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5th Infantry Division in the Years 1945-1949

5 dywizja piechoty w latach 1945-1949

Abstract

The article describes the history of the 5th Infantry Division in the first years after World War II. The division was created in 1944 and took part in the battles of the Polish Second Army on the Eastern Front in 1945. After the war had finished, the division became part of the Military District No. V Poznan and was deployed in garrisons in the Lubusz Land. It opened a new period in its history, in the difficult first post-war years. The article discusses its organizational changes, training of soldiers, educational activities, participation in agricultural work as well as the battles with the Polish independence underground in the eastern Polish territories. The modernization of the Polish army in 1949 brought significant changes in the organization and deployment of the division, at the same time opening another chapter in its history.

Abstrakt

Artykuł opisuje historię 5 Dywizji Piechoty w pierwszych latach po zakończeniu II wojny światowej. Dywizja ta powstała w 1944 r. i brała udział w walkach 2 Armii Wojska Polskiego na froncie wschodnim w 1945 r. Po zakończeniu wojny dywizja weszła w skład Okręgu Wojskowego nr V Poznań i została rozmieszczona w garnizonach na Ziemi Lubuskiej. Otworzyło to nowy

okres w jej historii, w jakże trudnych pierwszych latach powojennych. W artykule omówiono jej zmiany organizacyjne, szkolenie żołnierzy, działalność oświatową, udział w pracach rolnych oraz w walkach z polskim podziemiem niepodległościowym na wschodnich terenach Polski. Modernizacja polskiej armii, rozpoczęta w 1949 r., przyniosła poważne zmiany w organizacji i dyslokacji dywizji, otwierając zarazem kolejny rozdział w jej historii.

Keywords: 5th Infantry Division, Military District No. V Poznan, Polish Army after the Second World War

Słowa kluczowe: 5 Dywizja Piechoty, Okręg Wojskowy nr V Poznań, Wojsko Polskie po II wojnie światowej

The history to date of the so-called people's WP (Polish Army)¹ has not been studied uniformly because whereas before 1989 ample literature was written to cover the issues of origins, organisation and combat effort of WP in the eastern front, its post-war history has been studied quite superficially. Although in recent years several works have been published which presented a new look at the political conditions of the formation of WP and its role in the eastern front, as well as in the post-war period, a complete and fully objective scientific elaboration on this subject is still missing. Also, the historiographic output concerning tactical formations is relatively poor and the majority of works in this area were written before 1989 – which is often reflected in their contents.

The aim of this article is to present the organisation and operation of the 5th Saska DP in the years 1945-1949, when it underwent serious structural and

¹ The following abbreviations are used in the text: CAW WBH – Centralne Archiwum Wojskowe Wojskowego Biura Historycznego (Central Military Archive of the Military Historic Office), dappans. – dywizjon artylerii przeciwpancernej (division of anti-tank artillery), das – dywizjon artylerii samochodowej (division of motorised artillery), DP – Dywizja Piechoty (Infantry Division), DWL – Dowództwo Wojsk Lądowych (Land Forces Command), GZPW – Główny Zarząd Polityczno-Wychowawczy (Central Political and Educational Management), NDWP – Naczelne Dowództwo Wojska Polskiego (High Command of the Polish Army), MON – Ministerstwo Obrony Narodowej (Ministry of National Defence), OW – Okręg Wojskowy (Military District), pal – pułk artylerii lekkiej (regiment of light artillery), pp – pułk piechoty (infantry regiment), SG – Sztab Generalny (General Staff) and WP – Wojsko Polskie (Polish Army).

deployment changes related to reductions of the military conducted at that time. The subsequent analysed areas were issues related to training, discipline, cultural and educational activities or involvement of its units in various tasks related to rebuilding of the country. Just as important a research element was to present the participation of the 5 DP in fighting the armed underground and in the so-called great political and propaganda actions related to the referendum and elections to the Legislative Sejm. Achievement of these goals required the application of a perspective which demanded the analysed facts to be treated in connection with the entirety of the situation in Poland and, in particular, the political and socio-economic life. The years 1945-1949 was a time of demobilisation, transition of the army to peacetime organisation, new system of training and forming of the peacetime structure of WP. However, the principal influence on the development of the army came from the economic situation of the country in the first post-war years, which not only did not allow to assign considerable financial resources to modernisation of the Polish army, but also even forced further reduction of its personnel count. During that time, the army was also imposed with a specific political and ideological role. The caesura came in 1949, with the start of a new period of accelerated development of the Polish army, within which serious structural and deployment changes were introduced in the armed forces, which included the 5th DP, but their description goes beyond the thematic and chronological scope of this text.

The history of the 5th DP² of the so-called people's WP started in July 1944, when its formation began in the area of Żytomierz and finished after several months near Łuków. In the division, under the command of a Russian officer, colonel Aleksander Waszkiewicz, like in other units of the so-called people's WP, the most important command positions in the middle of the 1940s were filled with officers transferred from the Red Army, which posed a number of problems related to training. In the sub-units of the division, soldiers were indoctrinated in the spirit required by the authorities, but it did not bring the expected result, which was reflected in the low level of discipline and numerous desertions. After nearly five months of training, in January 1945, the 5th DP was directed to fulfil garrison duty in Warsaw, after which in February it

² On 19th August 1945 the 5th DP received the appellation "Saska" (*Mała kronika Ludowego Wojska Polskiego 1943-1973*, ed. M. Plikus, Warszawa 1975, p. 219).

was redeployed to the Łódź area, from where it was transferred to the vicinity of Czarnków at the end of the month, where it was incorporated into the Polish Second Army. The division was created on the basis of a Soviet guard division, but it differed slightly in size, which was 11 465 soldiers on war footing³. Organisationally, it consisted of three infantry regiments – 13th, 15th and 17th pp (each was to count 2 915 soldiers), 22nd pal, 14th Sapper Battalion, 6th das, 5th Reconnaissance Company, 12th Signal Company, 5th Chemical Warfare Company, 7th Motorised Transport Company, 5th Sanitary Battalion, Training Battalion and several smaller subunits. The division was to have the following weaponry: 6 701 rifles, 653 sub-machine guns, 501 hand machine guns, 166 heavy machine guns, 216 anti-tank rifles, 13 self-propelled guns SU-76, 84 cannons (36 45 mm cannons, 36 76 mm cannons and 12 122 mm howitzers), 167 mortars (58 50 mm ones, 85 82 mm ones and 24 120 mm ones), more than 320 mechanical vehicles and 1 230 horses, which generally corresponded to the requirements of the battlefield at the time⁴.

After incorporating into the Polish Second Army, on 20th March 1945, the 5th DP received an order to relocate to the area of Wrocław, from where the division was moved to the banks of the Nysa Łużycka River on 4th April, where it took part in the Łużyce Operation commenced on 16th April, along with the remaining forces of the above mentioned military formation. Four days later, sub-units of the division were directed towards Dresden to participate in the Battle of Bautzen, during which it suffered heavy losses – including the death of the division's commander A. Waszkiewicz on 22nd April. After several days of hard defensive combat, during which the division fought in dispersion, the division's command and staff were recreated and a Soviet officer – lieutenant-colonel Piotr Wiesieński (the division's former chief of staff) became the temporary new commander. Then, along with the entire Polish Second Army, on 4th May the 5th DP received an order to prepare to participate in the Prague

³ Including 1 252 officers, 3 257 non-commissioned officers and 6 956 privates.

⁴ K. Frontczak, *Siły zbrojne Polski Ludowej. Przejście na stopę pokojową 1945-1947*, Warszawa 1974, pp. 137-138; J. Kajetanowicz, *Polskie wojska lądowe 1945-1960. Skład bojowy, struktury organizacyjne i uzbrojenie*, Toruń 2004, pp. 14-17; *Wojsko Polskie. Krótki informator historyczny o Wojsku Polskim w latach II wojny światowej*, ed. S. Komornicki, T. 1, *Regularne jednostki Ludowego WP. Formowanie, działania bojowe, organizacja, uzbrojenie, metryki jednostek piechoty*, Warszawa 1965, pp. 125-128.

Offensive, during which the division was under the command of the new commander, colonel Stanisław Kupsza (also a Soviet officer). During the operation, the division reached the area of the Czech town of Litomerice, where it finished its participation in the Second World War⁵.

After finishing the military operations, the Polish Second Army was relocated to Poland, where it took over the protection of the western border until a separate border guard unit was formed. On 17th May 1945, NDWP ordered the units of the Polish Second Army to garrison the line of the Odra River: the 12th DP was supposed to garrison the section between the mouth of the Odra and Gryfino, the 5th DP – between Gryfino and Słubice, the 8th DP – between Słubice and Nowa Sól, the 7th DP – between Nowa Sól and Wołów, and the 10th DP – between Wołów and the mouth of the Bystrzyca River. According to the order, the 5th DP was supposed to garrison a nearly 170-kilometre-long section of the Odra River. After regrouping the subordinate subunits, on 20th May the division's command reached Muszków (20 km to the east of Kostrzyn and 40 km to the south of Myślibórz), where the division's commander, colonel S. Kupsza defined the task related to protecting the border belt assigned to the division. On the next day, infantry regiments of the 5th DP started to take the assigned border sections (each one was assigned a single squadron of the 22nd pal): the 13th pp garrisoned a section on the right wing, the 15th pp - the central section, and the 17th pp – on the left. However, several days later, NDWP ordered – with its order of 27th May – to move the forces of the Polish Second Army to the line of the Nysa Łużycka and Odra, as a result of which, the 5th DP was assigned the section between Krajnik Dolny and the mouth of the Nysa Łużycka into the Odra River. In accordance with the new formation, the belt assigned to the 5th DP was shortened on the right wing from Gryfino to Krajnik Dolny and lengthened on the other by approximately 20 km to the south towards the mouth of the Nysa Łużycka into the Odra River. Due to shifting the division's belt to the south, the 13th pp was regrouped to the southern wing, where it garrisoned the section between Słubice and the mouth of the Nysa

⁵ More information in: E. Kospath-Pawłowski, P. Matusak, J. Odziemkowski, T. Panecki, D. Radziwiłłowicz and T. Rawski, *5 Dywizja Piechoty w dziejach oręża polskiego*, Pruszków 1997, pp. 141-160; K. Kaczmarek, *Druga Armia Wojska Polskiego*, Warszawa 1978, pp. 185 and the following.

Łużycka into the Odra River. Sub-units of the 5th DP took care of the protection of borders for almost half a year, until this task was assigned to the newly formed Border Protection Troops in November 1945.⁶

In the meantime, at NDWP order of 2nd June 1945, the 5th DP – while remaining in the composition of the Polish Second Army – was subordinated to the forming 1st Army Corps, which was abandoned when the army was put on a peace footing. During that time, sub-units of the division took part in resettling German population from the borderland on the right bank of the Odra, although formally the so-called Regained Territories were incorporated into the territory of Poland only under the decisions of the Potsdam Conference. One of the elements of the process of settling in the Northern and Western Lands was also military settlement, initiated by NDWP order of 3rd June 1945, according to which demobilised soldiers with their families could inhabit the designated frontier districts along the Odra and Nysa Łużycka. Just under two weeks later, in a circular letter of 15th June, NDWP designated 13 frontier districts for military settlement, from which WP units resettled most Germans at the end of June and beginning of July. Four of these districts were included in the Poznań OW, formed under the order of 22nd August 1945 – Gubin, Krosno Odrzańskie, Sulęcín and Rzepin, the last two of which constituted the Settlement District no. 2, protected by the 5th DP. Assistance of the army was indispensable at that time, because former German lands to the east of the line of the Odra and Nysa Łużycka rivers were substantially devastated as a result of warfare and the Soviet authorities' politics of plunder⁷.

In the summer of 1945, NDWP started preparations for transforming the army into a peaceful organisation, which was related to introduction of new staffing establishments for the infantry divisions which envisaged decreasing

⁶ K. Frontczak, *Sily zbrojne ...*, p. 123; E. Kospath-Pawłowski, P. Matusak, J. Odziemkowski, T. Panecki, D. Radziwiłłowicz and T. Rawski, *5 Dywizja Piechoty ...*, p. 162; K. Kaczmarek, *Przez trzy granice. Z dziejów 17 pp*, Warszawa 1959, pp. 156-157; J. Ławski, *LWP w walce, służbie i pracy na Ziemiach Zachodnich i Północnych*, Warszawa 1975, pp. 41-42.

⁷ H. Dominiczak, *Wojska Ochrony Pogranicza w latach 1945-1948*, Warszawa 1971, pp. 33-35; B. Nitschke, *Wysiedlenie czy wypędzenie? Ludność niemiecka w Polsce w latach 1945-1949*, Toruń 2001, pp. 134-135; K. Kaczmarek, *Druhá Armia ...*, pp. 648-652; E. Ginalski, *Od Żytomierza do Litoměřic. Zarys dziejów 15 Pułku Piechoty 1944-1947*, Warszawa 1972, pp. 280-292; L. Grot, *Organizowanie osadnictwa wojskowego na ziemiach północnych i zachodnich*, "Zeszyty Naukowe WAP" 1971, 23, pp. 67-68.

their manpower. In August, along with the beginning of peaceful reorganisation of the army, in tactical units of the infantry, implementation of staffing establishments no. 2/1-10 began, according to which the manpower of the infantry divisions was to be decreased to the level of 5.5 thousand soldiers⁸. With the peaceful reorganisation of WP, the Polish First and Second Armies were disbanded, and the country was divided into seven military districts. One of them was the Poznań OW, which included the area of the Poznań and Pomerania provinces and to which, on 5th September 1945, three out of eighteen infantry divisions were subordinated: 4th, 5th and 14th DP. Two of them (4th and 14th DP) shifted to peaceful establishments no. 2/1-10 as early as September 1945, whereas the 5th DP did so only in November – after it handed over border protection to units of the Border Protection Troops⁹.

When the 5th DP shifted to peaceful organisation, its sub-units were regrouped to the following garrisons: in Międzyrzecz – division's command, the 17th pp and the 25th Signal Company, in Poznań – the 13th pp, in Skwierzyna – the 15th pp, the 6th das (in the spring of 1946 it was reformed to the 6th dappanc.) and the 22nd pal, and in Szamotuły – the 14th Sapper Battalion. In the following years, a lot of changes were introduced to the division's deployment: as early as the spring of 1946 the 13th pp was transferred from Poznań to the nearby Swarzędz, although part of the regiment was in garrison service in Poznań until the autumn of 1947, and in September of that year, the 22nd pal and the 6th dappanc. from Skwierzyna to Sulechów, and the 14th Sapper Battalion from Szamotuły to Międzyrzecz. Two years later – in the spring of 1948 – the 13th pp was transferred from Swarzędz and Poznań to Międzylesie near Sulechów (Cibórz). As a result of these changes, the deployment of the 5th DP in September 1948 was as follows: the division's command, the 17th pp, the 14th Sapper Battalion and the 25th Signal Company were based in Międzyrzecz, the 13th pp – in Międzylesie near Sulechów (Cibórz), the 15th pp – in Skwierzyna, the 22nd pal and the 6th dappanc. – in Sulechów. After another reorganisation of the 5th DP in the autumn of 1949, its deployment did not undergo any major

⁸ Including 733 officers, 1 756 non-commissioned officers, 3 011 privates and 13 contractual employees.

⁹ CAW WBH, Pomeranian OW, sign. IV.510.2/A.125, NDWP order no. 510 of 5th September 1945; E. Ginalski, *22 Pułk Artylerii Lekkiej. Zarys dziejów 1944-1947*, Warszawa 1974, pp. 345-346; K. Frontczak, *Sily Zbrojne ...*, p. 147.

changes, and its sub-units were still based in four garrisons: in Międzyrzecz – the division's command, the 17 pp, the 14th Sapper Battalion, the 39th Signal Battalion, the 25th Reconnaissance Company, the 23rd Chemical Warfare Company and the motorised transport platoon, in Skwierzyna – the 15th pp, in Międzyzlesie near Sulechów (Cibórz) – the 13th pp, and in Sulechów – the 22nd pal and the 6th dappanc.¹⁰

Table 1
Personnel count of the infantry division according to staffing establishment no. 2/1-10 of September 1945

Components of the division	Establishment	Personnel count
Division's command	2/1	78 military and 4 contractual
Infantry regiment	2/2	1 383 military and 2 contractual
Light artillery regiment	2/3	725 military and 1 contractual
Independent squadron of anti-tank artillery	2/4	171 military
Signal Battalion	2/5	150 military and 1 contractual
Sapper Battalion	2/6	170 military and 1 contractual
Independent transportation platoon	2/8	40 military
Independent rifle platoon of the intelligence unit	2/10	17 military
Total	2/1-10	5 500 military and 13 contractual employees

Source: CAW WBH, GZPW, sign. IV.502.1.2, NDWP order no. 305 of 10th Nov. 1945

¹⁰ CAW WBH, Office of the Minister of National Defence, sign. IV.500.1/A.128, Deployment register of the Poznań OW of April 1947 and IV.500.1/A.391, Deployment register of units of the 5th DP of 1948; Poznań OW, IV.510.3.89, Deployment register of units of the Poznań OW of 1st January 1946; GZPW WP, sign. IV.502.1.148, Deployment register of the Poznań OW of September 1946; Silesian OW, sign. IV.510.4/A.237, Deployment register of the Poznań OW of 5th May 1949; W. Jarno, *Terytorialne władze wojskowe w Polsce w latach 1945-1949. Organizacja i działalność okręgów wojskowych*, Łódź 2011, p. 164.

Reorganisation of the 5th DP, in accordance with the peaceful establishments no. 2/1-10 was conducted by the command of the Poznań OW in November 1945. Within its framework, the training infantry battalion, sanitary battalion, chemical warfare and reconnaissance company, division's artillery commander's platoon, veterinary ambulatory, fleet and uniform workshop and field bakery were disbanded, the division's signal company was reformed to signal battalion, and the transportation company was reduced to the level of platoon. Since that time, the division on a peace footing consisted of three infantry regiments (13th, 15th and 17th pp), 22nd pal, 6th dappanc. (formed on the basis of the former 6th das), 14th Sapper Battalion, 25th Signal Battalion and several minor sub-units. Each regiment consisted of three battalions¹¹, three independent companies (signal, anti-tank rifles and administrative), two batteries of anti-tank artillery (45 and 76 mm) and a battery of 120 mm mortars. In turn, the 22nd pal had three artillery squadrons (each squadron counted two batteries of 76 mm cannons and one battery of 122 mm howitzers, which altogether provided 24 76 mm cannons and 12 122 mm howitzers per regiment). Introducing new establishments meant skeletonising the division, whose personnel count was reduced by nearly a half in comparison to the wartime establishment (the number of soldiers decreased from 11.5 thousand to 5.5 thousand), but it is worth mentioning that the armament was preserved at a similar level to the wartime state, except for mortars and machine weapons, which were nearly halved¹².

The growing financial restrictions of late 1945 and early 1946 forced the military authorities to reduce the number of existing divisions from 18 to 16 (at the beginning of 1946 the 13th and 17th DP were disbanded) after which, by order of 27th February, another reorganisation of infantry divisions was performed, by introducing three types of such divisions (type A, B and C), which differentiated their personnel counts considerably. Only the 1st DP, which remained under the previous establishments no. 2/20-27 (7 thousand soldiers) became type A, whereas eight other divisions (3rd, 5th, 8th, 9th, 10th, 12th, 16th and 18th DP) were reformed to type B divisions (establishments no. 2/50-56, 5 197

¹¹ Each of the battalions consisted of three shooter companies, one heavy machine gun company, one mortar company and one anti-tank artillery platoon.

¹² CAW WBH, GZPW, sign. IV.502.1.2, NDWP order no. 305 of 10th November 1945.

soldiers and 35 contractual employees each), and the seven remaining ones (2nd, 4th, 6th, 7th, 11th, 14th and 15th DP) were reformed to type C divisions (establishments no. 2/40-46, 3 998 soldiers and 35 contractual employees). In comparison with the previous organisation, the following changes were introduced in the structure of the 5th DP: the division's signal battalion was reformed to a signal company, in infantry regiments the previous signal companies were reformed to platoons, companies of anti-tank rifles and reconnaissance and sapper platoons were disbanded, whereas in the 22nd pal one 76 mm cannon battery was disbanded in the 3rd squadron¹³. In practice, for many months, the actual personnel count of the 5th DP differed from the establishment, as on 1st October 1946, instead of 5 197 soldiers¹⁴ and 35 contractual employees, as provided for in the establishment, the personnel count of the division was still 5 895 people, including 453 officers, 1 072 non-commissioned officers and 4 370 privates¹⁵.

Table 2
Personnel count of the 5th DP type B in accordance with establishment
2/50-55 of February 1946

Unit	Establishment no.	Officers	Non-commissioned officers	Privates	Total	Contractual
Division's command	2/50	52	27	36	115	5
13 pp	2/51	137	320	847	1 304	8
15 pp	2/51	137	320	847	1 304	8
17 pp	2/51	137	320	847	1 304	8

¹³ CAW WBH, Cracow OW, sign. IV.510.5.551, NDWP order no. 46 of 27th February 1946; K. Frontczak, *Sily zbrojne*, pp. 155-156; J. Kajetanowicz, *Polskie wojska lądowe ...*, pp. 65-68 (here the data on personnel count of type B and C divisions are slightly different).

¹⁴ Including 612 officers, 1 307 NCOs and 3 278 privates.

¹⁵ CAW WBH, SG WP, sign. IV.501.1/A.320, Summary of personnel count of WP as of 1st October 1946.

22 pal	2/52	93	180	412	685	5
6 dappanc.	2/53	22	56	84	162	-
25 Signal Company	2/54	15	49	74	138	-
14 Saper Battalion	2/55	18	32	120	170	1
Security platoon of the intelligence unit	2/56	1	3	11	15	-
Total		612	1 307	3 278	5 197	35

Source: CAW WBH, SG WP, sign. IV.501.1/A.149, Personnel count of the infantry division in accordance with peacetime establishments 2/50-56 for type B divisions of February 1946

At the end of 1946, staffing establishments of the infantry divisions (not including the 1st DP) were changed once again, reducing by NDWP order no 208 of 22nd November the number of type B divisions from 8 to 4 (3rd, 6th, 9th and 18th DP) and at the same time increasing the number of type C divisions from seven to eleven (2nd, 4th, 5th, 7th, 8th, 10th, 11th, 12th, 14th, 15th and 16th). In accordance with these assumptions, the 5th DP was transferred from establishment 2/50-56 for type B division to establishments 2/70-71, 2/73-6 and 2/61-62 for type C divisions, whereas (similarly as in the case of other type C divisions) also in the 5th DP, one of its infantry regiments received establishment no. 2/61 for type B infantry division (13th pp), and 22nd pal – establishment 2/62 of type B light artillery regiment. As a result, in accordance with the new establishments, the 5th DP type C (with two type B regiments) was supposed to count 4 587 military and 49 contractual employees. The internal structure of the division was also changed, because: the motorised transport platoon was made independent, the number of battalions in the 15th and 17th pp was reduced from three to two and the regimental artillery squadrons were formed¹⁶.

¹⁶ CAW WBH, General Inspectorate of Armour, sign. IV.504.2.1, NDWP order no. 208 of 22nd November 1946; Lublin OW, sign. IV.510.7.825, Staffing establishments of infantry regiments no. 2/61 and 2/71 and staffing establishments of light artillery regiments no. 2/62 and 2/72 of 22nd November 1946; J. Kajetanowicz, *Polskie wojska lądowe ...*, pp. 68-69.

Table 3

Personnel count of the 5th DP type C, according to establishment 2/70-71, 2/73-75 and 2/61-62 of 22nd October 1946

Unit	Establishment no.	Officers	Non-commissioned officers	Privates	Total	Contractual
Division's command	2/70	35	19	24	78	6
13 pp	2/61	85	319	845	1 249	12
15 pp	2/71	75	295	665	1 035	11
17 pp	2/71	75	295	665	1 035	11
22 pal	2/62	75	237	396	708	9
6 th anti-tank artillery squadron	2/73	22	56	86	164	-
25 th Signal Company	2/74	15	46	72	133	-
14 th Sapper Battalion	2/75	18	32	120	170	-
Security platoon of the intelligence unit	2/56	1	3	11	15	-
Total		401	1 302	2 884	4 587	49

Source: CAW WBH, General Inspectorate of Armour, sign. IV.504.2.1, NDWP order no. 208 of 22nd November 1946.

In February 1947, the security platoon of the Intelligence Unit of the 5th DP was excluded from the establishment of the 5th DP (since then it had its own, separate establishment), whereas in November of that year, the 13th pp type B (establishment no 2/61) was moved to the establishment for type C infantry regiment (establishment no. 2/71), which resulted in a further reduction of the personnel count of the division. However, despite these actions, throughout 1947, personnel shortages and financial restrictions resulted in failure to

observe also these establishments, and the actual personnel counts were lower than the establishments in force. For example, on 1st June 1947, the personnel count of the division was only 4 094 soldiers and on 1st January 1948 – only 3 701¹⁷.

Table 4
Actual personnel count of the 5th DP, according to data of 1st June 1947
and 1st January 1948

Specification	Officers		Non-commissioned officers		Privates		Total	
	Actual count as of 1 st June 1947	Actual count as of 1 st January 1948	Actual count as of 1 st June 1947	Actual count as of 1 st January 1948	Actual count as of 1 st June 1947	Actual count as of 1 st January 1948	Actual count as of 1 st June 1947	Actual count as of 1 st January 1948
Division's command and staff	29	30	8	5	9	11	46	46
13 pp	77	64	200	157	877	695	1 154	916
15 pp	71	60	219	140	610	672	900	872
17 pp	71	61	227	149	659	678	957	888
22 pal	62	56	89	82	420	383	571	521
6 dappanc.	14	14	13	19	121	122	148	155
25 th Signal Company	12	13	21	24	114	99	147	136
14 th Sapper Battalion	18	15	31	11	122	141	171	167
Total	354	313	808	587	2 932	2 801	4 094	3 701

Source: CAW WBH, 5th DP, sign. IV,521.5.19, Report on personnel count of the 5th DP of 1 June 1947; Poznań OW, sign. IV.510.3.163, Report on personnel count of the Poznań OW of 1st January 1948

Another reorganisation of the 5th DP was conducted by order of 16th September 1948, in accordance with which it was to be reformed into new establishments by October of that year. This time, the division was no longer divided into three types (A, B and C) – introducing one division establishment

¹⁷ CAW WBH, 5th DP, sign. IV,521.5.19, Report on personnel count of the 5th DP of 1st June 1947; Poznań OW, sign. IV.510.3.163, Report on personnel count of the Poznań OW of 1st January 1948.

no. 2/76-81 with the personnel count of 3 697 military and 25 contractual employees each (the only exception was made for the 1st DP). All three infantry regiments of the 5th DP (13th, 15th and 17th pp) received establishment no. 2/77 now (867 soldiers each), in accordance with which each of them included: two infantry battalions (including one skeletonised), regimental artillery squadron, regimental training school for non-commissioned officers, logistics quartermaster corps, three special platoons (signal, reconnaissance and sapper), orchestra and sick ward. On the other hand, in the 22nd pal, establishment no. 2/78 was introduced which provided for 575 soldiers. According to it, the regiment now consisted of two artillery squadrons, regimental school for non-commissioned officers, two special platoons (staff and topographic reconnaissance) and an ambulance, and its armoury included 14 76 mm cannons, 18 122 mm howitzers and 2 120 mm mortars. As a result of this reorganisation, the personnel count of the division was reduced once again, now constituting only one third of its wartime establishment. This was achieved by skeletonising and disbanding of some sub-units, leaving only those which were recognised as indispensable for the functioning of the division during peace time. However, considerable personnel reductions in the years 1946-1948 resulted in the fact that they no longer were fully valuable combat units, becoming – as it was accurately noticed by Jerzy Kajetanowicz – in practice only mobilisation and material bases instead¹⁸.

Table 5
Personnel count of the 5th DP, in accordance with establishment 2/76-81
of 16th September 1948

Unit	Establishment no.	Officers	Non-commissioned officers	Privates	Total	Contractual
Division's command	2/76	35	14	5	54	7
13 pp	2/77	76	260	531	867	5

¹⁸ CAW WBH, SG WP, sign. IV.501.1/A.168, Order no. 168 of 16th September 1948; 6th DP, sign. IV.521.6.69, Staffing establishments of infantry divisions of 16th September 1948 no. 2/76-81; J. Kajetanowicz, *Polskie wojska lądowe ...*, pp. 71-73.

15 pp	2/77	76	260	531	867	5
17 pp	2/77	76	260	531	867	5
22 pal	2/78	70	196	309	575	3
6 dappanc.	2/79	15	63	86	164	-
25 th Signal Company	2/81	12	47	74	133	-
14 th Sapper Battalion	2/80	15	35	120	170	-
Total		375	1 135	2 187	3 697	25

Source: CAW WBH, SG WP, sign. IV.501.1/A.168, MON order no. 168 of 16th September 1948.

Similarly to other infantry divisions, the most important positions in the 5th DP in the first post-war years were filled with Soviet officers, although gradually, some command positions – especially those of lower rank – were more and more often taken by Polish officers. In the years 1945-1949, i.e. when the division was subordinated to the command of the Poznań OW, as many as three out of six division commanders were Soviet officers: colonel S. Kupsza, colonel Jan Siejko and colonel Kazimierz Ilnicki. Also the position of chief of staff of the 5th DP and almost half of regiment commanders were filled with Soviet officers in the first post-war years (table 6)¹⁹.

Table 6
Staffing of the major positions in the 5th DP in the years 1944-1949 (incomplete data)

Position	Staffing
Commander of the 5 th DP	col./brig. gen. Aleksander Waszkiewicz (AC) 14 th August 1944 – 23 rd April 1945 col. Piotr Wiesieński (AC) 24 th April – 4 th May 1945 col. Stanisław Kupsza (AC) 4 th May – 12 th December 1945 col. Jan Siewko (AC) 12 th December 1945 – 7 th August 1946 brig. gen. Stanisław Grodzki 7 th August – 16 th November 1946 cert. col. Stanisław Habowski 16 th November 1946 – 13 th September 1947 col. Kazimierz Ilnicki (AC) 13 th September 1947 – 3 rd November 1948 col. Napoleon Naruszewicz 3 rd November 1948 – 2 nd February 1950

¹⁹ CAW WBH, 5th DP, sign. IV.521.5.1-13, Command orders of the 5th DP from the years 1945-1949.

Chief of staff of the 5 th DP	col. Piotr Wiesieński (AC) 14 th August 1944 – 5 th May 1946 col. Ludwik Barański (AC) 5 th May 1946 – 13 th May 1947 col. Marian Masłowski (AC) 13 th May 1947 – 1 st April 1948 maj. Stanisław Koroway 1948 – 1949
Commander of artillery of the 5 th DP	col. Iwan Rozwozow (AC) 14 th August 1944 – 10 th September 1945 col. Antoni Wereszczyński 12 th September 1945 – 31 st August 1946 ltc. Władysław Niewodniczański 22 nd October 1946 – 15 th March 1947 col. Leonard Boruch (AC) 25 III 1947 – 1949
Commander of the 13 th pp	maj. Łazarz Mojsejn (AC) 30 th July – 21 st September 1944 maj. Mitrofan Żuk (AC) 24 th September – 4 th October 1944 col. Jan Siewko (AC) 4 th October 1944 – 26 th April 1945 maj. Tymofiej Zatulín (AC) 26 th April – 1 st May 1945 maj. Grzegorz Karbowski (AC) 1 st May – 28 th December 1945 ltc. Stanisław Kondratowicz (AC) 28 th December 1945 – 5 th May 1946 ltc. Marian Masłowski (AC) 5 th May – 7 th November 1946 col. Lucjan Kępiński 8 th November 1946 – 5 th May 1947 ltc. Tadeusz Cynkin 6 th May 1947 – 10 th April 1948 maj. Bogdan Hubert 1948 – 1949
Commander of the 15 th pp	ltc. Wasył Humeniuk (AC) 14 th July 1944 – 3 rd October 1946 maj. Jerzy Wilczyński (AC) 6 th October 1946 – 28 th April 1947 ltc. Walerian Kuczyński (AC) 29 th April 1947 – 18 th May 1948 maj. Zdzisław Bobecki 18 th May 1948 – April 1950
Commander of the 17 th pp	ltc. Ludwik Barański (AC) 1 st August 1944 – 22 nd May 1946 ltc. Władysław Wróblewski (AC) 23 rd May 1946 – 2 nd April 1948 maj. Kazimierz Leontowicz 1948 – 1950
Commander of the 22 nd pal	ltc. Jan Swiryn (AC) 3 rd July 1944 – 31 st March 1945 ltc. Leonard Boruch (AC) 31 st March 1945 – 24 th May 1946 ltc. Mieczysław Hubert 25 th May – 17 th November 1946 ltc. Szczepan Malinowski 18 th November 1946 – 1949
Commander of the 12 th Signal Battalion (later 25 th Signal Company)	por. Iwan Olszewski (AC) July – September 1944 cpt. Wasilenko (AC) September – December 1944 cpt. Jan Połosin (AC) December 1944 – April 1945 acting warrant officer class II Włodzimierz Jesionowski April – May 1945 acting warrant officer class II Jan Popow (AC) May – July 1945 cpt. Gienadij Kanonienko (AC) July-November 1945 maj. Wiktor Ławrientiew (AC) November 1945 – January 1947 cpt. Bernard Przewoźniak January – February 1947

Commander of the 14 th Sapper Battalion	maj. Bazyli Celajew (AC) 5 th July 1944 – 20 th January 1946 cpt. Jan Gozdek 20 th January 1946 – 24 th March 1947 lt. Julian Wenda 24 th March 1947 – 8 th January 1948 lt. Tadeusz Adamczyk 8 th January 1948 – 1949
Commander of the 6 th dappanc.	cpt. Aleksy Orłow (AC) 8 th September 1944 – 7 th December 1945 lt. Antoni Krebski (AC) 7 th December 1945 – 27 th May 1946 maj. Michał Łaszak (AC) 30 th May 1946 – 26 th February 1947 ltc. Jerzy Malarewicz (AC) 26 th February 1947 – 13 th May 1948 cpt. Władysław Szelaḡowski 1948 – 1949

Source: CAW WBH, 5th DP, sign. IV.521.5.1-13, Orders of the command of the 5th DP in the years 1945-1949.

At the end of the war, works started on reorganisation of the combat training process, which was supposed to adapt the army to peacetime requirements. Shortening the training during wartime to the essential minimum did not allow for the development of a uniform and long-term soldier training curriculum, which was possible only after WP was put on a peace footing. However, undertaking a systematic and planned combat training process, in the 5th DP, as well as in the remaining units of WP, was made difficult by a number of factors, including the involvement of the military in: fighting the underground resistance, various political actions and a number of other activities related to reconstruction of the country. As long as the core of the 5th DP consisted of soldiers conscripted to service during the war, its sub-units maintained the required level of frontline training. Apart from combat training of soldiers and sub-units, a tremendously important role was also played by training of the command of the 5th DP in tactical actions and warfare. However, with time – with advancing personal demobilisation – training of subsequent classes was conducted by officers and non-commissioned officers who were more and more deprived of wartime experience. The organisation and results of the training process in the analysed division were obviously influenced by many other factors, such as e.g. education of soldiers, discipline in sub-units, material and living standards, the condition of the training base in garrisons, as well as the effectiveness of the system of control over the training process.

The wartime training system was short-term in character and required – with transformation of the army to a peace footing – serious changes, which was reflected in a NDWP order of 16th November 1945, in which organisational principles, directions and methods of training of the military forces were

defined. The first post-war training period was divided into summer and winter terms, on the basis of which the district authorities – in accordance with the general guidelines – prepared detailed training plans for the subordinated units²⁰. Owing to the ongoing demobilisation process, frequent deployment changes and participation of the army in various works for the national economy and fighting the underground resistance, training sessions in the 5th DP were not systematic, which made it impossible in practice to implement most of the planned tasks in combat training, and they were conducted temporarily, usually with low attendance. After the end of the training year 1945/1946, its results were critically assessed by NDWP, as were the results in the next training year 1946/1947. A more complete assessment of the two-year training effort was included in the MON order of 30th October 1947, in which the training level of the army was once again critically assessed, although this time it was also stressed that despite many deficiencies, it began to improve slightly. In April 1948, the first complex inspection of army training was conducted, confirming the conclusions from previous cursory inspections on the generally poor level of training in land forces. Command of the inspected units also pointed to numerous examples of misconduct from members of the assessment commissions as regards examination. For instance: in the 5th DP, they supposedly shouted and publicly verbally abused soldiers who could not write during the inspection. However, on the other hand, there were numerous cases of cheating the commission in order to obtain a better grade; for instance in the 14th Sapper Battalion of the 5th DP, several officers pretended to be “bedridden” during the inspection, whereas some officers of the division’s staff informed the subordinate sub-units about the requirements and questions asked by the assessing commission in the previously inspected sub-units²¹.

In the summer of 1948, the 5th DP took part in the first large-scale concentration of land forces. Between June and August, sub-units of the division participated in manoeuvres in a training ground near Międzyrzecz²². After the

²⁰ CAW WBH, 2nd vice minister of National Defence, sign. IV.500.2.21, NDWP order no. 705/III of 16th November 1945; Archive of the Library of Military Art, sign. 6731, J. Marcickiewicz, *Poznański Okręg Wojskowy (1945 r. – 1949 r.)*, Warszawa 1983, pp. 123 and 127.

²¹ CAW WBH, DWL, sign. IV.507.1.30, Results of the spring inspection of land forces of April 1948.

²² CAW WBH, DWL, sign. IV.507.1.30, Guidelines for the summer concentration of land

concentration, in order to investigate the level of tactical and shooting training, the tactical capability of individual units, as well as the efficiency of commands and staffs, an inspection was conducted in the autumn of that year, run by an inspection commission under brig. gen. Ksawery Floryanowicz in the case of the 5th DP²³. Its results were not the best, because the division received a general grade of 2.3 in the scale of 2 to 5, which was interpreted as the unclassified grade (similar grades were given to the remaining tactical infantry formations). The inspection results revealed that despite the undertaken effort, the general training level of the 5th DP was still poor, although the division was among the highest graded units in the entire military forces as regards the training level, which clearly shows how low it was in the infantry divisions at that time (the training level of the remaining divisions stationed in the Poznań OW, i.e. the 4th and 8th DP was graded even lower). In the subsequent training year (1948/1949), conclusions and critical remarks of the previous inspections were taken into account, thanks to which a noticeable gradual improvement of the training level was achieved, which was confirmed by an inspection conducted in September 1949.²⁴

In the first post-war years, sub-units of the 5th DP were engaged in various kinds of tasks, including the defence of the new authorities. After establishing, in accordance with the guidelines of 29th March 1946, the Commission of State Security, the territory of Poland was divided into 14 security zones, whose borders coincided with the territories of the provinces – in the Poznań province (where the 5th DP was based), the chairman of the Provincial Security Committee was maj. gen. Wsiewołod Strażewski (commander of the Poznań OW)²⁵. Sub-units of the 5th DP were involved, among other things, in the activities of the military Security and Propaganda Groups on the eve of the People's Referendum and the pre-election action for the Legislative Sejm in January 1947. Besides that, in June 1946, part of the 15th pp was sent to fight the underground

forces in 1948; Office of the Minister of National Defence, sign. IV.500.1/A.76, Guidelines for the summer concentration in 1948.

²³ CAW WBH, Office of the Minister of National Defence, sign. IV.500.1/A.143, Order concerning the autumn inspection in land force units of 1st September 1948.

²⁴ CAW WBH, GZPW WP, sign. IV.502.1.443, Results of the autumn inspection in 1948; DWL, sign. IV.507.1.65, Order no. 180 of 24th October 1948.

²⁵ CAW WBH, Pomeranian OW, sign. IV.510.2/A.1567, Operational guidelines of NDWP no. 167 of 29th March 1946.

resistance in the territory of the Warsaw and Lublin provinces – a combined sub-unit of the 15th pp was stationed in the area of Bielsk Podlaski until 19th July 1946, after which it returned to Skwierzyna²⁶. A year later, a combined regiment made up of sub-units of the 5th DP – under the name of combined 5th pp under the command of lieutenant colonel Władysław Wróblewski (it carried the number of its own division) – took part in the Operation Vistula. Three combined battalions were included in the regiment: the 1st battalion formed on the basis of the 17th pp, the 2nd battalion – on the basis of the 22nd pal, and the 3rd battalion – on the basis of the 13th and 15th pp. On 19th April 1947, the combined 5th pp went by train from Międzyrzecz to Żurawica, where it was subordinated to the command of the combined 9th DP (along with the combined 3rd, 9th and 14th pp). The 2nd battalion of the combined 5th pp participated in the operation for the shortest time, as it returned to the garrison in Sulechów on 23rd May 1947. During the Operation Vistula, the combined 5th pp was later incorporated into the combined 3rd DP (along with the combined 3rd and 14th pp), after which it returned by train to Międzyrzecz on 26th July²⁷.

Sub-units of the 5th DP were also involved in the action of clearing the territory of the country of mines, in which the 14th Sapper Battalion actively participated, by taking part in sapper works in the Mine Clearing Area no. 7, which covered the section of the western border of the country in the area of the Lubusz Land, since the middle of 1945. Similar works were conducted by the battalion also in 1946, by defusing in the spring season nearly 30 thousand mines and almost 20 thousand artillery shells and ballistic bombs. Altogether in the years 1945-1946, soldiers of the battalion neutralised 104 thousand mines and nearly 250 thousand pieces of artillery ammunition and ballistic bombs. Sub-units of the battalion were also used at a larger scale in 1947 for the so-called screening minesweeping, continuing the unfinished sapper works in the Lu-

²⁶ CAW WBH, Office of the Minister of National Defence, sign. IV.500.1/A.119, Register of activities of operational groups of WP in the period January-November 1946; 5th DP, sign. IV.521.5.24, Results of activity of the 5th pp in the period 19th-29th May 1947; E. Kospath-Pawłowski, P. Matusak, J. Odziemkowski, T. Panecki, D. Radziwiłłowicz, T. Rawski, *5 Dywizja Piechoty ...*, p. 167; E. Ginalski, *Od Żytomierza do ...*, pp. 314-323.

²⁷ CAW WBH, SG WP, sign. IV.501.1/A.606, Order for Operational Group "Wisła" of 17th April 1947; K. Kaczmarek, *Przez trzy granice ...*, pp. 162-163; M. Jaworski, *Korpus Bezpieczeństwa Wewnętrznego 1945-1965*, Warszawa 1984, pp. 157-158; E. Kospath-Pawłowski, P. Matusak, J. Odziemkowski, T. Panecki, D. Radziwiłłowicz and T. Rawski, *5 Dywizja Piechoty ...*, p. 165.

busz Land. The work of sappers was not easy, which is indicated by the fact that 11 soldiers of the 14th Sapper Battalion died during the mine clearing²⁸. Right after the war, sub-units of the 5th DP also took part in agricultural works in the Lubusz Land, for which groups of soldiers from different sub-units were designated. For example, only during the spring farming works in 1946, 242 soldiers from the 5th DP (including 19 officers, 26 non-commissioned officers and 197 privates) ploughed 2 873 ha and sowed 2 610 ha in six districts of the Lubusz Land (Międzyrzecz, Skwierzyna, Krosno, Gubin, Sulęcín and Rypin). At the same time, the 13th pp based in Poznań and Swarzędz took part in similar works in the Oborniki district, where 31 soldiers of this regiment ploughed and sowed 178 ha of land. In total, sub-units of the 5th DP executed nearly 37% of all the spring agricultural works conducted by the military 1946 in the territory of the Poznań OW²⁹.

In the early spring of 1949, the “7-year development plan for the army”, as part of which the Poznań OW, to which the 5th DP was subordinated in the years 1945-1949, was disbanded on 30th April. After liquidating this district, the division was subordinated to the Silesian OW. The new division of the country into four military districts, introduced at the end of April, resulted from the assumption that the two western districts (Pomeranian and Silesian OW) would be the base for forming, in the event of war, two general armies, whereas the two eastern districts (Warsaw and Cracow OW) – would be a training base for developing subsequent units envisaged in the mobilisation plan. In accordance with the new assumptions, by 1st September, command of the Silesian OW was supposed to form the 2nd Infantry Corps on the basis of the 4th and 5th DP, on account of which the necessary reorganisation of the 5th DP was conducted – by forming the new 39th Signal Battalion and the 23rd Chemical Warfare Company on the basis of the 25th Signal Company (both units were stationed in Międzyrzecz). This reorganisation opened a new chapter in the history of the 5th DP, which goes beyond the chronological frames of this text and calls for a separate analysis³⁰.

²⁸ Z. Barszczewski, *Przywrócone życie. Rozminowanie ziem Polski*, Warszawa 1998, pp. 149 and the following.

²⁹ CAW WBH, Poznań OW, sign. IV.503.1/A.170, Summary of assistance with the spring sowing and ploughing action in the period from 1st April to 10th May 1946 in the area of the Poznań OW.

³⁰ CAW WBH, SG WP, sign. IV.501.1/A.177, Directive no. 6 of 24th February 1949 and

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orders no. 35, 36 and 37 of 4th March 1949 and IV.501.1/A.670, Directive no. 4 of 1st February 1949; J. Kajetanowicz, *Polskie wojska lądowe ...*, p. 148. The following years brought a number of further organisational and deployment changes in the 5th DP, as a result of which in September 1950 the division's command was transferred from Międzyrzecz to Sulęcín, and the 13th pp and 22nd pal were passed to the 4th DP, from which the 12th pp and 6th pal were excluded and incorporated into the organic composition of the 5th DP (the 12th pp was deployed to Gorzów Wlkp. and the 6th pal with the 6th dappanc. to Kęszczyca, whereas the 14th Sapper Battalion, 25th Reconnaissance Company, 23rd Chemical Warfare Company and the newly-formed 26th Anti-Aircraft Artillery Squadron – to Wędrzyn). This was not the end of structural changes, as in 1953 the newly-formed in Wędrzyn 122nd pal, which stationed in Ostrów Wielkopolski, and in 1954 the 18th Regiment of Tanks and Armoured Artillery (in 1955 transferred from Nysa to Wędrzyn) were incorporated into the 5th DP. Finally, it is worth adding that the history of this division ended in 1957, when it was disbanded by order of the Minister of National Defence of the 2nd of April – some units were transferred to the 4th DP (the 12th and 17th pp, 18th Regiment of Tanks and Armoured Artillery, 6th dappanc., 26th Anti-Aircraft Artillery Squadron, 25th Reconnaissance Battalion and 23rd Chemical Warfare Company), and the remaining sub-units of the 5th DP were dissolved.

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