

## Oleksandr DEMIANIUK

Doctor of Historical Sciences (Dr. Hab. in History), Professor,  
Deputy Rector for Scientifically-Pedagogical Work,  
Volyn In-Service Teachers Training Institute  
(Lutsk, Ukraine), adem51@ukr.net  
ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0034-5768>

## Ihor SOLIAR

Doctor of Historical Sciences (Dr. Hab. in History), Professor,  
Director of the I.Krypiakevych Institute of Ukrainian Studies NAS of Ukraine  
(Lviv, Ukraine), isoliar@ukr.net  
ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0439-6957>

# Volyn Region in the Period of Combat Actions Deployment on the Eastern Front of the World War I (1914–1916)

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.15407/uhj2022.06.147>

UDC: 94(477.82)“1914/1916”

**Abstract.** Volyn region, western districts of which became a place for a constant combat struggle starting from 1915, severely suffered during the World War I. The region was crowded by the militaries from both sides, and this reflected on the condition of the locals. On the other hand, several military operations conducted in Volyn region have been eternalized in the military craft handbooks. **Purpose of the research** is to conduct assessment of the World War I events as to their impact on the separate region, in particular – Volyn region, and to trace the course of episodes of the Great War during, first of all, 1915–1916, a period when Volyn finally entered the theatre of the combat actions. **Research methodology** is based upon the general methods of analysis, synthesis, and generalization. It is also based upon the principles of critical analysis of archive and documentary sources and methods of comparative analysis of the sources and historiography. **Scientific novelty** is in the fact that the authors confirmed the general tendencies of how the World War I deployed in Volyn region and formulated the peculiarities of the separate aspects of the military events occurring there during 1914–1916 (based on the little-known or even unknown documents from the archives of the Volyn, Zhytomyr and Rivne region). **Conclusions.** Volyn region, which from the beginning of the World War I received a frontline status, for several years became a place of, firstly, active (1915–1916) and, then, permanent (1917–1918) combat actions. A considerable amount of the local male population was conscripted to the Russian army, whereas most of the state authorities of the western districts and local population were evacuated deeply into the Russian Empire. The regional infrastructure was severely damaged, while most of the settlements in the area of the combat actions were destroyed with local citizens being relocated to both sides of the front.

**Keywords:** Volyn, World War I, Lutsk (Brusilov's) breakthrough, military operations.

Until summer of 1914 Volyn region was a part of Kyiv General Governance. On 23 August 1914, military situation was introduced there<sup>1</sup>. Because of this, offices of general governor for Kyiv, Podillia and Volyn were cancelled, whereas Volyn region, together with Podillia, Kyiv, Chernihiv, Kursk and Kharkiv regions, became a part of Kyiv military unit.

<sup>1</sup> Центральний державний історичний архів України, м. Київ (ЦДІАК України). – Ф.442. – Оп.864. – Спр.237. – Арк.5.

Due to its geographical location, territory of Volyn region was under the authority of the troops of the South-Western front, which was located between Ivanhorod (in the south) and Kamianets-Podilskyi (in the north). N.Ivanov, artillery general, was appointed as the chief of the front, to which 3rd, 4th, 5th, and 8th Armies were part<sup>2</sup>. Front's headquarters were located in Rivne.

The 3rd Army, led by infantry general N.Ruzskiy, and the 5th Army under the command of cavalry general P.Pleve were located directly on the territory of Volyn region. At the beginning of the World War I, the 3rd Army comprised the IX, X, XI and XXI corps as well as 9th, 10th and 11th cavalry divisions with a total number of about 215 000 soldiers and officers. The 5th Army consisted of V, XXV, XVII and XIX corps as well as 1st Don's, 7th and consolidated cavalry divisions.

For these armies, the following location was determined: for the 5th – the region of Chełm – Kovel – Volodymyr-Volynskiy; for the 3rd – the region of Lutsk – Dybno – Kremenets. Army led by general N.Ruzskiy had to act in the following districts of Volyn region: Lutsk, Rivne, Dubno, Kremenets, Ostroh, Iziaslav, Novohrad-Volynskiy and Zhytomyr<sup>3</sup>. In the tactical dimension, the 3rd Army was assigned to conduct attack on the territory of the Eastern Halychyna together with the 8th Army of the cavalry general A.Brusilov. The army of the general Pleve was responsible for Volodymyr-Volynskiy and Kovel districts. Within the offensive operation from the northern Volyn into the territory of Poland, Pleve's army had to act together with the 4th Army led by infantry general duke A.Zalts.

On 18–19 July 1914, mobilization manifesto was sent to Volynian district towns. In this period, citizens of the frontline regions (in particular, Volyn and Podillia) became the main source for Russian army staff. Local authorities widely used agitation materials for propaganda of mobilization – they spread leaflets, brochures and, for those who were illiterate, pictures and portraits. If only to take Pulmo area as of 1 October 1914, 139 men were conscripted into the Russian army. The most of them were from Pulmet (22 people), Pulmo (18 people), Pishcha (15 people) and Ostrivia (11 people)<sup>4</sup>.

In the first month of war, the royal army received nearly 7000 mobilized Volynians<sup>5</sup>. That said, the following number of people was taken to the military service: from Volodymyr-Volynskiy – 231 people; from Iziaslav – 55 people; from Kovel – 350 people; from Kremenets – 600 people; from Lutsk – 316 people for unqualified reserve; from Novohrad-Volynskiy – 430 people; from Ostroh – 115 people; from Ovruch – 118 people; from Starokostiantyniv – 106 people; from Rivne – nearly 600 people for reserve and arms service<sup>6</sup>. Percentage of mobilized people in comparison to the general quantity of the local population constituted 50–65%. For instance, 60% of working male population of Kamin-Kashyrskiy area were mobilized in the first year of the war<sup>7</sup>.

As early as on 31 July 1914, general N.Ivanov issued an order to impose military censorship on the entire theater of combat operations and adjacent territories<sup>8</sup>. Since then, a military censorship department was created in the headquarters of the commander-in-chief of the South-Western Front. It took over the organization of military censorship points and the creation of a censorship network on the frontline, particularly in Volyn region.

<sup>2</sup> Брусилов А.А. Мои воспоминания. – Москва, 1946. – С.66.

<sup>3</sup> ЦДДАК України. – Ф.442. – Оп.864. – Спр.237. – Арк.15.

<sup>4</sup> Державний архів Волинської обл. (ДАВО) – Ф.416. – Оп.1. – Спр.60. – Арк.56–66.

<sup>5</sup> Дем'янюк О. Західна Волинь: театр бойових дій Першої світової війни // Військово-науковий вісник. – Вип.9. – Л., 2007. – С.52.

<sup>6</sup> ДАВО. – Ф.3. – Оп.1. – Спр.1284. – Арк.65–69.

<sup>7</sup> Дем'янюк В. Літопис Камінь-Каширщини: історико-краєзнавчий нарис. – Луцьк, 2001. – С.63.

<sup>8</sup> ЦДДАК України. – Ф.1600. – Оп.1. – Спр.549. – Арк.14.

During 4–9 August 1914, military censorship points were formed at Volyn. The powers of the Zhytomyr's military censor were performed by the head of the Volyn regional gendarmerie, colonel Mezentsev. Captain Zhinkin was appointed as Rivne's military censor, retired colonel Modestov was appointed for Novohrad-Volynskiyi, and captain Bagration-Davidov was appointed for Dubno<sup>9</sup>. It should be noted that, already in the first autumn months of 1914, these points showed effective work: secret correspondence was intercepted, several scouts were caught, maps with notes of the location of Russian military units were seized.

In August – September 1914, voluntary-based infirmaries and hospitals appeared in the frontline regions. The number of beds in them ranged from 70 to 200. In August, an infirmary named after the Volyn eparchial priesthood was opened in the premises of the Zhytomyr Women's Theological College<sup>10</sup>. The medical building of the Volyn Theological Seminary was given for the needs of the wounded.

Since the beginning of the World War I, units of the 3rd, 4th and 5th Russian armies, headquarters, hospitals, and infirmaries have been located in the cities and villages of the Volyn region. The following units were stationed in Zhytomyr: 5th Infantry Division of the IX Army Corps, 17th Arkhangelogorodsk Infantry Regiment, 19th Kostroma Infantry Regiment, 20th Galitskiy Infantry Regiment. The 42nd Yakutia Infantry Regiment was located in Kremenets; the 126th Rylysk Infantry Regiment – in Ostroh, the 128th Starooskol Infantry Regiment – in Iziaslav, and the 18th Vologda Infantry Regiment – in Novohrad-Volynskiyi<sup>11</sup>.

In August, the personnel of the 11th Hussar Iziium Regiment, the 43rd Okhotsk Infantry Regiment, the 44th Kamchatka Infantry Regiment, and the 11th Infantry Division of the XI Army Corps were stationed in Lutsk<sup>12</sup>. Since June, units of the 125th Kursk Infantry Regiment, the 127th Putivl Infantry Regiment, the 21st Sapper Battalion, the 4th Convoy Battalion, and the 32nd Infantry Division of the XI Army Corps were stationed in Rivne<sup>13</sup>.

The headquarters of the 11th Cavalry Division, the command, the 1st, 2nd and 3rd batteries of the 11th Artillery Brigade, the 18th and 19th cavalry artillery batteries, the 32nd Chuhuiv Dragoon Regiment, the 41st Selenginskiy Infantry Regiment, and 4th Don Cossacks Battery were stationed in Dubno. Separate squadrons of the 32nd Chuhuiv Dragoon Regiment were stationed in the villages of Myrohoshcha, Kniakhynyn, and Pohoriltsi<sup>14</sup>.

The first armed clashes between the Russian and the Austro-Hungarian troops in the Volyn region took place on 2 August 1914. As a result of enemy attacks in the villages of Kovel, Dubno, Volodymyr-Volynskiyi and Starokostiantyniv districts, 178 peasant yards were partially destroyed, working equipment and crops were damaged<sup>15</sup>.

On 3–4 August, the Austro-Hungarian army shelled the city of Volodymyr-Volynskiyi and the district: a railway station in the district capital was destroyed, five houses and more than a dozen of outbuildings were burned down<sup>16</sup>.

At the beginning of August, among the volosts of Volodymyr-Volynskiyi district, the Porytsk district suffered the greatest losses, in particular, the villages of Samovolia and

<sup>9</sup> Там само. – Ф.1335. – Оп.1. – Спр.1666. – Арк.55.

<sup>10</sup> Степаненко Г.В. Православне парафіяльне духовенство на українських землях Російської імперії в роки Першої світової війни (1914 – лютий 1917) // Український історичний журнал. – 2004. – №5. – С.59.

<sup>11</sup> Звєгинцов В. В. Русская армия 1914 г. Подробная дислокация. Формирования 1914–1917 гг. Регалии и отличия [Електронний ресурс]: <http://regiment.ru/Lib/A/3.doc>

<sup>12</sup> ДАВО. – Ф.3. – Оп.1. – Спр.1284. – Арк.76–77.

<sup>13</sup> Там само. – Спр.1577. – Арк.11.

<sup>14</sup> Гаврилюк Т. Перша світова війна на Дубенщині // Минуле і сучасне Волині та Полісся: Сторінки воєнної історії краю. – Вип.30. – Луцьк, 2009. – С.172.

<sup>15</sup> Державний архів Житомирської обл. (ДАЖО) – Ф.226. – Оп.1. – Спр.539. – Арк.1, 7.

<sup>16</sup> ЦДДАК України. – Ф. 442. – Оп. 864. – Спр. 247. – Арк. 14, 18, 19, 30.

Shcheniutyn, where 81 estates were burned<sup>17</sup>. The town of Porytsk was destroyed and burned by Austro-Hungarian troops. The neighboring Hrybovets district was slightly less damaged. Soldiers of the 68th Borodino Infantry Regiment came to help the residents of Volodymyr-Volynskiy district, and scattered the Austrian cavalry as well as drove the enemy out of the county.

Then, on 8–9 August 1914, the Austrian artillery fired on the town of Radyvyliv, in Kremenets district, and the town of Druzhkopil, in Volodymyr-Volynskiy district, without significant damage to the local population. During the same time, the town of Volochysk in the Starokostiantyniv district was also shelled – the barracks and the house of the local priest burned down. However, it should be noted that Volochysk also suffered from Russian troops. They blew up the railway station<sup>18</sup>.

Local officials urged the population to remain calm and not to panic. At the meeting of mayors and elders of the Volyn region, which took place on 7 September in the region's capital, it was noted that the cities which are part of the active army – Dubno, Kovel, Kremenets, Volodymyr-Volynskiy – are in particularly unfavorable conditions. Mayor of Volodymyr-Volynskiy noted that the city is completely deprived of the possibility to receive the basic necessities since all railway communications of the city are occupied exclusively by the material for the construction of the railway<sup>19</sup>.

In order to combat the progressive deficit of food and basic necessities (flour, cereals, salt, sugar, tea, kerosene, coal, firewood, matches, etc.) and to prevent the spread of speculation in frontline districts, the authorities introduced the allowance, which were issued to families of the mobilized to troops. By the beginning of 1915, rations worth 45 813 rub. had been issued to 4280 families of those mobilized in twelve Volyn district towns. The military and church boards of trustees joined the maintenance of military families. According to the Volyn Diocesan Gazette, 20 458 families of the mobilized for the war received material assistance at the end of 1914 and the beginning of 1915<sup>20</sup>.

In the spring of 1915, the situation on the Eastern Front began to change in favor of the Central Powers. In May – June, Russian troops were unprepared for a breakthrough by Austro-Hungarian and German troops of the Russian defensive positions in the Gorlice – Tarnów area. The Russians were forced to retreat and defend the line of Chełm – Volodymyr-Volynskiy – Brody – Buchach<sup>21</sup>. Initially, the refugees were placed in the area of Lutsk, Volodymyr-Volynskiy – Dubno<sup>22</sup>, and, later, in camps near Rivne and Zhytomyr.

At the beginning of the summer of 1915, the Volyn region was gradually being filled with refugees from Galicia, whose placement in the front line undoubtedly became a mistake of the Russian military command. With the advance of the front line to the east, they had to be evacuated further and further to the rear. A.Vlodarchyk, an eyewitness to those events, recalled: “Refugees and military convoys were moving in different directions on the Lutsk road (tract). They said that grain had been burned behind them, and there was no water in the wells”<sup>23</sup>.

In June 1915, a telegram was sent to the Lutsk military executor stating that 376 peasant families with property on carts were moving from Horokhiv to Lutsk. They

<sup>17</sup> Сельскохозяйственные хроники Вольнской губернии. Январь 1915. – Житомир, 1915. – С.15.

<sup>18</sup> ДАЖО. – Ф.1. – Оп.44. – Спр.505. – Арк.3–4, 8.

<sup>19</sup> ДАВО. – Ф.3. – Оп.1. – Спр.1284. – Арк.59.

<sup>20</sup> Вольнские епархиальные ведомости. – 1915. – №7. – С.10.

<sup>21</sup> Науменко А. До історії бойових дій на Волині під час Першої світової війни // Минуле і сучасне Волині та Полісся: Сторінки військової історії краю. – Вип.30. – С.160.

<sup>22</sup> ЦДІАК України. – Ф.278. – Оп.1. – Спр.751. – Арк.21.

<sup>23</sup> Влодарчик А. Втікачі (біженці) з рідних осель в 1915 р. (Спогад з Першої світової війни) // Літопис Волині. – 1967. – Ч.9. – С.55.

were evicted from the Horodetskyi district of Halychyna by a circular order of 27 May 1915 by Governor-General of Halychyna G. Bobrinskiy<sup>24</sup>.

Mostly, refugees from Halychyna passing through the Volyn region had to take care of their own protection and take care of each other<sup>25</sup>. A typical picture of that time was told by a refugee from Halychyna: «A guard came to us, inspected carts, horses and cattle and said that in Rivne the government buys cattle for meat for the army and pays well, and horses and carts can be sold in Zhytomyr»<sup>26</sup>.

At the background of the changing situation at the front, there was a lack of funds to meet the needs of the army and to finance local programs. Gradually, a significant portion of non-military funds was withdrawn from local budgets. For example, the Rivne City Duma included in the costs covered by special funds the following expenses: rent of premises for the army, insurance of city buildings allocated for the assembly point, maintenance of families of reserve ranks and militia soldiers mobilized for active service, various costs associated with circumstances of wartime<sup>27</sup>.

In the summer of 1915, the territory of Western Volyn finally entered the theater of military actions. Austro-Hungarian troops gradually began to conquer the settlements of Volyn province by the forces of the 1st Army from July and the 2nd Army from August 1915. This led to the retreat and redeployment of Russian troops, as well as additional mobilization measures.

In a report to the head of the Warsaw Local Brigade, the Kovel District Military Commander, Colonel Puchkov, pointed out that all district citizens, who had been subject to military service, had been mobilized in July 1914, on 20 September 1914, and on 1 April 1915<sup>28</sup>. In total, by October 1915, 170 000 people had been drafted from the Volyn region for military service, including almost 68 000 reservists, 40 000 first-class soldiers, and about 60 000 conscripts<sup>29</sup>.

The local population began to become even more involved in the construction of fortifications, digging ditches, pulling wire, and arranging defensive lines. All discharged men between the ages of 18 and 45 were mobilized for military service. Since, for the most part, these were unpaid jobs, the locals tried to become hired by the landlords. Refugees from Galicia were often involved in ancillary work.

In August 1915, Austro-Hungarian troops began advancing towards Volodymyr-Volynskyi. However, the successful actions of the 3rd Russian Army under the command of Infantry General L. Lesh near Chelm suspended this offensive for a short time. In a few days, the Austro-Hungarian troops managed to reach the line of Turiisk – Volodymyr-Volynskyi. On 16 August 1915, the 11th and the Buh Armies captured Kovel, Volodymyr-Volynskyi, and Horokhiv<sup>30</sup>.

There was a threat of capture of Lutsk by the Austrians, as the city was in the zone of the least concentration of the Russian militaries. By order of the Supreme Commander-in-Chief of the Russian troops, almost half of the personnel of the 8th Army were transferred to the north to level the advantage of the Austrian armies, which was on the line of Kovel – Volodymyr-Volynskyi<sup>31</sup>.

<sup>24</sup> ДАВО. – Ф.3. – Оп.1. – Спр.1577. – Арк.49.

<sup>25</sup> Дем'янюк О.Й. Луцьк та Луцький повіт в роки Першої світової війни // Актуальні проблеми українського державотворення. – Вип.ІІІ. – Луцьк, 2010. – С.29.

<sup>26</sup> Влодарчик А. Втікачі (біженці) з рідних осель... – С.56.

<sup>27</sup> Державний архів Рівненської обл. (ДАРО) – Ф.616. – Оп.1. – Спр.2. – Арк.3 зв.

<sup>28</sup> ДАВО. – Ф.266. – Оп.1. – Спр.14. – Арк.421.

<sup>29</sup> ДАЖО. – Ф.206. – Оп.1. – Спр.40. – Арк.27.

<sup>30</sup> ЦДІАК України. – Ф.278. – Оп.1. – Спр.280. – Арк.294.

<sup>31</sup> Брусилов А.А. Мои воспоминания. – Москва, 1946. – С.160.

The troops of the Western Front, under pressure from the Austrian and German troops, retreated in the direction of Ratno – Kobryn, as a result of which a gap between the flanks of the two fronts – the South-Western and the West – formed. The South-Western Front stopped on the line of Brody – Lutsk – Chortoryisk.

In August – September 1915, the Russian command, in order to prevent the encirclement of its troops, decided to make a general retreat along the entire front. The most important state institutions and local authorities were hastily evacuated. So, on 16 August, in a hurry and without the evacuation plan, the Lutsk city council was evacuated to Zhytomyr. District documents, plans of city lands, current affairs since 1912, books on birth and death, marriage and divorce as well as other less important documents were taken out<sup>32</sup>. Employees of local institutions were fired due to military circumstances on 15 August 1915<sup>33</sup>.

Totally, by the middle of the autumn of 1915, six counties of the Volyn region were evacuated: Kovel, Volodymyr-Volynskiy, Lutsk, Dubno, Ostroh and Rivne. Novohrad-Volynskiy, Zhytomyr, and Kremenets districts as well as city of Zhytomyr were preparing for evacuation.

In the territories of the Volyn province occupied by German and Austrian troops, the local population was involved in the reconstruction of destroyed administrative buildings, bridges and crossings; repair of communications and roads damaged by the retreating Russian troops; construction of defensive fortifications. In addition, horses and livestock were confiscated from the local population. Signs in Austrian and German appeared on the streets of the settlements. District recordkeeping was being gradually transferred to the German language.

Austro-German troops conducted a series of successful military operations against the Russian army in the Volyn region, which led to its retreat near Rivne in a relatively short time. On 1 September, the 1st Austro-Hungarian Army launched an offensive on Dubno, and the 4th Army launched an offensive on Rivne. After the capture of Dubno, the commander of the 1st Austro-Hungarian Army, General Dankl, launched an offensive on Rivne.

At this time, the commander of the 8th Army had already managed to stabilize the front through the efforts of units led by Lieutenant General S.Stelnitskiy and Major General A.Denikin.

At the beginning of September, after the XXXIX Army Corps were joined by the 4th Iron (Zheleznaya) Rifle Division at station Klevan in Rivne district, General S.Stelnitskiy took a defensive position on the right flank of the 8th Army along the Stubla river. In addition, General A.Brusilov sent a convoy squadron and the Orenburg Cossack Division northeast of Rivne to the Oleksandriia area as well as the 7th and the 11th cavalry divisions to the region near Derazhnia<sup>34</sup>. Thus, the commander of the 8th Army covered Rivne, where the headquarters of the South-Western Front was at that time, by the troops semicircle and reduced the positional gap with the Western Front. The rapid retreat of the Russian army and the prompt redeployment of units of the 8th Army in the Rivne area made it possible to suspend the Austrian offensive.

The changes that took place on the Eastern Front of the World War I in August – September 1915 had a negative impact on the situation of the population of Western Volyn. Among the local population, there begun the large-scale propaganda in the frontline areas to destroy food and property so that they would not reach the enemy. In some districts the destruction of crops, the burning of estates, mills, and bridges became widespread. The local, mostly rural, population left their homes and moved deep into the Russian Empire, following the retreating parts of the Russian army.

<sup>32</sup> ДАВО. – Ф.3. – Оп.1. – Спр.1577. – Арк.125 зв.

<sup>33</sup> Там само. – Ф.85. – Оп.1. – Спр.6. – Арк.110.

<sup>34</sup> *Брусилов А.А. Мои воспоминания.* – С.162.

Meanwhile, General A. Brusilov, realizing that the forces at his disposal would not be able to hold back the Austrian offensive for a long time, demanded strengthening forces from the commander-in-chief of the armies of the South-Western Front General N. Ivanov. To strengthen the 8th Army, the XXX Army Corps was sent, led by Lieutenant General A. Zayonchkovskiy, who was immediately sent to the area of the village Stepan to strengthen the right flank of the army.

Having received strengthening, General A. Brusilov developed a plan of enemy counterattack with the involvement of personnel of the XXX and XXXIX army corps, the 7th Cavalry Division and the 4th Iron Rifle Division, i. e. with the whole right flank of the army. The ultimate goal of the counteroffensive was to transfer the front to the line of the rivers Styr and Ikva and to conquer back Lutsk and Rozhyshech<sup>35</sup>.

On 23 September 1915, as a result of a counteroffensive by General A. Denikin's 4th Iron Rifle Division, Lutsk was liberated for a few days. The morning attack was preceded by night shelling by the division commander. For a successful operation, A. Denikin received the following higher military rank of lieutenant general. During the battles for Lutsk, the 4th Iron Rifle Division captured 158 officers and 9773 soldiers of the Austrian army<sup>36</sup>. At the same time, the division itself suffered significantly due to losing about 40% of its staff.

A few days later, fearing an attack by German units coming from Kovel on the right flank of the 8th Army, the commander-in-chief of the South-Western Front General N. Ivanov ordered General A. Brusilov to withdraw his army to the Berestiany – Olyka – Mlyniv line. However, this tactical scheme did not work, since large land and cavalry forces could not have been secretly transferred across Volyn Polissia. In order to prevent the Germans from wedging into their right flank and tearing it away from the 3rd Army, which at that time was part of the Western Front, General A. Brusilov was forced to stretch the right front of the army to Kolky and then to Kukhotska Volia<sup>37</sup>.

During the autumn battles of 1915, the area and population around Kovel, Chortoryisk, Kolky, and Manevychi were severely damaged. In particular, many destroyed farms remained in the villages of Bilyn, Kolodii, Vovchok, Horodok, Yablunka, and Cherevakha<sup>38</sup>. Residents of Derazhnia, Diatkovychi, Klevan and partly Rivne districts suffered the greatest losses among Rivne area<sup>39</sup>.

As a result of the autumn operation by General A. Brusilov's 8th Army, the front started winter along the line of Kremenets – Dytiatychi – Dubno – Pereshiv – Khromiakovo – Bohuslavka – Kulykovychi – Chortoryisk – Bilska Volia – Loknytsia<sup>40</sup>. We have to state that the last military operation in 1915 on the territory of Volyn province was the December offensive of the troops of the South-Western Front near Dubno, which ended in failure.

The stabilization of the front and the coming winter prompted the Austro-Hungarian and Russian commands to create a continuous line of defensive buildings and fortifications along the entire line of confrontation. Depending on the strategic importance and features of the area, the defensive lines stretched for 5–9 km in depth of the area. For their construction, local residents were involved as well as materials from brick and stone buildings of nearby settlements were used.

<sup>35</sup> Соловійов О. Бойові дії на Волині в роки Першої світової війни // Науковий вісник ВДУ: Історичні науки. – Луцьк, 1998. – Вип.1. – С.46.

<sup>36</sup> Деникин А.И. Путь русского офицера. – Москва, 1991. – С.280.

<sup>37</sup> Брусилов А.А. Мои воспоминания. – С.166.

<sup>38</sup> Заброварний Б., Шабала Я. Західне Полісся під час Першої світової війни: соціально-економічна ситуація // Минуле і сучасне Волині й Полісся: Любомль в історії України та Волині. – Вип.25. – Луцьк, 2007. – С.96.

<sup>39</sup> Соловійов О. Бойові дії на Волині в роки Першої світової війни // Науковий вісник ВДУ: Історичні науки. – Вип.1. – Луцьк, 1998. – С.47.

<sup>40</sup> Патер І. Союз визволення України: проблеми державності і соборності. – Л., 2000. – С.187.

In the spring of 1916, the Russian command carried out large-scale engineering work on the future offensive in the Volyn province. For the covered movement of Russian units to the enemy's lines of defense, engineering bridgeheads were created, which consisted of 6–8 parallel interconnected trenches located at a distance of 70–100 meters from each other.

On the eve of the offensive in the spring of 1916, a large part of the Russian army was concentrated on the South-Western Front. However, information on its number, technical equipment and combat capability varies considerably. That said, the participant of the World War I, General of Infantry A.Zayonchkovskiy gives the following numerical and qualitative indicators: 19,5 corps and 11–12 cavalry divisions (a total of about 510 000 bayonets)<sup>41</sup>. Instead, the Russian military historian A.Utkin believes that the number of Russian soldiers in troops of General A.Brusilov (40 infantry and 15 cavalry divisions) was 573 000 bayonets and 60 000 sabers, 1770 heavy and 168 light canons<sup>42</sup>.

In contrast to the Western and Northern Fronts, the Russian forces on the South-Western Front were evenly distributed, which allowed General A.Brusilov to plan an offensive on the enemy's position in small offensive groups at a distance of 450–550 km.

At the Military Council in Mohyliov, on 1 April 1916, discussing the program of hostilities for the current year, the commander-in-chief of the South-Western Front General A.Brusilov, expressed the opinion that his armies were capable of effectively advancing and achieving certain successes. As a result, A.Brusilov received permission to prepare an offensive. However, he also was warned by General of Infantry M.Alekseev that heavy artillery and a large number of ammunition of the army of the South-Western Front will not be provided.

On the eve of the offensive of the South-Western Front, General A.Brusilov had four armies at his disposal, of which two armies were in the territory of the Volyn region: the 8th Army managed by General of the Cavalry A.Kaledin and partially (in Southern Volyn) the 11th Army managed by General of the Cavalry V.Sakharov<sup>43</sup>.

The 8th Army, which occupied the front in the Kovel direction from the village Ostrovsk, where it bordered on the 3rd Army of the Western Front, to the village Bohuslavka, included: IV Cavalry Corps (commander – Lieutenant General Ya.Gillenshmidt), XLVI Army Corps (commander – Lieutenant General N.Istomin), V Siberian Cavalry Corps (commander – Lieutenant General L.Velyashev), XXX Army Corps (commander – Lieutenant General A.Zayonchkovskiy); in the Lutsk direction from the village Bohuslavka to the village Detynychi: XXIX Army Corps (commander – Lieutenant General S.Stelnitskiy), XL Army Corps (commander – General of the Infantry N.Kashtalinskiy), VIII Army Corps (commander – Lieutenant General V.Dragomirov), XXXII Army Corps (commander – Lieutenant General I.Fedotov)<sup>44</sup>. The 8th Army reserve included units of the 100th Infantry Division in the Stepan area as well as the 7th Cavalry Division in the Derazhnia area, the 2nd Finnish Infantry Division and the 12th Cavalry Division south of Rivne.

Russian troops in the Volyn region were opposed by the 4th Austrian Army of Archduke Joseph Ferdinand as part of General A. von Linsingen's army group near Kovel and General E.Bem-Ermoli's army group near Lutsk.

The 8th Russian Army was opposed by: the 270th Reserve Regiment, the 9th and 1st Cavalry Divisions, the 11th Honvéd Cavalry Division, the Polish Legion, the 127th Brigade

<sup>41</sup> Зайончковский А.М. Первая мировая война. – Санкт-Петербург, 2002. – С.535.

<sup>42</sup> Уткин А.И. Первая мировая война. – Москва, 2001. – С.276.

<sup>43</sup> ДАВО. – Ф.490. – Оп.1. – Спр.63. – Арк.14.

<sup>44</sup> Брусиловський прорив на Волині: факти, цифри, дати, документи, матеріали, карти, телеграми, мемуари, фотографії, раритети / Упор. І.М.Пасюк. – Луцьк, 2006. – С.6–7.



of the 53rd Infantry Division, the 26th Landwehr Division, the 10th Cavalry Division, 4th Infantry Division, 41st Honvéd Cavalry Division, 37th Honvéd Cavalry Division, 2nd Infantry Division, 70th Honvéd Brigade, 11th Infantry Division, 7th Infantry Division, 36th Landwehr brigade, 46th Infantry Division. The 13th Infantry Division and the brigade of the 11th Infantry Division were stationed in the reserve behind Lutsk.

On the eve of the offensive of the South-Western Front, the right flank of the 11th Army was in the territory of the Volyn region. The 17th Army Corps (commander – General of the Infantry P.Yakovlev) was located on the line from the eastern bank of the Ikva river to the village of Popivtsi. The Austro-Hungarian command used the 25th Infantry Division, the 46th Infantry Division, the 7th Cavalry Division, and the 1st Landwehr Brigade against the Russian troops.

According to the plan of General A.Brusicov, the 8th Army was to attack with two strike groups. The Sarny group of the XXV Army and IV and V cavalry corps, operating in the direction of Sarny – Kovel, had to break through to Kovel. The Rivne group of the 8th Army formed with the XL and VIII Army Corps was given an auxiliary role – to take the enemy's troops in its grip from the south by the offensive through Lutsk to Kovel.

On 22 May 1916, from 4 o'clock in the morning, artillery shelling of enemy positions was carried out on the entire South-Western Front. An element of surprise and massive artillery training allowed the troops of the South-Western Front to achieve significant success in attacking the enemy. Later, the commander-in-chief of the South-Western Front General A.Brusicov pointed out that by noon of 24 May his armies had captured 900 officers, more than 40 000 non-commissioned officer and soldiers, and a large number of weapons and military ammunition<sup>45</sup>.

The most successful breakthrough was made exactly in Volyn by General A.Kaledin's 8th Army, in which about 170 000 Russian soldiers took part. The 4th Austrian Army of Archduke Joseph Ferdinand, involved in the battles against the 8th Army, consisted of 116 000 soldiers.

On 23–26 May 1916, heavy fighting continued on the Rafalivka – Kostiuukhnivka line. The V Siberian Cavalry Corps near the village Kolky and the XXX Army Corps near the village of Rafalivka could not overcome the enemy's defensive lines and break through to Stokhid for a long time. According to the operative report of Major General N.Dukhonin, on 25 May, the XXX Army Corps pressed the enemy along the entire front from Styr to Zhuravychi<sup>46</sup>. On 26 May troops under the command of General A.Zayonchkovskiy with forces of units of the 80th Infantry Division occupied Kolky, Roznychi and Kopyllia. On 28 May 1916, the Austrian units launched a counteroffensive near Kolky in order to set the front line on the Styr river.

On 25 May 1916, the 125th Division and the 1st Brigade of the 102nd Division captured station Kivertsi and moved in the direction of Lutsk<sup>47</sup>. On 28 May, the regiments of the 125th and the 102nd divisions took over Rozhyshche with simultaneously capturing more than 1000 German soldiers. By July, the front line had been established along the Stokhid River, 18–20 km west of Rozhyshche.

In the area of the XL Army Corps, the troops managed to capture the first fortified strip of the Austrians which had a depth of 2 km. Their army destroyed the X Corps of the 4th Austro-Hungarian Army near Zhornyshche and Olyka. In other places of the breakthrough, the first day's attacks were unsuccessful. On 24 May 1916, the XL Corps, while developing its success with the assistance of the VIII Corps, occupied the second fortified strip, and the next day, pursuing the 2nd and 70th Austrian divisions, captured Lutsk.

<sup>45</sup> Брусиллов А.А. Мои воспоминания. – С.203.

<sup>46</sup> Брусилловский прорыв на Волині: факти, цифри, дати... – С.13.

<sup>47</sup> Луцьку 900 років: 1085–1985 / Упор. В.А.Наконечний. – К., 1985. – С.71.

As early as 29 May, Volyn Governor Skarzhinskiy issued an order to the Lutsk mayor, who was evacuated to Zhytomyr in 1915, demanding him to return to Lutsk together with the city administration to take up his duties. The main tasks of the mayor were determined as full assistance to the troops, providing food aid to the population and improving the health of the city and the population<sup>48</sup>.

After a successful offensive on Lutsk on 26 May 1916, the Commander-in-Chief of the South-Western Front General A. Brusilov issued a directive №1594, in which he set the task for the 8th Army to gain a foothold on the Styr River in the Sokil – Rozhyshe – Lutsk – Torhovytsia section. He also ordered to continue the offensive on the right flank to Ostrovski – Novi Chervyshcha – Kashivka – Sokil and on the left flank in the direction of Torhovytsia – Demydivka. During the offensive operation, Russian troops reached the river Stokhid near village Mylsk, where they stayed until July 1916.

Less successful was the Russian offensive on Kovel, which was on the verge of the armies of the South-Western and Western fronts. Although the good time for the development of the offensive was lost due to the delay of the commander of the Western Front General A. Evert, General A. Brusilov decided to attack on 11 June 1916. In particular, he ordered the 3rd (transferred from the Western Front; commander – General L. Lesh) and the 8th Army to defeat the enemy and capture the area Horodok – Manevychi. General L. Lesh had to capture the territory in the direction of Horodok – Manevychi – Haluziia, and General A. Kaledin had to strike the main blow at Kovel and the auxiliary – at Volodymyr-Volynskiy. However, the front line moved towards Kovel only for 5–20 km and was established on the border of Kolky – Kyslyn – Horokhiv.

Fresh German divisions, the 11th Bavarian and the 108th Infantry, appeared in the area of the 8th Army along the railway towards Kovel. Following them, the 10th German Corps, hastily transferred from the French front, was redeployed to the Kyslyn area. Powerful counterattacks by these troops forced the 8th Army, which no longer had more reserves, to stop the successful advance<sup>49</sup>.

Fighting continued in the southern part of the Volyn region. In the Horokhiv – Berestehko – Pliasheva area, the 7th Infantry Division of the 5th Siberian Corps, the 101st and 105th Divisions of the XXXII Army Corps carried out the offensive<sup>50</sup>. The need to force water obstacles and fight in the wetlands restrained the Russian offensive.

In early July, after heavy artillery shelling, Russian soldiers of the XXIV Artillery and IV Cavalry Corps, which formed a part of the 3rd Army, broke through the defenses of General Hauer's troops in several places and crossed to the left bank of the Stokhid River near the villages of Chervyshche, Rudka, and Toboly, and captured the eight-kilometer bridgehead on the flank and three kilometers in depth<sup>51</sup>. On 1 July, the troops of the 8th and 3rd armies reached the line of the Stokhid River and established a front along it from Liubeshiv to the Kovel – Lutsk railway.

On 15 July 1916, the general offensive on the South-Western Front was resumed. Russian troops of the 3rd and Special Armies (a group formed at the base of guards corps in early July; commander – General of the Cavalry V. Bezobrazov) managed to push back the enemy near the villages of Siltse and Trysten, the 8th Army fought near the village of Kashivka and in the direction of Volodymyr-Volynskiy. One of the most successful battles took place on 18–19 August 1916, when three right-wing armies of the South-Western Front simultaneously launched an offensive on enemy positions. At the end of August, the offensive of the 3rd, 8th and Special Armies near the Stokhid River was very

<sup>48</sup> ДАВО. – Ф.3. – Оп.1. – Спр.1574. – Арк.4–4 зв.

<sup>49</sup> Зайончковский А. М. Первая мировая война. – С.544.

<sup>50</sup> Гильчевский К.Л. Боевые действия второочередных дивизий в мировую войну. – Москва; Ленинград, 1928. – С.111.

<sup>51</sup> Борбич М. Перша світова війна: бої на Стоході // Минуле і сучасне Волині й Полісся: Край на межі тисячоліть. – Вип.10. – Луцьк, 2002. – С.154.

unsuccessful. General A. Brusilov ordered the troops of the South-Western Front to move to active defense.

Therefore, the spring – summer campaign of 1916 was generally successful for the Russian army. However, the successful breakthrough of the South-Western Front, which went down in history as the Lutsk (Brusilov's) breakthrough, did not have an effective continuation. The autumn of 1916 in the territory of the Volyn region liberated during the spring-summer offensive of Russian troops, passed quite calmly in the military aspect, but with elements of growing propaganda of social-democratic parties both among the soldiers and among the local population. Military confrontation negatively affected the development of most frontline settlements in the Volyn region.

In Lutsk district, the population suffered significant material damage. The villages in Kolky, Trostianets, Sylno, Rozhyshche and Velytsk districts suffered the most. In Piddubtsi volost 1139 houses were destroyed and 582 houses were damaged (out of 2399 houses). Derno and Lypno were completely destroyed, while not a single undamaged building remained in Strumivka and Nyzhnii Hremen<sup>52</sup>. Retreating from Lutsk, Austro-Hungarian troops destroyed the power plant, parish school, military barracks and other utilities. Kovel district was especially devastated – on its territory the longest (comparing to all Western Volyn districts) active fighting took place. Residents of the villages of Velykyi Obzyr, Toboly, and Borovne suffered the most.

The villages of Varkovychivka and Malyn areas suffered the most among Dubno district. The villages of Pidbortsii, Skrakliv, Pidluzhne and Kamenytsia were wiped off the face of the earth. In Dubno, Austrian troops burned more than 400 buildings and deported about 700 locals to Austro-Hungary. In fact, the city was completely destroyed<sup>53</sup>, and the local population was in a «state of complete insolvency»<sup>54</sup>. Radyvyliv, Kozyn, Verby, and Krupets were burned down almost completely.

Berezhets and Bilokrynytsia areas suffered the most in Kremenets district. 14 villages and hamlets of Kremenets region were significantly destroyed. In Novooleksynets, 229 out of 247 yards were destroyed with only 142 locals remaining<sup>55</sup>. In Pochaiv, 36 houses were destroyed and 90 were damaged with only 72 inhabitants left<sup>56</sup>.

So, we can conclude that hostilities in the territory of the Volyn region began three times during the two and a half years of the World War I. During the shelling of the border objects of the Russian Empire in the August 1914, such Volyn cities as Volodymyr-Volynskiy, Radyvyliv, Druzhkopil, and Volochysk were damaged. During the summer – autumn campaign of 1915, the front was established directly on the territory of the Volyn region. Harsh and bloody battles took place in the western districts of Volyn. Austria-Hungary completely seized the lands of Lutsk, Kovel, and Volodymyr-Volynskiy districts as well as partially took over Rivne, Dubno and Ostroh districts. The 1916 spring-summer offensive of the South-Western Front on the territory of the Volyn region (known as Lutsk breakthrough) was successful. During the summer – autumn offensive (known as Kovel's operation), the achievements of the Russian army were much more modest. Uncoordinated actions of the commanders-in-chief of the adjacent Russian fronts and the strengthening of the defensive lines by the German army in the area of Kovel did not allow the Russians to develop their success. In the autumn of 1916, the front line was preserved in the western districts of the Volyn region and, with minor changes, stayed here until the end of the World War I.

<sup>52</sup> *Бернадський Б.* До питання про стан економіки Волинської губернії в роки першої світової війни // Збірник навчально-методичних матеріалів і наукових статей історичного факультету ВДУ. – Вип.3. – Луцьк, 1998. – С.52.

<sup>53</sup> ЦДІАК України. – Ф.1335. – Оп.1. – Спр.200. – Арк.396–397.

<sup>54</sup> ДАРО. – Ф.359. – Оп.1. – Спр.14. – Арк.9 зв.

<sup>55</sup> ЦДІАК України. – Ф.1335. – Оп.1. – Спр.200. – Арк.630–645.

<sup>56</sup> Там само. – Арк.653–654.

## REFERENCES

1. Bernadskyi, B. (1998). Do pytannia pro stan ekonomiky Volynskoi hubernii v roky Pershoi svitovoi viiny. *Zbirnyk navchalno-metodychnykh materialiv i naukovykh statei istorychnoho fakultetu VDU*, 3, 49–55. [in Ukrainian].
2. Borbych, M. (2002). Persha svitova viina: boi na Stokhodi. *Mynule i suchasne Volyni i Polissia: kraii na mezbi tysyacholit*, 10, 154–155. [in Ukrainian].
3. Demianiuk, O. (2007). Zakhidna Volyn: teatr boiovykh dii Pershoi svitovoi viiny. *Vitiskovo-naukovyi visnyk*, 9, 49–62. [in Ukrainian].
4. Demianiuk, O. (2010). Lutsk ta Lutskii povit v roky Pershoi svitovoi viiny. *Aktualni problemy ukrainskoho derzhavotvorennia, III*, 27–36. [in Ukrainian].
5. Havryliuk, T. (2009). Persha svitova viina na Dubenshchyni. *Mynule i suchasne Volyni i Polissia: Storinky voiennoi istorii kraiu*, 30, 171–175. [in Ukrainian].
6. Nakonechnyi, V.A. (Comps.) (1985). *Lutsku 900 roki: 1085–1985*. Kyiv. [in Ukrainian].
7. Naumenko, A. (2009). Do istorii boiovykh dii na Volyni pid chas Pershoi svitovoi viiny. *Mynule i suchasne Volyni i Polissia: Storinky voiennoi istorii kraiu*, 30, 160–164. [in Ukrainian].
8. Pasiuk, I.M. (Comps.) (2006). *Brusylivskiy proryv na Volyni: fakty, tsyfry, daty, dokumenty, materialy, karty, telebramy, memuary, fotobrafii, rarytety*. Lutsk. [in Ukrainian].
9. Pater, I. (2000). *Soiuz vyzvolennia Ukrainy: problemy derzhavnosti i sobornosti*. Lviv. [in Ukrainian].
10. Soloviov, O. (1998). Boiovi dii na Volyni v roky Pershoi svitovoi viiny. *Naukovyi visnyk VDU: Istorychni nauky*, 1, 46–50. [in Ukrainian].
11. Stepanenko, H. (2004). Pravoslavne parafialne dukhovenstvo na ukrainskykh zemliakh Rosiiskoi imperii v roky Pershoi svitovoi viiny (1914 s. liutyi 1917). *Ukrainskyi istorychnyi zurnal*, 5, 45–65. [in Ukrainian].
12. Utkin, A.I. (2001). *Pervaya mirovaya voyna*. Moskva. [in Russian].
13. Vlodarchyk, A. (1967). Vitkachi (bizhentsi) z ridnykh osel v 1915 r. (Spohad z Pershoi svitovoi viiny). *Litopys Volyni*, 9, 53–59. [in Ukrainian].
14. Zabrovarnyi, B., Shabala Ya. (2007). Zakhidne Polissia pid chas Pershoi svitovoi viiny: sotsialno-ekonomichna sytuatsiia. *Mynule i suchasne Volyni i Polissia: Liuboml v istorii Ukrainy ta Volyni*, 25, 95–97. [in Ukrainian].
15. Zayonchkovskiy, A.M. (2002). *Pervaya mirovaya voyna*. Sankt-Peterburg. [in Russian].

## Олександр ДЕМ'ЯНЮК

доктор історичних наук, професор,  
проректор із науково-педагогічної роботи,  
Волинський інститут післядипломної педагогічної освіти  
(Луцьк, Україна), adem51@ukr.net  
ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0034-5768>

## Ігор СОЛЯР

доктор історичних наук, професор,  
директор Інституту українознавства ім. І.Крип'якевича НАН України  
(Львів, Україна), isoliar@ukr.net  
ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0439-6957>

## Волинська губернія в умовах розгортання бойових дій на Східному фронті Першої світової війни (1914–1916 рр.)

**Анотація.** Волинська губернія, західні повіти якої від 1915 р. стали місцем воєнного протистояння, впродовж Першої світової значно постраждала. Край було насичено військовиками, що відобразилося на становищі місцевого люду, тут відбулися кілька масштабних операцій. **Мета дослідження** – оцінити події Великої війни в розрізі впливу на окремий регіон, а також простежити перебіг епізодів протистояння на Східному фронті, насамперед 1915–1916 рр., періоду, коли Волинь була театром активних бойових дій. **Методологія** спирається на загальні методи аналізу, синтезу та узагальнення; ґрунтується на принципах критичного аналізу архівних й документальних джерел, методах порівняльного аналізу джерел і надбавь історіографії. **Наукова новизна.** На підставі мало- та невідомих документів з архівів Волинської, Житомирської, Рівненської обл. підтверджено загальні тенденції перебігу подій Першої світової війни на території Волині, сформульовано особливості окремих аспектів воєнного лихоліття в 1914–1916 рр. щодо краю. **Висновки.** Волинська губернія, яка від початку війни отримала статус прифронтової, стала на кілька років місцем активних (1915–1916 рр.), згодом перманентних (1917–1918 рр.) бойових дій. Значну частину місцевих чоловіків було мобілізовано до російської армії, більшість державних установ західних повітів і тамтешнє населення евакуйовані, інфраструктура краю зазнала руйнації та ін.

**Ключові слова:** Волинь, Перша світова війна, Луцький (Брусилівський) прорив, воєнні операції.