

Greater Poland Uprising 1918-1919

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18.04.2024, 18:22

BATTLES ON THE SOUTHERN FRONT 10 - 15 January 1919

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In the January of 1919, the Southern Front was not at any particular risk. Even though there were some strong German units, which could not be opposed by the scarce Polish forces, stationed in its direct neighbourhood - in Kępno, Syców, Milicz and Międzybórz - the fighting in this area was of a local nature. The regular units rarely challenged the insurgents, and, on top of this, the Poles were also lucky because the morale of the enemy at that time was not particularly high. However, some clashes of a more prestigious nature did occur here.

The fight for Ligota was one such combat episode of the Southern Front in the period between 10-15 January 1919. The account of this battle is as follows:

10 January: the insurgents seized Sarnowa,

11 January: the insurgents lose Sarnowa as the result of a surprise attack by the Germans,

11 January: the taking of Słupia by Germans,

12 January: the loss of Ligota,

13 January: the recovery of Ligota,

15 January: clashes near Kobyla Góra and Ligota,

14 - 15 January: the battles for Granowiec.

An example of the fighting during this period was the course of the clashes in the vicinity of Kobyla Góra on 15 January 1919. The commander of the action was Zygmunt Wieliczka, Head of Staff of Military District VII. The following forces were assigned the task of capturing Kobyla Góra:

1. First group: 4th company of the Border Battalion (80 people, 1 heavy machine gun, commander: Second Lieutenant Mieczysław Szreybrowski).

Task: to proceed through Rogaszyce, Kochłowy and Parzynów and to occupy positions opposite hill 284 (presently 253.6);

2. Second group: commander: Second Lieutenant Feliks Pamin, composed of the following units:

- *Skalmierzyce Company (50 people),*

- *Pleszew Company (30 people),*

- *2 light machine guns.*

Task: to proceed through Rojów and Myślniew in the direction of Ligota.

On 15 January, the plan was to surround the Germans who were occupying Ligota, Trzykamienie and hill 284, and to seize these locations.

On 14 January, both groups left Ostrzeszów at 19.00. Half an hour later, Rogaszyce, situated 4 km away, was occupied without any resistance from Germans - this is at least what Z. Wieliczka wrote in his report dated 18 January - however, things are not always so certain in the reality of wartime. Similarly, Myślniew was also taken without any serious obstacles, only some German mounted patrols were encountered. At 11.30 p.m., the unit from Mikstat, which consisted of 50 soldiers with one light machine gun, joined Pamin's group in Myślniew.

During the night of 14 to 15 January, Kochłowy, Parzynów and Jawor were occupied without any resistance and both groups established contact with each other. Before 5.00 a.m. the unit from Mikstat left for Kobyla Góra. Punctually at 7.00 a.m. (as planned), a successful attack on Ligota and hill 284 was conducted. According to the above-mentioned report, written up by Z. Wieliczka, the losses of the Germans amounted to 61 dead and 46 prisoners-of-war, while there were 3 fallen and 9 wounded on the side of the insurgents. Before 10.00 a.m., both groups from Kobyla Góra set off back to Ostrzeszów.

This is one example of the sort of action that was quite typical on the Southern Front. There were no really decisive clashes at that time, the respective towns were occupied as a result of sorties organised from insurgent "bases";

Ostrzeszów was one such base. In fact, the Germans behaved similarly. The rule, that the insurgent army was successful in the open field only when its ordinary soldiers were determined to fight and the lower and medium rank commanders had the necessary experience and qualifications, was proven here.

