

Red Winter Promotional Banner Series

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Red Winter




Russo-Finnish War, 1939



The Attack at Tolvajärvi, Finland
8-12 December 1939

**Company
Level Combat**



P500

In December of 1939, **1.25 million** Soviets swarmed across the border, the future appeared grim for Finnish independence.



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RUSSO-FINNISH WAR
8-12 December 1939



The Russo-Finnish War of 1939, commonly called the **Winter War**, was truly a David and Goliath struggle.



Did you know?

The population of the Soviet city of **Leningrad** alone was greater than the whole of Finland*.



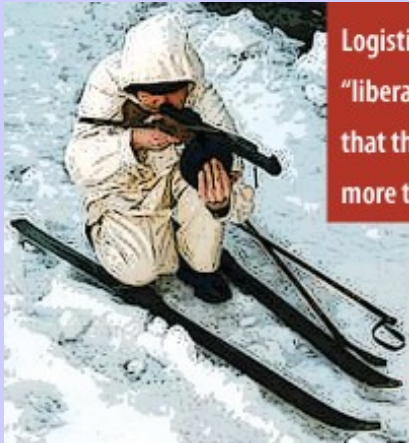
* In 1939, the total population of Finland was **3.7 million**.

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Logistical planning for the Soviet "liberation" of Finland assumed that the campaign would last no more than 10-12 days...

Most Finns were expected to welcome the **Soviet Army** with open arms.



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The **Soviet troops** wore summer uniforms. They would not need overcoats, as the campaign was only to last a week.



The winter of 1939 turned out to be the second coldest winter in over 100 years.



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The **Mannerheim Line**, likened to France's Maginot Line, was a narrow 90 mile front of bunkers, trenches and strongpoints, bordered by the Gulf of Finland on the west, and Lake Ladoga on the east.



The Mannerheim Line was often called Finland's "Thermopylae"



Carl Gustaf Emil Mannerheim
Commander-in-Chief
Finland's Defence Forces

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North of Lake Ladoga was a desolate 600 mile front of forests, lakes and wetland. This vast front was almost indefensible...



- It was here that the Soviets attacked with **20 powerful divisions**.
- It was here where a Soviet breakthrough could threaten the strong points of the **Mannerheim Line** and thus Finnish independence.

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Finnish Colonel Paavo Talvela

Tolvajärvi

Finnish Colonel Paavo Talvela was already thoroughly familiar with the terrain north of Lake Ladoga. He had extensively wargamed the very situation now at hand, and also led troops in the region during the Finnish Civil War. Talvela chose the place for his weary and tattered Finns to make a stand: **a lake called Tolvajärvi.**

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GAME SCALE – Grand Tactical



UNIT: Company; Section; Platoon

PLAYERS: 1-2



PLAYING TIME:
30-minutes
to 6-hours



TIME:
90 minutes per turn



MAP: 425 yards per hex



RANGE OF WEAPONS:

- 1 hex – rifles (adjacent combats only)
- 2 hexes – light machine guns
- 3 hexes – heavy machine guns & Russian tanks
- 6 hexes – medium mortars
- 12 hexes – heavy mortars

- Close range weapons figure into the rules for assaults



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Tolvajärvi

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Tolvajärvi is the name shared by both village and lake.

It was here, where the main highway and Soviet axis of advance crossed a narrow spit of land between lakes Tolvajärvi and Hirvasjärvi, that the overwhelmed Finns made their stand.

It was here, in December of 1939, that they fought and turned the tide against the Soviet invaders.

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Tolvajärvi

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The battle for Tolvajärvi was characterized by many unusual aspects:

- sub-zero weather conditions
- heavy fog
- highly mobile Finns on skis
- night raids
- the frozen lakes
- the many islands
- contested tourist hotel
- Soviet tanks tethered to the road network



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Stamps issued by Finns during the period when Finnish Army occupied East Karelia (Itä Karjala) in Russia.



Source: Markku Nieminen



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Sot.hallinto means Military Admin.

December 4

Prelude to Tolvajärvi

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The Soviet 139th Rifle Division advanced very quickly westward along the single main road in the region, pushing back the outnumbered Finns of Taskforce Räsänen (roughly three battalions) in victory after victory. On the evening of December 4, 1939, the Soviets routed the Finns at Ägläjärvi. At this point, the Soviet 718th Rifle Regiment was dispatched to the north in order to outflank the Finns holding the town of Tolvajärvi.



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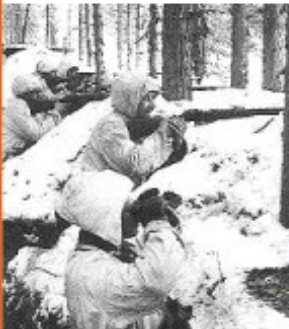
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December 6

Prelude to Tolvajärvi

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This day saw the first organized counterattacks by the Finns, but as the Finns did not yet realize they faced an entire Soviet division, their attacks were destined to failure. Finnish independent battalion ErP9 is transferred to the front using motorized transports, bringing Taskforce Räsänen's total manpower to almost 5000. (NOTE: December 6th is beyond the scope of the game, but it probably wouldn't offer a very satisfying gaming experience against the Russian steamroller.)

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Solitaire – Red Winter



Solitaire

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Designed primarily as a 2-player game, **Red Winter** is also ideal for **solitaire play** because there are NO cards or hidden information of any kind. The "fog of war" comes in part from the units' generous movement allowances during night game turns, and the Finns' ability to strike nearly any hex on the map via night raids. These and other mechanics provide a game with continually shifting opportunities.

"fog of war"

Optional fog of war rules are in the Play Book for players wishing to explore this option.

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