Foreign war volunteers and transnational recruits in Finland, 1939 – 1944

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The candidate confirms that the work submitted is his own and that appropriate credit has been given where reference has been made to the work of others.

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Abstract

Foreign war volunteering is a recurring phenomenon across conflicts in the modern period, even if it has been often overshadowed by national mass mobilization. Foreign volunteers seem to appear most frequently in civil wars and similar conflicts, most famously the Spanish Civil War and the various conflicts in former Yugoslavia after its collapse, as well as the on-going multi-faction war in Syria and the Russian-sponsored uprising in Ukraine which has now led to a full-scale war, the kind Europe has not seen since 1945. It is rarer for volunteers to join a war between two fully functional independent states.

This is why Finland's transnational recruits during the Second World War make for such an interesting and compelling research topic. At the time, albeit young, Finland was a fully functioning country with its own armed forces, diplomatic service, and civil and military bureaucracy. To make matters more complicated, Finland fought three separate wars during the 1939-1945 period, two of which included foreign volunteers.

Some volunteers came to Finland on their own while others had their travel arranged for them. Yet others were recruited by the Finns, while some were encouraged to join the conflict by their governments at home. Individuals, small groups, and entire military units arrived in Finland, some fully equipped, while many only had the clothes on their back. Several hundred were former Red Army soldiers, switching allegiance in the middle of the conflict, becoming transnational recruits.

Finnish bureaucracy was taken by surprise by the volume of volunteers and struggled to cope with them during a war. Despite mistakes and setbacks, the recruitment, training and organization of volunteers improved through the time period and, while most volunteers were not militarily useful, by the end of the Continuation War, the remaining foreign units had performed just as well as any Finnish unit had.

Between the Winter War and the Continuation War, as well as after the latter, the Finnish state took care of the volunteers, trying to repatriate them back home, or alternatively finding them livelihoods, and paying pensions to disabled veterans and widows, as hundreds of foreigners had paid the ultimate price for a country, they had not been born in.

Ultimately the volunteers' main impact was in propaganda and morale, proving that Finland was not alone facing the Soviet Union. Finnish political and military leadership preferred not to use them as cannon fodder, and they were mostly kept either away from the frontlines or at quiet parts which saw little action in the hope that their presence would keep Western powers – especially the United Kingdom – interested on Finland. After the war, their memory waned as the focus of war memorialization fixated on the national effort and, only relatively recently, has studies emerged looking at the separate groups. This thesis is the first to look at them all from the perspective of the host nation as previous studies have either focused on a single group or just one of the conflicts, and the aims and troubles of the host nation have largely been ignored.

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Introduction

In 2015, the Hungarian National Széchényi Library together with the Military Museum of Finland and in collaboration with the Hungarian Cultural and Scientific Centre in Helsinki opened a joint temporary exhibition, which explored the memories of both the Hungarian volunteers and their Finnish hosts from the period of 1939-1940, the Winter War, when the Soviet Union had invaded Finland and hundreds of Hungarian volunteers had come to Finland to fight. The exhibition took place on the 75th anniversary of the ending of that war. Photographs, diaries, keepsakes, interviews and archival documents were present for visitors to see.[1] It was a rare public acknowledgment of transnational volunteering for Finland. The historical consensus on the three wars that Finland fought during the Second World War – the Winter War (1939-1940), Continuation War (1941-1944) and Lapland War (1944-1945) – is that these were first and foremost a national effort, with negligible outside involvement or help.[2]

This thesis will challenge that view and demonstrate that, at times, the Finnish government actively sought out foreign volunteers and transnational recruits during the Winter and Continuation Wars, despite not having prepared for their arrival before November 1939. The volunteers were seen as a useful domestic propaganda tool, to show the Home Front that Finland was not fighting alone. Their presence in Finland was also seen as possibly a means of drawing in Western powers – namely France and Great-Britain – into the war, or at least keep those governments interested in what was happening at the northern end of the Baltic Sea. And volunteers could also become an important source of manpower, both in the form of specialists as well as forming complete, operationally useful formations that could fight on the

[1] National Széchényi Library, 'Hungarian volunteers of the Finnish-Soviet winter war of 1939-1940'. Published 23 May 2015, https://www.oszk.hu/en/news/hungarian-volunteers-finnish-soviet-winter-war-1939%E2%80%931940 [accessed on 10 May 2022]

[2] A good modern example of this popular sentiment is an article published by YLE, the Finnish national public broadcaster, on its website on 8 January 2017 titled 'Sota kosketti kaikkia' (War affected everyone) that emphasizes the unity of the Finnish people and honours the sacrifices of the war-time generation while completely ignoring any foreign element.
https://yle.fi/aihe/artikkeli/2017/01/08/sota-kosketti-kaikkia [accessed on 10 May 2022]

frontlines alongside the formations of the host country. For these reasons, the Finnish military kept volunteer and transnational units as part of its order of battle through the Continuation War, from 1941 to 1944. Their role in this war, the second one Finland fought as part of the Second World War, is less known than their part in the Winter War, especially outside of Finland. Even in Finland, only a handful of studies have looked at the different volunteer groups in detail.

The starting point for anyone researching the period is often the extensive series of ten military history books produced by the Military History Department of the National Defence University. Titled *Talvisodan Historia 1-4* ('History of the Winter War, parts 1 to 4', published between 1977 and 1979) and *Jatkosodan Historia 1-6* ('History of the Continuation War, parts 1 to 6', published between 1988 and 1994), they include brief chapters about the volunteers from the viewpoint of the military high command, giving a high-level outline of this topic but they do not go into much detail and do not offer any comparisons to other conflicts with volunteers. Similarly, the books *Talvisodan Pikkujättiläinen* and *Jatkosodan Pikkujättiläinen*, collections of essays about each war edited by Jari Leskinen and Antti Juutilainen that were published in 1999 and 2005 respectively, touch on both foreign volunteers as well as transnational recruits but again do not go into much detail nor do they offer any comparisons to other cases of war volunteering.[3] The otherwise excellent monograph on the Finnish Foreign Ministry, *The Diplomacy of the Winter War: An Account of the Russo-Finnish War 1939-1940* by a Finnish diplomat Max Jakobson published in English in 1961, only briefly touches upon the volunteers and does not go into any detail regarding what Finnish embassies

[3] Sotahistorian Laitos. *Talvisodan Historia 1* (Porvoo: WSOY 1977), Sotahistorian Laitos. *Talvisodan Historia 2* (Porvoo: WSOY 1978), Sotahistorian Laitos. *Talvisodan Historia 3* (Porvoo: WSOY 1978), Sotahistorian Laitos. *Talvisodan Historia 4* (Porvoo: WSOY 1979), Sotahistorian Laitos. *Jatkosodan Historia 1* (Porvoo: WSOY 1988), Sotahistorian Laitos. *Jatkosodan Historia 2* (Porvoo: WSOY 1989), Sotahistorian Laitos. *Jatkosodan Historia 3* (Porvoo: WSOY 1991), Sotahistorian Laitos. *Jatkosodan Historia 4* (Porvoo: WSOY 1993), Sotahistorian Laitos. *Jatkosodan Historia 5* (Porvoo: WSOY 1993), Sotahistorian Laitos. *Jatkosodan Historia 6* (Porvoo: WSOY 1994),
Jari Leskinen & Antti Juutilainen (ed.). *Talvisodan Pikkujättiläinen* (Helsinki: WSOY 1999), Jari Leskinen & Antti Juutilainen (ed.). *Jatkosodan Pikkujättiläinen* (Porvoo: WSOY 2005)

achieved in this aspect.[4] The Finnish Foreign Ministry Archives were a valuable source in uncovering this work done by the Finnish diplomats. The book *Sallan suunnan taistelut 1939-1940* (Battles of Salla region, published 2009) by Pentti Airio includes a good summary of the SFK, the Swedish volunteers force in the Winter War focusing on its organization and operational military use but does not cover any of the other volunteer groups.[5] Similarly, the book *Diletantteja vai taitajia? Päämajan valvontaosaston johtama valvonta ja vastavakoilu Talvi- ja Jatkosodassa* ('Dilettanti or professionals? High Command Counter-Intelligence activity and operations in Winter and Continuation Wars', published in 2018) by Vladimir Panchin gives only two pages of information regarding control and surveillance of foreign volunteers, focusing entirely on Swedish volunteers due to the supposed scarcity of sources regarding the other nationalities.[6] A more in-depth look at the Swedes is provided by Martina Sprague in her book *Swedish Volunteers in the Russo-Finnish Winter War, 1939-1940*.[7] Sprague goes over both the motivations and actions of the Swedish government as well as looks at the volunteers themselves based on Swedish primary documents but naturally she does not examine the other volunteers nor does she discuss the topic from the viewpoint of the Finnish state. Elizabeth Roberts did much of the same for the British contingents in the Winter War, in her book *Freedom, faction, face and blood: British Soldiers of conscience in Greece, Spain and Finland*.[8] She uses British government archives and two biographical sources. As she had no access to Finnish sources, her analysis of the impact of the British contingent in Finland is somewhat limited. A better look into the lives and attitudes of the British volunteers can be found in Justin Brooke's 1990 autobiographical book *The Volunteers: The Full Story of the*

[4] Max Jacobson. *The Diplomacy of the Winter War: An Account of the Russo-Finnish War 1939-1940,* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press 1961)
[5] Pentti Airio. *Sallan suunnan taistelut 1939–1940* (Helsinki: Maanpuolustuskorkeakolun Sotahistorian laitos 2009)
[6] Vladimir Paschin. *Dilettantteja vai taitajia? Päämajan valvontaosaston johtama valvonta ja vastavakoilu Talvi- ja Jatkosodassa* (Tampere: Juvenes Print, 2018)
[7] Martina Sprague. *Swedish volunteers in the Russo-Finnish Winter War 1939-1940* (London: McFarland & Co. 2010)
[8] Elizabeth Roberts, *Freedom, faction, face and blood: British Soldiers of conscience in Greece, Spain and Finland* (Brighton: Sussex Academic Press 2010)

British Volunteers in Finland 1939-1941.[9] Based on his diary and interviews with other volunteers, Brooke paints a fairly comprehensive, ground-level picture of the British group during the uncertain period of 1940 and 1941. Aside from the Swedes and the British, only the Hungarians have received some attention thanks to *Unkarilaiset vapaaehtoiset Talvisodan Suomessa* ('Hungarian volunteers in Winter War Finland') written by Niina Alafossi, Richly Gábor and Vilisics Ferenc.[10] What is common to all these books is that they only examine a single group of volunteers, and they are interested mainly in the experiences of the volunteers themselves. They thus lack, understandably, the breadth of analysis that would enable examination of the big picture, so to speak. Or they view the volunteer issue as a minor sidenote and gloss over it.

When it comes to the Continuation War, the situation becomes worse as there are even fewer studies done on the volunteers for this period. *Heimopataljoona* ('Tribal Battalion', published in 1982) by Eino Hanski was the first book to discuss the recruitment of tribal Finns from POW camps. While Hanski claims that the book is based on interviews done with former tribal warriors who were living under new identity in Sweden, the book itself is written in the form of an adventure book and the protagonist is apparently an amalgamation of several real soldiers.[11] The first academic history book about transnational recruitment in the Continuation War did not appear until 1991, when *Isänmaattomat: Heimosoturit Jatkosodassa 1941-1944* ('Without Fatherland: Tribal warriors in Continuation War') by Pentti Syrjä was published.[12] His book is the only source of detailed information regarding the battle experience of the three Tribal Finn formations in the Continuation War and it conflicts with some of the information written by other Finnish historians who have not delved as deeply in to the topic. For the foreign volunteers, there is *Pohjantähden Pojat* ('Sons of the Northern Star', published in 2010)

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[9] Justin Brooke. *The Volunteers: The Full Story of the British Volunteers in Finland 1939-1941* (Upton upon Severn: Self-Publishing Association 1990)
[10] Niina Alafossi, Richly Gábor, Vilisics Ferenc. *Unkarilaiset vapaaehtoiset Talvisodan Suomessa* (Helsinki-Budapest: Embassy of Hungary in Finland 2014)
[11] Eino Hanski. *Heimopataljoona*, (Juva: Finn-Kirja 1982)
[12] Pentti Syrjä. *Isänmaattomat: Heimosoturit Jatkosodassa 1941–1944* (Juva: WSOY 1991)

by Arved Viirlaid, a book about Estonian volunteers based on his diary and interviews and letters from his fellow volunteers.[13] No book about the Swedish and Danish volunteers in the Continuation War has been discovered.

As this brief literary review shows, the foreign volunteers in the Winter War have received more academic attention than their counterparts in the Continuation Warm though overall this does not amount to much. The whole Second World War period has not been researched fully or in a comprehensive manner or from the viewpoint of the host nation. This thesis is the first of its kind to explore all the various transnational groups that arrived in Finland from the point of view of the Finnish State during the entire conflict period, including failed recruitment plans and, where possible, look into the experience of the volunteers and recruits themselves. Thus, the primary goal of the thesis is to be an analysis on how Finland and its various State organs, primarily the Finnish Foreign Ministry, the Finnish Defence Ministry and the Finnish military, handled the various issues around the topic of foreign volunteers as well as the related topic of transnational recruitment.

Transnational war volunteering was not a new phenomenon in 1939, nor has it passed into the twilight of history since then. As recently as 2022, during the full-sized Russian invasion of Ukraine, numerous people have travelled to the warzone to volunteer for both humanitarian and military purposes.[14] Conversely, the earliest war volunteers of the modern era were those who travelled to Greece to fight for its independence in the 1820s.[15] Between these two conflicts, there were many more that drew volunteers to join them, such as Flora Sandes who fought for Serbia during the First World War.[16] The International Brigades fighting for the Republican side in the Spanish Civil War have received plenty of scholarly attention, for

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[13] Arved Viirlaid. *Pohjantähden Pojat* (Juva: Gummerus 2010)
[14] Reuters, 'For foreign fighters, Ukraine offers purpose, camaraderie and a cause', 8 March 2022, https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/foreign-fighters-ukraine-offers-purpose-camaraderie-cause-2022-03-07/ [accessed on 10 May 2022]
[15] Nir Arielli, *From Byron to bin Laden: a history of foreign war volunteers* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press), 2018, p. 3.
[16] British Library, *A British Woman Soldier in First World War Serbia: Flora Sandes*. Published 7 March 2016 https://blogs.bl.uk/european/2016/03/flora-sandes.html [accessed on 10 May 2022]

instance in M.W, Jackson's book *Fallen Sparrows: The international brigades in the Spanish Civil War*.[17] Volunteers appeared on the Nationalist side in Spain too, including a Finnish cavalry Captain, Carl von Haartman, who later became a war hero during the Winter War.[18] The Germans were prolific recruiters of foreign volunteers and other transnational soldiers in their armed forces during the latter half of the Second World War, most famously the Waffen-SS, that raised several foreign legions and eventually even divisions by the end of the war.[19] Not to be outdone, the Japanese Army included transnational recruits from many of the former European colonies that they had occupied to form 'national militias' with the promise of eventual independence for them as part of the Pan-Asian *one color, one race* movement.[20] Independence was also on the forefront of the minds of the volunteers from North-America and across Europe who fought in red shirts under the command of Giuseppe Garibaldi to liberate and unify the numerous Italian states in the 1860s.[21] Almost 80 years later, in 1948, thousands of foreign volunteers from numerous countries joined the fledgling state of Israel in its war against its Arab neighbours.[22] In 1991 one of the more complex volunteer situations in a conflict emerged as Yugoslavia collapsed and three of its constituent states - Slovenia, Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina - fought their wars of independence. While the Slovenian war was a short one, the other two countries experienced years of warfare and welcomed numerous volunteers, who fought on different sides. The groups who volunteered for each side markedly differed from each other. For example, Islamic *mujahedin* volunteered for the Bosnian side, Serbs saw mostly Russian volunteers, while Croatia received volunteers from 35

[17] M.W. Jackson, *Fallen Sparrows: the international brigades in the Spanish Civil War* (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society 1994).
[18] Jyrki Juusela, *Suomalaiset Espanjan sisällissodassa* (Jyväskylä: Gummerus Kirjapaino), 2003. Pp. 340-352.
[19] Chris Bishop, *SS: Hitler's Foreign Divisions: Foreign Volunteers in the Waffen-SS 1940-1945* (Kent: Spellmount, 2005).
[20] Joyce C Lebra, *Japanese-Trained Armies in Southeast Asia: Independence and Volunteer Forces in World War 2* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1977), pp. 16-17, 76.
[21] Arielli, p. 46.
[22] Nir Arielli, 'When are Foreign Volunteers Useful? Israel's Transnational Soldiers in the War of 1948 Re-examined'. *Journal of Military History*, 78:2, pp. 703-724.

countries, mostly from Europe and both North and South America.[23] During the 21st century, volunteers have travelled to Iraq and Syria to fight for the extremist Islamic State organization as well as against it, most notably in the ranks of the Kurds.[24] And in 2014, when Russia invaded Crimea and launched a proxy war in the Donbass region of Ukraine, willing foreigners flocked to the area. To give one example from each side: Chechen units fought alongside the Russian-backed separatists, though their volunteer status is somewhat questionable.[25] At the same time, Georgian volunteers fought alongside local Ukrainian volunteers and government forces – yet some Georgians fought on the separatist, in essence Russian, side.[26]

As these examples show, transnational war volunteering is not limited to certain time periods nor is it geographically restricted. Rather, the phenomenon can be found almost anywhere and anytime. This makes conceptualizing it difficult as a definition that fit one group of volunteers in a certain conflict may not be accurate to another group from a different conflict. Neither is the terminology around this phenomenon simple and it requires some explanation, especially as one volunteer can be seen as a patriotic hero whereas another volunteer is called a terrorist. In 2014, the United Nations Security Council adopted Resolution 2178 which expressed

> grave concern over the acute and growing threat posed by foreign terrorist fighters, namely individuals who travel to a State other than their States of residence or nationality for the purpose of the perpetration, planning, or preparation of, or participation in, terrorist acts…[27]

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[23] Nir Arielli, 'In Search of Meaning: Foreign Volunteers in the Croatian Armed Forces, 1991-95.' *Contemporary European History*, 21:1 (2012), pp. 1-17. Https://doi.org/10.1017/S0960777311000518
[24] Arielli (2018), pp. 1-2.
[25] Emil Souleimanov, 'Chechen Units Deployed in Eastern Ukraine', *The Central Asia-Caucasus Analyst* https://www.cacianalyst.org/publications/analytical-articles/item/12990-chechen-units Published 4 June 2014 [accessed 17 May 2022].
[26] Adam Potocknak & Miroslav Mares, 'Georgian Foreign Fighters in the Conflict in Eastern Ukraine, *The Journal of Slavic Military Studies*, 32:2 (2019), pp. 159-177. Https://doi.org/10.1080/13518046.2019.1618583
[27] United Nations Security Council Resolution 2178 (2014) https://www.undocs.org/S/RES/2178%20(2014) [accessed 12 May 2022]

This definition focuses entirely on the terrorism aspect of volunteering and ignores the other types such as state-sponsored transnational recruitment, though it does acknowledge activities other than direct armed action. The Geneva Academy of International Humanitarian Law and Human Rights gives a broader definition for a foreign fighter, describing them as

> an individual who leaves his or her country of origin or habitual residence to join a non-state armed group in an armed conflict abroad and who is primarily motivated by ideology, religion, and/or kinship.[28]

While this definition is more useful, it is not accurate for the situation in Finland as the volunteers joined the armed forces of a state. The foreign fighter term is also closely associated with transnational Muslim fighters and terrorism, as evidenced by the United Nations resolution above and as discussed widely in the Geneva Academy Briefing. The term 'foreign volunteers' is thus a better fit. Firstly, it has been used in the context of multiple conflicts both in civil wars and revolutions as well as conventional, state-on-state wars. Similar terms have been used in other languages as well and it emphasizes the fact that the men in question truly were volunteers and were not sent by their governments.[29]

Could Finland's foreign volunteers be called mercenaries instead? While their motivations are examined in Chapter 2, a brief answer to this question can be given here. The United Nations Convention against Mercenaries defines their compensation as 'substantially in excess of that promised or paid to combatants of similar rank and function in the armed forces of that party'.[30]

The volunteers received the same pay as Finnish servicemen did and the only additional benefit that they received, in some cases, were travel funds, as Chapters 1 and 2 will

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[28] Sandra Kraehenmann, 'Foreign Fighters under International Law', *Geneva Academy of International Humanitarian Law and Human Rights Briefing,* N:o 7, October 2014, pp. 5-7.
[29] Arielli (2018), pp.5-6.
[30] United Nations International Convention Against the Recruitment, Use, Financing and Training of Mercenaries, adopted as Resolution 44/34 1989. Article 1, paragraph 1b https://treaties.un.org/doc/Treaties/1989/12/19891204%2008-54%20AM/Ch_XVIII_6p.pdf Accessed 17 May 2022

demonstrate. It is therefore clear that they were not mercenaries according to the later UN definition. Thus, this thesis uses the broader term of foreign volunteer to describe the men – and they were all men – who came to Finland with the purpose to fight alongside the Finnish armed forces from 1939 to 1944. That term has existed for centuries to describe the volunteering phenomenon and it neatly encompasses the fact that not all volunteers were fighters or had the chance to fight, even if that was their initial purpose.[31]

Alongside foreign volunteers, there were two groups who are better described with their own titles. Firstly, there were first- and second-generation Finnish immigrants in North America who returned to defend their homeland, similar to how Jews of many nationalities travelled to Israel in 1948, the Greek diaspora both returning home and recruiting more volunteers in the 1820s as well as how Ukrainians from abroad have returned to Ukraine in 2022. Many, but not all, of them still had Finnish citizenship. Some of them had already fought in the Finnish Civil War of 1918. They were certainly volunteers but they were not really foreign. They could be called diaspora volunteers as their willingness to volunteer was most certainly tied to their country of origin, even if for some that was their parent's former homeland. Their actions follow the patterns of other diaspora volunteers closely.[32] For the sake of simplicity, they are discussed alongside the foreign volunteers.

Secondly, there were individuals who were not Finnish citizens before the war began but who, for one reason or another, were already in Finland and did not have to travel to join the fight against the Soviets. They can be called transnational recruits. Finland's transnational recruits are almost entirely made up of the so-called tribal Finns, who are somewhat similar to the German concept of *Volkdeutsche*, in that they have ethnic, cultural, and linguistic kinship with Finns but live outside of Finland, mostly in what was then the Soviet Union, but formed a separate ethnic group from Russians. Some of these men were recruited from Prisoner of War

[31] Arielli (2018), pp. 4–6.
[32] Arielli (2018), pp. 44, 95, 102-108.

camps while others had emigrated into Finland during the 1920s and 1930s. The former were not really volunteers whereas the latter, not eligible for the mandatory national service, had to volunteer if they wanted to serve in the military.

The difficulty with the terminology springs partially from the complexity of the volunteering phenomenon in general and partly from the uniqueness of the Finnish situation. The Nordic country waged three separate wars during this period, all with their unique characteristics when it came to Finnish politics and relations with other countries. As this part of the Second World War is less known in the English-speaking world, it is prudent to go over the major events in Finland.

Boldened by the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact in August 1939 and the German invasion of Poland in September, the Soviet Union attacked across the entire length of the 1344-kilometre border it shared with Finland on 30 November 1939. This war lasted 105 days with the attackers suffering surprisingly high number of casualties due to the stiff defence by the Finns and the difficult environment. The Red Army failed to acquire their main objective – the conquest of the entire country. In the following truce, the Soviet Union abandoned its original objective and accepted that Finland had to give up only about 12% of its territory and its second largest city, Viipuri (Vyborg). The war drew significant interest from the international media, the public, and other governments. Volunteers came to Finland both individually as well as being sent in organized groups with the acquiescence of their governments. Post-war, this conflict became known as the Winter War.[33]

This peace, confusingly called Interim Peace in Finnish historiography, did not last long. Nazi Germany courted Finland to join its upcoming Operation Barbarossa, the anti-communist crusade to crush the Soviet Union. Seeing it as the best chance to recover the lost lands as well as expanding into East-Karelia, the Finnish government acquiesced and, after Soviet air raids

[33] Jacobson, pp. 173-177; Fred Singleton, *A Short History of Finland* (Cambridge University Press, 1989), pp. 129-133; Antti Juutilainen, 'Talvisodan ulkomaalaiset vapaaehtoiset', in Jari Leskinen (ed.): *Talvisodan Pikkujättilainen* (Helsinki: Werner Söderström, 1999), pp. 770–776.

gave the necessary excuse, launched an attack across the new border in July 1941. The attack was a success, with Finnish troops reaching the old border and, in some places, advancing beyond it. Once they had established good defensive lines in the winter, the nature of the conflict changed into positional warfare and remained largely static until the summer of 1944. By now, Germany was clearly losing the war and the Finns knew it. A major Soviet attack, called a strategic strike in Finnish military history, that started a day after the D-Day landings in Normandy, pushed Finnish troops back and almost caused a collapse of the front. But in three massive defensive battles (named Tali-Ihantala, Äyräpää-Vuosalmi and Viipurinlahti in Finnish historiography), the Red Army attack force was decimated, and the Soviets were again willing to settle the matter through a negotiated peace and an armistice was declared on 5 September. At first, the attack in 1941 was called the Summer War in Finland but, once it became a prolonged conflict, it became known as the Continuation War.[34]

One of the requirements of the armistice was that Finland had to intern or evict the remaining German troops from Finland or the Red Army would do it for them. This requirement led to the third war that Finland waged, later named the Lapland War, as the German troops were mostly stationed in the Lapland area. At the same time, the Finnish military had to demobilize. This paradox, combined with the Finnish desire to minimize casualties, led to the Lapland War lasting until 27 April 1945, when the last German troops retreated to Norway.[35] Unlike the first two conflicts, this third war involved neither foreign volunteers nor transnational recruits fighting alongside Finnish forces, so it is rarely discussed further in this thesis, though there is a brief mention of it in Chapter Five.

Another element that makes the Finnish case so different is the fact that, unlike most other conflicts that have seen significant volunteering across national borders, Finland was and

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[34] Singleton, pp. 134-138; Henrik Meinander, 'Finland' in *Joining Hitler's Crusade: European Nations and the Invasion of the Soviet Union*, ed. by David Stahel (Cambridge: University Printing House, 2018), pp. 26-45. For a more detailed read of the Continuation War in English, see Vesa Nenye et al., *Finland at War: The Continuation and Lapland Wars 1941-45*, (Oxford: Osprey Publishing 2016).

[35] Jouni Kallioniemi, *Lapin sota 1944–1945*, (Helsinki: WSOY, 1950). The above-mentioned book by Vesa Nenye is also the best modern English language choice for the Lapland war.

remained a fully functioning democratic state through the time period in question. Finland had gained its independence from the Russian Empire during the tumultuous days of the Great War in 1917. Despite a short but bloody civil war in 1918 and challenges by two domestic far-right movements in the 1930s, Finland had remained a parliamentary democracy.[36] There was an extensive civil service, a foreign ministry with embassies and consulates around the world, an experienced General Staff leading a relatively large military, and a bureaucracy to run it all. For comparison, in 1948 in Israel and in 1991 in Croatia, the state infrastructure was in the process of being built. In Spain in the 1930s and Syria in the 2010s, the state was collapsing due to a civil war. Many other cases were part of an insurgency against an occupation force or an uprising against a colonial overlord, such as Afghanistan in 1980s and Greece in 1820s. Volunteering experience can thus be wildly different between conflicts, as it is one thing to arrive in a country and become part of an organized, national military machine whereas it is quite different to join an ad-hoc formation that is part of an emerging movement. It is only in 2022 that the large-scale Russian invasion of Ukraine has created a case that is remarkably similar to Finland in this aspect.

Then after the war, Finland continued as a liberal democracy and honoured its commitments to the volunteers as best as it could, in the form of travel arrangements back home, pensions for disabled veterans and families of deceased volunteers, and commendations. The exception to this rule being some of the aforementioned tribal Finns who, as Soviet citizens, had to be repatriated to the Soviet Union and vanished from the eyes of the Finnish government. This debt of honour, as it was called by Finnish political and military authorities, also sets the Finnish case apart from many other cases.[37] It remains to be seen how Ukraine will conduct itself vis-à-vis volunteers after the current war is over. For example, the men who had

[36] Singleton, p. 123; Olli Vehviläinen, *Finland in the Second World War: between Germany and Russia*, (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2002), pp. 10-20.
[37] Only in Israel have volunteers received a somewhat similar level of post-war support as in Finland. See: Nir Arielli, 'Recognition, Immigration and Divergent Expectations: The Reception of Foreign Volunteers in Israel during and after the wars of 1948 and 1967' in *Journal of Modern European History*, 14:3, 2016, pp. 374-390.

volunteered to fight for the Germans during the Second World War often described themselves as outcasts and vanquished, and certainly received no financial compensation. In France, many were executed for their part either summarily or after trials, while others had to establish a new life elsewhere.[38] Similarly, the fallen Spanish Republic hardly could have been expected to pay pensions to former members of the International Brigades, nor could it be expected that Franco's dictatorship would do so either. Though when it comes to memory of war, the International Brigades have received far more attention than any other foreign volunteer movement.[39] Being on the winning side did not guarantee recognition and support afterwards, either. For example, Franco's Spain actively downplayed the role and presence of foreigners on its side during the Spanish Civil War to the point that until Franco's death in 1975, they had been invisible.[40]

This thesis is structured into five chapters that proceed mostly in a chronological order. The first two chapters focus on the Winter War. Chapter One examines the events that led to the war as well as the foreign policy position of Finland and its political situation before and during the Winter War. The chapter then assesses the actions of the Finnish Foreign Ministry in order to gather funds, recruit volunteers, and transport them to Finland despite not having prepared for such actions before the war. In addition to a number of successful programs, it breaks new ground with the exploration of a number of failed initiatives that have not been studied before. These highlight the complex international situations that can surround a conflict, ranging as they do from attempts to raise a religious Catholic crusade to attempts to restore the Russian Empire. They also show how other countries and non-state groups can attempt to leverage volunteers or the promise of volunteer recruitment and support for their own benefit

[38] Philippe Carrard, *The French who fought for Hitler,* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), pp. 169-172. The battlefield execution of 12 French Waffen-SS soldiers on the orders of General Leclerc of the Free French Army is detailed in Robert Forbes, *For Europe: The French Volunteers of Waffen-SS* (Mechanicsburg, PA: Stackpole Books, 2010), p. 471.
[39] Vjeran Pavalkovic, 'Cultural Memory of Yugoslav Volunteers in the Spanish Civil War', 2020, available at https://europeanmemories.net/magazine/cultural-memory-of-yugoslav-volunteers-in-the-spanish-civil-war-1/ Accessed 19 May 2022 shows that the memory of volunteers is still actively being kept alive.
[40] Judith, Keene, *Fighting For Franco: International Volunteers in Nationalist Spain during the Spanish Civil War, 1936-1939,* (London: Leicester University Press, 2001), p. 294.

rather than the benefit of the host country. Chapter Two focuses on the Finnish military and how it handled the volunteers that arrived in country, their organization and operational use during the war. It also looks at the national composition of the volunteers and their motivations. Chapter Three moves to the so-called 'Interim Peace' period of 1940-1941, during which Finland was not at war but several hundred foreign volunteers remained in the country. It examines how the Finnish Army handled them and how the Finnish Foreign Ministry tried to send them home, succeeding with some, failing with others. Chapter Four examines foreign volunteers and other transnational recruits in the Continuation War, noting the similarities and differences to the volunteers that had been in Finland during the Winter War. As the role of the Finnish Foreign Ministry became smaller in that conflict due to world events, most of the chapter is devoted to the Finnish military and to the volunteers themselves. Finally, Chapter Five looks at post-war developments, how the Finnish state sought to take care of the volunteers, or did not do so, and what were their fates. It ends with a short examination of the memory of war-time volunteering.

A note about sources: the main primary sources for this thesis are from the Finnish Foreign Ministry Archives (*Ulkoministeriön arkisto*) and the Finnish National Archives (*Kansallisarkisto*) both situated in Helsinki, Finland. In footnotes, they will be referenced as FFMA and FNA, respectively. In addition, some sources from the UK National Archives are used and are referenced as UKNA. Unfortunately, a planned visit to the Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library and Museum in Albany, New York state, in the spring of 2020 had to be cancelled because of the pandemic. I have also made use of published collections of diplomatic correspondence such as between the Soviet Union and Nazi Germany as well as the *Documenti Diplomatici Italiani*. A number of memoirs by foreigners who visited Finland during the Winter War are included as well as a broad range of secondary sources, consisting of books, journal articles and websites.

Chapter 1: The Finnish foreign ministry and the diplomatic front

On 13 October 1939 the Finnish embassy in Washington DC, received a letter from Baron Rokassowski von Wrangle.[1] The baron was a Russian emigre who had fought against and ultimately fled the Bolsheviks in the tumultuous times immediately after the Russian civil war. In 1923 Finns had helped him smuggle his mother out of the Soviet Union. Having read of the increased tensions between Finland and the Soviet Union, the baron now offered his services to Finland as a way to repay the debt of honour he felt he owed. The embassy staff made a note of his name and address, informed Helsinki of the offer and waited for instructions.[2] A similar story played out in Finnish embassies from Canada to Hungary, and from Norway to Spain. He was thus not the only Russian emigre willing to fight against the Communists under the Finnish flag, he was merely the first of many to offer his services. Eventually Helsinki turned his offer down and would later categorically bar the volunteering of all Russians, even when the situation at the frontlines became so dire that every source of manpower had to be exploited to the full.[3]

To understand why the Russians were not accepted, it is necessary to understand the wider context of Finland in the 1930s and the special nature of the Winter War – taking place during the Second World War but largely disconnected from the general conflict in Europe, yet strongly influenced by it, and influencing it in turn. The anti-communist cause of the White Russians risked dragging Finland into a larger conflict than what was threatening the country. Its leadership was sufficiently aware of this and avoided this entanglement. This seems

[1] His name is mistyped in the telegram. This was Baron Carl Rokassowski-von Wrangell as per Carl-Fredrik Geust. 'Valkoiset emigrantit ja Stalinin sotilaat Suomen armeijassa', *Sotahistoriallinen Aikakauskirja*, Vol. 31 (2011)

[2] Washington to Helsinki, 13 Oct 1939, Finnish Foreign Ministry Archives [hereafter: FFMA], Signum 109, Folder 12. The city names in footnotes indicate the location of the Finnish embassy or consulate, with Helsinki indicating the Finnish Foreign Ministry. This is done because many telegrams were sent without signatures, or they were signed by an embassy official instead of the ambassador or the consul.

[3] Helsinki to embassies, 30 Dec 1939/5 Jan 1940, FFMA, Signum 109, Folder 10.

counter-intuitive at first, since the aim of the Soviet Union was to conquer and eventually annex Finland, just like it did to the three Baltic States.[4] However, this was a strategic goal, aiming to improve the security situation of Leningrad, not a struggle for the survival of the Soviet Union or its leadership. Even though for the Finns the Winter War was a struggle for survival, to the Soviet Union it was not a critical struggle in the manner that the Great Patriotic War would be just a little over a year later. Finnish leadership realized this, and it was reflected in their attitude towards the foreign volunteers.

This chapter will begin by placing Finland and the 1939-1940 Russo-Finnish Winter War in the broader context of the Second World War in Europe. It will then examine the efforts of the Finnish Foreign Ministry to recruit and transport volunteers to Finland before the onset of the war as well as during its initial period from November 1939 to early January 1940. The actions that individual consuls and ambassadors took on their own initiative are also examined as they sometimes went against the official guidelines issued by Helsinki. The reason to put such focus on the Finnish Foreign Ministry and its actions, both successful ones and the failures, is that they present a special view into the process of managing an international volunteer movement, an element that is missing from almost every other conflict that attracted foreign volunteers, especially since several countries were supportive of Finland, some of which launched their own volunteering and recruitment operations. The failed attempts especially show how some groups attempted to use the war in Finland for their own purposes, these ranging from an early attempt in creating European unity to overthrowing communism in the Soviet Union.

Finland, Europe and the outbreak of the Second World War

The territory of Finland has always been contested between its two larger neighbours, Sweden to the west and Russia to the east. Originally part of the Swedish kingdom, Imperial Russia conquered Finland in 1809 during the Napoleonic Wars. In December 1917 during the chaos of

[4] Vehviläinen, p. 48.

the First World War, Finland declared its independence and the Russians, busy with their looming civil war, could not intervene. Unfortunately for the Finns, simmering tensions between political groups in Finland led to a short but bloody civil war in 1918. German support ensured victory for the 'White' side, consisting of conservatives and farmers, while many of the surviving Reds escaped across the border to Russia.[5]

Despite seven hundred years of Swedish and a century of Russian rule, the Finns had remained separate from both countries, speaking their own language, having their own culture, and enjoying a wide degree of domestic autonomy.[6] As to its domestic situation, it managed to remain a parliamentary democracy through the tumultuous 1930s and the domestic fascists did not gain power. In fact, Finnish politics were dominated by three major parties: the conservatives modelled after the British version of conservatism, the social democrats, and the centrist Agrarian Party.[7] There certainly was a rabid anti-communist element in Finnish society that largely stemmed from the *ryssänviha* - hatred of Russians. Finnish historians disagree whether this sentiment is a modern creation that arose in the early years of the 20th century or something much older that derived from the centuries of conflict between Finland and Russia.[8] Its existence is not questioned, but it was insufficient to prevent the demise of the Finnish fascist movement after its abortive coup attempt, the so-called Mäntsälä uprising that failed in 1932. Never having had substantive power, the movement subsequently lost popular support.[9] More importantly, the state-wide voluntary home guard organization of *Suojeluskunta* remained largely apolitical and under government control. It became an important partner for the military, instead of turning into something akin to the Stormtroopers for the fascists, as

[5] Fred Singleton, *A Short History of Finland* (Cambridge University Press, 1989), p. 1.
[6] Singleton, pp. 54 and 65.
[7] Vehviläinen, p. 13
[8] To give two examples: Professor Kustaa Vilkuna books *Viha: Perikato, katkeruus ja kertomus isostavihasta* (Helsinki: Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seura, 2006) and *Paholaisen sota* (Helsinki: Teos, 2006) for the argument that *ryssänviha* has existed among Finns for centuries stemming from the old wars where Russian invaders pillaged and occupied the countryside, whereas Professor Matti Klinge in his book *Vihan veljistä valtiososialismiin* (Porvoo: WSOY, 1972) argues that it was purposely created after the civil war of 1918 as a way of creating a national unity against external threat.
[9] Singleton, p. 123.

had happened in Germany with the *Der Stahlhelm*. The latter were absorbed into the Nazi-led *Sturmabteilung* between 1933 and 1935, as part of the general *Gleichschaltung*[10] process, and thus its members became de-facto supporters of the Nazi regime. In Finland, on the other hand, the *Suojeluskunta* remained as a national guard similar to its American namesake[11] – part-time soldiers voluntarily practicing on their own time - and under the control of the apolitical military.[12]

The fascist element in Finnish political life had completely fragmented after the aborted coup attempt and while the rise of Hitler and the NSDAP in Germany invigorated the activists, none of the bewildering array of groups managed to become significant. Between 1933 and 1945 there were thirty different fascist groups or associations, as well as fifteen newspapers or magazine publications. However, participants in rallies were usually numbered in the hundreds rather than the thousands.[13] A good, illustrative estimate of their power is found in a report written by a detective of the State Police in 1933 concerning one group: "these windbags will not develop into anything and their union is meaningless".[14] The final nail in the coffin was the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact in 1939. Suddenly Nazi-Germany was not a potential ally but a possible enemy, or at least the enabler of the real enemy – Russia. Despite several trips by Finnish fascists to Berlin, nothing concrete was achieved, certainly not any real information about German plans or any covert support.[15]

When it came to foreign policy, post-independence Finland sought to secure the young nation and the most convenient partner was the former overlord, Sweden, thanks to cultural,

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[10] *Gleichschaltung* is the German term for 'coordination', in this case meaning the Nazification of German society, synchronizing it into a totalitarian state.
[11] The US National Guard is an organization where citizens can receive military training on a part time-basis and are available to be called up in case of war. Similarly, *Suojeluskunta* offered its members military training and organized competitions. During a time of war, it was planned to be absorbed into the military, forming the Home Front command.
[12] Allen F. Chew, *The White Death: the epic of the Soviet-Finnish Winter War* (East Lansing: Michigan State Press, 1971), p. 26.
[13] Oula Silvennoinen, Marko Tikka, Aapo Roselius, *Suomalaiset fasistit: Mustan sarastuksen* airuet (Helsinki: WSOY, 2016), p.250.
[14] Silvennoinen, p. 256.
[15] Silvennoinen, pp. 333–336.

economic and linguistic ties. But not all Finns were happy with Sweden. Sweden had temporarily occupied the Åland islands in 1918 and there was ongoing debate about whether the islands should be part of Finland or Sweden. Swedish social democrats were not happy with the harsh punitive measures that the Finnish victors took against the losing side of the civil war. These differences were eventually overcome, and Finnish-Swedish military cooperation became more serious during the 1930s. Planning for defence in case of an attack by the Soviet Union began in the mid-1920s and continued up to the Winter War. The various plans expected Sweden to send four or five infantry divisions and a cavalry brigade to Finland in case of a Soviet attack. These troops would be transported via naval vessels to the Finnish ports in the Gulf of Bothnia, sidestepping the problem of different railway gauges between Finland and Sweden which would have made large-scale rail transport impractical. The plans also sought to utilize the Swedish navy and air force to secure the movement of troops in cooperation with their Finnish counterparts. Naturally, these plans required that the Finns hand over a significant amount of important information concerning logistics, equipment and deployment of troops. The 'Nordic Way' - the neutrality practiced by Denmark, Norway and Sweden, countries which Finland was eager to emulate - was the official stance of Finland when it came to foreign and defence policy and it was repeatedly mentioned by Finnish leaders in speeches and negotiations, despite Sweden not officially agreeing to any formal or binding treaties.[16] In fact, even the topic of Scandinavian cooperation was merely hinted at by Swedish politicians but never spoken of in concrete terms.[17] While in Finland the topic was discussed openly and with enthusiasm, in Sweden it was almost a dead letter. Its Swedish proponents could muster support only when promoting a limited military solution aimed at strengthening the security of Sweden itself, exemplified in the proposal for Sweden to place a

[16] Martti Turtola, 'Suomen ulkopoliittinen kehitys' in Jari Leskinen & Antti Juutilainen (ed.), in *Talvisodan Pikkujättiläinen* (Helsinki: Werner Söderström, 1999), pp. 21–24.
[17] Max Jacobson, *The Diplomacy of the Winter War: an account of the Russo-Finnish war, 1939-1940* (Massachusetts: Harvard University Press 1961), p. 33.

military garrison on the Aland Islands during a time war, and even this was seen more as a risk to Swedish neutrality, rather than an opportunity.[18]

Germany was a partner of secondary importance to Finland before the Winter War. Hitler's rise to power in 1933 alienated Finnish conservative circles that had long admired Imperial Germany, but now abhorred the revolutionary National-Socialistic regime. This tendency included prominent politicians such as Foreign Minister Rudolf Holsti and Prime Minister Aimo Cajander of the pre-Winter War government.[19] The violent events in Germany after Hitler's seizure of power caused suspicion and fear in Finland. With German debt to Finland growing, even economic factors could not keep official or unofficial relations between the two countries friendly. Only in military circles were the relations good and the heritage of cooperation stemming from the Great War kept alive.[20] However, the significance of connections between Finnish and German officers should not be exaggerated as the Finnish officer corps was considered loyal to the government, and Field Marshall C.G.E. Mannerheim, who enjoyed great authority, was seen even by the Germans as a pragmatic man not easily influenced by sentimentality.[21]

Before the Second World War, Great Britain was an important trading partner for Finland and the largest target market of Finnish exports. It was the first country that Finnish statesmen visited after the civil war. British-Finnish friendship culminated in several major trade deals in the 1930s and Finland bought torpedo boats and bomber planes from Britain. However, Britain had lost most of its influence in the Baltic during the late 1930s and considered Finland to be stuck between Germany and the Soviet Union, and so was outside of the political and economic reach of Britain. The pre-war British ambassador in Helsinki, Thomas Snow, predicted that Finland would succumb to Soviet pressure in short order and made no

[18] Jacobson, p. 39.
[19] Jacobson, p. 21
[20] Turtola, pp. 27–28.
[21] Jacobson, p. 26.

suggestion that Britain should help Finland.[22] This was a logical continuation of British foreign policy towards Finland. Ever since 1919 London had considered Finland peripheral to British interests and only useful as a buffer state between Scandinavia and the Soviet Union.[23] Finnish relations with France, originally good, were strained by the latter's attempts to form an alliance with the Soviet Union during the late 1930s and thus Finnish politicians did not cultivate close relations with Paris.[24]

Finnish-Soviet relations were based on the Tartu treaty of 1920 that settled the border between the two countries. The treaty normalized relations, yet the Soviet Union still loomed as a threat for many Finns. The non-aggression pacts of 1932 and 1934 did little to ease concerns among Finnish military authorities, though they seemed to have lulled the politicians into a false sense of security. Finland's military budgets remained small during the 1930s, ensuring that the country was woefully prepared for war in terms of equipment, despite the generally frosty relations between the two countries.[25]

So, it is clear that despite its peripheral location in the north-eastern corner of Europe, Finland had regular political, economic and cultural relations with other countries and followed a path of neutrality alongside the other Nordic countries. The country was not isolated nor was Finland an ally of any of the totalitarian states in Europe at the time. Neither did Finland embrace fascism or turn into a right-wing dictatorship. These reasons likely played an important part in the willingness of foreigners to volunteer for military service in the Winter War and the liberal democracy of Finland was certainly supported by international journalists. While the Nordic countries were a sideshow in the Second World War, their location and resources meant that they were eventually pulled into it by the major powers. In Finland's

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[22] Martin Kitchen, *British Policy towards the Soviet Union during the Second World War* (Basingstoke: Macmillan Press, 1986), p. 7.
[23] Esa Sundback, *Finland in British Baltic Policy: British political and economic interests regarding Finland in the aftermath of the First World War, 1918-1925* (Helsinki: Annales Academia Scientiarum Fennicae, 2001), p. 98.
[24] Turtola, pp. 29–30.
[25] Henrik Meinander, *Suomen historia. Linjat, rakenteet, käännekohdat* (Helsinki: WSOY, 2006), p. 80.

case, it was due to its proximity to both the Russian port city of Murmansk and especially to Leningrad, the cradle of the communist revolution in the Soviet Union, its second most populous city and an important industrial centre. With the worsening international situation, the Soviet Union initiated negotiations with Finland in an attempt to move the border between the two countries further west.

The initial approach was subtle: the second secretary at the Soviet embassy in Helsinki, Boris Yartsev, contacted Rudolf Holsti, the Finnish foreign minister on, 14 April 1938.[26] These negotiations thus started a year before the fateful Molotov-Ribbentrop pact that sealed the fate of Finland. In that pact, Germany agreed that Finland would belong to the Soviet sphere of interest.[27] Yartsev was not a minor official, but a representative of the GPU/OGUP (later NKVD), the Soviet secret police.[28] He wanted to meet Holsti in private in order to begin secret negotiations authorized by his superiors with the aim of improving Soviet-Finnish relations. Yartsev explained that Hitler was certain to attack the Soviet Union and that the German plans included the use of Finnish territory. The Red Army would not wait at the border for the enemy but would advance to meet it. The Soviet Union was prepared to offer Finland all the assistance it would require in order to resist such an invasion, which Yartsev argued Finland could not do on its own. Holsti stressed that the Nordic neutrality was proof of the peaceful intentions of Finland and that there was no risk of a German invasion of Finland. The few other members of the government who were told of the meeting could not make up their minds as to whether Yartsev was being serious or not or what the real significance of his proposal was.[29] This sentiment, while understandable due to the clandestine nature of the meeting, should not have been surprising to the Finns since already in June 1935 the Soviet ambassador, Eric Assmus, had warned them that Red Army would occupy Finland in case of a German-Soviet

[26] Singleton, pp. 127-128.
[27] Raymond Sontag and James Beddie, *Nazi-Soviet Relations 1939-1944: Documents from the Archives of the German Foreign Office* (Washington: Department of State, 1948), p. 78
[28] Eloise Engle and Lauri Paananen, *The Winter War: The Russo-Finnish conflict, 1939-1940* (Boulder: Westview Press 1985), p. 7
[29] Jacobson, pp. 8-9.

war; a threat that had been followed by further warnings from authoritative Soviet the following year.[30]

The Finnish government allowed the Soviet initiative to lapse, and the Soviets did not immediately seek further negotiations. This false calm period was broken the following year when, on 5 October 1939 Stalin summoned the Finns for further discussions. A week later the Finnish government sent a mission to Moscow led by the veteran conservative politician Juho Paasikivi.[31] Paasikivi was received by Stalin himself as well as by Soviet foreign minister Vyacheslav Molotov. The Soviets proposed an exchange of territory: on the Karelian isthmus the border would be pushed back almost to Viipuri, the second largest city of Finland; the islands lying in the Gulf of Finland would be handed over to the Russians; and part of the Petsamo peninsula by the Arctic Sea would be handed over in exchange for a sizable part of Soviet East-Karelia. The Red Navy would also get a naval base at Hanko, which would be leased to the Soviet Union.[32] In addition, Stalin proposed a treaty of mutual assistance similar to the ones forced upon the Baltic States. In fact, a surviving copy of the proposed treaty found in the archives of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of the Soviet Union was, except for the name Finland, identical in appearance to its Baltic counterparts.[33]

The Soviet demands were deemed harsh and unacceptable to Finland as they would have jeopardized any chance of resisting further Soviet aggression and the Finns did not trust the Soviet leadership. Furthermore, several members of the Finnish government believed that the Soviets were only bluffing and would not actually attack.[34] Later events proved Finnish pre-war concerns to be correct as the Baltic States were annexed into the Soviet Union. However, the notion that Stalin was only bluffing was blatantly wrong. In fact, Finnish stubbornness in not yielding to Soviet demands perplexed Stalin and gave credence to the belief that the Western

[30] Carl Van Dyke, *The Soviet Invasion of Finland, 1939-1940* (London: F. Cass, 1997), p. 1.
[31] Singleton, p. 129.
[32] Engle, p. 9; Upton, p. 14.
[33] Vehviläinen, p. 35.
[34] William R. Trotter, *The Winter War* (London: Autumn Press 2002), p. 16.

powers were secretly supporting Finland, an illusion that Soviet propaganda began to promote.[35] This false notion of Finland's situation fit nicely into a pre-existing bias in the Soviet intelligence briefs that Stalin read. As ever since the Russian Civil War, he had been wary of the capitalist countries funding and arming neighbouring countries or even forming alliances to wage war upon the Soviet Union. It is noteworthy that very often these wildly inaccurate reports of anti-Soviet intentions included Finland in one form or another, the most fantastical being a claim that Japanese officers were training Finnish soldiers in 1935![36]

After engineering a border provocation at the village of Mainila the Red Army crossed the border into Finland on 30 November 1939, at the same time creating the Terijoki puppet-government led by an exiled Finnish Communist, Otto Wille Kuusinen, based on the border village of the same name that had been occupied by the Red Army on the first day of the war.[37] The Soviet leadership might have hoped that the rest of Europe and the world would be too busy due to the recent German occupation of Poland and the possibility of the war expanding into Western Europe, but the situation had quieted down so much that the British called it the 'Phony War', while the Germans described it as the '*Sitzkrieg*'. Because of this relatively quiet period, world attention immediately focused on Finland and its continued struggle against the vastly larger Soviet Union – a David and Goliath comparison which fired up the popular imagination as reported in some newspapers. For example, the British newspapers *The Star*, *The Times* and *News of the World* utilized heroic turns of phrase to describe the Finnish resistance while harshly condemning the Soviet invasion.[38] This widespread popular support for Finland was somewhat of an embarrassment to the British government which was trying to turn the Soviet Union against Germany.[39]

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[35] Jacobson, p. 141.
[36] James Harris, 'Encircled by enemies: Stalin's Perceptions of the capitalist world, 1918-1941', *Journal of Strategic Studies*, 30.3 (2007), pp. 513-545 https://doi.org/10.1080/01402390701343490
[37] Singleton, p. 129 and Vehviläinen, p. 44
[38] See, for instance: 'Russia invades Finland', *The Star*, 30 Nov 1939; 'Raids on Helsinki – Russia's Folly', *The Times*, 1 Dec 1939; 'Finns will fight to the last man', *News of the World*, 1 Dec 1939
[39] Kitchen, p. 11

In the western world Finnish defiance was initially written off as a national suicide, a reckless ignorance of the cold reality of modern warfare, and Finnish resistance was expected to collapse within a few weeks. However, when the Red Army became mired in the snow-covered forests and the Finns succeeded in their counterattacks, things changed. More and more journalists journeyed to the north to report on the situation of the small country defending freedom against oppression, a message that was eagerly received in some sectors in Western countries after the string of victories that dictators from Rome to Berlin had enjoyed through the last decade.[40]

The response of the Finnish Foreign Ministry

As the tension between the Soviet Union and Finland rose during the autumn of 1939, a few foreign individuals began to step forward and offered their services. This took the Finnish embassies and consulates by surprise as they did not have standing orders on how to deal with volunteering foreigners. The Foreign Ministry consulted the Army General Staff and ordered embassies not to accept any volunteers yet, but to register them because, if a war did break out, things might change.[41]

The earliest recorded offer came from Montreal in September 1939 when the Association of the Veterans of the War of Liberation (another name for the Finnish civil war of 1918) offered to voluntarily return to Finland and serve in the military, though these were not foreign citizens *per se*. The men asked for travel funds to make the trip from Canada to Finland. The same consul reported again in November that the numbers of emigrant Finns and Finnish Canadians willing to return to Finland were rising, though the consul did not confirm any figures.[42] The embassy in Paris had reported popular support for Finland in October which shows that public opinion was on the side of Finland. Copenhagen reported the same,

[40] Jacobson, pp. 173–175 and Vehviläinen, p. 55. Among the journalists who came to Finland were Geoffrey Cox, Martha Gellhorn, James Aldridge, Carl Mydans, and Donald S Day to name few.
[41] Helsinki to embassies, 2 Nov 1939, FFMA, Signum 109, Folder 10.
[42] Montreal to Helsinki, 29 Sep and 27 Nov 1939, FFMA, Signum 109, Folder 10.

including offers to volunteer, as did Oslo.[43] As noted earlier, in Washington the Russian Civil War veteran Baron Rokassowski von Wrangle offered to give his life for Finland to repay his debt of honour.[44]

From these offers, which ranged from North America to across Europe, it seems clear that, through newspaper coverage, the tensions surrounding negotiations between the Soviet Union and Finland were known to the public. Since the Finnish army was not willing to accept foreign volunteers at this stage, the Foreign Ministry could do nothing more than ask the embassies to register the volunteers. It is important to note that the number of volunteers was relatively small at this point, ranging from individuals to a dozen men at most, meaning that they did not offer any real opportunity to reinforce the Finnish Armed Forces. Because Eljas Erkko, the Finnish Foreign Minister before the Winter War, strongly believed that the Soviet Union was merely bluffing and would not actually invade, it seems possible that he influenced the views of the civil servants in the Foreign Ministry.[45] Officials abroad who would organize volunteer programs on their own initiative were thus doing it despite the instructions from Helsinki.

On 30 November 1939 the Soviet Union invaded Finland. The same night the Finnish parliament held a closed session to unanimously give the Cajander government a vote of confidence. However, the prime minister thought that a new government would have a better chance of negotiating peace with the Soviet Union and he thus dissolved the government. The new government would encompass all parties except for the semi-fascist IKL and was to be led by Risto Ryti, the former chairman of the Bank of Finland. He announced that he was ready to negotiate immediately but that he would not bargain the independence of Finland away.[46] The new Foreign Minister was Väinö Tanner, a veteran politician who was the chairman of the

[43] Paris, Copenhagen and Oslo to Helsinki, 15 and 25 Oct 1939. FFMA Signum 109 Folder 16.
[44] Washington to Helsinki, 13 Oct 1939. FFMA Signum 109 Folder 12.
[45] Martina Sprague, *Swedish Volunteers in the Russo-Finnish Winter War, 1939-1940* (London: McFarland & Co., 2010), p. 26.
[46] Engle, p. 26.

Social Democrat Party and a former Prime Minister. He stayed in the post throughout the Winter War.[47] Erkko, the previous foreign minister, was sent to Stockholm as ambassador, and Paasikivi, the man who had tried his best to negotiate with Stalin and Molotov, became a Minister without Portfolio to assist Tanner. Clearly, this was a War Cabinet signifying the unity of the nation.[48]

Finnish embassies in the three Scandinavian countries were the first to be informed by Helsinki about volunteering procedures, four days into the war. They were instructed to direct volunteers to Turku and Tornio, where reception boards were being set up, and that volunteers should bring any equipment they could, including weapons.[49] A general notice to all embassies followed, stating that only Finnish citizens could have their travel documents processed for free and that no funds were to be given out to volunteers. However, they did not need to worry about travel expenses from Sweden to Finland as these were to be paid for by the Finnish state. The Army High Command stressed the importance that volunteers must be fully equipped but amended the earlier requirement slightly: pilots would get all travel expenses paid if necessary. Literally the next day Helsinki allowed the issuing of visas for free, even for non-Finnish citizens, but stressed the importance that Finnish passports should not be given out to volunteers even if they were otherwise lacking suitable documents.[50] Nevertheless, the instructions were not given out sufficiently quickly. Copenhagen had asked for instructions in the preceding week, on 1 December.[51] The embassy in Oslo wanted to know if they should accept foreign volunteers and what to tell Finnish sailors, some of whom were stationed on merchant ships that would sail across the Atlantic Ocean shortly. Both Finnish and Norwegian volunteers were offering their services and the embassy was unsure how to fund

[47] Valtioneuvosto, *Composition of a certain government*: *23 Ryti*, available at: https://valtioneuvosto.fi/en/government/history/governments-and-ministers/report/-/r/m1/23 Accessed 18/09/17.
[48] Jacobson, p. 161.
[49] Helsinki to Stockholm/Oslo/Copenhagen, 3 Dec 1939. FFMA Signum 109 Folder 10.
[50] Helsinki to embassies, 6/7/7 Dec 1939. FFMA Signum 109 Folder 10.
[51] Copenhagen to Helsinki, 1 Dec 1939. FFMA Signum 109 Folder 12.

their travel.[52] This is the first example of the unpreparedness of the Finns to deal with volunteering from abroad as well as other war-related issues. This theme will repeat through the chapter. Despite months of tension, the Foreign Ministry had not fully prepared its embassies and consulates for war to break out.

Neither did the Army have a plan ready for incoming volunteers. The High Command ordered the Home Front Command to place Lieutenant-Colonel Martti Vihma in command of the volunteers for now as he was already the commander of the Ostrobothnia training centre that trained Finnish reserve soldiers.[53] The Home Front Command would be responsible for feeding, clothing and equipping foreign volunteers as needed.[54] It had taken 12 days from the outbreak of the war for these orders to be issued. The military decided that the Turku reception board was unnecessary as the port had frozen over. All volunteers were thus to be directed to Tornio where two units were to be formed: one for the Swedes, who were to become the largest national contingent, and another for everyone else.[55] This second unit later became known as Task Force *Sisu*. The manner in which the military treated and handled the volunteers is examined in more detail in Chapter Two, as the plans kept changing due to the changing war situation.

The military was worried about hostile infiltration under the guise of volunteer movement and asked the Foreign Ministry to make sure that volunteers were properly screened before being sent to Finland – no communists or potential spies were to be allowed.[56] It is noteworthy that these were clearly two separate categories. This screening requirement remained in place throughout the Winter War. It seems that embassies and consulates largely relied on reports from their host countries on this matter. As things were taking shape, more restrictions emerged. Only certain nationalities were accepted, and volunteers had to come in groups of

[52] Oslo to Helsinki, 2 Dec 1939. FFMA Signum 109 Folder 12.
[53] Tuokko, Reino: *Jalkavakirykmentti 56: 1941–1944,* (Saarijarvi: 1989), p. 20.
[54] High Command to Home Front Command, 11 Dec 1939. FFMA Signum 109 Folder 10.
[55] High Command to Helsinki, 11 Dec 1939. FFMA Signum 109 Folder 10.
[56] High Command to Helsinki, 20 Dec 1939. FFMA Signum 109 Folder 10.

30-50 under the command of their own officers. The necessity of bringing their own equipment was once more brought up.[57] The embassy in Riga was worried since the Baltic States were not listed and notified Helsinki that some volunteers were already underway.[58] These repeated communications between Helsinki and the diplomatic stations abroad depict the extent of haphazard organization when it came to volunteering during the first month of the war. Orders and instructions were sent out before there had been time for Ministry officials to evaluate them properly which led to questions being asked of Helsinki, which then had to clarify matters. Naturally, this sort of back-and-forth exchanges caused delays in the recruitment of volunteers.

One case showing the confusion and the effect of such restrictions is the attempts by the embassy in Brussels to get at least some help to Finland. Multiple volunteers were prepared to travel but the men lacked passports and money. Belgian and Dutch female nurses were volunteering for service as well.[59] However, Helsinki turned all these offers down; nurses were only to be accepted if they came with ambulances, pilots only if they brought their planes with them and passports were not to be given out nor traveling costs paid.[60] The ambassador had to call Helsinki to ask whether Dutch and Belgian volunteers were to be accepted at all, finally receiving a positive answer.[61] It seems that these two small countries had been completely forgotten by officials in the Foreign Ministry. Afterwards, Helsinki asked Brussels whether there were enough volunteers to form a unit of their own and if the governments of Netherlands and Belgium could be convinced to arm it.[62] No such unit was ever formed.

The Brussels embassy had not been the only station working in confused circumstances. Finnish representatives in Washington similarly asked for instructions on 4 December.[63] As

[57] Helsinki to embassies, 30 Dec 1939/5 Jan 1940. FFMA Signum 109 Folder 10.
[58] Riga to Helsinki, 2 Jan 1940. FFMA Signum 109 Folder 10.
[59] Brussels to Helsinki, 12/13/14 Dec 1939. FFMA Signum 109 Folder 10.
[60] Helsinki to Brussels, 15/21st Dec 1939. FFMA Signum 109 Folder 10.
[61] Brussels to Helsinki, 4 Jan 1940. FFMA Signum 109 Folder 10.
[62] Helsinki to Brussels, 6 Jan 1940. FFMA Signum 109 Folder 10.
[63] Washington to Helsinki, 4 Dec 1939. FFMA Signum 109 Folder 10.

with Brussels, the offer of female nurses from the US was declined, though American doctors would be accepted.[64] The embassy in Paris had an American pilot with significant experience, yet it took eleven days for Helsinki to stipulate that he would only be accepted if he came with an aircraft.[65]

From reorganization to ceasefire

In January 1940, General Oscar Enckell was placed in charge of all foreign volunteers, replacing Lieutenant-Colonel Wihma, a natural move as he had been the commander of the High Command Foreign Office, overseeing the military attaches in embassies and remained in that position through the war. Enckell had served in the Imperial Russian military and had even served as the Russian military attaché at Rome during the Great War. Since he was one of the few Finnish general officers with international connections and a cosmopolitan attitude, Commander-in-Chief Field Marshall Mannerheim appointed him as his special envoy for international matters.[66] Enckell first used his own office at the High Command to deal with incoming foreign volunteers, though eventually these responsibilities were deemed too much of a burden and a separate office was created and named the High Command Volunteer Office.[67]

With gusto, he approached the issue headfirst and in just two days had compiled the existing issues into a letter to the Foreign Ministry in which he outlined all the requirements for volunteers, their gear and possible exceptions to the general rules. The Scandinavians were to be separated from other nationalities and attached to the Swedish Volunteer Force that was already forming in Finland. Other accepted nationalities included Great Britain, Canada, France, the United States, Poland, Japan, Italy, Hungary and Spain. Russian emigrants were not to be accepted, as their presence in Finland could tie Finland into the struggle between White

[64] Helsinki to Washington, 13 Dec 1939. FFMA Signum 109 Folder 10.
[65] Paris to Helsinki and response, 4/9/20 Dec 1939. FFMA Signum 109 Folder 10 and Folder 12.
[66] Antti Juutilainen: ”Talvisodan ulkomaalaiset vapaaehtoiset” in Jari Leskinen (ed.): *Talvisodan Pikkujättilainen*, (Helsinki: Werner Söderström 1999), p. 771.
[67] Helsinki to embassies, 6 Mar 1940. FFMA Signum 109 Folder 10.

and Red Russia. All volunteers had to be completely politically reliable and have military training. They would sign a contract that bound them to serve Finland for the duration of the war. Due to lack of means on the Finnish side, the volunteers had to supply their own gear and weaponry which used the ammunition types available in Finland. He deemed the Hungarian volunteer contingent as an exception from that rule because the Hungarian government promised to fully equip and train the men dispatched to Finland. This made the Hungarian unit, at least in theory, a ready-to-use force, like the Swedish volunteer force, albeit much smaller. Italians and Spaniards could only be accepted in limited amounts, more as technical specialists than infantry, as their suitability for the conditions of the Finnish winter was thought to be poor.[68]

The list of acceptable countries is quite telling. Enckell had completely ignored Belgium and the Netherlands, as well as the Baltic and Balkan states, and the Foreign Ministry did not immediately alter his instructions but passed them on to the embassies. As mentioned earlier, there already were volunteers available in Brussels. Japan is a mysterious addition to the list, as there were hardly any connections between Helsinki and Tokyo, though Finland did have an embassy in Japan and vice versa. Nevertheless, no Japanese volunteers ever arrived in Finland.

Taken together, these restrictions were very strict and made volunteering from outside of Scandinavia quite difficult and slow, if not completely impossible. However, as the situation on the front was becoming worse, the restrictions were relaxed. First, volunteers from countries that were supplying Finland with weaponry could arrive unarmed.[69] Next, Enckell discarded the requirement for them to arrive in groups under their own officers. Volunteers could now arrive alone so as to speed up recruitment. Even traveling costs could now be paid and embassies were told to make pleas for more donations and volunteers.[70] The Foreign Ministry

[68] High Command to Helsinki, 3 Jan 1940. FFMA Signum 109 Folder 10.
[69] Field Marshall Mannerheim to Foreign Minister Tanner, 13 Jan 1940. FFMA Signum 109 Folder 10.
[70] High Command to Helsinki, 16 Jan 1940. FFMA Signum 109 Folder 10.

summarized the changes in a telegram that was sent to all embassies, though noted that travel costs outside of Europe would not be paid.[71]

The second change that Enckell implemented was the creation of Task Force *Sisu*, which was to become a sort of Finnish Foreign Legion, home to non-Scandinavian volunteers. The eagerness of the Hungarians to volunteer had been noted as the plan now included a Hungarian unit in addition to the already existing Swedish one.[72] While *Sisu* had been mentioned before, Enckell formalized its existence. The two exceptions to this split were the American-Finnish Legion (*American Suomalainen Legioona*) and the Tribal Finn unit (*Osasto H*) still being formed. These will be explored further in the next chapter as the Foreign Ministry did not really play any part in creating them.

As the gravity of the situation begun to sink in, the Foreign Ministry ordered embassies to establish offices that would not only handle those that came forward of their own accord but would also encourage volunteering, meaning that the embassies would now be involved in active recruitment of volunteers. More details were sent later in a circular letter, including requests for weapons that the Finns could use.[73] Helsinki started to ask for specific types of volunteers: Rome and Washington were asked to find pilots and anti-aircraft specialists, representatives in the Nordic capitals were told to find mechanics,[74] The embassy in London was given permission to recruit non-British volunteers and representatives in Rome, Paris and Geneva were ordered to seek free transit for volunteers traveling through Italy, France and Switzerland.[75]

The Foreign Ministry was also asked to help fill vacant specialist positions among the services. The Air Force Command was joined by the Naval Command, the Artillery Command, the Air

[71] Helsinki to embassies, 16/24 Jan 1940. FFMA Signum 109 Folder 10.
[72] Laitos 1979, p. 51.
[73] Helsinki to embassies, 18/22 Jan 1940. FFMA Signum 109 Folder 10.
[74] Helsinki to Rome/Washington/Stockholm/Oslo/Copenhagen, 22 Jan 1940. FFMA Signum 109 Folder 10.
[75] London to Helsinki and response, 23 Jan 1940. Helsinki to Rome/Paris/Geneva, 24 Jan 1940. FFMA Signum 109 Folder 10.

Defence Command, and the Home Front Command in requesting specialists.[76] The Foreign Ministry had to translate contracts, originally written in Finnish and Swedish, to Italian, Spanish and Hungarian. This took three days, another delay that could have been avoided with better planning before the war.[77] Sometimes the requests were the result of misunderstanding: the Foreign Ministry asked the Brussels embassy to find volunteer experts for a Berkog fire control machine from the Netherlands. The embassy responded that the Dutch have no such experts as they do not use Berkog machines. This response did not stop Helsinki from renewing the request.[78] The confusion is understandable, as the Berkog machine was built by a Dutch-based subsidiary of Zeiss but was not itself used by the Dutch military by this time, having only been briefly tested in the 1920s.[79] Hence it was impossible to find Dutch volunteers who knew how to use the device. This is another example of the overall confusion between the diplomats and the soldiers on the one hand, and Helsinki and its stations abroad on the other.

The Foreign Ministry had to reprimand embassies for sending unreliable volunteers or ones with serious health issues. Problems had also arisen from people who just wanted passage to Sweden or Norway, with no intention of coming to Finland. Some volunteers had been given Finnish passports to make their travel easier and embassies were reminded that such actions were not permitted. Nor should volunteers be given promises of financial rewards aside from the basic wage, which was 550 Finnish marks per month. Finally, they were encouraged to be more active in recruiting.[80] Two consuls were singled out with reprimands for giving Finnish passports to Dutch volunteers, the consuls in Antwerp and Rotterdam.[81] It is interesting to note how these two consuls were the only ones singled out. Either no other post was guilty of such a deed or, more likely, the number of transients without proper paperwork was the

[76] Helsinki to embassies, 26 Jan 1940. Naval Command to Helsinki, 30 Jan 1940. Artillery Command to Helsinki, 25 Jan 1940. Air Defence Command to Helsinki, 2 Feb 1940. Home Front Command to Helsinki, 30 Jan 1940. FFMA Signum 109 Folder 10.
[77] Home Front Command to Helsinki and response, 29 Jan/2 Feb 1940. FFMA Signum 109 Folder 10.
[78] Helsinki to Brussels, 22/26 Jan 1940; Brussels to Helsinki, 25 Jan 1940, FFMA Signum, 109 Folder 10.
[79] W.A. Feitsma: *Het Korps Lughtdoel-Artillerie en zijn beteekenis voor onze luchtverdediging* (Assen: 1937), pp. 33-34.
[80] Helsinki to embassies, 17 Feb 1940. FFMA Signum 109 Folder 10.
[81] Helsinki to Brussels, 3/19 Feb 1940. FFMA Signum 109 Folder 10.

highest in these two busy shipping ports, leading to a higher number of cases in which consuls broke the rules to get promising volunteers to Finland quickly. Problems had also arisen at the reception board at Tornio where volunteers were processed, as some volunteers were under the illusion that they could select where and how they would serve. The Home Front Command asked the Foreign Ministry to remind the embassies that the Army makes such decisions.[82]

Another snag was that the legislation in certain countries prohibited their citizens from volunteering for foreign wars. The American ambassador in Helsinki asked the Foreign Ministry whether volunteers were required to swear an oath of fealty to Finland, and if so, whether exceptions could be made. After consulting with the Army, the Ministry responded that no oath was required, the written contract was sufficient.[83] This query was the result of the announcement of President Roosevelt that if they did not swear fealty to a foreign power, Americans could enrol abroad without losing their citizenship.[84] While this presidential promise could have opened the floodgate for American volunteers to enlist for Finland, the hostility of the US State Department meant that no such flood could happen, as they controlled the issue of passports and would not give them to anyone suspected of traveling aboard for the purpose of enlisting.[85] Baron van Haersolte, a Dutch politician, warned the Finnish consul in Amsterdam that Dutch citizens serving in Finland could lose their citizenship. He asked for a copy of the contract so he could pass it back to lawyers in Netherlands.[86] Unfortunately, there is no record of a response from Helsinki. However, neither is there any record of Dutch citizens having been prosecuted for service in Finland after the war, which is in stark contrast to how Dutch veterans of the Spanish Civil war were treated: stripped of their

[82] Home Front Command to Helsinki, 6 Feb 1940. FFMA Signum 109 Folder 10.
[83] US embassy to Helsinki and response, 5/9 Feb 1940. FFMA Signum 109 Folder 10.
[84] Washington to Helsinki, 5 Jan 1940. FFMA Signum 109 Folder 10.
[85] David Jr Riesman, 'Legislative Restrictions on Foreign Enlistment and Travel' in *Columbia Law Review*, 40 (1940), 794-835 (p. 80).
[86] Amsterdam to Helsinki, undated. FFMA Signum 109 Folder 10.

citizenship, they had to endure humiliating weekly interviews by police and were practically pushed outside of normal public life.[87]

On 18 February, Field Marshall Mannerheim asked the embassy in London to do its utmost to speed up the transit of volunteers and to increase their numbers, as there was 'not a day to be wasted'.[88] This was a call to action at a critical moment. The Soviet Red Army had been reinforced and reorganized, and its superiority in both numbers and firepower was finally beginning to crack the Finnish defence. At the onset of the war, the Red Army had deployed 450,000 men in 23 divisions against Finland, representing about 25% of its entire active order of battle.[89] By March, and despite the horrendous losses suffered, Soviet numbers had grown to 960,000 men in 58 divisions, representing 40% of the total force available to Stalin, an astonishing deployment considering the size of Finnish forces.[90]

Three days later, Colonel Jean Ganeval from France and Brigadier C.G Ling from Great Britain visited Mannerheim and the Finnish War Cabinet, in order to explain the plans for the Allied expeditionary force. It would march across the Arctic regions of Norway and Sweden. Their argument was further bolstered by the new British ambassador, Gordon Vereker, who presented his credentials to President Kyösti Kallio in an air raid shelter during a Soviet bombing raid. Vereker strongly urged the Finns to keep fighting until help would arrive, but this might not be until mid-April. Väinö Tanner complained that the Allied plans were too vague, and Mannerheim had kept the government informed of the declining state of the army, which led the Finns to explore possibilities for a negotiated truce.[91] Of course, in hindsight we know that the Allied plan was primarily aimed against Hitler's war machine and its main objective was to cut off iron ore deliveries from Sweden to Germany, so the Finns made the

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[87] Samuël Kruizinga, 'The First Resisters: Tracing Three Dutchmen from the Spanish Trenches to the Second World War, 1936-1945' in *War in History*, 27.3 (2020), doi.org/10.1177/0968344519831030 (accessed 10 July 2022)
[88] Helsinki to London, 18 Feb 1940. FFMA Signum 109 Folder 10.
[89] Van Dyke, p. 39.
[90] Vehviläinen, p. 68.
[91] Singleton, pp. 130-131.

right choice.[92] Stalin was open to resuming negotiations and had expressed this to the Finns via Sweden already on 29 January.[93]

Meanwhile, the embassy in Brussels reported that it had registered over two thousand volunteers but lamented that only ten percent were acceptable, without explaining further though it is likely that this was a combination of physical and mental fitness and reliability.[94] The embassy had established a volunteer office together with the Belgian *Fédération des Volontaires de Guerre*, unfortunately nothing more is known of this organization. Its plan was to send volunteers via France and Britain to Finland. Permission for this operation was gained from the military attachés of each involved country by the local Finnish military attaché, and the embassy had not been involved, meaning that Finland had not played a role in the recruitment or transportation of these volunteers. Due to the initial requirements set on volunteers, the office had to wait until a suitably large group of them were ready to depart, which slowed things down. Two more groups were about to depart when the war ended. The costs of the office and the volunteers had been paid by donations from the Belgian public.[95]

Washington had contacted Colonel Jewitt, who was organizing a group of 60 pilots, half being Poles, the other half Americans and Canadians. His only condition was that the group remained together.[96] While the group was still forming, Helsinki asked the representatives in Washington if they could send an additional twenty pilots and mechanics.[97] This was a somewhat unrealistic demand, as the embassy had so far only found three Brewster mechanics, who demanded competitive pay and could not thus be considered actual volunteers. A month before, Helsinki had asked whether additional groups of Americans and Canadians of Finnish heritage were ready to depart.[98] Washington eventually got roughly 200

[92] Kitchen, p. 18.
[93] Jacobson, p. 215.
[94] Brussels to Helsinki, 28 Feb 1940. FFMA Signum 109 Folder 10.
[95] Brussels to Helsinki, 20 Mar 1940. FFMA Signum 109 Folder 10.
[96] Washington to Helsinki and response, 2/5 Feb 1940. FFMA Signum 109 Folder 10.
[97] Helsinki to Washington, 18 Feb 1940. FFMA Signum 109 Folder 10.
[98] Washington to Helsinki and response, 17/18 Jan 1940. FFMA Signum 109 Folder 10.

men together but bureaucracy and lack of funds were delaying the process, so that none of these volunteers ever made it to Finland.[99] The Jewitt group took its time getting ready to leave, and Helsinki had to urge Washington to hasten their departure.[100] It is unlikely that they reached Finland in time to participate in the Winter War. Recruitment in North America must have been a disappointment to the Finns. Only a very small number of men reached Finland and even a smaller number made it in time to participate in the fighting, these being the men of the ASL to whom we shall return later on.

The Foreign Ministry routinely depended on the embassies to pass on instructions to consulates near them. However, these instructions were not always forwarded, causing further delays, as discussed earlier in the chapter. The consul in Montreal, for instance, asked as late as March 1940 whether he could do the paperwork of the volunteers for free, something that Helsinki had authorized in December. Helsinki approved and urged him to send more volunteers as quickly as possible. He had made a similar request in early February, but Helsinki had either ignored him or forgotten. Previously he had asked permission to use donation money to cover travel expenses for Finns returning home. The *Montreal Star* magazine had collected ten thousand dollars for Finland.[101] It can only be speculated if having been able to process the paperwork of volunteers for free a full month earlier might have made a difference in the number of volunteers from Canada.

Regardless of these last-minute actions, the truce between Soviet Union and Finland came to force on 13 March 1940 with the signing of the Moscow Peace Treaty. The Winter War had ended, and the Foreign Ministry now transitioned back into peacetime operations, first by informing embassies and consulates to cease all recruitment and to shutdown volunteer offices. As several hundred were still in transit at this time, the orders were somewhat conflicting. The Oslo embassy, for example, was first told to send everyone back home but this

[99] Washington to Helsinki, 29 Feb 1940. FFMA Signum 109 Folder 10.
[100] Helsinki to Washington, 1 Mar 1940. FFMA Signum 109 Folder 10.
[101] Montreal to Helsinki, 18 Dec/3 Feb/5 Mar 1940. Response same day. FFMA Signum 109 Folder 10.

order was changed during the same day to allow British and French volunteers to continue on to Finland.[102] Oslo had to inform Helsinki that the French had decided to return home but the Belgians were willing to continue and were thus replacing the French in joining the British unit.[103] Copenhagen, Berlin and several other capitals were told to close all volunteer-recruitment activity.[104] The presence of Berlin on this list is a curiosity, as Germans were, in principle, not allowed to volunteer and Nazi Germany had been hostile toward Finland during the Winter War. It is possible that the telegram to Berlin was meant for the consul in Hamburg, who had listed some volunteers at the end of December 1939, mostly foreign sailors stuck at the port but also included 3 Germans and 1 Swiss volunteer.[105] The embassy in Brussels asked what to do with twenty volunteers who were waiting in Antwerp and was told to return them home.[106] It is clear from these missives from Helsinki that the Foreign Ministry was more worried about the financial burden of volunteers in Finland after the war ended, rather than the possibility of further Soviet aggression, against which the volunteers could be useful, or their contribution to improving the international standing of Finland.

Successful programs

The most successful of all the volunteering efforts was undoubtedly in Sweden. The Swedish volunteer group was by far the largest and the only one that reached the combat zone, serving at the Salla front briefly towards the end of the war. The initiative, as with almost all the other cases, did not come from Helsinki.

Officially, Sweden only sent Finland materiel, including tens of thousands of rifles, machine guns, and over a hundred field artillery pieces and anti-aircraft guns.[107] Unofficially, three

[102] Oslo to Helsinki and responses, 14 Mar 1940. FFMA Signum 109 Folder 10.
[103] Oslo to Helsinki, 15 Mar 1940. FFMA Signum 109 Folder 10.
[104] Helsinki to embassies, 15 Mar 1940. FFMA Signum 109 Folder 10.
[105] Hamburg to Helsinki, 30 Dec 1939. FFMA Signum 109 Folder 10.
[106] Brussels to Helsinki and response, 14 Mar 1940. FFMA Signum 109 Folder 10.
[107] Antti Hannula: 'Yli notkuvien jääkenttien' in Jari Leskinen & Antti Juutilainen (ed.). *Talvisodan Pikkujättiläinen* (Helsinki: WSOY, 1999), p. 712.

Swedish officers formed a Committee for Finland on 4 December[108] and the recruitment of volunteers could begin. Due to their eagerness and the support of the Swedish government, Swedes became the largest group of volunteers to arrive in Finland. Volunteering for foreign wars was not an unknown concept to the Swedes and recruitment, especially once the government guaranteed that soldiers and officers would not lose their jobs, was voluminous.[109]

Shortly after the war started, the embassy in Stockholm asked the Foreign Ministry if Finland was ready to accept Swedish volunteers. At this initial stage, Finland would need to support them, though the ambassador was hopeful in that he could use the local donations for that purpose. The Swedes already had a structure in place for a three-battalion force, led by General Linder, with three lieutenant-colonels as his staff officers. Permission from the Swedish government was pending.[110]

They did not need to wait long for the permission, as a week later the embassy informed Helsinki that the Swedish Prime Minister Per Albin Hansson had authorized a force 8,000 men strong. The unit would be equipped with Swedish gear and weapons, obtained from Swedish depots, the contents of which Finland would buy for a nominal price. Three hundred Swedish officers were given leave of absence from the Army, so that they could travel in groups of twenty to Finland. The embassy would keep some donation money for insurance purposes and Finland would have to cover other costs. On the same day, the Swedish Army sent three officers disguised as civilians to evaluate transportation possibilities and to meet with their Finnish counterparts at the border town of Tornio.[111]

Things progressed rapidly from there. General Thornell, the Supreme Commander of Swedish Armed Forces, issued an order that up to ten percent of troops in Norland could volunteer for

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[108] The officers were Carl Ehrensvärd, Magnus Dyrssen and Viking Tamm. All three were lieutenant-colonels of the Swedish Army. Juutilainen, p 771.
[109] Sprague, p. 52.
[110] Stockholm to Helsinki, 5 Dec 1939. FFMA Signum 109 Folder 12.
[111] Stockholm to Helsinki, 12 Dec 1939. FFMA Signum 109 Folder 12.

Finland and would be registered as if on holiday. Norland was the province compromising the northern third of Sweden and shared a land border with Finland, making it easy for soldiers to travel to Tornio. The volunteer's transportation began on 21 December, by which point Sweden had added two squadrons of planes with pilots into the group.[112]

By the start of the New Year, the Swedish King discussed the matter of Finland with General Thornell, the result being the decision to send four propaganda officers to active military units, to hasten recruitment of volunteers. The King also instructed the Swedish Foreign Minister, Christian Günther, to improve the propaganda aimed at recruiting more volunteers. Soon the cap on officers on leave was raised to 400. Sweden had released sufficient equipment to fully gear 8,000 men, plus an additional twenty-five percent for battlefield consumption. Recruitment was now efficient enough that a second force was being planned.[113]

Swedes gave generously from their purses. Aside from private donations, industrial leaders gave the Finnish ambassador a check for ten million Swedish crowns, with only the stipulation that half of it would be spent on volunteers, the other half as the Finns saw fit. By now, the scheme of helping Finland had grown so much that it was beyond the ability of the Finnish embassy in Stockholm to even supervise. The Swedish military and its Finnish counterpart discussed all military matters directly. The program of evacuating Finnish children to Sweden was run by Home Front Command in association with its Swedish counterpart and civilian agencies. When the embassy informed Helsinki that they had over twenty mechanics wanting to come to Finland, the Foreign Ministry answered that they should be directed straight to the Finnish Labour Bureau, where a section to coordinate Swedish workers had been created.[114] The Finnish Mail and Telegraph Ministry negotiated directly with its Swedish equivalent on

[112] Stockholm to Helsinki, 17/21 Dec 1939. FFMA Signum 109 Folder 12.
[113] Stockholm to Helsinki, 1/12 Jan 1940. FFMA Signum 109 Folder 12.
[114] Stockholm to Helsinki and response, 21/23 Jan/10 Feb 1940. FFMA Signum 109 Folder 12.

how to handle mail between the Swedish volunteers and their families, only informing the Foreign Ministry that it was doing so.[115]

Soon after the fighting ended, the embassy in Stockholm sent a barrage of questions to the Foreign Ministry. Their understanding was that the Swedish troops were bitter for not having fought more. Would the various units be kept in Finland for the time being? The volunteers were keen on keeping their uniforms and the ambassador thought that it would be a good idea to acquiesce. The Foreign Ministry only answered that the situation was fluid but that the Marshall is in contact with General Linder.[116] The SFK, as the Swedish force was called, was demobilized on 30 April 1940. The men returned home in groups and those willing to remain could apply for jobs. The volunteers got to keep their uniforms, but all weapons were to remain in Finland as they had been purchased by the Finnish Government.[117]

Unlike Sweden, Norway presented significant challenges to Finland, both when it came to recruitment and for the transit of volunteers of other nationalities through Norway to Sweden. In a letter stamped as top secret, the Finnish ambassador in Oslo explained that while foreign minister Koht had declared that the Norwegian government would not stop volunteers from leaving Norway for Finland, he was suspicious of the volunteer office, considering that it was practically recruiting Norwegians, an activity that was forbidden. The ambassador informed Helsinki that he had asked the law professor Lauri Cederberg, a Finn who had good contacts in Norway, to try to convert members of the Norwegian parliament and government to the Finnish side. Due to the broad definition of recruitment, many Norwegians were worried that volunteering for Finland could get them into legal trouble.[118]

In February the ambassador explained that the Norwegian government had been influenced by Soviet pressure. Recruitment had been extremely difficult, and the government consented

[115] Finnish Mail & Telegraph Ministry to Helsinki, 7 Jan 1940. FFMA Signum 109 Folder 12.
[116] Stockholm to Helsinki and response, 15/16 Mar 1940. FFMA Signum 109 Folder 12.
[117] Mannerheim to General Linder, 27 Mar 1940. FFMA Signum 109 Folder 12.
[118] Oslo to Helsinki, undated Dec 1939. FFMA Signum 109 Folder 16.

to opening volunteer offices outside of Oslo only on 5 February. Newspaper advertisements were forbidden. The ambassador estimated that without such official obstructions, the number of volunteers would be 'at least double as willingness seems high'.[119] This seems quite possible, considering the numbers mustered from Sweden. Whether Norway was truly afraid of the Soviet Union or whether this attitude stemmed more from the pacifist leanings of their leading politicians at the time, the Finnish cause was tremendously slowed because of it.

Finally, in March, the Finnish ambassador had good news to report. Colonel Astrup of the Norwegian Army would be traveling to Finland, to work with the Swedish General Linder to make sure that the Norwegians could join the Swedish group as smoothly as possible. As the government was now allowing recruitment openly, thanks to the lobbying of pro-Finnish circles, the ambassador was certain that up to 5,000 men could be sent to Finland. A Norwegian committee had been formed for Finland, called *Finlandskommittee*, with ten members from the cream of Norwegian society. The recruitment office in Oslo had a staff of four, and branch offices had been opened in 21 towns. Monetary donations had exceeded eight million Norwegian crowns. This was a massive increase in the recruitment effort when compared to the rocky start or when compared to Sweden, where recruitment had been open and public from the start. Colonel Astrup had convinced General Linder that the Norwegians did not need to know how to ski, nor did they need to have undergone National Service. Only a third of Norwegian younger men had such training, and skiing was not a popular sport even in northern Norway. The difficulties caused by the timid approach of the Norwegian government stemmed from the misguided promise that the Norwegian Foreign Minister Halvdan Koht had given to the Soviet ambassador early on, that no Norwegian officers were or would be in Finland, and therefore everything had to be done in secret. The Norwegian government only lifted the ban on public recruitment in February. Soon thereafter the final obstacle for forming a proper Norwegian unit in Finland was removed, as the Norwegian government allowed

[119] Oslo to Helsinki, undated Feb 1940. FFMA Signum 109 Folder 16.

officers to enter Finland and volunteering was made easier as bureaucratic red tape was removed. This was too late for Finland, as the end of the war was a mere five days away.[120]

Denmark fell somewhere between Sweden and Norway. In a letter dated 13 December, the ambassador in Copenhagen reported that he had 400 volunteers registered at the embassy, several of whom mentioned they had friends who were keen to volunteer but had not been able to do so yet. But the difficulties facing the embassy and the volunteers were 'severe'. Most of the men lacked equipment and weapons, which were hard to get in Denmark. Danish law prevented recruitment offices from operating openly as recruiting Danes to serve in foreign wars was illegal. The ambassador had, in conjunction with the Finnish embassy in Stockholm, arranged for a Danish section to be formed there and had recruited Captain Knud Jagd to run it. To prevent unfit men from traveling too far, a medical inspection office was to be formed at Malmö, just across the border from Denmark, also run by a Danish officer. As donations from private citizens were coming in, the ambassador was hopeful that the running costs of the two offices, as well as the travel costs of the volunteers, could be covered by the donation money. As everything was done by the Stockholm office, the embassy in Copenhagen was not involved in this action of questionable legal status.[121]

Later in the month, the embassy reported that roughly twenty volunteers were departing daily. The embassy explored the possibility of recruiting German refugees living in Denmark, despite the Finnish ban on German volunteers, as there seemed to be interest among them.[122] In January, the embassy was approached by man with a car offering to volunteer. The Foreign Ministry answered that if he had a truck, he could come as a driver but otherwise he would have to sign up as a regular volunteer.[123] The circular letter had only talked about pilots coming with planes, so it is understandable that the embassy did not know whether to just send the man with his car to Tornio. It also illustrates the confusion evident in Finnish

[120] Oslo to Helsinki, 2/3/8 Mar 1940. FFMA Signum 109 Folder 12.
[121] Copenhagen to Helsinki, 13 Dec 1939. FFMA Signum 109 Folder 12.
[122] Copenhagen to Helsinki, 20/23 Dec 1939. FFMA Signum 109 Folder 12.
[123] Copenhagen to Helsinki and response, 6 Jan 1940. FFMA Signum 109 Folder 12.

embassies due to poor planning and guidelines when it came to the volunteers. The ambassador clearly did not know what sort of help the Finnish Army required or needed, nor was he fully informed of such requirements until January 1940.

In February the ambassador lamented the attempt of the Danish government to remain as neutral as possible but praised the Danish people. A private citizen had recently donated half a million Danish marks to equip the Danish volunteers, whose recruitment was still illegal. A single information office had been allowed to run, and through it over a hundred volunteers had reached Tornio. The Finnish requirement to only send trained soldiers meant that volunteer numbers were unlikely to grow, as many Danes believed that they were not fit for winter combat. After the Finnish envoys had visited the Danish office, it was agreed that untrained men could also be sent. 'As enthusiasm for the Finnish cause exists, this is good news', wrote the ambassador.[124]

As it had done with other countries, the Foreign Ministry asked the embassy to find experienced pilots, with 150 hours of experience as well as qualified mechanics. Copenhagen answered that 25 pilots would be available in eight weeks. The Foreign Ministry had to clarify that the mechanics needed to be able to work on Bristol Bulldog and Gloster Gauntlet planes and at least three or four of each needed to depart immediately.[125]

As the Danish unit was forming in Finland, it became evident that it needed a commander. This leadership issue was solved in February when Marshall Mannerheim accepted the offer of Danish Colonel Tretow-Loof with similar terms as were offered to senior Swedish officers.[126] The Colonel soon departed Copenhagen and travelled via Stockholm to Tornio to assume command.[127] After his arrival, the Foreign Ministry drafted an internal memo regarding the Danish volunteers, based on an inspection that Tretow-Loof conducted. In general, things were

[124] Copenhagen to Helsinki, 17 Feb 1940. FFMA Signum 109 Folder 12.
[125] Helsinki to Copenhagen and response, 22/30 Jan/1 Feb 1940. FFMA Signum 109 Folder 12.
[126] Helsinki to Copenhagen, 7 Feb 1940. FFMA Signum 109 Folder 12.
[127] Copenhagen to Helsinki, 9 Feb 1940. FFMA Signum 109 Folder 12.

good. Some friction existed between the Danes and the Swedes, largely stemming from the fact that the Swedes came with their own uniforms, while the Danes had to wear civilian clothes until the Finnish Army could clothe them. This had led the Danes to feel like second class soldiers. However, the fact that the Danish contingent was twice as large as the Norwegian one was a source of pride to them. The unit still required at least a month of training before it would be ready for the front.[128]

Having achieved this much, especially in the face of a largely uncooperative host government, the embassy in Copenhagen could have relaxed. Instead, the ambassador showed fresh initiative and came up with new plans to improve recruitment. The ambassador phoned the Foreign Ministry to propose an idea of replacing Finnish sailors aboard Danish ships with some Danish volunteers who were not fit for combat. In this manner, the Finns could get out of their contracts neatly and shipping would not be endangered. Helsinki also gave the ambassador permission to hand out temporary Finnish passports to volunteers who had no papers of their own, based on his own judgement.[129] It is not clear whether this was meant for Finnish sailors only, or whether the Foreign Ministry allowed the ambassador to give Finnish passports to Danish volunteers. If the latter, then it was a radical departure of the earlier line but would fit together with the similar permission given to the consul in Riga, as mentioned earlier in the chapter.

In mid-February, the Danish government finally consented to fully embrace the volunteer program and allowed the formation of *Det frie Nord* (The free North) association to assist the volunteers. This association was chaired by General Erik. About 600 volunteers had departed Denmark thus far and the ambassador expected that number to grow to 800 soon. The propaganda impact of Colonel Tretow-Loof leading the Danish contingent was seen as very important, especially as he had had to resign his commission in the Danish Army.[130] This is a

[128] Helsinki memo, 17 Feb 1940. FFMA Signum 109 Folder 12.
[129] Copenhagen to Helsinki, 21 Feb 1940. FFMA Signum 109 Folder 12.
[130] Copenhagen to Helsinki, 22 Feb 1940. FFMA Signum 109 Folder 12.

notable difference to Sweden, where officers could keep their rank and position despite volunteering for Finland.

A final plea from Finland, addressed to all three Scandinavian countries, was delivered via various sports groups during the first week of March. It was written and signed by a multitude of Finnish sports clubs and associations, and pleaded with their fellow Scandinavians to volunteer for Finland.[131] The embassy in Oslo was the first to respond, stating that the Norwegian government had forbidden the appeal and demanded that it must be sent directly from each Finnish association to their Norwegian counterpart, and that official Finland could play no part.[132] The embassy in Copenhagen explained that the appeal was given to Danish sports groups who then delivered it to newspapers, one of whom printed it in full, while another printed a short summary only. The Finnish ambassador suspected that the Danish foreign minister Peter Munch stopped the appeal from being printed in other papers.[133] In Sweden the appeal was successfully passed on and published.

The ambassador in Copenhagen wrote a final letter immediately after the truce, in which he described the Danish attitude to the war. He was certain that most Danes blamed their foreign minister for hindering the volunteering process, so that insufficient men arrived in Finland in time. The harsh winter made traveling difficult, another reason for the slow progress. Danes were happy that at least their numbers were 'double or triple that of Norway'. The ambassador attached an article from the newspaper *Berlingske Tidende*, in which the future resistance leader Erling Foss wrote a scathing attack on Peter Munch and his ilk, who's 'radicalism' demanded fighting war volunteering as a 'plague'.[134] It's notable that even in this last letter, the Finnish ambassador himself has more conciliatory tone towards the Danish

[131] Helsinki to Stockholm/Oslo/Copenhagen, 6 March 1940. FFMA Signum 109 Folder 12.
[132] Oslo to Helsinki, 3 Mar 1940. FFMA Signum 109 Folder 12.
[133] Copenhagen to Helsinki, 11 Mar 1940. FFMA Signum 109 Folder 12.
[134] Copenhagen to Helsinki, 15 March 1940. FFMA Signum 109 Folder 12.

government and its dilemma of maintaining strict neutrality while also trying to help Finland as the public opinion demands.

It is understandable that the Finnish officials were upset about the reluctance of the governments of Norway and Denmark to support Finland to the same extent that Sweden did. However, this must be placed in the right context of the time. Both countries were more nervous about Hitler and Germany, than they were of Stalin and the Soviet Union. Furthermore, both countries had extremely limited military capabilities in 1939. In fact, the Danish foreign minister Peter Munch, criticized earlier, had based his entire term as a foreign minister on the concept that Denmark could not militarily compete with its big neighbour to the south and instead should maintain strict neutrality while reinforcing Danish popular sovereignty s that the country and its people could survive even an occupation. For this purpose, the Social Liberals and the Social Democrats, led by Munch, promoted disarmament and while they did manage to cut military spending and marginalize the military, Denmark was not demilitarized. Danish historians have made the argument that this policy worked as both Danish civil society and political structures survived the Nazi occupation.[135]

The situation in Norway was largely the same. The Foreign Minister since 1935, Halvdan Koht, had full command of his country's foreign policy as the Norwegian government was largely focused on domestic matters and Koht insisted on neutrality as the best answer to the worsening security situation in Europe, keeping Norway as detached from power politics. After the German occupation of Norway in April 1940, Koht was soon isolated in the government-in-exile and was replaced as a minister in November 1940.[136] He had been a tireless peace activist since before the emergence of Norway as a fully independent state in 1905, going as far as writing that "The small peoples … have to be peoples of peace, they need not invest in army and navy, they have no other outlet for their abilities than culture, and culture means justice

[135] Klaus Petersen, 'The Welfare Defence' in *Historical Social Research / Historische Sozialforschung*, Vol. 45. No. 2 (2020), 164-186 (p. 167, 175, 177)
[136] Pavol Jakubec, 'Reading the Signs of the Times: Norway, Slovakia and the Recognition Puzzle, 1939-1940' in *Diplomacy & Statecraft*, Vol. 33. No. 3 (2022), 474-492 (p. 475)

and peace".[137] These political leanings of their respective foreign ministries and the ideology of passive neutrality and even disarmament go a long way in explaining the lack of strong support for the Finnish cause from both Denmark and Norway. Among the population, based on the letters that the Finnish ambassadors sent Helsinki, there was a fairly widespread support for Finland but at the governmental level, there was hardly any way to turn that enthusiasm into concrete action, especially with the spectre of Nazi-Germany looming over both countries.

After the Scandinavian countries, it was in Great Britain where a sizable and relatively successful scheme emerged. The embassy in London reported in early December that about ten volunteers had registered so far as well as some nurses. None of them spoke Finnish or Swedish, so the ambassador asked for guidance on how to deal with them and whether he was allowed to pay their travel costs.[138] Later in the same month, the embassy reported to Helsinki that a local newspaper, the *Sunday Times*, had claimed that an Anglo-Canadian group had already been formed in Finland under the command of Nigel Allan James Beck.[139] The newspaper was well informed, though they had gotten the name slightly wrong, as on the 19th Nigel Powell Carrick Allan showed up at the embassy with a letter from foreign minister Tanner, explaining that he would be forming the British volunteer group.[140] Whatever it was that Allan attempted to do never happened, and his name does not appear in any later documentation.

Volunteering in Britain really got underway in January, based on a local initiative. The embassy in London informed the Foreign Ministry that the initial plan was to send 500 men in February and that there would not be any public appeal as that could cause an adverse public reaction in Germany and Scandinavia.[141] A committee to organize armed assistance for Finland had been established by Harold Gibson, who was a secretary at the British War Cabinet. Gibson

[137] Halvard Leira, 'Our Entire People are Natural Born Friends of Peace: The Norwegian Foreign Policy of Peace' in *Swiss Political Science Review*, Vol. 19, No. 3 (2013), 338-358, (pp. 343-344)
[138] London to Helsinki, 6 Dec 1939. FFMA Signum 109 Folder 11.
[139] London to Helsinki, 18 Dec 1939. FFMA Signum 109 Folder 11.
[140] Helsinki to London, 19 Dec 1939. FFMA Signum 109 Folder 11.
[141] London to Helsinki, 10 Jan 1940. FFMA Signum 109 Folder 11.

had approached the Finnish embassy and gained the ambassador's permission to proceed, allowing Gibson to petition the British government for official recognition, which was gained by end of January. The committee evolved into the Finnish Aid Bureau (FAB) and opened an office at Thornton House on Smith Square in London. Lord Davies, who owned the house, was a committee member. Initial running costs were covered by an anonymous donation of 100,000 pounds by a private individual. The Finnish ambassador transferred all registered volunteer offers to the FAB as the embassy took an advisory role, leaving the actual organization in the hands of the committee. While it was intended for the FAB to remain secret, and Sir Walter Monckton, the press secretary, had requested newspapers not to write about it, its presence was made public by a Communist MP named Willie Gallacher, who questioned the British government in parliament on the nature of the office.[142] Thereafter, the British press made the FAB's existence public and gave it positive coverage. Thanks to the supportive attitude of the British government, background checks for the volunteers would be run by Scotland Yard and Military Intelligence. The aim of the FAB was to first send 500 men within 30 days. The ambassador had included a clipping from the *Daily Herald*, dated 8 February 1940, with the headline: 'Hundreds of Men Are Being Enrolled In London To Fight In Mannerheim Line – British To Join Finn's Army '.[143]

The FAB kept careful minutes of its meetings, copies of which were given to the Finnish embassy, from where they were sent by courier to the Foreign Ministry in Helsinki. From these documents, it can be ascertained that the members of the committee were part of the elite of British society. They were:

- General MacDonogh
- Colonel Serlachius

[142] For more on Willie Gallacher's stance during the Winter War, see: Malcolm L. G. Spencer, 'Stalinism and the Soviet-Finnish War of 1939-40: Crisis management, Censorship and Control' (DPhil thesis, University of Oxford, 2015), p. 8.
[143] London to Helsinki, 10 Feb 1940. FFMA Signum 109 Folder 11.

- LS Amery MP, Conservative Party
- Lord Balfour of Burleigh, George John Gordon Bruce
- Lord David Davies
- Lord Bertrand Dawson, 1st Viscount Dawson of Penn
- Lord Godfrey Walter Phillimore, 2nd Baron Phillimore
- Earl of Lytton, Victor Bulwer-Lytton
- Viscount Nuffield, William Morris

In addition, Harold Gibson remained as the director of the FAB throughout its existence.

The committee held twenty-one meetings, though only nine were held during the Winter War. Additionally, a sub-committee for publicity and a sub-committee for management were also formed. The minutes tell a story of polite discussion in a comfortable environment, at least until the start of the Blitz, which often revolved around even the minutest details. For example, in the second meeting the committee argued over the necessity of water-proof boots as these were more expensive than regular army boots. The committee decided to equip volunteers with one pair of each.[144] The exact wording of the agreement that the volunteers would sign, a contract between the men and the FAB, took over two weeks.[145] However, the committee was extremely well connected with various British government agencies, and it did achieve significant results. Branch offices were to be opened in northern England, Scotland, Wales and Ireland.[146] It ran a media campaign via both press and cinema in England, as well as a letter writing campaign in North America.[147] Furthermore, the committee managed to gain permission from the British government to allow up to 1,000 men to leave for Finland, which is a noteworthy amount considering that Britain was at war with Germany at the time. The War

[144] Minutes of the second committee meeting, 30 Jan 1940. FFMA Signum 109 Folder 11.
[145] Minutes of the fifth committee meeting, 14 Feb 1940. FFMA Signum 109 Folder 11.
[146] Minutes of the fourth committee meeting, 9 Feb 1940. FFMA Signum 109 Folder 11.
[147] Minutes of the meeting of sub-committee for publicity, 9 Feb 1940. FFMA Signum 109 Folder 11.

Office additionally helped the committee to find suitable officers to command the volunteer group.[148]

Lord Davies visited Finland in February and, after his return, impressed his fellow committee members with the urgent need that Finland had for both men and material.[149] Despite his plea, the pace of the committee remained slow. By the ninth meeting, only the Glasgow office was up and running, with the Welsh, Irish and Edinburgh ones were still in the process of establishment. Offices in Canada were only at the planning stage. The appeal for donations and volunteers that was supposed to have followed the media campaign, had not been ready to go at the time and the committee decided to postpone it further.[150]

The goal of the committee was to help Finland in a concrete way, and it is understandable that it was slow to start with, as the general opinion was that Finland would be occupied by the Red Army in a week or two. However, as it failed to act in a prompt manner, the war would have needed to last months longer for British volunteers to become useful for the Finnish war effort. It did manage to send 227 men, who arrived a day after the war ended. On the positive side, the committee did keep up with its obligation after the war ended and attempted to take care of the British volunteers, who later turned into a major headache for the Finnish Government.

Alongside the Finnish Aid Bureau and the semi-formal armed volunteer group that it was organizing, there were some other proposals and offers that the embassy in London dealt with. A curious one was an idea to send 23 English women to help with Civil Defence. It is unlikely that these women would be fluent in Finnish and would thus be more of a hindrance than help for the Finns, though it is evidence of the high level of enthusiasm for supporting Finland in any way possible. Several embassies and consulates had received offers from nurses to help but this British offer of sending non-medical women volunteers was the only one of its

[148] Minutes of the sixth committee meeting, 20 Feb 1940. FFMA Signum 109 Folder 11.
[149] Minutes of the seventh committee meeting, 26 Feb 1940. FFMA Signum 109 Folder 11.
[150] Minutes of the ninth committee meeting, 11 Mar 1940. FFMA Signum 109 Folder 11.

kind. Unfortunately the documentation on this subject is very scarce: there is a short memo of a phone call between Civil Defence Office and the Foreign Ministry, in which the Office representative asked the Ministry to help determine their skills and language proficiencies.[151] The London embassy was involved as well, as they asked Helsinki where to send the women.[152] It is likely that the women were never sent to Finland, as there are no further records of them and they are not listed among the British volunteers who were in Finland after the Winter War.

The London embassy kept the Finnish Foreign Ministry updated on the British contingent. Foreign Minister Tanner wrote to Field-Marshall Mannerheim to outline what the British had proposed, based on information received from Georg Gripenberg, the Finnish ambassador in London. He placed emphasis on the semi-official nature of the group. While it did not reach the level of official participation that the Swedish or Hungarian groups did, the British government was more involved than most others.[153] By the end of the month, London was hopeful that the first group could leave in ten days. As events were to show, this estimate was far too optimistic. Helsinki was warned that the volunteers would need additional training from the Finnish military. The embassy asked Helsinki to send a qualified officer to help with the volunteers as their own staff were stretched thin.[154] Neither the Ministry nor the Army had any officers to spare, so London had to make do with General Enckell visiting them briefly, as part of his pan-European tour.[155]

The volunteer program was additionally used as a camouflage for more official type of support. The British War Office decided to send six experienced non-commissioned officers to Finland, to instruct the Finns in operating and maintaining the equipment that Britain had donated. The men were disguised as civilian mechanics of the Vickers Company and flew via Scandinavia to Finland.[156] Britain had sold or donated to Finland over 40 Gloster Gladiator, Bristol Blenheim

[151] Civil Defence Office to Foreign Ministry, 1 Jan 1940. FFMA Signum 109 Folder 11.
[152] London to Helsinki, 9 Jan 1940. FFMA Signum 109 Folder 11.
[153] Tanner to Mannerheim, 12 Jan 1940. FFMA Signum 109 Folder 11.
[154] London to Helsinki, 27/30 Jan 1940. FFMA Signum 109 Folder 11.
[155] Helsinki to London, 31 Jan 1940. FFMA Signum 109 Folder 11.
[156] London to Helsinki, 14 Feb 1940. FFMA Signum 109 Folder 11.

and Hawker Hurricane airplanes as well as many artillery pieces. The British volunteers were also supplied with British rifles and side arms for the officers, removing the need for the Finns to arm them.[157]

As the British force was going through necessary vaccinations as demanded by Lord Dawson of Ren, who was the Royal Doctor and the chair of the medical inspection board, the advance party of Captain Chandor with equipment for 50 men was travelling from Bergen to Tornio, via Oslo and Stockholm. [158] As stated previously, the British volunteer force arrived too late. Perhaps if less time had been spent on worrying about water-proof boots in the middle of an unusually harsh winter or of vaccinations, the unit could have arrived earlier. However, that would still not have made any change to the outcome of the Winter War. The British would have needed at least four weeks of additional training before being fit for frontline service. Thus, while it is easy to criticize the FAB and British bureaucracy for acting slowly, it is somewhat misleading. The only possible way for Finland to have gained a useful British volunteer force was if the necessary network and suitable instructions had been put in place before the Soviet invasion. The fact that the British government had, using the League of Nations resolution as a pretext, bypassed the Foreign Enlistment Act of 1870 speaks volumes of the sympathies of official Britain, since the Act had been enforced throughout the Spanish Civil War.[159]

Hungary was the only continental European country to send an official volunteer force. The Finnish ambassador in Budapest had reported early in the war that he had received donations and registered many volunteers. There were cultural and linguistic connections between Finland and Hungary, which will be explained later, that explain the great enthusiasm the Hungarians had for the Finnish cause. The Hungarian government made up its mind quickly

[157] London to Helsinki, 25 Feb 1940. FFMA Signum 109 Folder 11.
[158] London to Helsinki, 29 Feb 1940. Oslo to Helsinki, 4 Mar 1940. FFMA Signum 109 Folder 11.
[159] London to Helsinki, 15 Feb 1940. FFMA Signum 109 Folder 11. Roberts, pp. 164-166, points out the difference between British attitude towards Spain and Finland and Nevakivi, pp. 83-84, traces the decision making in British War Cabinet regarding the approval for sending volunteers.

and decided that at least 400 volunteers would be sent to Finland. At this stage, it seemed that Italy would send a contingent as well, so the initial plan was for the Hungarians to be attached to the Italian legion.[160]

However, things were not quite that simple. The Italians changed their mind about sending a legion and Germany blocked all attempts of gaining transit rights through their territory. The Hungarian government did not give up. The Hungarian Prime Minister invited the Finnish ambassador to meet him and outlined the Hungarian plan of sending between 400 and 500 men, in small groups, to Stockholm, from where they could move as a single unit to Finland. The men would all be trained and able to ski, an important skill in winter warfare. Their officers were to be either in active duty or recently retired, and all should be fluent in either Finnish, Swedish or German, with a handful of Russian speakers among them.[161] The Finnish Army was worried of ammunition supply and tasked the Foreign Ministry to find out if the Hungarian weapons could accept the bullets that the Finns had an ample supply of.[162] Budapest answered that the volunteer group had grown to four companies and travel would now be taking place through Italy and France, an initiative to which the latter gave their consent.[163] As the situation was becoming more serious in Finland, Helsinki urged the embassy in Budapest to send as many volunteers as possible.[164]

In a letter dated 9 January 1940, the Finnish ambassador outlined the situation in Hungary. The travel plan was now to take a special purpose train from Hungary via Italy, France and Belgium, to end in Amsterdam, from where the men would be shipped further. All the countries involved in the process had not only given their permission but granted cost-free passage for this train. The Hungarian Regent Miklos Horthy was actively involved in the process, as was the Prime Minister and other government functionaries such as Denes Tomboly, a Member of

[160] Budapest to Helsinki, 7/10 Dec 1939. FFMA Signum 109 Folder 16.
[161] Budapest to Helsinki, 23 Dec 1939. FFMA Signum 109 Folder 12.
[162] Helsinki to Budapest, 29 Dec 1939/2/8 Jan 1940. FFMA Signum 109 Folder 12.
[163] Budapest to Helsinki, 9/11 Jan 1940. Helsinki to Defence Ministry, 13 Jan 1940. FFMA Signum 109 Folder 12.
[164] Helsinki to Budapest, 18 Jan 1940. FFMA Signum 109 Folder 12.

Parliament, and Miklos Kozma, a former minister. While the Hungarians praised the Finnish spirit and harshly condemned the Soviet Union, they still wanted to keep the volunteers a secret and recruitment had not been made official. Later, the Hungarians wished that any Finnish newspaper writing about them would claim that they were arriving from Hungarian communities across Europe, instead of being sent from Hungary.[165] The travel plan changed again, with the train passage now ending at Le Havre in France, from where the Hungarians could be shipped to Bergen or to England. As there were no suitable Finnish ships available, the ambassador was told to plead with the French for assistance.[166]

A significant delay on the progress of the Hungarians was that their government wanted to test the travel arrangements before sending more volunteers. Therefore, instead of a non-stop shuttle service from Budapest to Le Havre to Aberdeen to Bergen to Stockholm to Tornio, they waited for confirmation that the first company arrived safely in Finland before allowing the second company to depart. It took until March before the Finnish Foreign Ministry could confirm that the Hungarians are 'excellent, fit with high morale' and asked for more. Thus, only one company of Hungarians arrived in Finland in time and that unit, 346 men strong, was still undergoing training when the Winter War ended.[167]

Unsuccessful schemes

Many embassies and consuls received bewildering offers of help from unexpected sources as well as unsolicited schemes to recruit volunteers. Nearly all of them came from individuals acting alone or as a representative of a small, non-state group. However, some were state-sponsored initiatives. Unsurprisingly, these were unsuccessful, and there were many more such projects than the successful ones. The earliest such proposal came in November 1939

[165] Budapest to Helsinki, 9 Jan/7 Feb 1940. FFMA Signum 109 Folder 12.
[166] Paris to Helsinki and response, 18/21 Jan 1940. FFMA Signum 109 Folder 12.
[167] Budapest to Helsinki and response, 24 Feb/7 Mar 1940. FFMA Signum 109 Folder 12.

from a certain Jean Marabini who contacted the Finnish ambassador in Paris.[168] He proposed that Italian exiles of the Legion Garibaldienne could fight for Finland in case of hostilities.[169] Units claiming to continue the Garibaldian tradition have appeared multiple times in various conflicts from the initial wars of the Risorgimento in Italy to the American Civil War and in both World Wars. All these units were named after the Italian politician and general Giuseppe Garibaldi who played a significant role in the unification of Italy, as his memory and principles have been kept alive and passed on over generations of Italians.[170] No further detail of this legion was given at that time. The idea remained buried in Helsinki until early December when someone remembered it and asked for more information. Whether the Paris embassy responded is not recorded in the archives, but the Foreign Ministry gave permission for a representative of the Legion to come to Finland in secret.[171] Later in the month, Paris informed Helsinki that the Legion was separate from a Communist legion that had taken part in the Spanish Civil War and was also named after Garibaldi. The members of the new Garibaldian formation were staunchly anti-communist and reliable. The representatives were on their way to Helsinki in late December.[172]

Whether the Finns knew anything more about them is unclear as the communications between Helsinki and Paris, on the one hand, and Rome and Helsinki, on the other, do not mention any further details. The French Prime Minister, Edouard Daladier, mentioned a Garibaldi Legion to a Finnish liaison officer at the Paris embassy, according to whom it would have consisted of men from all the various refugee groups in France at the time, many of whom had combat experience from the Republican side of the Spanish Civil War. However,

[168] Paris to Helsinki, 7 Nov 1939. FFMA Signum 109 Folder 13.
[169] Paris to Helsinki, 17 Nov 1939. FFMA Signum 109 Folder 10.
[170] For the multigenerational legacy of Garibaldi, see: Enrico Acciai, "Traditions of Armed Volunteering and Radical Politics in Southern Europe: A Biographical Approach to Garibaldinism", *European History Quarterly*, 01/2019, Volume 49, Issue 1, pp. 51-52 and for a summary of his life, see: Nir Arielli, *From Byron to bin Laden: a history of foreign war volunteers* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press), 2018, pp. 45-47.
[171] Helsinki to Paris, 7/9 Dec 1939. FFMA Signum 109 Folder 10.
[172] Paris to Helsinki, 25 Dec 1939. FFMA Signum 109 Folder 10.

this idea was quietly dropped during January 1940.[173] While the Finnish sources do not explicitly confirm it, this is likely the same legion that Jean Marabini mentioned already back in November 1939 as there are no mentions of a different legion with the same name in the Foreign Ministry archives.

The reason for not pursuing this scheme further seems to have been new information that the Finns received from the United States. The Foreign Ministry had kept Washington informed of the matter because some members of this Legion were living in the US as well as in France. As the plan was seemingly becoming feasible, the embassy in Paris was ordered to assist the Legion in its search for equipment and means of transportation. The Washington embassy, however, poured cold water on the project as it declared that Giuseppe 'Peppino' Garibaldi (the grandson of the original Italian hero), who attempted to gain permission to act as an official intermediary between Helsinki and Rome, was untrustworthy. A second disappointment came when the embassy in Rome confirmed that Italy did not acknowledge Peppino Garibaldi as an official representative. Undaunted, the Foreign Ministry tried the French connection once more because a small group of men was ready to leave France despite all the setbacks. But that group was the beginning and the end of the Legion Garibaldienne initiative.[174] In July 1940, the Captain of the Italian volunteers, Camillo Marobin, had been interned in Glasgow along with his sons on his way back from Finland. He contacted the Finnish embassy in London to pass his whereabouts to his family in France.[175] This proves that Camillo Marobin had been among the seven Italians in Finland during the Winter War, one of whom – the pilot Diego Manzocchi – lost his life. While the recruitment of the Legion itself was a failure, a few Italian volunteers did manage to fight in Finland.[176]

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[173] Jacobson, p. 174.
[174] Helsinki to Washington, 26 Dec 1939; Helsinki to Paris, 8 Jan 1940; Washington to Helsinki, 12 Jan 1940; Washington to Helsinki, 3 Feb 1940; Helsinki to Paris, 5 Feb 1940; Rome to Helsinki, 14 Feb 1940; Helsinki to Paris, 23 Feb 1940; Paris to Helsinki, 24/28 Feb 1940, FFMA Signum 109 Folder 10.
[175] London to Helsinki, 6 Jul 1940. FFMA Signum 109 Folder 10.
[176] Luigi G deAnnan: "Italialaislentäjä taisteli Suomen puolesta" in *Turun Sanomat,* 21.03.2009.

Mussolini's famously critical stance towards the Soviet Union and the significant Italian participation in the Spanish Civil War were possible reasons why Finland hoped for significant support from Italy, separate from possible exile Italian volunteers coming from elsewhere. While Italy did sell several airplanes, the recruitment of volunteers ran into problems very quickly and amounted to little. The Finnish Foreign Ministry asked the embassy in Rome early on whether volunteer pilots could be recruited.[177] It took nearly a month for the ambassador to respond, promising a small number of pilots and mechanics but Finland would have to cover their travel expenses. Undaunted, Helsinki renewed its request that pilots come with planes as well as a ground force ´as large as possible´, equipped by the Italians.[178] The ambassador wrote a letter in response, in which he admitted that, while there were large numbers of eager volunteers, he agreed with the Italian Foreign Minister Galeazzo Ciano that the Italians were not suited for the Finnish climate, nor the conditions of a war fought in winter. Sending only small numbers of specialists might be better for both countries. Ignoring the letter, Helsinki asked again for as many volunteers as possible and told the embassy to establish a volunteering office.[179] The army was prepared to form a separate Italian unit. General Enckell personally contacted the ambassador and stressed the importance of sending as many volunteers as possible and doing so quickly.[180] The answer to both telegrams was the same: the Italian government was resisting attempts at recruitment on a large scale and that only specialists, like pilots or tank drivers, could be recruited. The embassy was not staffed to handle the large-scale recruitment and they were barely coping with matters as it were.[181] To explain his position better, the ambassador wrote a letter to the Foreign Ministry, going into detail about how the Italian government had changed from its initially enthusiastic position to a more cautious one. The government wanted a list of all volunteers who had registered with the embassy and forbade further recruitment, making an exception only for specialists, who

[177] Helsinki to Rome, 7 Dec 1939. FFMA Signum 109 Folder 10.
[178] Rome to Helsinki and response, 4/6 Jan 1940. FFMA Signum 109 Folder 10.
[179] Rome to Helsinki and response, 6/19 Jan 1940. FFMA Signum 109 Folder 10.
[180] Enckell to Rome, 21 Jan 1940. FFMA Signum 109 Folder 10.
[181] Rome to Helsinki and Enckell, 24 Jan 1940. FFMA Signum 109 Folder 10.

could come to Finland in small groups, if they were kept away from the front. Even this was not easy, as getting passports was almost impossible for Italians.[182]

The ambassador had touched upon this subject already in December, so it is interesting how the Foreign Ministry kept pushing him to work miracles. He had discussed the matter with Ciano repeatedly. Passage through Germany was another significant factor for the Italians. The ambassador suggested that the Italians could travel through France as direct transit via Germany seemed impossible. Ciano agreed that if Finland were in the Mediterranean, Italy could give far more help but its distant location, the opposition from Germany and the bad experience of the Spanish Civil War made it difficult for Italy to do much.[183]

February brought some relief in this matter. Pilots and mechanics could leave Italy, if Finland paid them 1500 and 750 lire respectively in addition to the normal Finnish wage. A special envoy, Count Bechi, who was a Captain in the Italian army, left Italy with full powers to negotiate further. He travelled by air, under a secret name. The negotiations must have been fruitful, as Rome received details for Italian contracts on 18 February. The first group left Italy by the end of the month, traveling via Amsterdam. [184] The Italians reached Finland while hostilities were still on-going, but had no significant impact on the war. As they had arrived before the war ended, the Foreign Ministry later sent Italian veterans Winter War memorial medals.[185] It is not clear from the available sources whether the seven Italian volunteers registered by the Finnish Army to have been in Finland during the Winter War were the transnational Legion Garibaldienne volunteers mentioned earlier in this chapter, or if they were these government-indorsed specialists that Italy eventually allowed to leave, or whether it was a mixture of both, though this last option is the likeliest.

[182] Rome to Helsinki, 26th Jan 1940. FFMA Signum 109 Folder 10.
[183] Rome to Helsinki, undated Dec 1939. FFMA Signum 109 Folder 13.
[184] Rome to Helsinki, 9/11/20 Feb 1940. Helsinki to Rome, 18 Feb 1940. FFMA Signum 109 Folder 10.
[185] Helsinki to Rome, 15 Oct 1940. FFMA Signum 109 Folder 10.

Italian government archives prove that Ciano's claim that German pressure was preventing Italy from helping Finland was not a fabrication. On 5 January 1940, Mussolini had already claimed to Hitler that while 'thousands of volunteers' had come forward to volunteer, their 'offers have been – at present – declined by the Finns'. It is possible that Mussolini was merely stretching the truth a little, as it took until 18 January for the Italian ambassador in Helsinki to inform Ciano about the relaxed requirements for foreign volunteers. However, as explained above, Helsinki had asked the embassy in Rome to organize the recruitment of a 'large ground force' on 6 January. It seems unlikely that the Finnish ambassador would not have immediately informed Ciano of this change as the embassy would have been delighted to see such numbers of volunteers! Hitler later stressed to the Italian ambassador in Berlin how Finland should yield to Soviet demands as these were not 'exorbitant'.[186] The initial confusion on the Finnish side and the delays it caused thus gave Mussolini a convenient excuse to delay and hinder Italian volunteering just as Hitler wanted, though fascist Italy kept dragging its feet even after all the issues had been cleared. The claims that Italians were not suited for Finnish climate ring hollow, after all Mussolini had no qualms about sending tens of thousands of Italians into the Soviet Union once Germany's invasion had begun.

Another wild scheme was the attempt to capitalize on White Russian emigrants living in France. They convinced the Finnish ambassador to send a suggestion to Tanner that Finland should invite both Trotsky and Kerensky to form a Russian government-in-exile as a counterweight to the puppet-government of Kuusinen.[187] White Russian emigrees were living across the world, and many offered their service for Finland in places as varied as Washington and Teheran.[188] These offers were invariably declined. As stated before, this was a strategic decision made by Field-Marshall Mannerheim, who correctly foresaw that the involvement of

[186] *Documenti Diplomatici Italiani* (hereafter: DDI), ninth series, volume III (Rome: 1959), p. 20, pp. 34-35, p. 136.
[187] Jacobson, p. 203.
[188] Teheran to Helsinki and response, 27 Jan 1940. FFMA Signum 109 Folder 10. Washington to Helsinki, 13 Oct 1939. FFMA Signum 109 Folder 12.

White Russians would antagonize Stalin and elevate the conflict to a new and more ideological level, thus minimizing the chances of Finland negotiating a peace treaty to end the war. At the same time, the Finns doubted that White Russian volunteers would give Finland any significant advantage.[189]

The Finnish consul in Alexandria, Egypt, was quite active in trying to drum up support and attract volunteers, though due to the distances involved, his efforts were doomed to fail. From a modest start of a single volunteer in December, he had by February formed a dozen-strong group, including two pilots. However, all of them needed funds to cover their travel.[190] Around the same time as the Foreign Ministry was ordering all embassies to establish volunteer offices, Helsinki briefly entertained the idea of starting one in Alexandria as well. The consul wrote a letter in response, in which he cited the religion and ethnicity of locals being unsurmountable obstacles for widespread recruiting, which is why he had only recruited immigrants living there. The Foreign Ministry decided that, except for 'very special cases', recruitment in Egypt would not be worth the costs. The two pilots were deemed worthy exceptions, and the consul was instructed to send their papers to Rome, where the military attaché could review them.[191] Thus ended any possibility of Egyptian participation in the Winter War.

The consul in Cape Town was likely not expected to produce many volunteers in the first place. After nearly a month of war, he had found only a single German pilot, who was turned down by the Foreign Ministry because of his nationality. A week later he had found two officers, but the South-African government did not allow either military or medical personnel to leave the country. The consul concentrated on foreigners living in South Africa and informed Helsinki

[189] High Command to Helsinki, 3 Jan 1940. FFMA Signum 109 Folder 10.
[190] Alexandria to Helsinki, 16 Dec 1939/26 Feb 1940. FFMA Signum 109 Folder 10.
[191] Helsinki to Alexandria and response, 19 Jan and 5/29 Feb 1940. FFMA Signum 109 Folder 10.

that he will issue visas for 'good volunteers' without consulting with Helsinki first, if they are willing to pay their own travel costs.[192]

Finland had a consul in Teheran, who contacted the Foreign Ministry only once. He had 'some White Russians and Italians' present. Helsinki asked him to thank them for their enthusiasm, but they would not be accepted.[193] Helsinki did get back to him in February, when the situation at the front was becoming critical and asked how many volunteers were present and from which nations. As the total was only 16, some of whom were Russians, the Foreign Ministry told the consul to decline their offers.[194] These examples from Egypt, South Africa and Persia show how certain segments of the population are more likely to volunteer. Emigrants who have not put down roots in the country they live in find it easier to leave their old lives behind in order to volunteer for a distant battlefield.[195]

The farthest official posting of the Foreign Ministry was in Sydney. The consul there was not idle. He gathered a small group of potential volunteers by the end of December but had no funds to pay for their travel and the volunteers could not afford it themselves. Undaunted, the consul found a pilot with 500 hours of flight experience. The Foreign Ministry accepted him and gave the consul permission to use donations to cover his trip. However, the circular letter never made it to Sydney in time, as the consul asked for guidance again in February, regarding two inexperienced pilots, and later for volunteers in general. Helsinki told him to accept all good quality candidates if they would pay their own way. The consul managed to find a doctor and two nurses as well but by the time they would have departed, the war was over. [196]

Spain was an unlikely source for volunteers, considering the climate difference and the recent civil war but that did not completely deter the Finnish ambassador in Madrid. Just like his

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[192] Cape Town to Helsinki and response, 27/30 Dec 1939/5 Jan/19 Feb 1940. FFMA Signum 109 Folder 10.
[193] Teheran to Helsinki and response, 27 Jan 1940. FFMA Signum 109 Folder 10.
[194] Helsinki to Teheran and response, 16/21 Feb 1940. FFMA Signum 109 Folder 12.
[195] Arielli (2018) provides several examples of this phenomenon, pp. 66-93.
[196] Sydney to Helsinki, 29 Dec 1939/4 Jan/16/27 Feb/5 Mar 1940. Helsinki to Sydney, 9 Jan/29 Feb 1940. FFMA Signum 109 Folder 10.

colleagues elsewhere, he quickly asked for instructions, noting several would-be volunteers had registered with the embassy, though he was sceptical of their usefulness.[197] The first serious volunteering attempt came a fortnight later, as the ambassador had found several officers wanting to fight against Communism. Four of these were General Broussilof, Colonel Amilachvary and Captains Goguidjoni and Trincam, all with experience from the Civil War.[198] The ambassador was worried that the Spanish government would not allow these officers to leave as it could lead to a shortage of officers in Spain. He suspected he would need to see Spanish dictator Francisco Franco, personally. The Foreign Ministry asked for more details and as Madrid was not forthcoming immediately, Helsinki sent a list of requirements: only exceptional officers, 10-15 pilots preferably with planes and 5-6 engineers.[199] The embassy responded that without more information and lacking the contracts that the pilots would need to sign, recruitment would be impossible. By mid-January, no Spanish volunteers had left the country and Helsinki urged the ambassador to work harder on the issue. The ambassador responded that 'in the current climate, the official way is the only way, no alternatives´. He asked that the consul in Lisbon be given permission to issue visas for volunteers, which Helsinki denied. The confusion between Helsinki and Madrid continued as the ambassador asked twice for more information regarding pilot contracts. The Foreign Ministry only asked whether the ambassador was talking about fighter pilots or dive bomber pilots as well.[200]

Frustrated with official Spain, the Finnish ambassador wrote a lengthy letter to the Foreign Ministry, in which he explained the situation. While the people of Spain were supportive of Finland, certain German-leaning politicians were doing their best to hinder his every attempt. The Spanish Interior Ministry had forbidden any donation campaigns. The Air Ministry and the War Ministry had expressly forbidden volunteers from leaving the country. The ambassador

[197] Madrid to Helsinki, 3 Dec 1939. FFMA Signum 109 Folder 10.
[198] Madrid to Helsinki, 11 Dec 1939. FFMA Signum 109 Folder 12.
[199] Madrid to Helsinki, 16 Dec 1939. Helsinki to Madrid, 18/19 Dec 1939. FFMA Signum 109 Folder 10.
[200] Madrid to Helsinki, 3/19 Jan/7/15 Feb 1940. Helsinki to Madrid, 18/19 Jan/16 Feb 1940. FFMA Signum 109 Folder 10.

had not been allowed to meet with Franco and the situation was unlikely to change. His last attempt was to ask Helsinki for permission to use donations to cover the travel expenses of volunteers at the end of February, to which Helsinki acquiesced.[201] Considering the letter the ambassador had written earlier, these were likely Portuguese volunteers, and the donations must have come from private citizens.

The consul in Bucharest complained that the circular letter concerning volunteers had never reached him, so he was forced to ask if the ban on Russians was still in place. He had had many offers, however, as that ban remained in place throughout the Winter War, the consul was unable to recruit many volunteers. In a series of letters, the ambassador in Bucharest painted a bleak picture of volunteering in Romania. He described the locals as 'timid and peaceful people', whose 'knowledge and interest in the outside world is lacking, and sense of justice underdeveloped'. A few candidates had visited him, but lacking passports, which they were unlikely to get, they would not be able to leave the country. The ambassador proceeded to contact all Scandinavian embassies, in the off chance that he could secure passage aboard their ships for Polish volunteers, as the Romanian officials had assured him that no Romanian was allowed to leave the country. Eventually the ambassador got promises from the Turkish, Yugoslav, French and Italian ambassadors that volunteers could transit via Turkey, though the Turkish ambassador stipulated that Jews would not be allowed to transit. The consul did not explain why Turkey would not allow transit for Jewish volunteers. The numbers of local volunteers were slowly rising but, as they lacked passports, nothing could be done. The exiled Poles were in a similar position. The ambassador reported having turned away many Russians. The ambassador later lamented the poor state of the locals as well as the Poles and kept struggling with Romanian bureaucracy to get permits for leaving the country for the few qualified volunteers. Finally, at the end of February, the ambassador was proud to write that

[201] Madrid to Helsinki and response, 5/21/23 Feb 1940. FFMA Signum 109 Folder 10.

he had sent three qualified volunteers ahead: A Czech pilot, an Italian mechanic and a Hungarian sports coach.[202]

An esoteric offer came from Geneva. The Finnish ambassador at the League of Nations described a frankly wild plan suggested by Count Richard von Coudenhove-Kalergi, a Japanese-Austrian politician, philosopher and an early pioneer for the cause of European integration.[203] His plan was to form a Pan-European army of volunteers to help Finland. A month later, the ambassador reported that Kalergi worked on his own and had no support in the League. Considering how utterly toothless the League had been in containing aggression previously, it is quite likely that nobody in Finland paid much attention to Kalergi. Geneva was a hotbed for rumours and wild speculation – as early as December, it was reported that the Western Allies together with Sweden and Norway were planning a military intervention on behalf of Finland. No such intervention was ever planned. It seems clear that Kalergi was using the Winter War as a convenient cause to advance his own agenda of Pan-European cooperation and integration.[204]

A similar proposal was suggested to the Finnish ambassador in Geneva by Aloys, the seventh Prince of Lowenstein-Wertheim-Rosenberg, chairman of the Central Committee of German Catholics. He aimed to gather 25,000 German-Austrian volunteers from across Europe. The ambassador dismissed Lowenstein as 'reliable but a dreamer, a radical' and pointed out that the Prince had no knowledge of military matters, nor an organization to handle such a massive undertaking. Any cooperation with him would risk seriously angering Germany, as the Prince was a well-known anti-Nazi.[205] He was not the only one with such ideas. A representative of the Austrian emigrants in Britain proposed to the Finnish ambassador in London that his group

[202] Bucharest to Helsinki, 9/16/20 Dec 1939/19 Jan/6/12/26 Feb 1940. FFMA Signum 109 Folder 12.
[203] Desmond Dinan: *Europe Recast: A History of the European Union,* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner 2014), p. 2.
[204] Geneva to Helsinki, 22/23 Dec 1939/24 Jan 1940. FFMA Signum 109 Folder 16.
[205] Geneva to Helsinki, 29 Dec 1939. FFMA Signum 109 Folder 12.

could be organized with the blessing of the British authorities, who thought it would be difficult to force them to fight the Germans.[206]

A third Germanic proposal emerged in Oslo. A man named Eugen Scheyer, of whom the Finns had no prior knowledge, contacted the Finnish ambassador there and wanted to organize the German refugees, currently suffering poor conditions in French work camps or concentration camps. Many of them had combat experience from the Spanish Civil War, having fought on the Republican side. If Finland could offer them a materially secure future, he was certain that thousands could be recruited. Scheyer proposed that General Wollenberg be placed in command, as he was a known figure in the German communities outside of Nazi Germany and a fierce opponent of both Hitler and Stalin.[207] While it is not certain, this could be the German Communist Erich Wollenberg who had a prominent role in KPD, the German Communist party. He had to flee the Nazis to the Soviet Union, where the NKVD later believed him to be a Trotskyite, which forced him to flee again, this time to France, from where he fled to Morocco after Germany occupied France. During his stay in France, he was in contact with anti-fascist resistance, which would explain how Scheyer knew of him and why he was nominated. While he was not a general, he had served in the Red Army as a battalion commander from 1924 to 1926 and he had been a lieutenant in the German Army in the Great War.[208]

None of these three plans gained any traction in Helsinki, nor were they followed up by Finnish ambassadors in their respective countries, and for good reason. Any cooperation with such groups could have endangered the already strained Finnish-German relations. But the wildest proposal never reached Finnish ears and was only made public in 1973. In a letter dated 9 February 1940, Cardinal Luigi Maglione, who served as the Vatican Secretary of State in 1939, received a negative answer from Jesuit General Wlodimir Ledochowski who was the head of

[206] London to Helsinki, 16 Jan 1940. FFMA Signum 109 Folder 12.
[207] Oslo to Helsinki, 2 Mar 1940. FFMA Signum 109 Folder 12.
[208] Sven Schneider, *Widerstand oppositioneller Kommunisten. Erich Wollenberg – verfolgt on Hitler und Stalin*, in Hans Coppi & Stefan Heinz (ed.), *Der vergessene Widertand der Arbeiter. Gewerkshafter, Kommunisten, Sozialdemokraten, Trotzkisten, Anarchisten und Zwangsarbeiter* (Berlin: Dietz, 2012), pp. 199-228.

the Jesuit Order, to his proposal of raising a Catholic volunteer group for Finland.[209] Whether Maglione's proposal had any connection to the Lowenstein proposal is not clear from the Finnish source material. Ledochowski was later criticized as a supporter of Fascism and Nazism due to his anti-Semitism, which might explain his reluctance to support Finland at that time, despite them fighting the atheist Soviet Union.[210]

These unsuccessful initiatives show some similarities. Resistance to volunteering from the authorities in their home country essentially destroys any chance of forming an effective volunteer force because it prevents the opening of recruitment offices and the running of information campaigns. Even if the government in question does not actively object to their citizens volunteering, the bureaucratic machine can drag its feet to such an extent that volunteering becomes impossible, as shown by the difficulties in obtaining passports in some countries. Even if recruitment is successful, the logistics of travel and transport posed serious problems in this time period. All of this means that a well-planned organization, especially in the host country but also in friendly or at least supportive countries, is required for effective utilization of the volunteers.

And a lack of such organization is a great hindrance. The ideas of forming Pan-European Catholic Force or recruiting refugee Germans and Austrians across Western Europe may have sounded like good ideas on paper, but such tasks would require an immense effort by a large organization to pull them off, and there were no such organizations in existence at the time. Perhaps the Catholic Church could have managed it, though it is likely that the various governments would have interfered in the matter, and the process would, in any case, had been too slow to have helped Finland.

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[209] Vatican to Helsinki, 25 Jul 1973. FFMA Signum 109 Folder 12.
[210] David I. Kertzer: *The Pope and Mussolini: The Secret History of Pius XI and the Rise of Fascism in Europe* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), pp. 235, 289, 304.

The Polish connection

A possible source for large numbers of volunteers was Poland. Partitioned and occupied by Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union, thousands of Poles had fled aboard. Many were now stuck in Romania, Lithuania and Latvia, in addition to the ones who had made it to France and Britain. Finland received offers to assist from both individual Polish citizens as well as the Polish government-in-exile. As early as 8 December, the consul in Riga asked how he should answer the Jews, Russians, Poles and those holding NANSEN passports. Helsinki answered that Polish passports were still valid but kept silent regarding the rest.[211]

The first official contact from the Poles happened in Geneva, where the Polish ambassador to the League of Nations informed his Finnish counterpart that he could muster 500 Polish pilots from France and England to come to Finland.[212] Almost at the same time, the Finnish consul in Bucharest had been contacted by Polish refugees and reported that he could arrange, in secret, for a group of them to go to Finland, using Scandinavian ships currently in Romanian ports.[213] Soon contact was made also in Paris, London and Riga. The embassy in London had been contacted by Major Ilinski, who proposed recruiting 50 pilots from Latvia, who could fly Gloster Gauntlets – a plane that was available, on the cheap, from Britain.[214] The embassy in Paris was told that there were fully equipped Polish soldiers available in France, who could form an international force in Finland.[215] The consul in Riga was told by the British military attaché that Lithuania had interned 15,000 Polish soldiers. His idea was for the Finns to convince Sweden to accept them as farm labourers, at which point they could be recruited as volunteer soldiers for Finland. The Polish military attaché in Stockholm knew of the plan and supported it.[216]

[211] Riga to Helsinki and response, 8 Dec 1939. FFMA Signum 109 Folder 10.
[212] Geneva to Helsinki, 10 Dec 1939. FFMA Signum 109 Folder 12.
[213] Bucharest to Helsinki, 12 Dec 1939. FFMA Signum 109 Folder 12.
[214] London to Helsinki, 20 Dec 1939. FFMA Signum 109 Folder 12.
[215] Paris to Helsinki, 20 Dec 1939. FFMA Signum 109 Folder 12.
[216] Riga to Helsinki, 20 Dec 1939. FFMA Signum 109 Folder 12.

In Paris, the Finnish ambassador had contacted General Sikorski, who had become the Prime Minister of the Polish government-in-exile. He explained that the Poles in Romania would be sent to join the French General Weygand in the Middle East, who was trying to convince the French Prime Minister Daladier to invade the Soviet Union near Baku in the Caucasus. Finland could gain a 'few thousand' Poles from Lithuania and Latvia and form a Polish Legion. In addition, several Polish ships in France and Britain could support Finnish operations in the Arctic Sea. The ambassador followed by blaming the Swedish consul in Kaunas for obstructing any plans for moving the Poles and suspected that the consul was secretly working for the Germans.[217] The Finnish consul in Kaunas reported that there were plenty of volunteers' present, both locals and Poles. Among the latter was a certain Colonel Dumbrowski, who had lived in Finland as a boy but was currently held in a military prison due to Soviet demands. His men, who feared for the life of their Colonel, had approached the consul to see if he could help them get the Colonel freed so that he could leave the country.[218] The Foreign Ministry never answered the consul.

The Sikorski plan, as it became known, was forwarded to Helsinki by the Finnish ambassador in Paris. The ambassador argued that, if Sweden did not trust the Poles, they could be given Finnish passports for the journey.[219] Before the courier could arrive, the Foreign Ministry wanted clarification whether negotiations with Sikorski would take place in Paris or Stockholm. The ambassador in Paris argued that while high-level negotiations would take place in Paris, 'practical matters' could be discussed in Stockholm.[220] The Polish foreign minister August Zalevski was now ready to negotiate based on the Sikorski proposal, but the Finnish ambassador had not received any guidance from Helsinki yet.[221] On the Finnish side, General

[217] Paris to Helsinki, 22/24 Dec 1939. FFMA Signum 109 Folder 12.
[218] Kaunas to Helsinki, 29 Dec 1939. FFMA Signum 109 Folder 12. The Foreign Ministry archives do not have further information on Finnish suspicions regarding the Swedish consul in Kaunas secretly working for the Germans.
[219] Paris to Helsinki, 31 Dec 1939. FFMA Signum 109 Folder 12.
[220] Helsinki to Paris/Stockholm and responses, 1/2/3/4 Jan 1940. FFMA Signum 109 Folder 12.
[221] Paris to Helsinki, 7 Jan 1940. FFMA Signum 109 Folder 12.

Enckell had been sent to Stockholm to discuss practical matters with the Polish military attaché. Helsinki lamented that the courier from Paris had not yet arrived, and they could not give any instructions.[222] It took another week until Helsinki received the Sikorski plan.[223]

In an internal Foreign Ministry memo, officials tied together the Sikorski proposal and the Finnish counterproposal into a compromise that would be acceptable to the Finnish High Command as well as the Polish government-in-exile. The number of Polish volunteers was to be 4,000 and their status equal to that of the Swedish group. Field-Marshall Mannerheim would appoint their commander based on Sikorski's suggestions and he would be a Pole, just like the Swedes were commanded by a Swedish General. Uniform, weapons, other gear was all agreed upon. The Finns maintained that they could not accept the Polish stipulation that the Legion could be withdrawn at any time, nor could they assist the Poles in moving their men from the Baltic States into Sweden. Permission from Sweden would be acquired only after agreement had been reached. The Polish Legion would be formed and trained partially in Sweden and partially in Finland. To avoid any complications with unfit men remaining in Sweden, transit visas to a third country, like Great Britain, would need to be acquired by the Poles. On 24 January, the memo was sent by courier to Paris due to secrecy concerns, instead of being sent by telegram, which caused even more delays.[224] Around the same time, the Foreign Ministry told the embassy in Paris to accept all Polish pilots and mechanics with gratitude 'as offered'.[225]

At the end of January, the Finnish ambassador in Paris met with both Zalevski and the Polish ambassador Frankowski. Zalevski promised Polish ships for Finland, as well as 100 pilots who were already in Stockholm. He stressed that the Polish groups in the Baltics were 'small and in danger', so they should be allowed to transit to Finland as quickly as possible. He expressed the official wish of Poland that Finland would normalise diplomatic relations with the

[222] Helsinki to Paris, 9 Jan 1940. FFMA Signum 109 Folder 12.
[223] Helsinki to Paris, 16 Jan 1940. FFMA Signum 109 Folder 12.
[224] Helsinki memo, 24 Jan 1940. FFMA Signum 109 Folder 12.
[225] Helsinki to Paris, 23 Jan 1940. FFMA Signum 109 Folder 12.

government-in-exile in the near future, as a counter-favour.[226] Frankowski agreed in principle with the Finnish plan, stating that differences between it and the Sikorski proposal were 'not too great'. The ambassador reported that there was talk in France that an expeditionary corps would be formed, consisting of a Polish, a Canadian and a French brigade. The Polish brigade would be entirely separate from the Polish soldiers Finland would receive from the Baltic States.[227]

At this stage, when everything seemed to fall in place, things instead fell apart. The Foreign Ministry asked in the middle of February whether things were progressing. It took eleven days for the embassy in Paris to respond, with a laconic 'Poles are stuck in Baltics, very fuzzy'. It seems that the Finnish requirement for the Poles to handle transport out of the Baltic States on their own was too difficult to fulfil. The Foreign Ministry reiterated to the embassy in Paris that the Poles were still welcome if they could travel to Sweden on their own. That was the last official communication on the topic.[228]

Alongside the official contact, there were fewer official measures taken to assist the beleaguered Poles. The embassy in Tallinn asked for permission to give a Finnish passport to a Polish pilot named Urban, who was interned in Estonia. He came recommended by the French naval attaché. After consulting with the High Command, the Foreign Ministry gave its consent. Urban became 'Mikael Urpo Lahti' and was sent to Riga, so he could sail to Stockholm and make his way to Tornio.[229] His case is an extreme deviation from the usual procedure that the Foreign Ministry adhered to. It is possible that Urban was a special case or that, this late in the war, the Finns were becoming truly desperate for manpower. The embassy in Tallinn had previously sent a few Estonians via the Riga-Stockholm route, as the direct route from Tallinn to Helsinki had been cut by the Soviet Union, but the most the ambassador had done for them

[226] Paris to Helsinki, 30 Jan 1940. FFMA Signum 109 Folder 12.
[227] Paris to Helsinki, 30 Jan 1940. FFMA Signum 109 Folder 12.
[228] Helsinki to Paris and response, 15/26/28 Feb 1940. FFMA Signum 109 Folder 12.
[229] Tallinn to Helsinki, undated Mar 1940. FFMA Signum 109 Folder 14.

had been to purchase a ticket for the ship.[230] Earlier on, the Foreign Ministry had clearly forbidden all stations from giving Finnish passports to foreign volunteers, regardless of the situation.

The failed attempt to bring Polish soldiers, sailors, and airmen to Finland highlights the possible complexities surrounding State-sponsored volunteering. The Polish government-in-exile undoubtedly had its own reasons to support Finland and it seems clear that getting their interned troops out of eastern Europe was one of their primary goals. At the same time, the Finns certainly could have used the additional manpower, but they were being careful not to expand the scope of the conflict without certain guarantees of support. The hesitant attitudes of the other governments involved, especially Sweden, played a part, and the fact that France had been so slow in organizing and equipped the Polish refugees on its soil did not help. Sikorski himself seems to have despaired of the inadequate support from the French and this likely soured him on the plan, especially since Finns were reluctant to facilitate the movement of Poles from Lithuania to Sweden.[231]

Conclusion

The sources clearly show that the Finnish Foreign Ministry was unprepared for handling foreign volunteers at the outset of the war. It was not alone, as the Armed Forces of Finland seem to have been equally taken by surprise, despite the recent precedent of the Spanish Civil War, in which thousands of foreign volunteers had taken part. Embassies and consulates abroad had not received any standing orders regarding volunteers and the Army had not made any special preparations. While the Finns did not outright admit it, there is ample evidence for this unpreparedness in the communications between the Foreign Ministry and the Army High Command. To what extent this was influenced by the stubborn belief of many Finnish politicians that Stalin was only bluffing and would not really invade, and to what extent it was

[230] Tallinn to Helsinki, undated Feb 1940. FFMA Signum 109 Folder 14.
[231] Nevakivi, p. 183

merely the result of limited funding and lack of oversight, is unclear. The outcome was in any case the same: a clash of conflicting orders sent from Helsinki and numerous questions asked by Finnish officials abroad in response.

If proper instructions had been sent to stations already in October, they could have launched donation drives and volunteer recruitment far sooner. Even in Sweden, where everything worked for the benefit of the Finns, it took 21 days to get the first group of volunteers equipped and underway to Finland.[232] Everywhere else the process was slower, or non-existent. The recruitment process was further hindered by the strict demands placed upon volunteers by the Finnish Army High Command. Expecting fully trained and equipped volunteers to come with their own officers and in already organized groups was pure folly and it is astonishing that such restrictions were put in place to begin with.

Possibly because of the unpreparedness of the military, foreign volunteers were seemingly not considered a serious source of additional manpower until late in the war. This seems like a curious oversight since the Finnish High Command was fully aware of the impossibility of matching resources with the Soviet Union, and its pre-war plans always included assistance from other countries, whether Sweden, Germany or Britain. But these plans seem to have relied exclusively on expeditionary forces that would be sent to Finland as a formal part of their respective armies which would thus not require Finnish equipment or training.[233] That the military had to set up a training centre for foreign volunteers two weeks into the Winter War is telling – if volunteers had been planned for, the centre would already have been up and running, and had a training cadre and a commanding officer, before the Soviet invasion. Another piece of evidence comes from the requirements that the High Command issued to the Foreign Ministry that clearly show preference for fully equipped, trained and organized

[232] Stockholm to Helsinki, 21 Dec 1939. FFMA Signum 109 Folder 12.
[233] Martti Turtola: 'Suomen ulkopoliittinen kehitys' in Jari Leskinen & Antti Juutilainen (ed.). *Talvisodan Pikkujättiläinen* (Helsinki: Werner Söderström, 1999), p. 21-24.

units.[234] These requirements completely disregarded the actual nature of volunteering: enthusiastic individuals who usually lack the necessary skills and gear.

It is surprising that, despite the haphazard nature of the recruitment drives in European countries, some volunteers appeared in Finland already in December 1939 and that 'pipelines' were forming up. It is probable that the massive media attention Finland received played a part. This media attention drummed up popular support that seems to have influenced the local politicians in the volunteers' home countries to some degree, as well as monetary donations that helped Finnish ambassadors and consuls to fund recruitment drives and pay at least some of the travel costs of volunteers. Perhaps not surprisingly, the first volunteers were Finnish immigrants returning from abroad and Swedish volunteers who were already nearby the conflict zone, and in both cases their travel costs were paid by monetary donations from civilians.

The opposition of Germany to any plan to aid Finland should not have come as such a surprise to the Finns as it did. While the secret clauses in the Molotov-Ribbentrop plan were not known in Finland at that time, the fact that Poland, after a bitter but short struggle against the invaders, had been peacefully divided by ideological opponents, Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union, should have alarmed the Finnish Foreign Ministry and should have been a catalyst for planning around Germany. That the Hungarian volunteers had to travel via Italy, France and Britain to reach Scandinavia certainly hindered their ability to aid the Finnish war effort in any significant manner.

Certainly, many European countries dragged their feet, though this is quite understandable as the war between Germany and the Western Allies, while not exactly raging, still made all Europeans countries concerned for their own security. It was quite unrealistic to expect nations like Spain or Italy to help Finland when war could reach them soon. Similarly, the fact that the Hungarian General Staff wanted to keep most volunteers at home was completely

[234] Helsinki to embassies, 30 Dec 1939/5 Jan 1940. FFMA Signum 109 Folder 10.

pragmatic, considering that their formal alliance with Germany was still far in the future. Similarly, the reluctance of Norway and Denmark to match the enthusiastic help that Sweden was providing, in monetary funds, military equipment and enabling volunteering, can be understood through the context of the pacifistic defence policy and neutral foreign policy both countries had adopted in the interwar period, perfectly embodied by their respective foreign ministers of the time.

Once the initial issues were worked out and instructions were in place, the Foreign Ministry still had to play catch-up as the European situation evolved. Relying almost exclusively on the telegraph, occasionally augmented by phone calls and letters, it tried to coordinate and support different volunteer initiatives in over a dozen countries. The decision to allow the embassies in Paris and London significant autonomy over practical matters was a good one, as Helsinki had little chance to successfully micromanage them. Whether it was a conscious decision by the senior administration in the Foreign Ministry or something forced upon them by events, the documents do not reveal.

The relaxation of the requirements in January and again in February show the increasing desperation of the Army High Command for manpower. The small number of volunteers to arrive in December could have also played a part in the Finnish thinking, proof that the requirements were too strict. While this led to more volunteers arriving, these were still in transit or in training when the war ended with an armistice on 13 March 1940. The main exception was the Swedish force that had assumed frontline duty at the relatively quiet Salla front and the tiny American Legion on the Ladogan Karelia front. Thus, as Chapter Two will show, the importance of the volunteers was not their combat prowess, but rather a two-fold propagandistic one: showing the Finnish public that they were not alone in their struggle and showing the Soviet Union that the Finns had international support and that the conflict could not be kept localized for long. Finally, the Finnish ambassador in London, promoted to Foreign Ministry the idea that the presence of foreign volunteers in Finland would maintain interest in

the fate of Finland in other countries, especially Britain, and this idea was considered in Helsinki, though it does not seem to have become a priority or an official position of the Ministry.[235]

While this aspiration was clearly stated in a telegram between Helsinki and the Finnish embassy in London, it is further reinforced by the willingness of the Finnish Army to keep the British volunteers in Finland after the Winter War ended, even as the Nordic and Hungarian volunteers departed for home. As Chapter Three shows, it was only after the German invasion and subsequent occupation of Denmark and Norway in spring 1940 that the Finnish Army considered the British volunteers unnecessary and released them from service.[236]

In hindsight, it is easy to be highly critical of how the whole business was handled. Nevertheless, the embassies and consulates do deserve praise for their initiative and work during a period of uncertainty. Most embassies were minimally staffed and many of the consuls worked completely alone. Yet they all worked hard to gather at least some donations and volunteers, even if in the end it was not feasible to transport them to Finland.

[235] London to Helsinki, 17 Jun 1941. Helsinki memo, 17 Jun 1941. Helsinki to London, 18/19 Jun 1941. FFMA Signum 109 Folder 11.
[236] HCVO to Helsinki, 30 Apr 1940. FFMA Signum 109 Folder 10.

Chapter 2: The Finnish military and the volunteers, 1939-1940

On 26 February 1940 Colonel Procopé was ordered by the High Command Personnel Office to undertake a special mission. The increasing number of foreign volunteers in the country meant that it was likely that the number of deaths would increase to a level where handling the casualties would be a problem. The solution was to assign Col. Procopé the responsibility of handling all aspects of the process for fallen foreigners. He would have to contact the families of deceased volunteers to ask whether they wanted a burial or a cremation, and to ensure that their possessions, combined with any medals, would be sent home.[1] "Fallen heroes", as they were called, would first be sent to the regional deceased gathering depot, where they would be stored until Procopé decided what to do with them. Then the coffin would be transported to Helsinki, to the Hietaniemi Chapel overlooking the Gulf of Finland. An army chaplain would recite a blessing, a hymn would be sung, a wreath would be placed by Procopé – sometimes the ambassador of their home country would be present - and then the volunteer would undertake their final journey.[2] This process remained the same throughout both the Winter War and the Continuation wars.

[1] Circular letter from High Command Personnel Office to all commands, undated, The National Archives of Finland (hereafter: FNA), T-6571/1. Colonel Alexander Procopé belonged to Finnish nobility, his relatives being distinguished as generals, bishops, tycoons of industry and feudal lords.
[2] Uusi Suomi clipping, 28 Aug 42. FNA, T/6570-13.

Image 1: Burial of two Danish volunteers in 1942.[3]

This chapter will discuss the volunteers that colonel Procopé and several other Finnish officers took care of to the extent that is possible with the sources available. This includes looking at their motivations and the make-up of the various volunteer groups. As not all volunteers are fit for duty, several unfit volunteers are examined. The chapter also looks at how the Finnish military handled the foreign volunteers. The training and organization of soldiers is always important during a conflict. When the soldiers in question are untrained and do not speak the local language, such matters become even more important. Finally, the combat record of the foreign volunteers is inspected, including known casualties.

Finnish historiography has not ignored the Winter War volunteers but there have not been numerous studies about them. As outlined in the introduction, the existing literature on the volunteers can be divided into two parts. Firstly, there are the books that recount and examine the entire Winter War. These include small segments about the foreign volunteers from the viewpoint of the host nation, but they are short on details and unfortunately do not make any comparisons to other wars that attracted volunteers. Secondly, there are books that focus on a single national group and while these do go into more detail and can thus be quite useful, they obviously ignore the other volunteer groups. Furthermore, some groups have not had any

[3] Uusi Suomi clipping, 28 Aug 42. FNA, T/6570–13.

books dedicated to them. Few published articles round out the available secondary literature on this topic. Nearly all of these are only published in Finnish. This chapter will bridge these various sources in order to examine the similarities and differences of the various groups as well as the attempts of the military authorities to organize, train and utilise them. This will prove illuminative for both understanding how a host nation can utilize volunteers to augment their armed forces, what problems can arise from volunteering, as well as highlighting an element of the war that has been neglected in the English-speaking world.

Who were the volunteers and what motivated them?

It is difficult to give a comprehensive picture of the volunteers' background and motivations. Information about them is incomplete, among other reasons because many of them never made it to Finland and some arrived either just before the end of hostilities, or immediately after. Only a minority saw frontline service. Unlike the foreign volunteers in the International Brigades in Spain, where there was a sizeable number of intellectuals who left a record of their experiences, there are very few memoirs written by former volunteers in Finland and official information on their background and experiences is similarly scarce.[4]

Table 1 shows the number of volunteers of various nationalities that were registered by the Army during the Winter War as well as the number of those who were killed in action.

Table 1: Foreign volunteer numbers by nationality.[5]

Nationality	Number	Killed
Sweden	8680	33
Denmark	1010	5

[4] For example: Martina Sprague, *Swedish Volunteers in the Russo-Finnish Winter War, 1939-1940* (London: Mcfarland & Company, Inc., 2010) includes biographical sources from Swedish volunteers and Justin Brooke, *The volunteers: the full story of the British volunteers in Finland 1939-41* (Upton upon Severn: Self-Publishing Association, 1990) does the same for the British contingent but neither is completely comprehensive. Other groups have received even less attention.

[5] Sotahistorian Laitos, *Talvisodan Historia 2* (Porvoo: WSOY, 1979), p. 52.

Norway	695	2
USA	372	3
USSR	350 * (approx.)	0
Hungary	346	0
Estonia	56 **	0
Belgium	51	0
Germany	18 ***	0
Netherlands	17	0
Great Britain	13 ****	0
Italy	7*****	0
Poland	6	0
Switzerland	6	0
Latvia	4	0
Luxembourg	3	0
France	2	0
Lithuania	2	0
Austria	2***	0
Total:	**11640**	**43**

**Emigrants from countries that later formed the Soviet Union and Russian emigrants with refugee passports alongside Karelian and Ingrian men who had not yet gained Finnish citizenship.*
***True number was much higher, but many Estonians were disguised as Finns.*
****German and Austrian emigrants and expatriates.*
*****Preparatory group for the main British contingent.*
****** Unknown why the Finns did not recognize the death of an Italian pilot.*

The table clearly shows the variety of nationalities among the volunteers, even when excluding those who never made it to Finland. The Nordic volunteers from Sweden, Norway and

Denmark, stand out as the largest group, yet there were significant numbers of volunteers from the United States and Hungary as well as stateless emigrants from the former Russian Empire. The latter's presence is an interesting paradox as, officially, recruitment of Russians was not allowed, yet the military had registered approximately 350 volunteers of Russian background. Similarly, Germans, and by extension Austrians, were not allowed to enlist, yet the military recorded twenty such volunteers in Task Force *Sisu*. To further complicate matters, there were the Estonians whose true number was certainly higher than 56, but the actual figure remains unknown; many Estonians served under Finnish names and identities to protect their families from Soviet reprisals.

There were many differences between the various volunteers. A significant portion of Swedish volunteers, for example, were active-duty soldiers in the Swedish army, whereas volunteers from other countries were generally civilians. The reason for this discrepancy was simple: Sweden allowed recruitment for Finland to take place in military units. The example of a fellow soldier or officer is likely to have motivated and encouraged others to join up as well. However, not all of the Swedes who volunteered were soldiers, as recruitment had started immediately when the war began and had initially targeted civilians. In fact, recruitment at first had been done in secrecy to avoid endangering the neutrality of Sweden and the government was criticized for this overly careful approach by right-wing politicians.[6] This led to restrictions being lifted around Christmas of 1939 and the change quickly led to a massive increase in volunteer numbers – as high as 600 prospective volunteers a day contacted the recruitment centre in Stockholm.[7]

[6] Sprague, pp. 64-65.
[7] Sprague, p. 69.

The actual process of volunteering was remarkably similar regardless of the origin country. For example, in both Sweden[8] and Britain[9] a volunteering man – and they were all men[10] – first underwent a medical examination and received vaccinations. They were then informed of the contract they would need to sign, as well as the terms of service and the monetary compensation to be received. After this, the volunteer would need to wait several days until being told if he had been accepted or not. During this period, background checks were done to weed out criminals and communists as well as recruits with other 'unwanted backgrounds', which was a code-word meaning the type of people that the Finns did not want or that the recruiting organizations did not want to send, these types will be discussed later in the chapter.

As the Swedish contingent was by far the largest, it has been studied in more depth than any of the other groups. Thus, the composition of it is better known. Two-thirds of the volunteers were under the age of thirty. Roughly twenty percent had no prior experience with firearms, meaning that they had not completed national service, yet were willing to volunteer for Finland – possibly in non-combat roles.[11] In the British contingent 56% were aged thirty or younger.[12] The British volunteers surprised their hosts as the group included many men considered unfit for combat duties. The Finnish authorities criticized the Finnish Aid Bureau (FAB) in London for sending such men. However, it must be noted that most high-quality candidates would have been snapped up by the British armed forces in September 1939, and that most of the volunteers had probably been rejected by the medical boards of the British Army, Royal Air Force and Royal Navy. One such example would be the quartermaster of the British contingent, Richard Dudley Ryder, who had attempted to join British forces in

[8] Sprague, p. 65.
[9] Brooke, pp. 37-40.
[10] All the fighting volunteers who arrived in Finland were men. There were a few women among the non-combatant volunteers such as those who joined medical ambulance crews. These will be discussed further below.
[11] Sprague, p. 69.
[12] Brooke, p. 44.

September 1939 but, at the age of 35, had been rejected for being too old. Similarly, the medical officer of the British group, Doctor Martin Herford, had attempted to join the RAF, following in the footsteps of his brother, but he had not heard back from them by December and thus decided to volunteer for Finland.[13] This meant that the FAB had to make do with what was available. The statistics of FAB interviews with prospective volunteers show that 30% of candidates were rejected for various reasons.[14] Yet even this relatively high rate of rejection was not sufficient as once the British contingent arrived in Finland, the Finnish authorities deemed a third of them unfit for combat duty due to age, criminal records or serious physical infirmities.[15]

The reasons for volunteering are difficult to explore in a reliable manner. This is especially so in the case of the Finnish Winter War because the conflict only lasted 105 days. There are very few surviving primary sources written by the volunteers themselves, and those that have been published are only from Swedish and British volunteers. Thus far, no first-hand sources from other national viewpoints have been found. Therefore, the analysis here will draw on insights stemming from other conflicts where transnational volunteers were present.

As the general literature on transnational volunteers shows, volunteers have multiple motivations, and these can overlap. There is the sense of patriotic duty (i.e., representing the ideals one associates with one's nation by going to fight for another), often combined with a sense of perceived threat from an external source from other ethnic or national groups. Peer pressure as well as pressure from superiors can be strong motivators. Then, there is the possibility of monetary gain, especially for those from poor backgrounds, and finally the chance for adventure, the opportunity to experience martial combat personally and to leave behind the humdrum of boring domestic life.[16]

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[13] Roberts, p. 178.
[14] Brooke, p. 39 and 45.
[15] Roberts, p. 176.
[16] Nir Arielli and Bruce Collins, *Transnational Soldiers: Foreign Military Enlistment in the Modern Era* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), pp. 7-8.

The financial aspect is the easiest to explore. All volunteers received wages equal to those that Finnish soldiers were paid by the government, but this amount was very small.[17] While it is likely that some volunteers were unemployed and thus had poor prospects back home, it is unlikely that greed was their main motivator. The aforementioned patriotic duty seems to have been a strong factor among Nordic volunteers, especially the Swedes. Helping to defend their next-door neighbour was often framed as benefiting the security of Sweden itself. Thus, the gravestone of John Magnus Sjöqvist, a Swedish pilot shot down by Soviet aircraft, reads: 'Fallen in Finland for Sweden's honor and Nordic independence'.[18] Swedish recruitment posters emphasized the fraternity between the two countries, using slogans like 'Finland's cause is ours! For a greater fight, join the Volunteer Corps' or 'Now the world knows what it means to be a Finn. Show the world what it means to be a Swede' and 'Finland's fight is the fight of the Nordic countries, which is the fight of the Western world'.[19] This was the exact same angle that certain Swedish politicians had used before and during the Winter War to try to get the Swedish government to offer more support to Finland.[20] Thousands of Swedes were willing to fight for Finland, but it is unlikely they would have volunteered for a more distant country, especially one that did not share centuries of history with their homeland.

In a somewhat similar vein, the massive interest of Hungarians in volunteering was likely the result of the linguistic connection between the Finnish and Hungarian languages, which at the time had become a symbol of fraternity between the two countries. This connection emerged in the 19th century as scholars in both countries explored the roots of their languages and traditions. Cooperation between Finnish, Estonian and Hungarian scholars expanded from linguistics to other fields such as ethnography, music, literature and arts.[21] After 1918 this cooperation grew stronger and became more nationalistic, expanding from academic circles

[17] High Command order to Home Front Command, 11 Dec 39. FFMA, Signum 109 Folder 10.
[18] Sprague, p. 142.
[19] Sprague, p. 69.
[20] Jacobson, p. 180.
[21] Sirkka Saarinen, 'The myth of a Finno-Ugrian community in practice', in *Nationalities Paper*, 29:1 (2001), p. 44.

into the public consciousness through education, schooling and sports. Finno-Ugrian cultural congresses were organized in all three countries for scholars, teachers and students, and, despite the expense of travelling in the inter-war period, nearly a thousand people participated in them. Most importantly, this linguistic and ethnic fraternity became part of the identity of many in both Finland and Hungary and was commonly accepted among the general population.[22] In addition to such cultural elements, there were strong feelings of anti-Communism in Hungary, combined with fear of re-emergence of pan-Slavic ideology in Russia, both of whim could threaten Hungary directly. Hungarians saw themselves as a bulwark of Europe and thought of Finland sharing the same position.[23] Without such connections, it would be difficult to explain how the Finnish embassy in Budapest could have registered hundreds of volunteers only a week into the war, and this also begins to explain the enthusiasm of the Hungarian government in organizing a volunteer force for Finland.[24]

A third motivation, especially for the younger men, was the need to test their mettle in combat. For a Briton rejected by his own armed forces, volunteering for Finland offered that chance, especially in the winter of 1939/40 when the war on the Continent was seemingly paused.[25] For a Swede, whose home country was famous for its neutrality, the Winter War similarly offered a unique chance to experience battle. Some joined with a friend or friends, promising to fight as long as Finland would need them, to get to wear a uniform and march with other men to war.[26] The Swedes, Norwegians, Danes and Finnish Americans were the only groups who actually got to see combat during the Winter War. The Svenska Frivilliкåren (SFK) – which included Swedish and Norwegian volunteers, but not Danes – was deployed on the Salla

[22] Saarinen, pp. 45, 49–50.
[23] Gábor Richly, 'Unkari ja Suomen Talvisota' in *Sotahistoriallinen aikakausikirja*, Vol. 15 (1996), pp. 135-137.
[24] Budapest to Helsinki, 7/10 Dec 39. FFMA Signum 109 Folder 16.
[25] Roberts, p. 178.
[26] Sprague, p. 71.

front for a period of a month, and the American Legion saw combat near Lake Ladoga at the very end of the war.[27]

The American Legion embodies both patriotic and martial motivations. Its members were Finns who had emigrated to Canada and the United States at some point in the early 20th century or whose parents had done so in the late 19th century. Some members of the Legion had already returned to Finland once before, in 1918, to fight in the Civil War; others had emigrated during the 1920s. As mentioned in the previous chapter, the Associations of Civil War Veterans were among the first volunteers to contact the Finnish Foreign Ministry even before the Soviet invasion.[28] The first fifty men arrived in Finland just before Christmas and despite the original intention of integrating them with other foreign volunteers, the fact that they could all speak Finnish meant that Captain Albert Penttilä, a veteran of the 1918 Civil War and a volunteer coming from America, could form the Legion as an ad-hoc formation. An old brother-in-arms of the Finnish General Paavo Talvela, he managed to get permission to bring the American and Canadian volunteers to the battlefront at Aittojoki, north of Lake Ladoga.[29]

The American Legion is an interesting paradox among the volunteers of the Winter War. Strictly speaking, its members were not foreigners, despite many of them having American or Canadian citizenship. As first- and second-generation immigrants, and fluent in the Finnish language, they likely felt an even closer ethnic and linguistic pull to their 'Fatherland' and 'Mother language' than the Swedes or the Hungarians. In this sense, they more resemble the volunteering among the Croatian diaspora that took place in the lead up and during the Croatian War of Independence (1991-1995), with the aim of creating an independent Croatia.[30] Similarly, these *ulkosuomalaiset*[31] enthusiastically returned to Finland and the main reason

[27] Chew, p. 136.
[28] Montreal to Helsinki, 29 Sep and 27 Nov 39, FFMA, Signum 109, Folder 10.
[29] Chew, p. 135.
[30] Daphne Winland, *We Are Now a Nation: Croats between 'home' and 'homeland'* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2016), pp. 164-168.
[31] *Ulkosuomalaiset* is a Finnish term that has no exact English translation. It encompasses all ethnic Finns living outside of Finland whether permanently or temporarily, regardless of their citizenship or whether they can speak Finnish and does not carry negative connotations.

why their numbers were in the hundreds and not thousands was the cost of travel. The term diaspora, while initially referring only to Jews, has grown to mean any group of people identifying with a larger community or a country, united by ethnicity as well as cultural and linguistic ties, however weak these might be. Diaspora volunteers are thus individuals who volunteer based primarily on such connection to one side of a conflict.[32]

The main motivation of all the volunteers seems to have stemmed from the perceived unjustness of the Soviet invasion. Despite its attempts to frame the war as the fault of Finland, the Soviet Union was widely seen as the aggressor. The Mainila border incident did not seem to have convinced many, and the creation of the pro-Soviet Terijoki puppet government under Kuusinen had the opposite effect from that which Stalin most likely intended. *New York Times*, for instance, wrote of 'Americans who are grateful to Finland for the gallant fight it is making in behalf of liberty…' while *The Manchester Guardian* spoke of how Kremlin especially detests Finnish government due to it being led by Socialists.[33] *The Washing Post* announced that 'having embarked on a policy of naked imperialism the Kremlin is certain to follow the logic of this course to its inevitable conclusion' and *The Times* described it as 'Russian aggression on the Nazi model'.[34]

Older Soviet claims of secret collaboration between Finland and Germany must have rung hollow after the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact became public and the Red Army marched into Poland. In fact, there were Swedish veterans of the Spanish Civil War, who had fought on the Republican side, and now volunteered to fight for Finland.[35] Certainly, the British who volunteered were described as anti-Communists, with the Secretary of the International Brigades Association going as far as claiming they had the support of leading fascists.[36] The

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[32] Arielli (2018), p. 102.
[33] 'The Defense of Finland', *New York Times*, 12 Dec 1939, p. 26; 'Finland a New Slovakia?', *The Manchester Guardian*, 1 Dec 1939, p. 7.
[34] 'The War Spreads', *The Washington Post*, 1 Dec 1939, p. 19; 'Finland Invaded', *The Times*, 1 Dec 1939, p. 8.
[35] Letter to General Kekoni, 3 February 40, FNA T-6572/5 and Sir Walter Citrine. *My Finnish Diary* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books 1940), p. 162.
[36] Roberts, p. 177.

bombing of Finnish cities and towns on the first day of the war caused widespread condemnation and the immediate enlistment of several Swedish pilots who flew over to Finland on their own accord, before receiving official permission from their government.[37] It is quite ironic that the bombing of civilians was an accident caused by the poor training and skills of the Soviet pilots, whose mission had been to hit Finnish ships in ports and planes in the airfields, both targets located next to civilian populations.[38]

While the international media framed the conflict as one between David and Goliath, for example, *The Times* called it 'an unequal fight' between 'heroic' Finland and that Russia suffered loss of prestige,[39] the Winter War was not as ideologically laden as the Spanish Civil War had been. There was no widespread conservative agenda that would have spurred those leaning to the right of the political spectrum to volunteer, as had happened with the Frenchmen volunteering for Franco in Spain.[40] For those leaning to the left, there seemed to be even less of an ideological motive to volunteer: the participation of the Soviet Union obviously made it impossible for Communist parties to support Finland. It would thus be misleading to characterize the volunteers as simply anti-Communist or anti-Soviet, though both sentiments existed among them. The injustice of the invasion can partially explain why in Britain, the FAB had a record of a grand total of 8,900 offers of volunteering, a number which can be explained by the vast amount of media attention that the Winter War gained. However, the number of British men who eventually reached Finland was much smaller as discussed above.[41]

The actual effect of the media coverage of the Winter War on volunteering is difficult to gauge but it certainly helped, as publicity and media attention have been shown to raise awareness

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[37] Sprague, p. 72 and 'An Early Morning Attack' in *The Times*, 1 Dec 1939, p. 8.
[38] Van Dyke, p. 44.
[39] 'Hand-to-Hand Fighting in Finland' in *The Times*, 29 Dec 1939, p. 6
[40] Judith Keene, *Fighting for God, for Franco and (most of all) for Themselves: Right-Wing Volunteers in the Spanish Civil* War, in Christine G. Kruger & Sonja Levsen (eds), *War Volunteering in Modern Times: From the French Revolution to the Second World War* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), pp. 220-221.
[41] Brooke, p. 45.

among possible volunteers also in other historical and contemporary cases.[42] The pro-Finnish headlines of British newspapers have been mentioned already, and many American newspapers adopted a similar outlook. The poor battlefield performance of the Soviet Red Army was lambasted even by the moderate newspaper *New York Times* which reminded its readers of Stalin's purges and the effect they had had on the officer corps of the Red Army, as well as the chronic shortcomings of the Soviet economic model, mentioning shortages of fuel and food.[43] Thanks to being the only European country to pay back its loans punctually to the United States, most Americans had a positive image of Finland as a noble outpost of democracy in Europe which did not try to take advantage of American generosity. Both liberal and conservative newspapers attacked the Soviet Union harshly, declaring it morally bankrupt and lusting for an empire. Some papers mixed anti-communism and racism, warning about Asiatic hordes invading Europe. Leading American politicians, including former president Herbert Hoover and the incumbent president Franklin D. Roosevelt, could safely promote the Finnish cause without stumbling on any political landmines. According to Gallup data from December 1939, 99% of Americans sided with the Finns and only 1% with the Soviet Union. Which is not surprising, since according to newspaper surveys done in the US at the time, nearly 20% of newspaper coverage in both December 1939 and January 1940 was devoted to Finland.[44]

Another way to look at the motivations of volunteers is the push and pull concept. It argues that volunteers are responding to a combination of factors, some pushing them away from home and others pulling them towards the host nation. For example, a push factor could be unemployment and financial insecurity, as was the case for many urban working-class men who ended up in the International Brigades in Spain. A pull factor, on the other hand, could be

[42] See Arielli, *From Byron to bin Laden*, p. 38 for historical examples, and for a contemporary one, see Naman Karl-Thomas Habtom, 'The Composition and Challenges of Foreign Fighters in Ukraine', *Scandinavian Journal of Military Studies*, 5(1), 2020, pp. 79-90.
[43] Chew, p. 75; 'Why the Russian Army Has Bogged In Finland', *The New York Times*, 7 Jan 1940, p. 77.
[44] Ralph B. Levering, *American Opinion and the Russian Alliance, 1939-1945* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1976), pp. 32-34.

a sense of kinship to the cause of the host nation, and this seems to have been the case for many of the American and British jews who volunteered for cause of Israel in 1948.[45] All the motives listed above can be fitted in this dichotomy of push and pull factors, though there is always the danger of oversimplification when making generalisations.

There is no simple answer to the question of what motivated the volunteers. Even with limited evidence, it is clear that both personal reasons as well as moral and/or ideological reasons were present. Most volunteers are likely to have had multiple reasons, ranging from a sense of adventure and guarantee of upkeep to moral outrage over the Soviet invasion and a desire to fight for liberal democracy. To make the matter more complex, motivation is a matter of emotion and cannot be argued purely through logic and reason. Volunteers themselves might not fully understand their own motivations and even when they recount their past actions, the human memory can be flawed and there exists the problem of both self-censorship and self-promotion, conflated by the temptation to justify the past with later experiences.[46] Justin Brooke, one of the British volunteers and who, much later in life, wrote a book about the British contingent, was interviewed by the Imperial War Museums in 2000 and when asked about his motivation to go to Finland, he answered:

> I felt great sympathy for the Finns since I'd been to Finland twice … it's curious that I was the only person in the British contingent who had been to Finland before …

In other words, he could not explain himself further than just mentioning a general sense of sympathy from having visited Finland before. In the rest of the interview, he talks glowingly about Finland and the Finnish people.[47]

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[45] Arielli (2018), pp. 78-84.
[46] Arielli (2018), pp. 67-69.
[47] IWM Collections, *Brooke, Justin (Oral history)*. Published 13 Mar 2000, available at https://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/80018707 [accessed on 1 Nov 2022]

Finally, what is known about the motivations goes somewhat against the argument presented by Malet, that positions recruiters as the most important tool for convincing volunteers to signup for hardship and possible death.[48] While his argument focuses on civic conflicts, which does not fit the Finnish case, it is unlikely that the motivations between those who volunteer for a state-on-state conflict and those who volunteer for a civic conflict would radically differ. Thus, the fact that some volunteers appeared at Finnish embassies even before the war and that significant numbers signalled their willingness to volunteer before the actual recruitment campaigns were started means that volunteering can and will take place even without effective recruitment. However, it is notable that recruitment did eventually take place in most countries and peer-pressure can and did play a strong part in convincing some volunteers as happened in Sweden and especially among military units.

Unfit adventurers

Not all offers of volunteering were beneficial to the Finns. Captain Krause-Jensen was initially accepted to the Finnish Air Force.[49] The embassy in Copenhagen had to quickly cancel this invitation as they learned more about the man. A French former pilot officer who flew in the Great War, he was now 47, blind in one eye, had not flown in 18 years, had no apartment or furniture due to poor business acumen, and his personality made him unfit as a teacher.[50] A more sinister volunteer was Prince Ferdinand Lichtenstein. The embassy in Paris warned the Foreign Ministry that he was a known German spy, possibly even a Gestapo agent. Quickly a second warning came from London, citing British and Austrian sources. These warnings were taken seriously. The Foreign Ministry warned military authorities that the prince must be apprehended by either military police or the civilian State Police and questioned. The prince

[48] David Malet. *Foreign Fighters: Transnational Identity in Civic Conflicts*, (New York: Oxford Academic 2013). Pp. 5-15.
[49] Helsinki to Copenhagen, 1 Mar 1940. FFMA Signum 109 Folder 12.
[50] Copenhagen to Helsinki, 5 Mar 1940. FFMA Signum 109 Folder 12.

did eventually make it to Finland, where he was politely rejected by the medical board and subsequently left.[51]

A similarly suspicious character was the Finnish communist Niilo Neils Kruth (also known as Nils Milo Kruth), who attempted to travel to Finland under the alias 'Valentine', pretending to be an American volunteer. Having emigrated to Brooklyn with his parents at the age of 12, he had studied at City College of New York and graduated from Columbia University, joining the Communist Party of America in 1924. He had fought in the Washington Battalion and the Abraham Lincoln Battalion in the Spanish Civil War in 1937, was promoted to a lieutenant but returned to the USA in 1938 after being wounded. Unfortunately for him, he had been found out by the other Finnish American and American volunteers and was forcibly removed from the ship as they suspected his loyalties. He spent the rest of the war touring Finnish American communities in Minnesota and Wisconsin, distributing Soviet propaganda leaflets about the Winter War.[52]

Some volunteers made it to Finland despite being physically and mentally completely unfit. For example, Finnish American Antti Siltanen, who arrived in Finland on 20 January 1940 as part of a group of 68 volunteers. The entire group faced several hardships as one man fell overboard and drowned, two lost their minds and had to be immediately returned back, one came seriously ill and two more vanished from the train taking them through Sweden. At the Oulu volunteer camp, Siltanen behaved in such an erratic manner that he was confined to quarters and later taken to mental hospital where a doctor diagnosed him with schizophrenia and Siltanen remained in this asylum for the rest of the war. His platoon mates reported that he often brandished his knife and accused the other men of spying on him.[53] After the Winter War, he was eventually released though it was not long until he ended up in prison, this time

[51] Paris to Helsinki 10 Jan, London to Helsinki 12 Jan, Helsinki to High Command 13 Jan and Helsinki to London 24 Jan 1940. FFMA Signum 109 Folder 13.
[52] Kari Kallonen, *Tähtilippu Talvisodassa: Amerikan suomalaisen legioonan tuntematon tarina* (Juva: Revontuli, 2016), pp. 91–92. Full biography of Kruth available at the Abraham Lincoln Brigade Archives at https://alba-valb.org/volunteers/nils-milo-kruth/ Accessed 1 Oct 2022
[53] Kallonen, pp. 96-98.

for murder. On 2 August 1940, Siltanen came across a protest by Finnish Communists at Helsinki and shot one of them. He was sentenced to eight years of jail time. During the Continuation War, the Finnish Army experimented with the concept of 'a penal battalion' following the German and Soviet examples. On 17 October 1941, Siltanen was transferred from Turku state prison to Independent Battalion 21 (*Erillinen Pataljoona 21/Er. P21*) and he was killed in action only ten days later, on 27 October 1941, in a fierce battle at the village of Kumsa.[54]

As mentioned earlier, a conflict can act like a magnet for adventurers of all sorts and the Winter War was not an exception. This was especially true for fliers as Finland was short of both planes and pilots. There were several pilots of questionable quality who came to Finland to take advantage of the situation. One of the most outrageous was the so-called Black Eagle, real name Hubert Fauntleroy Julian, born at Trinidad in 1897. While he was a real pilot, having flown aerial circus stunts in New York City in the 1920s and serving in the Ethiopian Air Force for four months, until he crashed Emperor Haile Selassie's personal airplane.[55] He was made a captain in the Finnish Air Force, yet he called himself Field Marshal of Abyssinia. He flew only two practice flights and got lost during the second one. Instead of flying, he dined at the most expensive restaurants, chased women and fought with a Finnish junior officer who did not give his seat in a train quickly enough. He was dismissed and sent back to the US before the Winter War even ended. Julian wasn't the only useless pilot arriving from North America. Americans Frank Clevenger, David Bondurant and Charles Doran, as well as Canadians Cameron McMaster, Edward Owens and JW Jenkins all did more harm than good while serving in Finland. McMaster wrecked a Brewster plane while trying to land it on his maiden flight and required hospitalization. Clevenger spent more time giving interviews to Finnish journalists than actually flying. Jenkins was deemed so unsuitable he was not even allowed inside a

[54] Kallonen, pp. 190, 212-214.
[55] David Shaftel, 'The Black Eagle of Harlem: The truth behind the tall tales of Hubert Fauntleroy Julian', *Air & Space Magazine*, 2009. https://www.smithsonianmag.com/air-space-magazine/the-black-eagle-of-harlem-95208344/

cockpit. Bondurant and Doran both damaged the Blenheim light bombers they were trying to fly. Owens lost his nerve after witnessing a single Soviet bombing raid and immediately wanted to resign. Before leaving Finland, he racked a massive bill at the hotel he had been staying in, which is why he fled during the night.[56]

A final pilot-adventurer was a Spanish colonel, Alfonso Reyes. The Finnish embassy in London received a warning about him from a British Foreign Office official who had previously been posted to Finland. He had seen an interview of Reyes in a newspaper in which the Spaniard had stated his intention to travel to Finland, prodding the British official, Burbury, to warn the Finns. The information concerning Reyes, also known as Beres and Perez, was both dramatic and difficult to take seriously, as it painted a picture of a scoundrel and a bigamist who had been imprisoned in multiple countries, including Japan, and somehow had fought on both sides of the Spanish civil war, being both chief of Republican Air Force and personal friend of Franco. Understandably, Finnish authorities were concerned about such a character and General Melander, the commander of High Command Foreign Office, asked Finnish Foreign Ministry to find out more from Spain. The Spanish consul to Finland, Valdés Torata, answered that though there was a discrepancy considering the name, he was certain that Reyes/Perez was a former 'Red' pilot and likely a Soviet spy. Accordingly, the Swedish volunteer office in Stockholm refused him entry and the Spaniard never arrived in Finland. As the various warnings mention the Swedish newspaper *Hufvudstadsbladet* and the British newspaper *Daily Telegraph*, it seems that whatever the true nature of Perez was, he did not keep his intentions secret and like the boastful pilots mentioned earlier, eagerly talked to journalists.[57]

Chapter Three will examine the handling of problematic volunteers further as they ended up causing trouble for their Finnish hosts after the Winter War. It seems clear that some volunteers were completely out of their depth due to poor health or lack of skills while others

[56] Kallonen, pp. 157-161.
[57] London to Helsinki, 19 Feb/HCFO to Helsinki, 25 Feb/letter from Torata to Voionmaa 31 Jan. FFMA signum 109/14.

came in search of an easy payday and comfortable living, neither of which were available in poor Finland. These examples showcase the ultimate hazard that foreign volunteers can pose, being a danger to their host nation. A pilot that wrecks his plane is worse than no pilot at all and an enemy agent can cause critical damage. Not that Finland is unique in facing such trouble from volunteers. A recent comparison can be made with Ukraine in 2022, where thousands of volunteers flocked to help them fight off the Russian invader amidst massive media attention in an eerily similar situation to Finland in 1939, only for the Ukrainians ending up having to dismiss majority of them as unsuitable and unqualified.[58]

From talk to action – how the Army organized the volunteers

If the diplomats of the Finnish Foreign Ministry were surprised by the number of foreign volunteers showing up at embassies and consulates, as we saw in Chapter 1, so were the career soldiers in the Finnish Defence Ministry. While the matter was seen as important and had been discussed in November 1939, its initial handling was left in the hands of General Oscar Enckell, a long-term career officer whom the Commander-in-Chief Mannerheim trusted to handle all sorts of foreign matters. However, Enckell had other matters to deal with, such as procuring weapons and equipment from abroad as well as high-level meetings in Europe to negotiate for official assistance and as being the go-to military expert whenever Finnish diplomats needed one. His official title was Special Envoy of the High Command. Thus, it is not surprising that a special office was established in December and General Heikki Kekoni was appointed as the commander of the Volunteer Office of the High Command.

An equally important military organ was the Home Front Command. Following the outbreak of war, the peace-time Finnish National Guard was mobilized as part of the armed forces and its headquarters became the Home Front Command, responsible for everything outside the

[58] Andrew Milburn. 'Legion of the damned: Inside Ukraine's army of misfits, veterans, and war tourists in the fight against Russia' in *Task and Purpose*. Published on 18 Mar 2022, available at https://taskandpurpose.com/news/ukraine-foreign-legion/ accessed 30 Nov 2022

actual battle fronts. So, it was the old National Guard men at the rail station of Tornio who first met foreign volunteers on arrival in Finland. General Lauri Malmberg and his chief of staff, Colonel Eino Martola, delegated matters down to local commanders. Throughout the war, the Home Front Command was responsible for supplying and supporting the volunteers as well as initially training them.[59]

It is very telling of the lack of preparation that it was only on 12 of December, almost two weeks after the war had started, that Malmberg issued the first orders on how to handle foreign volunteers. In the first letter sent to local commanders, the volunteers are only divided into foreigners and tribal Finns, i.e., Viena-Karelians, Aunus-Karelians and Ingrians. The former was to be sent to 'national units if such exist or to a nearest replacement depot' while the latter were directed to Kemi, where Major Hämäläinen was setting up his volunteer unit of Tribal Finns (to whom we will return later on). Malmberg's order was quite un-army like in its lack of firm guidance to units lower in the chain of command. High quality volunteers were to be sent for officer training for three months, but the order did not say when and where this training would take place, nor who was responsible for it. Volunteers were to be asked for their preference on where they wanted to serve, which is quite extraordinary considering the situation, likely stemming from the idea that most volunteers would be highly trained specialists, though this certainly was not the case.[60] Between the 12 and 21 of December, clear progress was made with the second order that had a firmer tone. This time written by Colonel Martola, it lists the volunteer units and their locations at that point in time:

1. Swedes and Norwegians were to be sent to Tornio, under Swedish command
2. Karelians and Ingrians were to be sent to Kemi, under Finnish command
3. Danes were to be sent to Oulu, under Danish command

[59] Juutilainen, pp. 770-771.
[60] Letter from Home front Command to all sub-commands, 12 Dec 39. FNA, T-6572/5.

4. Finnish Americans and Canadians were to be sent to Oulu, under Finnish command
5. Everyone else were to be sent to Lapua to join Task Force *Sisu*, under Finnish command
6. Pilots and flight technicians were to be sent to Parola, to join the Finnish Air Force
7. Special cases to be reported to Home Front Command

Martola pointed out that the Navy was not accepting volunteers, though this was to change later during the Continuation War. Several details concerning signing of contracts and private equipment that volunteers might bring with them were also explained, as well as instructions on what to do if a volunteer wants to resign and leave. [61]

It speaks highly of the abilities of Martola and his staff that, while handling numerous other demands – conscripting and training replacements for the Finnish field army, securing supply transports, guarding installations, performing air warden duties, helping the police with maintaining public order – they were nonetheless able to create an effective framework for organizing volunteers to make training possible as well as to get combat-capable volunteers to the front as quickly as possible. Obviously, it would have been better if such plans had been prepared before the war, so that they could have been implemented even before the Red Army crossed the Finnish borders or at the very least on Day 1 of the Winter War. However, unlike most other conflicts that attracted foreign volunteers, Finland had a fully working military infrastructure to ease and assist this process.

In a similar vein, the government took steps to ensure that volunteer rights and responsibilities were based on legislation. A Cabinet Decree on 21 December 1939 ordered those foreign volunteers in service of the Finnish Armed Forces were eligible for food, accommodation, a

[61] Letter from Home front Command to all sub-commands, 21 Dec 39, FNA, T-6572/5.

daily allowance, monthly pay, flight bonus and similar benefits based on same criteria as Finnish conscripts. Volunteers with officer or NCO rank from foreign militaries would have that rank acknowledged. Signing a contract was now legally mandated, but if an earlier contract gave a volunteer better terms than what this decree stated, the earlier contract would be honoured.[62]

As mentioned in the previous chapter, the organization was improved in beginning of March – very late in Winter War - with the establishment of the High Command Volunteer Office and ordering general Enckell as its commander.[63] The HCVO would from then on handle almost all matters related to foreign volunteers, and it kept this job through the brief period of peace between the Winter and Continuation Wars and throughout that later conflict.

The achievements of the foreign volunteers

A soldier who cannot effectively communicate with others, is not of much use on the battlefield and can be more dangerous to his comrades than to the enemy. This has always made multi-ethnic or multi-linguistic armies difficult. The solution has always been the same: segregate languages into their own groups. A modern example can be found in the civil war in Spain, where both sides organized their foreign volunteers into groups based on language as well as nationality. This was absolutely necessary especially on the Republican side, where estimated 54 nationalities of volunteers spoke over 30 different languages![64] As explained above, the Finns followed the same paradigm. Organizing the volunteers in such groups happened under pressure of the war and with a push from both the High Command, as well as the initiative of individuals who took advantage of opportunities available to them.

Ranger Battalion 5 (*Sissipataljoona 5, SissiP.5*) is a good example of such improvisation during a rapidly evolving situation. Major Viljo Hämäläinen, who had volunteered in 1917 to receive

[62] Letter from Defence Ministry to Volunteer Office, 17 May 40, FNA, T-6572/5.
[63] Juutilainen, p. 771.
[64] Jorge Marco & Maria Thomas, 'Mucho malo for fascisti: Languages and Transnational Soldiers in the Spanish Civil War', *War & Society*, 38 (2019), p. 141.

military training in Germany and later fought on the White side during the Finnish Civil War, knew that many Ingrian and Karelian men would not be automatically called up as they were not citizens or had gained citizenship later in life, thus passing the age bracket for compulsory national service. Some did serve in the National Guard (*Suojeluskunta*), the paramilitary volunteer training organization. Under his own initiative, Hämäläinen established Force H at the town of Kemi and through his connections in the National Guard, put out the word that he was recruiting tribal Finns. Over the Christmas period and through January 1940, enough men arrived at Kemi that the Force swelled to several hundred, allowing the creation of multiple companies. The officers of the unit were Finns. On 5 February 1940, Force H was renamed Ranger Battalion 5 (*SissiP.5*) and sent to the Kuhmo front to deal with the emergency caused by the arrival of the Soviet ski brigade 'Dolin'.[65] The average age of the battalion was 28, but the older men were mostly placed into the supply column and the rifle companies were staffed by young men, giving the unit a high level of fitness. It performed well in combat though suffering 72 dead and 124 wounded in roughly a month of fighting.[66] This volunteer unit was not part of the general mobilisation; it was not established alongside the field army and its members were not conscripted to the Finnish military. While it started out with Karelians, it soon involved Ingrians, Estonians and even a German named Wenzeslaus Högel who had been living in Viipuri before the war but joined quickly on 10 December 1939 and survived the war.[67] This formation illustrated that tribal units could prove useful for the Finnish war effort, even if the recruits were not Finnish citizens. Ultimately, it was a small unit where foreign volunteers were restricted to the rank and file, though it is likely that it served as an example of what was

[65] Named after its commander, colonel Dolin, the brigade was an ad-hoc formation made up of the three ski battalions of the Soviet 9th Army formed in February 1940 with the purpose of relieving the encircled 54th Mountain Rifle Division near the Finnish town of Kuhmo. For more detail in English, see Nenye, Vesa et al., *Finland at War: The Winter War 1939-40* (Oxford: Osprey Publishing, 2015), pp. 163-165.
[66] Väinö Mononen, *Dolinin hiihtoprikaati: Kuoleman kuriiri Kuhmossa* (Book on Demand, 2018), pp. 155–156.
[67] Letter from SissiP.2 to Procopé, 6 Jun 40. FNA, T/6572-5.

possible and thus led to the idea of recruiting tribal Finns more widely in the Continuation War, something that will be discussed in Chapter 4.

While being a completely different formation, the Svenska Frivilligkåren (SFK) ended up being just as useful. It was better organized despite not having been planned for before the war. It was the only operationally independent formation consisting of foreign volunteers and the Finnish High Command trusted it enough to attach Finnish units to it. SFK took responsibility for the Lapland region from the Finnish Lapland Group (*Lapin Ryhmä*) on 28 February 1940. As Lieutenant-General Ernst Linder took over from Major-General Kurt Wallenius, the Swedish general became the commander of Finnish units Group Pennanen (*Ryhmä Pennanen*), fighting at Petsamo, and Independent Battalion 17 (*Erillinen Pataljoona 17*/*Er. P 17*) fighting at Saija. Saija is a separate location from Salla, where the main body of the SFK was fortifying itself.[68] It was not common for foreign volunteers to assume command over local units, and this is the only known case of it happening in Finland during the Winter War. This makes it clear that the Finnish High Command trusted the Swedish volunteers, both their commanding officers to handle the situation as well as their rank and file to hold the line, even if it was a secondary front.

The Swedes' deployment in Lapland was due to two reasons: one being geography, as the Salla area was the closest front to Tornio, where the border between Finland and Sweden lay; the other was political and diplomatic. As mentioned in Chapter 1, Field Marshall Mannerheim had made a clear decision that foreign volunteers would not be utilized as cannon fodder. Instead, they would be placed on quieter fronts, freeing up Finnish troops that could then be thrown into places where the need was greatest, this being the Viipuri front from February 1940 onwards.

[68] Pentti Airio, *Sallan suunnan taistelut 1939-1940* (Maanpuolustuskorkeakolun Sotahistorian laitos, 2009), p. 32.

SFK was organized into three separate elements. The first to get into combat was the flying element, Flight Squadron F19 on 12 January 1940. Up to that point, there had been nothing opposing the Soviet air force in northern Finland. With 12 Gloster Gladiator fighters and 4 Hawker Hart light bombers flown by Swedish airmen, they represented a significant combat force and were a welcome sight at Veistiluoto airfield.[69] The second element was the Battle Group (*Stridsgruppen*) which consisted of the Swedish volunteers organized into two reinforced infantry battalions. It entered combat on 28 February 1940 as it replaced the Finnish Infantry Regiment 40 (*Jalkaväkirykmentti 40 / JR40*) at Salla. The third element was the supply and training group back at Kemi, where further Swedish and Norwegian volunteers were trained and the logistics tail of the SFK was handled.[70] The group eventually grew to 11,000 men by early March, though this number includes its attached Finnish units. The Swedes performed well enough that, after the war, Linder was promoted to General of Cavalry and his chief of staff, lieutenant-colonel C.A. Ehrensvärd to full colonel. Several members received medals, some of which Mannerheim handed out personally when he travelled to Märkäjärvi on 24 March 1940 to thank the volunteers.[71]

The most notable battle for the Swedes happened near the end of the war at Salla. Most of the period was characterized by artillery duels and occasional infantry fire exchange between Russians and Swedes as the Salla front had settled into trench warfare. Lieutenant Grafström, who later became a General and the commandant of the Swedish military academy, led a 100-man strong patrol behind Soviet lines. Over a day of cat-and-mouse action, as the Russians tried to ambush the Swedes, who in turn counter-ambushed the Russians. Soviet forces reportedly suffered some 200 casualties while the Swedes only had a few. This made the 40 casualties suffered under Soviet bombardment on the very last day of the war a far more significant blow.[72]

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[69] Airio, p. 18.
[70] Airio, p. 32.
[71] Airio, pp. 37-38.
[72] Airio, p. 33.

The third formation with volunteers that managed to fight at the front was the American Finnish Legion (*Amerikansuomalaisten Legioona/ASL*). As briefly mentioned earlier, it was an ad-hoc formation similar to the tribal Finn Force H. When the first North American-based Finns arrived in Finland, lieutenant Albert Penttilä led a group of the most eager and best trained volunteers to the frontlines at the north side of Lake Ladoga, while the rest started training and preparing for the arrival of further volunteers from Canada and the United States. Penttilä was ordered to take command of the 7th company of Infantry battalion 3 (*Jalkaväkipataljoona 3/JP3*) from Regiment 16 (*Jalkaväkirykmentti 16/JR16*) and his Finnish Americans were assigned as casualty replacements to the same unit, which also absorbed the remains of the 3rd company of the same battalion. Penttilä had fought in the Great War, the Finnish Civil War, the Estonian War of Independence, and in Morocco as a member of the French Foreign Legion. After suffering from malaria, he moved to the United States via Mexico and ended up as a married mechanical engineer in New York.[73]

On 15 February, Penttilä was ordered to take command of the entire battalion, though due to casualties suffered, it was wildly understrength. The ASL men were a minority in the battalion, but their performance stood out and they ended up performing majority of the dangerous ski recon patrols over the No Man's Land between Finnish and Russian trenches. The three volunteers that performed most patrols were Oskari Parkkali, a construction supervisor, Aimo Penttilä (not to be confused with Albert Penttilä, the commanding officer), formerly a petty officer on a merchant ship, and Toivo Kaksonen, a steam engine fireman on a merchant ship. Their civilian professions certainly could not predict their feats on the battlefield. Private Aimo Penttilä lost his life on 1 March during a counterattack near the Aittojoki bridge. He was the first member of ASL to be killed in action. Lieutenant Albert Penttilä was awarded the 3rd Class Freedom Cross (*Vapaudenristi*) after the war for his leadership. After the Winter War ended,

[73] Kallonen, pp. 105–107.

he applied for the surviving ASL members of the battalion, 13 men, to be released from military service, which Finnish military authorities granted in mid-April.[74]

Foreign pilots suffered the highest casualty rates among the volunteers, as was to be expected. Their overall personnel numbers were low and therefore each injured or dead pilot meant a significant percentual increase. Danish lieutenant, Count Erhard Frijs, or Erhard Krad-Jüel-Vind-Frijs of Frijsenborg, had arrived in Finland on 26 December 1939 but it was not until late January 1940 that he was assigned to Air Regiment 2 (*Lentorykmentti 2*) where most foreign pilots found themselves once they proved capable of flying. As a well performing pilot, he quickly mastered the Dutch-built Fokker D.XXI plane and joined Flight 1 of Squadron 24 which is a prominent position as the squadron commander led the first flight. During a combat mission on 19 February, the squadron leader Gustaf Magnusson[75] had to perform an emergency landing due to mechanical failure, leaving Frijs flying with two Finns, lieutenant Sarvanto and sergeant Kinnunen. North of the city of Viipuri, they spotted six Soviet Tupolev SB-2 bombers, with skis on them, and commenced an attack run. However, all three Finnish Fokkers were damaged by machinegun fire from the bombers and only Sarvanto and Kinnunen made it back to their base. Frijs was seen diving to the ground. His maimed body was found next to his crashed plane, with slight burns on his face.[76] His family wanted Frijs to be buried at home so instead of cremation, his coffin and possessions were sent by rail, first to Tornio and from there through Sweden to Denmark, though they accidentally made a detour through Helsinki.[77] He was not the only Danish pilot to die in Finland. Lieutenant Fritz Rasmussen had perished on 2 February 1940, assigned to the same Regiment and Squadron as Frijs and also flying with Magnusson. During air combat between Finnish Fokkers and a mix of Russian I-153

[74] Kallonen, pp. 108–111.
[75] Despite his name, he was a Finn and not a Swedish or Danish volunteer. He eventually became a Major General, though he started the Winter War as a Captain. He was promoted to a Major during the Winter War which is why his rank is reported differently between sources.
[76] After-action report to Air Regiment 2 by Sarvasto, 19 Feb 40. FNA T/6571-3.
[77] Letter from Air Regiment 2 to col Procopé, 17 Mar 40 and letter from Danish embassy to col Procopé, 8 Mar 40. FNA T/6571-3.

and I-16 fighter planes, Rasmussen's plane was hit in the fuel tank, and his plane smashed through the ice of Lake Saimaa as a fireball, though he must have tried to eject from the plane at the last moment as his body was discovered on the ice, whereas his plane lie at the bottom of the lake until it was lifted in 1979. He had been a good friend of Count Frijs as they had both served in the Naval Air Service (*Marinens Flyvevæsen)* in Denmark, and they had traveled together to Finland with five other Danish pilots. The loss of these two pilots hit the Squadron especially hard as the Finns had quickly grown fond of the duo, famous for their gentlemanlike behaviour, friendly demeanor and good humour, despite the language issue. The staff of Squadron 24 spoke a mixture of English, Swedish and Danish to communicate. In fact, the Danish pilots paid a heavy price as out of eight volunteers, four were killed in action and two more were wounded.[78]

A similarly sad fate awaited the lone Italian volunteer who saw combat, staff sergeant Diego Manzocchi. The likely reason why his death was not marked in the official statistics was that he came from France on his own and not from Italy as part of the small official Italian contingent. He had deserted from Italy to France in September 1939 after falling in love with a French woman, flying his Fiat C.R. 20 Aviano plane from Milan to Gap Tallard airfield. He was interned but considered harmless and, while the plane was returned to Italy, Manzocchi was not.[79] In Paris, while wandering around after being rejected by the French woman for whom he had deserted, he met two Canadian pilots on their way to Finland. The Italian decided to join them but for some reason he went through the Swedish embassy in Paris instead of the Finnish one. He was interviewed at Stockholm and arrived at Tornio on 7 February and was interviewed

[78] Erkki Mattila. 'Luutnantti Fritz Rasmussen – tanskalainen vapaaehtoinen lentäjä Talvisodassa', *Kansa taisteli – miehet kertovat*, (Sanoma Oy: 1958 – Suomen Sotahistoriallinen Seura: 2014). Available at http://kansataisteli.sshs.fi/julkaisemattomat-kirjoitukset/kirjoitukset/ts/Kirjoitus_1557.pdf [accessed on 1 Oct 22]

[79] Professor Luigi G de Annan argues that the romantic story was merely a cover and that Manzocchi was either spying for the Italians and had to crash land due to a technical issue or that he was delivering secret communiques from anti-Fascist groups in Italy to France. His version of the story is available at: https://www.ts.fi/lukijoilta/119328 accessed 14.03.2019

again. The journey continued to Lapua where Manzocchi spent a short while at Task Force *Sisu*. Unlike the many useless pilots mentioned earlier, the Italian was deemed to be 'a real pilot with skill' and ended up at Utti air base, flying the Fiat G.50 monoplane, which he had never flown before due to the plane being so new. It is somewhat ironic that an Italian deserter-volunteer would end up flying the most modern Italian plane, donated to Finland. He performed nine combat missions but did not achieve any kills and his tenth mission became his last. Flying as the wingman for Finnish lieutenant Olli Puhakka, he tried to catch Soviet DB-3 bombers. To their ill fortune, they found a horde of nearly a hundred planes, escorted by Soviet I-153 fighters. Puhakka managed to shoot down one bomber and then retreat but Manzocchi was not as lucky. Local villagers saw his plane crash land on the frozen Lake Ikola. Apparently, the landing wheels had gotten stuck in the soft snow, and this caused the plane to flip upside down. It took several hours until a rescue party managed to extract the pilot from the cockpit of the plane, half buried in snow and ice. At the field hospital, death was determined to have been caused by a combination of a concussion from crash landing, bleeding caused by a bullet in one lung, and being stuck upside down for hours.[80]

Conclusion

While after fighting had begun, the Finnish military realised it would need to expect foreign volunteers, it did not prepare for them before the war. Practical matters, from reception to housing to clothing had to be organized quickly during the first month of the conflict. The overall handling of the volunteers was also somewhat chaotic to begin with, but this was fixed during the war, and by March 1940, things were well organized and responsibilities between the High Command, the Home Front Command, and the combat formations properly divided. The volunteers were divided into groups based on nationality or ethnicity, and language. Exceptions were made for some specialists, like pilots, though attempts were made to

[80] Tapio Huttunen, *Italian ja Suomen ilmavoimien ylikersantti Diego Manzocchin lyhyt elämäntarina* https://ilmakilta.info/diego.php Published in Jan 2011, [accessed on 25 Feb 2022]

concentrate foreigners in as few units as possible. While only three formations of volunteers saw combat, this number would have risen had the war continued longer and it was clearly the intention of the Finnish military command that foreign volunteers would serve in their own units, using their own language.

It is important to note that the foreign volunteers were not used as cannon fodder. The Swedish-Norwegian *SFK* was assigned at the quietest part of the front, and it is likely that the Hungarians, Danes and Task Force *Sisu* would have been assigned similar sectors. In a stark contrast, the vanguard of the *ASL* and the *Sissi P.5* were immediately sent to bloody battles, the former at Aittojoki near Lake Ladoga and the latter at Kuhmo. The reason for this difference is most likely three-fold. Firstly, both of these units were commanded by experienced officers who personally wanted action. Secondly, the men all spoke Finnish, at least at a passable level, meaning that there would not be any language barrier at the battlefield. Thirdly, the men were not really foreign, being either ethnic Finns who had emigrated elsewhere or tribal Finns who had immigrated into Finland years ago. Thus, they could not fill the same propaganda role that the other, more 'exotic' volunteers could. And the propaganda value was not small as Finnish newspapers were keen to report about foreign volunteers.[81]

As to the volunteers themselves, their motivations for volunteering are difficult to discover due to lack of primary sources as the Finnish authorities did not ask the volunteers why they came to Finland. Based on literature from other conflicts and what little sources there are, it seems that the motivations run across a gamut, and most volunteers had more than a single reason for wanting to fight. They also include both push and pull factors, a volunteer could feel a push factor in their homeland, for example rejection from their national armed forces, while simultaneously feeling a pull factor from Finland, for example a need to defend democracy.

[81] For example, *Aamulehti* on 31 Dec 1939 dedicated a quarter of its front page for talking about Swedish volunteers arriving in Finland.

Chapter 3: The Interwar Period

On 13 March 1940, the Winter War ended after 105 days. The previous day, Finnish diplomats had signed a cease-fire treaty in Moscow. Stalin had quietly dropped the Terijoki puppet government and agreed to negotiate directly with Helsinki.[1] On 25 January, the Soviet Foreign Minister Molotov had still insisted to the German ambassador that making peace with the 'Ryti-Tanner government' was impossible. Yet the following day Yartsev, the Russian architect of the secret negotiations before the war, returned to Stockholm to agree to the Swedish offer of mediation and, on 29 January, Tanner, the Finnish Foreign Minister, was informed that Moscow was willing to talk to him.[2]

Stalin no longer demanded the complete annexation of Finland and was content to end the war as quickly as possible. It is impossible to know for certain whether the presence of foreign volunteers played a role in this change of heart. Obviously, the poor performance of the Red Army versus the Finns must have been the primary reason – the Soviets suffered one-and-a-half times more daily casualties during the Winter War than they suffered during the five months of the battle over Stalingrad.[3] It is possible that the Franco-British plans for sending troops to Finland were known in Moscow and, if so, they probably played an important role, whereas foreign volunteers probably did not.[4] As explained in the previous chapters, the first significant volunteer group to be battle ready was the SFK, consisting mainly of Swedes, and they assumed responsibility for the Salla front on 28 February, well after the Soviet had begun peace talks. It is possible that the presence of volunteers in Finland added pressure on the Soviet leadership alongside other factors. When it comes to affecting the fighting, the

[1] Singleton, p. 131.
[2] Jakobson, p. 215.
[3] Roger R. Reese, 'Lessons of the Winter War: A Study in the Military Effectiveness of the Red Army, 1939-1940', *The Journal of Military History*, Vol. 72, no. 3. (2008), pp. 830-831.
[4] Reese, p. 849.

volunteers most likely only somewhat alleviated Finnish lack of manpower but did not have time to influence resistance against the Red Army.

Thus, the Finnish authorities had to shift their priorities from recruiting and transporting volunteers to Finland, to repatriating them. However, as uncertainty over the fate of Finland remained, this change was not immediately clear to them. Many volunteers were willing to remain in Finland in case the Soviet Union would resume hostilities. As the volunteers were contractually under military control until released by the Army, the Foreign Ministry had no immediate role to play. Once no renewed Soviet attack materialized, the Foreign Ministry began to organize return travel for the volunteers whose upkeep was being paid by the Finnish State. The initial Finnish plans were ruined first when Germany invaded Denmark and Norway on 9 April 1940 and then began its grand offensive against the Netherlands, Belgium and France on 10 May 1940. Volunteers from those countries who had not been repatriated yet were placed in a difficult position. This also applied to the British volunteers who now found themselves stranded in Finland. Others had already been demobilized, yet all of them looked to the Finnish authorities for assistance. And just as the Finns had not had proper plans for the recruitment and transport of volunteers once war began, they also had no plans for sending the volunteers home once war ended and therefore had to continuously improvise and react as the international situation changed. The situation was made more complicated by conflicting agendas between different Finnish institutions as the military, the diplomats, and the state police did not always see eye to eye.

This chapter will examine what happened to the volunteers who had arrived in Finland during the Winter War or immediately after, as well as how the Finnish State treated them in the aftermath of a lost war, generally showing a tremendous generosity towards them while navigating the complex international situation Finland was in. It is divided into sub-chapters that focus on particular issues in chronological order: the uncertain spring of 1940 and subsequent developments over the summer of that year; problems with the North American

connection via the port of Petsamo; the repeated attempts to expatriate the British contingent that remained as the largest group of volunteers in Finland; and the maintenance of remaining volunteers as the possibility of a renewed war against the Soviet Union emerged in 1941, this time jointly with Germany. This 'quiet' period between the Winter War and the Continuation War has not been researched much when it comes to the volunteers, the assumption seemingly having been that the volunteers just went home and nothing of interest could have happened. However, the chapter will show that sending volunteers home can become a major problem for the host country and their presence can similarly cause issues that the Finnish authorities had to solve. It will also reinforce the unique nature of the Finnish case due to the level of care that the Finns provided to the volunteers.

An uncertain future

Finnish embassies in Europe were eager to report to their host countries how their volunteers had performed. The embassy in Paris asked for such a report immediately on 14 March, wishing to know the total numbers of volunteers as well as how many were non-Swedes.[5] Once the fighting in Norway began, the French authorities asked the Finnish ambassador in Paris if the volunteers could be sent to Norway to join the French troops there. Helsinki had to refuse this suggestion as the remaining volunteer forces were in the process of disbanding and the only elements that were still functional as combat units were the British and the Hungarians.[6] The Finnish Aid Bureau in London informed the Finns that they did not object to their volunteers remaining in Finland for the time being, if needed, which the Finns accepted. This meant that the full group of British volunteers that arrived in Finland just after the Winter War had remained together as a unit.[7] It is questionable whether the group could have been turned around and quickly returned to Britain, but their presence would later cause the

[5] Paris to Helsinki, 14 Mar 1940. FFMA Signum 109 Folder 10.
[6] Paris to Helsinki and response, 13 Apr 1940. FFMA Signum 109 Folder 10.
[7] Helsinki to London and responses, 14/15/16 Mar 1940. FFMA Signum 109 Folder 11.

Foreign Ministry significant problems. The FAB even considered continuing recruitment in Britain.[8] It was fortunate for the Finns that this did not happen as it would have only caused bigger problems for the Finnish diplomats.

The British were not the only volunteers to remain. A group of 33 Norwegians who had served at the Third Independent Vehicle Repair Shop during the war signed new, peace-time contracts to keep fixing captured Soviet tanks and trucks at the town of Kajaani for a month after the war.[9] At Task Force *Sisu*, there were still 171 volunteers that were not part of the three major national contingents – the Danish, the Hungarians and the British. Out of these 171, 37 men wanted to leave now that the war was over, but 134 agreed to stay 'for the moment'.[10]

Attempts to repatriate the Belgian volunteers provide a striking example of the difficulties entailed in demobilizing transnational soldiers while a broader global conflict was still raging. After the Winter War ended, the Belgian ambassador visited the Finnish Foreign Ministry twice and stated firmly that some of his countrymen were drunks and rabble, who should be jailed, and that Belgium will not accept responsibility for them. He was especially critical of the leader of the Belgian group because, in his opinion, he was unfit for command duty.[11] He was the most anti-volunteer official in Finland as the other volunteers received at least some level of support from their embassies, though the British ambassador Vereker was not far behind him, openly calling the men of the British contingent 'unscrupulous adventurers' and did his best to minimize his contact with them.[12] The Finns had already moved both the Dutch and the Belgian volunteers to Stockholm, where they remained stranded ever since the German invasion of their home countries, though six of them had made it home through Norway. In

[8] London to Helsinki, 17 Mar 1940. FFMA Signum 109 Folder 11.
[9] Letter to High Command Volunteer Office (from now on HCVO), 4 Jun 40. FNA T-6572-5.
[10] Letter to HCVO, undated but wording makes it clear it was written right after end of Winter War. FNA T-6572-5.
[11] Helsinki memo, 29 Mar/22 Apr 1940. FFMA Signum 109 Folder 10.
[12] Veli-Matti Syrjö. 'Kulttuurien kohtaaminen: englantilaiset Talvisodan vapaaehtoiset Suomessa' in *Sotahistoriallinen aikauskirja*, Vol. 9 (1990)

fact, the Belgian government billed the Finns for their ship tickets, in the middle of the German invasion.[13]

Comparing this Belgian effort to how the FAB operated in Britain or how the *Finlandskommittee* worked in Sweden shows the differences in the approach towards recruitment between countries. It seems that the Belgian government was not as supportive of volunteering as their Swedish and British counterparts were. Superficially, the recruitment and organization of volunteers was done by a private group of enthusiasts in each country, but neither the British nor the Swedish effort could have achieved what they did without ample support from their respective governments. Thus, only a small group of Belgian volunteers had arrived in Finland, and they ended up causing some difficulty for the Finns as it is likely that they were not screened as comprehensively as they probably should have been.

Colonel Procopé continued his grim task of collecting the remains and possessions of fallen foreign volunteers. He received confirmation shortly after the end of the war that the Finnish Defence Ministry would pay transportation costs abroad.[14] As most deceased volunteers had died during the latter days of the war, this process continued throughout the spring and even into the summer. For example, the meagre possessions of the Italian pilot Manzocchi were sent to Procopé on 4 April and his unit, Air Regiment 2, had burned his letters as they did not know what else to do with them.[15] The Italian embassy confirmed on 5 June that the belongings and pay of Manzocchi had been handed over to his mother.[16] In a few cases Procopé had to act as a detective as in the case of the Swedish volunteer Gerhard Ström who died on 23 February 1940 at Petäjänsaari, a small island on the north side of Lake Ladoga. This was an important location for the Finns, as it allowed them to prevent the Soviets from supplying their encircled troops via the frozen lake. As the situation on that front was

[13] Brussels to Helsinki, 25 May 1940. FFMA Signum 109 Folder 10.
[14] Letter from High Command to Col Procopé, 24 Mar 1940. FNA T-6571-3.
[15] Letter from Air Squadron 26 to Col Procopé, 4 April 40. Letter from Air Regiment 2 to Col Procopé, 14 April 40. FNA T-6571-3.
[16] Letter from Italian embassy to Col Procopé, 5 June 40. FNA T-6571-3.

especially chaotic, it is no surprise that Procopé had trouble finding where exactly Ström had served and where his possessions might have ended up. The puzzle was solved in May when it was discovered that Ström had been marked as 'unknown' when his remains had been evacuated from the front. Unfortunately, it is not clear why Ström had been a member of Independent Battalion 18 instead of the Swedish Volunteer Force.[17]

It is a credit to the Finnish authorities that they managed to ship to the relatives of deceased foreign volunteers their possessions, wages and sometimes even the remains in nearly each of the 43 cases of death. This was likely because, unlike some other conflicts where volunteers fought, Finland remained a fully functioning state after the war.

Throughout the spring, the High Command Volunteer Office (HCVO), responsible for all foreign volunteers since February, collected lists of various foreigners serving in the military as well as in civilian support roles. These lists illustrate the wide variety of tasks that foreign volunteers performed during the Winter War and immediately after, many of whom would be forgotten by the official history of the conflict. They included Swedish volunteers serving as garrison troops at the various coastal forts, Norwegian Red Cross staff of both genders helping out at hospitals, an Italian propaganda filmmaker and his translator, an Australian flying sergeant, and a former lieutenant of the Austrian Army who had escaped his homeland with his wife after the Anschluss as he was a Jew.[18] These lists were then collated to allow proper planning for repatriation. Several volunteers travelled to Helsinki and were given accommodation in the capital, paid by the HCVO, though 12 were able to cover their own living expenses as they waited for the possibility of going home. In May there were 93 volunteers in such accommodation, divided between a hotel, a travel lodge, and private accommodation.

[17] Letter from Col Procopé to JR38, 18 April 40. JR38 to Col Procopé, 26 April 40. JR35 to Col Procopé, 4 May 40. FNA T-6571-3.
[18] Multiple HCVO lists, mostly undated. FNA T-6572-5.

Interestingly, three are women. It is likely that they were volunteer nurses as it seems that HCVO had assumed responsibility for civilian volunteers as well by this point.[19]

Summer developments

The HCVO made two decisions over the spring and summer that impacted the remaining volunteers. The first was that all volunteers would be demobilized and, if they were unable to return home, they would need to find employment. Finnish authorities would assist with the required paperwork.[20] The second was that the British volunteers would be sent home through the 'quickest routes if possible' and Finland would pay for their travel and meals. While waiting for transportation to be arranged, the volunteers were offered paid work and warned not to travel to Norway, though some had already done so and forfeited their right to upkeep from Finland because of this.[21] The Volunteer Office had gained permission from the Army High Command to keep those volunteers who remained idle in military service.[22] The Foreign Ministry recorded 165 British volunteers at this point in contrast to the 227 who had originally arrived in the country.[23] The difference is explained by the German invasion of Norway that caused two events where British volunteers saw a chance to fight – some volunteers who had been on their way through Norway to the UK refused to flee Oslo with the help of the Finnish ambassador and were likely captured by the Germans, and some volunteers crossed the Finnish-Norwegian border near Enontekiö during the spring.

This border crossing was accidentally made possible by a joint effort between the Finnish Army and the Interior Ministry that employed volunteers to help build a new road in Enontekiö in the far north that would connect Finland with Norway. On 24 April the Army sent American, Belgian, Estonian, French, Italian, Polish and Swiss volunteers for this purpose. They were later

[19] Internal HCVO report, 21 May 40. FNA T-6572-5. This report does not explain the wartime roles of the volunteers.
[20] HCVO to Helsinki, 30 Apr 1940. FFMA Signum 109 Folder 10.
[21] HCVO to London, 4 Jul 1940. FFMA Signum 109 Folder 10.
[22] HCVO to High Command, 29 Apr 1940. FFMA Signum 109 Folder 10.
[23] Helsinki to London and response, 24/28 Mar 1940. FFMA Signum 109 Folder 11.

joined by some British volunteers. These were all Task Force *Sisu* members sent from the training centre at Lapua. It is likely that they came from the group of 134 volunteers there who had wanted to remain in Finland after the war and since no Soviet attack materialized immediately, they were sent to 'earn their upkeep'.[24]

The Finnish embassy in Stockholm was forced to buy new clothes for the volunteers and this program was extended in cooperation with the *Finlandskommittee*, which clothed all the volunteers in Sweden through the Swedish Army quartermaster.[25] In July, Finnish Foreign Ministry instructed the embassy in Berlin to ask for transit visas for 16 Belgians and five Dutch, all of whom had already applied for visas through the German embassy in Stockholm. The Germans required the volunteers to make new applications, which slowed down the process further.[26] Some of the Belgian volunteers returned to Finland. The Interior Ministry urged the Foreign Ministry to send them home as they were 'useless for defence or employment'.[27] As late as June 1942, three Belgians still remained in Finland. They had been interned since the previous summer for petty crimes and were finally expelled back to Belgium.[28] This sorry episode illustrates well the difficulties that arose with even small volunteer groups. The Belgians, not being able to speak the Finnish language, and not knowing any useful trade skills, were largely useless.

Throughout the period between the Winter and Continuation War, the Foreign Ministry assisted volunteers in distress as well as transmitting information between the volunteers and their homelands. For instance, a former volunteer who moved to Stockholm was notified of the death of his mother.[29] Another volunteer who got stuck in transit was granted 500 Belgian

[24] HCVO list, 24 April 40. FNA T-6572-5.
[25] Stockholm to Helsinki, 22 May 1940. Helsinki to HCVO and response, 23/31 May 1940. Stockholm to Helsinki, 17 Jun 1940. Finlandskommittee to Helsinki, 18 Jun 1940. FFMA Signum 109 Folder 10.
[26] HCVO to Helsinki, 13 June, forwarded Stockholm 18 Jun. Helsinki to Berlin and response, 1/9/11 Jul 1940. FFMA Signum 109 Folder 10.
[27] Interior Ministry to Helsinki, 13 Nov 1941. FFMA Signum 109 Folder 10.
[28] Helsinki to State Police, 26 Jun 1942. FFMA Signum 109 Folder 10.
[29] HCVO to Foreign Ministry, 9 Aug 1940. FFMA Signum 109 Folder 10.

francs to cover his living expenses.[30] Another group of Belgian volunteers were paid 51 Reichsmarks each to cover travel expenses.[31] The US embassy in Helsinki was concerned that eight Finnish-American volunteers were still in military service 30 days after the end of hostilities and a Foreign Ministry official had to call the Americans and explain that they were 'in uniform' so that they could be supported by the Army until passage home could be booked for them.[32] The embassy in London sent multiple batches of letters to British volunteers through diplomatic mail.[33] Similarly, the Foreign Ministry sent a number of letters back to their senders as the recipients had left Finland.[34] As normal post routes had been cut by the war, the diplomatic courier mail was the only option for the volunteers to communicate with their families. Two Canadian pilots had made it from Finland to London but could not afford passage across the Atlantic and the Foreign Ministry authorized the embassy in London to arrange their trip aboard the ship *Esther Thorden*, which belonged to the Swedish-Finnish shipping magnate Gustaf Thorden. The London embassy was anxious for guidance on how to handle a small group of volunteers who demanded more money so they could return home. The ambassador proposed to give each man ten pounds. Helsinki responded that the group, consisting of Swiss, French, and Yugoslav volunteers, had forfeited their rights for support as they had escaped from their road construction camp at Enontekiö to Norway. However, the Foreign Ministry agreed that if the embassy still had donation funds left, they could pay the men off, if the volunteers agreed to make no further demands.[35]

HCVO also assisted volunteers in finding employment. A good example being Estonian volunteer Valle Lindsalu, who was given a letter of recommendation by the Office as he was

[30] Helsinki to Berlin/Antwerp, 27 Dec 1940. FFMA Signum 109 Folder 10.
[31] Helsinki to Berlin/Brussels, 7 Jan 1941. FFMA Signum 109 Folder 10.
[32] American Legation in Finland to Helsinki, 17 Apr 1940. FFMA Signum 109 Folder 10.
[33] London to Helsinki, 7 March/7/10/16/22 May 1940. FFMA Signum 109 Folder 10. There were 141 letters and a single post card.
[34] Helsinki to embassies, 7/25 June/1 Aug/17 Sep/23 Oct/4 Nov 1940. FFMA Signum 109 Folder 10.
[35] London to Helsinki and response, 26 May/6/17 Jul 1940. FFMA Signum 109 Folder 10.

applying for a job at Hietalahti Docks. While he was unsuccessful, the HCVO gave him 500 marks later so he could buy tools and start a business as carpenter at the town of Järvenpää.[36]

To summarize this period of 1940, the Finnish military was content to keep volunteers in service until the situation became clearer. When the Soviet Union did not resume hostilities, the volunteers were demobilised and, where possible, sent home. The Hungarians, who could now travel via Germany, and the Nordic volunteers from Sweden, Norway and Denmark, could quickly and easily travel home, and did so by the end of May. But the German invasion and occupation of Denmark and Norway complicated the situation, which was made worse by the subsequent invasion of Netherlands, Belgium and France. Volunteers could not be sent directly home, and in some cases, they did not want to leave. It also meant that Petsamo became the last lifeline connecting Finland to the rest of the world.

[36] Two HCVO letters, 8 May 1941 and 8 July 1941. FNA T-6572-5.

Image 2: *Hungarian volunteers marching past Finnish General Enckell from the High Command Volunteer Office (on the left) and a Finnish military band (on the right) at the port of Turku on 20 May 1940 as they prepare to board a ship to Germany. Note how they are all wearing civilian clothing.*[37]

The North American connection

In the far north, Petsamo on the Arctic coast was the last remaining port in Finland where ships could operate from since the German occupation of Denmark had blocked the Baltic Sea completely. The Finns planned to move the men of the American Finnish Legion (*ASL*) home using Finnish and American ships. Due to the restrictions that American officials placed on immigration, the Finnish shipping lines that transported Canadian and American volunteers

[37] Finnish Army Picture Archives at http://sa-kuva.fi/ Copyright SA-Kuva.

across the Atlantic ended up in trouble and repeatedly asked the Foreign Ministry for assistance.

The earliest case happened in July 1940. After the press in New York reported that volunteers had been sent home in poor conditions, the Thorden Line asked the Foreign Ministry to help clear their reputation. The Foreign Ministry instructed their consul in New York to act. The consul interviewed crew members and concluded that the accusations were largely 'fabrications by the tabloids' based on interviews with a few drunken volunteers and that corrections had already been printed in other papers.[38]

After some volunteers had made it back to North-America, the idea of evacuating American and Canadian civilians, as well as the remaining volunteers, from Finland was proposed but the plan was abandoned as no safety guarantees could be gained from either Britain or Germany.[39] The Foreign Ministry made a second attempt in September, after hearing rumours that the US State Department was organizing an evacuation ship from Finland, to get 60 Finnish-Americans on board, but Washington assured Helsinki that no such plans existed.[40]

This forced the Foreign Ministry to purchase passage aboard Thorden's ships, though it was not until January 1941 that the plan was put into action. Thirty men would travel back home, and the Foreign Ministry paid all their fees, as well as ordering the embassy in Washington and the consulate in New York to help with immigration issues. In February Thorden was fined 1.6 million Finnish marks by American immigration authorities as penalty for bringing ashore people with insufficient paperwork. The case had to be disputed by a lawyer in a New York court and Foreign Ministry officials were reassured by both the Volunteer Office as well as directly by Thorden himself that the shipping line would not have to pay the fines. The Finnish military attaché in Washington was reminded by Helsinki of the promise made during the

[38] HCVO to Helsinki, 10 Jul 1940. Helsinki to New York and responses, 12/13/15 Jul 1940. FFMA Signum 109 Folder 10. Unfortunately, a search through the archives of *New York Times* produced no such articles.
[39] Helsinki to Washington and response, 29 Jul/1 Aug 1940. FFMA Signum 109 Folder 10.
[40] Helsinki to Washington and response, 11/14 Sep 1940. FFMA Signum 109 Folder 10.

Winter War by President Roosevelt who guaranteed that volunteers for Finland would not get in trouble when returning to the United States. By May, the problem was determined to have been caused by ignorance among immigration officials and, once the American State Department stepped in, the issue was resolved, and all fines were waived.[41]

This was not an isolated incident. In May 1941, while the Thorden case was being resolved, the Wihuri shipping line had similarly been fined for a single volunteer. The company demanded that the Finnish government reimburse them. The Foreign Ministry urged the embassy in Washington to see if the fine could be repaid, after the Thorden case proved that such fines were without grounds, but the embassy did not believe that money would be returned by American authorities and lamented that Wihuri should not have paid anything in the first place. Despite the happy conclusion to the first Thorden case, that company was fined yet again in September of 1941, this time for four volunteers. Once more Helsinki instructed the embassy in Washington to make sure that the fines would be waived. It is likely that they reached that conclusion, albeit the last communication on the matter merely states that the process was ongoing.[42]

Thus, the volunteers from North America turned out to be more difficult to repatriate than the Nordics and the Hungarians, though at least their transportation was possible. It also serves as one example of the unforeseen financial difficulties volunteers could cause to their host nation, though it seems that the Finnish state refused to compensate either of the two shipping lines beyond the price of tickets.

Some Finnish American volunteers never made it far enough to get in trouble with American immigration officers. The Volunteer Office informed the Foreign Ministry in June 1941 that six

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[41] Helsinki to Washington, 28 Jan/8 Feb 1941. HCVO to Helsinki, 8 Feb 1941. Washington to Helsinki, 10 Feb 1941. HCVO to Helsinki/Washington, 25 Apr 1941. Washington to Helsinki, 1 Mar 1941. Helsinki to Washington, 2 May 1941. Washington to Helsinki, 3 Jun 1941. FFMA Signum 109 Folder 10. Roosevelt's speech is discussed in Chapter 1.

[42] Wihuri to HCVO, 15 May 1941; HCVO to Helsinki, 11 Jun 1941; Helsinki to Washington, 16 Sep 1941; HCVO to Helsinki, 30 Oct 1941; Helsinki to Washington, 15 Nov 1941; Washington to Helsinki, 19/28 Nov 1941, FFMA Signum 109 Folder 10.

men had been detained as the ship they were travelling on had been forced by a German naval vessel to dock at a Norwegian port, where it had been boarded by German officers and the former volunteers were arrested. Despite repeated attempts by the Finnish embassy in Berlin to find out more information regarding their fate or to secure their release, there was no answer over the summer. Curiously, the Finnish Army informed the Foreign Ministry in August that the men had been released and sent back to Finland. The reason for their arrest was never disclosed. It is likely that, as Finland joined the invasion of Soviet Union alongside Germany in July 1941, the release of the six former volunteers was negotiated via backdoor channels between German and Finnish military officers. Based on the Foreign Ministry sources, neither Helsinki nor the Berlin embassy played any part in it.[43]

A sad sidenote is the fate of Verner (Vernon) Laine, who had served as an infantryman in the US Army from 1929 to 1932. In 1939 he joined the ASL and came to Finland but was quickly released from service due to being 'mentally challenged'. He became a vagrant and wandered around northern Finland until he was arrested at the town of Mikkeli. HCVO decided to send him back to the US if he had citizenship. There are no further mentions of Laine so it is unknown what his fate ultimately was.[44] His case is a dark example of the type of persons that war volunteering can attract – running away from problems at home and hoping that the future would change things, which it never did. Such examples could be found in other conflicts from the 19th century wars in Italy and Greece, as well as the 20th century wars in Spain and Yugoslavia, to name just few prominent examples.[45]

[43] HCVO to Helsinki, 12 Jun 1941. Helsinki to Berlin and response, 12 Jun/30 Jul 1941. Army Control Office to Helsinki, 30 Aug 1941. Berlin to Helsinki, 21 Oct 1941. FFMA Signum 109 Folder 10.
[44] Internal HCVO report, undated. FNA T-6572-5.
[45] Arielli, pp. 179-185.

The adventures of the British volunteers

The first attempt to repatriate the British contingent happened in June 1940, the HCVO notified the Foreign Ministry that the Germans might be willing to let the British volunteers travel home and suggested asking the Swedish police for help if the volunteers were not eager to move on. It seems that the cost of upkeep for the volunteers was the primary reason for the Army's enthusiasm on this occasion. The diplomatic wheels turned slowly, and the Foreign Ministry ended up recommending bringing the volunteers back to Finland. The Army, knowing that passenger shipping via the Arctic port of Petsamo was unreliable, resisted.[46] This would become the theme for the British as one attempt after another failed and their return home became ever more complex.

Eventually, these problems led the Foreign Ministry to launch a plan to transfer European volunteers to Sweden. As 1941 progressed, the cooperation between Finland and Nazi Germany deepened and the likelihood of another war with the Soviet Union grew. This development placed the Foreign Ministry in a difficult position. On the one hand, the Finns still felt honour bound to take care of the volunteers who had come to Finland to fight. On the other, the remaining volunteers were all citizens of countries that were at war with Germany, making them prospective spies. During the summer of 1941, negotiations between Finland and Sweden led to an agreement that the volunteers could be moved to Sweden, though Finland would still pay their expenses. Initially this agreement covered only the British volunteers, but it eventually grew to encompass other nationalities as well. Sweden wanted the volunteers moved in large groups, which posed a logistical problem on the Finnish side, as the volunteers were spread across the country. The Finnish State Police was heavily involved in transporting and escorting the volunteers across the border. This did not always proceed smoothly, and in early July, the Foreign Ministry asked the embassy in Stockholm to pressure Swedish

[46] Stockholm to Helsinki, 23 May/25 Jun 1940. HCVO to Helsinki, 28 May 1940. FFMA Signum 109 Folder 10.

authorities to allow all volunteers to cross the border, as the Swedish police had barred the entry of 25 Poles, 10 Belgians, a Frenchman and a Dutchman.[47]

Image 3: British volunteers at Helsinki, 1 March 1940. These men were part of the vanguard that arrived before the main British contingent. The tall man on the back row, left, is allegedly the late Sir Christopher Lee. His name does not appear on the lists of British volunteers who became stuck in Finland after the Winter War so if this is indeed him, he was one of the very few British volunteers who managed to make their way home between the end of the Winter War and the German invasion of Norway.[48]

The fate of the British volunteers warrants a closer examination as it showcases the surprising problems that foreign volunteers can create for their host nation as well as the lengths that the Finnish state went to in order to repay the debt of honour that Finnish leadership felt it owed to them. There had been 227 British volunteers in Finland after the Winter War ended. As stated previously, the first plan was to have them travel via Sweden to Norway and then

[47] Helsinki to Stockholm, 5 Jul 1941. FFMA Signum 109 Folder 10.
[48] Finnish Defence Force image gallery http://sa-kuva.fi

gain passage aboard a regular passenger ship back to Britain, but this plan was foiled when Germany invaded Denmark and Norway. The Oslo embassy managed to help some of the British contingent to escape back to Finland. The volunteers were gathered at a military-run camp and urged to find employment, if possible, while plans for the repatriation were formulated. One of the earliest ones was suggested by British officials and the proposal was explained to the Finnish ambassador in London via the FAB. The British Royal Navy would send three destroyers to Petsamo in total secrecy, to evacuate the Britons. Helsinki delayed an answer for two weeks, until deciding that it would be a violation of Finnish neutrality and noting that the Germans would not allow safe passage for the British ships. The delay was caused by the Foreign Ministry urgently ordering the embassy in Berlin to find out if Germany would allow such transit in neutral or British ships.[49]

In June 1940, some British volunteers escaped to Norway while working at a road construction site near the border, most likely to join the Allied forces fighting at Narvik, not knowing that the forces were already being evacuated. It is also possible that they thought they could find their own transport home with Norwegian fishermen. The Volunteer Office decided that the men who crossed the border lost all their benefits as they were explicitly warned not to do so. The Foreign Ministry reported this to the London embassy so that they could inform the British. 39 men had crossed of whom two returned and the fate of the rest was unknown.[50] Three other volunteers smuggled themselves aboard the *Kastelholm,* but the ship was boarded by the German navy and the trio was arrested at Oslo. The Foreign Ministry could not help them and instructed the FAB to contact a consul of a neutral country.[51]

The second plan was to use Swedish civilian planes for transport, which would require a safety guarantee from the Germans. The idea came from the British again, apparently inspired by a

[49] London to Helsinki, 8/13 Aug 1940. Helsinki to London, 14 Aug 1940. Helsinki to Berlin, 10/14 Aug 1940. Helsinki to London, 20 Aug 1940. FFMA Signum 109 Folder 11.
[50] HCVO to Helsinki/London, 4 Jul 1940. London to Helsinki and response, 6/17 Jul 1940. FFMA Signum 109 Folder 11.
[51] London to Helsinki and response, 22/26 Nov 1940. FFMA Signum 109 Folder 11.

discreet deal that Sweden had struck with Germany. In that deal, Sweden returned 50 German pilots that had been interned during the Norwegian campaign in exchange for Germany guaranteeing the safe passage home of several interned British troops. These were not volunteers but soldiers, sailors and airmen who had fought in Norway as part of the Franco-British expeditionary force and ended up on the Swedish side of the border. As neither Finland nor Sweden could make a similar deal with the Germans, the plan fell apart.[52]

Due to a request by the embassy in London, the Foreign Ministry ordered the embassy in Berlin to once more ask the Germans for permission. Amazingly, two different German officials promised the Finns that Germany now had no objections to Finland transporting British volunteers, even if they would be taken straight to the UK instead of another neutral country.[53] However, Helsinki informed London that Germany does not guarantee safe passage and will not assist the repatriation in any way. Whether Helsinki misunderstood the German message, gained additional information from another source or simply was not willing to take any risks, is unknown as there is no written clarification in the sources. There had been a short discussion between the Finnish Foreign Minister and the German ambassador to Finland, and the topic had been raised but without noting down any conclusion.[54] In November 1940, the Foreign Ministry was informed by the Army and the State Police that the Germans might be more receptive to a repatriation by sea, which led the Foreign Ministry to instruct the embassy in Berlin to ask once more. The Finnish ambassador took his time, responding in January 1941 that while the German Army was willing to support Finnish efforts, the German Navy was not. Thus, the situation remained unchanged.[55] The opposite views of the two German branches of the military are interesting as they show the different priorities that the services had. The

[52] London to Helsinki, 22 Aug/2 Sep 1940. Helsinki to Stockholm and response, 6/8 Sep 1940. Helsinki to London, 11 Sep 1940. Helsinki to Stockholm and response, 11/19 Sep 1940. FFMA Signum 109 Folder 11.
[53] London to Helsinki, 24 Sep 1940. Helsinki to Berlin and response, 1/11 Oct 1940. FFMA Signum 109 Folder 11.
[54] Helsinki to London, 26 Oct 1940. London to Helsinki and response, 2/8 Oct 1940. FFMA Signum 109 Folder 11.
[55] HCVO to Helsinki, 25 Nov 1940. Helsinki to Berlin and response, 27 Nov 1940/8 Jan 1941. FFMA Signum 109 Folder 11.

German Army, now preparing for the upcoming invasion of the Soviet Union, which included a northern attack from Finland towards the Arctic port of Murmansk, would naturally have wanted to ensure that 200 enemy aliens were not living in their rear area, whereas the German Navy was not willing to negotiate the complex agreement that would allow safe passage of neutral ships through the waters where their submarines operated.

As the direct routes seemed to have been completely blocked, the Foreign Ministry moved to yet another plan, which was passage through the Soviet Union to Palestine or alternatively to the Far East. The Foreign Ministry received information from both military and diplomatic sources that, negotiating together, the British and the Swedish governments had gained transit visas for 17 British volunteers, with 23 more waiting for their paperwork to be processed. This led Helsinki to inform London that the Russian route was 'now the only possible way'.[56] It is likely that the Foreign Ministry wanted to make sure that embassy in London would not give the British any hope of alternative routes. However, as Finland had no direct communication line with Moscow, the circuitous route of having the Swedes negotiate each transit visa in Stockholm meant that the process would be slow and not guaranteed to work for all volunteers. It must have been a stunning moment of irony for the few volunteers who gained transit visas in this manner, to have volunteered to come to Finland to fight against the Soviet Union, only to end up having to travel through the Soviet Union instead!

Meanwhile, 129 British volunteers were still stationed at the village of Korpilahti in Finland, where Captain Nordlund was in command as a representative of the Volunteer Office. 67 of them had found employment in various places, some working as translators and language teachers, a few working for the British embassy, while others had become lumberjacks. The conditions at the camp were Spartan but generally good, though somewhat cramped. Some complaints from the volunteers' relatives had reached the FAB, whose members asked the

[56] Helsinki to Stockholm and response, 2/8 October 1940. Helsinki to London, 26 Oct 1940. FFMA Signum 109 Folder 11.

Finnish ambassador in London to make sure that the men were taken care of. The complaints were mostly focused on lack of clothes, the indifference of the authorities, poor finances, cramped quarters and lack of variety in food. This led to the forming of an inspection committee to investigate the camp. The committee included the British consul, representatives of both the Finnish Army and the Foreign Ministry, and the industrialist Sakari Solhberg who was bilingual and a known anglophile. The committee reported that complaints stemmed from boredom and lack of work, and that the volunteers had no major grievances, except for the issue of pay. The FAB was paying each man ten Finnish marks a day, which was not sufficient, and the committee suggested doubling the amount. The men received special Christmas packages from home, though these arrived a little late, in March 1941.[57]

Yet another chance for the repatriation of volunteers came during the spring of 1941. The Volunteer Office suggested to the Foreign Ministry that Germany might allow the repatriation of 15 volunteers who were unfit for military duty. They even proposed that a German doctor could inspect the men. The Foreign Ministry asked the embassy in Berlin to make further queries. Despite earlier refusals, this time the Germans were willing and accepted the suggestion. The Finnish plan was to use the Petsamo - New York route. It is notable that the plan was first proposed in February, yet it took until May before German permission was granted. As the archives have nothing further on their fate, it is likely that the 15 men were evacuated successfully.[58]

When the route through the Soviet Union proved slow and unreliable, the Foreign Ministry switched gears and started organizing the transfer of volunteers to Sweden. The Foreign Ministry even sought German approval for this plan.[59] Throughout this period, the British Foreign Office was under pressure from both the British government and the FAB to repatriate

[57] Helsinki to London, 29 Jan/4 Feb/31 Mar 1941. London to Helsinki, 28 Jan/12/13 Feb. FFMA Signum 109 Folder 11.
[58] HCVO to Helsinki, 12 Feb 1941. Helsinki to Berlin and response, 19 Feb/26/29 May 1941. FFMA Signum 109 Folder 11.
[59] Helsinki to Berlin and response, 9/11 June 1941. FFMA Signum 109 Folder 11.

the British volunteers. The latter was quickly running out of money in 1940 while it was still contractually obligated to pay the upkeep of the volunteers, which explains the urgency in many of the telegrams that its chairman sent to both the Finnish ambassador in London as well as directly to the Foreign Ministry in Helsinki. He claimed that the British Foreign Office had demanded the immediate return of the volunteers and hinted at the possibility of sending a ship to Petsamo. At the same time, the British ambassador to Finland visited Field Marshall Mannerheim and asked for Finnish assistance in repatriating the volunteers and discussed the possibility of evacuating British civilians from both Sweden and Finland. The Foreign Ministry assured both men that Finland would 'help as best as we can'.[60] The embassy in London, most likely acting on behalf of the British government, asked if the Foreign Ministry could find out the fate of four Englishmen who were rumoured to be hidden in the American hospital in Oslo, which Helsinki could not do as communications with Oslo were unreliable and thought to be monitored by the Germans.[61]

During this process the Foreign Ministry, the Volunteer Office and the London embassy, in talks with the FAB, decided it would be best to keep the volunteers together as a group while trying to find work for them. The FAB continued to pay them a daily allowance of two shillings. The Bureau gave its permission to the volunteers, at their own risk, to travel to Palestine if possible and they would assist with the expenses.[62]

Despite initial reluctance from both the Foreign Ministry and the Army, the Finnish authorities ended up handling the upkeep and daily allowance of the British volunteers after the London embassy made it clear that the FAB was out of money in late 1940. The matter of repatriation thus became even more urgent for the Finns.[63] To make matters more complicated, many

[60] London to Helsinki, 9 May/12 Jun/10 Jul 1940. Helsinki to London, 10 May/14 Jun/12 Jul 1940. FFMA Signum 109 Folder 11.
[61] London to Helsinki and response, 22/24 May 1940. FFMA Signum 109 Folder 11.
[62] London to Helsinki/HCVO, 21/26 Jun 1940. FFMA Signum 109 Folder 11. Roberts states that eight volunteers travelled through Soviet Union, p. 193.
[63] London to Helsinki, 10/15/19 Jul 1940. Helsinki to London, 12/15/22 Jul 1940. FFMA Signum 109 Folder 11.

British volunteers were in Stockholm after escaping the German invasion of Norway. 125 of them were to be evacuated via Petsamo aboard Swedish ships, after Sweden gained permission from the Germans to do so. Surprisingly, the Swedes were worried that Finland might object to this plan as it required the use of the Finnish port, but Finnish authorities seem to have been only too happy that the number of men they had to support was halved.[64] Not every British volunteer was evacuated as the Foreign Ministry later received complaints that their daily allowance was not sufficient. The FAB refused to increase their allowance as the remaining men were the responsibility of the British consul and they 'will soon come home'.[65] Stockholm confirmed in early September that multiple Brits were stuck in Sweden, who could not be sent home.[66] It is unclear whether these were stragglers who, for some reason, missed the Swedish evacuation at the end of July or whether they were entirely separate from that group. Nevertheless, the FAB showed incredible optimism which was wholly without basis in reality and was likely an attempt to save money while also trying to cheer up the volunteers.

In February 1941 the Foreign Ministry informed the British that the volunteers would remain under military care 'until the end'. As the Ministry agreed that Finland was 'honour bound to assist volunteers', the daily allowance was now doubled. Despite a few of them having successfully travelled home via Russia, the Ministry reported that further returns were 'currently not possible'.[67] The ending of this frankly bizarre route was likely a relief to the Finnish authorities as it simplified their task, not having to arrange travel for British volunteers from their camp in central Finland to Stockholm and possibly back.

Around this time the Foreign Ministry received a letter from Cape Town. The Finnish consul there had interviewed two former volunteers, an Englishman named John Fleming and an Australian named G. Kingsote, who had travelled through Sweden, Latvia, Russia and Turkey to reach Palestine and then to South Africa. The two men had no complaints regarding the Finns

[64] Stockholm to Helsinki, 29 Jul 1940. Helsinki memo, undated. FFMA Signum 109 Folder 11.
[65] Helsinki to London and response, 21/22 Aug 1940. FFMA Signum 109 Folder 11.
[66] Stockholm to Helsinki, 8 Sep 1940. FFMA Signum 109 Folder 11.
[67] Helsinki to London, 4/8 Feb 1941. FFMA Signum 109 Folder 11.

or even the Russians, but they did claim that the British ambassador in Helsinki had been unhelpful. This complaint was repeated by other British volunteers. Roughly two weeks later, a small group of volunteers arrived in South Africa as well. Giving an interview to a local paper, they accused the Finns of war crimes such as killing wounded enemy combatants. The consul felt forced to write a public rebuttal.[68] This case is a good example of the sort of negative publicity that foreign volunteers can create, especially as one of the main reasons for a host country to accept and recruit foreign volunteers is positive publicity for their cause. Since it is almost certain that the volunteers in the second group had not seen any combat nor been even close to the front, they must have either fabricated their entire story or repeated some rumours they had heard.

One last attempt was made by the Foreign Ministry to repatriate all remaining volunteers in 1941. Their number was still 158. As Germany had granted passage to medically unfit volunteers, it is possible that the Ministry hoped that they could do the same for the rest of them, perhaps even combining them with the British expats living in Sweden and Finland.[69] This time the Germans did not even answer and, as the expected German invasion of Soviet Union was imminent, the Foreign Ministry focused on the relocation to Sweden plan. The Swedes were not willing to accept the volunteers without explicit German approval, which caused the Foreign Ministry to hurriedly contact the embassy in Berlin, asking them to remind the Germans that this initiative had originally been suggested by German military authorities in Finland. Approval was apparently gained as the matter was moved to military authorities on both sides.[70]

The Ministry simultaneously asked London to inform the British Foreign Office of the relocation plan and that the Finnish aim was to ‘avoid friction’. All volunteers would first be gathered in the camp at Korpilahti, to avoid contact between German troops and the British

[68] Cape Town to Helsinki, 27 Nov/13/20 Dec 1940. FFMA Signum 109 Folder 11.
[69] Helsinki to Berlin, 31 May 1941. FFMA Signum 109 Folder 11.
[70] Stockholm to Helsinki, 9/12 Jun. Helsinki to Berlin and response, 9/13/21 June 1941. FFMA Signum 109 Folder 11.

volunteers, and then moved as a group to Sweden.[71] To make matters more complicated, Finnish internal authorities had implemented exclusion zones where foreigners were not allowed to reside, one of which was the capital Helsinki. This meant that volunteers who had gained employment inside these zones had to give up their jobs and return to the camp. Several volunteers had been employed by the British embassy and the Finnish State Police suspected them of spying, which seems to have been the case, as one volunteer was seen at the port of Turku writing down notes. The Foreign Ministry clashed with the State Police over the volunteers, as the original idea had been that foreigners in diplomatic service would be excluded and anyone employed could freely leave the camp. This was only partially successful – although no volunteers were arrested, they had to be gathered at the Korpilahti camp to put a stop to the spying, regardless of their employment status. Both the Finnish Minister in London and the British Minister in Helsinki were suspicious of the relocation plan, the former warning that it might cause damage to Finnish reputation in the 'Anglo-Saxon world'. The Ministry was under pressure because foreign trade with Britain had practically stopped by now German interests had become far more important to the Finnish government than British ones.[72]

Thus, the relocation plan moved forward. Not part of this plan was the temporary arrest of two former volunteers now working as diplomatic staff from Petsamo and Rovaniemi. Both were actively spying for the British embassy and Foreign Ministry had asked the Interior Ministry to rescue both men before the Germans could get to them. This was done quietly, and the men ended up at Korpilahti with the other volunteers. The British embassy officially complained to the Foreign Ministry, as did the British Foreign Office to the Finnish embassy in London but off the record ambassador Vereker thanked the Finns.[73]

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[71] Helsinki to London, 13 Jun 1941. London to Helsinki and response, 14/15 Jun 1941. FFMA Signum 109 Folder 11.
[72] London to Helsinki, 17 Jun 1941. Helsinki memo, 17 Jun 1941. Helsinki to London, 18/19 Jun 1941. FFMA Signum 109 Folder 11.
[73] London to Helsinki and response, 24/28 Jun 1941. FFMA Signum 109 Folder 11.

The volunteers travelled by train to Sweden, arriving on 30 June 1941. A group of eight late comers joined them on 8 July, after which the only British volunteers remaining in Finland were those employed by the British embassy. Helsinki asked the embassy in London to make sure that the British government knew that Finland was paying their costs in Sweden, which the embassy confirmed and added that the British authorities were impressed.[74]

The upkeep issues

In July 1941, The Finnish Army tried to shift responsibility for the volunteers to the Foreign Ministry, citing the reason that the volunteers were now in Sweden, making it a foreign affair instead of a military one. The Foreign Ministry in turn refused to accept this responsibility and claimed that the matter was purely military in nature and that the ministry lacked the necessary funds. By the end of the month, the Defence Ministry agreed to keep paying their bills, allowing the Foreign Ministry to inform both the British embassy in Helsinki and the Finnish embassy in Stockholm, ordering the latter to handle the matter and send receipts to the Defence Ministry in Helsinki.[75]

On 6 December 1941, after repeated Soviet demands, Great Britain declared war against Finland. A month earlier, Prime Minister Winston Churchill had sent a personal letter to Field Marshall Mannerheim, in which he regretted that the overall situation would eventually require such an act to take place.[76] The declaration did not lead to actual fighting between the two countries and the only hostile act was largely symbolic: planes of the Royal Navy Fleet Air Arm strafed a Finnish fishing village on the shores of the Arctic Sea while attacking a German base in nearby Norway.

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[74] Helsinki to London, 30 Jun/1/3/4 Jul 1941. London to Helsinki, 30 Jun/1/3 Jul 1941. FFMA Signum 109 Folder 11.
[75] HCVO to Helsinki and response, 9/12 Jul 1941. Helsinki to British embassy in Finland, 19 Jul 1941. Defence Ministry to Helsinki, 26 Jul 1941. Helsinki to Stockholm, 4 Aug 1941. FFMA Signum 109 Folder 11.
[76] Lasse Lehtinen. *Sodankäyntiä sanoin ja kuvin - Suomalainen sotapropaganda 1939–1944* (Helsinki: WSOY 2006), p 117.

Helsinki did react quickly regarding the British volunteers housed in Sweden. It was thought to be inappropriate for Finland to pay their living costs and if Sweden was not willing to cover their costs, the volunteers should be transported back to Finland, where they would be interned as enemy non-combatants.[77] The matter seems to have been quietly dropped as there is no further evidence of it and the volunteers remained in Sweden until they were evacuated back to Britain.

The issue of upkeep was discussed between HCVO, and the Foreign Ministry in August 1941 and the decision was made to pay three-and-half Swedish crowns per day per man to the *Finlandskommittee* which was acting as the go-between, handling practical matters with various Swedish authorities. Stockholm kept careful note of the bills and sent them monthly to Helsinki. The embassy further explained that, while the number of volunteers dwindled, the basic maintenance cost of the holiday resort where they were housed remained the same, which increased the daily cost. The final upkeep bill was sent in April 1943 as by then all volunteers had departed, except for a single hospitalized Englishman. From September 1941 to April 1943, the total upkeep of the volunteers in Sweden came to 106,816 Swedish crowns.[78] The British volunteer suffering from tuberculosis, ended up costing 1,935 Swedish crowns just in medical bills. He was eventually evacuated by a high-altitude airplane from Sweden to Britain in late 1943 once doctors had cleared him for travel. The Swedish Social Ministry charged the Finns 3,138 Swedish crowns in reparations for the damage to the lodgings caused by the British volunteers. The Defence Ministry was unwilling to pay these additional fees and the discussions between the military, Finnish diplomats and the Swedes took several months, from April 1943 to August 1943.[79]

[77] Helsinki to Stockholm, 10 Dec 1941. FFMA Signum 109 Folder 11.
[78] In modern money, this would be over half a million pounds.
[79] Stockholm to Helsinki, 10 Aug 1941. Helsinki to HCVO, 12 Aug 1941. HCVO to Helsinki and Stockholm, 20 Aug 1941. Stockholm to Helsinki, 18 Sep/14 Oct/29 Nov/12 Dec 1941/16 Jan/31 Mar/27 Apr 1942/17 Feb 1943. FFMA Signum 109 Folder 11.

The discussion between London and Stockholm on one side and Helsinki on the other regarding possible use of donation funds in Britain had started in 1942. During the Winter War, two separate funds had been collected in the UK, one by the FAB, for funding the volunteers, and another by the Finnish Fund for non-military and humanitarian purposes. The FAB money had already been exhausted by 1941, but there remained significant Finnish Fund money, held at Westminster Bank. Head Consul Niskanen wrote to Helsinki that the total amount of money was £12,780. This money, minus a fee of nearly £240 charged by the bank, was transferred to the Swedish embassy for safekeeping, before Britain declared war against Finland.[80]

Helsinki returned to this topic in 1943, when a discussion between embassy secretary Palmroth on the Finnish side and the Swedish foreign minister Johansson took place. Johansson revealed that Sweden had made a deal with Hungary to handle their affairs in Britain during the war and received 400 pounds a month for it. Palmroth stated that the Finnish attempt to unfreeze Finnish funds in 1941 had been denied by the British but perhaps now, if Sweden asked for it, the Brits might agree, especially as the funds would be used to pay Sweden for outstanding bills caused by the British volunteers. Johansson agreed and the Swedish embassy would start the appeal process. The British were not willing to unfreeze funds held by the Bank of Finland and the second appeal thus failed.[81]

These convoluted financial manoeuvres prove that the Finnish state was short on money as they tried multiple times to get access to funds abroad, especially for an issue as contentious as paying for expenses related to the foreign volunteers. The military wanted to get rid of having to pay for their upkeep, but neither did the diplomats want to accept such responsibility. Yet both authorities acknowledged the immaterial debt owed to them – despite their lack of combat utility – and just cutting ties and abandoning the volunteers was clearly completely out of the question. Furthermore, the authorities were willing to help volunteers

[80] London to Helsinki, 11 Sep 1941. FFMA Signum 109 Folder 11.
[81] Stockholm to Helsinki, 10 Dec 1943. Undated Helsinki memo. FFMA Signum 109 Folder 11.

when they could, even if that did cost them money, as the examples of buying tickets for returning volunteers who had already received compensation or buying them tools so they could start a new career show. It is also clear from the correspondence between the various Finnish authorities that these were not just simple acts of charity committed by soft-hearted individuals but always authorized by superiors, even if in some cases the authorization came after the fact. Neither is there any documentary evidence that officials got into trouble for assisting volunteers, as really the only such reprimand was the one described in Chapter One: a consul giving Finnish passports to a few volunteers so they could travel to Finland.

Conclusion

The Finns coped relatively well with the changing situation after the Winter War ended, adapting as best they could to developments and restrictions imposed by the Second World War in Europe. Volunteers continued to arrive in Finland despite the war being over and many were even asked to remain in the country. When the European situation changed drastically during 1940, the Finnish authorities were placed in a difficult position. Some volunteer groups were easily demobilized and sent home, like the Swedes and the Hungarians. The former could travel easily back home, being next door, whereas the latter were allowed to sail across the Baltic Sea and transit through Germany, a route which had not been available during the Winter War. Others were left in limbo because their homelands were turned into battlefields, like the Belgians and the Dutch. Others still, like the British and Americans, became stranded since the direct route home was now blocked.

In this situation, there was little that the Finnish Foreign Ministry could achieve, and to their testament, they kept pushing the embassies for results. The Americans were eventually returned successfully, albeit with some problems with US immigration officials that had to be overcome. The British were the most problematic group, as there were so many of them. The number of different ideas and attempts to return them home is impressive, even if many of the remaining volunteers had to be evacuated to Sweden at the end, from where they

eventually were transported back to Britain in late 1942 and early 1943 on a diplomatic airplane that flew between Stockholm and Scotland, an operation in which the Finns were not involved. Similarly, the Finnish Army acted pragmatically but not heartlessly during this difficult period. Once the initial repatriation period of spring 1940 was over and the difficulties of sending the remaining volunteers home became evident, the military continued to maintain the volunteers, though reluctantly at times, at considerable cost to the taxpayer.

The importance of the debt of honour that Finland felt it owed to the volunteers, even though many of them saw no combat, can be seen in the efforts to ensure that they were treated fairly. Their daily allowance was doubled, and their upkeep was paid by the Finnish taxpayer. The volunteers were not confined to quarters or imprisoned, aside from a few troublesome individuals who were guilty of theft or drunkenness. The debt of honour outweighed purely economic considerations!

The volunteers were prisoners of circumstances: if the British contingent, for example, had been immediately turned around and sent home, they most likely would have passed Norway before the German invasion. But they all agreed to serve in Finland for at least a while to help out, which ultimately made their situation much more complicated. This most likely played a part in how the Finnish authorities viewed them. Volunteers were encouraged to find employment but those who could not find one were not pressed into chain-gangs or imprisoned. Instead, the authorities housed, clothed and fed them at the Jyväskylä camp and even increased the daily allowance paid to them. Earlier on, dozens of volunteers had been housed at motels and traveller lodges in Helsinki as they waited to return home. It is also noteworthy how Sweden agreed to help Finland out with the repatriation of volunteers by allowing them to be moved over and then housing them at a ski resort. While initially meant for the British only, they did end up accepting other nationalities as well. The Finnish Defence Ministry kept paying for their upkeep, but it is difficult to imagine other nations doing the same sort of favour to their neighbours, even if they were compensated for it. Hence, Sweden

continued to pursue a policy highly supportive of Finland and its transnational recruits even after the Winter War had ended.

Chapter 4: The Continuation War

Kaarlo Ruuskanen, born in 1891 in central Finland, became a university student before the First World War. From 1914 onwards, he became an activist for independent Finland which led to his imprisonment by Russian authorities in 1916. Once Finland did become independent, Ruuskanen found employment with the new Finnish Foreign Ministry, serving at numerous overseas posts. Known as an avid horseback rider and a hunter, he brought breeding stock from Brazil when he was not busy furthering his education at the London School of Economics. Yet the cause of the Fatherland was so important to him that in 1941, after the outbreak of the Continuation War, Ruuskanen volunteered for the military despite being 50 years old. He lacked the experience to become an officer and instead was placed at the rank of sergeant and assigned to the tribal Finn unit being formed. He survived the war and died in 1953.[1] Why an older man, albeit with plenty of patriotic zeal, from central Finland would be put into a unit whose rank-and-file consisted of non-citizens is an important element of the transnational recruitment that took place between 1941 and 1944 and it happened alongside the volunteering of foreigners that continued on a smaller scale to what had happened in the Winter War.

Finland remained in a precarious position after the Winter War. Germany invaded and occupied Denmark and Norway in May 1940, cutting off the main trade route from Finland to the rest of the world. Only a limited amount of trade could continue from the Arctic port of Petsamo, the only port that was deep enough for ocean-faring ships and remained unfrozen during the winter. The Soviet Union remained a hostile neighbour to the east and Sweden, nominally neutral, could not be relied upon to save Finland in case of further hostilities. This left Finland with only one possible ally, Nazi Germany, and this ally was planning to invade the

[1] Editing team, *Aikalaiskirja 1934* (Helsinki: Otava 1933), p. 569. This is a Finnish series of books that document biographical information of notable persons, published generally every four years. It does not have an author, rather the publishes forms an editing team that decides who to add in each edition.

Soviet Union and wanted Finland to join in the attack. So, while the Winter War was over, the World War raged on and as Finland ended up in war again, foreign volunteers and transnational recruits returned once more to serve under the blue-white flag.

This chapter will briefly explain the major events of the Continuation War, proceeding then to examine the volunteers who came to Finland and how the Finnish authorities, namely the Army and the Foreign Ministry, handled them, as well as how the composition of the volunteers differed from the Winter War. This will be followed by section examining the major volunteer units in as much detail as possible. The chapter will end with an analysis of the impact of these units for the Finnish war effort as well as a discussion of how differently the foreign volunteers were treated from other transnational recruits. It is noteworthy that Finnish military historiography has not paid much attention to the volunteers until recently. The same issues concern the historiography of the Continuation War as did with the Winter War. Some of the problems that arose from the deployment of foreign volunteers and transnational recruits are also discussed.

The Continuation War context

While Germany had not supported Finland during the Winter War, blocking the direct transit of Hungarian volunteers for example, the relations between the two countries warmed in the second half of 1940 and especially during 1941, as Finland came to be seen as a useful ally in the upcoming invasion of the Soviet Union. Meetings between German and Finnish civilian and military authorities took place and, despite no formal treaty of alliance being signed, the two countries became *de facto* allies, if not *de jure* ones. Increasing numbers of German troops were stationed in Finnish Lapland and German supplies and weapons were sold to Finland, which was rebuilding its armed forces.[2]

[2] Laitos, pp.30-42.

This process seems almost inevitable in hindsight. The pressure that Moscow was putting upon Finland, consisting of demands that went beyond the 1940 peace treaty, and both public and private threats of renewed war, figuratively pushed Helsinki into the arms of Berlin, even if Stalin's intention was the opposite – ensuring that Finland would not plot an invasion with Germany.[3]

As part of the 1940 peace treaty, Finland had to cede about ten percent of its pre-war territory to the Soviet Union and a subsequent massive evacuation project moved roughly twelve percent of the country's population elsewhere in Finland.[4] As this process was going on, Finland sought a defence union with the other Nordic countries of Sweden, Norway and Denmark. The short-lived project failed as the Soviet Union vehemently opposed it and, in any case, the Germans invaded Norway and Denmark on 9 April 1940 and soon occupied both countries. Sweden attempted to negotiate a military alliance with Finland during May, but once more Soviet opposition torpedoed the initiative. Final attempt for a Finnish-Swedish alliance was done during August 1940, when a small group of Swedish politicians raised the possibility of some sort of state union between the two countries in order to preserve 'Nordic independence' but this plan went nowhere as well as it was opposed by both Berlin and Moscow.[5] Furthermore, the Soviet annexation of Bessarabia and northern Bukovina on 27 June and the Baltic states on 21 July further drove home the realisation that Finland could not remain neutral as Moscow, despite the horrendous casualties suffered during the Winter War, kept up its aggressive expansion. The Soviet Union now started to make demands concerning Finnish domestic politics as well as other demands that went beyond the peace treaty such as railroad access to the new naval base at Hanko, to Petsamo's nickel mines and to the Åland islands.[6]

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[3] Singleton, p. 134.
[4] Vesa Nenye et al., *Finland at War: The Continuation and Lapland Wars 1941-1945* (Oxford: Osprey Publishing, 2016), p. 27.
[5] Laitos (1988), pp.27-30.
[6] Nenye, pp. 29-30; Singleton, pp. 133-134.

The cooperation between Berlin and Helsinki started in September 1940 with the German request of transporting small amounts of troops and supplies through Finland to occupied Norway, similar to the treaty Germany had made with Sweden.[7] The Germans attempted to camouflage these developments by claiming that only an anti-aircraft battalion was to be moved through Finland and that there were to be no German troops in Finland permanently.[8] Over the winter period, there were several meetings between high-ranking military officers of both countries, culminating in the decision by the Finnish parliament in May 1941 to sanction military action against the Soviet Union, but only if Finland was attacked first. This led to an official German pledge to assist Finland in case of hostilities and an invitation to Finnish officers to participate in concrete planning of the northern prong of the upcoming Operation Barbarossa. More German troops arrived in Finland and the country prepared for war by mobilizing reserves and bringing the field army up to readiness.[9] As part of the mobilization that officially started on 16 June but, for critical units, had actually started on 10 June, the Finnish III Army corps was attached to the German Army of Norway (*AOK Norwegen*).[10] This headquarter was formed at Rovaniemi and it would later be renamed the 20th Mountain Army. It consisted of Mountain Corps Norway with four divisions (2nd and 3rd Mountain Divisions, 199th and 702nd Infantry Divisions). This force was to attack from Kirkenes via Petsamo towards Murmansk with the mountain units while the two infantry units were to remain behind for garrison duties. The other major force was the XXXVI Corps, consisting of the SS-Kampfgruppe 'Nord', later to be reinforced to a full division status, and 169th Infantry division. Together with the Finnish III Army Corps, their task was to regain Salla, lost to the Soviets in the Winter War, and then push east to Kandalaksha in order to cut the Leningrad-Murmansk railroad and reach

[7] Nenye, p. 32.
[8] Raymond Sontag and James Beddie, *Nazi-Soviet Relations 1939-1944: Documents from the Archives of the German Foreign Office* (Washington: Department of State, 1948), pp. 188-189.
[9] Nenye, pp. 36-41.
[10] Laitos (1988), pp. 32-38.

the coast of the White Sea. In total, the Germans had around 70,000 combat troops in Finland, plus a smaller number of support personnel.[11]

22 June 1941 saw the launch of the invasion of the Soviet Union by Germany. Finland remained technically neutral until 25 June when Soviet airplanes bombed Finland, prompting the Finnish President to announce that, once more, a state of war again existed between the two countries.[12] Eventually, it became known in Finland as the Continuation War (*Jatkosota*) and thus seen as direct continuation of the Winter War. Finland's aim was to regain the territorial losses of the Winter War, though its forces advanced beyond the old border at many locations.

The war can be split into three phases. The first was the Attack Phase, during which Finnish forces advanced to the old border from before the Winter War, and in many cases advanced further to occupy strategic locations (like East-Karelia) or to gain advantageous terrain for defence (such as river lines). This phase ended in late 1941 and the Finnish Army dug in, waiting for the coming German victory. The second phase was the Trench War, lasting from the spring of 1942 to the summer of 1944. While there were many skirmishes and even a few brigade-sized engagements during this period, no major battles took place and the frontline remained static. Thus, the Finnish army downsized itself, releasing badly needed manpower back to civilian life. The Soviet Red Army noticed this, transferring forces south to fight the Germans.[13] The third and final phase was the Soviet strategic strike during the summer of 1944, that started three days after the Allied invasion of Normandy and kept going alongside the massive Operation Bagration that took place in Belarus. Finnish troops, partially in chaos, retreated but eventually rallied and, in a series of battles that rivalled those that happened on

[11] Earl F. Ziemke, *The German Northern Theatre of Operations 1940-1945* (Washington: Department of the Army, 1959), pp.129-138.
[12] As German troops had been stationed in Finland, the Soviet Union must have assumed that Finland was a de facto ally of Nazi Germany, regardless of the lack of hostilities between Finnish and Soviet forces along the border. Finnish troops were in defensive posture at the time and the Finnish offensive did not start until 10 July 1941.
[13] Nenye, pp. 143–144.

the Eastern Front for intensity, stopped the Red Army and decimated their attacking force to such an extent that the Soviet Union dropped its demand of unconditional surrender and accepted a negotiated truce. On 2 September the Finnish parliament accepted the Soviet terms, and a truce was declared on 4 September for the Finns and 5 September for Soviet troops. The terms for peace were harsh but Finland remained independent.[14] The Finns had bled the Soviets sufficiently to make further bloodshed and loss of equipment not worth it when Stalin must have considered Berlin the bigger prize.[15] Subsequently, Finland still had to wage a third conflict: the Lapland War, in which the remaining German troops were driven back to Norway. As no foreign volunteers took part in that campaign on the Finnish side, it will be only briefly examined in Chapter 5.

The changing profile of foreign recruits

Unlike the previous war, during this conflict there was no widespread global support for Finland, nor were volunteer movements being organized in any country aside from Sweden. Partially, this was due to the expansion of the general war in Europe, and partially due to Finland allying with Nazi Germany and no longer fighting alone.[16] Furthermore, it was almost impossible to travel to Finland from anywhere but Sweden at this point due to the spread of the war. Yet 'foreign' volunteers – in the broad sense of the term – did serve in the Finnish armed forces during the Continuation War and they can be roughly split into three groups – Swedes, Estonians and the Tribal Finn groups.

The Swedish force was the first to be formed and it served on the Hanko front, augmented by a small number of Danes and even smaller number of Norwegians. It was called *Svenska Frivilligbataljonen* (SFB) to differentiate it from its earlier counterpart, the SFK. Some Estonians chose to fight for Finland instead of joining German units after Germany had occupied Estonia,

[14] Nenye, pp. 274-276.
[15] Upton, p. 152.
[16] Oslo to Helsinki, 7 Aug 1941, Copenhagen to Helsinki, 11 Jul 1941. FFMA Signum 110 Folder 25.

and an infantry regiment was formed out of them in 1942 that fought successfully and was eventually released from Finnish service and sent to Estonia to continue their fight there.[17] Large numbers of Estonians also served in the Finnish Navy, making Estonians the largest contingent of foreign volunteers in the Continuation War (see Table 4.1). The third group was formed from the so-called Tribal Finns, also known as 'kinfolk', men of various ethnicities that were related to Finns.[18] This group can further be split into three parts. The first were men who had immigrated into Finland during the Finnish Civil War of 1918 as well as the two Kinship Wars of 1918-1922.[19] They performed as well as any Finnish unit and were not really considered a 'foreign' unit, which is why they are missing from all official lists of foreign volunteers or tribal units. The second group were Baltic Finns, mostly Ingrians, transferred from German-occupied areas of Russia in 1943. The third group were recruited from the Finnish-run prisoner of war camps following a process in which suitable 'kinfolk' were identified. For this group, the recruitment started already in 1941 but the actual unit was not formed until 1942. As a result of these separations, the Tribal Finns cannot be examined as a single group as each of the three groups had its own characteristics and their paths in the war ended up being quite different.

Nationality	Amount	Killed	Missing	Wounded
Estonians	3273	126	72	286
Swedish	1694	79	3	203
Ingrians (Er. P 6)	777	22	12	20
Danes	204	11	-	24
Others	74	7	1	2
Total	6022	245	88	535

Table 2: The Ingrians listed on this table were solely ones transferred from German occupied areas who formed the Independent Battalion 6. Ingrians that were part of Brigade K or later were recruited into Tribal Battalion 3 are not listed here.[20]

[17] This became Infantry Regiment 200 (Jalkaväkirykmentti 200 or JR200 in Finnish)
[18] The concept is quite like the German idea of *Volksdeutche*. For an in-depth look at them, see Valdis O. Lumans, *Himmler's Auxiliaries: The Volksdeutche Mittelstelle and the German National Minorities of Europe, 1933-1945*.
[19] Arto Kotro, 'Ulkomaalaiset ja heimokansat Suomen armeijassa' in *Jatkosodan Pikkujättiläinen* (Porvoo: Werner Söderström, 2005), p. 313.
[20] Laitos (1994), p. 277.

As we shall see later on, the recruitment of volunteers seems to have intensified in late 1942 and during 1943, despite this being a relatively quiet time of the war, the so-called 'Trench War Period'.

The attitude of official Finland towards the foreign volunteers

Occasionally, the Foreign Ministry in Helsinki had to deal with offers to volunteer from a neutral country like Portugal or Switzerland, but these cases were usually turned down, so they are not examined in detail.[21] Initially, only Scandinavian volunteers were to be accepted. However, for some reason Norwegian volunteers were categorically refused while Swedes and Danes were accepted in the same manner that they had been welcomed during the Winter War.[22] However, after a protest from the Foreign Ministry, the military High Command reversed its earlier decision and announced that Norwegians could be accepted but stressed that the Finnish embassy in Oslo should not undertake any sort of recruitment activities and that only spontaneous volunteering would be acceptable.[23]

Realizing that there is no need to re-invent the wheel, the Finnish High Command re-established the Volunteer Office, like it had done at the end of the Winter War, in Helsinki. As before, it was responsible for handling all matters related to the foreign volunteers while they were in Finland. This time it was allotted an extra task: to organize recruitment aboard and to lead recruitment offices outside of Finland. It worked directly under the High Command. Its main branch office was at the western port city of Turku, the former capital, where a Volunteer Reception Centre welcomed foreigners into the country, storing their civilian clothes and arranged travel when volunteers left for leave or permanently. It cooperated with the Swedish Volunteer Centre (*Svenska Frivilligcentralen*). As the number of Scandinavian volunteers diminished as the war progressed and the importance of Estonian volunteers in

[21] Lisbon to Helsinki and response, 23 Mar/14 Apr 1942 and Bern to Helsinki and response, 11 Jun/1 Jul 1941. FFMA Signum 110 Folder 25.
[22] HCVO to Foreign Ministry, 26 Jun 1941. FFMA Signum 110 Folder 25.
[23] Oslo to Helsinki/HCVO and response, 7 Jul/10 Jul 1941. FFMA Signum 110 Folder 25.

comparison grew, the Volunteer Reception Centre was disbanded in autumn 1943 and some of its staff were moved to Helsinki, where a new Volunteer Reception Centre was established to handle the Estonians.[24] Mostly these were administrative issues, rather than operative. For example, in December 1943, the office received a phone call from the Finnish military attaché in Stockholm, who reported that he had extended the leave of Swedish volunteer B. Fugestan due to medical reasons and the office in turn informed his unit.[25] Another example would be keeping track of incoming and outgoing volunteers, such as the volunteers at the Helsinki reception centre, as well arranging their further transit.[26] It seems that most, if not all volunteers, had to first travel to Helsinki before they could travel elsewhere.

This meant that the Volunteer Office was also collecting information about crimes that the volunteers committed. It was not uncommon for foreign volunteers to run into trouble with the law in their host country and the main reason why this did not really happen in the Winter War was the short duration of that conflict. However, the Continuation War lasted four years and this meant ample time for lawlessness, ranging from almost-silly mischief to extremely serious incidents. For example, Estonian volunteer sailor Edgar Lepp was sentenced to 21 days of confinement in quarters for theft by a court at the Turku naval station.[27] Lepp was not the only one, as minor theft seems to have been the second most common crime committed by volunteers. A more serious case was that of Estonian volunteer August Sirkel, who is a good example of the type of unlucky vagrants that are easily attracted to volunteer in a conflict. Sirkel was born in 1921 so he was only 22 when he was sent to state prison in Finland. He had served as a sailor on a German transport ship 'Hohenhörn' for three months in 1942 but was superfluous, so instead of returning to Estonia, he volunteered for the Finnish Army, which assigned him to the 9th company of Infantry Regiment 47 *(Jalkaväkirykmentti 47)*. His commanding officer deemed him a poor soldier. Despite this, he was granted leave, during

[24] Laitos (1994), p. 277.
[25] Phone message from Stockholm to Volunteer Office, 22 Dec 43. FNA T-6518/1.
[26] Letter from Volunteer Office to Helsinki reception center, 11 Oct 43. FNA T-6549/4.
[27] Letter from Turku Naval Station to VolOff, 29 Nov 43. FNA T6548/1.

which time he travelled to Helsinki and stayed at the reception centre at Kulosaari. Instead of returning to his unit in time, he forged a leave pass. He was caught and sentenced to 10 months of incarceration for absence and forgery of military documents. However, his sentence was commuted, and he was released on 15 December 1943, after only a month of actual jail time. Once released, he was expelled back to Estonia.[28]

Even more serious was the case of extortion at the Helsinki equipment depot. In December 1943, Major Erik Lönnroth, at the time the commanding officer of the Volunteer Office, suspected that about 300 Estonian volunteers did not hand over their civilian clothes when they joined the Finnish Army, and at the same time the quartermaster, lance corporal Nikula, demanded bribes from the Estonian volunteers. The investigation was fairly rigorous and discovered that Nikula, along with three other supply clerks, had demanded money from Estonian volunteers to issue them proper gear. Those refusing to pay, would be issued poor quality gear. They also accepted boxes of cigarettes instead of money. Some Estonians pooled their money together so that they could afford the better gear, but many also refused to pay. Multiple volunteers testified that the four Finns were drunk and kept drinking through the process of equipment issuing. Nikula denied the accusations but one of the supply clerks admitted that he had accepted food stuffs as bribes to hand over better gear. The Volunteer Office handed the case papers over to the Helsinki Civil Guard field court. Considering the evidence, it is likely that the four Finns were convicted but unfortunately nothing was reported back to the Office.[29] This example shows how foreign volunteers can become a target for local criminal elements that seek to take advantage of them.

An example of a bizarre case was the Swedish volunteer Gösta Anders Lindbord, from Gothenburg. A metal worker whose brother Anders had volunteered with the Waffen-SS, Gösta wrote a letter addressed to his sister, with the note that she should forward it to

[28] Multiple letters between VolOff and Hel-SK Field Court and Helsinki State Prison and JR47. FNA T-6548/1.
[29] Multiple memos and interrogation notes by VolOff. FNA T-6548/1.

Norrskensflamman, a Communist magazine in Sweden. In the letter he harshly criticized the Nazis and Finland and claimed that he heard from a Finnish soldier that men who refused to cross the River Syväri *(Svir)* were executed on the spot. He also claimed that most of the Swedish volunteers had been misled by the 'Swedish Nazi press'. Knowing that military censors would read his letter if he mailed it from Finland, he gave it to another Swedish volunteer who was going back to Sweden on leave, to mail it once he crossed the border. Unfortunately for Gösta, the other volunteer could not contain their curiosity and opened the letter. After reading it, he reported the matter to the Finnish authorities who arrested Gösta. During his interrogation, he claimed that the whole thing was a sham, in order for him to get expelled from the Swedish volunteer unit since both his request to resign before the end of his contract and his request for leave had been denied, as he had 'important business to handle back home'. Incredibly, after interviewing his squad mates and his commanding officer, the Finnish authorities came to believe him and he was only sentenced to 30 days of being restricted to quarters, after which he was indeed expelled back to Sweden. The plan worked![30]

An example of the most serious types of crimes committed by volunteers would be the case of Danish volunteer, former sub-lieutenant *(vänrikki)* William Torsten Larsson. He had served as a platoon leader in the Swedish volunteer unit, though he had missed out on the siege of Hanko as he had only joined on 22 December 1941. He was wounded on 11 June 1942 and was sent to 38th Field Hospital. After that, it was discovered that during his service he had 'borrowed' money from his soldiers, stolen Army property which he had then sold or pawned and committed fraud against other soldiers. He was sentenced to 11 months of imprisonment by the Supreme Court on 12 November 1942, which also meant he lost his military rank. Larsson complained to the Parliamentary Ombudsman that as a foreign citizen he should be released on parole and sent back to Denmark. The Ombudsman consulted the High Command, and the Volunteer Office refused the request. Larsson ended up serving the whole sentence in Finnish

[30] Multiple documents between Volunteer Office, 17th Division Field Court, Er.K/JR13, 20 March 43. FNA T-6548/1

prison as it was not until 18 October 1943 when he was supposed to leave Finland on a merchant ship heading to Denmark. However, the case did not end there as, just before the ship departed, Larsson jumped back to the pier with an officer uniform he had stolen from a fellow volunteer and money he had sweet-talked out of a Finnish female passenger. The Volunteer Office alerted Helsinki Police to search for him, but Larsson was not found.[31] Why he was not under police escort is unknown.

While the total number of crimes committed by volunteers is unclear, as many cases might not have been reported to the Volunteer Office, the amount that was reported seems to be less than fifty, which is a minuscule amount compared to the total number of volunteers, that being 6022. This means that the volunteers did not place an undue stress on Finnish law enforcement resources. It is also important to note that foreign volunteers can be victimised by the very people they came to help. The examples above give a good range of the types of criminality that volunteers ended being involved in, showing the reality behind the polished propaganda image. This sort of problematic relationship between volunteers and their host country is common for nearly every conflict that has attracted them, from the Serbian and Greek wars of independence in the 19th century, to the Yugoslav Wars of the 1990s as well as more contemporary conflicts in the Middle East and Ukraine in the 21st century.[32] While direct comparisons are difficult to make, it seems that the volunteers in Finland during the long years of the Continuation War were far less troublesome for their host than some of their counterparts in other conflicts.

Swedish and Nordic volunteers

Like in the Winter War, all practical matters of recruitment in Sweden were once more handled by the Swedes, but a thin veneer of neutrality was maintained by placing the Finnish

[31] Multiple letters between VolOff, High Command, Finnish Parliamentary Ombudsman, Helsinki State Prison, Helsinki police over a period of several months in 1942 and 1943. FNA T-6548/1.
[32] Arielli, pp.179–202.

military attaché as the nominal commander of the Stockholm-based *Frivilligbyrån*, literally Volunteer Office, which became the successor to the Winter War era *Finlandskommittee*.[33] While government support was not as extensive as in the Winter War, neither did the Swedish government hinder its citizens from going to Finland.[34] In German-occupied Denmark, the Finnish embassy directed volunteers to travel to Stockholm.[35]

The SFB, a force of eventually 825 men, was deployed on the Hanko front in southern Finland as part of the sizable Finnish force ensuring that the Soviets could not attack from the naval base towards Helsinki.[36] The battalion was attached to Finnish Infantry Regiment 55 (*Jalkaväkirykmentti 55*) as that regiment already consisted of Swedish speaking Finns. Just like in the Winter War, the Swedes wore Swedish uniforms purchased from government warehouses at stock prices by the Volunteer Bureau. The transport costs, both ways, were covered from the funds remaining with the *Finlandskommittee*. The committee had not been completely dismantled by the beginning of the Continuation War and could thus fund the Bureau. As General Linder, the commander of the SFK during the Winter War was now 72 years old and as the SFB was a much smaller unit, the 46-year-old Lieutenant-Colonel Berggren was appointed to lead it. He had volunteered during the Winter War but had not been assigned as there had been only a very limited amount of officer slots available. Thus, the Continuation War became his second chance to experience combat. The commanders of the three rifle companies were all veterans of the Winter War.[37]

The SFB arrived at the Hanko front in mid-August and assumed responsibility for its portion of the frontline on 17 August 1941.[38] In September, the SFB was part of the Finnish attack plan to

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[33] Arne Stade, 'Svenska frivilligbataljonen framfor Hangö 1941', *Sotahistoriallinen Aikakauskirja 10* (Jyväskylä: Gummerus 1991), pp. 148–149.
[34] Stockholm to Helsinki, 26 Jun/4 Jul 1941. FFMA Signum 110 Folder 25.
[35] Helsinki to Copenhagen, 1 Jul 1941. FFMA Signum 110 Folder 25.
[36] This is the strength of the battalion at its largest at the Hanko front. As men returned home and new volunteers arrived, the size of the formation ebbed and flowed. In total, 1694 Swedes served in Finland during the Continuation War.
[37] Stade, pp. 137, 140-141, 150-152, 155-156.
[38] Stade, p. 160.

partially reduce the Russian enclave by capturing the village of Lappvik and the Swedish officers were excited about the operation despite the inherent risks in a frontal assault. The attack however was cancelled.[39] In November, Berggren travelled to Mikkeli for a meeting with Field Marshal Mannerheim in order to get permission for a new attack plan involving the SFB and one Finnish battalion. Mannerheim categorically refused and emphasized that the Swedish volunteer unit was more important politically and would not be wasted in meaningless combat.[40]

Image 4: *Major Stackelberg welcomes 60 Swedish and 3 Danish volunteers to the Hanko front on 1st August 1941. Foreign soldiers wore a slightly different uniform from the Finnish officers.*[41]

This sentiment exactly mirrors his earlier thinking during the Winter War. As explained in both Chapters 1 and 2, Mannerheim did not want to use foreign volunteers as cannon fodder. The SFK in the Winter War had been placed at the quietest front at the time and the other

[39] Stade, pp. 171-172.
[40] Stade, p. 173.
[41] Picture from the Finnish Defence Force Wartime Photograph Archive: http://sa-kuva.fi/

volunteer groups had been sent to comprehensive training instead of the frontlines. It was only the Finnish American Legion and the Tribal Finn ranger battalion that had been sent to harm's way. To him, the foreign volunteers were primarily a political tool, to show the rest of the world that Finland's cause was just.

Berggren did not get to carry out his attack and the SFB remained on the defensive on the Hanko front until the end, which came in December 1941 when the Russians evacuated the base and the Finns regained it without a fight. Over a period of nearly five months of defensive action, the battalion nonetheless lost 26 men killed and 80 wounded which is proof that the area was mostly, but not entirely, quiet. The casualties came largely from Russian artillery fire and land mines. The battalion returned to Stockholm on 20 December 1941 as both General Enckell, commanding the Volunteer Office of the High Command and thus the superior officer of all foreign volunteers, and Field Marshall Mannerheim had decided that home sickness and fatigue were plaguing the battalion. Most of its men had expected a short and sharp fight, not a months-long, dull but dangerous guard duty and were glad to be going home.[42]

However, enough Swedes wanted to remain in Finland that an independent company could be maintained, and this unit was attached to the Infantry Regiment 13 (*Jalkaväkirykmentti 13*). Eventually, 404 Swedes served in the company though not all of them simultaneously and despite suffering from a dwindling number of volunteers to fill its ranks, the company served with respectable manner through the war, including heavy fighting in the large summer battles of 1944. Additionally, about 130 Swedes served in other combat units.[43] Some 40 specialists served in Field Artillery and Anti-Aircraft Artillery units, plus four in the Navy. Over two hundred Swedish mechanics and technicians worked at Finnish depots and a similar number of men at hospitals, both human and veterinarian. Interestingly, out of this entire group, over two-hundred Swedes served under at least two different military contracts in Finland during

[42] Stade, pp. 176, 188.
[43] These were JR13, JR24, JR61, Er. P 18 and Rv.Pr (Infantry Regiments 13, 24 and 61, Independent Battalion 18 and the Cavalry Brigade)

the war – basically two 'tours of duty'.[44] The largest concurrent number of Swedes was slightly over 800 in autumn of 1941. By the end of 1943 most of the Swedes had left so that by June 1944, there were only about 100 Swedes left, mostly in the Independent Company as mentioned above.[45]

An attempt was made to recruit Norwegian doctors in 1941 and volunteers in general in 1943 but the terms of service and resistance from German officials made it very difficult.[46] It is likely that the Germans wanted Norwegians to volunteer for the Waffen-SS instead of Finland. In fact, a Norwegian ski battalion was eventually integrated into the otherwise German SS-Division 'Nord', and it served in Finnish Lapland from 1943.[47] The 204 Danes who served in Finland during the Continuation War did not form a single unit. Rather, they served in a number of different units based on their skills and preferences, most likely in the Swedish-speaking Finnish units, where some Swedes also served as explained above.[48]

The Scandinavian volunteers received preferential treatment compared to Finnish soldiers. The military paid their living costs during the transitory period of leaving the service and traveling back home. This seems to have been as much as 20 Finnish marks per day.[49] They could also be granted leave for educational purposes.[50] Their combat value at Hanko is obvious as it released Finnish troops to be moved to the more important Karelian front. They were also useful as a propaganda force to show Nordic unity and in some cases, they provided important specialist workforce in Finnish depots and hospitals. The Swedish company performed extremely well in 1943 and 1944 but a single company, no matter how well it fights, cannot turn the tide of the war. Nevertheless, it suffered heavy casualties, having only 20 Swedes able to fight after the

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[44] Laitos (1994), p. 228.
[45] Kotro, p. 303
[46] A. Asanti to Minister Hellstrom, 20 Jan 1943. FFMA Signum 110 Folder 25.
[47] *SS-Skijeger bataljon 'Norge' 1943-1945*. Undated, available at https://www.waffen-ss.no/SS-SKIJAEGER-NORGE-ENGLISH.htm [accessed on 10 May 2021]
[48] Kotro, p. 314
[49] Major Rannisto / Funding Office letter to Military Attaché Office of the High Command, 22 Dec 1942. FNA T-5665-2.
[50] Col. Wahren / Commandant Office letter to Military Attaché Office of the High Command, 28 June 1942. FNA T-5665-2.

massive battle of Tali-Ihantala.[51] So, it seems that despite Mannerheim's earlier insistence that the Swedes would be used more for show than action, they ultimately were thrown into the meat grinder when the Finnish need was the largest. This likely suited them well since the men of the Swedish volunteer company remaining in Finland in 1944 could fairly be called die-hards for the cause. Everyone who had had any scepticism about the war or lack of faith in the cause had had ample time and opportunities to leave by that point.

The Estonian volunteers

While the friendship between Finland and Estonia had long roots and Finland had been the first country to officially recognize Estonia in 1920, the two countries had taken different paths in the 1930s after gaining their independence around the same time, in the aftermath of the collapse of the Russian Empire. Finland managed to maintain democratic institutions and refused Soviet demands in 1939, whereas Estonia had been placed under martial law in 1934 which lasted until 1938, though opposition was practically powerless even after parliamentary elections were re-established. The Estonian government had succumbed to Soviet pressure in September 1939, allowing Red Army units, ships and planes to be stationed in Estonia and the country was completely occupied during the summer of 1940.[52] Many Estonians fled their country for Finland and Sweden, and some of them volunteered to fight for Finland in the Winter War. When the German conquest of the Baltic States in 1941 did not give Estonia independence, more Estonians fled to Finland, to avoid having to serve in the German military. By the spring of 1943, sufficient men had arrived in Finland so that an understrength regiment could be formed.[53] The officer positions were all filled Finns as were many of the non-

[51] Kotro, p. 303

[52] For further reading on Estonian politics during the interwar period, see: Andres Kasekamp, *The Radical Right in Interwar Estonia* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2000).

[53] The regiment was officially numbered as Infantry Regiment 200 or JR200 in Finnish sources. The number is significant as regular regiments had their numbers derived from the division that they were part of and only used two digits. A three-digit number meant that it was a special unit. The regiment had only two battalions instead of the usual three.

commissioned officers, with the rank and file being Estonian. Eventually, Estonian officers and NCOs were trained. Almost four hundred Estonians served in the Finnish Navy and a small number joined Finnish Military Intelligence. The Finnish embassy in Berlin had, on its own initiative, suggested to petition Germany to allow the Finns to openly recruit volunteers in Estonia but the Finnish Foreign Ministry turned the idea down as the matter was being handled by the military.[54]

The first Estonian unit in the Finnish Army was the so-called ERNA, a radio reconnaissance unit made up of Estonian men who had come to Finland during and after the Winter War. During 1940, the High Command Reconnaissance Office created ERNA, initially to perform signal intelligence work, intercepting Soviet radio transmissions. The fifteen Estonians chosen to become radio operators were housed in a villa owned by the Finnish officer who was in command of all signal intelligence, colonel Hallamaa. The training course lasted just short of three months and at the end of it, all fifteen volunteers successfully graduated. They were then placed together with 51 other Estonians, who would form the direct-action element of the unit. Eighteen out of these 67 men had served in Task Force *Sisu* during the Winter War, rest had arrived in Finland afterwards. As the German 18th Army was advancing towards Estonia, ERNA received a German liaison, first-lieutenant Kurt Reinhardt, who immediately clashed with the commanding officer of the unit, colonel H.A Kurg. Reinhardt demanded that, as the unit would be operationally under German command, the Estonians should swear an oath of fealty to the Führer. Kurg categorically refused and explained that the Estonians volunteers were part of the Finnish military and had already sworn an oath to Finland.[55]

On the evening of 9 July, the poorly equipped group was sent to Estonia, armed with old Swiss-made SIG Bergmann submachine guns, Belgian pistols, dynamite and radio transmitters. In order to maintain a low profile, it was divided into three detachments that were carried by

[54] Berlin to Helsinki and response, 24/26 Feb 1942. FFMA Signum 110 Folder 25.
[55] Ülo Jôgi, *Ernan tarina: Suomen tiedustelujoukko Virossa toisen maailmansodan vuosina* (Juva: Ajatus, 1996),P pp. 48-69.

different types of boats: some men were aboard fishing trawlers, some in small speedboats and the rest in Finnish Navy's patrol boats. Unfortunately, they ran into a Soviet convoy and most boats had to turn back. This meant that only half of the group made landfall by the morning of 10 July. They successfully evaded multiple attempts by the Russians to destroy the unit and managed to make contact with local resistance forces. Another attempt to land the remaining half failed on 13 July as the boats were spotted by Russian defenders but their Finnish crews managed to turn around and retreat without casualties. As the part of ERNA that was in Estonia was reporting more and more Estonians wanting to join the unit and fight against the Red Army, the Finns decided that it would be better to insert the remaining radio operators by parachute. The men received the bare minimum of training for jumping out of a plane. On 21 July the first two men were dropped into Estonia, followed quickly by the second pair a day later and then more drops of men and equipment on 26 and 27 July as well as the 28. Finally, on the same day, a German Junkers Ju-52 cargo plane brought last 16 men from Finland to Estonia.[56]

During July and the first week of August 1941, ERNA performed both reconnaissance and sabotage missions and transmitted valuable information to Finland about Soviet troop deployments and movements. Its strength was bolstered by eager locals but as most of them lacked weapons, colonel Kurg sent them away. The unit performed well and, despite multiple attempts by NKVD troops, avoided capture and annihilation. Its losses were three killed, one missing and four wounded. From 6 August to 8 August, the various ERNA detachments made contact with advancing German forces and were thus transferred to German command and control. Peculiarly, the men were allowed to keep wearing their Finnish army uniforms and the locals who had joined them kept wearing their Estonian army uniforms.[57]

[56] Jôgi, pp. 76–97.
[57] Jôgi, pp. 98–117.

The story of the ERNA group is an example of volunteers being used in a non-standard way – not for their special skills as they required special training that was given to them by the Finns, but because of their background and knowledge. A group of Finnish agents could not have blended into Estonian countryside nor be successful in recruiting Estonian resistance groups to their side, only Estonians could achieve this.

Finnish military intelligence organized a second group for Estonia in 1944, this time called Group Falcon (*Haukka*). Consisting of few ERNA veterans, one Estonian commando who had been working with Finnish long-range reconnaissance patrol, and several new men gathered from among Estonian volunteers in the army and the navy. Planning for the unit started in 1943 after the German defeat in Stalingrad made it clear to the Finns that their ally would be losing the war. The purpose of *Haukka* was to monitor German activity in order to gain advance warning in the case of hostilities if and when Finland would sever the alliance with Germany and negotiate for separate peace with the Soviet Union. Ultimately, 18 men were sent to Estonia after several weeks of training. They were sent in pairs and small groups and operated clandestinely without German support or knowledge, having to dodge German secret services. This mission they performed well, though twice the Finnish military attaché had to intervene due to Germans arresting a member of the group. Eventually the situation became impossible as the Soviet juggernaut moved into Estonia, and the group faced a sad end. Eleven men were killed in action, one died from tuberculosis and five were arrested and sentenced to hard labour – only one man managed to escape. The reason was that the members of *Haukka* expected their Finnish controllers to organize an evacuation, which is why they stayed put even after the Russians arrived. This evacuation never happened as the control centre in Finland was dismantled as part of the peace treaty between the Soviet Union and Finland, both its Finnish and Estonian members escaping to Sweden with their equipment and archives.[58]

[58] Jôgi, pp. 169–233.

Throughout the period between 1941 and 1944, Finland was diplomatically in an awkward position between Estonian nationalism and German imperialism. Nazi Germany intended to Germanize the Baltic States and had no intention of granting independence to any of the three nations. The Germans did not allow Estonians to leave their country and tried to recruit men for military service, initially in auxiliary formations but later for combat duty and into the Waffen-SS. In 1943 Germany implemented conscription in Estonia, which drove increasing numbers of young Estonian men to Finland. Finland, seen as kindred people to the Estonians, could not protest much as Germany was at the time a critically important ally for Finland, yet the Estonians could not be completely ignored.[59] The Finnish Foreign Ministry does not seem to have received any demands from Germany for repatriation of Estonian nationals, which likely helped the military to agree to the formation of an Estonian unit.

Thus, the Infantry Regiment 200 was created. The forming of this regiment was not without trouble. The Foreign Ministry suggested the formation of an Estonian unit in March 1942, after discussing the topic with the German ambassador in Helsinki. Interestingly, the response to this initiative came not from the Volunteer Office but from the Army Intelligence Office and it was negative. The Army did not want to give the Germans an impression of poor loyalty, especially at a time when the Germans were trying to form their own Estonian battalion.[60] Either the opinion of the Intelligence Office was overruled, or the office changed its opinion later in 1942 as the formation of the regiment started in 1943 and went so smoothly that, by January 1944, the Finnish ambassador in Bern could inform his Baltic colleagues that a significant number of Estonians were already being trained as non-commissioned officers and that suitable ones would eventually be trained as officers.[61] At that time, both the authorities

[59] Kotro, p. 304.
[60] Helsinki to Army High Command, 18 Mar 1942. Army Intelligence Office to Helsinki, 24 Mar 1942. FFMA Signum 110 Folder 25.
[61] Helsinki to Bern, 21 Jan 1944. Signum 110 Folder 25.

and the general population were firmly in support of the Estonians, so Finland could act more defiantly towards Germany.[62]

Initially, the Estonians were formed into their own company in the III Battalion of Infantry Regiment 47 *(Jalkaväkirykmentti 47)*, on the Karelian Isthmus, where they received training and performed guard duties, meaning they were not engaged in frontline combat. Slowly the entire battalion became Estonian as more of them arrived and Finns were, in turn, transferred elsewhere. Training of officers and non-commissioned officers started in Autumn 1943 with the aim that eventually the Estonians would have a formation completely of their own. In February 1944, the High Command issued the order to create Infantry Regiment 200 with two battalions. Its commander would be lieutenant-colonel Eino Kuusela who spoke fluent Estonian and had attended the Estonian Higher Military Academy in the 1930s. At this point the regiment had about 1850 Estonian men, though its officers were still Finns.[63]

In addition to the two infantry battalions, the regiment included an anti-tank company, a mortar company, and a training school. While it did pull most of the Estonian military manpower in Finland into it, small numbers of Estonians remained serving in specialist units within the High Command Reconnaissance Office as well as in the Finnish Navy. In the latter roughly 10% of personnel were Estonians.[64]

With the general situation becoming worse for both Finland and Germany during the summer of 1944, Estonian nationalist circles became active. They formed a National Committee, which sent a letter to the Finnish Foreign Ministry, pleading for a massive evacuation of Estonian civilians to Finland, prioritizing the families of Estonian volunteers first, and members of academia and the leadership second. The Foreign Ministry asked the High Command Volunteer Office for an estimation of numbers of family members, which the HCVO placed at 600 if only wives and children under 17 were counted, but could be as high as 10,000 if parents, in-laws

[62] Kotro, p. 304.
[63] Kotro, p. 304.
[64] Kotro, p. 305.

and other family members were included. The Foreign Ministry must have gotten approval from the Finnish government for this plan, as the Finnish embassy in Berlin was subsequently ordered to press the Germans to allow the evacuation of Estonian family members with the option of extending the evacuation to members of academia and 'other notable persons' later. German approval was gained after the Finns had convinced both *Generalkommissar* Karl Litzmann and *Reichskommissar* Heinrich Lohse.[65] Having successfully completed their part, the Foreign Ministry transferred responsibility to the Evacuation Office of the Interior Ministry and the Finnish Navy. The evacuees would be divided into four categories:

1. Estonians with relatives already living in Finland
2. Members of tribal and ethnic associations and clubs
3. Relatives of Estonian volunteers serving in the Finnish armed forces
4. Leading members of Estonian society and their families

Classification of the evacuees was planned to take place in the Estonian port of Tallinn.[66] However, this ambitious evacuation never actually happened. The armistice with the Soviet Union stopped the plan and no further mention of it can be found in the Foreign Ministry archives. It is possible that some Estonians were evacuated clandestinely to Finland.

In August 1944, an internal Foreign Ministry memo examined the critical situation in Estonia and the proposal from Estonian circles that the regiment, reinforced by any willing Estonians living in Finland - whether they were serving in the Finnish military or not - should be sent to Estonia. The memo suggested the creation of a monitoring group that could facilitate the evacuation of the regiment in the worst-case scenario, as well as persuading Germany to arm

[65] Litzmann was the Nazi governor of Estonia while Lohse was the Nazi governor of Ostland, the Nazi German term for the Baltic States. Kasekamp, p. 135.
[66] Estonian National Committee to Helsinki, 3 Aug 1944. HCVO to Helsinki, 4 Aug 1944. Helsinki to Berlin, 9/13/14 August 1944. Special envoy Helanen to Secretary Ivalo, 12 Aug 1944. Undated memo by Secretary Ivalo. Berlin to Helsinki, 18/26 Aug 1944. Undated letter from Foreign Minister to Prime Minister. Phone message between Foreign Minister and Prime Minister, 25 Aug 1944. FFMA Signum 110 Folder 30.

Estonian troops with the latest weaponry.[67] Once Germany promised not to prosecute any Estonian who had left the country without proper permits, the men of the regiment, as well as other Estonian volunteers, were transferred from Finland to Estonia.[68] The regiment fought the Red Army alongside German formations. While the regiment was a small formation compared to the tens of thousands of Estonian men that Germany conscripted, the men were all trained and had combat experience. The unit sustained 126 killed and 286 wounded, with 72 missing. Some of its members escaped to Sweden once Estonia had been re-occupied by the Soviet Union.[69]

The Estonians were useful in both reasons that Mannerheim and the High Command viewed foreign volunteers: they fought well at the frontlines while also being a shining example of unity and cooperation. The Estonian regiment fought several extremely tough battles during the summer of 1944, a fighting withdrawal after the collapse of Finnish frontline at Valkeasaari, the counterattack at Riihisyrjä and most importantly it fought alongside the German 122nd Division to push the Soviet amphibious invasion at the Bay of Viipuri back to the sea.[70] While a single, under-strength regiment cannot be considered crucial in a war that involved 45 Finnish regiments, it did play an important part during a critical period. And while the Navy was certainly the least important of the three branches during the Continuation War, having a significant portion of its personnel being Estonian means they played an important part there as well.

Another noteworthy issue is that, from the start, the Finns planned that the Estonian regiment would be fully Estonian. This is proven by the fact that the training of Estonian non-commissioned officers and commissioned officers started immediately and continued up to

[67] Helsinki memo, 3 Aug 1944. FFMA Signum 110 Folder 25.
[68] Tallinn to Helsinki, 22 July 1944. FFMA Signum 110 Folder 25.
[69] Chris Bishop. *SS: Hitler's Foreign Divisions: Foreign Volunteers in the Waffen-SS 1940-1945* (Staplehurst: Spellmount, 2005), pp. 94-95.
[70] Kotro, pp. 305-307; Laitos (1994), p. 279.

the last days of the war. This is certainly not a given for a foreign volunteer unit that is supposedly integrated into a national force.

At the same time, it seems clear that the vast majority of Estonian volunteers came to Finland only when push came to shove, in essence when Germany started drafting them. This seems like a classic push-pull scenario: the German conscription pushed Estonians while the linguistic and cultural ties with Finland pulled them. However, the numbers of Estonians 'escaping' to Finland needs to be put into proper context: just a little over 3200 Estonians served in the Finnish military whereas the Germans ended up drafting over 100,000 Estonians into their various military formations by autumn of 1944, from the Waffen-SS to anti-aircraft auxiliaries and as many as 65,000 Estonians retreated from Estonia with the Germans.[71] While it is unsurprising that forcibly drafting nets more people than pure volunteering, the difference between the two numbers is more than an order of magnitude.

The Tribal Finns

The third cohort of volunteers were formed by the so-called tribal Finns. They are an example of transnational recruitment, rather than foreign volunteering. Several ethnic groups that were related to Finns remained inside the Soviet Union, the largest of which were the Karelians and the Ingrians. In 1918, a Finnish attempt to bring East-Karelia together with Finland, especially the regions of Viena and Aunus, had been foiled by British and Russian opposition.[72]

Those who served in the Finnish military can be split roughly into three major groups: firstly, the men who were already living in Finland before the war, who were mostly Karelians, secondly the Ingrians and Livonians who were transferred from German-occupied areas to Finland, and thirdly the assortment of all Finnic groups that were captured as prisoners of war

[71] Bishop, pp. 94–95.
[72] Pentti Syrjä, *Isänmaattomat: Heimosoturit Jatkosodassa 1941–1944* (Juva: WSOY, 1991). P. 15.

by either the Finns or the Germans. These three groups also ended up serving in different formations, making the split organizational as well.

Unit	Registered	Killed	Missing	Repatriation 1944	Repatriation 1945-1951	Total repatriated
HeimoP 3	1114	85	28	466	185	651
Er. P 6	729	26	13	347	184	531
Others	281	8	51	15	34	49
Total	2124	119	92	828	403	1231

Table 3: Soviet citizens in the Finnish Army and the casualties they suffered. All Tribal Finn units also included Finnish soldiers. As mentioned earlier, this does not include those Tribal Finns who had been living in Finland before the wars.[73]

The first tribal unit to be formed, on 23 June 1941, was Brigade K, named after its commander, lieutenant-colonel Eero Kuussaari, whose influence ensured that army officers who were also members of the Academic Karelia Society were transferred to it.[74] It had two battalions, named after the geographical regions of their members as the Aunus Tribal Warrior Battalion (hence ATWB) and Viena Tribal Warrior Battalion (hence VTWB).[75] The formation was extremely diverse both in its equipment as well as its members since it had not been part of the official order of battle for the Finnish Army before the war and had to make do with whatever it could get. While many of its men had combat experience from 1918-1922, others had only limited training. Some soldiers did not even have military rifles, carrying their own shotguns or hunting rifles instead. Even their uniforms ran the gamut from pre-WW1 ones to Civil Guard and Army issues.[76]

In combat, the brigade was treated by the Finnish High Command as if it was a normal Finnish formation. During the Porajärvi campaign of autumn 1941, the Brigade received several

[73] Laitos (1994), p. 278.
[74] Kuussaari had been a volunteer in the Finnish independence movement during WW1, had received military training in Germany alongside other members of the Jäger-movement (Jääkäriliike), fought in the Finnish war of independence and took part in the expeditions to liberate East-Karelia, was the chairman of the Finnish Tribal Warrior Union from 1934 to 1944 and spent several years as a board member of the Academic Karelia Society. Clearly a firebrand preacher of the Greater Finland and Tribal Finland ideology. Syrjä, p. 25.
[75] Laitos (1994), p. 279.
[76] Syrjä, p. 31

Finnish units attached to it, including both infantry and ranger battalions, and even a battery of light artillery. The brigade also fought just like a regular Finnish army formation, utilizing flanking movements through roadless wilderness, a staple of Finnish tactics. Lieutenant-colonel Kuussaari also understood the value of local knowledge during such operations, as scouting patrols were always formed from men who knew the geographical area that the patrol would be moving through. The offensive began on 25 August 1941 and continued successfully for three days, by which time the Brigade had reached heavily fortified Russian units defending the town of Porajärvi. The brigade then turned to construction, clearing a new road for supply. Without heavy equipment or power tools, the road was not open to traffic until 1 October.[77]

Before this was done, however, the Finnish general offensive resumed, and the Brigade joined it on 10 September at five in the morning. VTWB went first, attempting to flank the Russians by crossing a large swamp, but was forced to retreat by a Russian counterattack in the same afternoon. Two days later, the battalion attempted the attack again at a slightly different location but, despite a successful defensive battle on the 13 September, repeated Russian counterattacks forced the battalion to once again return to its starting point on the 14th. This battle, lasting five days, proved that the tribal soldiers were just as effective in combat as their Finnish counterparts, a fact that the officers of the brigade were keen to broadcast. However, the casualties suffered, and a poor supply situation meant that the brigade remained on the defensive until the new road opened.[78]

Thus, the campaign was restarted on 5 October, with the VTWB once again leading and the ATWB joining the next morning. They successfully encircled the defending Soviet troops who did not give up until 10 October, when the truth of their nature was revealed: the defending Red Army regiment (Rifle Regiment 126) had largely been made up of fellow Karelians and

[77] Syrjä, pp. 35-40.
[78] Syrjä, p 41.

Ingrians as well. With only fifty prisoners taken, many men searched the hundreds of corpses to find familiar faces. Nevertheless, the Brigade continued its advance past Porajärvi, towards the village of Juustjärvi. Lieutenant-colonel Kuussaari aimed to encircle the remnants of the Soviet regiment, now that it was known that both its commander and men were 'locals'. Before this was achieved, however, orders were received to stop the brigade. The reason is not known.[79]

On 20 October 1941 the Brigade was dissolved, and the battalions were eventually given normal names: ATWB became Independent Battalion 7 and VTWB became Independent Battalion 8. They were moved further north and due to replenishments being mostly Finns since the original groups of Aunus-Karelians and Viena-Karelians had included many older men, their composition started to resemble regular battalions.[80] In a situation report dated 18 April 1944, Independent Battalion 7 was assigned to the Finnish 14th Division, holding the northern flank of the Finnish side of the frontline, while Independent Battalion 8 was assigned to the German 7th Mountain Division even further north.[81] As they could no longer be called tribal units at this point, their later events are not examined here.

The second unit to be formed was eventually named as Tribal Battalion 3 (*Heimopataljoona 3*). During their advance eastwards in 1941, thousands of men from various Finnic groups were captured by the Finns and the Germans, the Finns alone holding over 50,000 prisoners. For emotional and political reasons, the Finnish authorities tried to find members of the various tribal groups and separate them from Russians. As soon as the war started, the Chief of Staff of the Karelian Army, Colonel K. A. Tapola proposed that Karelian and Ingrian prisoners of war should be attached to Brigade K since it only had two battalions. While this proposal was turned down, a separate prisoner of war camp was created to house tribal groups at Aholahti, near the city of Savonlinna. In addition to Karelians and Ingrians, it would house Estonians,

[79] Syrjä, pp. 42–46.
[80] Kotro, p. 313.
[81] Army Order of Battle by High Command Operational Office, 18 Apr 44. FNA T-10603/2.

Livonians, Komi, Mari, and Vepsian prisoners of war, as long as they could speak even a little Finnish. Members of the more distant groups, or Finns who had moved to Soviet Union in the 1920s and 1930s would not be accepted to this special camp, and membership of the Communist Party would also disqualify a man. Conditions on the Aholahti camp were significantly better, with mortality rate being less than 1% while it was about 20% at other Finnish POW camps. Prisoners were also to be assigned work duties at farmhouses and lumber yards across Finland. The long-term goal was to convert the prisoners into 'proper Finns' and then re-settle East-Karelia with them. This plan did not come to fruition as problems with transfers meant that by November 1941, only 60 prisoners were at Aholahti and many of them struggled with the Finnish language, meaning that the camp's educational program could not proceed. In 1942 the program was expanded and accelerated thanks to the massive POW exchange with Germany. Finland would receive tribal prisoners from German camps and in return hand over 'foreign' prisoners, in essence meaning Russians, Ukrainians and so on. By August 1942, 812 men had been transferred to Finland, all assigned to farms as workers after quarantine and in September, the Aholahti camp roster climbed to 2518 men.[82]

Initially, the Finnish Army was reluctant to use them, since recruiting prisoners of war went against the Hague Convention of 1907.[83] However, this reluctance had not spread from the High Command to frontline formations. There were plans to form a unit out of the prisoners and frontline formations had recruited tribal soldiers under their own initiative, something that the High Command only learned of during spring 1942, when some units asked what to do with tribal 'volunteers' who were too old to remain in service despite valiant service. An amusing event took place at the village of Joutsa, where an Ingrian man, technically a prisoner-of-war, spent two months driving the local grocery store truck before authorities found out that he was a Soviet citizen and had been brought back from the front by older Finnish

[82] Syrjä, pp. 48-49.
[83] Article 6 states that prisoners of war cannot labor for military operations and Article 52 states that occupied populations cannot be compelled in military operations against its own country.

soldiers, recently demobilized. Faced with such facts, the High Command gave up and in November 1942 Mannerheim accepted the creation of the Tribal Battalion 3 was formed out of volunteers in December. It is obvious that a great amount of preparatory work had taken place before this as it was just not possible to kickstart a battalion that quickly. In fact, already back in August, the third proposal for a tribal unit made up of former prisoners had been put forth at the High Command and justified with the good experiences that the Germans had had.[84] Interestingly, Mannerheim made his decision without consulting his second-in-command, the Quartermaster-General, lieutenant-general Aksel Airo,[85] who was strongly opposed to such initiatives and was likely the reason why all the earlier proposals were rejected. He had opposed even the creation of Brigade K because not all its members were Finnish citizens. It is noteworthy that the letters and orders planning the creation of the battalion are not present in the Finnish National Archives. The High Command officers associated with the project have their paperwork fully archived, including letters about tribal prisoners being used for farm work, but that is all. Whether these letters were destroyed or never existed, the plans being transmitted purely orally, is unknown. So is the identity of the officer who convinced Field-Marshall Mannerheim in November 1942 – normally that person would have been Airo but in this case that is extremely unlikely. There had to have been Finnish officers who worked to promote this initiative despite knowing that their superior officer opposed it.[86]

The idea of utilizing prisoners of war did not appear out of nowhere. Already during the Winter War, part of the Finnish military intelligence in cooperation with a handful of White Russian emigrants living in Finland had attempted to create two separate formations out of Red Army

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[84] Kotro, p. 308; Syrjä, pp. 49-50.

[85] Finnish Army used this term in the same vein as Germany rather than the Anglo-American version. 'Majoitusmestari' was the chief operational commander of the army and thus the second-in-command after the supreme commander.

[86] Finnish historian Pentti Syrjä, a former Army general, interviewed several officers who had been involved with the Tribal Battalion 3 during the war and is convinced that the formation of the battalion started in summer 42 against the express orders of general Airo. Syrjä, pp. 51-53.

prisoners of war but these plans had not led to anything more concrete than a single propaganda mission against encircled Red Army units near Sortavala.[87] With the Finnish High Command reluctant to embroil Finland in any sort of anti-Communist crusade against the Soviet Union, this is not a surprise. However, it is likely that this failed recruiting scheme from the Winter War inspired the creation of Tribal Battalion 3 in the Continuation War, this time relying on the kinship of the tribal Finns.

When it was formed, the battalion had a fantastic mismatch of various groups, with 120 Finns as a cadre to stiffen the unit:

Nationality / Ethnicity	**Number**
Ingrians	423
Viena-Karelians	94
Aunus-Karelians	380
Tver-Karelians	101
Vepsians	24
Estonians	1
Unknown	17
Finns from the Red Army	30
Total	1070

Table 4: Ethnicity of the prisoners of war who volunteered for Tribal Battalion 3.[88]

The strength of the battalion was supposed to be 865 men but from the start it was larger. Unsuitable men were sent back to the Aholahti camp and new volunteers were recruited, 36 in 1943 and 113 in 1944. In fact, the last tribal soldier to join the battalion arrived very late on 14 August 1944.[89]

All the men in Tribal Battalion 3 were technically volunteers, but naturally their motivations were unclear. Some of the tribal recruits harboured vengeance against the Russians or Bolsheviks in general, while others hoped to gain Finnish citizenship after the war, which was promised to them. In a mundane way, many were content to enjoy better food, and more of it,

[87] Geust (2011), pp. 117-118.
[88] Laitos (1994), p. 279. According to Syrjä, pp. 57-58, the lone Estonian was an old cavalry captain Aleksander Elson, who had served in Mannerheim's division in Poland during the Great War. Due to his age and rank, he was later transferred to the High Command Volunteer Office, and, near the end of the war, he resigned and went to Germany.
[89] Syrjä, pp 53-54.

than they had at the camps. Similarly, life in the camp was boring whereas service would at least bring some excitement. The available sources do not say more about the motivations of the men. Recruiting prisoners of war to one's side was prevalent in early modern Europe but became far less prevalent in the twentieth century. Nonetheless, several attempts were made during the Second World War, most notably by the Germans who managed to recruit thousands of Soviet citizens to their side, even including the Russian general Andrey Vlasov.[90]

As to their qualifications, all of them had been soldiers in the Red Army and had received Soviet military training. Twelve percent were trained as sergeants and twice that as officers – the highest rank being captain. There is some disagreement over the composition of the battalion, as Finnish military historian Arto Kotro claims that all command positions were held by Finns and all the volunteers served in the rank and file, which created grumbling, but that Finns trained some non-commissioned officers from the volunteers. However, another Finnish military historian, Pentti Syrjä, claims that the battalion executive officer and all company executive officers were tribal men. Moreover, rifle platoon leaders were divided 'fifty-fifty' between Finns and tribal, and only the machine-gun platoons were completely Finn-led as was the *jääkäri*-platoon.[91] However, these officers were classified as 'tribal officers' and were thus in a separate category from Finnish officers and, when on leave, were not allowed to wear rank insignia which caused awkward situations. The unit suffered from low morale as most of its members had no knowledge of what had happened to their families. Demotion from a command position in the Red Army to being a private in the Finnish Army rankled with some. Why the battalion included thirty Finns who had 'jumped the border' when such men should not have been at the Aholahti camp in the first place is unknown. They were ostracized in the battalion, both by the Finnish cadre and the tribal soldiers.[92]

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[90] For more information on German recruitment, see Chris Bishop, *SS: Hitler's Foreign Divisions* and Robert Forbes, *For Europe: The French Volunteers of the Waffen-SS*.
[91] *Jääkäri* units were elite light infantry in the Finnish Army during the Continuation War and the name came from German word *jäger*, meaning hunter.
[92] Syrjä, pp. 57-58, 66-68, 94; Kotro, p. 308

The first period of the battalion's training was extremely difficult. The commanding officer, captain Pekkanen, chosen for this familiarity with Karelians, was being undermined in an exceptionally blunt way by his executive officer, captain Poutanen. For example, despite orders strictly forbidding from doing so, Poutanen assigned tribal officers on his own volition to new positions while his commanding officer was on leave. He also loudly criticized the training programme that Pekkanen had written. Once High Command learned of the problems, they, perhaps somewhat unfairly, replaced Pekkanen instead of the troublemaker Poutanen. The new commander was a 44-year-old experienced frontline commander, Major Paavo Pyökkimies, who was famous for being a strict disciplinarian as a regiment commander in the Winter War. According to interviews of the surviving platoon and company officers, problems among the command staff continued and it is clear that 'the wrong man got replaced'. To further make problems, the original Finnish cadre saw their assignment as a punishment. The men of the tribal battalion wore a different uniform than what Finns did, which made them stand out, and there was lack of equipment. Many Finnish soldiers saw the battalion, and its volunteers, as trash and were ashamed to admit being members of it. In addition, the Counter-Intelligence Office of the High Command *(Päämajan Valvontaosasto)* had sent a special intelligence officer to the battalion who proceeded to recruit several informants and he ensured that key positions were always held by Finns. Captain Pekkanen, before he himself was replaced, successfully replaced many of the Finnish cadre with better quality men by February 1943. He also managed to get the battalion's own non-commissioned officer training course started, which successfully trained 48 out of the 57 NCOs in the battalion.[93]

Spring 1943 did see the battalion starting to successfully form into a cohesive, combat capable unit. Training advanced from squad level to company level, including one major exercise as a full battalion working alongside supporting arms. The tribal soldiers also received language

[93] Syrjä, pp. 66–68, 92–96.

education, Lutheran and Greek-Orthodox sermons, lessons on Finnish politics, society and history. Perhaps most importantly, their wages were corrected to be equal to Finnish ones.[94]

A serious setback started in March 1943 when, due to a report by one of the informants, the Counter-Intelligence Office of the High Command began an investigation of possible mutiny and treason in the battalion. What initially seemed to be relatively harmless, turned out to be a serious intelligence operation masterminded by tribal officer Jaani Sainio, who was a Russian agent, sent to Finland for this express purpose. He had recruited multiple tribal officers into his scheme. The plan was to turn opinions against Finland in the battalion, then once on the front, commit a mass desertion to the Soviet side. In April 1943, the tribal officers involved in the plot were transferred back to prisoner-of-war camps, though in an unbelievable turn of events, one of them was later admitted back to the battalion! The entire investigation was handled embarrassingly poorly by the Finns, who either due to naivete or incompetence never caught many of the plot members, as evidenced by the fact that the informant who blew the plot open died in Helsinki during summer 1943 under suspicious circumstances, most likely murdered as revenge by his so-called comrades.[95]

Despite this, the battalion was commanded to the front on 27 April and on 1 May the battalion arrived at the village of Viisjoki, between Lake Ladoga and river Taipale at the old border between Finland and Soviet Union on the Karelian isthmus. Unlike how some of the original cadre had viewed the battalion, at the frontline it was warmly welcomed. In ascending order of seniority, the battalion was visited by lieutenant-general Öhquist, commander of Karelian Army *(Karjalan Ryhmä),* major-general Hersalo, commander of 15th division, and lieutenant-colonel Viljanen, commander of Infantry Regiment 16 *(Jalkaväkirykmentti 16)*, which became the parent formation for the battalion. But what impressed the tribal soldiers the most was the surprise arrival of Field-Marshall Mannerheim himself. Only two days after the battalion had

[94] Syrjä, pp. 96–97
[95] Syrjä, pp. 97-100

fought off the first Russian probing attack, the Supreme Commander of Finnish forces arrived at the battalion with a small entourage and conversed with several tribal officers and men for a long period – long enough that his adjutant wrote about the length in his diary.[96]

This cavalcade of visit by Finnish officers testifies that the Finns did see the battalion as an experiment. Despite its men not fitting the same mould as foreign volunteers, they were still special for wanting to fight for Finland and thus reinforces the argument that such volunteer units can be more useful for their propaganda value than their actual combat usefulness. That the battalion was not disbanded despite the problems it faced later on, also argues for this propagandistic value and the importance placed on it by the Finnish High Command.

The first sign of trouble came in October 1943, as after weeks of enemy propaganda from loudspeakers, several men deserted the battalion and the High Command saw this as an emergency, so the battalion was pulled back to the rear. During this period, the battalion lost 11 killed in action, 33 wounded in action, 4 as deserters, and one man was captured by the Soviets. Almost twenty men had been sent back to the Aholahti camp. The transfer to work duties in the rear was seen as collective punishment and the morale of the battalion dropped even further, though there were attempts to improve it by bringing entertainers and educators to visit the battalion. Its Finnish personnel saw many replacements too. In November a new commander, a fluent Russian-speaker, lieutenant-colonel Ludvig Mäntylä arrived. At the same time, older men of the Finnish cadre were demobilized and replaced with younger men. The break also allowed the companies to be reorganized in an attempt to make them more homogenous instead of being a mix of many ethnicities. Four tribal officers were sent to a divisional prepping course, in the hope of getting them slots at the Military Academy and another four men were promoted to NCOs. But not all were well as three men committed suicide and several more men had to be returned to the POW camp.[97]

[96] Syrjä, pp. 102–109
[97] Syrjä, pp. 110–119

One of the deaths was Pekka Skobelev, a private. Like the other suicides, his death was carefully investigated to rule out foul play or enemy action by the battalion legal officer, who interviewed several of Skobelev's squad mates as well as his platoon leader. Interestingly, all of the men interviewed had originally been captured by Germans in 1941 and had joined the battalion in December 1942. They must have been part of the POW transfer between Finland and Germany. Skobelev had gotten drunk and eventually started a fight with another soldier. Despite repeated attempts by his squad mates to get him to sleep, he had gotten up multiple times in an attempt to resume the fight, at one point threatening other soldiers with an unloaded rifle. While others were at morning call washing up, Skobelev made his way to the shed where the rifles of the platoon were held and shot himself. Despite surgery at the field hospital, he died on 19 December 1943 and the official judgement was that temporary insanity caused by alcohol led to suicide by rifle. All the notes of the investigation were copied to the High Command Volunteer Office.[98]

The next problem for the battalion came in June as another desertion plan was discovered. Once again, the organizers were Russian-trained agents. The plotters planned to destroy one of the combat bases[99] and take its commander as a prisoner to the Russian side. If the Red Army had a unit ready to attack at the same time, there was a real risk of the front line collapsing. Once an Ingrian informant told their officers about the plot, the battalion command staff reacted quickly. The fully Finnish *jääkäri*-platoon arrested the plotters and occupied the vulnerable base. After an investigation that involved over fifty men, 26 were arrested and 17 were sentenced to imprisonment, though their sentences were surprisingly lenient. The leader of the plot, corporal Novodorov, who turned out to be a Russian agent sent to Finland with the specific mission of getting captured and working his way to the tribal battalion, a mission in

[98] Report from HeimoP3 to VolOff, 24.12.43. FNA T-6548/1

[99] Finnish defence during this period relied on the use of combat bases formed by a bunker and several pillboxes near it connected via trenches, that together could dominate the terrain around them with direct weapon fire. Multiple bases would form a sector. Important sectors would have bases right next to each other whereas in unimportant sectors the bases might be separated by kilometres of forests and swamps with troops patrolling them.

which he had been incredibly successful. He was sentenced to 10 years in prison. All members of the plot had been members of various Communist organizations in Soviet Union.[100] These two major plots prove that the initial selection for the battalion was done incredibly poorly, and that the informant system was absolutely necessary, however distasteful it must have seemed at the time. While the individual deserters and the group-schemers were a small minority of the full manpower of the battalion, they nevertheless highlight the vulnerability of a unit literally recruited among enemy soldiers. If this had been the end of *Heimopataljoona 3*, it would be easy to dismiss the unit as a failed experiment of certain segment of Finnish officers who were blinded by dreams of Greater Finland populated by number of Finno-Uralic tribes.

However, the battalion was returned to the frontlines just in time to experience the Soviet strategic strike in the summer of 1944. After several days of a fighting retreat, often acting as the rear-guard for the entire the 2nd Division, the battalion ended up on the hill range south of river Vuoksi, between the villages of Äyräpää and Kylä-Paakkola. Just when the battalion had completed its digging-in, it was ordered to move to the north side of the river as a reserve unit, though its 3rd company and mortar company were left to support the new defenders.[101]

[100] Syrjä, pp. 121-123
[101] Syrjä, pp. 124-130.

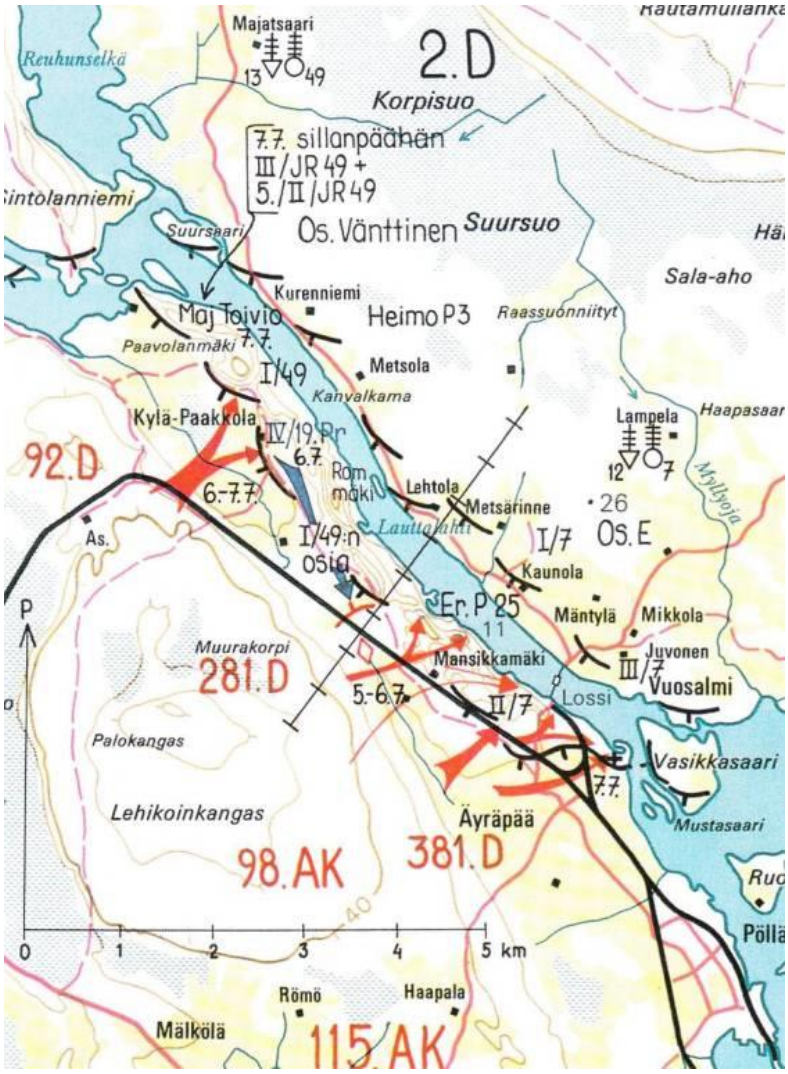

Image 5: The main Soviet attack against Finnish positions at Äyräpää-Vuosalmi. Note the Heimo P3 text on the map.[102]

The battle, later to be known as the major battle of Äyräpää-Vuosalmi, one of the three decisive battles of the summer, started on early morning of 21 June with Soviet attacks supported by tanks and rocket launchers. Finnish defence held firm at this point and the Soviets stopped for about a week to resupply and reinforce their forces. On 4 July they resumed the offensive, this time with eight divisions and heavy artillery support. On 10 July the Finnish troops on the south side of the river had been pushed back so much that Soviet tanks could cross the river and attacked the battalion, though a counterattack managed to push them back. The next day, 11 July, the fighting reached its peak as the battalion was ground

[102] Matti Koskimaa, *Murtajan tykistö: 2.Divisioonan tykistön taistelut 1941–1944* (Porvoo: WSOY, 1994), p. 203.

down by repeated Russian attacks, supported by tanks and artillery, though the tribal soldiers managed to hang on to one of their defensive bases until 13 July, when the exhausted battalion was replaced. In all, the battalion had suffered heavily during the summer, having lost 308 men as killed, wounded and missing. That meant that one in four of its soldiers had become casualties for Finnish freedom, a heavy price that meant that Tribal Battalion 3 ultimately was as good a combat unit as any Finnish infantry battalion. In fact, at this last battle that it fought, the battalion performed better than some of the ethnic Finnish battalions that participated in the battle.[103]

Without the excellent performance of the battalion during Äyräpää-Vuosalmi battle, it would be difficult to understand why the Finns did not disband the troubled unit. In other similar situations, for example recently in Ukraine, the men would have been returned to the POW camp or sent home much earlier.[104]

The third tribal unit to be formed was Independent Battalion 6. Its men were Ingrians who had been living under German occupation south of Leningrad and had originally been recruited into *Ost-Bataillon 664*. In December 1943, the battalion was transferred to Finland, as part of the general transfer of Ingrians from German-occupied areas to Finland. Over 63,000 Ingrians, including women and children, were transferred in March 1943. With their families secure in Finland, the men were happy to exchange their German uniforms to Finnish ones and the unit's name was changed to Independent Battalion 6. It is notable that the authorities took pains to make sure that the unit remained separate from Tribal Battalion 3 and only had Ingrians as its members. Any former Red Army members or those belonging to other tribal groups were quickly transferred to Tribal Battalion 3. Finns trained some of the Ingrians to become non-commissioned officers and improved their training, which greatly enhanced their motivation as the Germans had largely used them as cannon fodder in anti-partisan

[103] Syrjä, pp. 131-135.
[104] Milburn.

operations. A positive surprise to the Finns was that every man spoke Finnish, though some of them did so only poorly. Their commander at this time was a Finnish officer, lieutenant-colonel Kaarlo Breitholtz, overseeing 620 men. Spiritual training was not forgotten, as the battalion received lectures from Finnish teachers and priests before it was transferred to the front.[105] By the end of training, the formation was considered reliable, over half of its men had families living in Finland and all of them claimed to be willing to defend Finland. When the Soviet main attack started, the battalion had been behind the frontline as an operational reserve formation. It was hurriedly trucked to the front to plug a hole on the flank of 15th Division, which it did successfully for a day. It had to withdraw under heavy enemy fire and was transferred to 2nd Division, just like Tribal Battalion 3. However, unlike that battalion, Independent Battalion 6 was put in reserve again. The frequent transfers caused a fall in morale in it and the arrival of new commander, Major Hans Katas, did not reverse its fortunes, as the battalion was again transferred, this time to 3rd Division but it did not see combat, never truly having had the chance to prove itself in the crucible of fire.[106]

In hindsight, the performance of the tribal units was excellent, considering their circumstances. The fact that, unlike veterans of Finnish units, the surviving members were not in a position to write memoirs of their experiences, most likely contributed to Finnish military historiography overlooking their contribution. The six-volume official history of the Continuation War published by the Military History Department of the National Defence University, *Jatkosodan Historia*, barely mentions them. Yet Brigade K, Tribal Battalion 3 and Independent Battalion 6 completed all the missions assigned to them. Brigade K successfully fought a better equipped enemy despite lacking even numerical superiority and while operating under a difficult supply situation. Tribal Battalion 3, despite some desertions and Soviet agents infiltrated into it, performed extremely difficult delaying actions and then held firm against massively superior enemy forces for several days. And the only reason that Independent Battalion 6 could not

[105] Kotro, p. 311; Syrjä, p. 54.
[106] Kotro, p. 312

boat the same, is that it was not given the opportunity – the battalion was an unlucky victim of circumstances, as there are no reports that its prowess or reliability was in doubt.

Conclusion

The Continuation War was very different from the Winter War in many respects. The ad-hoc nature of handling foreign volunteers was a thing of the past; the High Command Volunteer Office, together with the Finnish Foreign Ministry, had learned how to handle the volunteers. The war lasted significantly longer, yet the total number of volunteers was clearly smaller than what they had been previously. This also made things easier for the Finns.

The organization of the volunteers themselves was also significantly improved. Partially this was because more offers to join were now rejected, and partially because the Finnish military had had time to learn from its experiences. There was no attempt to create a Foreign Legion, like with Task Force *Sisu* in the Winter War. Rather, the foreign volunteers were organized into their own units, on ethnic and linguistic lines. Of course, this was markedly easier to do when the authorities only had to deal with Estonians, Swedes, Norwegians and Danes, if we discount the tribal groups, instead of the dozen or so national groups of the 1939-1940 period.

As to the volunteers themselves, their motivations were partially the same, but the pressure of difficult situations was now far more prevalent, as evidenced by the significant increase in Estonian volunteering once the Germans implemented conscription in Estonia. Similarly, with reduced support from the Swedish government, the numbers of Swedish volunteers dwindled to almost nothing by 1944. 'Finland's cause is still ours but let's not yell it out too loud', seems to have been the guiding philosophy for Sweden.

It needs repeating that all the units examined here performed admirably well and none of them were worthless. No matter how much Field Marshal Mannerheim preferred volunteers as propaganda tools, they did accomplish their assigned combat tasks. While most of the Finnish field army was gaining martial glory taking back Karelia, the Swedes had to maintain a thankless guard perimeter against a Soviet naval base that quickly lost its strategic importance.

No surprise then that they were so eager to launch some sort of attacks against the Russian defenders, even if they had to go alone, if only Mannerheim had given them permission. And the diehards of the Independent Swedish company fought valiantly alongside the Finns during the fierce summer 1944.

As did the Estonian regiment, whose true battle was only starting when the Continuation War ended, and they were transferred back home to continue fighting the Soviets. It is curious that the Finns had no initial plans on recruiting and forming an Estonian unit, outside of the small ERNA group for covert operations. Almost certainly the difficult position of Finland between German imperialism and Estonian independence had an impact on Finnish planning. Their case highlights once more that foreign volunteers can cause international tension even between nominally friendly states. For a similar modern example, one can look at the Turkish reaction to citizens of its NATO allies joining the Kurds in Syria.[107]

The role of the transnational recruits in the Continuation War can be said to be the largest difference between the two wars. As discussed in Chapter 2, in Winter War there was only a single formation made up of tribal Finns, the Ranger Battalion 5 (*Sissi Pataljoona 5*). Just as it is curious that the Army did not plan for an Estonian unit, it is strange that, despite the good war record of that battalion, the Army initially did not want to create any tribal Finn units either but the actions of individual, enthusiastic officers created them despite objections from above. Brigade K kept up the same level of good performance as Ranger Battalion 5 had done in the Winter War, successfully pushing a difficult campaign almost to a conclusion when it was suddenly disbanded for no clear reason.

Which makes the creation of Tribal Battalion 3 (*Heimopataljoona 3*) and especially its continued existence despite the serious problems it faced, all the more surprising. Clearly there were different factions inside the Finnish military High Command when it came to such

[107] Josie Ensor. 'Turkey warns: we will treat Britons fighting with Kurds as terrorists' in *The Telegraph*. Published in 1 Sep 2016 available at https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2016/09/01/turkey-warns-we-will-treat-britons-fighting-with-kurds-as-terror/ [accessed on 30 Nov 2022]

units. Despite its chaotic start and struggles with desertions and mutiny attempts, the battalion eventually fulfilled the expectations placed on it by its valiant fight during the difficult summer of 1944. Regardless of this, the battalion is a stark warning of the worst type of problems that transnational recruitment can create, and it is questionable whether the battalion truly was worth the effort.

The Independent Battalion 6 (*Erillinen pataljoona 6*) was perhaps the strangest of the units examined in this thesis due to its background as part of the German Wehrmacht. It is difficult to find similar examples from other conflicts. The concept of ethnic kinship between the various Finnic tribes and the idea of the Greater Finland must have been the driving force behind its creation. It has also received the least attention in Finnish historiography, even the otherwise excellent book by Syrjä does not go into much detail about this battalion.

The longer conflict meant that there were more chances for negative issues to emergence. While it seems that mostly the relations between volunteers and locals were good, there were cases of criminality in which volunteers were sometimes the perpetrators, other times they were victims. As far as it has been possible to determine, there were no cases of suicide among volunteers during the Winter War, but during the Continuation War there were several such cases. Volunteers are not, by any means, immune to the stresses of war.

Chapter 5: Post war treatment of volunteers

The Continuation War ended on 5 September 1944. A strategic Soviet attack in June, just a day after the D-Day landings, broke the Finnish defence lines at the Karelian Isthmus. Over the summer, the Finnish army lost all the gains it had made in 1941, including the city of Viipuri. In three large battles the Red Army was depleted enough that Stalin, with his attention already turned upon Berlin as the western Allies were making rapid gains in France and Belgium, agreed in August to open negotiations with Finland. The Finnish parliament accepted the ceasefire on 2 September, the Finnish military stood down on 4 September and the Soviets on 5 September.[1] While the terms of the peace were even harsher than those that brought the Winter War to an end in 1940, Finland had once again been able to ward off a full occupation. Whereas other Eastern European countries had been occupied, most twice or even thrice, Finland remained independent, with its democratic institutions intact.[2]

The terms of the truce included a demand for the Finns either to subdue or push out the German forces that were still in the country. This led to the Lapland War, in which foreign volunteers did not fight on the Finnish side, though ironically a Norwegian volunteer unit that was part of the 6th Waffen-SS Mountain Division Nord, *SS-Skijäeger Bataljon Norge* (SS ski battalion Norway), ended up fighting against the Finns. This unit had been recruited by pro-German Norwegian collaborators in 1942 as a company and expanded to a battalion in autumn of 1943. Its men were trained in Germany and, to give it a stiff backbone, a handful of Norwegian veterans of the 5th Waffen-SS Panzer Division Wiking and the 11th Waffen-SS Panzergrenadier Division Nordland were assigned to its three companies. It also gained members from the SS-Legion Norge, a unit that the Germans had put together in 1941 and had fought at the Leningrad Front, despite its members having been promised that they would

[1] Singleton, p.138 and Upton, p. 152.
[2] Meinander, p. 45.

fight in Finland.[3] A third source of men for the unit were Norwegian policemen who served a six-month stint at the battalion. The formation fought extremely well against the Russians, losing 197 men killed in action. Its only action against Finnish troops happened on 16 October 1944 at the town of Rovaniemi, where the Norwegians defended two pontoon bridges that the German 20th Mountain Army was using in its retreat from Finland to Norway. It is notable that the men of this unit were mostly members of the Norwegian National Socialist Party or its youth element.[4] This is in contrast with the volunteers on the Finnish side whose political ideologies were more moderate, as far as the available evidence suggests.

Image 6: A memorial plate embedded in stone near Norvajärvi, Finland, next to a German military cemetery. The inscription reads: In memory of the 196 Norwegian volunteers who died in the Continuation War.[5]

[3] Sorlie, p. 338.
[4] https://www.waffen-ss.no/SS-SKIJAEGER-NORGE-ENGLISH.htm
[5] Image from the website *Suomen sotamuistomerkit 1939-1935,* available at https://www.sotamuistomerkit.fi/sivu.php?id=482 Accessed 15 June 2022

Thus, the only element of active fighting by foreign volunteers in the Lapland War was against the Finnish Army, not beside it. However, the story of Finland's foreign volunteers did not end when the fighting ceased.

Hundreds of tribal Finns, who were technically Soviet citizens, remained in Finland and this would cause a major problem for Finland. In addition, many disabled former volunteers as well as widows of fallen volunteers, continued to draw pensions paid by the Finnish State. This chapter examines the post war treatment of the volunteers, drawing on both military and diplomatic archives from Finland as well as the few secondary sources that exist.

The chapter explores to what extent Finland was a standout case in terms of how it treated its foreign veterans. In many conflicts where volunteers are present, there is a total lack of post-conflict aftercare for the volunteers. For example, once Franco won the Spanish Civil War, it was obviously impossible for veterans of the International Brigades to ask for pensions from the Spanish state. Finland was different as the country remained unoccupied at the end of the war and had its civil service continued to function afterwards. This meant that Finland was capable to honour the contracts the volunteers had signed when they joined the Finnish armed forces. However, at this point the uniform treatment of volunteers and recruits ends. Throughout the war every volunteer, whether American, British, Swedish, or Karelian or Ingrian, received the same pay and benefits as Finnish soldiers did. Only differences were between men of different ranks, in that a sergeant received less pay than a captain. After Continuation War ended, differences in how they were treated emerged. The reasons are explored below.

Repatriations of Tribal Finns

On 22 and 23 of September 1944, the Allied Commission for Supervision of the Moscow Peace Treaty arrived in Finland. Its task was to ensure that Finland complied with all aspects of the treaty and thus ensure a path forward to the normalisation of relations between Finland and

the Soviet Union, as well as Britain and the Commonwealth. One of its demands concerned the transnational recruits that had served Finland. The Commission, led by General Andrei Zdanov who was Stalin's right-hand man, demanded that all Soviet citizens had to be repatriated to the Soviet Union.[6] This demand, based on the 10th Article of the Treaty, made no distinction between those who volunteered to serve in the Finnish Armed Forces during the war and those who had moved to Finland for other reasons. The repatriation of civilians was supposedly on a voluntary basis, but the actions of the Commission, which sent agents to convince Ingrians, Karelians and Estonians in Finland, created widespread fear of forced relocations, in turn causing many of these people to flee to Sweden. The Finnish Army initially resisted repatriations as in its view the men were volunteers, not prisoners of war. The military justified this by stating that only three men out of over 800 wanted to return to Soviet Union, as well as the fact that many of them had family in Finland.[7]

In respect to the tribal recruits, a list of names was delivered by the Allied Commission to Foreign Minister Enckell on the first day of November 1944, claiming that those men were all Soviet citizens and Finland 'had violated international treaties by forcing prisoners of war to serve in the military'. The Finnish view was that their POW status had expired when they volunteered for service. Yet Finland was in no position to decline and the men, who mostly belonged to Tribal Battalion 3 and Independent Battalion 6, were to be transported to the border. Their full repatriation was to happen within nine days.[8]

The process was planned and executed in haste, as is evident from the military correspondence that was sent to the Foreign Ministry. There seems to have been confusion on who needed to be repatriated. The Headquarters of the Prisoner of War Camps sent a letter to General Paalu, who was organizing the repatriation, in which they stated that only 22 former

[6] Syrjä, p. 137.
[7] HCVO to Helsinki, 30 Sep 1944. FFMA Signum 110 Folder 55.
[8] Memorandum 23, signed by Lieutenant-General Savonenkov, 1 Nov 1944. FFMA Signum 110 Folder 124.

POWs were serving outside of Tribal Battalion 3.[9] This number was not satisfactory to the Commission, which insisted that they knew of many more men.[10] According to Finnish records, Tribal Battalion 3 counted 694 volunteers. An additional 22 men had served at various headquarters and military police units as translators. This list had been sent to the Allied Commission on 5 November but clearly, the Commission did not believe this information since they had pushed the Finns for a more comprehensive list of Soviet citizens.[11]

This operation did not sit well with those Finns ordered to execute it. Tribal Battalion 3 had been transferred first to Oulu, in preparation for combat against the Germans, and then to Ylitornio, next to the Swedish border. It is unknown if this was done on purpose, to make it easier for them to escape across the river to Sweden, or if it was a random consequence of operational planning – the Allied Commission did demand that the Finnish Army had to be demobilized while it was still fighting the Germans. In any case, the men were not told that the Soviets had demanded them to be handed over but at least ten assumed the worst and fled. At the end of September, the battalion was moved south to the port of Lapaluoto, next to the town of Raahe. According to a local source, many of the men refused to believe that Finland would betray them in such a way; that was the answer given to a local boy who offered to take some of the Ingrians over to Sweden. In November, the battalion was ordered into a train that would take them to the prisoner-of-war camp at Naarajärvi, from where they would be turned over to the Soviets.[12]

By 17 November, roughly half of these men had been repatriated: 347 were handed over to the Soviets while 290 escaped from the train in the process. The Allied Commission had specifically insisted that the guards were not to be allowed to fire their weapons which made

[9] POW Command to General Paalu, 17 Nov 1944. FFMA Signum 110 Folder 126.
[10] Colonel Spåre to POW Command, 11 Nov 1944. FFMA Signum 110 Folder 126.
[11] List of former POWs serving in various units, 5 Nov 1944. Signum 110 Folder 26. Colonel Karhu to Lieutenant-General Savonenkov, 5 Nov 1944. FFMA Signum 110 Folder 124.
[12] Pekka Kantakoski, 'Reino Honkanen – tuntematon sankari, jonka tottelemattomuus pelasti satojen heimosotureidemme hengen' 8 July 2020. [https://sotaveteraanit.fi/reino-honkanen-tuntematon-sankari-jonka-tottelemattomuus-pelasti-satojen-heimosotureidemme-hengen/] Accessed 8 August 2021

escape easy. Colonel Malm, appointed by General Paalu to oversee the repatriation at the border, sent a circular letter to all prisoner of war camps and military police units and urged them to caution, insisting that the escaped men must be found quickly, and none can be allowed to remain in Finland. The escapes forced Lieutenant-General Oesch to call the Allied Commission over the phone and explain what had happened and to assure them that the Finns were doing their utmost to recapture them.[13] The Soviets were not satisfied and responded with strong words two days later in a meeting between Colonel Spåre and the Soviet Lieutenant-Colonel Nevolin. The latter not only disputed the number of former prisoners-of-war turned volunteers, but also accused General Oesch of making up excuses and the Finns in general of allowing the repatriates to escape on purpose and not trying to catch them.[14] Despite the repatriations continuing, the Soviets renewed their pressure on 20 November, this time taking the form of a letter, in which General Savonenkov listed the Soviet grievances, including a demand to punish all soldiers involved in delays and escapes. The Foreign Ministry forwarded the letter to the Army, which responded with a judicious explanation of the circumstances and the information that court martial trials were underway.[15]

Initially, the two formations assigned to hunt down the escapees were 19th Brigade and Jäger Battalion 1. They must have not given their utmost to the task as they caught exactly zero fugitives. In unofficial interviews after the war, two Finnish officers explained how they had facilitated the escapes: captain Aimo Zillacus had been in the 19th Brigade and responsible for both disarming the men of Tribal Battalion 3 as well as hunting down the fugitives, intentionally making sure that his soldiers caught nobody. Major Reino Honkanen, also from 19th Brigade, was the officer in charge of the train. He had ordered the train doors to remain unlocked and open for the journey, as well as ensuring that the guards had no live ammunition

[13] Report from Colonel Malm, 17 November 1944. Colonel Malm, same date. General Oesch to Allied Commission, 8 Nov 1944. FFMA Signum 110 Folder 126.
[14] Colonel Spåre to Foreign Minister, 10 Nov 1944. FFMA Signum 110 Folder 124.
[15] General Savonenkov to Helsinki, 20 Nov 1944. High Command to Helsinki, 22 Nov 1944. FFMA Signum 110 Folder 124.

in their rifles so that, even if they wanted to disobey the orders not to shoot at the tribal Finns, they could not do so. As the train slowed down on the curves, they could see men jumping from it. He claimed that at least 650 men escaped in this manner. In the court martial mentioned above, he was found guilty of negligence of duty but received a light punishment of 7 days of house arrest. Both officers went on to have careers in the peacetime Army. In retrospect, both officers stressed how their involvement with the repatriation of Tribal Battalion 3 was the hardest event of their military careers.[16]

The hunt for escaped volunteers was transferred from the Army to the Police during spring of 1945, as all military police units were being demobilized. The Interior Ministry, led by the freshly appointed Communist Yrjö Leino, tasked the now Communist-staffed State Police to continue the search for escaped volunteers throughout 1945.[17] The matter reached its pinnacle in July that year, when the Foreign Ministry ordered the embassy in Stockholm to gain permission to send two Finnish officers to Sweden to verify whether any escaped volunteers were among the Finnish refugees there. Sweden categorically refused, citing their long-standing refugee policy.[18]

The Soviets tried one final time in 1947. The Allied Commission sent a letter addressed to all Finnish authorities, demanding that Finland 'immediately takes over' the 327 former volunteers who escaped to Sweden and repatriates them to the Soviet Union. Foreign Minister Carl Enckell, the brother of General Oscar Enckell mentioned earlier, handed over a list of 322 names to the Swedish ambassador in Helsinki, proving that the Finns had known about them,

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[16] Kantakoski, 'Reino Honkanen'. Kantakoski's 2018 article is based on his notes from the two interviews he did with Zillacus and Honkanen. It is noteworthy that he wrote the article over sixty years after the interviews: he interviewed Zillacus in 1952, so over seven years after the events, and Honkanen sometime in mid-1960s, probably two decades after the events took place. This would explain the discrepancy between the numbers of escapees mentioned. In any case, the interviews are still useful as they show how the Finnish officers felt – that the repatriations were a betrayal of their comrades in a most shameful manner.

[17] High Command to Helsinki, 5 Feb 1945. Interior Ministry to police, 6 Jul 1945. FFMA Signum 110 Folder 124.

[18] Colonel Malm to Helsinki, 16 Jul 1945. Helsinki to Stockholm and response, 17 Jul/13 Aug 1945. FFMA Signum 110 Folder 124.

and an explanation on how that information had been gained. At the same time, the Finnish ambassador in Stockholm handed over the same list to the Swedish foreign minister. Sweden refused to cooperate with Finland in this matter. An internal memo written by the Foreign Ministry and co-signed by Leino, explained how the Finnish authorities had done everything they could to track down the escapees but that they could not force the Swedes to hand them over. Whether the Soviets were satisfied with this outcome is unknown as there is nothing more regarding this subject in the Foreign Ministry archives.[19]

Considering the Soviet actions regarding both the Estonian volunteers and the tribal Finns, the Finnish consul in Kaunas had acted prudently when he, in the summer of 1940, had sent his list of 182 Baltic volunteers to Helsinki, preventing it from falling to Soviet hands.[20] Otherwise that list would most likely have been used by the Soviets as has been discussed in previous chapters.

What became of the tribal Finns who returned to the Soviet Union? Immediately after the war and for a long time after, the common thought among those volunteers who had escaped to Sweden, as well as among Finns in Finland, was that they must have all been executed or sent to the gulags. Swedish-Ingrian journalist Eino Hanski, who managed to track down and interview a handful of former tribal volunteers in Sweden and published a semi-fictitious book based on these interviews in 1979, stated that all officers and non-commissioned officers were immediately shot at the border while the rank and file were sentenced to twenty years of hard labour in the gulag camps, from which the survivors were pardoned sometime after the death of Stalin.[21] A similar comment was made by another former volunteer to the Finnish military historian Pentti Syrjä, though in this case it was that every tenth man and all squad leaders

[19] Allied Commission, 27 Jan 1947. Helsinki to Swedish embassy in Finland, 1 Feb 1947. Colonel Ursin to Helsinki, 15 Feb 1947. Stockholm to Swedish foreign ministry, 11 Feb 1947. Helsinki to Defence Ministry, 8 Mar 1947. Stockholm to Helsinki, 11 March 1947. Helsinki to Allied Commission, 15 Mar 1947. FFMA Signum 110 Folder 124.
[20] Kaunas to Helsinki, 3 Aug 1940. FFMA Signum 109 Folder 10.
[21] Eino Hanski, *Heimopataljoona*, (Juva: Finn-Kirja, 1982), pp. 207-208.

were shot, the rest being sent to coal mines in Siberia.[22] In his article from 2018, military historian and lieutenant colonel Pekka Kantakoski mentions death sentences but states that they were never implemented. Rather, everyone was sentenced either to ten or twenty-five years of hard labour and that an estimated 15% of them perished during their imprisonment at the gulag camps.[23]

Modern Russian historiography supports Kantakoski. Russian historian Viktor Zemskov has extensively researched repatriations of Soviet citizens after the war as well as the procedures of the Soviet authorities towards the repatriates. While he does not specify the fate of the tribal Finns, he gives multiple examples of men from similar circumstances who were not summarily executed. A good comparison would be the 9907 men of Russian origin who had served in the German Wehrmacht in France, and who were sent by the Allies to Murmansk. They spent a year in an NKVD camp being interviewed and monitored, after which they were moved to a special resettlement camp and, after six years, released in 1952 with no criminal record. Zemskov further dispels the myth of execution lists and allegations that repatriates were immediately executed after arrival at Soviet assembly points and camps. The men of Tribal Battalion 3 would be counted in the list of categories that Soviets were especially interested in as it includes 'national legions and other such organizations' so it is likely that Kantakoski is correct.[24]

Interestingly, the Soviet statistics do not show any Ingrian soldiers or prisoners-of-war while showing a significant number of Karelian and Finnish soldiers being repatriated. Men of Tribal Battalion 3 were most likely counted as Finns as seems to be the case with the Ingrian soldiers from Independent Battalion 6, unless they managed to pretend to be civilians.

Ethnicity	**Civilians**	**Soldiers / prisoners**	**Total**
Karelians	1247	2194	3441

[22] Syrjä, p. 147; Laitos (1994), p. 279.
[23] Kantakoski, 'Reino Honkanen…' as above in footnote 10
[24] Viktor Nikolaevich Zemskov. Репатриация советских граждан и их дальнейшая судьба (1944–1956 гг.). Социологические исследования. 1995. № 5. С. 3-13, pp. 6-7.

Finns	4122	583	4705
Ingrians	43246	None	43246

Table 5: Numbers of repatriated people are counted from everywhere in Europe, not just from Finland and Sweden.[25]

In Chapter 4, the abandonment of the Estonian intelligence group *Haukka* was briefly explained but it worthwhile to revisit it here as well as the exact same reason, changing political situation and pressure to comply with the demands of the Soviets, led to the expatriation of the tribal Finns. The Allied Commission for Supervision of the Moscow Peace Treaty did not allow Finns any leeway and it had access to every database in Finland. Even before their arrival the control centre for the Estonian intelligence group was dismantled and its members escaped to Sweden without informing its volunteers that their mission was over and they should escape as best as they can if their evacuation had become impossible. Similar episodes were happening across the entire Finnish military intelligence sector, with confidential documents being burned, and equipment and personnel being moved abroad, primarily to Sweden in cooperation with Swedish military intelligence.[26] The men of Brigade K were safe, having attained Finnish citizenship, so it was the men of Tribal Battalion 3 and Independent Battalion 6 who were most in danger. It seems clear that the Finnish authorities did the best they could in a terrible situation, as not complying with the demands of the Commission and the letter of the Moscow interim peace treaty, would give Soviets an excuse to occupy the whole country at a time when organized resistance by the Finns would have been near impossible due to demobilization of the army. Completely avoiding the repatriation issue was clearly not possible so the officers in charge of the transport train hoped to at least save some of the men. According to both Syrjä and Hanski, the men were not told to try to escape but the fact that the guards had no bullets in their rifles and had been told not to fire was not kept secret either. Neither was the military effective at all when it came to hunting down the escapees since they found exactly zero former volunteers. It was only after the Communist controlled State Police took over the case that tribal Finns started to be

[25] Zemskov, p. 12.
[26] Jôgi, pp. 218–246.

apprehended and sent over the border. This is why in the statistics the repatriates are split into two categories: those repatriated immediately after the Continuation War by the Finnish military and those repatriated later by the so-called 'Red' State Police. Similarly, individual Finns, from soldiers to police to ordinary civilians, helped the Tribal Finns to lay low or even to escape to Sweden. Sadly, this meant that Finland could not legally pay pensions to what were technically fugitives.

The Foreign Ministry kept tabs on the repatriated men as well as it could, which did not amount to much, but it did manage to cleave some information from the Soviets. In a memo drafted for the President and Prime Minister in August 1956, the Foreign Ministry confirmed the fates of 10 Finnish citizens and another 10 non-citizens who had been repatriated to Soviet Union in 1945. 11 of them had returned to Finland, six had died and the remaining three wanted to stay in the Soviet Union.[27] Considering the total numbers of repatriated, this was a drop in the sea.

So, while the post-war treatment of the transnational recruits differs massively from how the foreign volunteers were treated, the reason for this seems to entirely be the pressure caused by the Soviet Union and not malice by the Finnish authorities, as is evidenced by the acts of kindness and support shown by some Finns towards them.

Pensions

The first decisions regarding the pensions of foreign volunteers were taken in 1940, in the immediate aftermath of the Winter War. They were handled by the Defence Ministry, though later the responsibility was transferred to the Ministry of Social Affairs. For example, in July 1940, the widow of the British volunteer George Kilpin applied for a pension through the Finnish Aid Bureau in London. The investigation into the case took a curiously long time and was not decided until September 1941, to the detriment of the widow as Kilpin had died after

[27] Foreign Ministry memo 'Conclusion', dated 3 Aug 1956. FFMA Signum 110 Folder 43.

demobilization and his sickness was not due to military service.[28] Possibly due to problems with early applications, a ruling on pensions was communicated to the Foreign Ministry from the High Command Volunteer Office, ordering the embassies to assist former volunteers with the necessary paperwork and ensuring that it was filled out correctly.[29] Cases continued to be handled by the Defence Ministry during the war and it seems that the shift from the Defence Ministry to the Ministry of Social Affairs happened in 1944, after the Continuation War ended.[30]

In any case, the Finnish government debated and decided the issue of pensions for non-Finnish volunteers in two meetings, both held in 1941. The decision was that volunteers would be eligible for the same benefits as Finnish veterans.[31] A good example of how pensions were handled is the case of a Belgian volunteer, Lieutenant Ramon de Labinsky, who had died in Finland. His widow was paid a pension through the Finnish consulate in Goteborg, Sweden, as she had relocated there during the war. The widow had asked the consul to ensure that her pension would be paid in Swedish crowns and complained that she was getting only a third of what she was owed. The Foreign Ministry consulted the Ministry of Social Affairs, which confirmed that Labinsky was not being paid the correct amount, though she was mistaken regarding the actual sum. As pension amounts were increased in 1948, she was paid the higher-rate pension retroactively.[32]

Volunteers did not automatically receive a pension. Even with a disability of some kind, the volunteer had to apply for a pension and, depending on the case, might have their application refused if they could not prove that the injury was the result of the war. This had happened to Karl Henrikson, a Swedish volunteer who had been wounded in February 1940, during the Winter War. His disability pension had been refused at the time, but in 1969 he reapplied,

[28] London to Helsinki, 12 Jul 1940; Defence Ministry to Helsinki, Sept 1941, FFMA Signum 109 Folder 13.
[29] HCVO to Helsinki, 27 Mar 1941. FFMA Signum 109 Folder 10.
[30] Defence Ministry to Helsinki, 2 Sep 1941. FFMA Signum 109 Folder 13.
[31] Reproduction of Valtioneuvosto minutes, 24 Jul/7 Aug 1941. FFMA Signum 110 Folder 25.
[32] Goteborg to Helsinki, 11 Feb 1946/21 Sep 1948. Ministry of Social Affairs to Helsinki, 8 Oct 1948. Helsinki to Goteborg, 26 Oct 1948. FFMA Signum 110 Folder 55.

stating that his disability had gotten worse. From the first contact between the Foreign Ministry and Ministry of Social Affairs, it took nine months for Henrikson to receive a decision, an appallingly long time for the bureaucracy to work when deciding the fate of a person's livelihood.[33]

Another example of a pension request being refused is the case of an Australian volunteer, Henry Connolly. He claimed to have contracted Bronchiectasis while in Finland. The Ministry of Social Affairs declined his appeal, arguing he should have applied for pension back in 1940, not thirteen years later, making it impossible to prove that it was indeed his stay in Finland which had caused the disease. Thus, one would think that when Norwegian volunteer Rolf Graff-Lonnevig applied for reparations as late as 1969 for frostbite and hearing loss, his application would have been similarly rejected. However, his case was positively decided in his favour in 1971.[34] Unfortunately, the archives do not include detailed medical information about Connolly or Graff-Lonnevig, so it is not possible to analyse what made their cases different. However, it shows that even those who applied decades after the conflict could get a disability pension.

A more difficult case was the pension of Robert Law, who had been part of the British volunteer group. He had contacted the Finnish Ministry of Defence directly in 1943 while Finland and Britain were formally at war and asked for a pension due to pneumonia. As there was no postal service between the two countries at the time, his letter must have been routed through Sweden. The Defence Ministry initially refused his request, stating that his pneumonia had flared up a year after his departure from Finland. Law contested this decision and procured statements from two Swedish doctors that proved that his illness was caused by his service in Finland. The Foreign Ministry reminded the Defence Ministry that the Finnish state had been covering Law's medical bills in Sweden and suggested to reconsider the matter. The

[33] Stockholm to Helsinki, 20 May/30 Jul 1969. Ministry of Social Affairs to Helsinki, 30 Jun 1969/20 Jan 1970. FFMA Signum 109 Folder 13.
[34] Sydney to Helsinki and response, 16 Dec 1965/17 Aug 1966. Oslo to Ministry of Social Affairs, 28 Jul 1971. Helsinki to Ministry of Social Affairs, 23 Sep 1971. FFMA Signum 109 Folder 13.

case received scant attention during 1944, but in April 1945 the Defence Ministry agreed with the Foreign Ministry and decided to pay Law a one-time payment of 78,500 Finnish Marks as reparation for his disability. However, the matter did not end there. Law died in August 1945 and his will named Anna-Lisa Molberg as the sole benefactor. Presumably, Law had been under her care in Sweden. Molberg was unhappy that, due to inflation and exchange rates, the amount she received was worth only £150 instead of the £400 she had expected. The Finnish ambassador in Stockholm, Georg Gripenberg, who had been the Finnish ambassador in London during the Winter War, campaigned for Molberg and argued that the payment, tiny as it was in 1946, was against the spirit of the original decision, which had emphasized the importance of the debt of honour that Finland had towards the foreign volunteers. He failed to convince the Defence Ministry.[35] It is interesting that, despite Finland being in peace by this time, the matter was still being handled by the Defence Ministry and not the Ministry of Social Affairs. And it is remarkable that the Finnish authorities not only covered Law's medical bills but also decided to pay him reparations, since Law did not see any combat. Yet this did not affect his case and decisions were made based on the contract that the British volunteers had signed and the Finnish law on treatment of disabled war veterans. Law's nationality only mattered in that it brought the Foreign Ministry into the picture to handle the necessary correspondence abroad.

Pneumonia was not the only reason for pension applications. Asthma and frostbite were sufficient to qualify for pension.[36] Widows of volunteers who fell in combat were also paid a pension, if they remained unmarried. If the widow re-married, the pension was cancelled. Most pensions were due to a disability of some sort. The amount depended on the severity of

[35] Defence Ministry to Helsinki, 20 Mar 1943/17 Apr 1945/Jan 1947. Helsinki to Stockholm and response, 3 Apr 1943/Aug 1944/Jan/Feb 1945/20 April 1945/Mar/Jun/Aug/Dec 1946. London to Helsinki, 18 Apr 1946. FFMA Signum 109 Folder 13.
[36] Stockholm to Helsinki, undated Feb 1971. FFMA Signum 109 Folder 14.

the disability, which was decided by a doctor and measured in percentages. Children of fallen volunteers received a pension until they turned seventeen.[37]

As inflation reduced the purchasing power of pensions, the Finnish authorities agreed to increase them. Such an increase was desperately needed, as up to the end of the 1950s, the pension amounts had remained the same as they were in 1941 and 1942. However, the pensions of foreign volunteers were not automatically increased, possibly due to lack of communication between the Foreign Ministry and the various authorities that handled military pensions in Finland. There were issues with pension money not arriving to the embassies in time, which caused embassies to complain to the Foreign Ministry. Partially because of such issues, Sweden started to pay additional pensions to Swedish volunteers, on top of the Finnish pensions they were receiving.[38] This Swedish decision was quite unique and is a good example for why the Finnish case of foreign volunteering was special. As mentioned earlier, often volunteers could not get any sort of assistance from the host country after the conflict, and whether that was because the host country no longer existed or was not willing to commit the financial resources necessary is immaterial. Sweden paying additional pensions on top of the pensions the volunteers received from Finland is very much a unique case.

There is one other sad aspect to the pensions and that is the lack of support for the tribal Finns who had escaped repatriation to the Soviet Union. While from a legal point of view it is understandable that Finland could not officially pay pensions to them, the moral case is more muddled and is not surprising that they were bitter about how official Finland had handled them. For example, one of the volunteers that Syrjä interviewed in Sweden, Pekka Pentikäinen, commented that the Finnish government should have paid him at least a little pension and that 'me and my Ingrian comrades are very disappointed'.[39] The final footnote on

[37] Ministry of Social Affairs to Helsinki, 15 Jul 1941. Helsinki to Ministry of Social Affairs, 28 Apr 1972. Ministry of Social Affairs to Helsinki, 27 Feb 1945. FFMA Signum 110 Folder 26.
[38] Stockholm to Helsinki, 7 Nov 1964. Ministry of Social Affairs to Helsinki, 15 Sep 1964. FFMA Signum 109 Folder 10.
[39] Syrjä, pp. 148-150.

the story of the tribal Finns came in 1990, when the Finnish president at the time, Mauno Koivisto, stated that all Ingrians should be seen as equal to Finns, and they have a right to return to Finland. The process grew to include all tribal Finns as well as those who had served in the Finnish military or had been part of the population transfers from German occupied Soviet Union to Finland. In other words, everyone who had been repatriated from 1944 to 1947 could now, legally and safely, return to Finland with their families. The exact number of returnees nor those eligible to return is not known as they were listed as citizens of Estonia, Russia and other successor states of the Soviet Union but estimates range from 30,000 to 35,000.[40]

Pensions were not the only volunteer-related problem for Finnish authorities. After the war, the Foreign Ministry continued to assist former volunteers with a multitude of issues. In 1960, the Foreign Ministry received a curious request from a former volunteer. Conrad Carlsson from Sweden wanted to move to a disabled war veteran care home in Finland. The request was granted by the Ministry of Social Affairs.[41] In 1957, Albert Christianes from Belgium was mailed his Winter War Memorial Medal after he asked the embassy in Brussels about it.[42] In 1950, Latvian Gustav Celmine, who resided in the United States, was provided with proof that he volunteered in Finland, which he needed to prove his identity. Unfortunately, he moved apartments and could not be found by the Finnish consul in New York.[43] The International Red Cross approached the Foreign Ministry to verify the past of a former German citizen, whose identification papers had been lost during the war. The Foreign Ministry forwarded the request to the Army which stated that no such person had served in Finland.[44] The Foreign Ministry was also asked to find foreign citizens who had gone missing during the war, though the

[40] Heli Jormanainen, 'Koiviston inkeriläislausunto avasi ovet kaikille Neuvostoliiton etnisille suomalaisille', https://yle.fi/uutiset/3-7917797 Published 10 Apr 2015, accessed 10 Oct 2022.
[41] Conrad Carlsson to Helsinki, Jul 1960. FFMA Signum 109 Folder 13.
[42] Helsinki to Brussels, 1957. FFMA Signum 109 Folder 13.
[43] Gustav Celmine to Helsinki, Apr 1950. War Archive to Helsinki, Jul 1950. New York to Helsinki, 1956. FFMA Signum 109 Folder 13.
[44] Red Cross to Stockholm, 30 Jun 1946. Helsinki to Stockholm, Oct 1946. FFMA Signum 109 Folder 13.

information was usually too scarce to make a meaningful search possible, such as in the case of an American swimmer Jon Helso. President Eisenhower had asked the US State Department to track Helso down and, based on war-time rumours, they contacted the Finnish embassy in Washington who passed the request to Helsinki. Unfortunately, no further information about Helso was found.[45] In other cases, the answer was a bleak one, like for the family of English volunteer Lace, who asked for details regarding his death in Finland. The Foreign Ministry initially reported that Lace was alive and well when he moved to Sweden with the other British volunteers, but a Swedish source added that the ship Lace departed Sweden on had been sunk by the Germans in March 1942.[46] A different scenario was the case of Danish Captain Dethlefsen, the last Danish volunteer to die in Finland during the Continuation War. In 1964 his parents died and thus the Danish embassy in Helsinki contacted the Foreign Ministry to find out if he had had a widow or children in Finland, to whom the estate of his parents could be bequeathed. With assistance from the Defence Ministry, his Finnish widow was found albeit she had moved to Canada.[47]

In addition to pensions, the Foreign Ministry handled the forwarding of service records, medals and decorations to volunteers. These were done both by a request of the volunteer in question, as well as on the request of the military. The Foreign Ministry would task the relevant embassy to deliver the items requested to the volunteer. Such requests came from Denmark, Canada, Switzerland, the United States, Japan, Yugoslavia and the United Kingdom.[48] Sadly, the archives do not include total lists of the various commendations and medals given to foreign volunteers.

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[45] Washington to Helsinki, 15 Jul 1954. FFMA Signum 109 Folder 13.
[46] London to Helsinki, 14 Jan 1946. Defence Ministry to Helsinki, 6 Jun 1946. Stockholm to Helsinki, 6 Jun 1946. Helsinki to London, 7 Jun 1946. FFMA Signum 109 Folder 13.
[47] Danish note to Helsinki, 1964. Defence Ministry to Helsinki, Jul 1964. FFMA Signum 110 Folder 25.
[48] Helsinki to Copenhagen, 23 May 1952. FFMA Signum 109 Folder 13. Defence Ministry to Helsinki, Feb 1972. HCVO to Helsinki, Dec 1942. Helsinki to US legation in Finland, May 1951. Signum 109 Folder 14. Helsinki to Tokyo, 14 Jul 1960. FFMA Signum 109 Folder 12. Helsinki to London, 10 Sep 1951. FFMA Signum 110 Folder 25.

One final service that the Foreign Ministry assisted volunteers with was the repatriation of the remains of fallen soldiers. Volunteers were usually buried in war graveyards in Finland but in a few cases the families demanded them to be returned home and were willing to pay for the costs. At least three coffins were sent to Copenhagen. In some cases, like the burial of Lieutenant Jörgen Hagemann, the Finnish ambassador placed a wreath on behalf of the Finnish State.[49] If the family was not available or did not want the remains to be transferred, the volunteer was buried in Finland. This was the majority of cases, and the matter was handled by the High Command Volunteer Office, which could assist with the financial side of the burial.[50] It is remarkable how accommodating the Finnish officials were towards the former volunteers.

Speaking of the HCVO, the office remained in operation and kept handling issues regarding the volunteers, one of the most important of these being the return of possessions of fallen volunteers to their families, like it had done in 1940 after the Winter War. For example, in November 1944, the Office received a letter from a field chaplain explaining how a widow of a fallen soldier was missing 600 marks from his possessions and suggesting that the money might have been mistakenly put into the bag of another volunteer, private Galkin, who had died on the same day and at the same place.[51] As mentioned in Chapter 4, Colonel A. Procopé was ordered by the High Command to oversee matters of the fallen volunteers and this duty kept him busy throughout 1944, the last line in his postal diary being from 30 November. While many cases were routine, such as sending a single package to the cousin of a fallen volunteer[52] or informing the families of fallen tribal warriors whose remains could not be recovered about memorials for them,[53] there were more complex issues as well. They ranged from bureaucratic problems, such as the hunt for the Parabellum pistol of a Swedish volunteer Bo Wahlund, who had been wounded in the winter of 1942 and his pistol had been missing

[49] Army Chaplains Office to Helsinki, 11 Jul 1941. Helsinki to Copenhagen, 15 Jul 1941. FFMA Signum 110 Folder 26. HCVO to Helsinki, 26 May 1942. FFMA Signum 110 Folder 27.
[50] Letter from Johan Rehn to Col Procopé, 20 Oct 44. FNA T-6571/7.
[51] Letter from Tribal Battalion 3 to High Command Volunteer Office, 9 Nov 44. FNA T-6571/7.
[52] Letter from Col Procopé to Mrs Eeva Heinonen, 30 Oct 44. FNA T-6571/7.
[53] Letter from Valkeakoski Church to High Command Volunteer Office, 27 Oct 44. FNA T-6571/7.

ever since, an anomaly that the military would not let stand. Other problems were more tragic, such as the case of an Estonian volunteer Lepik who died in the summer of 1944 and whose possessions were sent to his father in Estonia but as the father had escaped to Sweden as a refugee, the possessions had to be evacuated back to Helsinki before making their way to Stockholm.[54] Then there were the truly difficult ones like private Roman Guik who disappeared during patrol on 31 August and it was unknown whether he deserted or was captured. The Volunteer Office received notice of his disappearance only in mid-September. His only known member of family was an uncle in Estonia, whose address was unknown.[55] He was not the only volunteer who disappeared in battle and in such cases their possessions were sent to the HCVO who would store them in case the men turned up in the future.

As mentioned in Chapter 4, if the family of a dead soldier did not demand that their remains should be shipped home, they were buried at the Hietaniemi cemetery in Helsinki. Colonel Procopé organized these events in cooperation with the military chaplain of Helsinki garrison. This practice continued during the autumn of 1944 as Swedish volunteer Sven Eric Ericsson for example was buried at the end of September once permission from his father was gained through the Frivilligbyrån in Stockholm.[56] It is noteworthy that several men from Tribal Battalion 3 who were killed in action during the hectic fighting of July, were buried at temporary gravesites and colonel Procopé had to hunt down their locations so that they could be either transferred to Helsinki or moved abroad.[57] Understandable deviation from the protocol, considering the situation the Finnish army was in at the time.

Some volunteers had no next of kin in Finland or abroad, such as privates Ville Abramov and Vilho Radionov, both of whom were from East Karelia and died in the battle of Äyräpää on 22 June 1944. The commander of Tribal Battalion 3, lieutenant-colonel Mäntylä, suggested that

[54] Letter from Maj Tiusanen to Col Procopé, 6 Oct 44 and multiple letters to HCVO. FNA T-6571/7.
[55] Letter from Evacuation Centre for the Fallen 13 to HCVO, 10 Sep 44 and letter from Er.P 4 to HCVO, 19 Sep 44. FNA T-6571/7.
[56] Telegram from Frivilligbyrån to HCVO and letter for col Procopé, 15 Sep 44. FNA T-6571/7.
[57] Letter from chaplain Siitonen to col Procopé, 31 Aug 44. FNA T-6571/7. This is a good example as the chaplain explains what had happened to three volunteers and why the protocol had not been followed.

their wages and savings would be donated to poor families of Ingrians and Karelians now living in Finland.[58] Similarly, Procopé had to organize the collection of wages that had been paid to the bank accounts of volunteers who had died in the last days of the war if they did not have a family member in Finland. These sums rose to several tens of thousands of Finnish marks.[59] And deaths did not stop just because the war ended. For example, Vihtori Kudrävtsew from East Karelia, hanged himself in mid-October 1944 and his only family member was his mother Matrena Volotskov who had disappeared from Äänislinna during the war.[60] As he left no note behind, it is not possible to speculate why he committed suicide.

Colonel Procopé received several letters from families of fallen soldiers who thanked him for letters he wrote to them to go with their possessions and final pay.[61] It is not clear if he wrote a letter to the family of each and every deceased volunteer, at least if their address was known, but given the number of letters in the archives, he certainly wrote many such letters. This is a very humane effort on his part as it would have been easy to avoid such a task since he did not know the soldiers personally.

The Volunteer Office itself was eventually dissolved. At this point, the Office was led by Major Erik Lönnroth, the professor who had been involved in one way or another with foreign volunteers since the first days of the Winter War. He had replaced Captain Nordlund at the end of the war. On 20 November 1944, the office was closed, and all unresolved issues were transferred to a single officer working at the Command Office of the Finnish High Command, with two assistants transferred over from the HCVO. Aside from the aforementioned assistants, a secretary and a message-runner, the other civilian staff were dismissed, and the officers were assigned to other tasks. Unfortunately, these are not listed in the HCVO archives. It is noteworthy that in the order that outlines the actions required for the closing of the office, the archives of both the office itself as well as Colonel Procopé were ordered to be handed

[58] Letter from Tribal Battalion 3 to High Command Volunteer Office, 20 Sep 44. FNA T-6571/7.
[59] Certificate from Col Procopé to Bank of Finland, 7 Nov 44. FNA T-6571/7.
[60] Certificate of death, Home Front Replacement Centre, 15 Oct 44. FNA T-6571/7.
[61] FNA T-6571/7 includes multiple such letters.

over to Finnish National Archive.[62] This meant that any requests from volunteers abroad or their families would face significant delays as the officer would have to retrieve papers out of the archives when needed and then forward the information to either the Defence Ministry, the Foreign Ministry or the Ministry of Social Affairs. This explains at least some of the long delays that families had to suffer through. In any case, the bureaucracy was brought down to a minimum as even the officer over at the High Command did it as an additional duty on top of his normal job. Clearly the military felt that there was little need to ensure communications with the former volunteers.

The amount of aftercare provided by Finland seems extraordinary when compared to other foreign volunteer movements of the time. Naturally, as a fully functioning state that was not occupied at the end of the war, Finland was in a completely different situation when it came to looking after their volunteers compared to, for example, Nazi Germany or Republican Spain. This makes for an unfair comparison as those two countries lacked the means to do much for their volunteer veterans. However, in Finland there was also the political will to take care of the 'debt of honour' towards the foreign volunteers, as it was worded. This certainly extended to all volunteers, not just those who saw combat. That both the Finnish military as well as the Foreign Ministry assisted former volunteers in a myriad of things is a testament of this will. Only Israel would be a somewhat similar case after 1948.

This can be seen most clearly with the pensions. Unfortunately, it is not possible, from the available archive material, to calculate the total amount of money that the Finnish government paid to the volunteers in the form of pensions, nor the total amount of combining wages, travel fees, living costs and pensions. Naturally this sum must have been dwarfed by the wages and pensions paid to Finnish soldiers and their families, if only because they outnumbered the volunteers by multiple orders of magnitude. Nevertheless, it was not insignificant because

[62] Order from High Command Command Office, 27 Oct 44. FNA T-6571/7.

there were several instances where the Finnish authorities tried to either minimise costs of something or to avoid having to pay altogether. Two examples fit here: the fines issued to the Finnish shipping lines of the latter intent, whereas the attempts by the Foreign Ministry to get donation money to pay for volunteers' travelling costs works for the former. It is, however, remarkable that pensions were paid for decades to come, and commendations were sent sometimes many years after the war, as well as answering queries from both other governments and from private individuals. These sort of unforeseen needs certainly complicated things for the Finns and are a warning example for other host nations looking to utilize foreign volunteers, such as in the 2022 war in Ukraine.

From the few memoirs of volunteers, it seems clear that the veterans largely felt positive about themselves, Finland and the Finns. The British volunteer Justin Brooke, for example, only has praise for the Finnish authorities. That some volunteers returned in 1941 for the Continuation War, after having served earlier in the Winter War, is also proof of this positive sentiment. Naturally, there were some negative examples, like the drunken volunteer talking to the tabloids in New York, or the Swedish volunteer who pretended to be a Communist agent to get home from the frontline. These were, by and large, a small minority of all the volunteers. The few adventurers that tried to exploit the situation only appeared in Finland during the Winter War, whereas the Continuation War, due to the changing nature of the conflict, seems to not have attracted any such troublemakers, though probably that was also due to the fact that the Finns were reluctant to accept individual volunteers and the Air Force especially was completely closed to foreigners. This change was probably influenced by the volunteer pilots that appeared in Finland during the Winter War.

Aside from such characters, the volunteers seemed to have had a relatively good experience in Finland and with the Finnish authorities. Similarly, the number of problematic volunteers was relatively small compared to their total amount. In fact, the only aspect related to the foreign volunteers that continued to draw criticism in Finnish historiography was the repatriation of

the Ingrians and other tribal Finns to the Soviet Union and it is something that is, to this day, brought up, as evidenced by the 2018 article discussed earlier in this chapter, and thus it is not a surprise that many of the volunteers who escaped to Sweden at the end of the war remained bitter at the Finns for having betrayed them.

The memory and legacy of the volunteers

As mentioned in the introduction, these memories are scarce, but they do exist. The Winter War volunteers were celebrated immediately after the war, and they all received both a commendation medal and a written document, signed by Field Marshall Mannerheim thanking them for their service. Some of these commendations could not be sent until the collapse of the Soviet Union made it politically passable to send them to Hungary, for example.

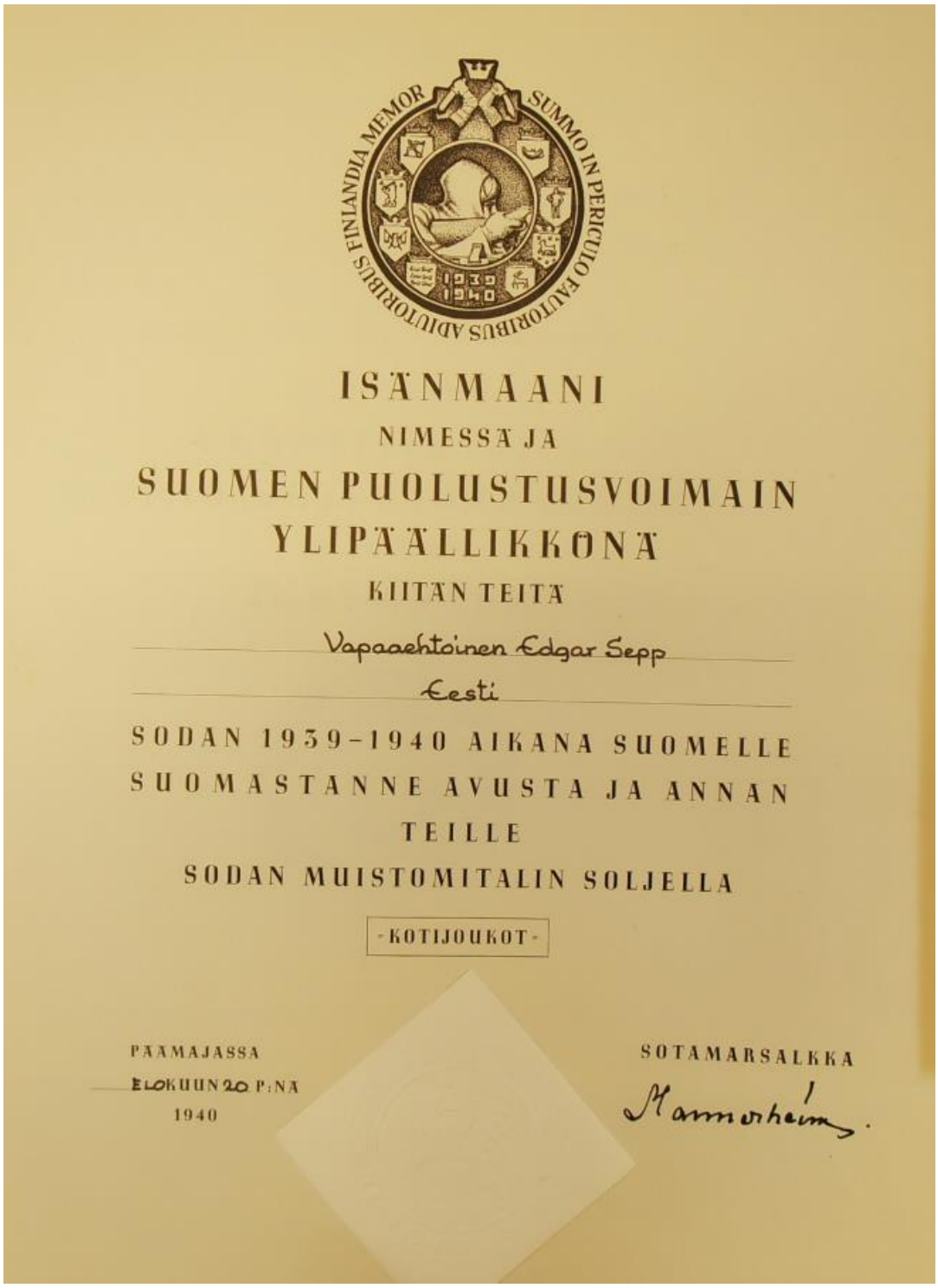

Image 7: signed by Field Marshall Mannerheim, this document thanks Estonian volunteer Edgar Sepp for their service to Finland. A commendation medal would have been attached. This particular one remains in Finnish Foreign Ministry archives.

When it comes to contemporary memories, things get scarcer. As far as the author has been able to find out, the exhibition organized jointly by the Hungarian National Széchényi Library together with the Military Museum of Finland and in collaboration with the Hungarian Cultural and Scientific Centre in Helsinki in 2015 is the only one of its kind. While historians have not

forgotten them completely, they are noticeably absent from popular culture. There are no Finnish movies that include foreign volunteers, despite 26 such movies having been made on the war period. Outside of Finland, only one example discusses volunteering briefly. Max Manus: Man of War is a 2008 biographical war film from Norway that is based on the real life of resistance fighter Max Manus. He was among the Norwegian volunteers who came to Finland during the Winter War and the movie, based on his autobiography, shows him fighting the Red Army at the Salla front. The battle scene is well done, with Russians speaking Russian and the volunteers equipped with a mixture of Finnish and Swedish gear. The movie also makes it clear that the experience deeply affected Max Manus as he is shown to have nightmares of the events in Finland multiple times in the movie, likely alluding to him suffering from a Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder to some extent.

All the books written by volunteers have already been mentioned before, as have been the books exploring this topic through usage of unpublished memoirs and letters. A popular comic book series, *Korkeajännitys*¸ included one story about two English soldiers fighting in the Winter War. Unlike the actual volunteers, the duo is transporting 'Six-B' tanks to Finland and decide to remain. The story has no basis in reality as its source is the British comic book Warlord and cannot be considered an accurate portrayal of either foreign volunteering or the Winter War.[63] The Finnish comic book *Korkeajännitys* did publish several other stories about both the Winter and Continuation Wars, created by Finnish artists, but these did not include foreign volunteers.

Conclusion

The Finnish state took as good care of the foreign volunteers as it could, considering its limited resources after the war. Though not every application for pension was approved of, many were, and some were approved decades after the war ended. While the money was not much,

[63] Samson Asko Alanen, 'Kersantti Wiggersin talvisota' *Korkeajännitys*, (Egmont Kustannus Oy, 2001). It has not been possible to find the original writer of the comic. Asko Alanen is the Finnish translator of the story.

it was better than nothing and Finland eventually increased the amounts. The counterpoint to this generousness is the abandonment of the repatriated tribal Finns as even the ones who escaped to Sweden could not apply for pensions. That Ingrians, and other 'kinfolk' could from 1990 move to Finland with their families was also a way to make amends to them and that it was announced by a president who had personally served in reconnaissance infantry during the Continuation War, increased the symbolic value of this invitation. That the Finnish authorities, both civil and military, kept helping former volunteers with various issues over the years is also a statement for the benefit of working bureaucracy. Long after everyone who had worked with the volunteers had retired or moved, the institutions kept going. That sort of reliability has not been a guarantee in other conflicts that attracted volunteers. Remarkably, the latest pension case documents in the Finnish archives are dated to 1971, proving the extent of communications between officials and former volunteers.

Unlike in Croatia, where there is to this day an active Association of Foreign Volunteers of the Croatian Homeland War 1991-1995, with a strong presence in social media, the volunteers who came to Finland did not form any such organizations.[64] There are several reasons for the lack of such an organization. Firstly, the fact that the volunteers never served together and most of them never had contact with people outside their national group. The only exception to this were the men of Task Force *Sisu* during the Winter War. Secondly, the political situation post-1945 probably made such associations difficult to organize, what with Finland being on the losing side of the war and having been allied with Nazi Germany. It is unlikely that the Finnish government would have been keen on celebrating foreign volunteers during the Cold War period when the country had to tread lightly between East and West. Thirdly, there was no easy way for the volunteers to contact each other even among their own national group and going from one country to another would have been almost impossible. This is clearly

[64] For veteran organizations of foreign volunteers in Croatia, see https://www.facebook.com/groups/52899198685/ and https://www.croatiaweek.com/foreign-volunteers-in-croatian-war-want-recognition/ and http://www.croatia.org/crown/articles/9991/1/481-foreign-volunteers-from-35-countries-defended-Croatia-in-1991-1995.html as examples.

shown in the manner that the few books about volunteers that utilize oral history focus on a single national group and even then, have only interviewed a handful of volunteers.

The lack of such an association might have played a part when it comes to the lack of presentation of the volunteers among the memory of the war. While they are dutifully catalogued in monographs about the Winter and Continuation Wars, they are almost completely absent from popular culture and popular memory of the Finnish wars, focused as it is on the national effort of survival through the dangerous year of 1939 to 1945. Official Finland, that is the State organs, did keep the memory alive as they kept sending commendations even long after the war to those volunteers who had not yet received theirs. This official memory was not reflected in the larger cultural memory of the war. It is of course understandable as literally every Finn was affected by the war so personal memories and the shared memory of the national effort surpassed everything else.

However, there are a number of monuments erected to honour the men who fought for Finland. The Hungarians had created a plaque for themselves already in 1940 and it is still placed on the wall of Lapua village church. At the city of Rovaniemi, a statue called 'Brothers in Arms' was erected in 1964 with a sign stating that '1939-1940 Swedish volunteers fought in this province for the freedom of the North'. In 1989 memorial plaques were placed at the four locations where the Swedish volunteer Air Regiment (*Lentorykmentti 19*) was stationed during the Winter War. The Danes received their plaque at their wartime training location, which is now a high school at the city of Oulu. There is also a memorial stone, unveiled in 1991 thanks to local veterans, at the city of Loviisa where the Danes had been stationed during March and April of 1940. In 2005, a memorial for Norwegian soldiers who participated in the Winter War was unveiled at the Hietaniemi graveyard in Helsinki, where many foreign volunteers were buried.[65]

[65] *Suomen sotamuistomerkit, 1939-1945* available at https://www.sotamuistomerkit.fi/sivu.php?id=386 accessed at 30 Nov 2022

There are also memorials for volunteers of the Continuation War. A memorial stone is placed at the Hietaniemi graveyard, with an inscription of 'For the freedom of Finland and honour of Sweden'. A similar text was often written on the graves of the volunteers. At the port town of Hanko, where the SFB fought in 1941, there are multiple stones naming all the Swedish volunteers who died, erected in 1981.[66] The 101 Estonian volunteers buried at the Malmi graveyard received a small plaque that states that they 'died for the freedom of Finland and honour of Estonia'. The similarity to the Swedish plaque is uncanny. Another memorial stone, made from an anti-tank obstacle in 1991, is dedicated to the *JR200* at the village of Taavetti which is close to where the Estonian regiment fought in 1944. Its inscription reads 'For Finnish independence and Estonian honour'. In 1994, the Estonian sailors in the Finnish Navy received their plaque at the Heikkilä barracks where they had been housed during the war. Another memorial stone for dead sailors was erected in 1996 next to the Suomenlinna church, which was a naval base during the war.[67] In 1992, a memorial stone at the Hietaniemi graveyard was erected to commemorate the men who died in all the various tribal units. 'They made the highest sacrifice that a brother can give for his brother' is engraved on it.

It is noteworthy that, with the exception of the Hungarian plaque that was created immediately after the Winter War, most of the others were unveiled long after the war. The memory of the Swedish volunteers seems to have been celebrated the most, as shown by the significantly earlier placement of some of their memorials. That the tribal Finns have only a single memorial stone representing three units and over two thousand men speaks volumes of how poorly they have been remembered.

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[66] *Suomen sotamuistomerkit, 1939-1945* available at https://www.sotamuistomerkit.fi/sivu.php?id=446 [accessed on 30 Nov 2022]

[67] *Suomen sotamuistomerkit, 1939-1945* available at https://www.sotamuistomerkit.fi/sivu.php?id=447 [accessed on 30 Nov 2022]

All of this means that neither the foreign volunteers nor the transnational recruits are well known outside of military historians in Finland, despite the occasional newspaper article of them. Outside of Finland, the volunteers and their stories are even less known.

Conclusion

In hindsight it really is astonishing how surprised the Finnish authorities were by the enthusiasm of foreigners to flock to their cause and the numbers contacting embassies. The precedent of the Spanish Civil War was certainly known in Finland, if for no other reason than that the Finns who had gone to fight in Spain had been interviewed by the Finnish State Police.[1] There had been several offers of volunteering before the Soviet invasion started on 30 November 1939 and these had been all categorically turned down. Neither the Finnish Foreign Ministry nor the Finnish military were prepared for volunteers and the archives show that they were surprised to have to handle this surge of unknown, often untrained and unequipped men. Embassies and consulates across Europe and North America, as well as far abroad as Egypt, South Africa, Japan and Australia had to ask Helsinki for advice and guidance as no standing orders or standard procedures had been drawn up before the war, aside from a note that ordered officials to refuse any volunteers for the time being and that things might change if war actually started. The conflicting orders from Helsinki, telling embassies first one thing and then changing that order just few days later, is more proof that both in the military and the side of the Foreign Ministry, officials were improvising as the situation developed.

The exact reasons for this apparent lack of preparedness by the Finnish authorities remains unclear. The stubborn belief of some Finnish politicians that the Soviets were only bluffing could have played a part, though it is notable that the country had started a full mobilization of the field army months before the Red Army attacked. Lack of oversight and limited funding likely played an even more important role. There does not seem to have been any joint planning between the military and the diplomats before the war on how to handle the foreign volunteers. This deficiency is most glaring when looking at the timeline of the arrival and

[1]Juusela, pp.352–354.

organization of the volunteers as even in Sweden, where the organization for recruiting and transporting volunteers was kickstarted almost immediately by three eager Swedish officers, merely three days after the beginning of the Winter War, it took 21 days before the first group of volunteers was equipped and on its way to Finland. For every other country, the same process took longer or was non-existent. A prime example was the British contingent, that arrived in Finland the day after the war ended.

Another major hurdle for volunteers was presented by the strict requirements presented by the Finnish High Command early in the Winter War. These were initially almost impossible to fulfil, demanding fully organized units led by their own officers and consisting of trained men and equipped on their own. This demand seems ludicrous when confronted with the reality of war volunteering which generally consists of eager, enthusiastic men coming alone or in small groups, usually without military training and almost always without proper equipment. However, this restriction becomes more understandable when placed in the context of the Finnish pre-war plans that envisioned regular army expeditions sent by friendly nations, especially Sweden but hopefully also from the United Kingdom and France. The High Command must have remained in that mindset, expecting foreign volunteers to be made up of regular army soldiers supported by their governments. Only Sweden and Hungary came close to this expectation and even with them this vision was not fully reached. Thus, it is no surprise that when General Enckell took command of the foreign volunteers in January 1940, he revised and then relaxed the restrictions, and this increased the number of volunteers accepted by the Finnish embassies. It is noteworthy that no such requirements were put in place when the Continuation War started which proves that the Finnish High Command had learned from its mistake.

The final problem of unpreparedness in the Winter War was the lack of training facilities. Many volunteers had not received military training before coming to Finland and even those who had, were unaccustomed to the environment and climate of Finland. For example, very few

knew how to ski, a critical skill during the conflict. Naturally, almost nobody spoke the Finnish language. A training centre could have been planned for, including assigning a training cadre and a commanding officer, before the war so that it could have started operating immediately. However, it took two weeks for such a centre to be established by the Finnish Home Front Command, a time during which the very early volunteers could do nothing but wait.

The prevalence of such early volunteers is somewhat surprising since the recruitment by official Finland was haphazard and got off to a slow start. It conflicts with Malet's view that, for foreign volunteers, recruiters are the primary method of getting them to leave their homes and civilian lives in order to travel to a warzone to risk their lives as discussed in Chapter Two.[2] The case of Finland is an excellent counterpoint to this argument. While there were recruitment drives organized by both Finnish officials abroad as well as local enthusiastic 'friends of Finland', many volunteers were pulled more than pushed thanks to the massive media attention that the Finnish struggle against the Soviet Union received. In this case and despite expectations, many volunteers truly were spontaneous, rather than recruited. Donations for the cause helped significantly, as they were used to pay the travel costs of many volunteers and, in some countries, to run propaganda campaigns to bring even more attention to the plight of Finland in order to drum up more volunteers. The best evidence for this pull factor, of the situation in Finland pulling volunteers being far stronger than the push factors that a prospective volunteers might face at home that push them to travel abroad, is that the earliest volunteers were nearly all Finnish immigrants returning from abroad, or men with Finnish heritage who felt connected to the 'old homeland'. However, this argument should not be pushed too far since, from Sweden, there is evidence that peer-pressure and the efforts of recruiters, did play a significant role in bringing over eight thousand Swedes to Finland and, during the Continuation War, when this recruitment effort dwindled down, the numbers of volunteers did so as well, though the different nature of that conflict clearly paid a part too.

[2] Malet, p. 32.

The Finnish Foreign Ministry seems to have also been taken by surprise by the German opposition to helping Finland, which should not have been the case considering the European political situation at the time. Poland had been divided between Germany and the Soviet Union, and the two countries seemed friendly enough. Yet the Finns initially planned with the Hungarians that their volunteers could travel through Germany and the embassies were told not to accept any Jewish volunteers despite there being no such restrictions on Finnish Jews from serving in the military. This requirement came from the Finnish High Command and the Foreign Ministry went along with it. The Ministry seems to have been the junior partner with all dealings with the military. The Army issued requirements and demands, and the Ministry tried its best to fulfil them. The only topic where the Foreign Ministry pushed back, and did so successfully, was money and specifically funding the living costs of the volunteers. The most notable example of this was the upkeep of the remaining members of the British contingent once they had been relocated to Sweden, a financial burden that the Ministry managed to transfer to the military.

Money was indeed an important factor with the Finnish Foreign Ministry. While the archival sources only rarely mention exact sums, the importance of frugality is stressed again and again. Travel costs were only paid for urgently needed specialists, like pilots, though once donation money became available, embassies were allowed to use it to help their local volunteers to travel to Finland. Embassies were allowed to issue visas for free to volunteers so the Ministry was not at the risk of immediate insolvency, at least. The monetary issue continued to plague the Finns through the period examined as shown by their attempts, with Swedish assistance, to unfreeze the remaining donation money in London, that the British authorities had frozen after the December 1941 declaration of war by them against Finland and the upkeep issue mentioned above. Despite these financial issues, the embassies and the Ministry itself seem to have done well under the difficult circumstances. Recognizing that Helsinki was unable to micromanage the embassies, they were given significant autonomy on how to achieve the goal of recruiting and transporting as many high-quality volunteers to

Finland as possible. Especially the London and Paris embassies acted with a great degree of independence, negotiating with their respective host governments about everything from weapon sales and monetary donations, to travel arrangements for volunteers coming from their countries and from elsewhere as well. Since the main communication device between Helsinki and its embassies was the telegram, augmented by letters and, if the situation was deemed critical enough, phone calls, this level of autonomy was obviously warranted and fully necessary. There was only one clear instance where the Foreign Ministry rebuked an official, and that was the consul at Rotterdam, who during the Winter War had given Finnish passports to local volunteers who lacked documents so that they could travel to Finland.

The failed recruitment drives are almost as informative as the successful ones were. Some of them were entirely expected, such as problems in post-Civil War Spain, while others seem to have been surprising to the Finns, such as Italy. The extended negotiations that attempted to bring Polish soldiers to Finland show well the problems facing the Finnish leadership. While the trained manpower would have certainly been useful during the Winter War, the presence of thousands of Poles in Finland could have led to far more difficult peace negotiations. Similarly, the Finns steered clear of the White Russian émigrés and their lost cause of bringing back the Russian Empire. Their presence in Finland certainly would have raised the stakes of the conflict much higher for Stalin, which could have had serious consequences for Finland. Some volunteers are not worth their trouble.

If the Foreign Ministry was unprepared for the appearance of foreign volunteers, so it was equally unprepared for their repatriation as the Winter War ended. Naturally, the difficulty of returning a volunteer home varied wildly, from the ease of sending the Swedes, Danes and Norwegians home next door or packing the Hungarians in a ship that would take them back south, to the difficult problem of finding berths for Americans on the very few ships available that sailed from the Arctic port of Petsamo to New York. The Foreign Ministry did instruct its embassies to facilitate the return of volunteers as much as they could. This issue was further

complicated when Germany launched its invasions of Scandinavia and Western Europe, which happened three weeks after the Winter War ended. Some Belgian and Dutch volunteers no longer wanted to go home, just to live under Nazi occupation. British volunteers could obviously not safely travel to Norwegian ports to sail home and thus they remained in Finland, alongside small numbers of other nationalities. These difficulties brought to light – not for the last time for the Finns – the problems that states confront when they opt to host foreign volunteers.

This Finnish hospitality continued for years, and it was quite remarkable, considering the non-existent impact that the remaining volunteers had had on actual military operations, none of them having seen combat. Naturally, it was not completely a happy story as shown by the imprisonment of some volunteers as mentioned in Chapter 3, though it is noteworthy that these were done only in a tiny number of cases that stemmed from disorderly behaviour and petty crime, rather than as a security measure of placing outsiders into containment. The fact that, in the uncertain days immediately after the ending of the Winter War, many volunteers had agreed to stay in Finland as a sort of back-up policy in case the Red Army renewed its offensive across the border, a delay which ended up stranding them in Finland once the routes home were blocked by events elsewhere in Europe, possibly influenced Finnish authorities. After all, if the British contingent had been immediately turned around after its arrival in Finland and sent back to Bergen in Norway to be shipped home, its men would in all likelihood have made it home well before the Germans invaded Norway. While this is not directly raised in the archives, it is likely that this heightened the sense that the Finns owed the volunteers a debt of gratitude as Field Marshall Mannerheim had put it.

That is not to say that Finland, as the host nation, did not try its best to minimize the upkeep costs for the remaining volunteers. Several attempts were made to find meaningful employment for the remaining volunteers and the sources show that slightly over half of the British contingent did find jobs, ranging from becoming a lumberjack to teaching and even

spying for the British embassy! Those who could not find jobs were still housed, clothed and fed at the volunteer camp near Jyväskylä, and as the cost of living in Finland increased, they even had their daily allowance doubled. The life at the camp seems to have been generally comfortable, though boring. The Foreign Ministry went so far as to facilitate transport of Christmas gifts from Britain to the volunteers. And despite the occasional grumbling in internal communications about the costs, the Finns did not accept any plan to repatriate the volunteers if it did not strike them as a safe one. Thus, the British suggestion that Royal Navy destroyers secretly pick the volunteers up from Petsamo was rejected as violation of Finnish neutrality and rejected as well were the multiple attempts to put the men in merchant ships that would sail to either Iceland or Britain directly, because guarantees of safe passage could not be gained from the Germans, making any such plan too risky.

It was only the changing international situation as Finland started to prepare for the Continuation War with German support, that the authorities deemed that the volunteer question had to be solved. Even then, instead of interning them behind barbed wire at a camp somewhere, the Finns negotiated a deal with the Swedes, allowing the transport of the remaining volunteers, whether British or other, across the border. The Finnish Defence Ministry paid Sweden for their upkeep at an empty ski resort until the last men boarded the high-altitude passenger plane that would fly them back to Britain. This showed an extraordinary amount of support by Sweden for its eastern neighbour and by Finland towards the volunteers.

This support did not end with the conclusion of the Second World War in 1945. Widows and underage children of fallen volunteers received pensions from the Finnish State and the Foreign Ministry facilitated these payments through its embassies. Similarly, some wounded volunteers received disability pensions due to injuries they had received while in Finland. Surprisingly, a few such applications came years and decades after the war and while some were rejected, others were still accepted. The last pensions were paid in the 1970s according

to Foreign Ministry archives. In addition, commemorative medals and proof of service were continuously sent abroad from Finland, whenever a former volunteer requested them. Some were not handed out until the 1990s, after the collapse of the Soviet Union and the Communist bloc in Eastern Europe. This sort of aftercare makes the Finnish case so different from many other conflicts where foreign volunteers were present. Having a working bureaucracy where the institutions keep honouring past promises, even though all the people who were personally involved had retired, was evidence of the sort of reliability that foreign volunteers in most other conflicts could not expect to find, making the Finnish case a relatively rare one. It is one thing to honour the contributions of foreign volunteers through public gratitude, like in Israel or Croatia, but paying them pensions for decades after the war is quite another thing altogether especially since their wartime contribution could not be compared, in size or effort, to that of the local Finnish recruits.

This contribution by the foreign volunteers, and the transnational recruits, can be difficult to analyse in detail because it of its nature. The Finnish leadership seems to have focused on the propaganda role of the volunteers, both as a sign of support to the domestic population in order to prove to them that Finland was not fighting alone, and to the international audience, including Moscow, that Finland was deemed important enough by these men that they would volunteer to risk their lives in order to defend it. However, they came to Finland primarily to fight and thus many paid the ultimate price: at least 496 lost their lives, though this might not be the full number due to record-keeping problems between different units that had volunteers in them. It is important to note that the Finnish military did not use the volunteers as cannon fodder and instead preferred to train and equip them as well as possible before committing them to the frontlines, and even then, their sector was generally a quiet one. This meant that most foreign volunteers never left their training centre and the only large formation to have been deployed, the Swedish SFK alongside its Norwegian contingent, assumed responsibility for the Salla sector late in the Winter War, freeing up Finnish troops that were sent to the heavy battles at the Viipuri sector. Similarly, in the Continuation War, the

Swedish SFB, this time alongside its Danish contingent, was deployed at the Hanko sector, which was expected to be a quiet one, unlike the Karelian front where the Finns were attacking on a wide front. The sources show that this was clearly a conscious decision by the Finnish High Command, to the extent that when the Swedish commander of the SFB visited Field Marshall Mannerheim to propose that his battalion-sized unit be allowed to launch an offensive against the Russian defenders of Hanko, his offer was turned down. However, this policy seems to have changed later in the war, likely due to the pressure of needing more manpower at the front overcoming the usefulness of volunteers as propaganda tools. Through 1944, the diminished Swedish formation did see extensive combat, as did the Estonian regiment. The main exception to this policy that valued propaganda over military contribution were the volunteer pilots who due to the nature of air war, could not stay safely away. As discussed in Chapter 2, several foreign pilots were killed during the Winter War.

Altogether different was the operational handling of the formations consisting of transnational recruits in both the Winter War and the Continuation War. The American Finnish Legion (*ASL*) and the Ranger Battalion 5 (*Sissi P. 5*), consisting mostly of Tribal Finns, were both used in heavy battles north of Lake Ladoga and suffered casualties. In the Continuation War, all three Tribal formations saw combat and suffered casualties, though it should be pointed out that they were largely used in a manner consistent with the deployment of regular Finnish units, meaning that they were neither kept back from fighting nor deployed for excessive lengths. Brigade K performed exceptionally well during the offensive phase of the Continuation War as did Tribal Battalion 3 during the huge battles of summer of 1994. Independent Battalion 6, with its men being Baltic Finns transferred from German-controlled areas of the Soviet Union, is the sole exception in that it did not have the chance to show its mettle in battle to the same extent as the others, yet it seems that this was more due to circumstances rather than conscious effort by the Finnish High Command.

While it could be possible to claim that this difference between how foreign volunteers and the transnational recruits were utilized by the Army was based on nationality and ethnicity, evidence suggests that the question is more complex. Most foreign volunteers could not speak Finnish whereas transnational recruits generally could. Putting soldiers together who are unable to communicate with each other or with their superiors is obviously a bad idea. Furthermore, among the foreign volunteers were many men without military training, which was not the case for the transnational recruits. For example, most of the men of the ASL as well as the men of both Ranger Battalion 5 and Brigade K had either fought in the Finnish Civil War of 1918 or done national service in the Finnish army in the 1920s and 1930s or they had joined the voluntary National Guard (*Suojeluskunta*). So not only could they communicate with Finnish units, but they also did not need a long training period before becoming combat ready. Finally, the leaders of both ASL and Ranger Battalion 5 were former active-duty officers who were eager to fight and who had connections to the senior leadership of the Army, facilitating their quick entry to the frontline. These reasons explain the difference in operational use between the different formations. However, the propaganda element inherent to the more 'exotic' volunteers should not be forgotten as it clearly played a part. However, the longer the war lasted and the more demand there was for manpower, the less importance there seems to have been on using volunteers for purely propaganda, as shown by the deployment of volunteer and tribal Finn units to demanding frontline positions, in which the units suffered serious casualties – a far cry from how they were deployed during the Winter War.

The Finnish military seems to have been ambivalent on how to use foreign volunteers and it shows in the manner that they were first rejected, then grudgingly accepted, then urgently clamoured for, then rejected again at least partially, then utilized for special purposes only, and finally being used like normal units as mentioned above. By the time things were running smoothly, the Winter War was about to end. However, it is useful to examine the Finnish plans on how to utilize the volunteers as, had the Winter War lasted longer, they would likely have become an important element of the war effort. Interestingly, not all Nordic volunteers were

to be grouped together – Norwegians would join the brigade-sized Swedish SFK, while the Danes would form their own battalion-sized unit. The Hungarians were also to form a battalion-sized unit. Finally, Task Force *Sisu* would act as a 'foreign legion' in that it would house all other volunteers, divided into smaller, company-sized units based on language and overall numbers. In addition to these combat formations, many services in the military were asking for specialist volunteers, men with advanced technical skills or niche knowledge, ranging from the Navy wanting hydrophone experts to the Air Force asking for mechanics for specific engine types to the Fortress Command requesting military engineers specializing in fortifications. This sort of need for special skills is almost universal across all conflicts where volunteers appear. While they were wanted in Finland as well, here they were needed as a supplement to the Finns already doing these jobs, instead of literally kickstarting their speciality field as was the case with foreign volunteers and the fledgling Israeli Air Force in 1948.

Things changed again once the Continuation War began. The Finnish Air Force, perhaps due to some bad experiences and the casualties suffered in the Winter War, no longer accepted foreign volunteers at all. At the same time, the Finnish Navy was happily taking in more and more Estonian recruits, to the extent that eventually about ten percent of its manpower was Estonian. The Army stood somewhere between these two extremes. Initially the Army was willing to only accept the Swedish volunteers. Almost immediately though, elements inside the military contested this policy as on one hand the military intelligence started training Estonians for covert operations by forming the ERNA unit and, on the other hand, champions of the Greater Finland ideology began forming a Tribal Finn formation to help 'liberate east Karelia'. As the war continued and manpower shortages became more acute, the Army accepted more and more transnational recruits and became open to more foreign volunteers. The former was done by creating the Tribal Finn units (*Erillinen Pataljoona 6* and *Heimopataljoona 3*), while the latter was carried out through the creation of the Estonian infantry regiment (*JR 200*).

That Finland would violate the Hague and Geneva conventions by recruiting among the prisoners of war is remarkable, especially as it seems that this process was started without permission from the High Command and only later presented as a *fait accompli*. Equally remarkable is that this unit, Tribal Battalion 3, was able to function at all, what with the number of Soviet infiltrators in it, the low motivation of some of its men and the initially chaotic leadership situation. While the Finns did take certain precautions with this unit, they also seem to have been surprisingly naïve when dealing with agitators, as shown by the fact that Communist agents were able to recruit other men and then attempt a coup in one of the bases the battalion was manning. Also remarkable is that this unit eventually performed just as well as any regular Finnish battalion. The other two tribal units did not suffer from similar problems as Tribal Battalion 3. While ultimately the recruitment of prisoners of war was successful, it is questionable if the amount of trouble such units can cause is worth the modest increase in available manpower.

Thus, it can be stated that while there were some useful specialists among the foreign volunteers that Finland could utilize, their main importance to the host nation was as a propaganda tool. In that aspect they were useful for both domestic and international usage. All three services could use small numbers of specialists but there was no need for volunteers to create non-existent services, such as managing air or sea operations. Neither did the Finnish High Command need any additional senior officers to bring in more experience. This is a notable difference from other conflicts where foreign volunteers have provided exactly such special skills. As a source of additional manpower, the volunteers in the Winter War did not really have time to become an asset and, in the Continuation War, while they were useful, their numbers were not high enough to become significant to alter the course of the war. This is not to say that their propaganda value was critical to the war effort or made a large impression on other countries attitudes towards Finland as there is no evidence of either. Rather, this argument comes from the statement made by Field Marshall Mannerheim to such an effect and from the way the volunteer formations were operationally utilized. They were

not used as cannon fodder by sending them immediately to the hot spots of the frontline. In fact, it would have been possible to deploy all the volunteers rapidly to reinforce the buckling defence lines near the city of Viipuri, where the Soviet pressure was the highest during February 1940. That this was not done, is evidence that the Finnish leadership saw their primary use as that of propaganda and morale booster, rather than strictly as fighting men on the front.

As to the volunteers themselves, while they are not the focus of this research and the Finnish authorities did not interview them, some information can be gleaned from the archives and the biographies, especially when combined with general trends from other conflicts that have attracted volunteers. Firstly, they were motivated by a multitude of reasons, some of which were overlapping. Most volunteers had multiple reasons for why they came to Finland to fight. There was a sense of adventure and the masculine need to prove their martial mettle, so to speak, especially if the armed forces of their own country had rejected them, as was the case for some of the British volunteers. Some clearly perceived the injustice of a large nation like the Soviet Union attacking its small neighbour. Then there were the ideological reasons, of a liberal democracy under attack by a totalitarian state, as well as a capitalist society invaded by a communist one. Furthermore, some volunteers made no distinction between Hitler and Stalin, and if the former could not be stopped in Poland, then some good might be achieved by stopping the latter in Finland. A small number of Swedish volunteers had fought against Franco in Spain and now came to Finland to fight against Stalin. In addition, other volunteers felt kinship to Finland and whether this was a real connection, such as the volunteers from North America with Finnish heritage, or an imaginary one, such as felt by some of the Hungarian volunteers, was largely meaningless as the end result was the same: men were willing to travel long distances to fight for a country that was not their own even at the risk of losing their lives. In addition to kinship, there was a sense of neighbourly fraternity for some volunteers, especially for those from Scandinavia and, to a lesser extent, from Estonia, caused by geography and centuries of cultural exchange between these countries. Finally, the financial

aspect cannot be overlooked. The volunteers were paid the same wages and allowances as Finnish soldiers, these sums could not be called large by any means. Nevertheless, the military gave you clothes, food and a place to sleep, and some volunteers may have been motivated to sign-up for such a basic reason, especially if they had been unemployed or otherwise struggling in their civilian life before the war. To reiterate, most volunteers, if not all, had multiple motivations that combined together. They were affected by a myriad of push and pull factors: lack of job opportunity at home might lead a man to look for opportunities elsewhere and Finland provided one, and the decision to go was made easier by political leanings and the injustice of the attack widely reported by newspapers, to give an example. And as chapters 1 and 2 showed, the Winter War received plenty of attention from the media and nearly all of it painted Finland and the Finns in positive light.

The picture changes a little when the Continuation War erupted in June 1941. Despite the far longer duration of the conflict, the numbers of volunteers do not reach the peaks of the Winter War. Some of this is easily explained by the changed conditions in Europe as more and more countries were fully embroiled in the Second World War. For example, Hungary was waging its own war against the Soviet Union as an ally of Germany, and Great Britain had mobilized its manpower to a much larger extent than had been done in 1939. International travel into Finland had largely become impossible with the exception of the Swedish border still remaining open. The Swedish government still permitted its citizens to go to Finland but as this time Finland was seen more as an aggressor than a victim, the widespread calls for supporting Finland that had existed during the Winter War no longer happened to the same extent. The reality of war also presented its ugly face and, just like the International Brigades in Spain had struggled to replace casualties as the Spanish Civil war kept going, the Swedish-Danish SFB became smaller and smaller. Clearly the pull factors of the Finnish cause were not as strong as they had been earlier. It is only the external push factors that turn the tide, in this case the worsening situation in Estonia, which led to more and more Estonians fleeing to Finland and then joining the military.

Secondly, foreign volunteers can cause unforeseen problems for the host nation merely by existing. The volunteers certainly were involved in a number of petty crimes, but the number of incidents reported to the Volunteer Office was surprisingly small when compared to the total numbers of volunteers present in Finland. While it could be argued that the Winter War did not last long enough for criminal problems to crop up, the fact that the same trend continued through the Continuation War proves otherwise. There were desertions, suicides, theft, and drunkenness among the volunteers, but the vast majority of volunteers behaved well. But problems could arise elsewhere: a handful of returning volunteers gave negative testimonials of Finland to newspapers, which required Finnish officials to write rebuttals. There were a few volunteers who became drifters in Finland instead of returning home, and the problems with repatriating the British contingent have been thoroughly explored. The existence of the tribal Finn units caused a problem when the Soviets demanded the complete return of all of their citizens in the autumn of 1944 and these men, who had been promised Finnish citizenship, were instead betrayed and sent over the border to an unknown fate. That the Foreign Ministry tried to find out their fates and that the Army made it relatively easy for them to escape cannot change the nature of that 'dishonourable act', as the officer in charge of the repatriation train called it. Survivors of Tribal Battalion 3 who had escaped to Sweden, still felt bitter about this betrayal when some of them were interviewed in the 1980s and the 1990s, as unlike other surviving volunteers, their memory was not celebrated by the Finnish state and their story was largely unknown until relatively recently.

That is not to say that the memory of foreign volunteers and the transnational recruits was well known in Finland after the war. When the exhibition showcasing Hungarian volunteers who came to Finland opened in 2015, it was a rare public display of the memory of foreign volunteers in Finland. As this thesis has shown, the linked topics of foreign volunteers and transnational recruits in Finland have not received much attention outside of Finland and what research has been done locally, has been a relatively superficial overview of the topic outside of the very few in-depth books focusing on single groups, like the Ingrians or the American-

Finnish Legion, both of which were published in the 21st century. Finnish historiography of the war has, understandably, focused on the national effort. The volunteers were not excluded, as the comprehensive histories of the Winter War and the Continuation War do have segments dedicated to them, as do a few other history books that seek to explore all aspects of the wars, but these are largely overviews of the topic and gloss over much detail. The fact that the volunteers were far from a uniform group made it even more difficult to even establish any sort of veterans' association and without such a group to raise awareness of them, it is easier to see why their experiences have not received much attention.[3] Most volunteers had no contact with other volunteers outside their own national group and the various volunteer units never served together. It is telling that the few biographical books about the volunteers that exist, focus only on a single national group and even then, have interviewed a mere handful of former volunteers. They are also completely missing from popular culture, with only a single mention in one Norwegian war movie, and no representation in Finnish war movies.

In conclusion, the previous Finnish historiography has not looked at the entire wartime period of 1939 to 1944, nor has it examined both foreign volunteers and transnational recruits in a comprehensive manner. Historians have either looked at all volunteers in one war but not the other, or they have only examined a single national group. The English-language studies on volunteers who went to Finland have largely been unable to access Finnish archives nor secondary sources. Many books and journal articles utilized as sources for this thesis have not been translated to English, nor to any other language, thus their information has not been available in the English-speaking world until now.

The Finnish case provides an interesting and a different scenario from most other conflicts where volunteers crossed national borders to fight as it was a fully functioning state before, during and after the wars in question. The Finnish case also argues that volunteering does

[3] Arielli (2016), discusses the importance of veteran's association in order to keep the memory of volunteering alive, p. 382.

happen even if the host nation does barely any recruitment as long as there is media attention paid to the conflict. That is not to say that the was no recruitment, as there certainly was, but that significant numbers of volunteers seem to have been spontaneous in their actions, not coerced or persuaded to go to Finland. The volunteers were largely treated uniformly and equally regardless of their origin. This includes, for the most part, the transnational recruits, and this treatment, with the major caveat of the men of the Tribal Battalion 3, continued well past the war.

It could be useful to compare the Finnish case to other similar cases, most notably Ukraine post-2014, as the evolving situation in Ukraine now most closely resembles the situation in Finland in the 1930s and 1940s out of all the large conflicts that attracted foreign volunteers during the 20th and 21st centuries. Ukraine will undoubtedly face similar problems when it comes to repatriation, the 'debt of honour', and memory of its volunteers as Finland did almost eighty years ago.

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