

"Chopping Wood "

Battle on the Raate Road, Dec39-Jan40

by Steve Keyer of Two Tin Soldiers

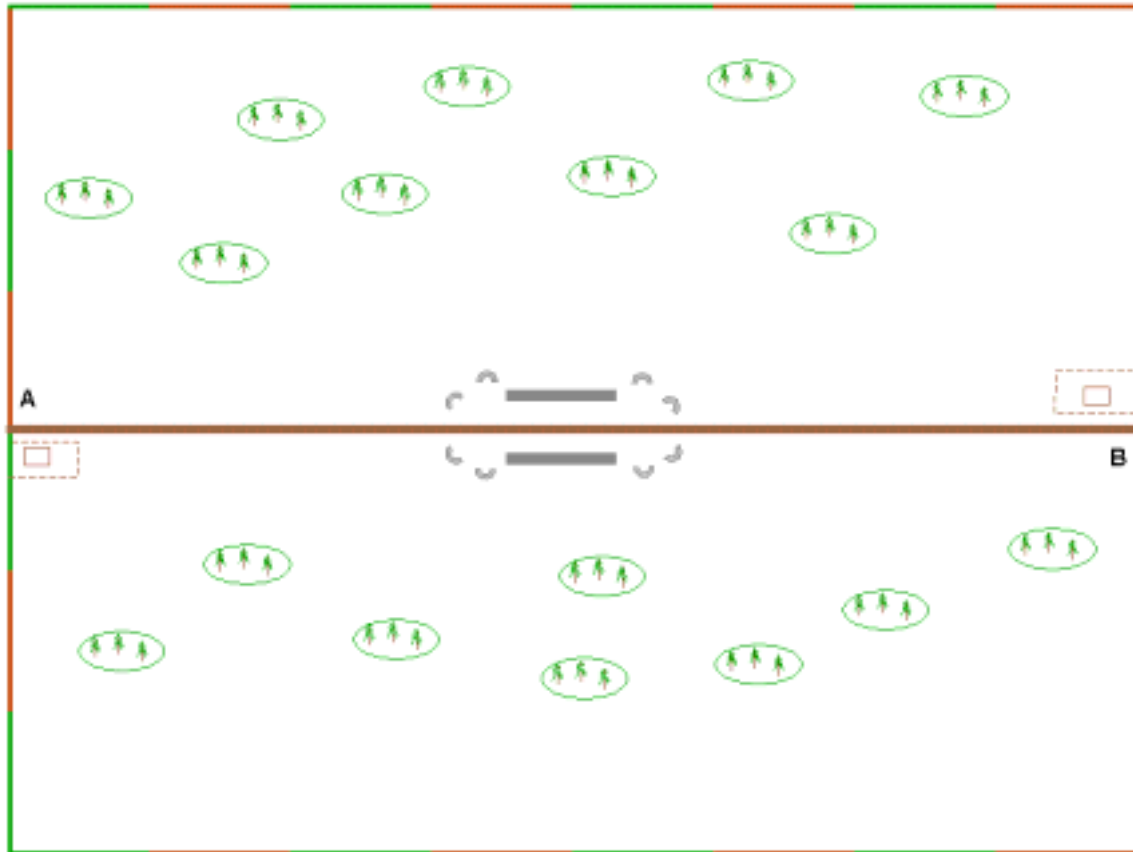
Historical perspective

This scenario represents the reduction of a small Russian "motti". In old Finnish, the term "motti" means "one cubic meter of firewood", however, in the Winter War of 1939-40 and in Finnish military slang thereafter, it came to mean a surrounded/encircled military unit or place. The new term came about as a result of the spectacular Finnish victories North of Lake Ladoga in the winter of 1939-40.

As Hitler was gobbling up the countries of central Europe in the late 1930s, Stalin was doing the same in Eastern Europe. Latvia, Estonia, and Lithuania came under Soviet rule as the two dictators divided the little nations into "spheres of influence". Perhaps the most spectacular example of this occurred in Poland itself, where Poland was split in half under the Hitler-Stalin pact at the start of World War 2. Stalin felt that Finland, which had won its independence from Russia just after World War 1, fell inside the Soviet sphere of influence. In late 1939, he decided to do something about it. After a series of unreasonable territorial demands and various staged provocations, the massive Soviet army was launched against the Finns at the end of November 1939. Outside observers expected it to be a short campaign (Stavka, the Soviet High Command, reportedly gave the commanding general 12 days to complete his task), as the Soviets vastly outnumbered the Finns in both personnel and material. However, the Finns decided to resist and did so skillfully, finally succumbing to superior forces after 4 months of combat and inflicting almost 350,000 Russian casualties.

While the fighting near Leningrad resembled that of World War 1, with the Russians attacking entrenched positions, the campaign in Northern Finland led to some of the most interesting maneuver battles of the World War 2 period. Two of these are the linked battles of Suomussalmi and the Raate Road. The Soviets launched two division-sized mechanized columns at the middle of Finland, with the ultimate objective of cutting Finland in half at Oulu on the Baltic coast. The two columns, formed by the 163rd division in the north and the 44th division to its south, were to link up at the town of Suomussalmi and then press westward to the Baltic. Initially, Finnish delaying forces consisted of only a battalion of troops, but they were greatly assisted by the winter and inadequate road network. When reinforcements arrived, the Finns kept the two columns from linking up and defeated them in detail, using their superior knowledge of the terrain and the mobility of their ski troops to first fix the Russians in place and then attack their vulnerable supply lines, cutting the mechanized columns into many isolated pockets. After dealing with the 163rd division in late December, the Finns turned their attention to the 44th division, which had been advancing up the Raate Road. The culmination of the battle came in early January 1940. The two Soviet divisions were totally defeated, and the Finns captured vast amounts of equipment. This scenario depicts the attack on a Russian

pocket, or "motti". The Russians have formed a defensive position, and have the choice of defending in place or attempting a breakout. The Finns must contain any breakout attempts and use their superior mobility to destroy the Russians.



	Wooden Fence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A map size of 8' x 5' is displayed, but 8x4 -> 8x6 is fine, as most of the action will occur around the center road. A narrower map can also be used (down to 6x4).
	Wooden Building	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The area within the fortifications and the buildings/fenced-in areas are considered clear terrain. All other areas are considered "deep snow". Note that the Finns ignore most deep snow effects.
	Fortification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The road negates terrain the snow but is only considered clear terrain (it does not allow full road movement). Treat the "road" as being 2" wide.
	Dug-In Position	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The heavy woods areas (woods with underbrush) are scattered randomly. Russian units moving into them suffer the worst of deep/snow and woods with underbrush effects. Feel free to add as more if you like but all must be 6" or more away from the buildings/roads and fortifications.
	Muddy Road	
	Heavy Woods	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The fences are considered a low wall with soft cover. • The buildings provide soft cover and can each hold 2 stands. • The dug-in positions may each hold 1 stand. • The fortification is a linear dug-in position that provides dug-in benefit to conformed troop/guns. Each fortification can hold up to 4 stands. • The fortifications and dug-in positions block line-of-fire against T and G class targets unless the target or firer is conformed to (on either side) the edge of or occupies the defensive position. This restriction does not apply to IDF and shooting from/at the AFVs and the supply wagons.
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Game Length 12 turns

At the beginning of the game, roll 1 die for each side. The winner may decide which side moves first for the remainder of the game.

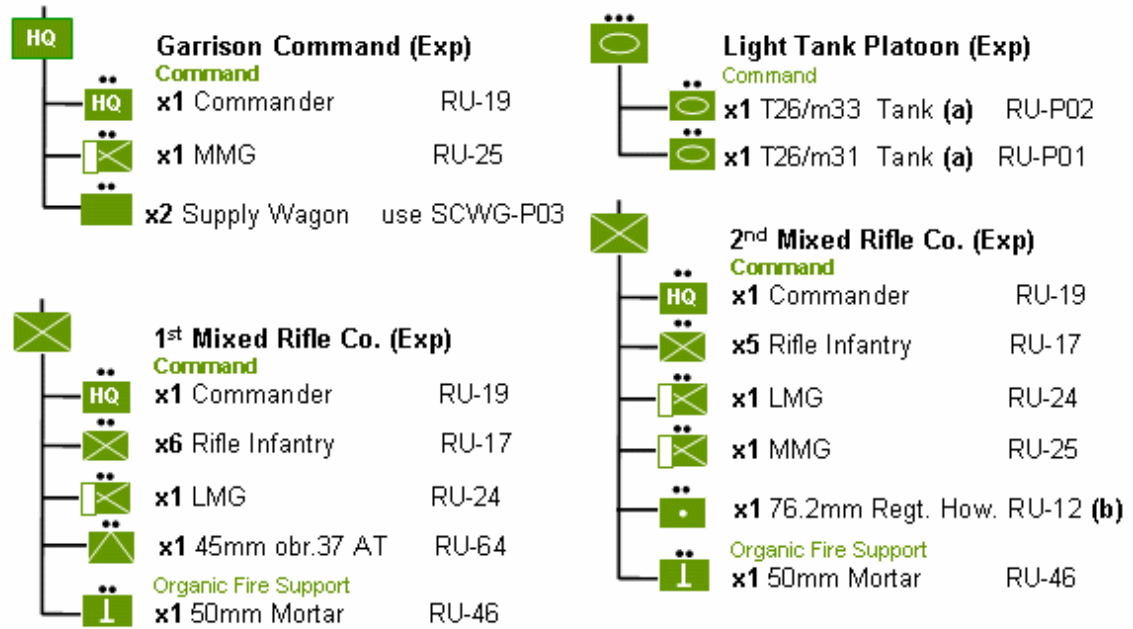
After the completion of the 12th turn, determine victory conditions according to the following schedule:

Finnish Victory Points	
Each Russian Stand knocked out	1
Each AFV KO	3
Each Gun KO	4
Hold the strongpoint	7
For each supply wagon destroyed	10
Russian Victory Points	
Each Finnish Stand KO	1.5
AT gun or mortar KO	4
Each Supply Wagon alive at end of game or moved off board	10
Hold the strongpoint	7
Capture Building at end of the map.	5

Holding the strongpoint or a building is defined as either having been the first to hold it, or at the end of the game having 1 or more of your own undisordered stands within the building or fortified area while the enemy has no undisordered stands in the same area (you essentially must drive all of the enemy stands out of the contested area). At the beginning of the game, the Finns hold both buildings, while the Russians hold the fortified area in the middle.

Victory Levels	
Finn total 25+ greater than Russian	Decisive Finnish Victory
Finn total 15-24 > Russian	Major Finnish Victory
Finn total 10-14 > Russian	Minor Finnish Victory
Finn total 0-9 > Russian	Draw
Anything else	Major Soviet Victory

Russians MAIN FORCE



(a) May substitute other variants of the early T26 if you don't have these exact versions.

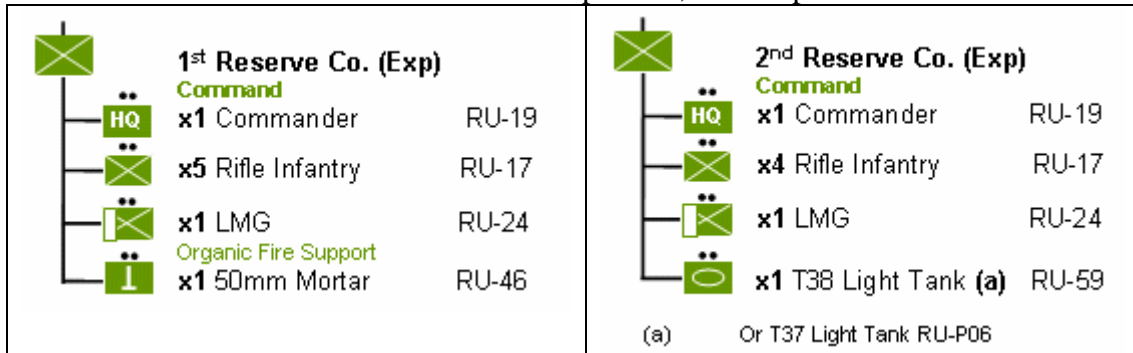
(b) Or Early 76.2 field gun SCWR-R04 or SCWR-R04

The main force starts within the boundaries of the fortified area. Troop and gun stands may start hidden and conformed to the fortification.

RESERVES

The Russians have 2 reserve groups. They will enter randomly during the course of the game. At the beginning of the Russian turn 2, roll a d10. A reserve group enters on a roll of 10. If unsuccessful, the die roll needed is decrease by 1 each turn until the group arrives (9,10 on turn 3, 8-10 on turn 4, etc.). On the turn after the first group arrives, restart the process for the second group, resetting the die roll needed to 10.

When a group arrives, it will enter the map randomly on the road at either point A or B. A d10 roll of 1-5 will allow it to enter at point A, 6-10 at point B.



Finnish Forces

