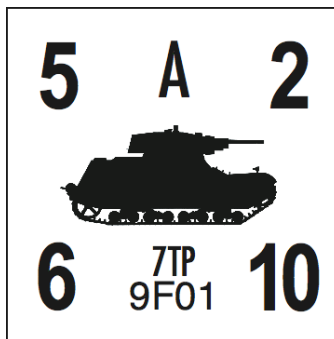




## **First to Fight, Never to Surrender:** **PB Polish 1 & 2**

By Byron Henderson

There have been several designs for the Polish army for PanzerBlitz ; mine is only the latest. I use the word "mine" only in the sense that I put together the initial unit designs. I am indebted to the numerous individuals for additional information and a variety of challenging viewpoints that helped to bring about the final shape of the counter set. Chief contributors are Tomasz Moder, Greg Moore, and Glen Coomber.



map of Europe at this time to see what a boon for Poland's security it would have been to be formally allied to both Czechoslovakia and Lithuania. Instead, Poland signed non-aggression pacts with Russia in 1932 and Germany in 1934. Neither was worth the paper they were printed upon and when war did break out in 1939, it was Germany and Russia who conquered and divided the Polish state.

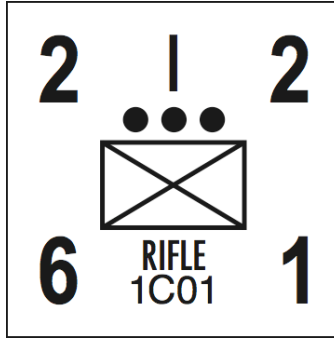
### **Some History**

After 123 years of non-existence, an independent Poland returned to the maps of Europe in 1918. With little in the way of defensible geography and borders which antagonized her avaricious neighbours, Poland was under siege almost immediately. After a series of border wars, the nation's boundaries were finalized after its victory over the Soviet Union in 1921. Due to the bitterness of these various disputes, Poland declined to join both the Little Entente and the Balkan Entente. One has only to glance at the

### **Non-vehicular units**

Polish Infantry was some of the best in Europe in 1939. Their arms were equivalent to those of their German counterparts but they were short in antitank weapons (the new ATRs, hidden in boxes entitled "Rifles for Uruguay" would not be issued prior to the invasion) and they lacked significant motorization. The individual soldier was capable and well armed; the wars of the early 1920s - and the appreciation of another war being immanent - resulted in a highly motivated and well trained force.

For these reasons, the Polish infantry ranks higher than the standard PB/PL infantry of the 1939–1940 era. They were not overwhelmed by the German panzers although they were not always effective in their defense against them. The final rating of 2 | 2/6–1 reflects a force not quite as well trained as their opponents (the Germans being represented by Ramiro Cruz’s 2 | 2/8–1) but much stiffer than the regular Allied platoon of 1 | 2/5–1. The Polish 1 | 2/5–1 unit reflects the existence of reservists and border guard units armed with older equipment.

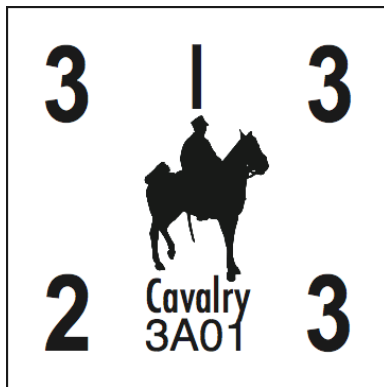


time for the war. They are included for DYO “what if” purposes only.

**Vehicular units**

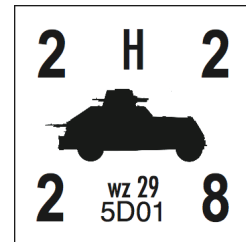
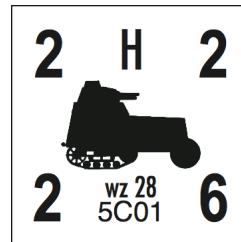
Polish armored cars caused some problems throughout the counter rating process.

The Poles armed their armored cars with either machine guns or with a short 37mm gun – the same gun arming the French FT-17 tank and the Panhard AC. This gun was simple and accurate but primarily used for assaulting infantry and machine gun emplacements. Its low velocity, resulting in armor penetration of only 12mm at 0 meters, meant it was not well suited for armored warfare. In addition, the Poles organized their armored cars with a mix of 37mm gun and machine gun armed types. As a result the attack factors for the Polish armored cars reflect the 2 H 2 of the French Panhard armored car, not the armor piercing capability of the FT-17.



Polish Cavalry were elite units in the Polish army. They often fought dismounted; the horses were used mainly for transport. The cavalry counters include polish *taczankas* – heavy machine guns mounted on wagons for fire support.

Polish towed guns were of the standard PanzerBlitz types and most ratings simply reflect the values issued previously for early war guns. The Polish 47mm antitank gun and the 120mm mortar were not produced in



The defense factors of the armored cars are worth commenting upon. Anyone who reads a little history will find that armored cars of this time period usually had only 8mm of armor. However, consider that a motorcycle platoon has a defense factor of 2, and trucks a defense factor of 1. Armored cars would seem to rate higher than either,

but given the limitations of the game engine, they are rated as better than trucks but the same as motorcycles and other carrier units. Their armor, although of limited value from a strict formula standpoint, affords them some protection within the game system. More on armored defense factors below, as there were other things to consider as well.

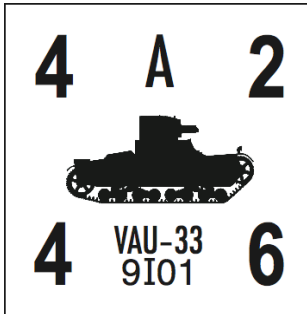
Polish tankettes and tanks were limited in effectiveness by the policies of Jozef Pilsudski. Although he strengthened the armed forces of his country, he failed to modernize them. After his death in 1935, various modernization programs went into effect but they succeeded in only limited advances by 1939 due to financial restrictions.



The TK tankettes were armed only with machine guns although approximately 24 were rearmed with 20mm antitank rifles before the war. They were generally regarded as unsuited even for reconnaissance roles.

The Poles purchased 38 British Vickers Armstrong 6-ton tanks in 1921. 22 of them were rearmed with a short armor-piercing 47mm gun of dubious quality (reported penetration of 25mm at 500 metres). They were assigned to two mechanized brigades just before the

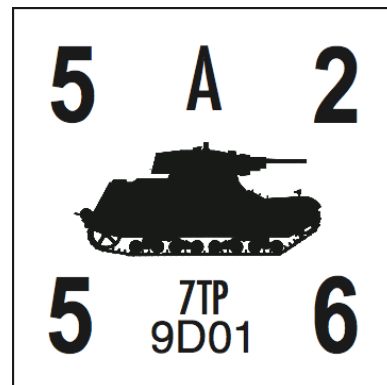
German invasion. Designated the VAU-33 (machine gun armed) and VAU-33jw (47mm gun armed) they are represented in the game with factors of 2 I 2/4-6 and 4 A 2/4-6 respectively.



In 1934, the Poles developed the 7TP (7 ton pancerna) tank. The armor was considered too light so an improved version, with twice the armor, was built in 1937. Unfortunately, only 11 of the improved version had been produced when the

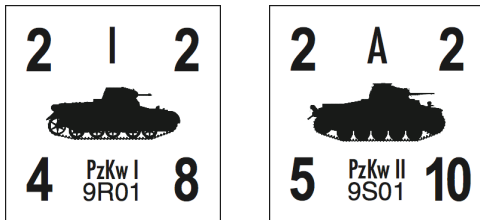
approach of German forces halted their manufacture. There was also a 10TP tank being tested but, depending on your source, it may have been either the improved 7TP or a completely different tank type with equivalent statistics. The improved 7TP included in the counter set is meant to represent both the improved 7TP and the 10TP tanks.

Also in the works was a new light tank, the 4TP, armed with a 20mm gun and a heavier medium tank, the 14TP, armed with a 47mm gun. Both are included in the counter set for DYO "what if" scenarios. Depending on your source, the Z ratings may vary by one or two factors.



### Tank Defense Factors

Anyone having read Alan Arvold's excellent series on PanzerBlitz factors will notice that the defense factors of the Polish tanks are overrated. The VAU-33 and 7TP both had a maximum armor of 13 to 17mm and even the improved 7TP only had armor of 40mm. This would mean that Polish tanks should have defense factors of 2 and 4. Instead they have factors of 4 and 5. The reason for this has to do with their opponent(s) in the game.



Players will notice that there are no counters included in this set for the 1939 German army. The counters in use for any Polish scenarios would need to use Ramiro Cruz's 1940 German counters - and there were significant differences in the German panzer forces that fought Poland and those that invaded France a year later.

To start with, the Panzer II (perhaps the most numerous tank of the campaign) possessed a maximum of only 15mm of armor in 1939; the Panzer I had only 13mm. The limited numbers of Panzer IIIs and IVs in the campaign were also very lightly armored; only a maximum of 15mm each. Starting in 1940, two things increased the defense value of these tanks: First, their experiences in

Poland convinced the Germans to increase the armor on all tanks except the Panzer I, which was to be discontinued altogether. Second, the tactical doctrine of the tank forces changed.

In Poland, the Germans learned the hard way that their tanks were too lightly armored to advance directly at the enemy. Instead they began advancing obliquely, pointing the vehicle's corner at the enemy. This gave them an artificial modifier for "sloped" armor that shouldn't be present in Polish scenarios. The defense factors of the German tanks in 1939 *should* be 2, not 4, 5, or 6. However, since we are using Cruz's factors from 1940, an artificial bonus was also given to the Polish tanks to "even the playing field." As they stand now, the Poles are presented in the proper format to fit into the existing game structure.

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