German cavalry in Command Decision

In continuation of the [short history of the German cavalry](#), I'll show you the wargame unit that I've made (or rather - is working on).

Our primary period for wargaming the Second World War is (or rather was) 1943-45.

So I've decided to base my wargame unit on the 41st Cavalry Regiment (Reiter-Regiment 41) (formerly Cavalry Regiment South (Kavallerie-Regiment Süd)) which was formed in the beginning of 1944 and did participate in the actions on the centre of the Eastern Front ending up surrendering to the British in Austria in May 1945.

This is how I suggest representing a German cavalry regiment 1944 in Command Decision:

Cavalry regiment

HQ

  Command stand
  Kübelwagen
  Staff radio truck

HQ company

  Mounted command stand
  2 cars (recon)
  75-mm AT gun
  Tractor (RSO)
  Gun crew (ds)
  Engineer stand
  Opel Maultier light truck

Supply company

  Medium supply truck [1]

2 cavalry battalions each:

  Mounted command stand
  Mounted staff radio stand [2]

  3 cavalry squadrons each

    Cavalry command stand
    2 cavalry stands

  Machinegun squadron

    Mounted command stand
    2 mounted MMG stands [3]
    2 pack horse stands

  Mortar squadron

    Mounted command stand
    2 8-cm mortar stands (ds) [4]
    2 horse carts

Notes:

[1] *The supply company is represented as a single truck, as this gives the proper possibilities of resupplying during the game. It does not represent the actual number of vehicles.*

[2] *To represent the large quantity of wireless equipment in the German cavalry I suggest that each battalion get a mounted staff radio stand.*
This also helps to give that extra control of operations, which gives the right feeling, when operating the unit.

[3] *According to regulations there was 12 real medium machineguns, but I feel that two stands give the right amount of firepower.*

[4] *As with the MMG squadron the regulations calls for 12 real mortars, but again I feel that two stands*

give the right amount of firepower.

A simplified official theoretical strength can be seen here.

The (partly) finished cavalry regiment

Figures and vehicles

Most of the figures and vehicles used in my cavalry regiment come from Britannia Miniatures.

Britannia do a large series of mounted and dismounted cavalry from the SS.

The mounted figures are one-piece-castings, which suits me well.

Representing SS-troopers the figures are equipped with camouflage smocks, but I chose to ignore this as I were making Wehrmacht cavalry, which often did not use these smocks.

Because of the 20-mm scale you can get away with that.

Reiter-Regiment 41

Regimental commander and signals platoon (Regiments-Chef & Nachrichten-Zug)

To represent the regimental commander I chose an officer reading a map on a makeshift table made of two oil drums and a door.

The commander has a VW-Kübelwagen at his disposal.

The regimental signals platoon consists of a staff radio truck.

The Kübelwagen is a plastic kit, I can't remember from which company.

HQ company (Stabs-Kompanie)

Company commander and reconnaissance platoon (Kompanie-Chef & Erkundungs-Zug)

The commanding officer of the HQ company is riding and as such he is represented by two models (mounted and dismounted).

The reconnaissance platoon is equipped with cars in stead of motorcycles.

This is according to the order of battle.

One of the cars is a Schwimmwagen, the other a Kübelwagen. This doesn't make a great difference in a wargame, but again this was the case in at least one of the cavalry regiments. Both vehicles are plastic kits, but I don't remember from what company.

To both recon vehicles I have made a single figure patrol stand to represent dismounted crew.

Anti tank platoon (Panserjäger-Zug)

The anti tank gun platoon is represented by a single gun (they had four real guns).

The type of gun should be some kind of 75-mm gun (at one time the Kavallerie-Regiment Süd had Pak 97/38).

I've chosen to use a Pak 50, for which I have no evidence, but which pleases me as a model.

To pull the gun I used a RSO (Raupen Schlepper Ost (Fulltrack Tractor East)). This is according to the order of battle.

The gun and the tractor are both from SHQ.

Engineer platoon (Pionier-Zug)

The engineer platoon is motorised as is most of the support troops of the German cavalry.

According to the order of battle they had Opel Maultiers as transports - and so have my unit.

Supply company (Fahr-Kolonne)

This unit consisting of a single medium truck has not been finished yet.

1. cavalry battalion (I Reiter-Abteilung)

Battalion HQ and signals platoon (Abteilung-Stab & Nachrichten-Trupp)

The battalion commander is riding and is represented mounted as well as dismounted.

The Commander has at his disposal a mounted staff radio stand. This unit has been made mounted and dismounted as well.
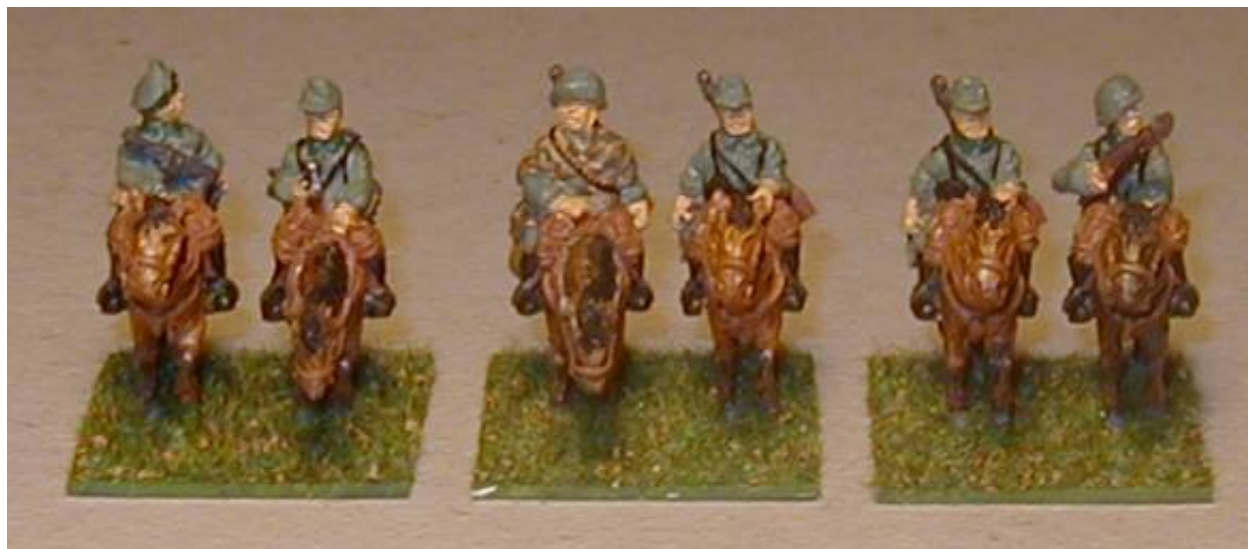
My dear friend and fellow wargamer Per Finsted - who has shot the pictures for this page - has pointed out to me, that I've failed to make an antenna for the radio (a fact I'll seek to remedy as soon as I find the time (probably meaning "never")).

Anti tank section (Panserjäger-Trupp)

According to order of battle each battalion had an anti tank section equipped with Panzerschrecks.

I've found no pictorial evidence proving this way of transporting the Panzerschreck, but it is really "*Big men (with big guns) on big horses*" and I feel sure, that the platoon was mounted, no matter what way they transported their anti tank weapons.
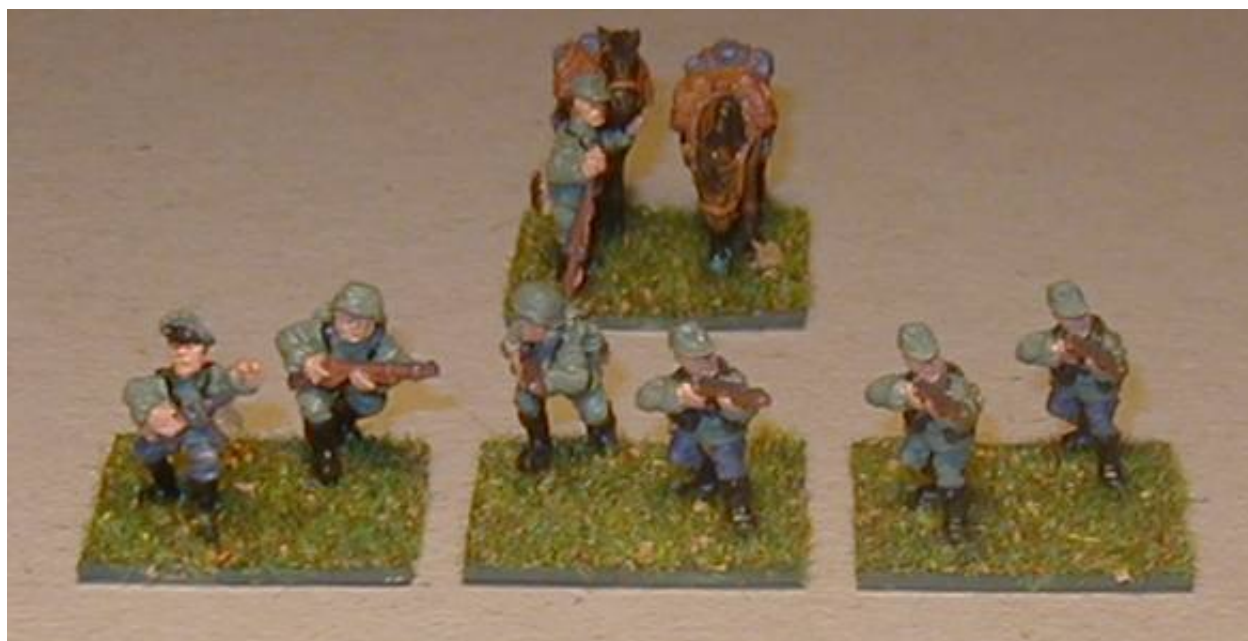

Cavalry squadron (Reiter-Schwadron)

The battalion had three squadrons of cavalry each consisting of three platoons.

According to the order of battle they should be armed with the Sturmgewehr 44, but most of the figures from Britannia Miniatures are armed with the ordinary carbine K98.

This suits me well, partly because I'm not certain to which amount these weapons were in fact distributed, partly because it makes it possible to field these cavalrymen as troops from the first half of the war.

These are of course represented as mounted.....

..... and as dismounted.

To mark the spot, where the horses have been left I've made a horseholder stand.

A horseholder did have four horses to hold including his own, but representing this, would have made the stand to large to be practical.

In Command Decision a horseholder can't move at all, but I'm currently working on a rule amendment correcting this, as it was common practice to have the horses brought forward when remounting after a firefight.

Mortar squadron (Granatwerfer-Schwadron)

The squadron was equipped with 12 real 8-cm mortars.

As dismounted they are just represented as ordinary double 8-cm mortar stands with a single figure command stand.

The mortars of the cavalry were transported on horsedrawn carts (If 9/1) - just as in the infantry.

What was special in the cavalry was, that 2 horses in tandem pulled each cart.

I've chosen not to represent this, because the model of the cart would be too long for wargame purposes.

You could argue that the squadron, when mounted should have two cavalry stands to represent the crew as these were not riding on the carts.

Well - I'm lazy, as well as a miser - but may be some day!!!

Machinegun squadron (sMG-Schwadron)

The heavy machinegun squadron was equipped with 12 medium machineguns.

The machineguns were transported on packhorses.

I've chosen to represent the mounted squadron by a commander, two mounted platoons and two packhorses.

When dismounted they're represented as two normal MMG stands and a single command stand.

The MMG gun is fairly heavy to look at, but Britannia Miniatures favours sturdiness. And on the whole

their models look their part.

Other units from the brigade

Besides the cavalry regiment I've so far made a couple of units from the brigade in whom my regiment was part and I'm planning to make a number of additional units.

The units I've finished so far are shown below:

Artillery forward observer (Artillerie-Beobachter)

The cavalry brigade has a motorised artillery battalion equipped with 105-mm howitzers.

As this artillery mostly is represented in the games as off-board, I've only made the forward observer, represented mounted and dismounted.

I was left with a couple of curious looking figurines of a German in poncho advancing looking through his binoculars.

One of these found use here, but I felt the need to build a ruined house corner on the stand to make his excuse for standing upright.

Although he is as such equipped with a portable hard cover, it gives him no extra save when shot at **;-)**

Military police section (Feldgendarmerie-Trupp)

Each German division/brigade had a military police section.

In Command Decision this is often represented as a reconnaissance platoon with a light truck.

As Britannia Miniatures released a nice MC combination from the Feldgendarmerie, I've chosen to mount the platoon on a motorcycle. A fact that apart from speed doesn't affect the strength of the platoon.

I've not made any patrol stands to this platoon, because I feel that the use of military police as reconnaissance in Command Decision does not reflect their true purposes.

In the real world the tasks of the German military police were to control rear areas, direct traffic and prepare the position for the staff of the division. As such they should only be represented as a platoon at the brigade staff.

To represent the platoon as dismounted I took a second MC combination from Britannia and carefully removed the figure from the sidecar.

The dismounted officer and NCO are also from Britannia.

4. Heavy cavalry battalion (Schwere Kavallerie-Abteilung 4)

From this unit I've so far only completed one company.

Engineer company (Pionier-Kompanie)

The company was motorised and I've chosen two Opel Blitz 3-ton trucks to carry the personnel and an Einheits-Diesel 2-ton truck as engineer supply truck (Pionier-Geräte-Wagen).

The company consists of:
Command engineer stand
Engineer support stand
Engineer flame-thrower stand
Engineer stand

The engineers come from Britannia Miniatures and the trucks from Frontline.

A final note

This is how far I've completed my German cavalry in this late autumn of 2002.

I'm currently working to complete the heavy battalion as well as the second battalion of the cavalry regiment, but unfortunately I'm often sidetracked by other projects. When (If) further companies are completed I'll update this page.

I hope that this page might have been an inspiration for other wargamers to incorporate a cavalry element in their forces.

The Germans are far from being alone in fielding cavalry in large numbers. Most eastern European states had cavalry during the Second World War.

For futher inspiration you can find two articles by Per Finsted on these pages: Polish Cavalry in WW II and Hungarian Cavalry - a wargame unit as well as my own Short history of German cavalry 1942 -1945

Kaare Myltoft

Sources

1. *Die Geshichte der deutschen Kavallerie*, Klaus Christian Richter, Motorbuch Verlag, 1982, ISBN 3-87943-603-7
2. *Kavallerie der Wehrmacht*, Klaus Christian Richter, Podzun-Pallas, 1994, ISBN 3-7909-0514-3
3. *Die Boeselagershcen Reiter, Das Kavallerie-Regiment Mitte und die as ihm hervorgegangene 3. Kavallerie-Brigade/Division*, Hans Joachim Witte and Peter Offerman, Schild Verlag, 1998, ISBN 3-88014-116-9
4. *Die bespannten Truppen der Wehrmacht*, Klaus Christian Richter, Motorbuch Verlag, 1997, ISBN 3-613-01794-6
5. *Waffen-Arsenal, Sonderband S-33 - Waffen und Ausrüstung der deutschen Kavallerie*, Klaus Christian Richter, Podzun-Pallas, 1994, ISBN 3-7909-0499-6
6. *The Thin Grey Line,* Bob Mackenzie, Tac Publications, Oxford, 2000

Painting the figures

When painting figures I start out with a coating of Humbrol white enamel.

The German cavalry is painted with these paints:

The horseflesh is painted with a thin mixture of black and orange enamel. This gives a varying degree of brown, which is an easy way to paint horses in colours varying from light to very dark brown.

The mane and legs are painted with thinned down black enamel (a few manes are drybrushed with light brown).

For white or grey horses I use a mixture of white and grey Humbrol paint.

The rest of the figure is painted in water-soluble paint.

Uniform jacket and in some case trousers	Humbrol 5078
Uniform trousers	Humbrol 5027
Saddle and horse gear	Humbrol 5062
Saddle blanket	Humbrol 5033
Ammunition pouch for MP40	Humbrol 5063
Weapons	Humbrol 5070 and 5053
Officers rank badges, cap eagles and belt buckles	Games Workshop Boltgun Metal
Collar and cap-lining	Games Workshop Salamander Green