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FROZEN HELL[™]

Finland in the Winter War and Beyond



By **HUNTER JOHNSON**

STEVE JACKSON GAMES

HAKKAA PÄÄLLE!

Take to the frozen forests of Finland to save your nation from the ruthless Red hordes in *GURPS WWII: Frozen Hell*. Inside you'll find:

- ☘ The histories of the three distinct wars that Finland found itself fighting during the WWII years.
- ☘ Descriptions of Finn culture and military practices, so that you can immerse yourself in the setting.
- ☘ An extensive sampling of the motley assortment of arms and vehicles that Finland had to piece together in order to fight.
- ☘ A wide sampling of campaign ideas, including a diplomatic setting that thrusts the players into the roles of negotiators and attachés trying to twist their way through the heated Baltic politics of the day.

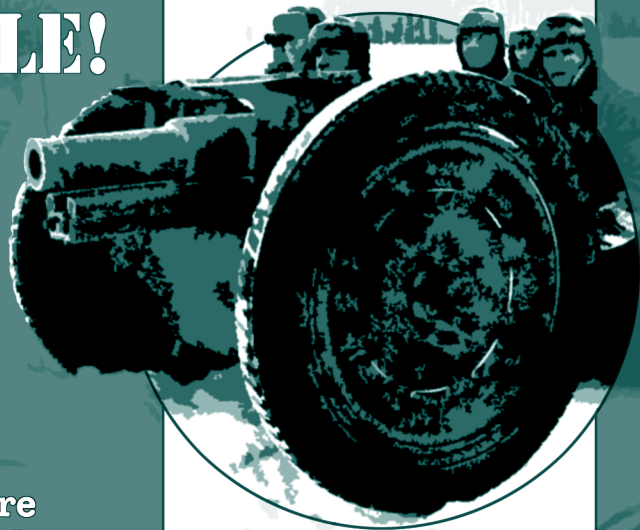
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Stand up and fight.

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Hunter Johnson

Edited and Illustrated by
Gene Seabolt

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Page References

Rules and statistics in this book are specifically for the **GURPS Basic Set, Third Edition**. Any page reference that begins with a B refers to the **GURPS Basic Set** – e.g., p. B102 means p. 102 of the **GURPS Basic Set, Third Edition**. Page references that begin with CI indicate **GURPS Compendium I**. Others are HT to *High-Tech*, W to **WWII**, W:HS to **WWII: Hand of Steel**, W:IC to **WWII: Iron Cross**, and W:RH to **WWII: Return to Honor**. The abbreviation for this book is W:FH. For a full list of abbreviations, see p. CI181 or visit the updated web list at www.sjgames.com/gurps/abbrevs.html.

INTRODUCTION

On Nov. 30, 1939, the Soviet Union – an industrialized colossus of more than 200 million with the world's largest, most mechanized army – launched an assault on Finland, a rural democracy of 3.4 million whose poorly armed defense forces numbered about 400,000. History affords few examples of a conflict so one-sided.

Geography motivated Stalin. The Finnish border was only 25-33 miles from Leningrad. Finland steadfastly proclaimed “neutrality,” but the Soviets thought that eventually the Germans or Allies would not *allow* Finland to remain neutral.

Anticipating only “token resistance,” the Soviets put together an inept operational plan. (They did not think to paint their tanks *white* before hurling them into a snow-covered theater!) Their attack, however, was *big*, the idea being that the sheer size would awe Finland into quick surrender.

Numerical “odds” don't always foretell the outcome. Inspired leadership, brilliant low-level tactics, and the ordinary Finnish soldier's courage blunted the ponderous Red Army offensive. The main thrust on the Karelian Isthmus was stopped cold within weeks, and several Soviet secondary attacks had been destroyed by counterattacks.

In time, the Red Army regrouped and overwhelmed the Finns by sheer weight of numbers and firepower, but the Allied public – bored during this “Phony War” period on mainland Europe – was electrified by the Finns' courage and martial prowess. Meanwhile, the Allied governments did little to bolster “brave little Finland” militarily.

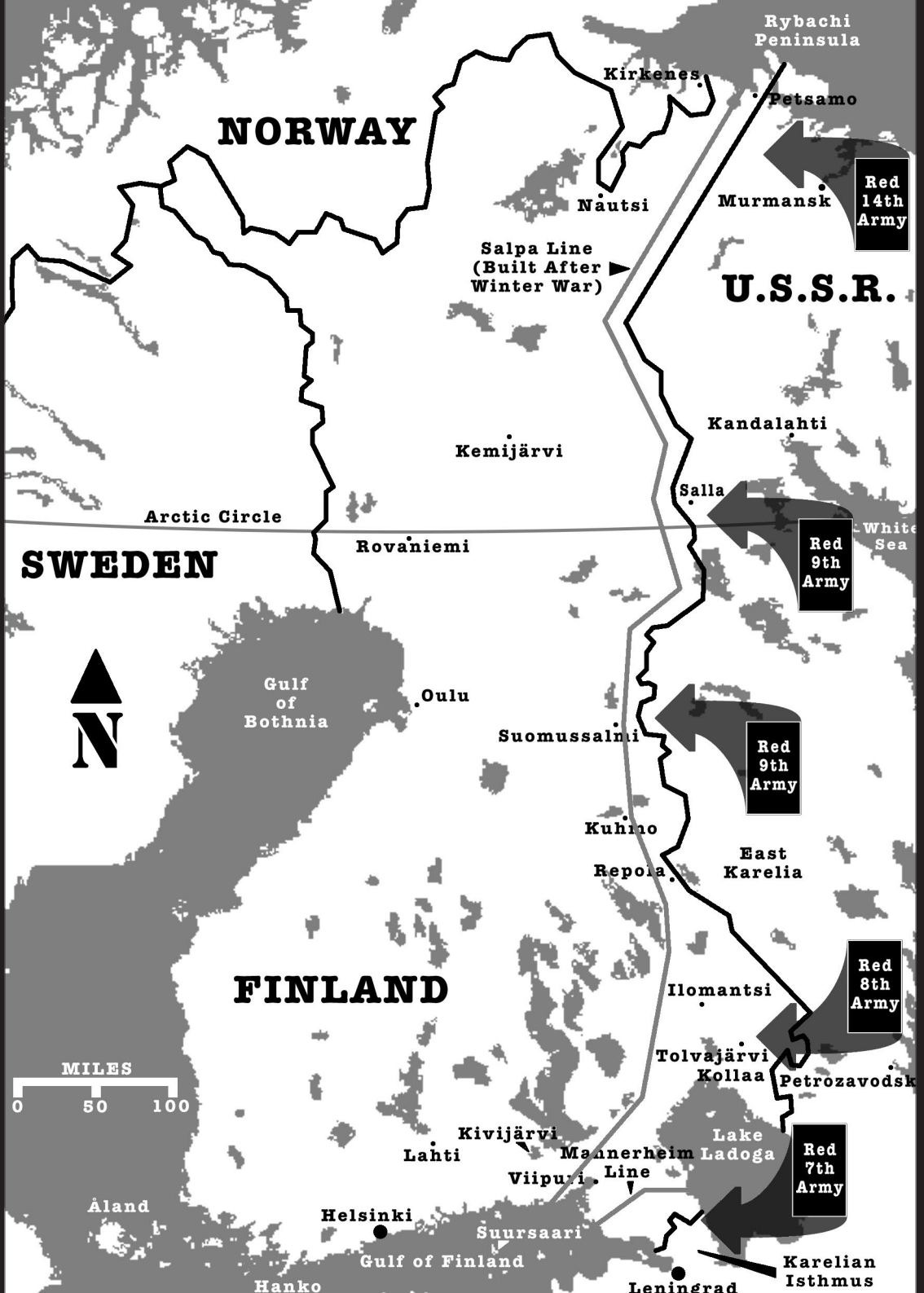
Stalin finally got his land, but the victory was expensive: some 250,000 men killed or missing, frozen to death in the trackless forests. The Finns destroyed or captured more than 900 tanks. One Soviet general remarked, “We have won just about enough ground to bury our dead . . .”

– William R. Trotter, author of
*A Frozen Hell: The Russo-Finnish
Winter War of 1939-40*

About the Author

Hunter Johnson has worked on **GURPS Japan**, **Bestiary**, and **Monsters**, and provides official support for **Knightmare Chess**. Besides writing, revising, and compiling, he also edits (*Another Fine Mess* from Grey Ghost Games), reviews (for *Moves and Fire & Movement* from Decision Games), translates (for Mayfair Games), designs (*gToons* for White Wolf and CartoonNetwork.com), and monkeys (for Cheapass Games and Mayfair Games). He occasionally plays games, too. You can find him on the web at www.hunterandlori.com.

FINLAND



FINNISH RANKS

MR	Finnish Army	Finnish Air Force	Finnish Navy
8	Marsalkka	–	–
8	Kenraali (kenr)	–	–
8	Kenraaliluutnantti (kenrl)	–	Amiraali
7	Kenraalimajuri (kenrm)	–	Vara-Amiraali
7	–	–	Kontra-Amiraali
6	Eversti (ev)	Eversti	Komentaja, Kommodori
5	Everstiluutnantti (evl)	Everstiluutnantti	Komentajakapteeni
4	Majuri (maj)	Majuri	Kapteeniluutnantti
4	Kapteeni (kapt)†	Kapteeni	Luutnantti
3	Luutnantti (ltn)	Luutnantti	Aliluutnantti
3	Vänrikki (vänr)†	Vänrikki	Reservialiluutnantti
2	Vääpeli (väöp)	Vääpeli	Pursimies
2	Ylikersantti (ylik)	Ylikersantti	Ylikersantti
1	Kersantti (kers)	Kersantti	Kersantti
1	Alikersantti (alík)	Alikersantti	Alikersantti
1	Korpraali (korpr)	–	Ylimatruusi
0	Sotamies* (stm)	–	Matruusi

* In Finnish service, soldiers who could have been lumped together as privates were given separate rank names depending on their duty. A *sotamies* was a rifleman while a *jääkäri* (*jääk*) was a rifleman or jäger often mounted on a bicycle. A gunner was a *tykkimies* (*tkm*); an engineer was a *pioneeri* (*pion*); a signalman was a *viestimies* (*vm*); a dragoon was a *rakuuna* (*rak*); and a cavalryman was a *ratsumies* (*ratsum*).

† In the cavalry, a second lieutenant was a *kornetti* (*korn*) rather than a *vänrikki* and a captain was a *ratsumestari* (*ratsmest*) rather than a *kapteeni*.

ADVANTAGES, DISADVANTAGES, AND SKILLS

See pp. W62-66 for a more comprehensive discussion. The following elaborates on particular facets of Finnish service.

ADVANTAGES

Wealth see p. W63

Finns use the Wealth rules as described, without modification for nationality.

DISADVANTAGES

Code of Honor see p. W184

Any Code of Honor (Finnish) overlaps considerably with Sense of Duty (see below). The GM should not allow both, unless the Code brings weighty *new* restrictions to conduct.

Sense of Duty see p. B39

In the Finnish wars of WWII, Fanaticism (Patriotism) often was attributed to the Finns, and it was certainly no less common than in other

armies. But the more nearly universal disadvantage was a Sense of Duty (Finland) [-10]. Soldiers fought in the face of such overwhelming odds not necessarily because they thought that Finland was right in every situation, but because they thought that Finland had a right to exist and that right was being challenged.

Much of their conduct in battle also could be attributed to a strong Sense of Duty (Comrades) [-5], as well. A German veteran described one incident where an overwhelming Soviet force hiding in nearby woods tortured a Finn captive to provoke the combined Finn and German force in which he had served. Even as they listened to the prisoner's agonized screams, the Germans would not have even considered going to his rescue, given that any "rescuers" almost certainly would be killed or join the captive. The Finns in the group quietly put on their weapons and disappeared into the woods – they could not even consider *not* going.

A Finn soldier may possess both sorts of Sense of Duty at the same time – for however long he manages to survive them . . .

4. FINN ARMOURY

More than in most armies, the idea of a “standard” piece of Finnish equipment is, at the least, less than ironclad. To a large extent, the Finns scrapped and scrounged and employed whatever

weapon they could find. An easygoing GM might allow the player of a Finn soldier to carry just about anything, provided he created a good background story as to how his character obtained it!

PERSONAL GEAR



In addition to their firearms and white snowsuits, each Finnish soldier carried a *leipälaukku* (bread bag), where he stored his rations, mess kit, and hand grenades, and a separate bag for his gas mask. Most men also had a rucksack that was more like a bag than a proper backpack.

Helmets during the Winter War were WWI relics; by the Continuation War, supplies had improved to green or gray German and Austrian models, with salvaged Soviet helmets used in rear areas. The last reserves that were called to arms only received a cockade, ammo belt, and rifle; they fought in their civilian clothes. Soldiers, and most rural civilians, also carried a *puukko*, or large knife.

Each soldier also had a tin of food that would provide a day’s worth of sustenance in an emergency. Field kitchens were common on the Finnish side, but the usual fare was but one warm meal a day, along with a ration of three cigarettes. Potatoes were in good supply, so potato soup was often the hot meal. *Näkkileipä*, a hard and dry rye flatbread, was also common. The usual term for it was *vanikka*, derived from the word for “plywood.”

All types of equipment required special care in the Finnish winter environment, especially in a harsh winter like the one of 1939-1940. Regular grease and oils could freeze at some of the more extreme temperatures.

SMALL ARMS



See pp. W92-93 for the common arms of major WWII combatants, including the Soviets.

Pistols

Apart from those listed below, many Russian Nagant M-1895 revolvers (pp. W94, HT110) and Tokarev TT-33 pistols (p. W94) were also in use.

DWM Luger Pistooli malli 23 (1923): This variant of the German Luger (pp. W94, HT108) was the most common sidearm of the Finnish army during WWII. It differed from the standard German weapon only in caliber, being chambered for the 7.65mm Parabellum.

Husqvarna Browning Pistooli malli 07 (1917): The FN-Browning Mle 1903 was made under license in Sweden as the Pistol m/07. Several hundred of these came to Finland with Swedish volunteers, and were later donated to the Finn military.

VKT Lahti Pistooli malli 35 (1939): Commonly known as the L-35, this was designed by famous Finnish inventor Aimo Lahti, and outwardly resembled the Luger. Although intended to replace the imported weapons, it was never available in sufficient numbers. Sweden built it under license as the Husqvarna Pistol m/40 (1942) in much larger numbers, and some of these were supplied to the Danish resistance movement later in the war.

Rifles

The Russian Mosin-Nagant M-1891 had been the Finnish army’s standard rifle since the time of the nation’s independence in 1917. It was still widely used, and all later Finnish service rifles of the war were based on it. More than 100,000 M-1891/30 rifles (p. W95) were in use with the Finnish military during WWII. Thousands of Tokarev SVT-38 and SVT-40 semiautomatic rifles (p. W95) were captured during the Winter and Continuation Wars, and became popular with Finnish troops as the KautKiv/38 and KautKiv/40, respectively. Since they often came with 3.5× scopes, they were popular with Finnish snipers; scopes were scarce in Finland. A few hundred AVT-40 full-auto rifles (p. W95) also saw service.

During the Winter War, the army received about a hundred Boys Mk I anti-tank rifles (p. W95), which they named the PstKiv/37. Captured Soviet anti-tank rifles such as the PTRS-41 (p. W95) were used in some numbers, but never officially introduced.

Carl Gustaf Mauser Kivääri malli 96 (1896): The Swedish service rifle (Gevär m/96) was a full-size Mauser design. It was supplied in large numbers to Finland during the Winter War and in use with front-line units, the Civil Guard, and

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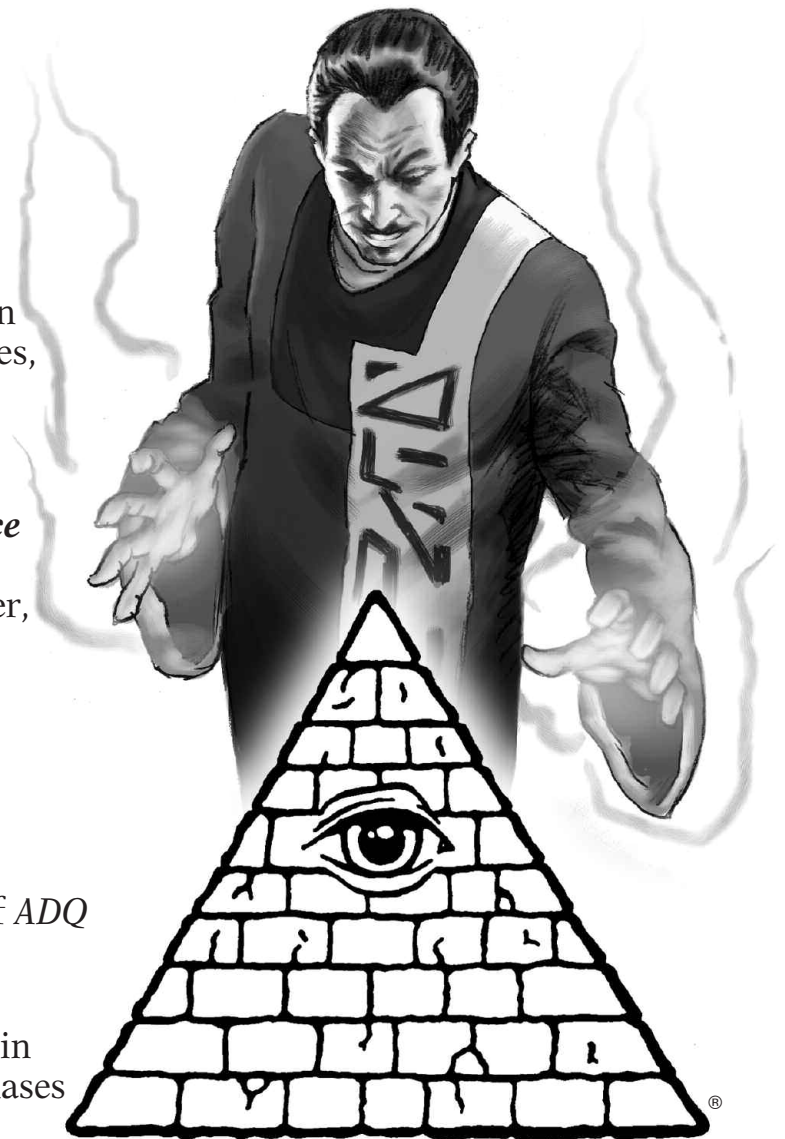
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