

## CHEMICAL SCHOOL IN THE INTERWAR PERIOD

Krzysztof CYGAN\*

\*Institute of History, University of Wrocław  
e-mail: [cyggi@wp.pl](mailto:cyggi@wp.pl)

Received on 4<sup>th</sup> April ; accepted after revision June 2017

Copyright © 2017 by Zeszyty Naukowe WSOWL



### Abstract:

*In the current paper, the creation and development of the chemical school which as a completely new institution functioned since 1919 is presented. Despite the numerous transformations and under various names the school operated till the outbreak of the World War II. It was not only the new school but also relatively new military branch, which survived to the contemporary times. The established school had neither the tradition nor the history, however, by providing the services it managed to educate competent and professional commanders. Its educational system enabled the staff to train according to their positions or military specialties.*

### Keywords:

*chemical troops. education. Gas School. Chemical Weaponry School. Gas Defense School*

## INTRODUCTION

The modern CBRN (*chemical, biological, radioactive or nuclear*) troops belong to one of the newest military branches of the Polish Armed Forces. The reason for this course of affairs, with respect to the history of military science, lies in relatively recent discovery and military application of the features of combat measures constituting the part of the weapon of mass destruction (chemical, radioactive or biological substances) as the weaponry.

While addressing the issues related to the education of the prospective officers of chemical corps, the reasons that triggered the process of its establishment should be considered. As repeatedly evidenced in the history of military science, the cause of the formation initially the service and finally chemical troops<sup>1</sup> is to be sought in the devel-

<sup>1</sup> The impropriety regarding the issue of the appropriate usage of the terms *chemical service* or *chemical branch* is to be clarified and simultaneously corrected at this point. Since its establishment in 1957 this specialty functioned in the military nomenclature as *chemical service*, unfortunately in the

opment of the new combat measures (i.e. chemical weapon). The emergence of this weapon was connected with evolving nature of combat operations, resulting from civilization progress, particularly the dynamic industrial development in the turn of nineteenth and twentieth centuries, including chemical industry. Its development resulted in the appearance of chemical weapon<sup>2</sup>. This was also linked to the growth of threats associated with this kind of weapon on the then and contemporary battlefields. The increased significance, mass nature, as well as its application on the World War I battlefields contributed to the initiation of systemized training for the emerging military specialty, which yielded the establishment of the Gas School for the chemical branch in 1919.

## 1. THE GAS SCHOOL

The interwar period (post-partition) was the complicated time for newly reborn Polish state. The state created from the patchwork of three partitions faced significant problems. The occurrence of obstacles and complications touched any single field or area. The formation of the Polish Armed Forces<sup>3</sup> was the area of significant importance presumably the most paramount one in the then period. Along with its formation, the new military specialty, which covered chemical (gas) issues, was distinguished. The formation established at that time, despite several transformations triggered by variable situation, has survived and exists nowadays as the chemical forces.

In October 1918 the new central authority for the gas service management was incorporated into the structures of the Polish Armed Forces. It was the Chemical Section<sup>4</sup> of the Artillery Department VII of the Ministry of Military Affairs. Moreover, in September 1919 within the framework of creation the gas service's structures on lower levels, the interim establishment of gas officers for the Supreme Command, front commands and infantry divisions and regiments<sup>5</sup> was created and implemented.

The responsibilities of the newly emerging branch included keeping the record of gas protecting measures and maintaining them in proper conditions<sup>6</sup>. Moreover, conduct-

---

majority of studies it is incorrectly referred to as *chemical 'forces'*. Raising *chemical service* to the status of the military branch occurred in 1958; see: AWO, ZA No. 1644, 2662/10/84, k. 36.

<sup>2</sup> Its implementation in the common and mass way is worth emphasizing, since it did not happen before; it was not used as weapon, only occasionally and experimentally or for accidental application.

<sup>3</sup> The perspective and consequently the 1919-1920 Polish-Soviet War itself, despite various aspects, was not without significance as for forming the armed forces, the structure and military thought of the then period; see: J. Maroń, *Wokół teorii rewolucji militarnej: wybrane problemy*, Wrocław 2011, p. 150.

<sup>4</sup> The main task of the Section was the delivery of explosive and pyrotechnical materials and the means of gas defense.

<sup>5</sup> CAW, ZA No. I.300.3.2; A. Wysocki, *Broń chemiczna w wojnie polsko-sowieckiej*, BWSA, No. 22, 1999, p. 17; Z. Zielonka, *Polskie wojska chemiczne w latach 1945-1991*, Wrocław 2015, p. 31.

<sup>6</sup> CAW, ZA No I.300.3.2; Z. Zielonka, op.cit., p. 32.

ing the trainings (lectures)<sup>7</sup> in units equipped with gas measures and assets assuring their proper exploitation and protection in case of usage on a battlefield<sup>8</sup>.

The newly created formation did not provide the basic education for officers but executed the course-based training consisting in adopting to the chemical specialty the soldiers already possessing the officer's ranks. In the initial period after World War I, a civilian candidate or a non-commissioned officer was obliged to accomplish an infantry course which lasted four months<sup>9</sup>. Thereafter, he was supposed to undergo two-month traineeship in infantry units after finishing of which he was promoted to the rank of an officer (the way to train an officer altered along with transformations of educational system). Not until an officer was appointed to a position in another military branch, he underwent specialized (directed) training during the applicatory course, in this case, chemical (gas) training<sup>10</sup>.

In the turn of July and August 1919 the Gas School<sup>11</sup> was established in Warsaw in order to facilitate the requalification and the development of the officer cadre for fulfilling the specialized chemical tasks. In terms of subordination it was supervised the Science and Military Educational Department of the Ministry of Military Affairs. Its first main office was located in Powązki<sup>12</sup>, afterwards due to the lack of the sufficient number of the offices and consequently opportunities for the relevant development and fulfillment of tasks it had to be relocated. Therefore, upon the request of the Gas School Management, its the new intended location was overhauled by a gas officer of the Supreme Command. Following the favorable opinion, a building in barracks at 11 Ludna Street in Warsaw<sup>13</sup>, whose entire third floor was dedicated to the needs of the School, became its new location. The existing promises were allocated to auditoria and

<sup>7</sup> They covered the courses in the field of gas chemistry, theory of canisters, construction of masks, gas shells and mines, theoretical and practical meteorology and rescue; see: A. Wysocki, op.cit., p. 19; Z. Zielonka, op.cit., pp. 32-33.

<sup>8</sup> The use of the chemical weapon on battlefields of the just ended War is to be born in mind as well as the fact that this weapon was instanced in the armories of neighboring states – including Russia, with which the conflict began relatively soon.

<sup>9</sup> T. Siemaszko, *Zarys powstania i rozwoju polskiego szkolnictwa wojskowego do 1939 roku* – file No. ASG WP 3814/84, Warsaw 1984, p. 49; *Wyższa Szkoła Oficerska Inżynierii Wojskowej im. gen. Jakuba Jasińskiego we Wrocławiu (zarys dziejów)*, Wrocław 1994, p. 29.

<sup>10</sup> B. Woszczyński, *Ministerstwo Spraw Wojskowych 1918-1921, zasady organizacji i działalności*, Warsaw 1972, p. 42.

<sup>11</sup> S. Rutkowski, *Zarys dziejów polskiego szkolnictwa wojskowego*, Warsaw 1970, s. 95; M. Ciepłewicz, A. Rzepniewski, P. Stawecki, J. Wojtasik, M. Wrzosek, *Zarys dziejów wojskowości polskiej w latach 1864-1939*, Warsaw 1990, p. 277; A. Leosz, W. Piątek, *Z dziejów obrony przeciwchemicznej w Polsce*, Wrocław 1995, p. 43; R. Tomaszewski, *Odbudowa polskiego szkolnictwa wojskowego 1908-1923*, Toruń 1997, p. 82; I. Nowak, *Obrona przeciwgazowa w Wojsku Polskim II Rzeczypospolitej (2)*, PWL, 2001, No 6, pp. 82-83; W. B. Moś, W. Soszyński, *Polskie szkolnictwo wojskowe 1908-1939, odznaki-emblematy-dokumenty*, Kraków 2007, p. 121; A. Leosz, *Gazmajстры*, Chemik, 2006, No. 2; S. Gruchalski, M. Rozpond, S. Trzciński, *W jubileusz 50-lecia rozpoczęcia szkoły rocznika 1962-1965*, Warszawa 2012, p. 2; Z. Zielonka, op.cit., p. 31, The information board of the Museum of the Military Center of Engineering and Chemical Forces in Wrocław;

<sup>12</sup> A. Leosz, W. Piątek, op.cit., p. 43; I. Nowak, op.cit., p. 82.

<sup>13</sup> A. Leosz, W. Piątek, op.cit., p. 43; I. Nowak, op.cit., p. 82.

accommodations for participants of the gas courses, as well as the gas museum<sup>14</sup>. The barrack's premises were prepared to accommodate the school HQ, 50 officer students and 100 non-commissioned officer students. The process of the relocation of the school commenced in November 1919.

In the newly created Gas School mainly the training in the framework of ten-day informative courses<sup>15</sup> for officers and non-commissioned officers<sup>16</sup> of all military branches were conducted. Based on the then regulations, the officers and the non-commissioned officers assigned to the gas officers' positions had to sequentially listen to lectures in the Gas School in Warsaw. Until 6<sup>th</sup> of December 1919 the Gas School educated 914 gas service officers, including 52 doctors<sup>17</sup>.

In the following year the school was called the Military Gas School<sup>18</sup> and the training period was extended to three weeks. Afterwards its name was changed into the Central Gas School<sup>19</sup>. Since 1921 only the officers were trained in the framework of eight or twelve-week courses.

## 2. THE CHEMICAL WEAPONRY SCHOOL 1923-1924

In 1923 the further reorganization of the School was conducted. Pursuant to the order of the Minister of Military Affairs, on 1<sup>st</sup> January 1923 it began operating according to new establishments. Apart from the establishment, the name of the school was changed into the Chemical Weaponry School<sup>20</sup>. Based on the new organizational structure the establishment of the school was as in figure 1.

The school HQ was represented by the Commandant at the rank of colonel, the adjutant (at the rank of captain), three clerks and a typewriter. The Education Department consisted of scientific personnel: the director of education, lecturers, assistants, managers, instructors and a translator. The Administrative Department included the administrative and fleet section and quartermaster personnel. In total the staff of the

---

<sup>14</sup> The Report of the Department Head to the second vice Minister of Military Affairs on gathering the significant number of the artifacts for the Gas Museum; see: CAW, ZA No I.300.3.2.

<sup>15</sup> Apart from the course-based trainings, the informative type lectures aimed at presenting the chemical issues were conducted.

<sup>16</sup> In addition to the courses organized by the School, the divisional gas officers were responsible for the issues related to the training of the gas non-commissioned officers and for that reason they organized the courses on the front (3-4 days); see: document No. 26961/IV of the Chief of the General Staff, Colonel Haller to the Minister of Military Affairs dated; 12 IX 1919 r., CAW, ZA No. I.300.3.2.

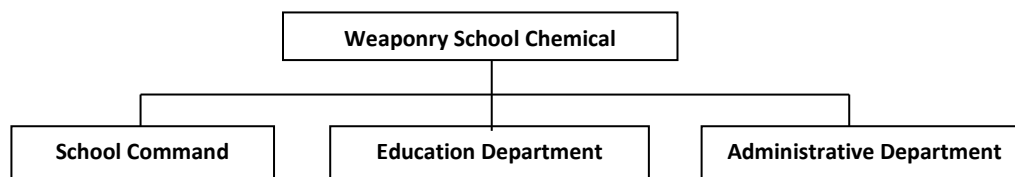
<sup>17</sup> CAW, ZA No I.300.3.2.

<sup>18</sup> CAW, the Inventory of the Military Schools Records 1918-1929, part I, Introduction, p. 65; the information board of the Museum of the Military Center of Engineering and Chemical Forces in Wrocław; A. Leosz, W. Piątek, *op.cit.*, p. 43.

<sup>19</sup> CAW, The Inventory of the Military Schools Records 1918-1929, part I, Introduction, p. 65.

<sup>20</sup> The permanent and interim peacetime establishments of the Central Schools and the Training Camps dated 9 XI 1922, appendix 17, CAW, ZA No I.303.3.136; CAW, the Inventory of the Military Schools Records 1918-1929, part I, p. 65; the information board of the Museum of the Military Center of Engineering and Chemical Forces in Wrocław; R. Tomaszewski, *op.cit.*, p. 146,171.

school was represented by: 13 officers, 13 non-commissioned officers, 42 privates and 14 civilian workers .



**Fig. 1.** Peacetime establishment of the Chemical Weaponry School

*Source: CAW, ZA No I.303.3.136, app. No. 17*

This crew was responsible for organizing and conducting the educational process within the framework of three courses i.e.:

- Course for gas officers;
- Chemical weaponry course;
- Course for branch officers.

Apart from that, the establishment specified the allowable number of seats for the gas officers' course and the twelve-month course of chemical weaponry, which counted respectively 80 and 30 seats.

The course for gas officers was of informative nature and lasted for one month. The course was intended for the gas officers who were appointed to or held such positions in military institutions and units<sup>21</sup> or in the military branches schools. It was the permanent course, organized cyclically – six times per year.

The fact of implementation of the new establishments for Central Schools and Training Camps since 1<sup>st</sup> January 1923 was of utmost importance as far as organizing the above-mentioned course is concerned. In the case of military schools the introduced establishment enforced the joint position of weaponry and gas officers (at the rank of captain), and in the structure of training camps the unassisted position of the gas officer, to whom the gas non-commissioned officer was subordinated. The new positions triggered the necessity of training the personnel, who had already been appointed to those positions but had not acquired the appropriate knowledge.

Another position following from the new establishment of military schools, which reflected the requirement of the introduction of the new combat asset as well as, in particular, the protection measures against it, was the position of the gas science lecturer in the Education Department (at the rank of captain/major), who was responsible for adequate realization of chemical education<sup>22</sup>. Therefore, in the light of the situation

<sup>21</sup> It was directed in particular to officers of regiments, whose positions required specialized knowledge to secure effective functioning and fulfillment of anti-gas defense tasks in a regiment; see: R. Tomaszewski, op.cit., p. 237.

<sup>22</sup> The chemical issues (anti-gas defense and gas science) were the obligatory subjects in the military schools; see: *Wyższa Szkoła Oficerska Inżynierii Wojskowej im. gen. Jakuba Jasińskiego we Wrocławiu (zarys dziejów)*, Wrocław 1994, p. 36; R. Tomaszewski, op.cit., p. 172; Z. Cutter, M. Katolik, *Szkolenie wojsk saperskich w okresie międzywojennym*, Wrocław 2000, p. 24.

described above, the course for branch officers was organized for lecturers of military schools and didactic personnel conducting the trainings related to chemistry subjects. It was the stationary course, whose duration was four months<sup>23</sup>.

The chemical weaponry course was intended for the officers of respective military branches and services responsible for overall activities related to functioning of the gas defense. The appropriate preparation of the command and staff personnel of the military branches for realization of anti-gas protection<sup>24</sup> as the new military specialty was the main objective of the course.

The establishment of the training chemical company at the School was another factor, which reflected the transformation of the gas service. The activities under the challenge were aimed at research purposes. It allowed re-directing the didactic activities to scientific and experimental ground as well as practical field training tracks<sup>25</sup>.

### 3. THE GAS SCHOOL 1925-1937

In April 1925 the Chemical Weaponry School returned to its original name, The Gas School<sup>26</sup> and its structure was modified for a subsequent time. Warszawa – Marymont became the location of the school. The undergone alternations reflected the then tendencies prevailing in the Armed Forces of the II Polish Republic, triggered by the transformations of the state. In the structure of the Gas School there were included:

- School Command;
- Education Department;
- Training Chemical Company<sup>27</sup>;
- Service Company<sup>28</sup>;

---

<sup>23</sup> R. Tomaszewski, *op.cit.*, p. 237.

<sup>24</sup> When it comes to the chemical weaponry course, the noncompliance with its duration occurs. According to the document CAW, ZA No. I.303.3.136 Appendix 17, its duration is one year, whereas in the book by R. Tomaszewski, *op.cit.*, p. 237, which includes the copy of the document CAW, ZA No. I.303.5.47 – five months. Unfortunately, the limited number of available documentation referring to that period prevents unambiguous explanation of this issue.

<sup>25</sup> CAW, the Inventory of the Military Schools Records 1918-1929, part I, Introduction, A. Leosz, W. Piątek, *op.cit.*, p. 43.

<sup>26</sup> Some sources provide incorrect information regarding the name of the school in the period of 1925-1937 defining its name as the Gas Defense School or Chemical Defense School whereas, in that period it was called the Gas School; Cf.: A. Leosz, W. Piątek, *op.cit.*, p. 43; Z. Zielonka *op.cit.*, p. 31.

<sup>27</sup> In that period the Training Chemical Company consisted of two platoons. When the Non-Commissioned Officers' School course commenced, it was conducted on the basis of that company. The Company commander detached one platoon as the training platoon. Based on the remaining Company's forces the exercise platoon was formed. The training platoon was subordinated to the Company commander, who simultaneously was obliged to fulfill his basic responsibilities; see the Day Order No 256 dated 13 IX 1935, CAW, ZA No. I.340.58.12; the Day Order No. 260 dated, 16 IX 1936, CAW, ZA No. I.340.58.13.

<sup>28</sup> Since 21 IX 1936 in compliance with the Rooster of Orders of the Ministry of Military Affairs dated 25 VIII 1936, the Service Company changed the name into Quartermaster Company; see The Day Order No. 266 dated 22 IX 1936, CAW, ZA No. I.340.58.13.

- Laboratory;
- Mechanical Workshops;
- Drafting office;
- Ambulatory;
- Warehouses.

The school continued education of the personnel through conducting the specialized courses such as:

- five-month chemical weaponry specialty course<sup>29</sup>;
- two-week informative course<sup>30</sup>;
- one-month ant-gas defense course<sup>31</sup> (Table 1);
- anti-gas platoon leaders' course<sup>32</sup> (Table 2);
- four-week anti-gas defense course for reserve officers<sup>33</sup>.

What is more, the four-week anti-gas defense courses for non-commissioned officers were conducted.

**Table 1.** The list of one-month courses organized for professional officers in the Gas School 1929-1934

| Course name   | Start date | End date   | Status as for start date | Course graduates |
|---|------------|------------|--------------------------|------------------|
| Gas Course <sup>34</sup>                            | 15.04.1929 | N/A        | 42                       | N/A              |
| Gas Course  | 21.05.1929 | 22.06.1929 | 11                       | 11               |
| Anti-gas Defense Course                             | 02.05.1932 | 31.05.1932 | 44                       | 44               |
| Anti-gas Defense Course                             | 02.09.1932 | 30.09.1932 | 43                       | 45               |
| Anti-gas Defense Course for active service officers | 03.04.1933 | 02.05.1933 | 40                       | 39               |

<sup>29</sup> Accomplishing of life fire exercise at the Bielańska shooting range was one of the rigors of this course. The exercise covered four types of shooting at the range of 200 meters at supported laying position: a) shooting without a gas mask, b) shooting with a gas mask, c) a smoked target, d) a smoked shooter; see the Day Order No 35 dated 04 II 1932, CAW, ZA No. I.340.58.7.

<sup>30</sup> The informative courses were primarily organized for commanders of regiments but in 1931 the first course was organized for certificated officers from the General Staff and the second, autumnal for commanders and deputies of regiments.

<sup>31</sup> This type of the courses was conducted till 1934. Since 1935 they were replaced by the courses for platoon leaders.

<sup>32</sup> In 1936 the name was changed into the course for chemical platoons leaders.

<sup>33</sup> The courses for reserve officers were organized separately for each type of military branch e.g. the infantry, the cavalry etc. or depending on the requirements, as general one for all specialties.

<sup>34</sup> In 1929 the gas course appeared under the name the one-month course. On the day orders of the Gas School both nomenclatures were used interchangeably. Concurrently, the provisions, in which both the names were combined – the one-month gas course, which was presumably dictated by its duration and the appropriate name of the course, can be found.



|   |            |            |    |                  |
|---|------------|------------|----|------------------|
| Anti-gas Defense Course for professional officers <sup>35</sup> | 20.09.1933 | 20.10.1933 | 39 | 40 <sup>36</sup> |
| Anti-gas Defense Course for professional officers               | 03.04.1934 | 02.05.1934 | 26 | 27               |

Source: Own study based on: CAW, I.340.58.1-15

**Table 2.** The list of the courses for platoon leaders organized in the Gas School 1935-1937

| Course name  | Start date     | End date   | Status as for start date | Course graduates |
|--|----------------|------------|--------------------------|------------------|
| Anti-gas Defense platoon leaders' Course <sup>37</sup> | 03.04.1935     | 18.05.1935 | 48                       | 50               |
| Anti-gas Defense platoon leaders' Course <sup>38</sup> | 20.04.1936     | 30.05.1936 | N/A                      |                  |
| Chemical platoon leaders' Course                       | 21.09.1936     | 30.10.1936 | N/A                      |                  |
| Chemical platoon leaders' Course                       | April 1937     | 14.05.1937 | N/A                      | 30               |
| Chemical platoon leaders' Course                       | May 1937       | June 1937  | N/A                      |                  |
| Chemical platoon leaders' Course                       | June 1937      | July 1937  | N/A                      |                  |
| Chemical platoon leaders' Course                       | September 1937 | N/A        | N/A                      |                  |

Source: own study based on: CAW, I.340.58.1-15

Furthermore, based on the Rooster of Orders of the Ministry of Military Affairs No. 33/1925, pos. 332 dated 8 October 1925<sup>39</sup>, the Gas School was given the right to present The Gas School Decoration<sup>40</sup> (Figure 2). The badge consisted of the hexagonal shield, the so-called 'benzene', with the glazed yellow-green<sup>41</sup> arms, on the top of which the silver, dark-oxidized eagle with the golden crown and legs was fixed.

<sup>35</sup> For the first time those officers were distinguished by the corps in the day order: infantry – 16, cavalry – 9, artillery – 5, engineering – 1, signal – 2, automotive – 1, military police – 2, medical – 3.

<sup>36</sup> One officer of the intendant corps joined the course at the later date.

<sup>37</sup> In the Day Order No. 128 dated 18.05.1935 the course was named the chemical platoon leaders course.

<sup>38</sup> Since 1936 in day orders there is no information regarding the arrival (checking in) and departure (checking out) of the course students. The information upon conducting of the course comes from the duty rooster (the duty officer of the chemical platoon leaders' course).

<sup>39</sup> Z. Sawicki, A. Wielechowski, *Odznaki Wojska Polskiego 1918-1945*, Warsaw 2007, p. 444; W. B. Moś, W. Soszyński, op.cit., p. 121.

<sup>40</sup> The image of the Gas School badge was placed inside the wreath on the reverse side of the banner of the General Jakub Jasiński Engineering and Chemical Forces Center in Wrocław (the presentation of the banner took place on the city main square on 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2011). The badge placed on the banner symbolizes the connection with the chemical units, whose glorious traditions are inherited by the Training Centre, see [online]. [Accessed: 27.01.2016], Available on the Internet: [http://cswiich.wp.mil.pl/pl/230\\_217.html](http://cswiich.wp.mil.pl/pl/230_217.html).

<sup>41</sup> The green-yellow hue symbolized chemical compound – the chlorine.





**Fig. 2.** The Gas School Badge

Source: Z. Sawicki, A. Wielechowski, *Odznaki Wojska Polskiego 1918-1945*, Warsaw 2007, p. 444; W. B. Moś, W. Soszyński, *Polskie szkolnictwo wojskowe 1908-1939, odznaki-emblematy-dokumenty*, Kraków 2007, p. 121.

The artillery shell braided by the golden snake was located under the eagle<sup>42</sup>. Pursuant to paragraph 4 of the Gas School Decoration Statute, it was presented to the officers who accomplished the five-month chemical weaponry specialty course<sup>43</sup>.

At the School's premises The Military Anti-gas Institute<sup>44</sup> (WIPgaz), logistically subordinated to the school, and the Central Institute of Physical Education<sup>45</sup> were located. Both institutions were independent, but functioned within the school.

Lt. Col. Doctor Józef Sergiusz Marzecki was the commandant of the School in the years 1919-1923, afterwards, to the end of 1937 Lt. Col. Walery Jasiński, whose farewell was conducted on the parade square of the Gas Defense School on 10<sup>th</sup> January 1938<sup>46</sup>. Pursuant to the Personal Order of the Ministry of Military Affairs, Lt. Col. Włodzimierz Scholze-Srokowski<sup>47</sup> was the last commandant of the school.

<sup>42</sup> It was the two-piece badge – made of silver-plated pinchbeck and glazed, with the dimensions of 52x27mm, Józef Michrowski from Warsaw was its manufacturer and the workshop was located in Marszałkowska 149 Street. The one-piece version, not glazed, was presented to non-commissioned officers.

<sup>43</sup> The Day Order No. 146 dated 27.05.1930, CAW, ZA No. I.340.58.3; The Day Order No. 50 dated 19.02.1932, CAW, ZA No. I.340.58.7; The Day Order No. 90 dated 31.03.1933, CAW, ZA No. I.340.58.9; The Day Order No. 131 dated 11.05.1934, CAW, ZA No. I.340.58.11.

<sup>44</sup> One of the main tasks of the Institute was the implementation of the research and experimental works on chemical combat measures and the means of their fabricating for the needs of the armed forces, while taking into account the production capacities of the chemical industry.

<sup>45</sup> The Day Order No 4 dated 04.01.1932, see CAW, ZA No. I.340.58.7.

<sup>46</sup> The Day Order No. 10 dated 10.01.1938, see CAW, ZA No. I.340.58.15.

<sup>47</sup> The Personal Order of the Ministry of the Military Affairs, the Human Recourses Office L. 2074/secret dated 13.12.1937, see CAW, ZA No. I.300.18.338.

#### 4. THE GAS DEFENSE SCHOOL 1937-1939

Starting from 11<sup>th</sup> May 1937 the Gas School was renamed as the Gas Defense School<sup>48</sup> and functioned under this name till the outbreak of the World War II, still being located in Warsaw – Marymont until the spring of 1938.

In striving for the further unification of the training process and the central supervision of the military education, the Center of Anti-aircraft and Anti-gas Training<sup>49</sup> was established in Brest-on-the-Bug. The conceptual works regarding the Center's construction began in the spring of 1937 and it was finally acknowledged that the school would be located in barracks being under construction since 1936, approximately 4 kilometers to the east from Brest, in Traugutów<sup>50</sup>. The significant progress of the construction works resulted in establishing the anticipated date of the school's relocation on 15<sup>th</sup> October 1937. Eventually the relocation was executed in the spring of 1938<sup>51</sup>.

After the school had been relocated to the Training Center, its establishment was altered. The School structure was as follows:

- the Commandant of the School;
- the Deputy Commandant of the school (simultaneously the Head of Education);
- the Secretariat of the Commandant;
- the personnel of the Head of Education;
- the Chemical Battalion.

*The Commandant of the School had the privileges equal to a regiment commander. The permanent manning of the school was as follows: 21 officers, 30 non-commissioned officers, 427 privates and 8 civilian workers. Lt. Col. Włodzimierz SCHOLZE-SROKOWSKI was the Commandant of the School, Maj. Henryk BAZYLKO – the Deputy Commandant and the Head of Education Maj. Roman LIPINSKI was the commander of the Chemical Battalion<sup>52</sup>.*

The school continued education of the cadre for the purposes of the chemical branch by the means of the specialized courses till the end of the interwar period within the structures of the Center.

---

<sup>48</sup> The Personal Order No. 131 dated 11.05.1937, see CAW, ZA nr I.340.58.14; the change of the name was dictated by the evolving nature of the anti-gas service, resulting from the implementation of the Act on the Anti-aircraft and Anti-gas Defense dated 15.03.1934, Journal of Laws of the Republic of Poland No 80 as of 11.09.1934, pos. 742, which was oriented on the anti-gas measures, see E. Kozłowski, *Wojsko Polskie 1936-1939*, Warsaw 1964, p. 250.

<sup>49</sup> J. Głośny, J. Zasadziński, *Wyższa Szkoła Oficerska Wojsk Obrony Przeciwlotniczej*, Warsaw 1983, p. 18.

<sup>50</sup> Z. Moszumański, *Centra Wyszkozenia Obrony Przeciwlotniczej (1921-1939)*, Pruszków 2003, p. 69.

<sup>51</sup> Z. Moszumański, op.cit., p. 71; A. Leosz, W. Piątek, op.cit., p. 43.

<sup>52</sup> Z. Moszumański, op.cit., p. 72.

## CONCLUSIONS

Along with the revival of the Polish state, the process of forming the new military branch, which was the chemical service, began and the modern Chemical Forces constitutes its equivalent.

The structure of the school, as well as its name had been substantially altered following from the evolution of the armed forces and the chemical branch itself. The transformations of the school were the natural consequence of undergoing transitions and the desire to meet them through the adaptation to the current requirements of the army.

At the time of establishment, the institution functioned under the name of the Gas School. Initially, the training process was based on short-term improvement courses organized for various groups, frequently on the basis of informative lectures only, which merely enabled the introduction to the issues of the gas science.

Along with the implementation of the new establishments for all military schools in 1923, the education process was systematized, owing to launching the three main training specialties, and the duration of the courses was standardized as well. The above-mentioned reorganization, which caused the return to the previous school's name, was the period of the most intense activeness of the Gas School. Throughout that period, the most significant number of the specialized courses for the particular specialties was conducted; moreover, the school extended its educational activities by providing the courses for professional non-commissioned officers. Therefore, the concurrent course-based education of officers and non-commissioned officers by one institution was assured.

The last period of the school's functioning was associated with its further reorganization, the change of name as well as its relocation from the capital city to the newly built and established Center of Anti-aircraft and Anti-gas Training in Traugutów, 4 kilometers away from Brest.

The interwar period of forming and functioning of the chemical branch school resulted in the establishment of the specialized chemical education center, which enabled the training and consequently education of both officer and non-commissioned officer cadre for the chemical branch's purposes. What is more, the model of the refreshment trainings for the privates and professional soldiers of other branches was developed. As a result, acquiring the essential knowledge and skills required to effective and practical handling of the chemical measures and assets, particularly defense against toxic impact of chemical weapon, became possible.

## REFERENCES

1. Cieplewicz M., Rzepniewski A., Stawecki P., Wojtasik J., Wrzosek M., *Zarys dziejów wojskowości polskiej w latach 1864-1939*, Warszawa 1990.
2. Cutter Z., Katolik M., *Szkolenie wojsk saperskich w okresie międzywojennym*, Wrocław 2000.
3. Głośny J., Zasadziński J., *Wyższa Szkoła Oficerska Wojsk Obrony Przeciwlotniczej*, Warszawa 1983.

4. Gruchalski S., Rozpond M., Trzciński S., *W jubileusz 50-lecia rozpoczęcia szkoły rocznika 1962-1965*, Warszawa 2012.
5. Kozłowski E., *Wojsko Polskie 1936-1939*, Warszawa 1964.
6. Leosz A., *Gazmajstry*, Chemik, 2006, no. 2, s. 40-46.
7. Leosz A., Piątek W., *Z dziejów obrony przeciwchemicznej w Polsce*, Wrocław 1995.
8. Maroń J., *Wokół teorii rewolucji militarnej: wybrane problemy*, Wrocław 2011.
9. Moszumański Z., *Centra Wyszkozenia Obrony Przeciwlotniczej (1921-1939)*, Pruszków 2003.
10. Moś W. B., Soszyński W., *Polskie szkolnictwo wojskowe 1908-1939, odznaki-emblematy-dokumenty*, Kraków 2007.
11. Nowak I., *Obrona przeciwgazowa w Wojsku Polskim II Rzeczypospolitej (2)*, [in:] "Przegląd Wojsk Lądowych" (PWL), 2001, nr 6, s. 80-84.
12. Rutkowski S., *Zarys dziejów polskiego szkolnictwa wojskowego*, Warszawa 1970.
13. Sawicki Z., Wielechowski A., *Odznaki Wojska Polskiego 1918-1945*, Warszawa 2007.
14. Siemaszko T., *Zarys powstania i rozwoju polskiego szkolnictwa wojskowego do 1939 roku* – ASG, Warszawa 1984.
15. Tomaszewski R., *Odbudowa polskiego szkolnictwa wojskowego 1908-1923*, Toruń 1997.
16. Woszczyński B., *Ministerstwo Spraw Wojskowych 1918-1921, zasady organizacji i działalności*, Warszawa 1972.
17. Wysocki A., *Broń chemiczna w wojnie polsko-sowieckiej*, „Biuletyn Wojskowej Służby Archiwalnej” (BWSA), no 22, 1999, p. 13-23.
18. *Wyższa Szkoła Oficerska Inżynierii Wojskowej im. gen. Jakuba Jasińskiego we Wrocławiu (zarys dziejów)*, Wrocław 1994.
19. Zielonka Z., *Polskie wojska chemiczne w latach 1945-1991*, Wrocław 2015.

#### BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

**Krzysztof CYGAN** – graduate of the General Tadeusz Kościuszko Military Academy of Land Forces in 1998. Since 2013 he has been an officer of the teaching methodology section at the Training Center for Engineering and Chemical Forces. He is currently a PhD student at the Institute of History at the University of Wrocław; his interests focus on the problem of training candidates for professional military officers of chemical corps until 1967.

#### HOW TO CITE THIS PAPER

**Cygan K.**, (2017),. Chemical school in the interwar period. *Zeszyty Naukowe Wyższa Szkoła Oficerska Wojsk Lądowych im. gen. Tadeusza Kościuszki Journal of Science of the gen. Tadeusz Kosciuszko Military Academy of Land Forces*, 49 (3), p. 5-16, DOI: 10.5604/01.3001.0010.5118



This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution International License (CC BY).  
<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>