The Russo-Swedish War 1808-1809

By George Nafziger

The Treaty of Tilsit (8 July 1807) ended the state of war between Prussia, Russia and France. With it Russia became part of the Continental System. Sweden, with its powerful neighbour actively conforming to the Continental System, found itself under considerable pressure to become a part of it as well.

As the Swedish were now being pressed to close their ports to the English the Russian ambassador to Sweden approached the Swedish government in an effort to reestablish an old convention that had existed between the northern powers. This convention established a joint military force to insure peace in the Baltic and the Russians hoped to use it to close the Baltic to British commerce.

However, the Swedish King considered this convention a dead issue because of Napoleon's victories on the Continent since it was founded. He considered all the Baltic ports open to English commerce.

On 11 January the Swedes began to hear about Russian forces massing on the Finnish border. Gustav IV, King of Sweden, responded by forming a military committee to study the situation. This committee was charged not only with looking to the defence of Finland, but to the potential military threats from Denmark and Norway.

The Swedes began to prepare themselves for war, but the King's ministers were unable to persuade him to make all the necessary precautions. His only actions were to recall the small fleet posted in Finland and to ignore the historical Russian territorial aspirations on Finland.

On January 21, 1808, the Russian ambassador approached the King of Sweden again. He pressed his demands again, stating that the Russians did not wish hostilities with Sweden, but that their forces were ready to cross the border.

With a refusal from the Swedes the Russians crossed the Finnish border at three points: Aborfors, Kjeltis and Anjala. The invading Russian forces consisted of about 30,000 men.

The Swedish army in Finland blocked the three principal roads across the frontier. They were posted north of the Kymme River, in Lovisa, Aretfjo and Nygby.

The entire Swedish force in Finland consisted of 9,500 men. The army in southern Finland consisted of about 6,000 men. This force was centred on Sveaborg. The Swedes had a garrison of about 600 men in Svartholm and other advanced posts in Forsby, Artfjo and Orittmatila. The forces of the two nations at the beginning of the campaign were as follows:

Russian Army Beginning of Finnish Operations 3 March 1808

Commanding General: General of Infantry von Buxhowden
Chief of General staff: General von Suchtelen
Quartermaster General: Generalmajor von Berg
Artillery Commander: Generalmajor de Belelgarde

5th Division: Generallieutenant Tuchkov I
Brigade:
Sievesk Infantry Regiment (2)(31/1197)
Kalouga Infantry Regiment (2)(32/916)
Brigade:
Perm Infantry Regiment (2)(37/1018)
Mohilev Infantry Regiment (2)(26/1150)
Brigade:
23rd Jager Regiment (2)(28/747)
24th Jager Regiment (2)(24/938)
Cavalry:
Cossacks (5/184)
Grodno Hussar Regiment (2)(8/178)
Artillery Brigade:
Position Battery #5 (8-12pdrs & 4 Licornes)
Light Batteries #9 & #10 (8-6pdrs & 4 Licornes ea)

17th Division: Generallieutenant Gorchakov
Brigade:
Minsk Infantry Regiment (2)(31/1069)
Krementchug Infantry Regiment (2)(38/994)
Brigade:
Wilmanstrand Infantry Regiment (2)(33/948)
Brest Infantry Regiment (2)(37/936)
Brigade:
31st Jager Regiment (2)(36/973)
30th Jager Regiment (2)(40/1064)
Cavalry:
Cossacks (19)
Guard Cossack Regiment (2)(11/232)
Grodno Hussar Regiment (2)(6/183)
Finland Dragoon Regiment (4)(23/631)
Artillery Brigade:
Position Battery #17 (8-12pdrs & 4 Licornes)
Light Batteries #32 & #33 (8-6pdrs & 4 Licornes ea)
1/lst Pioneer Regiment (3/147)

21st Division: Generallieutenant Count Bagration
Brigade:
Neva Infantry Regiment (2)(42/1510)
Lobau Infantry Regiment (2)(41/1507)
Veliki-Loutzk Infantry Regiment (2)40/1219)
Brigade:
2nd Jager Regiment (2)(37/1398)
25th Jager Regiment (2)(36/1035)
26th Jager Regiment (2)(39/1064)
Cavalry
Grodno Hussar Regiment (3)(14/311)
Cossacks (6/197)
Artillery Brigade:
Position Battery #21 (8-12pdrs & 4 Licornes)
Light Batteries #11 & #40 (8-6pdrs & 4 Licornes ea)

Swedish Army Beginning of Finnish Operations 3 March 1808

Commanding Officer: Generallojtnant C.N. af Klercker
Generalmajor: Generalmajor J.F. Aminoff
General Adjudant: Ofverste H.H. Gripenberg
Artillery Commander: Ofverste H. Akerstein

General War Commissariat
Comptroller General: Ofverste A. af Schenbom
Over War Commissariate: Faltkamrer H.I.I.Nyberg
Field Secretary: J. Unonius
Adjudant: S.A.Moller
lst Brigade: Ofverste A.F. Palmfelt
Nylands Infanteri Regemente (2)
Bjorneborgs Infanteri Regemente (3)
Nylands Jagarebataljon (1 coy)
Nylands dragonregemente (4)
Finska Artilleriregemente
3rd Light 6pdr Foot Battery (6 guns)
lst Light 6pdr Foot Battery (6 guns)
2nd Brigade: Ofverste Adlercreutz
Abo lans Infanteri Regemente (3)
Tavastehus Infanteri Regemente (3)
Nylands jagarebataljion (1/2 coy)
Nylands dragonregemente (4)
Finska Artilleriregemente
4th Light 6pdr Foot Battery (6 guns)
2nd Light 6pdr Foot Battery (6 guns)
3rd or Savolaks-karelska Brigade: Ofverste Cronstedt
Savolaks Infanteri Regemente (4) (2 coys ea)
Savolaks Jagare Regemente (4)(2 coys ea)
Karelska Jagare (2 battalions)
Combined Infantry Battalion
Karelska Dragoon (2 squadrons)
Dragoon Detachment (1 coy)
Savolks Artillery Brigade
8 - 3pdrs
2 - 2pdrs
Laivanlinna Volunteer Company
Kristina Volunteer Company
Unbrigaded units:
Osterbottens Infanteri Regemente (3)
Finska Artilleriregemente
1st Light 6pdr Foot Section (4 guns)
2nd Light 6pdr Foot Section (4 guns)
1st Light 3pdr Foot Section (4 guns)

The two principal Swedish positions were attacked on February 24 and 26. Lieutenant General Klerker, commanding in the absence of Count Klingspor, drew his forces together and withdrew under the pressure of a numerically superior enemy.

Lieutenant General Count Klingspor, governor of Finland, was in Stockholm when the Russians attacked. The King had little faith in Klingspor, as he was quite elderly. The King more had faith in his adjutant, Colonel of the Horse Guard and Adjutant General Count Gustav von Löwenhielm, who was given powers to override Klingspor if he was not acting in the best interest of the King.

Finland was not the best country for large scale actions. It was a land of forests, lakes and mountains. It was rare to find an open space large enough for a battle of 10,000 men. In the winter conditions were even less favourable for a campaign for the weather was harsh. Snows were high and temperatures were such that frostbite was an everyday occurrence.

However, the cold insured that the rivers were usually frozen enough to support artillery into April. Though the frozen lakes provided large, open areas they were not usable

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for very long periods. In addition, the winter conditions made the movement of supplies and material necessary to support a major campaign very difficult.

Klingspor took command of his army and disputed every step the Russians took into Finland. He centred his efforts on defending Sveaborg and, above all, Aland. These two cities provided him with strong bases able to provide him with replacements, munitions and supplies.

Klingspor felt he could easily organise 6,000 further men from the Sveaborg area. Because of the frontier nature of this area, these men were all excellent shots. He felt that these men with 9,000 regular troops might even permit him to take the offensive against the Russians. He hoped to be able to hold the Russians until the Baltic thawed and his fleet, possibly joined by the British, could land reinforcements.

The war was not going well for the badly outnumbered Swedes. Within a month and a half the Russians had captured much of southern Finland including its capital, Abo.

The Swedish began an departed Tavastehus after a few minor skirmishes. Their march to Björneborg. From there they continued to Pyhäjocki. The only serious contact with the Russians occurred at Pulkila. Once they arrived in Vasa the Swedes began detaching groups of officers and men to harass the Russians. They were well suited to this technique and it had been used successfully many times before.

Despite the Swedish efforts they were soon forced to abandon Vasa to the Russians. The Swedes took defensive positions behind Vasa, but they were quickly turned by the numerically superior Russian forces. The Swedes then withdrew to Pyhäjocky.

Löwenhielm was replaced by Colonel and Adjutant General Adlercreutz, who had served as a brigade commander since the beginning of the campaign. Despite the change at the top the Swedes were forced to continue their withdraw to Brahestadt.

They continued their withdrawal to Sikajocki where they assumed defensive positions. The Russians were uncertain of the Swedish strength and a skirmish battle began. Gradually the Russians fed more troops into the battle.

The battle continued for several hours while part of the Swedish army continued its march on Brahestad. The rearguard held its position, delaying the Russians as long as possible.

The Russians sent a large flanking force to turn the right of the Swedish rear guard. A small Swedish force commanded by Captain Björnstjerna encountered and drove back some of the troops of the Russian flanking manoeuvre. Emboldened by their success, the Nyland Infantry Regiment crossed the river under Russian fire and drove them back. This first Swedish success assumed an importance beyond its merit and Te Deums were sung in Stockholm. After this battle the Swedish retreat resumed and the Swedes would eventually retreat 400 miles.

The first truly major encounter occurred on July 8, 1808, near Lemo. The Swedish forces of Baron Vögesack, about 4,000 and six guns, disembarked from elements of the Swedish navy and were marching on Abo. They were stopped by a Russian detachment commanded by Colonel Vadkovski. This force consisted of a battalion of the Libau Musketeer Regiment and a single gun.

Generalmajor Baggovout arrived on the scene. He saw the precarious situation of Colonel Vadkovski and sent for the rest of his forces, under the command of Generalmajor Konovnitzin. This force consisted of the Libau, Neva, Brest (6 coys), and Pernau (1 bn) Musketeer Regiments, Grodno Hussar Regiment (1 sqn), Finland Dragoon Regiment (2 sqns) and a position battery.

Under heavy artillery fire and repeated charges by the Russian cavalry the Swedes slowed greatly. Baggovout withdrew and engaged them in a lively battle in the forest, while he awaited the arrival of reinforcements.

As they arrived, the Pernau and Neva Musketeer Regiments charged the Swedes with bayonets. The Swedes withdrew to their disembarkation, the Pernau and Neva Musketeer Regiments charged the Swedes with bayonets. The Swedes withdrew to their disembarkation point and, under the guns of their fleet, they reembarked and departed.

The Russian advance into Finland continued. After his success at Lintulax Generallieutenant Raevsky was ordered to assume a partial offensive. Raevsky dispatched Generalmajor Iankiovitch to attack the Swedish partisans commanded by Friandt and operating around Perho. The first Russian move was on Lappo, on the Gulf of Bothina, which was weakly occupied by von Ahrnroth. On July 26, the Russians attacked Lappo frontally. Two companies of the Veliki-Loutzk Musketeer Regiment were sent to attack the Swedish rear, but their attack failed and the Swedes escaped. They retreated and assumed a new position the Russians could not turn.

Raevsky occupied Lappo and recalled Iankovitch, who had beaten the Swedes near Perho, towards Lintulax. Raevsky was intent on defending what he had conquered so far. However, General Adlercreutz assumed the offensive on July 2, 1808.

Raevsky's forward post, consisting of a battalion and some cavalry, was attacked and after a violent battle, driven back.

The Swedes seized the forest that separated them from the plain around Lappo, but were unable to advance further. They awaited the arrival of the bulk of their forces. At 8:00 a.m. the Savolaks brigade of General Cronstedt attacked and pushed the Russian advanced guard back to the eastern edge of Lappo. They were too strongly pressed to hold that position and fell back to Raevsky's main body.

Raevsky had posted his principal forces in front of Lappo. on the northern bank of the river. Raevsky formed his forces en echelon on the left. The leading point was formed by the Veliki-Loutzk Musketeer Regiment and four guns. Two further battalions, held in reserve, were posted to the east, near the woods. To cover any retreat, three companies of the Petrovsk Musketeer Regiment were posted to the rear covering a pontoon bridge was thrown over the Lappo River near Liuhtari.

Raevsky deployed his forces along a front about 3 kilometres long. His position forced the Swedes to accept battle in open terrain and he covered his front with a strong skirmish line.

Adlercreutz chose to attack both wings of the Russian line simultaneously. After a brief fusillade Döbbeln's brigade attacked the Russian left wing unsuccessfully. Fearing for his right Adlercreutz stopped the attack on the Russian right by Grippenberg's brigade.

Part was sent to the village of Alapsa to cover Döbbeln's right. Döbbeln was then, despite the heavy Russian fire, to assault Lappo.

Lappo was held by the 23rd Jager Regiment and the

Kalouga Musketeer Regiment. They were obliged to withdraw to the southern bank of the Lappo River. The battle was heaviest on the Russian left. Adlercreutz concentrated most of his forces against it, leaving only the weak brigade of Cronstedt to face it.

Raevsky saw this as his chance and set out to turn Cronstedt's left. He sent the 26th Jagers and Petrov Musketeers to turn this flank, forcing the Swedes back.

At this time Döbbeln's attack succeeded in reaching the northern edge of Lappo. Adlercreutz ordered Cronstedt, with the aid of the Swedish reserves, to attack the Russians. Cronstedt obeyed and the attack was successful.

The superior numbers of the Swedes pushed the Russians back into Liuhtari. The village was set afire and the blaze prevented the Swedes from pursuing them as they withdrew to Salmi. The Russians lost about 150 men and the Swedes lost 162 in what was known as the Battle of Lappo.

The war of manoeuvre continued. The Finnish peasants quickly became guerrillas, attacking isolated Russians and their supply lines. The Swedish army under Klingspor took up a fortified position near Lake Kuortane. Their right wing touched the lake and was protected by a swampy stream and the smaller Lake Niso. Their left was also covered by the stream and touched the woods on the far flank. The position was defended with trenches and redoubts and covered with chevaux de frise and abattis.

The Swedes occupied this position with 7,000 men and 30 cannons, plus a further 6,000 armed peasants. On August 18, 1808, General Count Kamenski approached the Swedes in three echelons, with a total of 10,500 men and 83 cannons.

Advanced Guard: Generalmajor Koulnev,
3rd Jager Regiment
Petrovsk Musketeer Regiment (3 coys)
Grodno Hussar Regiment (2 sqns)
Lostchilin Cossack Regiment (1 peloton)
10 Guns
Detachment: Ericsson
23rd Jager Regiment
26th Jager Regiment
Azov Musketeer Regiment (3 coys)
Prince Constantine Uhlan Regiment (1 sqn)
Grodno Hussar Regiment (1 sqn)
Main Body:
Bieloserk Musketeer Regiment
Petrovk Musketeer Regiment
Azov Musketeer Regiment
Kalouga Musketeer Regiment (1 bn)
Veliki-Loutzk Musketeer Regiment (1 bn)
Grodno Hussar Regiment (2 sqns)
Prince Constantine Uhlan Regiment (2 sqn)
Lostchilin Cossack Regiment (1 peloton)
Detachment: Lt. Colonel Loukov
Sievesk Musketeer Regiment
Grodno Hussar Regiment (1/2 sqn)

On August 19 Koulnev, pushing a small group of Swedes before him, arrived before the Swedish position. He attempted to cross the river, but the Swedish artillery drove him back. The Swedes set the bridge afire as they retreated over it.

That evening the Russians concentrated their forces and

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established batteries within canister range of the Swedish positions. Kamenski decided to attack the Swedish left and sent Generalleutenant Raevsky with eight battalions to execute this attack.

On July 20 Koulnev advanced against the Swedish centre with three battalions while Demidov retained three battalions as a reserve on the main road. About 7,000 Russians were to take part in the battle.

At 10:00 a.m. Kamenski took the offensive without waiting for Loukov. Raevsky was sent on a flanking manoeuvre slowly advanced through a passage through the forest. Two guns were dismounted and hand carried by the Russians as they moved through the woods. In four hours the advanced only five kilometres. Raevsky detached a regiment and two guns to form a garrison for the village of Sipola and took the rest of his force on to Heroja.

Once there he deployed his forces before the Swedish position, but this went slowly because of the intense Swedish canister fire.

Seeing that their centre was still inactive the Swedes directed their reserves to this flank to face Raevsky and cut him off from the Russian main body. A battalion was sent from Sipola to support Raevsky, but it was inadequate. Kamenski sent two further squadrons and part of Koulnev's infantry (3 companies of the 3rd Jagers and 3 from the Petrov Musketeers). The Russian reserve now consisted of a single battalion.

The arrival of reinforcements allowed Raevsky to resume the offensive. He had driven the Swedes back to their original positions when night fell. Klingspor, fearing a Russian flanking manoeuvre during the night, withdrew his forces about two miles towards Salmi.

Kamenski camped his forces in Alavo. Koulnev detected the Swedish withdrawal and in the morning the Russians advanced again. The Swedes could not hold Salmi and after a three hour cannonade Koulnev chased them at bayonet point from the village. From there the Swedes withdrew to Vasa.

In the south of Finland the Russians moved on the great fortress of Sveaborg. It was a very powerful fortress and covered the entrance to Helsinki. The Russian attacks proved fruitless and the Swedish losses were insignificant. The fortress contained over 7,000 well provisioned men. They outnumbered their attackers and should have prevailed, however the Swedish governor, Vice-Admiral Cronstedt, underestimated his strength and surrendered Sveaborg.

Kamenski continued pushing the Swedes. In late August his force was organised as follows:

Advanced Guard: Generalmajor Koulnev
3rd Jager Regiment
Sievesk Musketeer Regiment
Grodno Hussar Regiment (2 sqns)
Lostchilin Cossack Regiment (1 peloton)
Detachment: Generalmajor Demidov
Petrovsk Musketeer Regiment (3 coys)
Perm Musketeer Regiment (3 coys)
Reserve:
Mohilev Musketeer Regiment
Lithuania Musketeer Regiment
25th Jager Regiment (1 bn)
Polish Lancer Regiment (1 sqn)
Grodno Hussar Regiment (1 1/2 sqn)
17th Artillery Brigade (1 coy)
21st Artillery Brigade (1 coy)

The Swedish forces under Klingsfor had about 7,000 men facing the 6,000 Russians. They consisted of:

Swedish Division: General Vögesack
Uppland Infantry Regiment
Helsinge Infantry Regiment
Västmanland Infantry Regiment
Västerbotten Infantry Regiment
Finnish Division: General Adlercreutz
Osterbotten Infantry Regiment
Savolax Infantry Regiment
Björneborg
Carelie Jager Regiment
Garde a Cheval (2 sqns)
Nyland Dragoon Regiment

The Swedes took up position near Orovais. On their right flank the sea's rocky beach supported their position. A battery was placed on this flank to hold it fast. In the centre, on a gentle rise bisected by the main road, were two further batteries. One battery was on either side of the road. The position was entrenched to further strengthen it.

The Swedish advanced guard was 1 mile to the east, in front of this position, near a lake. Their supporting batteries were placed behind a nearby bridge.

The Russian detachment of Demidov was 2 1/2 miles to the east, behind Koulnev's advanced guard. The Russian reserve was 9 miles further to the rear.

When contact was made Koulnev began a fusillade that drove back the Swedish advanced guard. The Swedes were pursued back as far as the bridge. The Swedes counter attacked and pushed back the battalion of the 3rd Jager Regiment on the Russian left.

The quick action of the Sievesk Musketeer Regiment stabilised the situation and pushed the Swedes back. The Swedes quickly followed this reversal up with the arrival of reinforcements. The Russian right wing, Perm and Petrovsk Musketeer Regiments, were thrown back.

The 5th Jager Regiment and 4 cannons were placed on the main road. To their right was the Sievsk, Petrovsk and Perm Musketeer

Regiments. The Swedes took this formation under heavy artillery fire and followed it up with a bayonet charge against the Russian right and centre.

Count Kamenski sent a battalion of the 25th Jager Regiment and two companies of the Mohilev Musketeer Regiment. The rest of the reserve remained near the bridge.

The Russian centre fell back under the heavy pressure of the Swedish attack. The Russian wings fell back abruptly, almost out of control. The 25th Jager Regiment and two companies of the Mohilev Musketeer Regiment held the Swedish attack back in front of the bridge while the Sievsk, Petrovk and Perm Musketeer Regiments and the 3rd Jager Regiment reformed. They were supported by the Lithuania and Mohilev (6 companies) Musketeers, Grodno Hussars and Polish Uhlans.

This force, once reformed, moved to strike the Swedes.

Kamenski commanded the centre and Ouchakov the left. Dimidov, commanding the right, executed a flanking manoeuvre and put the Swedes to flight. The Russians pursued the Swedes for about 2 kilometres, ending the Battle of Orovais. The Swedish losses numbered about 2,000.

The Swedish army withdrew with the irregular troops of Degyllenbogel leading the way. On September 16, 1808, they executed an amphibious landing near Abo, at Helsinge. They quickly threw back the Russian advanced posts on Himoïs. Bagration quickly pulled his forces together and prepared his defence. However, he quickly chose to pass over to the offence and divided his forces. He sent the Perm (1 bn), Pernau (1 bn), Neva (1 bn), Libau (1 bn) Musketeers, 1st Jagers (1 bn), Grodno Hussars (3 sqns), a Cossack regiment and 7 cannons forward in three columns.

The right hand column, under General Borozdin, marched along a lake against the Swedish left. It consisted of four battalions. General Baggovout lead the Russian central column down the main route and the right column, under Major Beck passed over a chain of rocky heights to strike the rear of the Swedish right.

Borozdin struck the Swedish left and after a 4 hour battle drove them back to the village of Järvenpää. The Swedes took the village and held it.

A Swedish column was attempting to deploy on the road and Baggovout struck it, preventing its manoeuvre and driving it back. However, during this Russian manoeuvre a gap opened up between Baggovout and Borozdin. The Swedish General Boie threw his forces into that gap.

General Bagration personally took command of the Russian reserve and marched against Boie. The Russian skirmishers in the rocks took the Swedes under heavy fire. Bagration drove the Swedes back and took the farm of Viano, the key to the position.

At this moment, Beck completed the flanking manoeuvre and struck terror into the Swedes. Bagration seized the moment to throw forward an unsupported column to strike their centre. The Grodno Hussars executed a powerful charge and drove the Swedes from the field. The Russians lost about 400 men hors de combat. The Swedes lost 1,000 dead, 365 prisoners, 1 flag, 5 cannons and all their train.

Once again the campaign stagnated. The Russians issued a proclamation to the Finnish soldiers serving in the Swedish army in an effort to strip their support away from the Swedes. It offered, to those who would surrender, a bounty of two rubles for a gun, one ruble for a sabre and six rubles for a horse.

In mid-October Lieutenant General Tuchkov was ordered to move his forces from Kuopio to Iidensalmi. He moved via the route to Uleaborg and attacked the Swedish forces of Sandels, throwing them back to Pulkilla. His force was as follows:

Division:
4th Jager Regiment
Tenguinsk Musketeer Regiment
Navajinsk Musketeer Regiment
Revel Musketeer Regiment
Nisov Musketeer Regiment
Leib Grenadier Regiment
Guard Jager Regiment

AB

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Mitau Dragoon Regiment (1 sqn)
Grand Duke Constantine Uhlan Regiment (1 sqn)
Miner Company of Cpt. Klutcharev
Horse Artillery Battery
Cossacks

There were 4,000 Swedes at Iidensalmi, between two lakes connected by a narrow channel. The Swedes dug two lines of trenches between the lakes and behind the channel. There was a bridge over the channel and the cavalry advance post was ready to burn it as soon as the Russians approached.

On 15 October Tuchkov advanced on the Swedish position with 8 battalions and 3 Cossack sotnias, totalling about 5,000 men. At noon the Cossacks and two companies of the 4th Jagers advanced against the Swedish advanced posts to seize the bridge. However, it was set alight and seriously damaged.

Russian pioneers repaired the bridge under heavy canister and musketry. The Russian jagers quickly crossed over the bridge in an effort to seize the trenches. The Swedes fell back to their second line of trenches.

The Tenguinsk and Navajinsk Musketeer Regiments crossed the bridge. The jagers moved to the right and Tenguinsk moved obliquely to the left to prevent the Swedes from recapturing the bridge. The jagers attacked a Swedish battery, but Saandels sent forward strong columns which pushed them back at bayonet point. The Tenguinsk and Navajinsk Musketeer Regiments, threatened with being cut off from the bridge, also withdrew. They crossed the bridge in great disorder.

The Swedes stopped their pursuit at the bridge when they encountered the Revel and Nisov Musketeers supported by a battery. A cannonade began and ended when night fell. The Russians lost 764 men hors de combat.

Two weeks later the Swedes attempt to cross the marshes to fall on the Russians during the night. Saandels sent a force of regulars to attack Generalmajor Rachmaninov's Russians frontally, while he sent the partisans commanded by Malm and Donner through the swamps. Rachmaninov's forces consisted of the a battalion of the Guard Jager Regiment, and two companies each from the Nisov, Revel and Navaguinsk Musketeer Regiments.

At midnight the partisans neutralised three companies of the Guard and arrived in the midst of the huts occupied by the Revel and Nisov Musketeers. Despite the confusion and disorder the Russians defended themselves bravely and prevented the Swedish partisans from destroying the bridge.

The turning point came when the reformed Guard Jagers struck the partisans in the rear. The partisans fought their way through the Russians with great effort. Malm was captured after a loss of about 200 men. Saandels, seeing the situation, withdrew before his forces became engaged in the battle.

With the coming of winter the campaign ground to a halt. Neither side had particular advantage and there seemed little opportunity for much. However, the Russians saw an opportunity to seize the Aland Islands in the middle of the Baltic. The Baltic was frozen solid and Generallieutenant Bagration planned a march across the ice. On March 3, 1809, Bagration took 30 battalions, 4 squadrons, 6 sotnias and 20 cannons across the ice and seized the islands without significant opposition. During the night of March 7, 1809, Generalmajor Koulnev marched across the ice from Alandshaff to Sweden and took the village of Grisselhamn. His force consisted of the Grodno Hussar Regiment (3 sqns), Leib Sotnia of the Ural Cossacks, Iseav Cossack Regiment (1 sotnia) and the Iostchilin Cossack Regiment (1 sotnia). Once in possession the Russians fortified their positions on the islands.

On March 10 Prince Bagration withdrew his forces to Finland, leaving as a garrison on Aland Generalmajor Knipper's detachment consisting of the 23rd Jager Regiment and 20 Cossacks. On March 19 he reinforced this force and sent the Petrov (1 bn), Pernau (l), Neva (1 bn), Libau (1 bn), Riazan (1 bn), and Brest (1 bn) Musketeer Battalions, 2nd Jager Regiment (2 bns), Grodno Hussars (1 sqn), a sotnia of Cossacks, a pioneer company and 6 guns.

Earlier, on the Island of Björkö, the detachment of Generallieutenant Barclay de Tolly consisted of six battalions: Leib-Grenadier Regiment, Polotsk and Toula Musketeer Regiments. On March 6 he sent a battalion commanded by Kiselev over the ice to clear a path. They advanced approximately 4 miles with 40 musketeers of the Polotsk Musketeer Regiment and 50 Cossacks in skirmish formation leading the way.

After 13 hours marching on the ice Kiselev arrived at the island of Grossgrund and found a small Swedish garrison on the island of Holm.

The rest of Barclay's forces arrived on the Vals-Orar Islands on March 7. They formed two columns and at 5:00 a.m. they formed two attack columns which moved to attack the Swedes on Holm. These columns moved by way of the Kvarken Channel. The right column, commanded by Colonel Filisov, consisted of the Polotsk Musketeers, one sotnia of the Cossacks and moved on the island of Holm. The left column, commanded by Count Berg, contained the rest of the Russian forces. His force moved against the island of Hadden. A third column, consisting of the artillery and a battalion of the Leib-Grenadier Regiment marched separately.

The march was very difficult because the snow was knee high and the ice was broken into huge blocks. The march of the left column was particularly difficult. It was not until 6:00 p.m. that the Russians were in Grossgrund where they bivouacked for the night. The wind was strong and the temperature reached -15 degrees Celsius.

Three companies of Filisov's column engaged the Swedes on Holm in battle. The Swedes were quickly pushed out and the Russians advanced into Tefte the next day. The left column went towards the estuary of the Umea river. Its advance guard consisted of 1 1/2 Cossack sotnias and two companies of the Toula Musketeer Regiment.

After an 18 hour march, at 8:00 p.m. the Russian column stopped 4 miles from Umea. The Swedes were stupefied by the unexpected appearance of Russians and Umea surrendered. The Swedish forces there withdrew to Görnesand.

At this most inopportune moment Barclay received an order to return to Finland. The return was easy and only a few of the wounded were lost. However, casualties were suffered from frostbite.

In May the ice still stood on the Gulf of Bothnia. General Count Chouvalov and Generalmajor Alexeiev crossed the ice and moved on Iterwick in an effort to take the Swedes in the rear. Alexeiev's force consisted of the Revel, Sievesk, and Mohilev Musketeer Regiments, 3rd Jager Regiment, some Cossacks and a single cannon on a sled.

Upon arriving on the Swedish coast the Russians found the

ice beginning to thaw. It had detached from the coast and the Russians were required to march 16 kilometres further to find where they could pass to dry land. The following day the ice began to break up.

Chouvalov's force, consisting of the Nisov, Azov and Kalouga Musketeer Regiments and the 26th Jager Regiment, moved on the road from Storkoge to Skelleftea. This manoeuvre once again forced the Swedish army to withdraw and surrender more territory to the Russians.

The war in Finland continued through the spring and into the summer with no significant action. The first major combat occurred in August. The Russians were positioned in Västerbotten. They consisted of:

Advanced Guard: Colonel Sabaneev
3rd Jager Regiment
23rd Jager Regiment
Sievesk Musketeer Regiment (1 bn)
Main Body: Generalmajor Alexeiev
Azov Musketeer Regiment (1 bn)
Revel Musketeer Regiment (1 bn)
Navaguinsk Musketeer Regiment (1 bn)
Tenguinsk Musketeer Regiment (1 bn)
Reserve:
Revel Musketeer Regiment (1 bn)
Mohilev Musketeer Regiment (1 bn)

The Swedes passed a column across a ford near Sevar in an effort to turn the position held by the two battalions of the Tenguinsk Musketeers. The force of General Wrede, 6,000 strong, was to attack the Russians frontally, while the column of Count Wachtmeister (8,000 strong) was to debark from the ships and strike the Russian rear at Ratan.

Count Kamenski, with 5,000 men and 8 guns, marched to counter Wrede's forces, but when he learned of the disembarkation of Wachtmeister he quickly returned to Ratan.

At 7:00 a.m. on August 7, 1809, Kamenski encountered the Swedes near Sevar. The Swedes quickly threw back the small Russian advanced guard. These Swedes outnumbered the Russians 1.5 to 1 and posted themselves along the river bank. The bulk of their forces were on a ridge which commanded the main route, cutting the Russian rear.

Kamenski seized the ridge after two hours fighting and placed his 8 guns on it as the Swedish columns advanced against him. Kamenski sent his last reserve battalion against them with a bayonet charge that drove them back. Two further Russian columns found passage across the river and a general Russian assault drove the Swedes back. The Russians lost 2 generals, 37 officers and 1,500 men. The Swedish losses are around 2,500 hors de combat.

The next day Kamenski drove forward and caught the Swedes as they embarked. He pressed them hard and it was only the cannon fire from the Swedish fleet that saved them from a disaster. Learning of this Wrede cancelled his planned offensive.

The war would have continued in the spring, but Sweden suffered a revolution against its king by a group of moderate military officers. General Aldersparre, commander of the Swedish army facing Norway, occupied Karlstadt in Värmland and organised his forces to march on Stockholm. Gustav IV fled to the south, hoping his army in Scania would remain

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loyal. It did not and Gustav IV was taken prisoner. Unlike the French king, his captivity was short and he was soon released. However, he was disposed. Assuming the title of Colonel Gustafsson he went into exile in Europe, never to return to Sweden.

A truce had been negotiated with Russia, but the Czar was not content with it. Hostilities resumed and the combined Danish-Norwegian and Russian forces resumed hostilities. After a series of battles, in which the Russians did not fare well. A convention between Sweden and Denmark removed Denmark from the war. The Russians continued the war. The Swedes attempted a major amphibious assault with the support of the English fleet. The Russians forced them to retreat, but another Swedish attack on the weak Russian position before Pitea drove the Russians back.

It became apparent to the Russians that any invasion of Sweden proper would be impossible as long as the combined British-Swedish fleets controlled the Gulf of Bothnia. Rather than face a drawn out war they agreed to a treaty. On September 17, 1809, a treaty was drawn up and signed at Fredericksham. The eastern borders of Sweden were drawn up and Finland ceded to Russia as far as the Tornea and Meconio rivers, the sea of Aland and the Gulf of Bothnia. The islands in the Gulf of Bothnia were divided such that those to the east of the midpoint were Russian and those to the west were Swedish. Sweden promised to conform to the Continental System and exclude British commerce.

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