What happened in Warsaw?

A WWII mystery RPG by Jan "Crowen" Rosa
Written for the Golden Cobra 2018 Challenge

Chapter 1 – Warsaw Incident and the analysis of the following events

In 1939, German authorities began to concentrate Poland's population of over three million Jews into a number of extremely crowded ghettos located in large Polish cities. The largest of these, the Warsaw Ghetto, concentrated approximately 300,000-400,000 people into a densely packed, 3.3 km2 central area of Warsaw. Approximately 250,000-300,000 ghetto residents met their deaths at Treblinka during the two-month-long operation in 1942, another thousands in Warsaw Ghetto Uprising in 1943.

On 1 August 1944, The Warsaw Uprising began as part of a nationwide Operation Tempest, launched at the time of the Soviet Lublin-Brest Offensive. Our objectives were to drive the Germans out of Warsaw while helping the Allies defeat Germany. The uprising was timed to coincide with the retreat of the German forces from Poland ahead of the Soviet advance. While approaching the eastern suburbs of the city, the Red Army temporarily halted combat operations, enabling the Germans to regroup.

Initially, we established control over most of central Warsaw, but the Soviets ignored our attempts to maintain radio contact with them and did not advance beyond the city limits. Intense street fighting between us and the Germans continued. By 14 September, the eastern bank of the Vistula River opposite our positions was taken over by the Polish troops fighting under the Soviet command. 1,200 men made it across the river, but they were not reinforced by the Red Army.

Winston Churchill pleaded with Stalin and Franklin D. Roosevelt to help us allies, to no avail. Then, without Soviet air clearance, Churchill sent over 200 low-level supply drops by the Royal Air Force, the South African Air Force, and the Polish Air Force under British High Command, in an operation known as the Warsaw Airlift. On 25 September, three companies of british paratroopers from the 1st Airborne Division were deployed to Warsaw to support our effort to drive the Germans out of Warsaw.

A few days later, panicking Russian soldiers were seen running towards the bridges over the Vistula river. They were running on foot, bicycles, several of them were riding horses, motorcycles or cars. Four tanks made it over, before destroying the two of the six bridges. Fires broke out and soon the whole east part of Warsaw was covered in smoke.

And then the hell broke loose.

Weird creatures covered in blood, some still wearing the remains of Russian uniforms, appeared out of the ashes and smoke. The monsters flooded the streets of Warsaw killing everybody they encountered. Shortly after that, Warsaw lost the connection with the rest of the world. Radio stopped working on the long distance, nothing gets in or out.

What happened in Warsaw?

Mjr. Adam W. Grom
Radoslaw Group, Kedyw
Warsaw

Game setup

- You need a handful of six-sided die per player and a pen & paper, printed map of Warsaw and printed Agent's cards. Optionally you can use tokens for some game counters, you'd need ~15 per player.
- Each player should read the *Warsaw Incident and the analysis of the following events* onepager to get a picture about the game setting.
- All but one player are members of Drużyna Widmo, the Ghost Squad. The last player is the squad's handler, Major Adam Witold Grom,
- Major Grom's player gives out the Agent cards randomly, or read Masks of the agents and the remaining players pick them one by one as they like the character descriptions.
- The game starts with the *Briefing* scene.

Briefing

Major Grom's player reads out the following text at the beginning of the game:

At ease, soldiers! Welcome and thank you for volunteering in these hard times…. It was a joke, you didn't really had a choice but to obey your orders, did you? You are now members s of Drużyna Widmo, the Ghost Squad. Ghost Squad is part of Radoslaw Group, a unit of Kedyw. Kedyw, as you know, is Kierownictwo Dywersji ("Directorate of Diversion"), a Home Army unit that conducts active and passive sabotage, propaganda, and armed operations against German forces and collaborators. That is, we did, before the fuckikng Warsaw Incident.

Anyway, my name is Major Grom, and I'm your handler, your liaison officer. I report directly to Colonel Jan "Radoslaw" Mazurkiewicz, the leader of Radoslaw Group. All orders and communication with the rest of the Radoslaw group goes through me.

Our mission is to figure out what the fuck happened here in Warsaw. I will be sending some or all of you out there to lead or to participate on various operations, but never forget what your mission is.

You all receive a standard Ghost kit after the briefing. It consist of a badge, a pistol, a knife, ammunition, a notebook and binoculars. As a group you receive two submachine guns, two rifles and two shotguns, a couple of grenades, and two medkits.

Any questions?

Ghosts

Each Ghost is described by a few attributes.

- **Name** - Ghost's name. If you are recruiting new Ghost, you can quickly pick from the list of names at the end of this document.
- **Mask** - who does the Ghost pretend to be. Mask consists of the name, rank and background (what was the Ghost's job before the war, military training, skills etc).
- **Secret identity** - who the Ghost really is. Secret Identity consists of the name, rank and background. Nobody but the Ghost knows this. This is not mandatory for every character, but adds some fun into the game.
- **Collection** - a collection of things the Ghost can use.
- **Secrets** - a collection of secrets the Ghost knows.
- **Lessons learned** - a collection of lessons learned the hard way - through making a lot of mistakes.

Sample Ghost

Name: Witold Lenski **Rank:** Corporal **Agend ID:** KRDW001 **Background:** Electrician Infantry **Mistakes:** 5 [ ][ ][ ][ ][ ][ ] **Secrets:** 3 [ ][ ][ ][ ][ ][ ] **Collection:** 4 [ ][ ][ ][ ][ ][ ] Pistol Vis 9x19mm 3 magazines (8 rounds) Revolver Nagant M1895 7.62x38mm 2 cylinders (7 rounds) Knife Notebook & pen Binoculars	**Secrets:** ex-Polish First Army sniper Speaks Russian **Lessons learned:** Never trust Russians. Always carry a second weapon. **Promotion:** [ ][ ][ ] [ ][ ][ ] [ ][ ][ ] [ ][ ][ ]

Mechanics of War

Game structure

Each game session (called the Operation) is split into several scenes. A set-up of the scene is simple, you need to say where is the scene happening, who is present on the scene, and what is happening.

Say yes or roll the dice

During the course of play the players describe, what their Ghosts want to achieve. If someone disagrees with what is being said, that player needs to introduce an obstacle for the Ghost. It's time to roll the dice!

Obstacles

An obstacle can be anything, from a locked door to an enemy patrol. The player introducing the obstacle needs to describe it, and set the difficulty. As a rule of thumb, the more descriptors you use the higher the difficulty of the obstacle is.

> **Example:** Getting through a locked (1) door has difficulty 1, a locked (1) door blocked (1) with a table has difficulty 2, a locked (1) door blocked (1) with a large (1) wardrobe has difficulty 3.

> **Example:** Sneaking by a sentry (1) on a watch tower (1) has difficulty 2. Well-trained (1) double sentry (2) on a watchtower (1) and high alert (1) has a difficulty 5.

Collecting achievements

In order to overcome the obstacle you have to collect equal to or more achievements than the difficulty of the obstacle your Ghost is facing.

First, you need to establish your dice pool. Take one die for each of the applicable attributes: Rank, Background/Training, Collection item, Secret, Lesson learned, Advantage. (Rank and Item can provide more than one die).

Roll the dice pool. **Each die with 4+ is an achievement.**

You can get extra results by collecting dice of the same number:
- For each **pair**, roll an extra die, and add the result to your pool.
- For each **triple**, get an extra achievement, and an advantage (+1 die) to the next roll.
- For each **quadruple**, double your current number of achievements.
- If you roll **five or more** same numbers, you win regardless of the obstacle difficulty or a roll of your opponent.

If you have equal to or more achievements than the difficulty, you have overcome the obstacle.

If you have less achievements than the difficulty of the obstacle, you have several options:
1. Accept the failure (Really, agent??)
2. Introduce a complication to the game, and roll the dice again. If you are using any rechargeable tools, spend one charge (a pistol magazine, a candle while trying to find your way out from Warsaw underground, …)
3. Spend one Mistake token, add a complication to the game, and overcome the obstacle.

Enemies

Opposing enemies have their own dice pool, built the same way as your Ghost's. Basically, the dice pool of the enemy is the difficulty you need to overcome.

A dice pool of a group is built as if they were one person. Number of achievements on the dice is then multiplied by the group's size (see the random tables at the end of the rules).

> **Example:** Three robbers (1) with knives (1) and a gun (2) have the dice pool of 4. If they roll 1, 3, 4, 5, which is 2 achievements, this is multiplied by 2, so overall they have 4 achievements.

Fighting enemies

When fighting an enemy, your dice pool is rolled against theirs. More achievements win the round.

The difference between achievements represents the wounds dealt in combat.

If you have more achievements than your enemy, cross of the (difference of achievements) squares off the Difficulty. Your enemy has a smaller dice pool in the next round. Same as with obstacles, introduce a complication to the game. In fight, this means you are tired or bruised, you have -1 to your dice pool until the end of the fight.

If you have less achievements than your enemy, they managed to wound you. The size of the wound depends on the difference of achievements.

Difference	Wound	Effect
1	Bruised or shocked	-1 to your dice pool in the next round
2	Small mistake - a cut or a shot scratch	-1 to your dice pool until the end of fight / scene. Spend one Mistake token to avoid.
3 - 4	Big mistake - a broken limb, dangerous shot or stab wound.	-3 to your dice pool until the end of the game session (or 4 weeks of in-game time). Spend two Mistake tokens to avoid.

| 5+ | Last mistake - multiple broken bones, multiple shots or stab wounds. | Incapacitated, you lost. If you survived, you have -5 to your dice pool until the end of the game session (or 8 weeks of in-game time). Spend three Mistake tokens to avoid. |

If you are out of all Mistake tokens, or your dice pool is smaller than the sum of your wounds, you lost the fight. What happen next depends on the situation - you are unconscious, captured or dead.

> **Example:** Corporal Witold is facing three robbers in a dark alley. His dice pool is as follows: Corporal (2) + pistol (2) + Infantry training (1). Witold doesn't have any advantage or a secret he could use against the robbers, so his player's dice pool is 5 dice. The robbers from the previous example have the dice pool of 4.
>
> Witold's player rolls 2, 2, 3, 5, 6. He has 2 achievements (5, 6). He also has a pair (2, 2), so he rolls an extra die, and gets 2 again. Not an achievement on itself, but he now has a triplet (2,2,2), so he adds 1 extra achievement, and has an advantage (+1) in the next roll. Robbers roll only 1 achievement (1,2,3,4), multiplied by 2 is 2. Witold wins this round of fight, and deals 1 wound (3-2). The Difficulty/Dice pool of robbers drops from 4 to 3 - he hits one of the robbers to the shoulder, and the robber is in pain, bleeding and screaming on the ground.
>
> In the next round, even with an extra die for advantage, Witold only gets 1 achievement. Robbers get 2 achievements on the dice, multiplied by 2 is 4. Witold gets a nasty stab wound. He has -3 until the game session. Witold was luckier in the next round, got 1 more achievements than robbers. Their Difficulty / Dice pool dropped to from 3 to 2. With focused fierce firing Witold managed to wound another robber. He also spent all 3 magazines and can't use his Vis pistol until he finds more ammo.
>
> It's getting very dangerous for Witold - he has ran out of ammo and is heavily bleeding from this wound. The remaining robber stands unharmed, and the next round most likely decides the outcome of the fight. Witold's player spends one Secret token, and says Witold has one more magazine in his pocket. In the last round Witold got two more achievements and shot the remaining robber dead.

Secrets give you power

You start the game with some secrets on your Agent card, and a few secret tokens. A secret in your card gives you extra dice if needed, but also other advantages in the game, as knowledge is power.

If you are in a situation, where knowing a certain secret would give you advantage or saves your life, you can spend one Secret token and write down the new secret to your Agent card. It can be anything from training in hand-to-hand combat to knowing a secret entrance to sewers where you can hide from the angry mob that runs after you.

Learn from your mistakes

You learn from your mistakes, but if you make too many of them you can die. You start the game with a few learnings from your mistakes, written down on your Agent card, and a few Mistake tokens.

A Lesson learned in your agent's card gives you extra dice if you apply the learning from this mistake in the game.

If you are in a situation, where having learned the hard way from your past mistake would give you advantage or saves your life, you can spend one Mistake token and write down the new learning to your Agent card. It can be anything from *Shoot first, ask later*, to *Always look behind your shoulder*.

Collection of things

You start the game with some gear provided by Kedyw, and a few Collection tokens. At any time during the game, you can spend Collection tokens to announce you own certain items.

- Spend one token to get a common thing
- Spend two tokens to get an uncommon thing
- Spend three tokens to get a rare thing

Rest and recharge

You get some rest in between operations. At the start of a new operation you receive new tokens - Collection, Secret and Mistake - two of each.

Promotion

If you want to play *"What happened in Warsaw?"* as a campaign, you can get promoted to a higher rank over time. You need to follow orders and uncover secrets in order to get promoted. Once you collect enough promotion points, you can be promoted by Major Grom.

How many points you need depends on how long do you want to play. If you only want a few game sessions, three or six promotion points is enough for being promoted. Nine or twelve is more suitable for a long-term campaign.

Advantages of the higher ranks

When you get promoted to the next rank, you receive 2 extra Collection, Secret and Mistake tokens. You can spend them immediately, or keep them for later.

Operations

Orders

Each operation of your squad starts with receiving orders from Mjr. Grom. Write them down on a piece of paper. The operation is successful, if you complete all primary objectives, secondary objectives are always a nice bonus.

Check the boxes next to individual mission objectives as you complete them. Every time you complete an objective, tick the Promotion box on your Agent card, and get one token of our choice (Collection, Secret or Mistake).

Creating orders

If you are stuck for ideas, you can roll a few dice and create the operations objectives getting inspiration or modifying the ideas from the random tables.

The order usually says to do something (actions from the random tables) to something (target item) or someone (target person) somewhere (locations).

> **Example:** Find sergeant Bialski. He went to scout the south docks for usable boats and hasn't checked back yet.

Secrets

Remember, the main reason for your team's existence is to figure out, what happened in Warsaw. Below is a list of secrets, that may eventually help you putting an answer together. Every time you uncover a secret, tick the Promotion box on your Agent card, and get one token of our choice (Collection, Secret or Mistake).

- There are no human survivors east side of Vistula river, just beasts.
- Some beasts can regenerate the wounds.
- The zone around Warsaw is roughly a circle with a 70km radius.
- No radio signal leaves or enters the zone
- No one can leave the zone, all roads and attempts just lead back to Warsaw
- No one can see the invisible border or what's behind
- No one can cross the invisible border

Recruitment

If your Ghost is killed, you can pick up a new character and join the operation at some in-game convenient time. Creating a new agent is quick and easy.

1. Roll 3d6, assign values to Collection (things you can use), Secrets (masks, secrets you know), Mistakes (you learn from), represented by tokens.
2. Pick a name
3. Agree on the rank of your agent with the rest of the players
4. Write down (rank) number of things into Background, Collection, Secrets and Lessons learned boxes on the agent card.
5. Decide, when and how your new agent joins the Ghost Squad.

Beasts

No one knows how beasts appeared and where they came from. After the initial attack and drastic population reduction in Warsaw and surrounding areas the beasts rule the land.

Random Tables

If you need to get a quick answer what's happening, who did the Ghosts meet or what did they find, just roll a dice and pick the right column.

	Events	Enemies	Beasts	Civilians	Civilians II
1	Robbery/Theft	Soldier	Runner	Worker	Doctor
2	Ambush/Attack	Thief	Stalker	Academic	Baker
3	Fire/Flood	Robber	Shrieker	Officer	Carpenter
4	Break in/Collapse	Smuggler	Berserk	Child	Butcher
5	Storm/Snow	Special Unit	Troll	Artist	Bartender
6	Betrayal/Pogrom	Collaborant	Herd	Merchant	Locksmith

	Units	Ranks	Type	Vehicle	Special Unit
1	Soldier	Private	Infantry	Bicycle	SS
2	Fireteam (2-4)	Corporal	Navy	Horse	Abwehr
3	Squad (8-14)	Sergeant	Airforce	Motorcycle	NKVD

4	Platoon (15-45)	Lieutenant	Mechanized	Car	OSS
5	Company (80-150)	Captain / Major	Sappers	APC	1st Airborne Division
6	Battalion (300-800)	Colonel	Comms	Tank	Polish First Army

	Weapon	**Polish**	**German**	**US**	**UK**	**Russian**
1	Knife	Baton	Axe	Bayonet	Brass Knuckles	Garotte
2	Pistol	Radom Pistolet wz.35 Vis	Walther P38	Colt M1911	Browning Hi-Power	Nagant 1895
3	Rifle	Mosin-Nagant	Gewehr 43	Lee-Enfield	M1 Carbine	Tokarev SVT 40
4	Submachine gun	Blyskawica	MP 40	M1A1 Thompson	Sterling Submachine Gun	Fedorov Avtomat
5	Grenade	Frag Grenade wz.1933	Model 39 Eiergranate	Mk.2 Frag Grenade	Thermos Grenade	RG42
6	Special	Molotow cocktail	Flame thrower	Grenade Launcher	Machine Gun	Landmine

	Tools	**Food**	**Food II**	**Food III**	**Items I**	**Items II**
1	Electrical tools	Bread	Dried fruits	Tea	Tobacco / Cigarettes	Map
2	Woodcraft tools	Flour	Conserve	Coffee	Ammunition	Gasoline / Kerosene
3	Mechanic's bag	Rice	Sweets	Beer	Money	Encryption machine
4	Doctor's bag	Milk	Vegetables	Wine	Jewlery	Explosives
5	Gardening tools	Butter	Fruits	Military rations	Matches / lighter	Drugs
6	Lockpicks / Watchmaker	Cream	Meat	Spirits	Candles	Medicine

|	**Action**	**Target item**	**Target person**	**Locations I**	**Locations II**	**Crime / Secret**
1	Protect	Information	Military officer	House	Warehouse / Factory	Theft / Robbery
2	Find / Locate	Food	Spy	Shop / Workshop	Riverside / Dock	Drugs
3	Rescue / Conquer	Weapons	Collaborant	Pharmacy / Doctor	Square	Murder
4	Escort	Equipment	Criminal	Bunker / Watchtower	Park / Cemetery	Rape / Prostitution
5	Kill / Destroy	Location	Scientist / Academic	Street / Gate	Office	Forgery / Cheating
6	Kidnap	Vehicle	Doctor / Medic	Sewers	Hospital	Desertion / Enemy agent

Extra resources

Lists of Polish, German, Russian and English names
Common WWII infantry weapons, Warsaw uprising and Warsaw ghetto
Occupation of Poland Photographs of Warsaw Uprising

Warsaw, September 1945
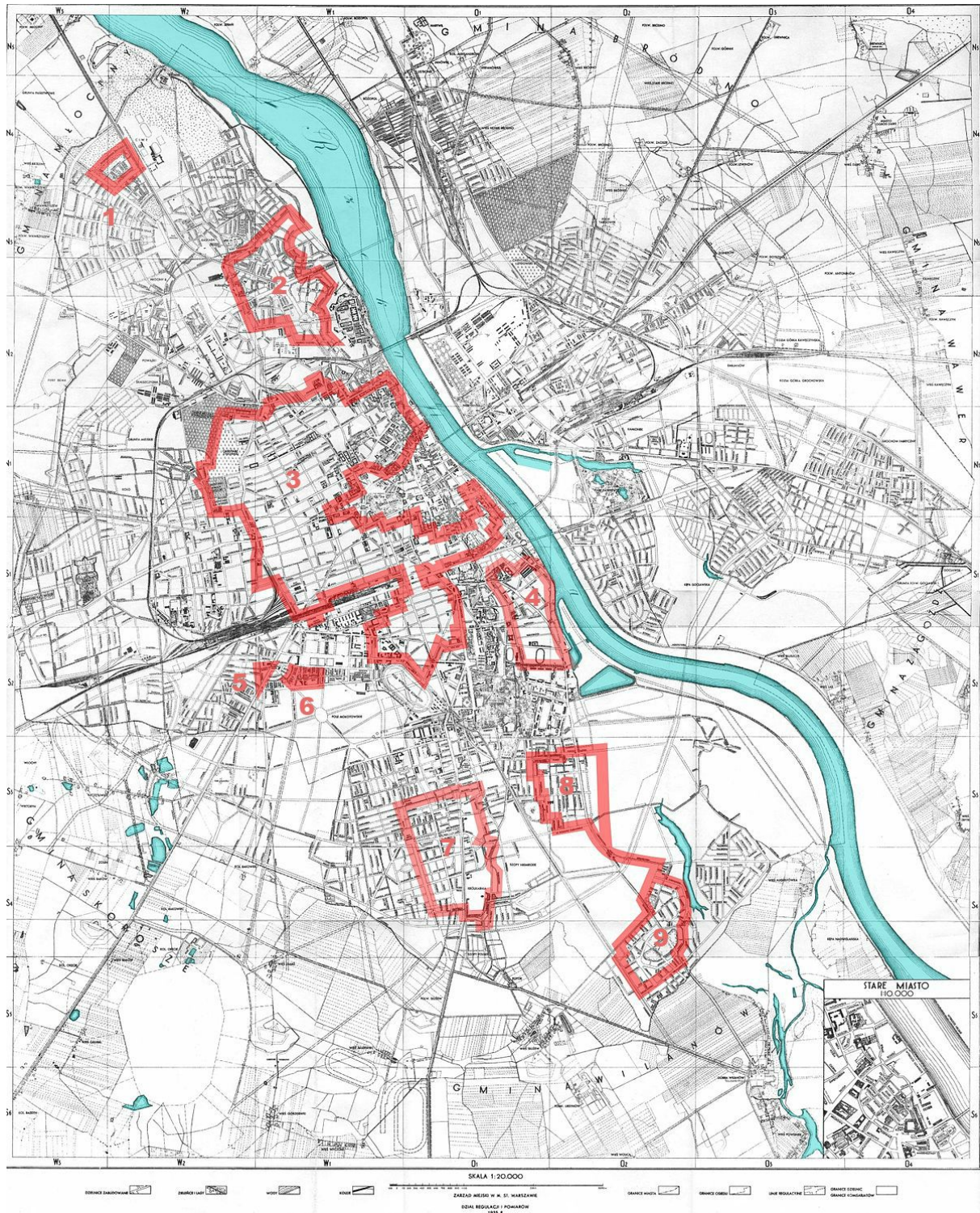
Areas of control:

1 – Abwehr (DE) – population estimate 30–50
2 – Wehrmacht (DE) – population estimate 120–150
3 – Jewish Military Union (PL) – population estimate 3000 Jews and 700 Poles
4 – Red Army (RU) – population estimate less than 200 Russians and about 150 Poles
5 – Office of Strategic Services (US) – population unknown, less than 30??
6 – 1st Airborne Division (UK) – population estimate 40 UK paratroopers, 20–40 Poles
7 – Home Army (PL) – population estimate 300 soldiers, 8–900 Polish civilians
8 – Polish Resistance (PL) – population estimate 100 soldiers, 2–300 Polish civilians
9 – Polish Resistance (PL) – population estimate 70 soldiers, 2–300 Polish civilians