



Operation 'Einsvogel'

A 1946 Storm of Eagles© Article

By S. Pearson written for C-P Models.

It was a perfect target for the Red Army airforce flying overhead Vassiloya told himself and a target they couldn't miss, they'd be mass slaughter if the Soviet air strike spotted the Germanski swine as they marched across the steppe!

Vassiloya did a quick calculation, he would expose his hidden position to the Germans if he fired a flare to alert the Sturmoviks, but upon reflection Vassiloya mused, what else could he do but destroy the German's even if it risked his own life?

Introduction

Luft-WaffenOberst Karl Ernsthäusen, (knights cross winner) spent the better part of three years with the Fourth Fallschirmjäger Division before attending a staff training course in Prague during September 1945. Once the course was completed he had expected to be transferred back to the staff of the 4th FJ-Gruppen. But instead was ordered to the Neu-Luftwaffe HQ near Darmstadt to receive a new command posting!

The head of the Luftreiter-Gruppen Luft-General Buchner gave him command of a new 'flying' infantry unit by the order of FM Adolf Galland the glamorous head of the Neu-Luftwaffe, composed of a mix of airborne infantry and a new VTOL aircraft capable of carrying them in to battle. These new VTOL aircraft the Me1109 would revolutionise air infantry tactics and Ernsthäusen was to receive command of the 16th Luftreiterwaffengruppe.

Luftreiter-Gruppen 16

The sixteenth air cavalry unit of the Luftwaffe was created at the 'home' of the Neu-Luftwaffe's helicopter arm on an airbase near Pilsen.

The newly created 16th Luftreiter-Gruppen 'SturmJägers' or storm hunters commanded by Luft-WaffenOberst Tebbe consists of a flight HQ, three staffel or luftreiterschwadrons an air supply schwarme, Pz-Jg and air medical zugs, all were initially equipped with the new fully enclosed Me1109 jet engine helicopter and four company sized infantry Sturm.

The 16th began training with six variants of the Me1109 during October 1945. The workhorse of the unit was the Me1109A troop carrier, with two crew and ten-man lift capacity and four MG17 machine guns for ground support. The vital headquarter communication variant is the Me1109f with two PUMA2000 radios.

The Me1109C was equipped with the X-4 rocket system for air-to-air defence. The Me1109E is equipped with 2 x 37mm anti-tank guns for anti-tank defence. The next variant is the Me1109B version, converted to carry four seriously wounded troops from battle to the field hospital. The Me1109D is a nerve gas delivery system which is not used by the Luftreiter-Gruppen.

The 500 man infantry component of the Gruppen was created from the reserve unit of the second battalion 13th Cavalry Regiment, (based at Paderborn).

Command of the unit went to Ernsthäusen due to the shortage of qualified field officers in the cavalry corp.

As was the norm the new unit carried its cavalry traditions to the new unit and was christened the 16th Luftreiterwaffengruppe, with three airlift-able Reitersturm and one combat support Sturm equipped with MMG and Mortars.

The infantry wear a newly designed tunic similar to the panzer troop's short tunic, fallschirmjäger helmet with splinter goggles and carry a toggle rope. Troops wear an armshield on the upper right arm depicting a jumping horse and eagle wings motif.

The Russian reacted first. He swung his MN rifle like a club. The cruel brass-shod butt caught the Luftreiter in the lower face. A great blob of scarlet blood shot from his broken nose staining his tunic. His MP46 fell from his lifeless hands as he fell backwards, pole axed, dead before he hit the ground.

The Jagd-Reiter

The first draught taken in at Pilsen from the 13th Reserve Cavalry Depot at Paderborn, consisted of 460 recruits from the Speer Labour Korp. They had performed their four weeks basic training at Paderborn and at Pilsen they were expected to train embarking and de-bussing from the hovering helicopters.

Heavy weapon zugs trained with their specialist equipment. Officers and Non commissioned officers came from every branch of the Neu-Heer and Luftwaffe; NCO volunteers had to have a minimum of three years serving as NCOs in a front line unit.

Basic training took six weeks, specialist training a further two weeks. Then the recruits under went a two week night fighting course, with special emphasis on using the Vampir II night vision set. The 4th support Zug also received instruction on the use of the Gasfaust, both VX and Sarin nerve gas versions. This is used in enclosed spaces such as dug outs or bunkers.

At the end of December 1945 the unit began field trials and Gruppe training, mostly conducted at night to avoid Allied detection. At the unit passing our parade on the 27th of December the unit was given the honorific title: 'SturmJagers' or storm hunters and the new unit shield issued to the men, (not to sewn on till the unit had been blooded in battle).

All NCO's and helicopter crews were issued the new short barrelled MP46 SMG, specially made for commandos and air crew instead of the StG45.

Operation 'Einsvogel' (kingfisher)

The 16th Luftreiter-Gruppen with its Luftreiter-Gruppe and 16th Luftreiterwaffengruppe received its last delivery of Me1109's on the 15th of January and was declared combat ready.

The 'Sturmjagers' went combat operational with the 9th Feld Armee a few weeks later, supporting the defence of Minsk. As part of a desperate attempt to shore up the crumbling Romanian front, the unit was transferred to the control of the 8th Feld Armee, north of Bucharest during February 1946.

It was with 8th Feld Armee they took part in their most famous mission to date, Operation 'Einsvogel' the destruction of Marshall Tolbukhin's 2nd Ukrainian Front HQ!

The winter skies shimmered as the dying sun sunk low over the river, its rays illuminating the whole far side of the river with its cold yellow light. Time was suspended for a second as Sturmofficer Bernt prepared to give the order to attack!

With a roar like that of an infuriated Bull the swarme of Me1109's engines shot across the river when Bernt gave the long awaited order to advance, Thwack, Thwack went the rotor blades alerting Ivan to their presence, but before the enemy FLAK could begin firing, the Luftreiter were over the enemy front line and advancing deep in to their un protected rear echelon.

19th of March 1946

Sometimes a field commander gets lucky during a battle, sometimes he can get very lucky and have an opportunity placed in to his hands that cannot be ignored?

On the night of the 8th of March 1946 trench patrol from the 370th FeldGruppen captured alive an officer of the Red Army during an attack on an enemy listening post. This officer proved a mine of information; his interrogators discovered he was a staff officer from the 2nd Ukrainian front!

Declaring himself a committed anti-communist he was willing to betray the whereabouts of the Front HQ and describe its defences! Apparently the HQ was located in an old ammunition underground bunker 3Km outside the village of Dinistra. It is guarded by a Rifle Company, NKVD guard Battalion, propaganda detachment, field police and a commissars section.

Fortunately for the Germans the bunker has a flaw in its defences. The barracks are separated from the Bunker by a wood, if the bunker is attacked, the enemy guards can be prevented from aiding the HQ when attacked, but how to keep them away from the bunker?

Immediately the Jagdkommando HQ in Berlin was informed about this discovery, Oberst Konrad the head of Jagdkommando Sud was tasked with securing the forces necessary to carrying out a successful attack on the enemy HQ. His subsequent plan, Operation 'Kingfisher' proposes infiltrating a commando group by foot to Dinistra, which attacks the bunker. At the same time, a heli-borne unit places it forces between the bunker and the barracks preventing the enemy from defending their commander.

Once the assault has destroyed the bunker, the commando's withdraw into the steppe and the airborne component air lifts out. The Luftwaffe would need to protect the

Helicopters with a suitable jet engine squadron. Ernsthausen also requested a nerve gas attack on the barracks ahead of the assault to incapacitate the enemy.

The head of Armeegruppe Karpathien, Field Marshall Manteuffel quickly approved the plan and the mission was given to Luftwaffenoberst Karl Ernsthausen to carry out.

“They have to be disposable, we can’t afford to throw away good men on an operation like this, get me men that won’t be missed to carry out this suicide mission!”

Waffen Oberst K. Ernsthausen conversation with Oberst Konrad.

Jagdfallschirmjäger ‘Schwarze Adler’

This parachute commando unit the Jagdfallschirmjäger Waffengruppe ‘Schwarze Adler’, (given its full title) was created during the summer of 1945 from select officers of Jagd-General Skorzeny’s specialist Jagdkommando and a cadre of German military probationer NCOs and volunteer Legionaries from the eastern territories to perform extremely dangerous commando operations that required parachute training.

This unit is not to be confused with Luft-Oberst Melden’s ‘Scharlachrauber’ Luftwaffe Kommando; this is a parachute trained unit created by Jagd-General Skorzeny for his commando Army and is not a part of the Neu-Luftwaffe ground forces.

Despite failing its first mission in Italy the unit was enlarged in Transylvania during the winter of 1945-46 and successfully captured an enemy PAK front during and attack in the 1st Hungarian Army front.

Like the men of the Heli-borne cavalry units the “Black Eagles” wear the M45 uniform dyed black, with a small Luftwaffe style eagle on the lower left arm.

The Black Eagles commanded by Reservieren Major Klaus Czech have an HQ Sturm; weapons support Zug, (with rocket capability) a medical Zug, light flak Zug, (2cm FLAK gun) and lastly an attached NachtjagdKommando Zug.

The Scenario

The German commando attack on the HQ of the II Ukrainian Front begins on the morning of the 19th of March 1946.

You command the Jagdfallschirmjäger unit as it fights to prevent the Soviet troops re-

enforcing the bunker HQ.

You may either attack the camp, or set up a blocking position in the forest to achieve this aim?

Terrain

You need a terrain with flat Gentle Rolling slopes interspersed with the occasional deep Balka, (ravine) on a gaming table at least 4 foot by 6 foot.

A largish deep forest should be placed between the barrack camp and the HQ bunker, with a track/road connecting the two. This should be placed centrally in the battlefield.

The medium sized Bunker entrance disappears in to the ground; there is only a wire fence and one checkpoint out side the bunker to reveal its existence.

The barracks consists of four one story buildings with a wire fence around them. This should have two guard posts. One placed opposite ends at two of the four sides.

Patches of rough ground and fields should be added to give patches of cover outside the wire fences.

Neu Heer Brief

All forces are available on turn one for deployment against the northern edge of the Barrack camp. You may decide if to start the game with your infantry forces on the ground or deploy straight from the helicopters?

You may also enlarge the scope of the game by deploying the Commando forces for the attack on the bunker.

Neu-Heer Forces

16th Luftreiter-Gruppen (with Me-1109’s)
16th Luftreiterwaffengruppe with 502 men
Jagdfallschirmjäger Waffengruppe with 480 men
KG273 (with HE162 salamanders)
KG-zbv ‘Ortmann’ (Diskus w STOL capability)

Neu-Heer Victory conditions

You must prevent the Soviet re-enforcements from reaching the bunker; you have 20 moves to prevent this catastrophic event from occurring.

The Luftreiter’s sudden rush came to a halt amongst the barracks. Russians, most of them naked or clad only in their underclothes were lying in exaggerated poses of death. Many had blood leaking from their eyes, noses and mouths.

The enemy had been slaughtered by the death delivering single winged Diskus; the whole camp

had been smothered by a blanket of poison gas.

The whole barrack was a bloody hell of murdered men, suffocated by an unseen death.

It was too much even for the hard bitten Gefreiter Nobis, he removed his rimless parachute helmet and whispered dejectedly "they are all dead.....they never stood a chance....!"

"Move, move men...shoot any survivors, Ivan's reserves will be here soon!" shouted

Sturmoﬃcer Munzel. "Come on Nobis, pull yourself together, get your men of the east gate and secure the armoury"

Allied Brief

Re-enforcements are available to you on turn two; they must arrive on the table from the southern edge of the camp.

The NKVD Battalion deploys in the camp, all other forces occupy the bunker except for the re-enforcements.

Allied Forces

NKVD Guard Battalion with 420 men

Rifle Company with 80 men

Propaganda detachment with 10 men

Field police detachment with 25 men

Commissar's detachment with 12 men

Re-enforcements:

Tank section with 8 JS-III tanks

Militia Company with 60 men

Red Army Victory conditions

Your position is under attack, you must counter-attack the enemy forces attacking the HQ bunker, victory lies in relieving the bunker defenders within 20 moves.

Recommended Rules

This table-top battle is perfect for using our own 1946 Storm of Eagles© Rules of engagement 1:1 Scale rules if you want a platoon sized action.

You may decide to change the figure scale to 1:15 soldiers to re-enact the whole battle.

The 1946 Storm of Eagles© rules contain a section on poison gas use.

Special Notes

You may also decide to fight for the bunker complex. You will need a second table and have an underground bunker upon it, remembering this will be built on at least two or three levels underground, a large three story house could be used to represent the bunker, your troops will be able to fight from room to room.

Conclusion

The men of the Jagdfallschirmjager 'Schwarze Adler' successfully infiltrated the Red Army front line and travelling by night reached the secret enemy HQ on the night of the 18th of March 1946.

By stealth Reservieren Major Klaus Czech positioned his men around the unsuspecting bunker entrance and sent the 'Go!' signal to the 8th Army HQ.

At 0504 Hrs the 1st Sturm of the 16th Luftreiter-Gruppen (with Me-1109's) supported by KG273 began assaulting the enemy camp after it had been successfully nerve gassed by Gruppe 'Ortmann'. Unfortunately for the Luftreiter the nerve gas attack did not fully incapacitate the NKVD Battalion and the First Company found itself embroiled in a serious fire fight. The Third Company moved up from the forest to support the First's withdrawal from the barracks.

Meanwhile the second company dug fire positions in the forest to create a blocking position. The First and Third Companies gradually withdrew northwards under pressure from an enemy tank assault.

The Jagdfallschirmjager Kommando meanwhile successfully attacked the HQ bunker, fighting their way down the labyrinth of corridors, firing both nerve gas and riot gas as they advanced. The Soviet staff could not effectively fight back and were soon overwhelmed. The HQ communications room was destroyed and useful intelligence gathered. Unfortunately Marshal Tolbukhin was not at the bunker, he had been called away to Moscow for a STAVKA meeting.

The 'Black Eagles' signalled their success and began their long trek back to the German lines immediately, covered by the badly hit Luftreiter.

The 'SturmJager' held off the Soviet tank attack with heavy casualties, luckily an enemy air attack did not materialise and Sturm by Sturm the air cavalry unit was carried off the battlefield by the Me1109's.

The Air cavalry unit lost 50 men and suffered 102 wounded in the assault; only one Me1109 was lost to ground fire during the operation. Luft-WaffenOberst Karl Ernsthausen was rewarded with the oak leaves to his knights cross and Luft-WaffenOberst Tebbe the National combat cross in gold.

Reservieren Major Klaus Czech's 'Black Eagles' found themselves pursued by a

vengeful Red Army within hours of the attack.

Using all their skills they managed to evade capture for three days and nights, but as they reached within 10Km of the front line, they found themselves trapped by a Red Army Rifle unit. The situation was becoming bleak for the commando unit!

Supported by the Neu-Luftwaffe the unit held off the enemy attacks on its positions in the village of Alexsroye for a further day.

The 16th Luftreiter-Gruppen provided medical support during this critical phase, airlifting out the badly wounded. Finally Czech had to order his men to split in to small groups and break out of the trap to avoid total annihilation. On the night of the 23rd of March the unit dispersed and began infiltrating through the Soviet line. Most of the 200 survivors of the breakout managed to find their way to the 141st FeldGruppen's positions including Czech over the course of the following three days. The unit lost 220 men during the operation. Of the 260 survivors, 60 men were wounded.

Reservieren Major Klaus Czech was awarded the National Combat Cross in gold for his actions and the unit was returned to Hungary for re-constitution.

The KVK deemed the mission as success, demonstrating to enemy that the German Army was still capable of launching deep missions in to the enemy rear echelon, from now on the Soviet commanders cannot ever gain feel completely safe!

Crump! A blinding flash of angry violet light appeared. The side of the Barrack wall splintered in to a thousand pieces as the Soviet shells crashed in to them. Peter yelled and cried "Load, fucking load arsehole, the Russki tank is nearly on us!"

'In!' Peter's frightened No2 cried at the same moment the JS-III tank turned the corner and began firing its MG at the two Black Eagles kneeling amongst the dead and dying Luftreiter. 'Fire!' Peter barked to himself, gritting his teeth with pain. In the same instant as he pulled the trigger on the Luftfaust an MG round from the

Soviet tank hit him squarely in the face, splattering his skull in to a myriad of pieces, the shattered bone gleaming like polished ivory, the remains of his face trickled down his parachute smock like molten wax.

Streaking toward the unsuspecting tank the six mini rockets slammed in to the JS-IIIs, ripping is turret off in a blaze of reverberating explosions tearing the crew apart.

The tank shuddered to a halt its remaining

ammunition exploding causing devastating casualties to the unprotected Red Army infantry advancing behind the smoking colossus. The Red Army counter-attack had been halted, for now!

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