

Finland Stands Alone

(The Finnish Campaign:1713 - 1714)

Part 2: The Battle of Storkyro (or Napue or Lappola) (19th February 1714)



In the first article of this mini series I described the background to the Finnish campaign of 1713 -1714 and the first large battle at Palkane. In this second part I will give details of the final battle of the campaign and briefly describe the events at sea. The battle is sometimes called Storkyro after the large river and a nearby village. It is also often called Napue which is the name of the village where the action was centred or Lappola, by the Russians, another small hamlet in the area.

With defeat at the battle of Palkane the Finnish army withdrew north and took up a position near the Storkyro river from which they could block further advances and also possible move south again to retake the large parts of Finland already lost.

The Russian response was two fold. Galitzin and a strong detachment of the Russian army were to clear Armfelt's Finnish army from its position and secure Russian control of Southern Finland. Apraxin and the Russian navy were to continue their advance along the coast and attempt to defeat or neutralise the Swedish fleet blocking their path north. I do not intend to cover the efforts of the Russian fleet in any detail but I will briefly outline their efforts later (see Aftermath). Instead I will now turn to Galitzin and his army. In freezing weather Galitzin and his army marched to attack Armfelt's waiting Finnish army.

The Historic Armies

Essentially the two armies were the same as at the previous battle. The units were a little more experienced but the rigours of campaigning had taken their toll on numbers. There were a number of Russian units present that were not at Palkane but they too had been in Finland at this time. This battle also saw Finnish militia fight.

The Swedish (Finnish) Army

Horse: All Horse use Swedish charging at a gallop tactics but once again this may be downgraded to a less effective tactic due to their poor performance.

- Abo och Bjorneborgs lans Cavalry Regiment: 628 men, poor cavalry.
- Nylands och Tavastahus lans Cavalry Regiment: 384 men, poor cavalry.
- Karelska (Viborgs och Nyslotts lans) Cavalry Regiment: 225 men, poor cavalry.
- Ingermanlandska Dragoon Regiment: 301 men, poor cavalry.

Note: Another source gives a total of 1500 Finnish cavalry.

Infantry: All infantry are musket armed, no pikes as would be usual. Unless noted the units use Swedish Ga Pa attacking tactics.

- Abo lans Regiment: 385 or 455 men, average.
- Bjorneborgs Regiment: 388 or 412 men, average.
- Tavastahus Regiment: 280 or 256 men, average.
- Viborgs Regiment: 120 or 128 men, average.
- Savolax Regiment: 700 or 568 men, average.
- Nylands Regiment: 130 or 326 men, average.
- Osterbottens Regiment: 600 or 669 men, average.
- Finska varvade Battalion: 230 or 224 men, average but probably using firing tactics.

Finnish Militia: about 1100 men, poor and using firing tactics.

The Abo lans, Tavastahus and Savolax regiments performed well as did the Finnish militia (in defence only). Therefore some slight upgrading may be called for, depending on the rules you use.

Note: There were also smaller units or remnants of units. There were 9 (or 16) men from the Finnish Adelsfanen company (cavalry) and 33 dismounted dragoons for example.

Artillery: 8 guns

The Russian Army

Horse:

- Governor's Squadron: about 200 elite dragoons.
- Tverskoy Regiment: about 500 average to good dragoons.
- Viatski Regiment: about 400 good dragoons.
- Narvski Regiment: about 400 good dragoons.
- Luzhski Regiment: about 400 average dragoons.
- Vologdski Regiment: about 400 average to good dragoons.
- Tobolski Regiment: about 500 average to good dragoons.
- Olonetzki Regiment: about 500 average to good dragoons.
- Cossacks: about 1400 poor light horse but only about 700 participated in the battle.

The Russian cavalry totalled either 3068 or 4717 men. For the lower figure it is possible that this is 'men' (i.e. ordinary troopers) and does not include officers and possibly others.

Infantry: Grenadier units are all musket armed. All other units are probably all musket armed as well but it is possible that they retained a small number of pikes - 10 to 20% of a unit.

- 1st (formerly Busch's) Grenadier Regiment: about 300 (a detachment) good infantry.
- 2nd (probably formerly Sykov's) Grenadier Regiment: about 500 good infantry.
- Archangelski Regiment: about 300 (a detachment) average infantry.
- Nishegorodski Regiment: about 500 average infantry.
- Kazanski Regiment: about 500 average to good infantry.
- Moskovski Regiment: about 500 average to good infantry.
- Sibirienski Regiment: about 300 (a detachment) average to good infantry.
- Luzhski Regiment: about 500 average to good infantry.
- Troizki Regiment: about 500 average to good infantry.
- Viborgski Regiment: about 500 average infantry.
- St. Petersburgski Regiment: about 300 (a detachment) average infantry.
- Galitschski Regiment: about 300 (a detachment) average infantry.
- Vologdski Regiment: about 600 average infantry.
- Vyborg Garrison Regiment: about 400 (a detachment) poor infantry.

Artillery: 11 guns

The Russian infantry totalled either 5639 or 6146 men depending on source. The smaller figure may, like the cavalry, be without officers, etc.

The Russian infantry were organised into 8 'battalions', i.e. groups of about battalion size, for the battle. It is not clear if all of the above were part of these battalions or if some remained with the Russian Train.

The Wargame:

The following is a scenario to re-fight the battle of February 19th 1714 using the Polemos Great Northern War rules. Hopefully I will also include enough information for you to fight the battle using another system.

If the game is going to be played by the organiser of the game then the organiser should be the Russian player.



Order of Battle: The Swedish (Finnish) Army

Army Commander: Armfelt (A: 3)

Horse: organised into 2 brigades.

- Abo och Bjorneborgs lans Cavalry Regiment: 2 bases of Raw, H.
- Nylands och Tavastahus lans Cavalry Regiment: 1 base of Raw, H.
- Karelska (Viborgs och Nyslotts lans) Cavalry Regiment: 1 bases of Raw, H.
- Ingermanlandska Dragoon Regiment: 1 base of Raw, H.

I have rated the units as Horse to reflect their poor performance.

Infantry: organised into 2 brigades.

- Abo lans Regiment: 1 base of Trained, Determined GP(-P).
- Bjorneborgs Regiment: 1 base of Trained, GP(-P).
- Tavastahus Regiment/ Finska varavde: 1 base of Trained, Determined GP(-P).
- Viborgs/Nylands Regiment: 1 base of Trained, GP(-P).
- Savolax Regiment: 1 base of Trained, Determined GP(-P).
- Osterbottens Regiment: 1 base of Trained, GP(-P).

Note: I have combined smaller units to make one reasonable sized unit.

Finnish Militia: organised into 1 brigade. 3 bases of Raw, AP infantry.

Finnish militia are Determined if deployed in any cover or defensive position.

Artillery: 1 Light Gun, Trained.

Order of Battle: The Russian Army

Army Commander: Galitzin (A: 3)

Cavalry Detachment Commander: Tshekin (P 2)

Horse: organised into 7 brigades, the Cossacks must be in a separate brigade

- Governor's Squadron: 1 base of Elite, Dragoons.
- Tverskoy Regiment: 2 bases of Veteran, Dragoons.
- Viatski Regiment: 2 bases of Veteran, Dragoons.
- Narvski Regiment: 2 bases of Veteran, Dragoons.
- Luzhski Regiment: 2 bases of Trained, Dragoons.
- Vologdski Regiment: 2 bases of Veteran, Dragoons.
- Tobolski Regiment: 2 bases of Trained, Dragoons.
- Olonetzki Regiment: 2 bases of Trained, Dragoons.
- Cossacks: 3 bases of Raw, Light Horse (mixed).

Infantry: organised into 3 brigades. A maximum of 8 bases may be used.

- 1st Grenadier/ Sibirienski Regiment: 1 base of Veteran AP (RS?) infantry.
- 2nd Grenadier Regiment: 1 base of Veteran, AP (grenadier) infantry.
- Archangelski/ Galitschski Regiment: 1 base of Trained AP (RS?) infantry.
- Nishegorodski Regiment: 1 base of Trained AP (RS?) infantry.
- Kazanski Regiment: 1 base of Veteran AP (RS?) infantry.
- Moskovski Regiment: 1 base of Veteran AP (RS?) infantry.
- Luzhski Regiment: 1 base of Trained AP (RS?) infantry.
- Troizki Regiment: 1 base of Trained AP (RS?) infantry.
- Viborgski Regiment: 1 base of Trained AP (RS?) infantry.
- St. Petersburgski/ Vyborg Garrison Regiment: 1 base of Trained AP (RS?) infantry.
- Vologdski Regiment: 1 base of Trained AP (RS?) infantry.

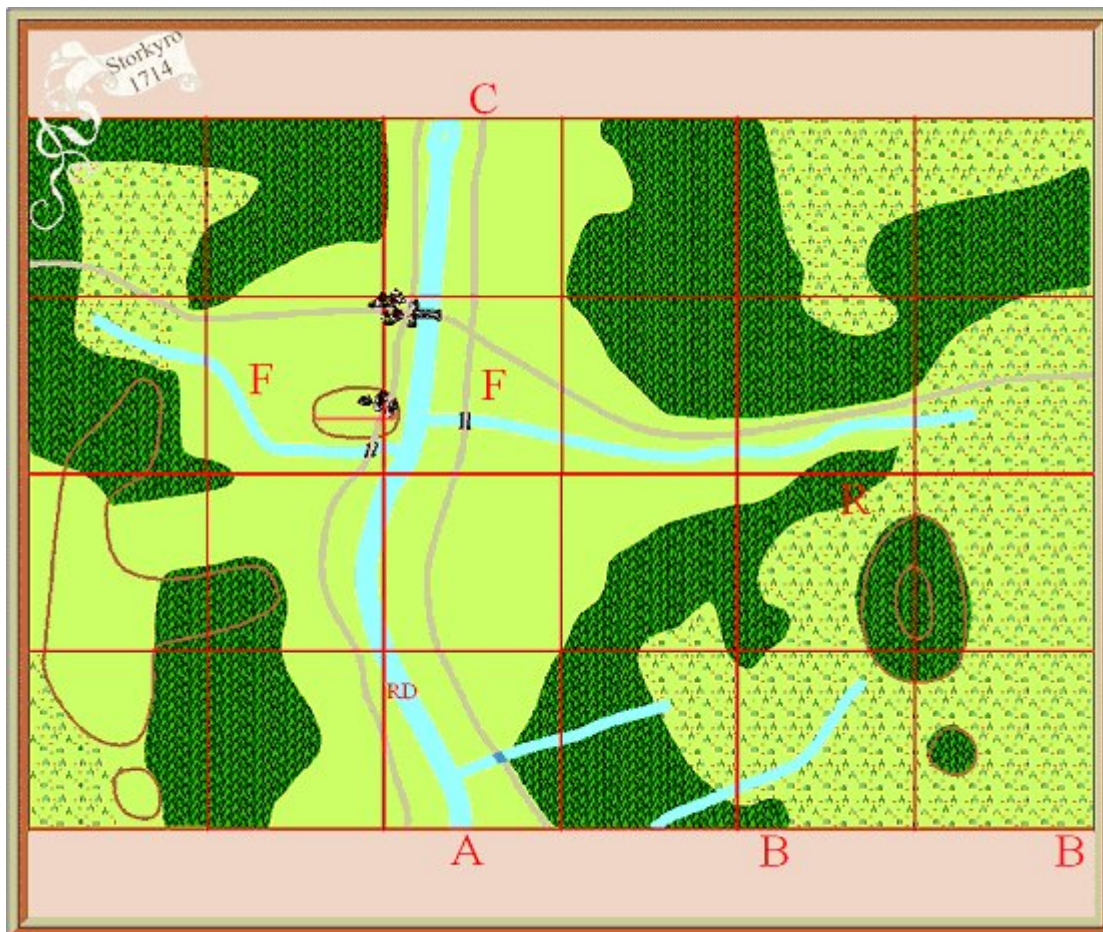
Note: I have combined smaller units to make one reasonable sized unit.

I have assumed that not all of the above fought in the battle. Chose 8 of the above or dice for which are present.

Artillery: 1 Field Gun and 1 Light Gun, Trained

Terrain:

The map is courtesy of Sven Luger and I would like to thank him for his excellent work.



Each square on the map is the width of 5 standard infantry battalions (5 BW). In Polemos: GNW terms they are with standard 60mm bases 30cm square. The smaller grey square represents a table 180 cm by 120 cm (6 by 4 feet) and the larger one a table 8 by 6 feet.

For other systems work out the table size you need by calculating the space need for 5 standard infantry battalions in the system. This will give you the size of each of the small squares.

Map Key:

Forest: There was deep snow in the forests. Movement through it is at half normal speed for woods but otherwise it counts as woods (Polemos - defence factor 1). In Polemos an extra TP must be spent for each move.

Hill: All hills will block line of sight and give defensive bonuses, if appropriate. Only the 2 level high hill affects movement. This counts as a Slope level 2 for Polemos and should be about half speed for other rules.

Village: Restrict movement and low defensive value (Polemos: Defence factor 1).

River/Streams: All rivers and streams are frozen and can be moved over as if clear terrain. The major river is one and a half times the width of a standard infantry unit (Polemos - 3 BD). The streams are all half a standard unit with (1 BD). Units will receive defensive bonuses if defending on the river bank against units attacking from the river or across it.

Marsh: All marshes are frozen. Movement is at normal speed but units will count as a little disordered while in this terrain. In Polemos the unit receive 1 Shaken level while moving in the marsh areas.

Roads: Normal small roads.

Breastwork: Gives a small additional bonus to defence factor and counts as a minor obstacle to cross. Polemos - defence value 1, obstacle value 1.

Deployment:

The players can choose from two deployments and with each of these the players may choose the historical deployment or freely deploy. The normal deployment has the Russian army moving on to the table from the edge. It will take longer to play and allow both sides to manoeuvre. The alternative, 'quick start', deployment has the two armies set up with the two armies confronting each other on the table in the location of the real battle. This version of the scenario will be quicker to play.

Normal Deployment:

It would be useful if an umpire is available if using this deployment. The umpire can then keep track of units (Russian normally) moving but which should be unseen.

The Finnish Army: The army is deployed between the two points marked F and facing south. Artillery is unlimbered and all other units are in 'Line'. Historically it was deployed from west to east as follows.

Right wing cavalry - Nylands och Tavastahus lans and half of Abo och Bjorneborgs lans regiments.

Infantry centre - 2 brigades, first brigade with the determined units on the right.

Left wing cavalry - The remainder of the cavalry.

The Finnish militia formed a second line and the artillery was with the infantry.

The Russian Army:

The majority of the Russian army marches onto the table on the first turn. 3 cavalry brigades, 4 regiments with 8 bases, commanded by Tshekin arrive from point A in march column. The arrival of this group may be delayed by the Russian player any number of turns. But the delay must be noted at the start of the game.

Galitzin with the infantry, artillery and the remainder of the Dragoons arrives between the two points marked B. All units are in march column or limbered. The Cossack brigade may accompany him or be sent on a wide flanking move.

If the Cossack brigade has been sent on a wide flanking move it may arrive at point C. The Russian player must pay to activate these units, if appropriate in the system you are using, and start the process. The Russian player may do this at any point. In Polemos TP's must be spent. Once the units have been activated you roll a D6 at the beginning of every turn to see if they arrive on table this turn. On the first turn after activation a 6 is needed for them to arrive, on the second turn a 5 or 6, third turn 4, 5 or 6, etc. A score of a 1 is always a failure. These units will arrive on table in march column at point C.

Quick Start Deployment:

The Finnish Army: As above but the brigades may be pivoted by up to 2 standard unit widths. No unit or part of a unit may be in the bottom 2 rows of squares. The Karelska cavalry is now assigned to the right wing.

The Russian Army:

Tshekin and a force of Russian dragoons (as described above) are placed within 2 standard unit widths (2 BW) of the point marked RD. They may be in any desired formation.

Galitzin and his force (as described above) are placed within 2 standard unit widths (2 BW) of the point marked R. They may not be in the open terrain. All units are in march column or limbered and have 1 level of Shaken from moving through bad terrain. The Cossack brigade is detached on a wide flanking move and may be activated and deployed as above. can be in command of these.

Free Deployment: Either of the above options may be used but with no restriction on group composition.

Other Game Options: If you wish you may add optional units to each side.

Russians: The Russian player may deploy all of his or her infantry bases. Add the 'missing' 3 bases in another brigade.

Extra Finnish Militia: It was planned that a lot more militia would be available than was in reality but this battle happened before they could be assembled. If you wish up to 4 brigades of militia may be used. Half, rounded up, are Raw and the others levy. All are determined if in cover or defences and use AP tactics. After nominating the quality of a brigade roll a D6 for the number of bases in each unit. A score of 1 or 2 = 2 bases, 3, 4 or 5 = 3 bases and 6 = 4 bases.

The Historic Battle:

Armfelt carefully chose a position near the village of Napue in which it was hoped his enemy would not be able to use its superior numbers. His army had suffered greatly from disease, sickness and desertions but it had received reinforcements. The reinforcements were the first part of a larger militia force which it was hoped would be raised. Despite worries about their quality they proved to be better than expected, perhaps because they contained many individuals with at least some military experience.

On the approach of the Russians the Finnish army took up a position facing south. The regular troops in front with the militia forming a second line and using the two streams, a small hill and a breastwork to strengthen his line. The Russian had been advancing towards the Finnish position using the river as a road when scouts informed Galitzin that the Finnish army was formed and ready for battle. The Russian army was at this time near to the village of Kuivila (to the south of the area of the map). It halted and a reconnaissance was made of the Finnish positions.

Having seen how strong these were Galitzin determined on a less direct approach for the following day's battle. A cavalry force of 4 Dragoon regiments, under Tshekin, was detached to protect the Russian baggage train and to continue the advance along the river. Meanwhile the remainder of the Russian army turned right and marched towards a position to attack the Finnish left wing. The Cossacks were dispatched on a wide sweeping movement to attack the Finns rear.

Marching through the frozen landscape the Russians emerged from the marshes and woods to the Finnish armies left. The Finnish army had though been informed some time earlier of the new direction of the Russian advance and they had already started to redeploy. The Finnish right wing cavalry was strengthened by the addition of the Karelska regiment and was positioned to block the Russian Dragoon detachment. Next to them in the area of the small hill and redoubt were the Finnish militia. While the regular infantry and the left wing cavalry moved to face the emerging Russian main body.

The Russian army started to deploy for battle with the infantry in front in 2 lines. The first line with the artillery and 5 battalions, the second line of 3 battalions. The cavalry, 3 regiments and a squadron, deployed in a third line behind the infantry. As the Russians deployed the Finns advanced. Swedish and Finnish tactics of this period were very aggressive and it was very rare for them to defend. Perhaps they also realised that they needed to do something quickly before Russian numbers could tell. The Finnish regulars formed up in a single line with the cavalry on the left, but hanging back, and moved to the attack supported by their artillery. The Russian artillery replied as the Russian infantry shook themselves into order for the coming clash.

With the minimum of firing the Finnish infantry charged. The Russian line shuddered and fell back but did not break. The left of the Russian line was particularly badly hit and sensing victory Armfelt committed part of his left wing cavalry to try and clinch victory. Unfortunately Galitzin had also seen the possibility and he also responded, in his case by committing a small number of the Russian cavalry and some second line infantry.

Having generally stabilised the situation it was time for the Galitzin to make a further move. With his remaining cavalry he moved round the Finnish left wing and moved to attack the Finnish line in the flank/rear. The situation was becoming desperate for the Finnish regulars as they attempted to face in two directions against the Russian dragoons and the shaken, but not defeated, Russian infantry.

Meanwhile up until this point the rest of the battlefield had been relatively quiet. The Finnish right wing cavalry and militia had been content to sit and watch the Russian detached Dragoon command. As the Finnish regulars attack ground to a halt the Russian Cossacks arrived and swept into the Finns rear, where the militia tried to deal with them. But the Russian dragoons under Tshekin had not been as inactive as they seemed. Earlier one of the regiments had been sent West to work their way round to the Finnish right wing cavalry's flank.

As the Cossacks caused chaos in the rear this unit appeared on the flank. In combination with the remaining units from Tshekin's command they charged. The Finnish cavalry was quickly dispersed and only vain, but brave, stands by the militia slowed Tshekin's victorious command.

With the Finnish right dissolving and the left in grave danger of becoming surrounded the Finns quit the field. Once again the brave infantry of the Finnish army tasted defeat and once again they headed north.

Aftermath:

The Finnish army had once again fought well but once again suffered defeat. It once again pulled back north but for the time being stayed in Finland. But it now relied on the Swedish navy to support its continued presence in Finland. This was unfortunate as events at sea were not going Sweden and Finland's way.

I do not intend to go into details but in short the Swedish and Russian fleets now confronted each other. The Russian fleet being galley's was supreme as long as it stayed near the coast where the Swedish vessels could not come. The decisive confrontation came at Hango Head, also called Gangut. At this place the Swedish fleet could get close enough to the shore to threaten the Russian fleet. The Swedes managed to catch the Russian fleet and trap it in a bay, or at least they thought it was trapped. But the water was not shallow enough to allow them to destroy the Russians. After a period of stalemate the event the Russians had been waiting for happened - in August 1714 the wind dropped.

The Russians did not feel strong enough to attack the main Swedish fleet but instead decided to attack an isolated Swedish squadron and thus break the Swedish 'blockade'. This involved transporting the galley's overland to another channel! The subsequent battle was costly but the Russians managed to sink or capture all of the small Swedish flotilla. This was enough for the Swedish fleet and made the whole of the Finnish coast untenable for them. So they withdrew to Swedish waters.

This meant that the valiant Finnish army also had to leave Finland. The Finns continued their struggle by using 'guerilla' tactics and a small but bloody campaign of strike and retaliation continued for the rest of the war. Not that the adventures of the Finnish army were over yet for this war. The battered remnants were stationed in northern Sweden for the rest of the war and took part in various actions. The Finnish army had not had much luck and this was to continue. In 1718 they took part in an invasion of Norway. An indication of how it went is that there part of this action is called 'Armfelts Death March'! But that is another story.

Acknowledgements:

I would like to acknowledge the help of the following people with these articles. In particular I would like also to thank Dan Schorr for his help, advise, material and corrections. Sven Luger for the excellent maps, Timo Immonen for various materials, Olavi Hartonen and Pauli Savolainen for their help with the Finnish language.

If you have any questions, comments, etc, on the scenario please contact me directly at nick@wfgamers.org.uk or via the [Polemos Yahoo group](#).