Rządu Francuskiego o wyasygnowanie sum na utrzymanie formacji wojskowych i wojsk znajdujących się pod rozkazami Generała, z prośbą aby Francuskie Ministerium Wojny poleciło Dowódcy Wojsk na Wschodzie Generałowi Franchet d'Esperey przyjęcie Oddziałów Polskich w Odessie na swój etat'. CAWWBH, DAGH, ref. no. I.123.1.204, no pagination, Pismo dowódcy Armii Polskiej we Francji do dowódcy 4 DSP z 7 I 1919 r.

⁴³ '4-a Dywizja pod względem administracji, instrukcji i operacji wojennych podlega bezpośrednio gen. Berthelot [Henri Mathias Berthelot – author's note], który należy do Grupy Armii Francuskiej gen. Franchet d'Esperey i stanowi w stosunku do Naczelnego Dowództwa pośrednika w drodze służbowej [...]. Dowództwo 4-ej Dywizji W.P. w ścisłym porozumieniu z generałem Berthelot będzie wysyłać co 10 dni kuriera do Kwatery Głównej N.D.W.P., drogą przez Bukareszt. Kurier ten może służyć również za łącznika między N.D.W.P. a Generałem hr. Lamezanem [gen. ppor. Robert Lamezan-Salins, w okresie od stycznia do czerwca 1919 r. był szefem Polskiej Misji Wojskowej w Bukareszcie – author's note], reprezentantem Wojskowym Polskim w Bukareszcie'. CAWWBH, DAGH, ref.

In Odessa, however, the main problem faced by the command of the 4th PRD was ensuring the necessary supplies. Hopes for a significant strengthening of the division's headcount also did not come true. Due to low staffing levels, individual regiments were equivalent to one weak battalion. Therefore, the commander of the 4th PRD sent a letter to General Józef Haller concerning increasing its staffing: 'I ask you, General, to give the order to staff the division with as many Poles prisoners of war from Italy as possible. We need 5–6000 [5–6 thousand – author's note] people to increase its combat value, which would be necessary if a more serious military operation starts'⁴⁴. Nothing came out of these plans, however, because in the face of opposition from the French side – former Polish prisoners of war gathered in Italy were transported to France at the turn of 1918 and 1919, in order to expand the Polish Army formed there. As a consequence, the expansion of the 4th PRD was slow, based only on Poles living in southern Russia. It is worthy of noting that until mid-January 1919, the artillery and cavalry units of the 4th PRD remained in Novorossiysk, where the soldiers survived several harsh weeks without pay, food, warm uniforms, etc. It was not until 15 January that they received the order to board the troop carrier no. 67, which four days later took the nearly 1000 men from Novorossiysk and reached Odessa on the 24th. As a result, on January 25th, the number of troops in the division increased to 3369 soldiers, including 762 officers and 2607 privates⁴⁵.

The commander of 4th PRD, having no permanent communication with the command of the Polish Army in France in December 1918, sent a delegation led by Julian Koźmiński and Major Wilhelm Rawicz-Liszka to Warsaw in order to settle the most important issues related to the expected arrival of the division in the country. These officers returned to Odessa on 23 January 1919 with a handwritten letter from Józef Piłsudski, which clearly stressed that the 4th PRD was an integral part of the Polish army. And although the division was still formally part of the Polish Army in France, reporting to the French Operational Command, in practice General Żeligowski – striving to direct the 4th PRD to Poland as soon as possible

no. I.123.1.204, no pagination, Pismo gen. Józef Hallera do gen. ppor. L. Żeligowskiego z 4 III 1919 r.

⁴⁴ 'Proszę Pana Generała o wydanie rozkazu o ukompletowaniu dywizji jeńcami Polakami z Włoch w możliwie największej ilości. Natychmiast konieczne jest wysłanie 5–6000 [5–6 tys. – author's note] ludzi dla podniesienia jej wartości bojowej, co jest niezbędne w razie rozpoczęcia poważniejszej akcji wojskowej'. CAWWBH, DAGH, ref. no. I.123.1.204, no pagination, Pismo gen. ppor. L. Żeligowskiego do gen. Józef Hallera z 28 I 1919 r.

⁴⁵ *Ibidem*, no pagination, Skład 4 DSP według raportu z 25 I 1919 r.; H. Bagiński, *op. cit.*, p. 505.

Table 2. The Personnel of the 4th PRD according to the Report of 25 January 1919.

Description	Officers	Privates	Total soldiers	Horses
Division Staff	50	64	114	8
2nd Rifle Regiment	109	162	271	23
13th Rifle Regiment	82	266	348	31
14th Rifle Regiment	130	239	369	22
Cavalry Squadron	97	561	658	491
Artillery Battalion	91	303	394	153
Engineering Company	61	164	225	25
Air Squadron	38	67	105	21
Division Hospital	26	153	179	5
Division rolling stock	38	137	175	48
Division Replenishment Branch in Novorossiysk	n/d	400	400	n/d
Vacations	40	91	131	-
Division total	762	2607	3369	827

Source: CAWWBH, DAGH, ref. no. I.123.1.204, no pagination, Stan 4 DS według raportu z 25 I 1919 r.

– began to follow the orders of Józef Piłsudski, who held the position of Commander-in-Chief⁴⁶. A little earlier, General Żeligowski received a similar announcement of the Division's imminent return to the country from General Józef Haller, in the aforementioned letter of 7 January: 'Polish Military Command of the Lviv District (Gen. Rozwadowski) asked for help to be sent against the Ukrainians who stand near Lviv. I started efforts to transport the Polish Army Division from Odessa through Romania to relieve Lviv. General Franchet d'Esperey will notify you of the date (time) of departure of the Division and subordinates'⁴⁷. Also this matter proved to be difficult, as the command of the French Intervention Corps asked the Polish authorities to temporarily leave the 4th PRD in Odessa in order to strengthen the coalition forces there. As a result, the division was stationed in this city for the next few months.

⁴⁶ H. Bagiński, *op. cit.*, pp. 501–504; *Armia Polska we Francji. Dzieje*, pp. 205–206; *Pamiętniki*, p. 13.

⁴⁷ 'Dowództwo Wojskowe Polskie Okręgu Lwowskiego (gen. Rozwadowski) prosiło o przysłanie pomocy przeciwko Ukraińcom, którzy stoją pod Lwowem. Wszczęłem starania o przewiezienie Dywizji Wojsk Polskich z Odessy przez Rumunię na pomoc pod Lwów. O terminie (czasie) wyjazdu Dywizji i podwładnych otrzyma Generał zawiadomienie przez generała Franchet d'Esperey'. CAWWBH, DAGH, ref. no. I.123.1.204, no pagination, Pismo dowódcy Armii Polskiej we Francji do dowódcy 4 DSP z 7 I 1919 r.

The period of quiet garrison service was interrupted at the beginning of February 1919 by the participation of subunits of the 4th PRD in the fight for the town of Rozdilna (at the left bank of the Dniester) near Tiraspol, which was an important railway junction enabling the French army in Odessa to maintain a direct connection with Romania. The town was strongly defended by Red Army troops, which caused the French command to ask Gen. L. Żeligowski for support. A combined battalion (composed primarily of soldiers of 14th Rifle Regiment) was assigned to this task, cooperating with the units of the French 30th ID in bloody battles in the area of Tiraspol (7–8 February). This battalion, led by Lt. Col. Paweł Kozubek (nominal commander of the 14th RR) was made up of an infantry company, artillery platoon, uhlán regiment, and a platoon of sappers. However, at the beginning of March 1919, the situation of coalition troops in Odessa deteriorated further when the Bolshevik troops – willing to force the defenders of the town to surrender – decided to occupy a water supply station in the village of Belayevka, 40 kilometres from Odessa. A large group of armed local populace joined the fights for the town. In order to suppress the rebellion and repel the Bolshevik troops, a combined group of Lt. F. Sikorski, consisting of 13th RR and several subunits from the remaining regiments of the division was sent there on 15 March. After completing the task, the group remained in the area of the village until 28 March, after which it regrouped in the vicinity of Odessa⁴⁸.

In the meantime, in March 1919, another reorganisation of the 4th PRD was carried out to adapt its structure to the model of the French infantry division (the so-called ‘triple system’), on the basis of which all tactical units of the Polish Army in France were formed. In order to do this, General Józef Haller sent a mission to Odessa led by Col. Maurice Loir, who was to coordinate the reorganisation of the 4th PRD, which still consisted of three rifle regiments: 13th Rifle Regiment (commander: Lt. F. Sikorski), 14th Rifle Regiment (Col. P. Kozubek) and 15th Rifle Regiment (renamed on 30 March from the former 2nd Rifle Regiment – led by Major Albin Skroczyński). According to the adopted model of the French Infantry Division, the posts of commanders were created at that time. The following officers became the commanders in the division: infantry – Colonel S. Nałęcz Małachowski, cavalry: Colonel Karol Tupalski, artillery: Major Mikołaj Alikow. In total, the division had 2947 soldiers at that time, which

⁴⁸ T. Kawalec, *op. cit.*, pp. 14–15; A. Papakin, *op. cit.*, pp. 169–170; S. Nałęcz-Małachowski, *op. cit.*, pp. 40–41; J. Niedolaz, *Zapomniana bitwa ‘Dzikiej Dywizji’, ‘Wojskowy Przegląd Historyczny’* 1995, 1–2, pp. 368–370.

was a clear sign of its professional character⁴⁹. The process of reorganizing the division was concluded by the order of L. Żeligowski on 30 March, in which he ordered that: '[...] all Polish troops located in South Russia checked in with me through their superiors. Polish troops located in the territory of South Russia and not included in the line-up of the Polish Armed Forces shall not be considered members of the Polish Army and are not in the service of Poland but in the service of the government who pays their salary'⁵⁰.

Over the course of this reorganisation, General Żeligowski, being aware of the limited recruitment capabilities among Poles living in southern Russia, turned to General Józef Haller with another request to supplement the 4th PRD with Polish soldiers staying in Italy. However, while in January 1919 there were 5000–6000 people there, now there were about 6000–10,000 soldiers, which would allow for a quicker supplementation of the tactical unit. On 9 March, a letter on this matter was sent to the PNC by Gen. Józef Haller, where he supported the idea: 'In view of the reports from Odessa and the reorganisation undertaken there in the 4th Division, in agreement with Major Radziwiłł, temporarily staying in Paris, I reiterate my request to send 6–10,000 men from Italy to the 4th Division of the Polish Army, justifying this request with the importance of the task of this Division, operating under the orders of Gen. Barthelot, as well as the fact that it would be more advantageous for the Polish military cause to send the newly recruited soldiers to the 4th Division than to transport them as prisoners of war to the country, which would be their fate anyway, given the impossibility of sending them to France at that time'⁵¹. However, this time around the French government rejected the request again. Eventually, the division has not become a part of the 2nd Corps, planned by Józef Haller back in November 1918, which

⁴⁹ CAWWBH, 4 DS, ref. no. 1.122.81.31, sheet 85.

⁵⁰ '[...] wszystkie oddziały polskie znajdujące się na terenie Południowej Rosji zameldowały się u mnie przez swoich zwierzchników. Oddziały polskie znajdujące się na terenie Południowej Rosji i nie zaliczone do składu Wojsk Polskich nie będą uważane za Wojsko Polskie i liczą się nie na służbie polskiej, a na służbie tego rządu, na żołdzie którego znajdują się'. CAWWBH, 4 DS, ref. no. 1.122.81.31, sheet 88.

⁵¹ 'Wobec raportów z Odessy i podjętej tamże reorganizacji w 4-ej Dyw., w porozumieniu się z majorem Radziwiłłem, bawiącym chwilowo w Paryżu, ponawiam moją prośbę o wysłanie 6–10.000 ludzi z Włoch do 4-ej Dywizji W.P., uzasadniając to zadanie ważnością zadania tej Dywizji, operującej pod rozkazami gen. Barthelot, jak również okolicznością, że korzystniej dla wojskowej sprawy polskiej byłoby wysłać nowo zaciągniętych do 4-ej Dywizji, niż transportować jako jeńców do kraju, co ostatecznie by ich czekało, wobec niemożliwości wysłania ich obecnie do Francji'. CAWWBH, DAGH, ref. no. I.123.1.204, no pagination, Pismo dowódcy Armii Polskiej we Francji do KNP z 9 III 1919 r.

never came into being, but was under direct command of the Polish Army Command in France⁵².

At the beginning of April 1919, the Red Army troops went on the offensive, quickly approaching Odessa and occupying, among others, Mikołajów and Oczaków. Despite this, the command of the French army assured the inhabitants of the city, as well as the command of the Volunteer Army, that the city would be defended, as the port of Odessa was too important a strategic point to be handed over to the Bolsheviks. However, the Bolsheviks used their supporters in the city to start communist propaganda action, aimed at weakening the morale of the multinational armies in Odessa (Russian, French, Polish and Greek soldiers). Difficult supply conditions provided an excellent breeding ground for this propaganda, which quickly brought the results expected by the Bolsheviks, particularly apparent among the increasingly rebellious Odessa population. Commander of the French army in Odessa, Gen. P. H. d'Anselme asked General H. Berthelot (commander of the French Army in southern Russia): '[...] to send additional troops to reinforce the weak Allied garrison in Odessa. The position of French and Greek troops in Odessa was weakened by strong Bolshevik propaganda, which negatively affected troop morale and aroused strong pacifist sentiment among French and Greek soldiers. Due to the difficult economic situation of the Odessa populace, high unemployment among the workers, problems with food and fuel supplies to the city, a large part of the Odessa populace was hostile to the French, blaming the French command for poor living conditions in the city. To strengthen the control of the French command over Odessa, on 15 March 1919 General d'Anselme imposed a state of emergency on the city. He also replaced the local government of Odessa and sacked Odessa's military governor, Gen. Sannikov. On 20 March 1919, he appointed Gen. A. W. Schwartz, who was also to organize a new Russian army. The civilian administrator of Odessa is now D. F. Arno. The new authorities have been closely subordinated to the French command in Odessa. These actions were treated by the command of the Volunteer Army as a coup d'état and Gen. Denikin forbade Sannikov to obey the orders of the new Odessa authorities. Therefore, on 22 March 1919 the French authorities forced Sannikov to leave Odessa'⁵³.

⁵² CAWWBH, 4 DS, ref. no. I.122.81.6, no pagination, Meldunek dowództwa 4 DSP do Józefa Piłsudskiego z 4 IV 1919 r.

⁵³ '[...] przysłania dodatkowych oddziałów, które wzmocniłyby słaby garnizon Aliantów w Odessie. Pozycję oddziałów francuskich i greckich w Odessie osłabiła silna propaganda bolszewicka, która negatywnie wpływała na morale oddziałów i wzbudzała wśród żołnierzy francuskich i greckich silne nastroje pacyfistyczne. W związku z trudną sytuacją ekonomiczną ludności Odessy, dużym bezrobociem wśród robotników,

The growing conflict between the French command in Odessa and the command of the Volunteer Army undoubtedly hindered the preparation of the city for defence, which led to the decision of the French authorities on 27 March to leave the city.

Two days later (on 29 March) the French government issued an order concerning this matter, which reached the Odessa defense commander, General P. H. d'Anselme on 2 April. He has undertaken the necessary preparations combined with the development of an evacuation plan. According to this plan, the majority of the troops were to withdraw from the city by land towards Bessarabia, while some were supposed to retreat by sea. 'The evacuation should be carried out within 3 days, but General d'Anselme decided to do it within 48 hours. The decision to evacuate took the people of Odessa by surprise, as the preparations for the city's defense made earlier indicated that the French command intended to maintain control over Odessa. The residents were also disturbed by the short time of evacuation of the city. That is why there was panic among the civilians, people tried to leave Odessa at all costs, trying to get on board of the ships mooring in the port'⁵⁴. The evacuation included the French 30th and 156th ID, Greek 2nd and 13th ID, and Polish 4th PRD. After several days of fierce fighting, on the night of April 4 to 5, a pro-Bolshevik uprising erupted in the city, which further worsened the position of the coalition forces. In the morning of 5 April, the remaining units of the Polish division in Odessa concentrated on the northern end of the city, where they were surrounded by Bolshevik troops. There were several hours of clashes, during which

występującymi problemami z dostawami żywności i opału do miasta, znaczna część ludności Odessy była wrogo nastawiona do Francuzów, obwiniając dowództwo francuskie o złe warunki bytowe w mieście. Aby wzmocnić kontrolę dowództwa francuskiego nad Odessą 15 marca 1919 r. gen. d'Anselme wprowadził stan wyjątkowy w mieście. Zmienił także lokalny rząd Odessy i pozbawił stanowiska gubernatora wojskowego Odessy gen. Sannikowa. Na jego miejsce mianował 20 marca 1919 r. gen. A. W. Schwartza, który miał także zorganizować nową rosyjską armię. Cywilnym administratorem Odessy został D. F. Arno. Nowe organy władzy zostały ściśle podporządkowane dowództwu francuskiemu w Odessie. Działania te zostały potraktowane przez dowództwo Armii Ochotniczej jak zamach stanu i gen. Denikin zakazał Sannikowowi podporządkować się nowym władzom Odessy. Dlatego 22 marca 1919 r. władze francuskie zmusiły Sannikowa do opuszczenia Odessy'. P. Olszewski, *op. cit.*, p. 92.

⁵⁴ 'Ewakuacja powinna być przeprowadzona w ciągu 3 dni, jednak gen. d'Anselme zdecydował się przeprowadzić ją w ciągu 48 godzin. Decyzja o ewakuacji zaskoczyła ludność Odessy, ponieważ podjęte wcześniej przygotowania do obrony miasta wskazywały, że dowództwo francuskie ma zamiar utrzymać kontrolę nad Odessą. Mieszkańców wzburzył także krótki termin ewakuacji miasta. Dlatego wśród ludności cywilnej wybuchła panika, ludzie starali się opuścić Odessę za wszelką cenę, próbując dostać się na statki cumujące w porcie'. *Ibidem*, p. 93.

Polish soldiers had to fight their way back to the Romanian border. Unfortunately, the fights resulted in serious losses, including Colonel Przemysław Barthel de Weydenthal, who was very respected among Polish soldiers. Despite the progressing loosening of discipline among the coalition troops, the evacuation of almost 30,000 soldiers went smoothly and by the evening of 6 April they left Odessa, which was captured by Bolsheviks in the evening⁵⁵.

During the next few days, units of the 4th PRD – being in the rear guard of the allied forces retreating from Odessa – headed towards the Dniester, in the vicinity of which the previously mentioned group of Lt. F. Sikorski, who was the first to move towards the Romanian border, awaited their arrival. It was ordered to quickly build a bridge over the Dniester River, where coalition troops could cross to the Romanian shore. This task was only carried out after the arrival over the Dniester River of the main forces of the 4th PRD evacuated from Odessa. Under their protection, the Allied forces passed through the bridge to the Romanian side. The 4th PRD was the last one to cross the Dniester and after a 22-kilometer-long march the unit reached Bessarabia, where in the area of the city of Jermoklija – at that time, it numbered 4029 soldiers, including 643 officers. Due to the rapid retreat of the allied troops from Odessa, the Polish division in Bessarabia practically stopped receiving any help and its soldiers suffered from hunger. From now on, for a period of several weeks, they found themselves in a hopeless supply situation, but in spite of this General Żeligowski managed to keep the division under his command⁵⁶.

In those days, the command of the 4th PRD received information about the arrival of the first units of the Polish Army in France to Poland, so that Lieutenant General Żeligowski in his order of 27 April prohibited further sending of liaison officers to France: 'As General Haller and the first Polish divisions entered the country, we will no longer be sending officers to France'⁵⁷. Two weeks later, the division celebrated the first anniversary of the Battle of Kaniv. The feast started with a Mass, followed by an army parade, and then a lunch. It concluded with readings about

⁵⁵ *Ibidem*; CAWWBH, 4 DS, ref. no. I.122.81.6, no pagination, Meldunek dowództwa 4 DSP o śmierci płk. Przemysława Barthele de Weydenthala; T. Kawalec, *op. cit.*, pp. 21–22; S. Nałęcz-Małachowski, *op. cit.*, p. 42.

⁵⁶ W. Zaborowski, *op. cit.*, pp. 6–7; W. Lipiński, *Walka*, pp. 336–337; H. Kiszko-Zgierski, *op. cit.*, pp. 10–12; T. Kawalec, *op. cit.*, pp. 18–25; *Armia Polska we Francji. Dzieje*, pp. 207; A. Smoliński, *Powrót*, pp. 3–5, *idem*, *Jazda Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej w okresie od 12 X 1918 r. do 25 IV 1920 r.*, Toruń 2000, pp. 162–164; W. Czaykowski, *op. cit.*, pp. 9–10.

⁵⁷ 'Wobec tego że Generał Haller i pierwsze dywizje polskie wstąpiły do kraju wysyłanie oficerów do Francji odwołane'. CAWWBH, 4 DS, ref. no. I.122.81.31, sheet 113.

the history of the Polish II Corps, the tradition of which was referred to by 4th PRD⁵⁸.

The following days brought waiting of new orders for the division in connection with its planned march to the country. It was not until 15 May that the divisional order contained information that a French officer – Lieutenant Colonel Respoldis – had arrived from Poland to the accommodation area of 4th PRD, who was to deal with the matter of preparing the Polish unit for further regrouping towards the Polish lands. He also brought a letter from the head of the Polish Military Mission to Bucharest, which read, among other things: 'Please accept the assurances of my high esteem and send all brothers-in-arms from the 4th Division of the Polish Army the best wishes from the Homeland, which hopes to be able to welcome them soon to the territory of our Beloved Poland'⁵⁹.

In the following weeks, the division – guarding the Romanian bank of the Dniester River against Bolshevik troops – gradually moved northwards. During this regrouping, on 21 May, the order to return to the country was received by the divisional command, which caused great joy among the soldiers. On 23–25 May 4th PRD left Bessarabia and went by rail transport to Chernivtsi in Bukovina, where it arrived on 1 June (here the position of Chief of Staff of the Division was assumed by Colonel Victor Thommée). With the arrival in Chernivtsi, the division ceased to be under the command of the allied forces operating in southern Russia – from that moment on orders for it came only from the Supreme Command of the Polish Army. It was caused by the fact that the Polish Army came to Poland from France and was thus subordinated to J. Pilsudski, who held the position of Commander-in-Chief. Since then, 4th PRD was subordinate only to the Supreme Command of the Polish Army, which made immediate efforts to get it to the lands controlled by the Polish authorities as soon as possible. In connection with the departure of Polish troops from Bessarabia – even before leaving Kalushany – representatives of the command of the allied forces in Romania carried out a review of the departing division on 25 May and decorated its commander and several officers with French crosses of merit. In addition, they gave General L. Żeligowski an official farewell order, which was a symbolic end to the subordination of the division to the allied forces. At that time (at the end of May 1919) it consisted of almost 4.4 thousand soldiers, among them

⁵⁸ *Ibidem*, sheet 140.

⁵⁹ 'Proszę Pana Generała przyjąć zapewnienia mego wysokiego szacunku i proszę przestać wszystkim towarzyszom broni z 4-tej Dywizji W.P. najszczęsże życzenia od Ojczyzny, która liczy, że już niedługo będzie mogła powitać ich na terytorium naszej Ukochanej Polski'. *Ibidem*, sheet 155.

as many as 1100 officers. The Division was still understaffed, especially when it came to privates. It also lacked guns, as at that time it only had: 2750 rifles, 60 cannons, 12 cal 76.2 mm field cannons, 6 armoured cars, 340 sabres, 210 lances, 1100 hand grenades, about 1,900 horses (including over 800 adapted for cavalry), 31 cars, 17 motorcycles, 350 carts, and 40 field kitchens. At that time, the 4th PRD consisted of: three rifle regiments, two uhlan regiments, an artillery squadron, an engineering company, an air force unit, a military hospital, an officer school, a military hospital, an armoured car unit, and several smaller subunits⁶⁰.

Table 3. The Personnel of the 4th PRD at the end of May 1919.

Unit	Position	Personnel
Division Command	Division Commander Division Infantry Commander Division Artillery Commander Division Cavalry Commander Chief Engineer	General Lucjan Żeligowski Col. Stanisław Nałęcz-Małachowski Major Mikołaj Alikow Col. Karol Tupalski Captain Henryk Bagiński
13th Rifle Regiment	Regiment Commander Deputy Commander commander of the 1st Battalion commander of the 2nd Battalion commander of the 3rd Battalion	Lt Col. Franciszek Sikorki Major Kazimierz Jacynik Major Bolesław Pytel Captain Marian Kański Captain Stefan Bryliński
14th Rifle Regiment	Regiment Commander Deputy Commander commander of the 1st Battalion commander of the 2nd Battalion commander of the 3rd Battalion	Colonel Paweł Kozubek Lt. Col. Leon Silicki Major Stefan Walter Major Waclaw Kaj Major Stanislaw Sobieszczak
15th Rifle Regiment	Regiment Commander Deputy Commander commander of the 1st Battalion commander of the 2nd Battalion commander of the 3rd Battalion	Major Albin Skroczyński Major Józef Kowzan Captain Henryk Bozowik Major Mikołaj Bołtuć Captain Zygmunt Łobaczewski
Artillery Battalion	Battalion Commander	Major Mikołaj Alikow
1st Uhlán Regiment	Regiment Commander	Major Konstanty Plisowski
6th Uhlán Regiment	Regiment Commander	Major Włodzimierz Kownacki

Source: CAWWBH, DAGH, ref. no. I.123.1.33, no pagination, Raport dowódcy 4 DSP z 31 V 1919 r.

⁶⁰ CAWWBH, DAGH, ref. no. I.123.1.33 and ref. no. I.123.1.53, Meldunki 4 DSP z maja i czerwca 1919 r.

After a short rest, the 4th PRD was transported by train from Sadogóra station near Chernivtsi to Ottynia station, located between Kolomyia and Ivano-Frankivsk. From here they marched to Ivano-Frankivsk, where on 16 June General L. Żeligowski gave his first order in the area controlled by the Polish army. Over the next few days, the division took part in the defence of the city against Ukrainian troops, writing down another glorious page of its history. During the fights in Eastern Lesser Poland, the 1st Uhlan Regiment (from the 4th PRD) was particularly distinguished thanks to their 11 July charge against stronger opponent at Jazłowiec, as a result of which several hundred prisoners of war fell into Polish hands, along with numerous cars. The next fights of the 4th PRD on the Dniester line lasted from 20 June to mid-July⁶¹.

In the meantime, General Lucjan Żeligowski reported to the Supreme Command of the Polish Army by telegram of 22 June about the arrival of his subordinate division in the Ivano-Frankivsk region: 'I report that the units of the 4th Polish Rifle Division came from Bessarabia and are now stationed in the area of Ivano-Frankivsk – Tysmenytsia. On the Commander-in-Chief's order, we fought until now in the ranks of the allied armies. Today we are in our beloved homeland. We are happy to stand up and fight for the borders of our Homeland'⁶². On the same day, Józef Piłsudski wrote in reply that due to the poor staffing of the division – it is being dissolved and its soldiers will supplement the ranks of the Polish army formed in the country: 'In view of the weakness of the division, which has the material required by the entire army, I hereby dissolve your [...] division, giving it the honourable task of instilling the ranks of the Polish army with the fighting spirit, which until now has distinguished your division'⁶³. Three days later, another order reached the commander of 4th PRD, appointing him the commander of 10th ID, instructing

⁶¹ CAWWBH, 4 DS, ref. no. I.122.81.11 and I.122.81.31, Rozkazy i meldunki 4 DSP z wiosny i lata 1919 r.; DAGH, ref. no. I.123.1.33, no pagination, Raport gen. ppor. L. Żeligowskiego z 31 V 1919 r.; T. Kawalec, *op. cit.*, pp. 28–32; W. Zaborowski, *op. cit.*, p. 8; A. Smoliński, *Powrót*, pp. 6–7; idem, *Jazda*, pp. 165–166; W. Czaykowski, *op. cit.*, pp. 11–17; H. Kiszko-Zgierski, *op. cit.*, pp. 11–14.

⁶² 'Melduję, że oddziały 4 Dywizji Strzelców Polskich przybyły z Besarabii i stanęły w rejonie Stanisławowa-Tyśmianica. Na rozkaz Naczelnego Wodza walczyliśmy do tej chwili w szeregach armii sprzymierzonych. Dziś stanęliśmy na ukochanej ziemi ojczystej. Jesteśmy szczęśliwi, że stajemy w bezpośredniej obronie granic Ojczyzny'. CAWWBH, Oddział I Naczelnego Dowództwa Wojska Polskiego 1918–1921 [hereinafter: O I NDWP], ref. no. I.301.7.7, sheet 1212.

⁶³ 'Wobec słabego stanu dywizji, która rozporządza jedynie kadrowym materiałem potrzebnym gwałtownie dla całego wojska, rozwiązuję niniejszym rozkazem [...] dywizję, przeznaczając skład do zaszczytnej roli zapłodnienia szeregów armii polskiej duchem wojennym, który dotąd cechował dywizję Pana Generała'. CAWWBH, O I NDWP, ref. no. I.301.7.7, sheet 1212.

him to use most of his subordinate forces to strengthen the so-called national division of this number. Its formation in the area of General District No. IV Łódź was slow, so the chief military authorities decided to speed up this process by combining the elements already created with experienced staff of 4th PRD. However, it was not an easy task and took several weeks, as first the units of the 10th ID had to be pulled from the depths of the country or from the front line into the Ivano-Frankivsk area. Therefore, on 25 June the Supreme Command of the Polish Army announced that detailed orders in this matter will be issued within the next days. At the beginning of July all regiments of the so-called national 10th ID – in order to merge with regiments of the 4th PRD – were regrouped from the front into the Ivano-Frankivsk area⁶⁴.

On 26 June, in the divisional order of 4th PRD, an appeal of General Józef Haller to the Division's soldiers, as a token of gratitude for many months of effort: 'In recent days, units of the 4th Dniester Division arrived to stand on the eastern borders of the Polish State. The dream of a Polish soldier, made true thanks to constant struggle, is now a reality. After the destruction of the II Corps after the Battle of Kaniv it seemed that after this catastrophe the cause of the independent Polish army was finally lost. But the Polish soldier did not yield and did not lose faith. [...]. Two months after the Kaniv battle there were Polish troops organizing themselves in Siberia, Murmansk, Kuban to continue the history of Polish battles for freedom. The 4th and 5th Divisions, comprising the former II Corps can proudly be called the Kaniv Divisions, the beginning of the independent Polish army. Soldiers! On the days of your joyful return, I remember your hard work in distant and foreign lands for Poland and only with Poland in mind. You were seen by the southwestern parts of Russia; you took part in the fights for Tiraspol and Odessa in order to finally break through to your homeland. [...]. Soldiers of the 4th Division! I welcome those who have returned to a free and independent homeland with utmost joy'⁶⁵. For the almost entire period of its existence

⁶⁴ CAWWBH, 4 DS, ref. no. I.122.81.11 and ref. no. I.122.81.31, Rozkazy i meldunki 4 DSP z wiosny i lata 1919 r.; O I NDWP, ref. no. I.301.7.7, *passim*, Depesze w sprawie 4 DSP z czerwca 1919 r.; 10 Dywizja Piechoty, ref. no. I.313.10.1, no pagination, Rozkazy nr 1 z 1 VII 1919 r. i nr 3 z 6 VII 1919 r.; S. Nałęcz-Małachowski, *op. cit.*, p. 42. For more on the process of forming the so-called first 10th ID see: W. Jarno, *Okręg Korpusu Wojska Polskiego nr IV Łódź 1918–1939*, Łódź 2001, pp. 56–60, 64–66; idem, *Strzelcy Kaniowscy w latach 1919–1939*, Warszawa 2004, pp. 51–58.

⁶⁵ 'W ostatnich dniach przeszły oddziały 4-tej Dywizji Dniestr, by stanąć na wschodnich granicach Państwa Polskiego. Spełniło się marzenie żołnierza Polskiego, realizowane nieustanną walką. Po rozproszeniu II Korpusu po bitwie pod Kaniowem wydawać się mogło, że po tej katastrofie sprawa niezależnej armii polskiej została ostatecznie przegrana. Lecz żołnierz Polski nie ugiął się i wiary nie stracił. [...] Już dwa miesiące po Kaniowskiej bitwie stoją organizujące się oddziały Polskie na Syberii, Murmanie, nad Kubaniem, by dalej snuć nić polskich bojów o wolność. Dywizja 4-a i 5-a tworzące b. II Korpus mogą

4th PRD was formally subordinate to gen. Józef Haller, as the commander of the Polish Army in France – although, in practice, it was general Żeligowski who established close contact with the Supreme Command of the Polish Army on January 1919 and *de facto* subordinated himself to Józef Piłsudski, as the Commander in Chief. The situation in this respect was not normalized until the spring of 1919, when General Haller's Army arrived in Poland and was subordinated to the Polish authorities emerging after the coalition government of Ignacy Jan Paderewski was formed. After receiving copies of the Sejm's resolution on transferring military power to Józef Piłsudski from the PNC in February 1919, Józef Haller recognized his superiority over the army, which ended the ongoing dispute over the Polish military⁶⁶.

In the first half of July 1919, when the so-called national 10th ID was merged with the 4th PRD coming from Bessarabia, the regiments of the reorganized 10th ID kept their old numbers (28–31). In turn, in order to preserve the tradition of the 4th PRD's rifle regiments, which have their roots in the Polish II Corps, a decision was made to change their names to 'Kaniów Riflemen Regiments'⁶⁷. This process was finally completed at the end of the summer of 1919, which meant the definitive incorporation of the 4th PRD into the ranks of the Polish Army, which was the only tactical unit formed in Russia to return to the reborn Poland as a formation⁶⁸.

(translated by LINGUA LAB)

z dumą nosić nazwę Dywizji Kaniowskich, zaczątku niezależnego wojska polskiego. Żołnierze! W dniach radosnego powrotu wspominam ciężkie wasze trudy w dalekich i obcych ziemiach ponoszone dla Polski i tylko z myślą o niej. Widziały was południowo-zachodnie części Rosji, brałście udział w walkach o Tyraspol i Odesę, by się wreszcie przebieć do Ojczyzny. [...] Żołnierze 4 Dywizji! Tych, którzy wrócili witam w wolnej i niepodległej Ojczyźnie z całą radością'. CAWWBH, 4 DS, ref. no. I.122.81.31, sheet 206.

⁶⁶ J. Haller, *Pamiętniki. Z wyborem dokumentów i zdjęć*, Londyn 1964, p. 192; M. Orłowski, *op. cit.*, pp. 252–253.

⁶⁷ CAWWBH, 10 Dywizja Piechoty, ref. no. I.313.10.1, no pagination, Rozkaz nr 151 z 31 XII 1919 r.; 'Dziennik Rozkazów Wojskowych' 1919, 2, 88, p. 2105. Since only three regiments of the 10th ID merged with the regiments of the 4th PRD (28th IR with 13th RR, 29th IR with 14th RR and 31st ID with 15th RR) and took over the tradition of the units of the Polish II Corps, on 26 August 1919 the Supreme Command of the Polish Army allowed the 28th, 29th and 31st ID to use the name 'Kaniów Rifle Regiment', whereas the 30th IR, which was supplemented by approximately 100 soldiers from different subunits of the former 4th PRD, got its new name by order of 16 December 1919, when three successive regiments of the 10th ID were renamed: 30th IR into 30th Kaniów Rifle Regiment, 10th Field Artillery Regiment into the 10th Kaniów Field Artillery Regiment and 10th Heavy Artillery Regiment for 10th Kaniów Heavy Artillery Regiment. In addition, there were two more units with 'Kaniów' in their names – with roots in the 4th PRD: 6th Kaniów Uhlan Regiment and 2nd Kaniów Sapper Regiment.

⁶⁸ A. Chwalba, *1919. Pierwszy rok wolności*, Wołowiec 2019, p. 272.

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STRESZCZENIE

Artykuł opisuje historię 4 Dywizji Strzelców dowodzonej przez generała Lucjana Żeligowskiego. Powstała ona jesienią 1918 r. na Kubaniu w południowej Rosji. Podlegała początkowo dowództwu rosyjskiej Armii Ochotniczej, lecz niebawem stała się częścią Armii Polskiej we Francji. Po podpisaniu we wrześniu 1918 r. umowy pomiędzy rządem francuskim a Komitetem Narodowym Polski – 4 Dywizja Strzelców została podporządkowana dowództwu wojsk sprzymierzonych i w grudniu przetransportowana do Odessy. W toku rozmów z rządem francuskim ustalono, iż od stycznia 1919 r. pełne zaopatrzenie dywizji miała przejść na siebie strona francuska. Wówczas też dywizja została podporządkowana pod względem operacyjnym Naczelnemu Dowódcy Sił Sprzymierzonych na Bałkanach. Dywizja stała się odtąd oficjalnie częścią Armii Polskiej we Francji. Równocześnie jednak generał Lucjan Żeligowski nawiązał bliskie kontakty z dowództwem Wojska Polskiego w Warszawie i de facto podporządkował się władzy Józefa Piłsudskiego, jako Naczelnego Wodza. 4 Dywizja Strzelców powróciła ostatecznie do Polski w czerwcu 1919 r., gdzie została przeformowana na 10 Dywizję Piechoty. Zakończyło to istnienie 4 Dywizji Strzelców, która jako jedyny polski związek taktyczny powstały w Rosji powrócił do Polski.

Słowa kluczowe: 4 Dywizja Strzelców w Rosji, generał Lucjan Żeligowski, Armia Polska we Francji, Historia Odessy, Wojsko Polskie w Południowej Rosji

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