

Nighttime operations in the doctrine and practice of the Polish Army between 1921–1939

The dissertation concerns the problems related to the military history, in particular the nighttime operations in the doctrine and functioning of the reborn Polish Army between 1921–1939. The dissertation is analytical. The subject presents both the theoretical aspect with respect to the conducted trainings and the attempt to evaluate the practical application of appropriate assumptions in the combat practice in September 1939 by the Polish Army. The basic research objective was the examination of what role the nighttime operations played in the doctrine, the regulations, the training program and military thought of the mid war military forces of the 2nd Republic of Poland.

The analysis and evaluation of the six selected examples of nighttime operations, conducted by the so called giant units – typical Polish infantry, cavalry and armor tactical units – during the September 1939 Campaign constitute a significant part of the dissertation. The selection of the particular formations is based on the varied experience of the infantry divisions, cavalry brigades or armored brigade. Consequently, the author attempts to evaluate how effective and adequate the training and preparation to the tasks realized by the Polish armed forces in the battlefield in the first month of the World War proved to have been.

The dissertation is comprised of six parts – chapters. The first two chapters constitute an introductory part to the subject matter and bring a sort of the historical context. The first chapter includes a short historical note of the military nighttime operations and presents the most important issues defining nighttime operations and their specifics. The second chapter is a military and geographical analysis as well as a military and political analysis of the mid war period. The third chapter covers the issues related to the destination, organization and weaponry of the infantry, cavalry and armor tactical units. The fourth chapter presents the original analysis of the regulatory assumptions related to conducting nighttime combat operations by the Polish Army. The fifth chapter reconstructs and describes the practical course of the nighttime trainings for soldiers in specific training periods, including the ones conducted as part of the courses run by the Higher Military School. The sixth chapter constitutes an attempt to analyze and evaluate the battles of the six tactical units of the Polish Army, as part of combat operations in September 1939.