

"Ungarische Reiter in der Ukraine" - Hungarian Hussars, 1941

Introduction

The German magazine *Die Wehrmacht*, Nr. 18/5. year, from 27 August 1941, contains a picturesque report by the war correspondent dr. Hans Feitl.

Imagination may have taken over in places, but this must be taken into account as the magazine was intended rather as propaganda than as a medium for more sober dissemination of information. Nevertheless, it is an interesting picture material, which can serve well as inspiration when setting up and using Hungarian hussar units.

The article

The days of the cavalry may seem over, but more than once during the hard battles on the Eastern Front, it has been shown that riders still have their value today, especially where the terrain is rough, swampy or very muddy.

In Hungary, which has a long equestrian tradition, today the cavalry also plays a large role. Thus, Hungarian cavalry units have been deployed in Ukraine, which of course have the most modern weapons, including machine guns, anti-tank guns and cannons 1).



"Sit up! A hussar squadron is getting ready to march. At the front of the picture is an anti-tank gun."



"The Russians have observed the hussar squadron and taken it under fire. The squadron immediately separates into smaller groups and advances at a gallop."



"A detached barn in the open countryside serves as observation posts; from here the enemy positions can be taken under observation."



"Combat feel with the enemy! In a few seconds, the medium heavy machine gun is brought into position and immediately takes up the fight."

The large collars of Sagittarius and the helper are remarkable, but are not immediately explainable. Perhaps they can belong to gas protection clothing or other type of cover clothing.



"A scout group has searched for another road, which the Russians will probably use as a retreat. The hussars seek information from a Ukrainian farmer's wife about the enemy's direction of march and the size of the force."

Unfortunately, the picture was split over two pages, but in my opinion I managed to put the two halves together fairly sensibly.



"Hungarian anti-aircraft artillery has shot down a Russian fighter. The hussars are now securing the machine, which, apart from the visible damage to the tail rudder, has not sustained significant damage."

I believe the aircraft is of the Il-2 (Shturmovik) type, which saw its first combat duties in the summer of 1941. With regard to the security task of the hussars, they now looked more interested than actually vigilant.



"As in the dawn of time, commands are conveyed today by means of trumpet signals."

Both the officer and the trumpeter carry sabers (on the left side of their horses).

As far as I can see from other pictorial material, however, sabers were generally not used under field conditions.



"In a cornfield, the horsemen captured a spy. She was disguised as a man and was supposed to use a hidden radio transmitter to call fire on a Hungarian division that was crossing the Bug river over a bridge. The picture shows the seventeen-year-old spy as she is interrogated by Hungarian officers. "

Supplementary image material

My article Hungarian Hussar Uniforms during the Second World War contains the pictures of Hungarian cavalry that I knew about when I wrote the article. The following images have appeared since then and, together with the images from the German article, constitute my total image material regarding Hungarian cavalry.



German cavalry and Hungarian Honved Hussars, on the border between Austria and Hungary, 1938.

The officer on the left in the picture represents the German element in the picture, but whether he is actually from the cavalry or "just" a mounted officer, is not visible.

The image comes from an article in the German journal *Kampftruppen*, Nr. 1/2, 1962.



Hungary, at the beginning of 1941. A hussar and his noble thoroughbred Arabs. The fine forehead, the jaw, the lips, and the lively nostrils form a triangle; the forehead curves like a shield; the large lively and expressive eyes are almost round and angular with long, strong eyelashes.

This image is from *The Cavalry of World War II* by Janusz Piekalkiewicz, Orbis Publishing Limited, London 1979, ISBN 0-85613-022-2.



The color image is from *Der Russlandskrieg: Fotografiert von Soldaten* by Paul Carell, Verlag Ullstein GmbH, Berlin - Frankfurt/M - Vienna, 1967. (Courtesy of Niels Blangsted-Jensen.)

The caption clearly states that it is "Romanian cavalry" ... but other sources claim that it is Hungarian - and the soldiers look more Hungarian than Romanian.

Notes

1) In the text, the word *Kavalleriegeschütze* is used, which cannot really be translated into Danish. In German, the term covers pamphlets with a caliber of 7.5 cm of the *Infanteriegeschütz* type, used by the cavalry. The Hungarian cavalry also used a 7.5 cm cannon, which was a modified Model 1915 mountain cannon from Skoda; the changes included, among other things, larger wheels, so that it could keep up with the riding. The designation was 15/31 M and it was appropriately called the Hussarcannon. The pamphlet was pulled by four horses. I am not familiar with pictures of the pamphlet.