

Piotr Kroll

THE USE OF THE CROWN HUSSARS IN THE UKRAINIAN WAR THEATRE in 1648–1667

Abstract

The article presents the use of hussar units in the fights in Ukraine during the reign of King Jan Kazimierz. The period was characterised by a decrease in the number of hussar troops with the maximum simultaneous use of their combat value in battles against enemies representing different types of combat tactics. On the one hand, they were forces combining firepower (Cossacks) with driving mobility (Tatars), which resulted in great manoeuvrability on the battlefield, and on the other – troops representing Western martial art (Moscow troops), supported by Cossack units (wagon forts and firepower), which made it possible for the Polish side to take over the initiative. Despite the decrease in the number of hussar units in the Crown Army, they retained their main advantage and were able to break both opponents they were fighting against at that time, as in the battles of Beresteczko, Ochmatów and during the Chudnov campaign. The decline in the number of hussars in the army was caused by both financial and logistic factors together with battlefield requirements, especially in Ukraine, as well as the overall situation of the state. At the end of the text, the author presented the phenomenon of the adoption of hussars by the Moscow army which noticed the advantages of this type of cavalry and tried to use it during the war against the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth.